



American Legion Auxiliary

How Iowa Got Cool!

Long-standing non-profit associations don't, as a rule, change their identities. They might accentuate a characteristic they already possess, but songs and skits don't stand out as revolutionary.

So how did the American Legion Auxiliary of Iowa pull off the national equivalent of an upset? Through radical cooperation, they rank first in the nation in member satisfaction amongst all 50 states for the American Legion Auxiliary.

Starting in 2014, the Auxiliary embarked on a five-year journey to achieve five goals by 2019. They tapped into the power of tradition, the support of their members, and the passion of their employees and leaders. They harnessed their ambition to jump-start the Auxiliary by promoting an internal culture of goodwill, developing leadership at all levels, strengthening their local units, and raising awareness to build loyalty.

They recognized that the Auxiliary wasn't going to transform itself without a clear long-term vision, so in an almost hyper-Iowan way, they did something almost unheard of. They took it upon themselves and tied together all of their strengths, identified their weaknesses and embarked on multiple initiatives. They took a good hard look at processes, the way things get done and worked together to make it happen, all for the good of the cause. They evaluated the way they communicate, how they helped younger members feel welcomed and as a result, drove their membership to an all-time high!

If all of this can be accomplished in five years, just in time for the Auxiliary's 100 year anniversary, let's see what they will do in the future to serve veterans, active military, and their families.

Early Progress Made in September



Tammy Wright, 2015-2016 Iowa President, takes a picture of the Strategic Planning team during the discussion of a new website design.

Through the leadership of President, Tammy Wright, the Strategic Planning team met five times during the 2015-2016 year. They shared five primary goals at 18 District Conferences, spread the word through social media, and gained the support of its members for the five-year strategic Plan.

During meetings and regular email correspondence, the team created a mentorship program, started a “Voice of our Members” video program (see right), developed the 2016 Mid-Winter Conference agenda, provided input into a website design, opened up the state-level leadership workshop to all members, and many other initiatives.

The team found cool ways to encourage attendance at meetings and conferences. For example, at the 2016 Mid-Winter Conference, team members moderated break-out sessions and participated in an early-morning fair to share how cool they are.

For these Auxiliary members, they tackled their challenges, embraced new ways of doing things, achieved their goals and advanced the mission and vision of the American Legion Auxiliary.

How cool is that!

Voice of our Members

Members know what to do, how to support Veterans, how to volunteer at VA facilities and many other things.

But ‘why’ do they do it?

By continuously telling their story on why they enjoy belonging to the Auxiliary. They told others the reasons why they volunteer their time and give back to their country, in their own way. The videos are located on several social media sites like Facebook (see below) and YouTube. (click [here](#)). For the last five years, they promoted the brand, encouraged membership and drove awareness for why it’s great to belong to this cool organization.

Facebook

Iowa American Legion Auxiliary uses a group page for members to share ideas, ask questions and exchange information. The group page is open to the public, but one must be a member to post on the page. Once a member, this information is shared on an individual’s news feed.

They also created a regular page and pushed out information to non-members. This proved to be a cool way to raise brand awareness to others about the cool things the Auxiliary does!