

Building a Phone Tree

A phone tree is a prearranged, pyramid-shaped system for activating a group of people by telephone to spread a brief message quickly and efficiently to a large number of people.

Affiliate presidents and officers create the skeleton of the phone tree,

ADVANTAGES

- ◇ Expeditious method of notifying members
- ◇ Spreads the work load out among members.
- ◇ Saves printing and postage costs involved with communicating brief notices by mail
- ◇ Enhances relationships among members by audible, meaningful conversations
- ◇ Social interactions for those who live alone

ACTION CHECKLIST

- ◇ Create a list of all affiliate members and preferred phone numbers—home? Cell?
- ◇ From that list, create a smaller “Key Group” of people who will be responsible for calling and activating other members. It is recommended that the Key Group be committee chairpersons.
- ◇ Divide the people on your list among the members of the Key Group. Try to limit calls to five per participant so that calling won’t become too burdensome.
- ◇ Make a chart of Key Group members and their assignments and distribute it to the Key Group.
- ◇ Key Group members must notify presidents when they are out of town or will otherwise be unavailable. Arrange for alternate folks to fill in their positions.
- ◇ Conduct message drills occasionally to test your phone tree for effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- ◇ Remind ALL participants the importance of completing all their assigned calls.

OPERATION OF THE TREE

Affiliate presidents must

- ◇ Start the tree and write a brief script with specific details of the message.
- ◇ Call the Key Group using the script to be sure they understand the message and the timeframe in which it must be conveyed.
- ◇ Members must keep trying each person on their list until they make contact. If a member of the phone tree cannot be reached, the caller should move to the next member so that the tree doesn’t stall. If a member is not reachable, notify the president so that a note could be sent in the mail.
- ◇ Spot-check the tree’s effectiveness by calling a few people down on the list to be sure they have received an accurate and complete message.
- ◇ Prearrange with folks down the list to contact you once they have received the message.