

Tips For Leading Small Chapters

"History, although sometimes made up of the few acts of the great, is more often shaped by the many acts of the small." - Mark Twain

1. Take care not to "burn out" people. One method is to involve as many people as possible in small ways—e.g. ask a member to team up with another and plan one program, to welcome guests at one meeting, to submit one newsletter article, or to help with one mailing, etc. As members take on small tasks, they will discover what they enjoy doing and will likely find themselves interested in doing more.

2. Continually build new leadership. Often this is an outcome of tip #1. Mastering multiple tasks is a strong confidence builder, a precursor to assuming leadership. Mentoring is another success-proven method. Where practical, officers can select members to serve on a committee, and then work with them as advisors. Actual training sessions for future chapter leaders is another option. Hold a day-long Saturday planning session at an officer's house. Think far ahead in terms of programming, seeking input from attending members. You will be surprised at how eagerly they will rise to meet the challenge.

3. Invite a larger chapter or another smaller chapter to a joint meeting. This is a great way of injecting energy and fresh perspective into your chapter.

4. Seek diversity. Charge the membership committee with seeking out prospective members of diverse age, experience, and cultural and racial backgrounds.

5. Keep communications ongoing. Ask a member to serve as email secretary for the year. Organize a phone tree for special projects. Place reminder phone calls. Develop good media relations with local papers & radio. Issue press releases. Send timely invitations, flyers, newsletter to members, media, and prospective members. Publish the meeting schedule a year in advance in newsletter-write TBA (To Be Announced) for those programs still tentative.

6. Strive for consistent, quality programs. Survey the interests of the membership. When planning programs, make sure they are relevant to the DAR objectives, seasonally timely, and appealing to prospective members.

7. Be positive! Chapter leaders have an obligation to minimize criticism and maximize positive feedback. A small chapter needs and deserves frequent kudos for each of its' successes.

Tips For Leading Any Chapter

*Think Like a Leader - Act Like a Leader
Plan Your Work - Work Your Plan*

Tips on Effective Leadership

- 1. Celebrate success.** Each chapter has successes. Identify the successes; analyze the reasons for the success; reward those who made each success happen.
- 2. Set realistic goals.** Identify a few clearly defined goals that are achievable with consistent effort but not requiring a miracle. If goals are impossible to achieve, you will experience failure. If they are realistic, you will probably experience success.
- 3. Spread the work around.** You can avoid burn-out by not asking too much of any one person, including yourself. Most members will participate enthusiastically if expectations are clearly defined and limited.
- 4. Don't make your members feel guilty.** Guilt does not motivate chapter members to participate. It drives them away. Find out what level of participation each member is comfortable with and find a way to involve them at that level.
- 5. Change the structure if you need to.** Sometimes chapters need to make structural changes in order to meet member needs and to function effectively. If the conventional structure isn't working for your chapter, work with other chapter leaders to make changes. This might mean changing meeting times and dates, or involving more or less members on your bylaws and budget committees.
- 6. Focus your efforts and resources.** Recognize that no one chapter can participate in every facet of the work of DAR. Identify your chapter's priorities; focus on those priorities.
- 7. Involve new members.** New members are eager to help but often short on experience. Put new members on committees right away in supporting roles and make wise use of their input and skills. However, don't give them too many responsibilities or they might back away!
- 8. Save effort.** Analyze the work that is done in your chapter. Eliminate what isn't really necessary or effective. Use technology to your advantage, including the electronic data resources available through the DAR Members' Web Site.
- 9. Have a positive attitude.** Your chapter is part of a powerful and exciting organization with an important mission. Even the smallest chapter has the opportunity for success.
- 10. Relax. Enjoy DAR!** The organization's greatest asset is its members. DAR members are diverse, stimulating, energetic, successful and supportive. Who could ask for better company?