Minnesota Women of Today
Leadership Toolbox – Positive Reporting

Positive Reporting starts with the basics. It is applicable for all members and should be trained at the chapter level all the way up. If you know you need to talk at a meeting or event, you should know what you are going to say and how you are going to say it before you arrive. This is more than being comfortable with the subject you are talking about. This is being prepared with your words and respectful of others time.

Verbal Reports and Presentation: Best Practices

➢ **Write it Down**. If you are an above average public speaker, shorthand will do. If you are not a professional public speaker, write a script. When applicable have a written report for the secretary before you speak.

- Use the 5 W's: who, what, when, where, why. This avoids forgetting important details and eliminate fluff,
- Train by example. Instead of continuously telling others what you expect of them show them what is needed, by being prepared with your own materials and duties.
- Train others one on one. Come up with a simple handout for members to use. Bring copies to meetings and encourage all to use it.

➢ **Know how much time you have**. For a business meeting, a report will typically be 1 to 3 minutes, depending on what needs to be shared. A simple report on any level should be 90 seconds or less.

- Never assume. When it comes to a presentation or a longer report, ask your host how much time you have to present.
- Use the time allotted to you. Only using 10 minutes of a 30-minute presentation reflects just as negative as being given a 10-minute time slot and using 30 minutes.
- Practice. Reading a report or presentation out loud will help find any hidden errors and increase your self-confidence. When needed, time yourself.

➢ **Include an interactive hand out or takeaway**. This should not be a copy of what you are saying, but something that adds value to your presentation or report. Consider a fill in the blank worksheet, brochure, skit, or activity that complements the presentation.

➢ **Keep discussions for the end of your report or offline**. Before you start, consider asking people to write down questions to talk to you once done speaking or after the meeting.
- Make sure time is scheduled for any discussion ahead of the meeting and let others know how much time is available.
- When you use your allotted time, simply table the discussion. Be considerate of others, but at the same time, move on.

Simple General Meeting Report Form Examples

Include meeting report information in your first board meeting and supply them at general meetings. Consider using both General Meeting Reports for verbal reports and Project reports for tracking the basics of the project. Encourage all members to have prepared written reports. See below for a simple template.

General Meeting Report

Once you are finished reading your report, please give it to the secretary. This will help get the most accurate information in the meeting minutes.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Project/Event Name: _____

Full Report (Script): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Project Report

After Event completion, please submit to the secretary for chapter records. This will support future project chairs complete similar projects.

Project/Event Name: _____

Dates Held: _____ Volunteer Hours Spent Planning: _____

Event Service Hours: _____ Total Number of Volunteers: _____

Total Donations Made: _____ (Monetary / In-kind)

Outside Contacts Used (Name, Business, phone/email): _____

_____

Briefly Describe Event: _____

_____

_____

Reporting in the Positive

It can be hard to think outside of the verbal box. We get used to hearing and saying the same phrases the same way. Changing your report to the positive will help you create enthusiasm, participation and achieve your desired outcome. Use the five (5) situations below to inspire your next report. By being prepared and keeping it in the positive you are not only increasing the positive energy of the room, but you are also increasing the positive feedback, an increased positive public image, and increasing your potential for even more positive results in the future.

➤ You did not meet your goal. If the number is small, remove the number from your report. If the number is large report with gratitude. Never Report you did not meet a goal.
- Example 1: "Thank you to the many outstanding members who turned in ABC. The winner of our drawing is DEF". Without positive reporting your report may sound like … "my goal was 10, but I only received 7." This is not motivating others to do more. Instead, many will leave thinking If no one else is doing it, why should I.
- Example 2: "Thank you to the dedicated 105 members who sent in their ABC this trimester." Without positive reporting your report may sound like "My goal was 125, but I only received 105. BUT…" There is nothing you can say that will excite a room after a negative start. Avoid the "but" when reporting.

➤ Not enough participation to hold an activity/competition. It had happened to most of us at least once. We plan and promote, but unfortunately the activity/contest needs to be cancelled due to lack of participation. The last thing you should say is "we did not meet our minimum number required and did not hold the ABC." This devalues your project and the member(s) participating. These situations typically require a two-part action.
- Example: If there will be no event or competition held, personally call everyone who participated. Thank them, let them know there will not be an event/competition this year. When reporting say "Thank you to everyone who participated, the winner of my Drawing is ABC." Yes, you can hold your participation drawing even when only 1 member participates." Do not give unpromoted pity gifts to make up for the lack of competition and no not report that there was no event. If someone asks, answer honestly.

➤ Minimal participation to hold an activity/competition. Winning and even being runner up should be something to be proud of. It's not when you are first of two or second of three. Reporting only 3 or 4 members participated can leave the winner feeling blah.
- Example: 'Thank you to everyone who participated. We had some outstanding ABC this year. The winner is DEF."

➤ Promoting a small goal. As a member if I hear you have a goal of four members or chapters participating is that a call to action or am I hearing you only need four, and someone else can do that. Instead of reporting a number, encourage others to participate by creating an opportunity for them to benefit.
- Example: "I am excited to be supporting and sharing the ABC Award with you this year. This is an amazing opportunity for your chapter to honor your local community partners this year. Nominations are due by DEF and awarded at GHI. As a bonus, in appreciation of your efforts, everyone who submits a nomination will receive a JKL from me."

- Exceeding a small goal. Perception is about context. Are there obvious knowns you are not reporting. If your goal is 5 and you receive 7, is that 7 out of 10 or 7 out of 100. If your goal was 5 and 7 out of 10 members or chapters participated, yes report it like that and celebrate. If the end number anything higher consider this, you are in a room with other members and you know the total number of members is 100. Even though your goal was 5 and you beat your goal, 7 out of 100 is no longer something that sounds positive. Try to increase your positivity by using a percentage or other encouraging language.
  - Example 1: Using the goal of 5, receiving 7. "Thank you to the amazing members who sent in their ABC Together we exceeded our goal by 40 percent."
  - Example 2: If your goal is to have 5 participants and you end up with 10, what sounds more exciting? "Exceed my goal by 5." or "we doubled our goal."

Reducing Reporting Redundancy

Reduce unnecessary information shared at meetings. Your Staff Meeting, Board of Directors/Executive Council Meeting, Business/General Meeting should not be repeats of each other. No one needs to hear the same report two or three times.

- Think of a Staff Meeting as casual, this is your behind-the-scenes conversations sharing what needs to be done to prepare for future events/meetings and what job duties have you have been working on. Typically, a closed meeting and a great time to discuss internal concerns and issues.

- Board of Director Meeting, Typically open to guests, is Business. What Business and calls to action do you have to share specifically with members of the Board that does not need to be shared in front of all of membership.

- The Business Meeting is for all general members, not only is it informative, but also should be inspiring. What promotions do you have and what recognition do you have to share.

Start Simple

Positive Reporting can feel overwhelming in the beginning. No one expects you to remember everything. All we can do is start taking steps towards a more positive experience for all. AND each of us has the ability to make small changes that lead to great results.

- Prepare and use a written report.
- Avoid double reporting.
- Words to avoid when reporting are "only", "did not meet", "under goal", "but", and "not enough to participate."
- Adjectives That Can Add Value: Amazing, Excited, Outstanding, Cheerful, Fabulous, Passionate, Compassionate, Fantastic, Respected, Delightful, Honored, Strengthening, Distinguished, Incredible, Superb, Enthusiastic, Joyous, Support, Exceptional, and Wonderful.