

NAMC Listserv Guidelines

October 2006

The NAMC listserv is an electronic discussion list for members of the Nonprofit Alliance of Monterey County. It is intended to provide a medium for rapid exchange of information, assistance, debate, and discussion of professional issues among NAMC members.

The NAMC listserv is not for questions from the general public, outside advertisements, market research, or other uses that are not of general use and benefit to the group and its members.

Guidelines for Messages:

1. Only subscribed users can post messages. Messages sent from non-subscribers are automatically rejected. Messages from subscribed members must be sent from the e-mail address known by the list software, or they cannot be accepted.

2. Postings must be kept within the scope of the list. The NAMC listserv is for matters of professional interest to the staff and volunteer leaders of organizations within the nonprofit industry of Monterey County. Please do not post humorous, inspirational, and out-of-scope messages. Keep in mind that your message will be sent to busy individuals who look to the NAMC listserv for content of specific interest.

3. Post only public messages. Just as it is important to try to share public information with the whole group, private correspondence should remain just that, private. Send personal messages directly to individuals by entering the individual's address in the "to" field. When you want to respond directly to the sender of a message from the NAMC listserv, just use the "reply" feature of your e-mail system. To reply to the entire group, use the "reply all" feature.

NAMC members are often interested in others' queries and appreciate reading answers to most questions, but if you are soliciting multiple replies, such as in a survey or publication offering, make sure you should ask for individual replies to your address. For some types of reference questions you might want to solicit individual responses, but offer to summarize the responses for the whole list. This technique allows the information to be shared with the whole list, but in a summary form rather than in bits and pieces.

4. Use descriptive subject lines. Always use a clear and informative subject line. The more descriptive you are, the more likely people will read and respond to your posting. When replying, amend the subject line to indicate the type of reply. Here are samples of subject lines and replies:

Subject: Need 2003 JP Article on Consulting
Reply: Re: Need 2003 JP Article on Consulting – Found

Subject: How Do I Get Listed in the Herald?
Reply: Re: How Do I Get Listed in the Herald? – My Thoughts

Subject: We're Planning a Health Fair
Reply: Re: We're Planning a Health Fair – I Can Help

Please do not use generic subject lines such as "Help," "Need help," "Please help," "Need Info," "Request." When you respond to a posting, check the subject line to make sure it still reflects the topic at hand. If needed, retype an appropriate subject line.

When you wish to initiate a new discussion or request, do not use the "reply" feature of your e-mail program. Instead, start a new message with an appropriate subject line.

5. Include a signature. Sign your full name at the bottom of your posting and include your affiliation, mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail address. Some subscribers receive e-mail messages with the header information stripped away by their local e-mail system and therefore cannot know the author of a particular posting unless it is included in the message text. Make it easy for people to contact you.

6. Provide context. Every posting should begin with a clear, concise introduction to the topic, or make some kind of reference to the topic of a previous posting. There are often several "threads" of discussion going on simultaneously, which makes unreferenced postings confusing to readers.

A popular way of providing context is to quote verbatim from the original message. Please keep the quotations short and relevant. Cut out unnecessary text and repetitive signature information from previous senders. Finally, please proofread your messages before sending to make sure they are complete and say what you meant to say.

7. You may forward messages. Messages may be forwarded from other lists if relevant to NAMC members and if permitted by the original sender. Please edit out extraneous lines, but leave enough information to identify the original source. Messages from the NAMC list may be forwarded to others but crediting the original sender or NAMC is appreciated. Use caution when forwarding NAMC messages to non-members. Remember that they will not be able to reply directly to the list.

8. Please limit "thank you" and "me too" messages. Send individual "thank you's" privately; if you've received the information needed, it's courteous to send a "halt" message to the list to stop others from continuing to respond to a request (the person who provides the answer may also indicate that to the list). Other examples of messages that should be sent privately are: requests for copies of offered materials, and "me too" messages (as in, "send me a copy of that, too"), survey responses, and very specific replies to questions that are not likely to be of general interest.

9. Please limit humor. Humor is appreciated, but please remember that humor in e-mail can easily be misinterpreted. Don't forward the many humorous e-mails that circulate on the Internet to NAMC members. Our list is intended primarily for professional use.

10. Censor your own messages. The NAMC listserv is not moderated. That means that messages that members post go directly to all the other members. In order to keep the list useful, it is important that only pertinent messages are posted to the list. If a member consistently posts inappropriate messages, his or her subscription to the list may be terminated.

11. Keep the quality of communication high. Debate about professional matters is welcome on the NAMC listserv. If you disagree with something posted on the list, you have every right to voice your objections, politely. You may also express any complaints directly to the person responsible, not on the list.

12. Use advertisements and announcements wisely. The NAMC listserv does not accept advertisements or product announcements from outside sources or commercial entities. However, some members of NAMC work in organizations that produce materials or events. Occasional announcements from a member's organization are appropriate when they are related to the interests of the membership. Try to keep these brief. Questions and discussion initiated by NAMC members about products or services are appropriate. This provides a forum for help and recommendations among colleagues on the list. Announcements of available jobs in the nonprofit industry are welcome.

13. **Don't worry about mistakes.** Everyone makes them. Perfect people are not allowed to subscribe to NAMC listserv. If you send a message to the list by mistake, you do not need to send an apology to the whole list unless the message might be truly offensive or personal. Assume that your colleagues will delete the unintended message and overlook your error.

14. **Here are some other posting considerations.** Do not send long documents directly to the list. Describe the document and give instructions for retrieving it, or offer to send it to those interested. Try to keep postings as brief as possible. If you have a web site, consider making long documents available for downloading from the web.

Avoid sending encoded messages and documents to the list. Use plain text, not rich text or html text. This limits the size of your document and makes it easy to read by all.

Avoid (or explain) jargon, abbreviations or colloquial language that may be unknown to all.

Refrain from sending unsubstantiated virus warnings, unless you are confident of their authenticity. Many virus warnings are actually hoaxes.