

PSA LINK

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PSA SHOP STEWARD NEWSLETTER

ONLINE organising: Guidelines

The COVID-19 pandemic is dictating a move towards conducting business online. The key practices that are central for the success of online organising include moving traditional activities online, engaging with members and prospective members in online spaces, sharing personal stories, hosting virtual events and building relationships.

Moving traditional organising activities online

Communicate the message to the constituency that these are unprecedented times and familiarise them with online platforms that will be used for meetings, etc. Make members aware that online modes of doing things involve a learning curve for everyone, that not everything tried will work, but the key aspect is learning lessons and to keep pressing. Treat preparation for online communication in the same way as preparing for face-to-face communication. It is important to share information with others - not only about content but also about the form of communication and technology used. Patience and understanding the difficulties that workers experience in adapting to digital communication and meetings are required.

As a first step in online organising, use social media to find out where prospective members work. This can be done by belonging to social media groups related to labour, social issues or the relevant sector. Participate in online conversations to generate leads.

Engaging constituency and prospective members on online spaces

With many people already connecting with like-minded individuals locally and globally through *Facebook* groups, the most effective way for shop stewards to engage prospective members online is to search for already existing social media groups related to labour, community, social issues or the relevant sector.

It is important to target groups with a large membership in the area and province in which one organises. After joining a *Facebook* group, you should regularly engage in conversation on issues raised in the group and provide useful information and practical solutions to gain the confidence and respect of group members. It is important to use profile pictures in which you wear PSA regalia or are in an environment that indicate your association with the PSA. This provides a good opportunity and platform to diplomatically show the ethics and capacity of the PSA to the group before individually engaging group members. You can also periodically share PSA communication that is open to the public and indicates the work that the PSA does (if protocols of these groups are not against such sharing).

Share personal stories

The best way of using social media to motivate people to join the PSA and be active in the Union, is by telling people about your activism and experience in the PSA and what drives you and others to belong to the PSA.

Collect images and videos from friends and colleagues with their personal stories, reflecting the PSA's service excellence. Post these on *Twitter*, *Facebook* and other social media platforms and share on relevant *Facebook* groups. It is strategic that shop stewards tag the PSA when they do this.

It is important to share only constructive, beneficial and motivational information. Refrain from negative and confrontational conversations and avoid sharing unverified information or information that may damage the PSA's reputation.

If you are in doubt, consult with PSA officials to obtain accurate information that you are authorised to share to attract new members.

The PSA's website (www.psa.co.za) also carries a host of useful information.

Building relationships online

It is important to keep regular contact with your constituency and stay in touch with your community through emails and text messages to individuals - even just to thank them for supporting the PSA, sharing useful information or motivating them in these trying times.



The PSA cares

