

Communications with Society members.

Tips on offering effective email/social media/other communications as part of recovery efforts.

1. Identify who the person (or 2 people) are that will be sending out updates about the recovery process. This should be in your Pre event plan, and if circumstances don't allow then a new person (or 2) should be chosen for this task as part of your event specific recovery efforts.
2. As a membership benefit: Form a group email list of only the membership or the membership plus those peripherally involved with the society. (ie partner organizations; service or resource providers; etc) to send information to.
3. Whoever is tasked with ongoing communications about the recovery effort should always be the one (or 2) to send out the informational emails; although the initial communication may come from the Chair of the Board or the Executive Director if appropriate.
4. In the first communication: Outline what the event is, how it has affected your community and how your society has been affected.
5. Promise further updates, but only within the capacity you have (as a society) to make sure this happens. If unsure, just promise further updates "soon" or whatever is appropriate for your situation.
6. Remain consistent in the format of each communication.
7. Make sure that any links you are including do work before hitting send.
8. Always manage expectations. Do not promise anything that cannot be followed through with.
9. According to the event and the ongoing progress of recovery efforts, gradually step back with communications; i.e.: daily to begin with, then weekly, biweekly, monthly, etc.
10. Make sure in your last group communication you indicate how members can contact the society going forward as you transition back to "normal" operations; will it be back to the usual contact? or if that had to change because of the event, indicate how members can contact the society going forward.
11. This last group email is always a good place to politely remind members (if you haven't previously) that ongoing work will continue and donations are always appreciated to support the society in their work.
12. Always remain consistent with messaging and information. Board, staff, and volunteers need to all be kept informed of the information being shared with membership and the public.

Further points for various audiences beyond membership:

1. If you have a website already, add an event specific web page with a link on the homepage to it that is easily seen and accessed.
2. If there is a recognizable and appropriate photo to use as the header on the webpage, use the same image on other event related communications (e.g. posters, Facebook page header) so people can easily visually identify this as being an event update (for instance).
3. If you have someone that can build an online media template (we, Facebook, etc) prior to an event and recovery, do it. Then you will have it ready to launch once you have information to share. It is important to send out accurate communications as soon as you can and having the site ready to launch will help you do this.
4. Likewise for hardcopy posters: build a template that could be used for recovery specific information.
5. Be aware of your recovery timeline and how long the recovery might take- and make sure you have someone available to keep the site updated ongoing. (Recovery can take a long time.)
Keep the information on the page current. If you don't have the capacity, use other forms of sharing information. A webpage that is not kept current is not useful.
6. Share event specific information, (beyond your society's news) as well as links to resources that your membership and the public may find useful.
7. If you have a donations and/or fundraising strategy, this is a good opportunity to launch it if capacity allows via your various forms of communication.
8. Identify and post ways that the general public can support your society. People really do want to help whether they are members or not.