

Analysis of post operations

President Abraham Lincoln is said to have remarked, "A man's legs need to be long enough to reach the ground." in the same way, a post's membership needs to be large enough to carry on the work of the post. A post's activities cannot exceed what the volunteers can support. Before discussing how big the post should be, consider these questions:

- What does the post do to make a veteran desire membership?
- Does the post have a vision for the future?
- What activities could the post reasonably expect to offer?
- How many members can the post handle?
- is it satisfied with its current membership?
- What kind of post is it what type of post does it want to be?
- What is the reason for the post's existence in your community?

The answers for every post will be different, revealing which posts are capable of membership growth and which must improve and modernize their programs before healthy membership growth can be supported.

in any given post, there is a reliable group of members who do most of the work. Nearly all posts build their programs around this manpower pool. Even so, this percentage of active members does not need to hover at the same mark.

Post Responsibility Audit (PRA)

A post responsibility audit anticipates a post participates, through its members, in meaningful activities within the community where its members reside. The PRA is a helpful way to measure the results of these activities.

The American Legion and its posts have developed programs largely in response to internal and external pressure. These pressures can take many forms: a drop in membership, community acceptance, changing economics, or new generations of veterans returning. These challenges, and others, must be faced by the post. Unfortunately, some posts respond by reacting rather than acting. As individuals, and in our personal lives, we know the value of planning ahead. When people have been active in a post for a long time, "tunnel vision" can occur.

There are no precise standards developed to provide both a qualitative and quantitative post analysis, but one must start somewhere, and the accompanying PRA form can be used as a barometer to help measure a post's effectiveness.

The PRA is not intended to quickly rate your post, although it can be a valuable tool. The primary purpose is to indicate how, by evaluating what the post is doing, you can see if it is fulfilling a useful function, attracting veterans and benefiting the community.

If you honestly evaluate your post, it will indicate where improvement is most needed.

Perhaps the social aspects have been underplayed, although it would be easy to cover all such activities under the fifth item, "Post is a community center," or the eighth item, "is a friendly place to be." if the PRA is used, there may need to be increased emphasis on planned social or recreational programs. in the meantime, do not lose sight of the fundamental question, "is this post doing the things that justify its continued existence in the community and for local veterans?"

A score of 24 usually reflects a post doing a respectable job of hanging onto old members. But it's doubtful many are coming out to meetings, and it's more doubtful it would be attracting members to help the post grow.

Most average posts, with a bit of effort, can become outstanding posts. Better performance equates to greater participation in meetings, programs and activities.



Rating schedule

- 0 - No participation
- 1 - Poor
- 2 - Below average
- 3 - Average
- 4 - Above average
- 5 - Excellent

	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Follows principles of Preamble	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Has good youth programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Members are interested and active	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Is a real asset to the community	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Post is a community center	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Veterans needing help are helped	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Has businesslike operation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Is a friendly place to be	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Is well thought of by the community	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Is well thought of by veterans	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

TOTAL POST SCORE _____

DATE OF AUDIT _____

Overall rating (assessment) from post total

- 0 - 4 Dead
- 5 - 14 Poor
- 15 - 24 Below average
- 25 - 34 Average
- 35 - 44 Above average
- 45 - 50 Excellent



THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF _____

Post _____ # _____ Location _____

Date of visit _____ By _____ Title _____

Name of commander _____ Adjutant _____

Last review of Consolidated Post Report? _____

COMMITTEES

	Committee appointed		Achieved last year's goal		Number of events
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Americanism	___	___	___	___	_____
Membership	___	___	___	___	_____
Children & Youth	___	___	___	___	_____
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	___	___	___	___	_____
Veterans Employment & Education	___	___	___	___	_____
National Security	___	___	___	___	_____
Boys State	___	___	___	___	_____
Legion Baseball	___	___	___	___	_____
Oratorical	___	___	___	___	_____
Other committees	___	___	___	___	_____
Community patriotic observances	___	___	___	___	_____

MEMBERSHIP

Goal _____ To date _____ Last year _____ Renewal rate of membership last year _____

Describe the general conduct of the meeting _____

How could post meetings better attract members to attend? _____

Average attendance at post meetings _____ How often does post meet? _____ Dates _____

How often does the post executive committee meet? _____

Does the post have a five-year strategic plan? _____ When was it last reviewed? _____

In your opinion, what can be done to assist this post? _____

Does post leadership attend district meetings? _____

Does post leadership attend department conferences and conventions? _____

Does post have fundraising plan to ensure post programs remain vibrant? _____

Signed (post officer) _____ Title _____

Signed (department representative) _____ Title _____

Steps to a better post

Many times, new post officers are eager to do a job but lack the background or organization skills to complete their year. The following outline is a proven plan that can help organize a post, useful at all levels:

Step I Obtain post records and get new material from department headquarters to become familiar with the policies and traditions of the post, district, department and National Headquarters.

Step II Call an early meeting of your newly elected officers. invite the outgoing commander and adjutant and other influential Legionnaires to meet with you.

A suggested agenda should include:

a. Budget

1. Old, and possibly new, sources of income
 2. Estimated expenditures
 3. Possible methods of financing selected programs with outside funds
- b. Assignments and outline of duties of elected officers
- c. Discussion of individual programs and committees to determine the following:
1. Qualifications and suggestions for committee chairs and members
 2. Established programs
 3. Possible new programs (use available handbooks and department material as guides)
 4. Program schedule

d. Discussion programs unique to your post

Initiate study of the post and community for new programs, conduct post analysis

Step III Activate committees.

- a. Select a chairperson and members.
- b. Make personal contact with each chair to determine his or her willingness to serve.
- c. Arrange a meeting of committees to formulate a program.
- d. instruct chairmen on programs, available materials, post reports and more.
- e. Build a timetable for each committee to fit into the overall post calendar.

Step IV Coordinate with the post's Auxiliary unit. Many programs depend on Auxiliary support to be successful.

Step V Conduct a post meeting.

- a. The first post meeting tends to set a pattern for the entire year.
- b. Work closely with the adjutant, officers and committee heads.
- c. Run a formal meeting, following the ritual in the Manual of Ceremonies.
- d. Post business should be attended to as briefly as possible.
- e. Know department and national material in advance and report items of interest to the membership.
- f. Committee reports should be brief and to the point.
- g. Consider qualified speakers at some or all meetings for briefings on some phase of Legion programs.
- h. Don't neglect the social side.
- i. Announce the main business of the next meeting.
- j. Have the welcome committee established.

Step VI Conduct a Public Relations Committee meeting.

- a. Discuss ways and means.
- b. Formulate instruction to post officers and committee chairs on standard procedure for keeping the Public Relations chair and editor of your newspaper or bulletin informed.

Step VII Plan for a more informed membership.

- a. include talks at post meetings.
- b. Give everyone a job.
- c. Encourage enrollment and completion of The American Legion Education institute online.
- d. Pass on information.
- e. Publish a monthly post newspaper or bulletin.
- f. Acquaint active members with veteran benefits.

Step VIII Appoint a coordinating committee for patriotic observances.

- a. Work with standing committees, including younger members.
- b. Work with the entire community to recognize local active military personnel and all veterans.
- c. include uniformed groups if available.

Step IX Give proper credit.

- a. Awards and citations

b. Thank-you notes

c. Recognition at meetings

Step X The voice of the Legionnaire and the post is only heard by active participation in meetings, whether district, department or national.

a. Plan election of delegates as part of the post timetable.

b. Attend district, department and national conventions and conferences.

c. Present sound resolutions of concern to The American Legion.

d. Report back to the post.

Step XI Follow standard procedures and schedule all year round. Plan post meetings three months ahead, and social activities six months ahead.

Step XII it is never too early to evaluate possible post officers for next year.