



SPJ Communities

A Guide for Community Leaders

Below are some ideas and tips for helping ensure [SPJ Communities](#) are active and successful. For more information or questions, contact SPJ headquarters staff at 317-927-8000 or email Associate Executive Director Tara Puckey, tpuckey@spj.org.

- 1. Communicate with everyone, not just your members.** Share information about what the community is doing on Twitter, Facebook and other social networks. Encourage people to join by sharing the link. **Note:** If you have not done so already, please share login information with HQ. That way as community leaders change, HQ can share it with new leaders and duplicate social media pages will be avoided.
- 2. Communicate with members.** Submit information for [Leads](#), SPJ's weekly email newsletter, which is sent to members every Wednesday. Submit a short blurb (one or two paragraphs) promoting upcoming Twitter chats, Google Hangouts, or other events and activities. Send to the communications coordinator at HQ, or Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer, jroyer@spj.org.
- 3. Think about creating member perks.** There should be advantages to being a part of the community. Special newsletters (think monthly or quarterly) are a great way to share information and start the conversation on community topics or ideas.
- 4. Ask for your roster so you know who your members are.** Contact Membership Coordinator Chrystal Parvin, cparvin@spj.org, for a roster of your current community members. Do you have a mailing list of non-SPJ members who are interested? Send them different information and encourage them to join the Society.

5. **Host webinars and other training events digitally.** Since your members are spread around the country and world, getting together via Google Hangouts or Zoom calls are the best ways to conduct training sessions. Think of topics that relate to your community and invite an expert to join the conversation.
6. **Create helpful documents.** The Freelance Community created its [Freelance Guide](#) – a complete toolkit for being more successful as a freelancer. Think short documents – top 10 lists – and longer documents, like the guide.
7. **Keep Community blogs fresh and interesting.** Most of the communities have a blog on the [SPJ Blogs Network](#). Keep blogs fresh and interesting by writing about current events, training opportunities, new helpful resources, etc. It's up to you whether one person or a couple of people write for your community's blog. A new post at least once a month is important, to show readers that the blog is active and current. For a login, contact Web Administrator Billy O'Keefe, billyok@mac.com.
8. **Filling community positions that are not filled through elections.** Elections are conducted with the help of HQ each year. We'll work with you on candidates and the election software. To prepare, continue encouraging interested community members and project leaders to pursue leadership positions within the community. If an open position is not filled through elections, the community leaders can appoint someone to fill the rest of the term until the next election cycle. Have bigger things in the work that need some specific leaders? Ask volunteers to serve as project leaders to help guide and facilitate larger-scale projects within the community.
9. **Funding for events.** Most everything communities do – training, chats, etc. – is virtual and can be done for free, so funds are not usually needed. Questions can be directed to Associate Executive Director Tara Puckey, tpuckey@spj.org.
10. **Participate in Excellence in Journalism Conference.** [Excellence in Journalism](#) is the one place each year where more than 1,000 SPJ members get together to discuss all things journalism. Consider ways to spread the word about communities there, whether it be an information table (just make sure it is sufficiently staffed), submitting a proposal for a session, or hosting an informal community gathering. If you want to network, brainstorm ideas with other SPJ members,