



AAZK Chapter Handbook: Section 7: Communication



The goal of this resource is to act as a guideline that completely and systematically answers common chapter questions with the understanding that all chapters are run differently. This information may serve as a companion, but not as an alternative, to the AAZK National Operations Manual.

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How to Contact AAZK National?

- For General AAZK or Chapter inquiries, email Ed Hansen, AAZK CEO/CFO. Ed.Hansen@aazk.org
 - Contacting Board members and Committee or Program leaders can be done by logging into the member section of the website to obtain the corresponding email addresses.
 - For Board Members, click on Board of Directors and Staff under the “Contact” Tab and the email addresses for Board members are listed on the page.
 - For Committee and Program Leaders, click on the committee you’re interested in under the “Committees & Programs” Tab and the email addresses for committee leadership are listed at the bottom of the page.
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How do Chapters Communicate?

Chapter Leadership Communication

- Communication amongst the chapter’s officers can be in the form of email, text message, as well as social media message chains in order to create a conversation thread.
 - Whatever form of communication leadership chooses, make sure it works for all members of chapter leadership.
 - Creating a system of communication that has a paper trail can be helpful to refer to later and to record conversations.
- Officer meeting notes that can be accessed after the meeting can be helpful.
 - Make minutes accessible via email, Google Drive, or Dropbox.

Communication with Membership

- Email is usually the best option to communicate with all chapter members at once.
 - Make sure chapter email lists are regularly updated so new members don’t get left out.
 - Place meeting reminders in interns’ mailboxes to encourage them to come to monthly meetings.
- Keep detailed meeting notes that can be accessed by all members.
 - Make minutes accessible via email, Google Drive, or Dropbox.
 - Members can be given access to view documents but not edit.
- Events and reminders on social media accounts can also be useful when communicating with members who follow the chapter’s pages.
- Creating a chapter social media page is a great way to spread chapter news and events to members
 - Have both a public and private group.
 - The private group is for members only.
 - The public group shares information about various events for the chapter.

Communicating Historical Chapter Knowledge

- Keep track of all the chapter information that will need to be known by future members or officers.
 - Passing along this information will help the chapter to operate smoothly and continue to grow.
- Keep updated digital copies of all chapter bylaws, finances, and other business.
 - Make these documents available to future officers via a usb jump drive, Google docs, or Dropbox.
- Keep track of information for each chapter fundraiser.
 - This will provide a good reference for what worked and what didn't from year to year.
- Include businesses contacted, pros/cons of the events, volunteers required, planning and event timelines, and event coordinator information.
 - Fundraiser break down meetings (after the event) can provide vital information for these types of documents.

Communicating with Host Facilities

- Meet with your curator/manager to explain the goals of the chapter.
 - This meeting is a professional courtesy to your facility, it creates a professional image.
 - Inform hosts about AAZK Institutional memberships.
- Designate a facility liaison, someone who will be responsible for communicating information between the chapter and the host institution.
- Explain how chapter goals may be beneficial to the facility.
 - A chapter can help the institution's staff by providing professional development opportunities, which ultimately helps the institution and the animals in their care.
 - A chapter can help expand on the host institution's mission with additional conservation fundraisers and education.
 - A chapter can provide volunteers for larger institutional events, and in return a portion of generated funds can support the chapter.
- Explain what the chapter might need from the institution.
 - Meeting space, advertising on grounds, animal art sales, storage space, etc.
- When communicating to host facility staff or volunteers about AAZK Chapter's meetings or events it is essential to gain permission from that institution to do so.
- All staff emails or in-house newsletters can often help spread the word about meetings, updates, and events.
 - Send a quarterly newsletter to facility all staff as opposed to repetitive all staff emails.
 - Newsletters and annual presentations at staff meetings can be a strong tool for communicating successes to a host facility.
 - At facility staff meetings have a chapter representative give a short summary of current chapter activities.
- Volunteers from host institutions can be an asset to an event.
 - Docents can provide additional help at events and provide a different perspective.
 - Docents can help attract new attendees that may be outside of the established chapter membership crowd.

Communication within the Community

- Websites and social media can allow for easy updates and communication with those outside of your facility.
- Sign-up sheets at events for email mailing lists can help your chapter keep attendees in-the-loop of all chapter events.
- Check for institutional support to post flyers, posters, or other advertisements at your front gate or in your member newsletters and magazines.
- Check with your local community for free sources to promote your event.
 - Some cities have local papers that are printed weekly to advertise events in their area. Check these resources for cost and how far in advance things need to be submitted.
 - Local radio shows will have time slots for local nonprofits to promote events.

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