

First Vice Commander

In the majority of posts, a first and second vice commander are elected, with membership the primary concern of the first vice commander.

Frequently, the success or failure of the membership record during his or her year determines the chances of advancing to the office of commander the next year. In a few posts, one or two membership go-getters will secure the majority of dues, but the possibility of death, illness or a change of residence makes for a weak foundation on which a vice commander and the post are staking the post's future. While each post is different, any membership campaign should cover certain fundamentals. Look at the methods used in the past. Were they successful? Do they need updated? Have new procedures been developed to improve the plans now being used?

In a successful post, a new commander is going to contact the post officers and committee chairs immediately after election to schedule a meeting where they can lay out a general plan of operation for the entire year. This is when the membership plan should also be decided.

The four W's of planning

WHERE – Where do you want to go? What's the objective? (Or, for a membership campaign, how many members do you want?)

WHAT – What steps have to be taken to reach the objective?

WHO – Who's going to do what has to be done in each step necessary to reach the goal?

WHEN – When is the work going to be done?

Only you and the members of your post know where you want to go, or how many members you want. But the steps to get there are much the same in every post. If you can answer the following questions for your post and for your membership campaign, you have your job analyzed and know what steps to take to reach your goal:

1. Mailed dues notices will bring in about 85 percent of your current members' renewals. Who is going to contact those who do not respond?
2. How are dropouts to be reinstated?
3. How are you going to contact prospective members? Who's going to contact them? How will new recruits be brought into the post?
4. What publicity will be needed?
5. Who can be counted on to work at membership?
6. What awards or special recognition will be given?
7. What special events can be tied in with membership, such as Veterans Day, team competition, contests with other posts, the Legion birthday, etc.?

Other duties

Membership may be the primary assignment of a first vice commander, but during a normal Legion year, the first vice commander will have many other duties. He or she should become familiar with the ceremonial protocol for regular meetings. He or she will most likely have to conduct one or more meetings during the year.

Knowing how to prepare a meaningful and fruitful agenda is very important, as well as good experience.
The
vice commander must be ready to fill in for the commander at a moment's notice