



DECEMBER 2016 MARKETING SUPPORT SYSTEM TRAINING VFW DEPARTMENT OF PACIFIC AREAS

As stated in the Marketing Support System Executive Summary, the system provides a comprehensive approach, and associated membership materials, to support the Department-wide recruiting effort by increasing the visibility of services to veterans and our communities provided by the VFW Department of Pacific Areas and our Districts and Posts. Increasing the visibility of our Posts and services provided will ultimately result in increased VFW membership and garner greater acceptance within our communities.

This system approach is broken down into the below categories. Listed with categories are some general descriptions and recommendations. The recommendations are by no means all-inclusive.

- Demographic realities and locating those eligible for VFW membership.
 - Districts having large active duty and contractor presence have a younger and more easily identified and reached population. They may be more technologically advanced, but may have time limitations due to conflicting responsibilities. Membership in other districts may be more likely to be retired or transient.
 - Utilize all available resources to locate eligible members to include word of mouth with current members and other local like organizations (e.g. RAO), networking, print and electronic media, base bulletin boards, etc.
- Improving physical, internet and conventional media visibility.
 - Advertise in local magazines or classifieds, write articles for popular local websites and expat blogs (e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/UsMilitaryRetiredInThePhilippines>).
 - Promote to younger eligible active duty members. This includes providing new members with a Welcome Aboard Letter, Certificate of Membership, Service Certificate Desert Storm and Shield, etc. that they can display for others to see.
- Key role of Life and Legacy memberships / Transitioning annual members.
 - Every attempt must be made to bring new members on as Life members and convert Annual to Life members in order to save a tremendous amount of time and effort in locating, convincing and processing annual renewals. Upgrading Life members to Legacy members will bring in an annual revenue to the Post.
 - Avenues to increase Life memberships include advertise the installment plan, fully utilize National VFW funding that pays for indigent veteran's memberships, be creative in using the DPA membership funds, Posts hold events (e.g. raffles, donations, dinners, etc.) to generate funds to upgrade memberships from Annual to Life to Legacy.
- Managing and leveraging limited recruiting and membership funds.
 - Maximize use of Military Assistance Grant (MAP) events such as BBQs for specific unit(s) or visiting forces.
 - Cost free methods include putting up posters where allowed, setting up booths at PX / NEX and reserve centers, fun run / walks for active duty members, etc.
- Tailoring VFW National recruiting tools for local use.
 - Develop a Post VFW Fact Sheet based on the National Fact Sheet, use National VFW marketing brochures and training that are provided free of charge.
- Effectively communicating membership benefits and services to a wide audience.
 - Methods include posting your Post VFW Fact Sheet and National VFW marketing information at your local NEX / PX, base gym, on your website and / or Facebook page, display at your booth during recruiting events, send out as email attachments for

fundraising events to other organizations / companies and letters to Senior Enlisted Advisors when you market your Post, make available at your Post when you host active duty commands, etc.

- Designing websites and Facebook pages to highlight recruiting and membership issues.
 - The goals of this area are to a) increase the number of "hits" on individual VFW Posts websites by participating in online social media, forums and publishing articles on various websites that are geared towards veterans, and b) once a potential member goes to a Post website the membership information and services provided should be easily available by being front and center.
 - Posts need to ensure they keep the information on their websites and Facebook pages up to date! There is nothing more frustrating for a person visiting your website / Facebook page to find outdated events, incorrect phone number(s), etc.
- Utilizing social media effectively and linking to existing systems.
 - At least once a week upload an article to your website / Facebook page or post a tweet.
 - Set up a Twitter account, link Twitter tweets to your Facebook page and vice versa, use hashtags (e.g. #VFWPostPride, #VFWPost2485, etc.) liberally.
- Recognizing and capitalizing on internal and external networking opportunities.
 - Word of mouth with individuals in your local area as well as stateside, fundraising letters that advertise your Post's work, support other organizations (e.g. RAO).
- Integrating recruiting into Post events and activities.
 - Set up a booth at PSO assistance, VA Outreach and community service events, provide Appreciation Plaques / Banners for organizations sponsoring your fundraising events so the Post is advertised at their facility.
- Soliciting and utilizing member feedback.
 - Develop an annual questionnaire for all members and a welcome aboard questionnaire for new members to see what they like and don't like about the Post, what programs they would like to see developed, what areas they would like to volunteer for, etc.

There are numerous resource venues that are available to each Post to tailor their marketing and recruiting program. Some of them are:

- The National VFW website and new phone / tablet app provides a wide range of marketing and recruiting assistance to all VFW members. This includes training (videos, webinars, guides, tips) and ready-made documents and brochures. This information can be obtained by logging on to the National VFW website or app, go to the "Member Resources" header and click the link "VFW Training & Support". The two best areas for marketing and recruiting are "Veterans & Military Support" and "Membership, Recruiting & Retention". The Veterans & Military Support area provides very good information that target current active duty members.
- Previous DPA Marketing articles and support documents that have been published in the Typhoon are posted on the DPA's website under the "Marketing" link.
- Conduct a Google search on sites where you believe you can reach new members. This includes searching for popular Facebook pages and blogs where you can market your Post.
 - For the demographic that has a pool of active duty personnel as potential members, Google "Why join VFW" or like phrases to see the concerns of current active duty members on joining. It is very eye opening.
- Go to Twitter and like social media venues to find out how to set up accounts and link, for example, Twitter and your Post's Facebook account (procedures are provided in the Marketing section of the DPA website).

As mentioned in Typhoon articles, this Marketing Support System will not succeed without individual Post inputs. You are encouraged to discuss these recommendations at your Post meetings and provide inputs on marketing strategies where your Post has found success. We also want to know what areas of marketing that you want to see discussed in the Typhoon articles.