

# Communications & Publicity

## How do you Communicate?

### Considering New Technologies

Pony Express anyone? How about a telegraph? Land line versus cellphone? Communication for individuals and businesses has evolved in innumerable ways over the years. At the time of Annie Webb Blanton, members of DKG were most likely to exchange communication via posted letters or, if they were fortunate, connect by telephone. In 1929, most telephones required the use of an operator, although dial phones were beginning to be in use. If a long-distance phone call was placed, a delay was necessary for the operator to connect with another operator, then to the person receiving the call. Communication by posted letters took even longer but was the established form for connecting with family, friends, businesses, and organizations.

Fast forward to 2016 and the avenues of communication are vastly different. So, when individuals in a chapter, school, or other organization are considering methods to transmit information, the choices depend on many factors. Because members of DKG cross the generational ages, communicators must consider comfort level in implementing communication methods that are different from those used in the past. Members of the Baby Boomer Generation have obviously seen the most changes and may be somewhat hesitant to embrace the newest technologies. Phone calls or postal communication are not the preferred choices of the younger generations. Clearly, comfort level goes both ways.

In considering changes based on the introduction of new technologies, members need to keep several questions at the forefront. Each question will be addressed below.

- What are we communicating at present?
- Why do we communicate the way we do?
- What other ways are there to communicate?
- What would happen if we choose to \_\_\_\_\_?

#### What are we communicating?

In the chapter or organization setting, communication about meeting times and locations needs to be transmitted. Minutes of meetings and

financial reports or updates are also important to keep members informed.

In the school setting, educators inform students about assignment requirements, due dates, and grades as well as provide educational resources. Colleagues communicate on curriculum, policy, planning, projects, and, of course, student needs.

#### Why do we communicate the way we do?

Barriers to change are most often found in the answer to this question. In most cases, we communicate the way we do because it is the way we have always communicated. It is ingrained in our customs. Change is not easily embraced by people who feel threatened by learning new technologies and methods. This is where the next two questions become important.

#### What other ways are there to communicate?

Options for consideration here include the use of computers and personal devices (smart phones, iPads), as well as various uses of social media. Each should be considered on its own merits and needs.

With the widespread use of computers, communication through e-mails has been accepted practice for several years. Most members of organizations such as DKG have access to this quick



and easy method of communication. Schools are also using this method more and more because of student access to devices.

Take a look around next time you are in a large group of people waiting for an event. Chances are you will see many of those people glancing at their smart phones. This tool offers great promise in spreading the word for organizations.

Social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Instagram are all considerations for chapters and other organizations. DKG has a presence in all of these outlets at the international level. Check them out!

## What would happen if we choose to implement changes in our current methods of communication?

Together, members can determine which method of communication will have the greatest impact for their chapters and can work together to coach members in these new methods. The same applies in school settings. School leaders who allow or promote availability of access to computers and personal devices for students will also need to instruct educators and learners in their usage.

Instruction and guidance in these communication tools is of the utmost importance. A one-shot introduction is often not sufficient in learning new material. Hands-on learning must be a part of this instruction. Continued review should also be factored into the implementation process to ensure success.

## Recommended Apps: *Remind* and *Schoology*

Two apps are highlighted here to meet the communication needs of schools and organizations.

- ✦ **Remind** ([remind.com](http://remind.com)) allows teachers or groups of individuals to create a “classroom” of members who can be connected electronically. This free and easy-to-use app allows announcements of 140 characters that can be delivered through e-mail or text. Additional features include chat, attachment of files, and links to calendars.

In the chapter setting, **Remind** could be used to send a text to remind members of a meeting scheduled for that day. The agenda and minutes from the past meeting could be attached, thus preparing members prior to the meeting and saving time.

- ✦ **Schoology** ([schoology.com](http://schoology.com)) also allows for electronic connection. This learning management system (LMS) provides many tools that are currently used by educators worldwide. Easy access and manageability are features that make it desirable to teachers.

In a school setting, **Schoology** could be used to update students as to the requirements for reading before class the next day and any notes that need to be taken in preparation. This also applies for professional development sessions with teachers.

## Internal marketing communication tools for DKG chapters

Put simply, internal marketing is how you communicate among your chapter members. Again, refer to the questions posted above in considering your best methods, forms, and types of communication.

Each chapter has the option of creating and maintaining a chapter Web site that can be linked to the DKG Web site. Easy-to-follow guidelines can be found at [www.dkg.org](http://www.dkg.org). Creation of the Web site may tap into the skills of members who are already using Web sites in their educational settings. Members will always know where to find current chapter contact information and a schedule of meetings and programs. The site is a place to highlight and show off projects.

Use of social media to market your chapter is another consideration in adopting new technologies. Members of Generation X and Y actively use these media outlets to connect with other educators already, so why not tap into this potential? A Facebook page for your chapter can inform members of activities and be a place for posting pictures of projects and community contributions. Registered Twitter account members may enjoy connecting via this online social network, sending and receiving “tweets.” Others may prefer an Instagram account to send their messages.

In conclusion, communication has changed over the years. Members of organizations, including DKG, must recognize those changes and make the necessary accommodations to stay current. In the blink of an eye, information can be transmitted across the miles or across the room. It is up to each receiver to decide how to gather and use that information. Let’s keep connected and informed!

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