



American Legion Auxiliary Public Relations – Zoom Chat #4 (02/25/26)

This presentation, delivered during Public Relations Zoom Chat #4 (February 25, 2026) by the American Legion Auxiliary – Department of Wisconsin, serves as a strategic roadmap for the entire American Legion Family—including the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and Riders. Its central message is that the Legion Family’s long-standing reputation for service must now be matched with intentional branding, professional public relations, and disciplined relationship-building to remain relevant and visible in today’s communities.

A key component of the session is the emphasis on unity across the Legion Family. While each branch has distinct roles, the presentation stresses that the public sees one organization. Consistent messaging, shared visual identity, and coordinated outreach are presented as essential to building trust, attracting partners, and engaging new generations of members and supporters.

The session is strengthened by special guests from the Sons of the American Legion, who shared practical insights drawn from their own leadership and membership success. SAL leaders discussed how consistent branding, clear identity, and visible purpose have helped build engagement and membership within their organization. Their experiences reinforced the idea that people are more likely to join and stay involved when they understand the mission, see unity across leadership, and recognize a strong, consistent brand at every level.

The presentation also reframes fundraising and sponsorship as business partnerships, requiring clarity, accountability, and mutual benefit. This message is

reinforced through the featured contribution of Julie Deleeuw, an American Legion Auxiliary member and successful small-business owner. Her real-world experience provides a practical lens on what businesses look for when deciding whether to partner with organizations like the Legion Family—and why professionalism, follow-through, and gratitude matter as much as mission.

Overall, the session reinforces that public relations is public education. Every event, partnership, social media post, and community appearance is an opportunity to educate the public about who the American Legion Family is today, what it does, and why its mission continues to matter. Consistency, preparation, and shared responsibility across all branches are presented as non-negotiable for sustaining the Legion Family's future.

PR Team Introduction

- Led by Natalia Genovesi King (Department Chair), with Julie Deleeuw (presenting) and Jenna Smith on the committee, and Bob Shappell as Of Counsel.

Please Send Us YOUR Contact Information (Stay Informed!):

- **Please send us the following:**

Name

District

Unit/Post/Squadron #

**State, if other than WI*

Email Address

Interested in Requesting a Visit?

To request a visit from the Department President, Sue Hembrook, or from any Department Chairperson, please fill out the "Department President/Chairman Visit Request," which may be found at: www.amlegionauxwi.org/forms

Stay Up To Date & Follow Us on Facebook

- **Web Address:** www.facebook.com/groups/aladepartmentofwipr/
- **QR Code for Facebook Page:**



- While you are there, check out our post: **“Seven Days, Seven Ways to Serve & Inspire.”**

Let’s make our stories shine all week long. Each day has its own catchy theme. Pick one, snap a photo, and inspire others to support our veterans and communities.

Have questions or feedback?

Share your thoughts on new topics, valuable takeaways, and how we can keep elevating ALA’s public relations impact. Let’s keep the momentum going and make every member’s engagement opportunity count.

Who This Is For and Why It Matters

This session is intended for Legion Family leaders, officers, and members involved in:

- Public Relations
- Community outreach
- Fundraising
- Membership growth
- Post, Unit, Squadron, and Chapter leadership

Its purpose is to help the Legion Family communicate with one voice, strengthen community trust, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Communication and Engagement Tools

The presentation highlights tools such as coordinated social media efforts and Department-level PR resources. These tools are positioned as shared Legion Family assets, designed to support storytelling, visibility, and consistency across all branches.

*****STARS, STRIPES & SNAPSHOTS*****

Attention, amazing American Legion Auxiliary units — we're on a *photo mission celebrating freedom!*

We're looking for your most patriotic, action-packed snapshots featuring:

- ALA members proudly wearing their ALA branding
- Candid, in-the-moment action shots (less "say cheese," more "serve with ease!")
- Your American Legion Color Guard in all their red, white, and blue glory
- Community events where your unit is making an impact

If it waves, marches, volunteers, salutes, or sparkles with Auxiliary spirit — we want to see it! Email Me at KingGenovesi@gmail.com

BUT WAIT! Before you press "send," please make sure you have permission from everyone pictured so we can proudly share your images. Selected photos may appear on our PR Facebook page, during the Department Convention, and/or in ALA Department materials.

SWOT Analysis – An Honest Look at the Legion Family

The SWOT analysis provides a candid assessment of where the Legion Family stands today.

Strengths

- Trusted, recognizable name with over a century of service
- Strong local presence through posts, units, squadrons, and chapters
- Deep commitment to veterans, youth, and communities
- Wide range of respected programs and advocacy efforts
- Multi-generational participation across the Legion Family

Weaknesses

- Aging membership and leadership gaps
- Inconsistent experiences from one post or unit to another
- Limited or outdated digital communication in some areas
- Fragmented messaging between Legion Family branches
- Heavy reliance on a small number of volunteers

Opportunities

- Increased public support for veteran mental health and transition services
- Strong interest in community service among younger generations
- Expanded use of digital platforms and virtual engagement
- Partnerships with businesses, schools, and nonprofits
- Growth opportunities for Riders and family-based participation

Threats

- Declining or shifting veteran population
- Competition from newer or more tech-savvy organizations
- Economic pressures affecting donations and attendance
- Changing community engagement habits
- Reputational risk if messaging or behavior is inconsistent

This analysis sets the foundation for why unity, branding, and planning are critical.

Leadership and Organizational Strength

Highlighting Sons of the American Legion leadership reinforces the depth of experience, governance, and training within the Legion Family. It underscores that the organization has capable leadership—and that effective PR and branding should reflect that professionalism.

Special Guest Spotlight, Member of the Sons of the American Legion

SAL Detachment Commander Chris Dannenmann

SAL Vice Commander Dave Hodgson (Districts 3,7,8) - davehodgson@charter.net

SAL PR Chair Bob Seidl - chicagofan99@gmail.com

Branding and Membership Growth

SAL leaders shared how:

- Clear identity attracts new members
- Consistent branding builds pride and retention
- Visible leadership and preparation increase credibility
- Success grows when messaging is unified and intentional
- Read the Room, tailor your message to your audience. Think of how you would try to recruit yourself. What would you want to hear/know?
- The SAL highlighted the importance of collaboration within the American Legion family and the use of social media and other tools to enhance visibility and attract new members.

Their success stories reinforced that **branding directly supports membership growth**, not just public image, as well as the importance of being seen in the community and having conversations with people.

Julie Deleeuw – Business Perspective on Branding and Partnerships

<https://www.juliesblueribboncookies.com/jad1270@msn.com>

Julie Deleeuw, an Auxiliary member and business owner, provided real-world insight into:

- How strong brands are built through consistency and reputation
- Why businesses partner with organizations they trust and understand
- The importance of organization, follow-through, and appreciation

Her message emphasized that Legion Family partnerships should feel professional, purposeful, and mutually rewarding.

Business Partnerships Through a Legion Family Lens

Using a business owner's perspective, the presentation explains how partnerships succeed when:

- Expectations are clear
- The organization is unified
- Commitments are honored
- Gratitude is shown consistently

This reinforces the idea that how we operate reflects who we are.

Why Business Partnerships Matter to the Legion Family

Strong business relationships:

- Support veteran and youth programs
- Increase visibility of Legion Family service
- Strengthen community trust
- Provide long-term sustainability
- Give businesses a meaningful way to serve veterans

Partnerships are not transactions—they are extensions of our mission.

What Businesses Expect From the Legion Family

Businesses want to know:

- Is the partnership supported by the Legion Family, not just one person?
- Are roles clear and responsibilities honored?

- Will the event or effort be well-organized and attended?
- Will their support be recognized appropriately?

The message is clear: do not ask unless we are prepared to deliver.

Demonstrating Value and Preventing Donor Fatigue

The presentation stresses:

- Tracking donations and support
- Avoiding repeated requests to the same partners
- Sharing clear impact stories
- Saying “thank you” early and often

Good stewardship reflects respect for our supporters and our mission.

Branding Is Public Education

Branding is described as:

- Consistent messaging
- Repeated visibility
- A clear explanation of who we are and what we do

For the Legion Family, branding ensures the public understands that we are:

- Active
- Relevant
- Service-driven
- Unified

One Legion Family, One Identity

A key message is that collaboration only works when the Legion Family presents:

- A consistent visual identity
- A shared message
- A unified purpose

Strong partners are attracted to strong, organized organizations.

Four Steps to Building Business Relationships

The presentation outlines a practical model tailored to Legion Family posts and units:

1. Identify businesses aligned with veteran and community values
2. Prioritize those already supportive of veterans
3. Create flexible, mission-focused partnership options
4. Maintain relationships through communication, recognition, and record-keeping

Practical PR Tools

Social media content ideas, engagement prompts, and annual PR reporting guidance are provided to help Legion Family members move from strategy to action.

Reporting and Accountability

Annual PR reports are positioned not just as paperwork, but as a way to:

- Document impact
- Demonstrate value
- Strengthen credibility at every level

Final Legion Family Takeaway

This presentation reinforces that the future of the American Legion Family depends on unity, consistency, and professionalism. Our history gives us credibility, but our actions today determine our relevance tomorrow. By telling our story together, honoring our partners, and showing up prepared every time, the Legion Family ensures it remains a trusted, visible, and essential force in our communities.

Fun Holidays for March Social Media

Here's a fun and engaging way to celebrate each of these March holidays on social media:

- MARCH 1 - National Compliment Day – Spread kindness and compliments! Compliment your community and the American Legion Family. #ComplimentDay
- MARCH 2 – DR. SEUSS DAY – Do you have a favorite Dr. Seuss book? Quote? Character? Ask your LLF and audience to recall their favorites. #DrSeussDay
- MARCH 3– National Anthem Day – What was your favorite rendition of the national anthem? Who was the performer? Ask your LLF and Audience. #NationalAnthemDay
- MARCH 8 – International Women's Day - Remember those women who have greatly impacted you. Was it your relative, a teacher? Ask your audience to comment. #internationalwomensday
- MARCH 12 – National Girl Scouts Day – Were you a Girl Scout? Recall a favorite memory or their favorite cookie. #nationalgirlscoutday
- MARCH 21– World Poetry Day – Do you have a favorite poet and poem? Ask your audience to name their favorite poet or poem. #worldpoetryday

Next Zoom Chat – LAST ONE!

- **Date:** April 29, 2026 (Wednesday, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM)

Topics: Cultivating Local Business Relationships & Collaborations, How do Businesses successfully use Branding, S.W.O.T. Analysis

- **Special Guests** from the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Wisconsin American Legion College – Spring 2026 Virtual Training

Open to the Entire Legion Family – American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and Riders.

Your Legion College is offering 22 virtual training opportunities this spring, including two offerings each of the Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Courses. Completion of these three courses earns the Wisconsin American Legion College Graduate pin, proudly worn by many in the Legion Family.

This spring, we especially encourage you to attend the high-value sessions, taught by Bob Shappell, Dean of the Wisconsin American Legion College, and Natalia Genovesi King, American Legion Auxiliary Department PR Chair.

Course Fees

- Basic Course: \$5
- Intermediate & Advanced Courses: \$15 each

All Legion Family members, including those from other Departments, are welcome. You can complete the Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced courses in just three months.

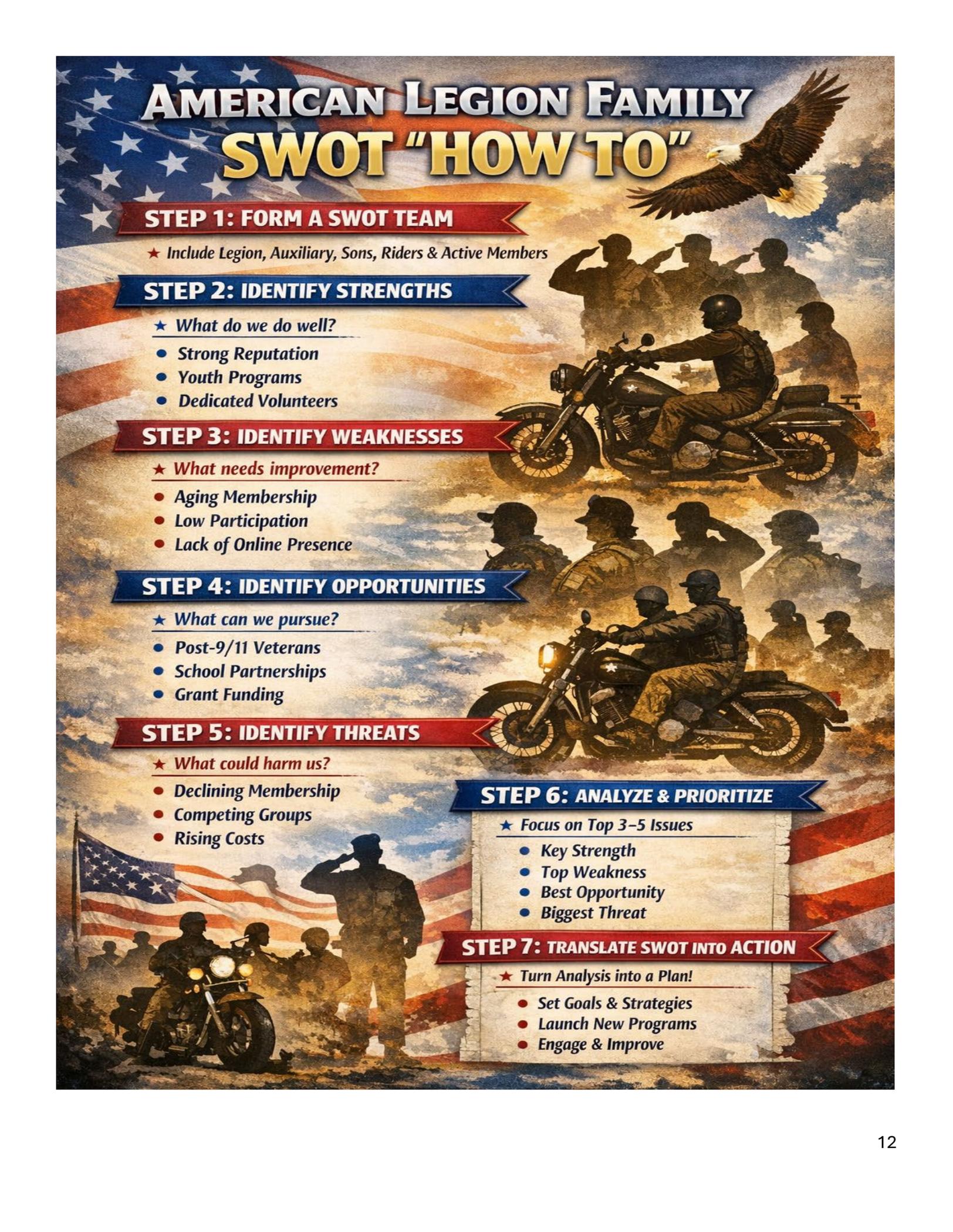
For More Information & To Register:

Sign up online at: www.wilegion.org/legion-college

Questions? Contact the Dean: wilegioncollege@gmail.com | 414-899-4067

This spring, strengthen your Post, Unit, or local Legion Family presence—you don't need seven years, you can earn your Legion College pin in three months!

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY SWOT "HOW TO"



STEP 1: FORM A SWOT TEAM

- ★ *Include Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, Riders & Active Members*

STEP 2: IDENTIFY STRENGTHS

- ★ *What do we do well?*
- Strong Reputation
- Youth Programs
- Dedicated Volunteers

STEP 3: IDENTIFY WEAKNESSES

- ★ *What needs improvement?*
- Aging Membership
- Low Participation
- Lack of Online Presence

STEP 4: IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

- ★ *What can we pursue?*
- Post-9/11 Veterans
- School Partnerships
- Grant Funding

STEP 5: IDENTIFY THREATS

- ★ *What could harm us?*
- Declining Membership
- Competing Groups
- Rising Costs

STEP 6: ANALYZE & PRIORITIZE

- ★ *Focus on Top 3-5 Issues*
- Key Strength
- Top Weakness
- Best Opportunity
- Biggest Threat

STEP 7: TRANSLATE SWOT INTO ACTION

- ★ *Turn Analysis into a Plan!*
- Set Goals & Strategies
- Launch New Programs
- Engage & Improve