

Commandery Public Relations Guidelines & Reasons

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Public Relations Committees have a responsibility of information gathering and publication both internally from our local commanderies, to and from the Grand Commandery, assisting local commanderies with their program development ideas, and within their local communities. The following informative brief is only suggested as a guideline for use but is not all inclusive.

1-What is Public Relations?

*It's a mutual communicating method of providing features and benefits between any organization and its members or target market of clients/members.

*It's basically image building.

*In business it's called building a positive brand or public image that is respected by its current clients or future clients. There is no difference with fraternal organizations.

2-What are some essential characteristics of public relations?

*Communicating and persuading others to accept a certain point of view on a subject matter.

*The messages must be clear/truthful, relevant, and helpful.

3-Who is responsible for public relations?

*Principally the 5 key officers along with a local commandery public relations committee.

*Whatever the officers and committee decide, it becomes a component of a 5 year commandery business plan that they decide upon.

4-How does the plan work?

*The local public relations committee works with the membership committee to establish an internal and external program, such as short talk presentations at lodges, chapters, and councils about Templar History. This is a similar process that would be used in each of the other Masonic Bodies to develop an interest in and continuation of the Masonic Journey from lodge by building one step upon the other.

*The committee also looks at what external opportunities exist that can become public information, such as local commanderies working on weekends at food pantries within their districts and not only sending a cheque; contributing to the relief of abused children, women or the aged. I.E., protecting the innocent or contributing something like physical items to the centers that address the needs of others.

*Activities at marathons for cancer walks, providing for the needs of veterans or the homeless, etc. Doing contributions of time and finances for other needy organizations Any type of charitable work to help the less fortunate but make sure it goes into the local news media with pictures. If a local commandery can't do it alone, then, the Division Commander should try and put a division program together.

*A public relations release of information at a meeting, monthly communication to the membership, use of a commandery website, and to the community-if affected, is essential in developing interest in Templary and Freemasonry. This in turn leads to one phase of leadership and membership development or membership retention, and is based on the principle of constant communications.

*The local public relations committee should contact the local chamber of commerce to ascertain what it might do within the community in acting as a contributing member. This also leads to public and/or internal fraternal awareness and bonding. However, whatever activity is decided upon with the chamber of commerce, it must be continuous and not just done once and forgotten about or dropped later. The image of the local commandery must be solid within the community, in order to maintain good public relations.

5-What else is needed?

*The local commandery public relations committee sends its program to its Division Commander so that he knows what internal/external public relations events are being sponsored by the commanderies within his jurisdiction, and what is contributing to a 5 year commandery business plan within each of his commanderies.

*Division Commanders send a list of the local committee activities to the Grand Commandery Public Relations Committee.

5-The Grand Commandery Public Relations Committee produces a spread sheet/comparison sheet of all commandery main activities from each division with completion dates, and sends the compilation data to each Division Commander, and he to each commandery within his jurisdiction. This method assures statewide overall communications/knowledge from every commandery, and not just data from his own division.

*This committee will also look at what other available materials, information, personnel/speakers or methods might be used for internal/external communications and presentations to produce more effective Templary results both locally and statewide.

*An additional source of information would be the foreign consulates who might provide films or power point presentations about their countries where there were Templar fortifications. I.E., viewing the locations and tourism. The Grand Encampment might also have pilgrimage photos that could be used. This material could be used with a speaker presentation.

*It's essential to use modern technology in promoting Templary, because the younger generations have less time and interest in just reading brochures. Therefore, also use YouTube or short films that can be downloaded and viewed quickly and easily on a cell phone, tablet, PC, etc. Suggest checking a list of what's available from the Grand Encampment or other Grand Commanderies. The idea is to capture the attention of potential candidates.

*Make sure that every Masonic Temple has the pyramid scale of Masonic Degrees posted so that Masons can easily view both the York and Scottish Rite Degrees/Orders.

With the above data, every commandery is committed to a standardized program, and the statewide shared commandery information would provide an additional general data process to assist other commanderies. Some activities will include, new member projections by certain dates, dates of projected conferral of the Orders per month or quarter, social events/dates of activities, celebration dates, charitable/community activities with projected dates, etc.

This sharing of information strengthens each commandery and all commanderies will be able to communicate with each other for any assistance or joint programs throughout the year. These methods contribute to the standardized policy which would be more easily administered throughout the state, rather than the current haphazard individual commandery doing whatever it wants to do during the year, and without communicating or planning anything.

Without local commandery coordinated plans, officer dedication, being pro-active, constant analysis, timelines, public relations actions, and the sharing of information, we can't expect

positive growth and retention. Thus, the Grand Commandery Public Relations Committee needs the input from the local commanderies, in order to maintain and develop statewide public relations communications.