



8 simple rules for chapter leadership

Congratulations on being elected an SPJ officer. Whether you agreed to perform this vital function to improve and protect journalism, to help guide its future or because no one else would (or maybe all three), you have your Society's sincere gratitude. We've crafted eight simple rules to help you through your leadership.

1 Update Chapter Contact Information

- ▶ Within 30 days of election of your officers, your chapter secretary is required by SPJ bylaws to submit a complete list of names and contact information of your chapter officers to headquarters. This allows the officers to immediately receive important information about national activities. Designate a liaison to correspond with headquarters about your chapter's events or concerns.

2 Understand Your Responsibilities

- ▶ In order to remain a chapter in good standing, there are certain tasks each chapter must perform. Find a complete list of those tasks in the Leaders section at www.spj.org when you download the Chapter Requirements. You'll also have access to the bylaws, list of headquarters staff, board leadership and FAQs.
- ▶ Chapter bylaws are a roadmap to running your chapter and dividing responsibilities. Get a copy to each board member, along with handbook of expectations of board members. Can't find yours? Contact headquarters.
- ▶ Read over last year's Chapter Annual Report to view the chapter's successes, challenges and failures. Those reports can help guide your efforts this year.

Questions about member roster, applications or recruitment materials?

**Membership Coordinator
(317) 927-8000, ext. 203
membership@spj.org**

3 Develop or Review Membership Plan

- ▶ Members are the lifeblood of our organization. If no plan exists, make one. If you're uncertain where to start, contact SPJ's Membership Manager for guidance about incentives, communication tips and building value. A membership plan doesn't have to be complicated, but a plan is necessary to grow your chapter. Don't forget: Engaged members renew!

4 Make Chapter Programming a Priority

- ▶ Members won't join or renew if the local chapter is invisible. Planning and executing meaningful, useful and topical chapter programs on a consistent basis will be a big draw for members and prospective members. Programming needn't be costly or time intensive. Draw on your area's strengths for speakers. Mix news-making events with workshops and social events to appeal to a wide variety of members. Partner with organizations that share our mission. SPJ.org Leaders section also has programming ideas shared from other chapters around the country.

5 Communicate

▶ It's a well-known fact that journalists can be lousy communicators. But the success of any chapter lies in its communication with members. In short: communicate fully and frequently. Publish an e-newsletter, set up a Web site from SPJ.org, develop e-mail lists, contribute to newspaper listings, have coffee with members or prospective members. Share ideas, get input and find out how you can best serve those in your area. Use the chapter roster available on the Leaders section of SPJ.org to gauge member involvement. Don't rely exclusively on e-mail. Talk to your members. They want to hear from you.

6 Participate in National Programming

- ▶ Chapters must send at least one delegate to the annual national convention and the regional convention. Aside from voting on the slate of national officers, proposed resolutions and changes to bylaws, the national conference is a chance to meet members from across the country. Share ideas, programming successes and membership challenges; network with fellow journalists; hear from dynamic speakers leading our industry; and improve your professional skills through a number of workshops.
- ▶ Your chapter may also be asked to help judge journalism contests such as the Sigma Delta Chi Awards or those from other regions. This important task not only fulfills SPJ's mission by honoring great journalism; it also gives chapter members an excellent opportunity to expose themselves to top-quality journalism.
- ▶ Much of the Society's work is done at the committee level. Whether you choose to pursue a passion for Freedom of Information, Ethics, International Journalism, Diversity or Freelance, SPJ has many opportunities to engage in this work on the national level. Visit the Committees section on SPJ.org for a complete list of committees.

7 Manage Your Money

- ▶ This may be common sense, but your chapter's financial assets must always exceed its liabilities. If you don't already have one, appoint a board member as treasurer. That person is charged with keeping current records of all your chapter's financial transactions. Have one or two board members as signatories on your chapter's account along with the treasurer. The treasurer also is required to "make prompt and proper report" of the chapter's financial condition upon request of the executive director, regional director or national officer. Penalties for failure to maintain proper financial records are severe.

8 File Annual Report

- ▶ We know you're all busy working at your day jobs, but your responsibility as an officer includes filing a complete, accurate and timely annual report. Your chapter's status is directly linked to your annual report and failure to file could result in ineligibility for national honors and inability to vote at convention. Start your file now so when it comes time to compile in the spring, you'll have the information at your fingertips. Templates will be sent to all chapter leaders with regular reminders to keep track of programming, membership activities and financial status. The report need not be long, but must include a one-page financial statement signed by the chapter treasurer and three other board members, chapter leadership roster and a good accounting of your chapter's activities for the year. Submission of supporting documentation is at the discretion of each chapter.



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