

## **Recruiting & Retention Notes – Improving Your Newsletter/Circular**

The Membership Council issues a Membership Newsletter and it retains an area for local news alongside the national news and initiatives. It is available electronically to avoid distribution costs and the main version may be accessed through the secure website.

Writing, designing and distributing a separate County/District, Branch or Club newsletter need not be a lot of work. When producing newsletters, think about ways in which they could be used as a tool to carry out LIC activities. Here are some examples of how you could achieve this:

- Try and write for a wider audience than just existing members. Remember to include background information for people who don't know anything about the Legion. It is good practice to assume that your readers are new to the subject that you are writing about.
- See if you can circulate your newsletter more widely in the community, for example at local churches, doctors' surgeries, libraries, tourist information services, local food outlets etc.

### **Sloppy image/Poor design**

With the availability of modern computer technology, there is no excuse for a poorly designed or poorly produced newsletter/circular. There is no need for sophisticated desk top publishing software to be used; a fairly polished look can be achieved using a basic word processing package. This will allow text to be laid out neatly in columns and boxes or be manipulated in other ways while tables and digital photographs can easily be incorporated. Modern photocopiers produce clear, smudge-free copies quickly and cheaply.

Idea 1: Collect different local newsletters (including those produced by other Legion Counties/Districts/Branches) - which ones do you like and why?

Idea 2: Does your local school/college teach graphic design? If so, ask if students could revamp your newsletter for free!

Idea 3: Consider printing/photocopying onto lightly tinted paper - it's less boring than traditional white.

Idea 4: Ask your readers how the newsletter could be improved.

Idea 5: Why not use your newsletter to encourage members to bring new people along to Legion activities in your area?

### **Boring Copy**

Copy should be objective, clear/easy to read and be punchy. Some tips:

- Think of your readers, not yourself.
- Keep it simple - no jargon.
- Never use a long word when a short one will do.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short - they're easier to read.
- Use active not passive - the piece will be more stimulating e.g. "Jim drove the car" not "the car was driven by Jim".

- Ask someone not involved what they think about your newsletter before printing.
- Ensure you proof read before printing - preferably two people.
- Ensure the editor is fully supported. No-one person should write the entire publication - unless they want to!

### **Drifting Schedules**

Every effort should be made to publish regularly and on time, especially if carrying advertising. Don't delay publications waiting for special news or in-depth features/items, instead, carry such items in a "special" or supplementary issue. Also, integrate newsletter production and review sessions into normal Committee meetings by having the newsletter as a standing agenda item; ideally, use one meeting to simultaneously review the last and plan the next issue(s).

### **Reader Response**

As the best communication is always two-way, your newsletter should interact with readers. Use a letters' page, classified ads, competitions, puzzles or interviews to bring the publication to life. Establish a dialogue with your readers. Conduct simple reader surveys every year. Ask them if they read the newsletter, if not, why not? If they do, what do they most like and dislike about it? If you have a large branch and you want to carry out a formal survey, using Survey Monkey, you may contact [MembershipTraining@britishleaion.org.uk](mailto:MembershipTraining@britishleaion.org.uk) to set up a survey collector that you can email to your members.