

**CHAPTER 7**

**SECTION**

**PUBLICITY**

**CHAIRMAN**

**AND**

**COMMITTEE**

## SECTION PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE

### **Section Publicity**

#### **Getting Started**

A section should consider implementing both external and internal publicity programs. External publicity is the communication of information to the general public or to specific groups outside the section. Internal publicity is the communication of information to your section membership. Depending on the size of the section and the groups with which the section needs to communicate, separate committees can be formed to accomplish the section's publicity objectives.

#### **External Publicity/Communications**

Disseminating information to audiences outside the section is a simple task if you have something newsworthy to communicate. Stories that may be of interest to external audiences include:

- Section efforts to educate the public about the oil and gas industry
- Profiles of section leaders
- Section-sponsored events involving members of the local community
- Section involvement in volunteer/community service activities
- Section anniversaries or other historic milestones

#### **Community Relations**

Communication with a certain group outside the section may be as simple as a business letter or a phone call. For example, inviting members of a local environmental club to a section meeting might require a series of letters or phone calls (initial invitation and follow-up) to the club president. These communications should highlight how the group might benefit from attending the meeting and should be made two to three months in advance of the meeting date.

#### **Public Relations**

The best way to communicate to the general public is through the news media. To do this, you must first get to know the local media and establish a rapport with them.

#### **Creating a Media List**

Each section should be familiar with the major news outlets in your area, including daily and weekly newspapers, local business journals, and occasionally, radio and television stations. In order to regularly communicate with these outlets, you will need to maintain a media list of appropriate contacts who might cover energy and the environment. Other contacts to consider would be those who cover city news, community service activities, social functions, special features, and calendar listings. This list should have a media member's complete contact information, including name, title, mailing address, telephone number, fax number, email address, and any communication preferences. For the media list to be effective, it should also be updated on a regular basis.

## **Contacting the Media**

Once a media list is compiled, a letter of introduction should be mailed or emailed to each person on the list identifying a key section contact, listing publicity committee members, and giving a brief overview of the section's activities. For members of the press, you should provide someone who can answer their questions, in a timely manner, about the information you send.

Each letter or email should be personalized and individually addressed. It should be roughly two to three paragraphs stating the nature of the section's business and how it might relate to the person to whom you are writing. Remember to include the names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of contact people. If the contact has a specific area of responsibility, such as career guidance or scholarships, note that beside the name.

Review the list periodically for changes in section contact persons. When more than two section contacts have changed, revise the list and send it out again with notification that this is an updated list. This not only provides your media contacts with current information, but it also affords a good opportunity to keep the section's name before this important audience.

## **Writing/Distributing Press Releases**

The best way to supply information to the press is with a press release. A press release should contain the name and telephone number of a contact person, when the story should be released, and the information itself.

Use a direct, straightforward style to write a press release. The first paragraph should contain all of the important information: who, what, where, why, when, and how. Subsequent paragraphs add supplemental information. Keep in mind that you want to communicate with the general public. Try to explain technical terms in easily understood language, and most of all, try to give some perspective on how the technology will affect daily life or the local community. If possible, keep your press release to a single, double-spaced page. Press releases should never be handwritten.

Once a press release has been distributed, usually via email, fax or mail, it is a good idea to follow up with the media to ensure that they have received the release and to see if they have any questions about your news.

For additional resources to support your public relations efforts (SPE Fact Sheet, Executive Bios, Past SPE Press Releases, SPE Logos/Images, etc.), please refer to the SPE Media Center at [http://www.spe.org/spe/jsp/mediacenter/0,2393,1104\\_1850\\_0,00.html](http://www.spe.org/spe/jsp/mediacenter/0,2393,1104_1850_0,00.html)

## **Internal Publicity/Communications**

Keeping the section membership apprised of section activities is one of the most important tasks to be accomplished. Strong internal communications are necessary to the section's success.

While internal communications are targeted toward a more receptive audience, it still requires dedication

and some assistance from all areas of section operations.

Deciding how to communicate with the section at large is a matter for the section board. The board should consider what information needs to be communicated on a regular basis (such as section meeting details), and what sort of periodic updates will be generated by various operating groups within the section (continuing education, scholarship, career guidance committees, social events, etc.). Once the amount of information to be distributed has been determined, the board should decide the most efficient means of communication.

### **Newsletters**

Many sections find a monthly section newsletter to be the most efficient communications medium. When planning a newsletter, consider costs, distribution, and personnel.

Newsletters do require some time to put together, but they need not be difficult if the section is operating in an orderly and efficient manner. Regular board meetings, at which committee reports are made, serve as the main source of articles for newsletters. Planning reports, meeting notices, opinion polls, and personal items are other suggestions to help fill the newsletter. Newsletters should be factual, concise, and timely. They should be written like a good press release with the most important information in the lead followed by supplemental information.

Advertising is an option to help defray the costs of printing and distribution, but it must be accurately managed and carefully monitored.

In general, advertising accepted for SPE section publications and websites should be pertinent to the oil and gas industry and the readers of the publication. Sections are advised to follow the SPE advertising policy, which is stated in each of its publications: “SPE journals accept advertising for goods and services which, in the publisher’s judgment, address the technical or professional interests of the journal’s readers.” This gives a section the option of refusing to run advertising it does not feel is appropriate to the professional reputation of the Society.

### **Websites**

A section website may be the most cost effective method to distribute both internal and external communications. SPE has developed Web hosting services to assist sections in establishing and maintaining a section website.

Contact [sections@spe.org](mailto:sections@spe.org) for more information about and assistance in creating a section website.

For additional information about guidelines for section publications and websites, please refer to [http://www.spe.org/spe/jsp/basic/0,2396,1104\\_1696\\_0,00.html](http://www.spe.org/spe/jsp/basic/0,2396,1104_1696_0,00.html)

### **Community Relations Night Program**

Many sections offer a “community relations night” each year. The community relations night provides an opportunity for section, industry, and community leaders to become better acquainted and to exchange ideas. It also allows the section to foster a stronger community presence. Suggested steps for a successful community relations night are as follows:

- 1) Set a date at least six months in advance of the community relations night program. Appoint a committee to manage the event.
- 2) Give careful consideration to the choice of speakers. Traditionally, SPE Distinguished Lecturers are available to speak on subjects of general interest. Secure the speaker early.
- 3) Have an alternative speaker available in case the first speaker cannot attend.
- 4) Prepare a guest list of community leaders, government representatives, and local media.
- 5) Mail (or email) invitations four to six weeks before the event.
- 6) Contact invited guests two to three weeks before the event to confirm their attendance.
- 7) Send reminder emails or make reminder phone calls one to two days before the event.
- 8) Assign one person as a host for each invited guest. The host's job is to usher the guests to their reserved tables, introduce them to the speaker and various section members, and answer questions as needed.