The 2012-2013 Team Mazkirim and M'GOSK Movement's

Guide to Counterpart Communication

From emails to hangouts, releases to Google documents, it's no question that as a Regional or Council leader, you have a LOT to do when it comes to counterpart work. This document is your home for ideas, tips, and advice on how to make this the smoothest when it comes to counterpart communication!

General Pointers

- → Be friends with them! You have to maintain a positive relationship with all of them for either a half or full year, and the easiest way for that to happen is by remaining approachable. Professionalism is important, but it's important to make yourself as accessible as a peer
 - **Example:** Posting fun/random YouTube videos on your Facebook group; going out with your counterparts for fro-yo, etc.
- → Counterpart success = your success. Your job is to make sure that communication and/or fundraising and/or globalization is top-notch, which ultimately means that chapters have to be successful in these areas too. Your counterparts are your biggest liaisons to ensuring excellency on the chapter level. Be sure to stay in the loop on what your counterparts are up to, and always remember to celebrate their successes.

Emails

- → Emails should occur consistently and routinely. That is, often enough to touch base with them and on a routine schedule. Suggested routine is weekly, or biweekly. Emails serve two purposes: **sharing information and training**. They can also include regular segments, like "Slang Word of the Week," personal shout-outs to counterparts, or a link to a cool social media site.
- → Opening—let your counterparts know what you've been up to, BBYO or otherwise. Don't just dive into content, ease them into it and make the transition smooth.
- → Information—You should be providing your counterparts with updates and information such as:
 - ✓ "Old Business"—past regional/council events, chapter successes

- ✓ "New Business"—upcoming regional/council events, as well as new
 initiatives that you want to share (as detailed as it would be in a general
 email; it should model how they will subsequently pass along the
 information)
- ✓ International News—you will be receiving what to include in your emails from us in your own informational counterpart emails, biweekly. Please be sure to pass down this information and involve your chapter counterparts in the exciting things we are doing internationally!
- ✓ Shout-outs—what your counterparts have been up to. Share how a chapter raised \$400 at their last bakesale. Share how a chapter ran a globalization program last weekend. This will publicly praise a counterpart, while motivating the others to follow suit and do work worth recognizing.
- → Training—In every email you should be imparting **wisdom and tips** to help your counterparts be better at their respective position. This can be in the form of a release (see Release section), or just in the body of the email. If you are regularly in communication with your counterparts, you should be able to gauge where they are and **customize this training component to where they need extra help**. It can be helpful to include a section at the bottom where you ask what topics they want you to focus on for next week's email!
- → Ending the email—If you ask questions or bring up items you need feedback on, be sure to **reiterate in a simple list** at the end of the email, explicitly telling them what you need to hear. Additionally, provide a **deadline** for when you need the response by.
 - You may want your responses in a Google Form or Document. If so, provide the proper link for them to complete the questions.
- → Signature—by this point, hopefully you have **an email signature** that has your name, position, and contact information. These can be fun and include quotes, so get creative!
- → Style! Be conscientious, whether Aleph or BBG, of how your emails are formatted and presented.

Things to consider:

- ✓ readable and few font colors
- ✓ consistent font choice
- ✓ proper spelling, capitalization, and grammar
- ✓ bolding to call attention to important sections
- ✓ spaced out paragraphs to ease reading
- → Emails should <u>ALWAYS</u> be proof-read by at least one other person, most commonly, your Regional/Council N'siah or Godol. Speak with your Godol/N'siah about protocol for counterpart emails.

- → Who to send them to:
 - ✓ Your counterparts, obviously! Depending on the amount of counterparts, you may choose to "bcc" (blind carbon copy), which does not show the "bcc-ed" recipients
 - ✓ Your Godol/N'siah, "cc-ed" (carbon copy), which shows that the email
 was not targeted at them, but you still wanted to share the email
 - ✓ Your International Counterpart—Nick or Michaela, "cc-ed"! We want to know what's going on in your region or council and this is the easiest way of us finding out. We'll also let you know if there's anything we'd like you to improve on for future emails
 - ✓ Your **co**! You're a team, so keep them in the loop, too.
 - ✓ You may be asked to send your email to your Regional/Council director, your regional board, or another person involved in your region or council. Check with your N'siah or Godol for their expectations.

Releases

- → Releases (like this one!) are an opportunity to **go in-depth on a particular component of a position**. They are helpful, because unlike an email, your counterpart can pull up the Word Doc or PDF and use it as a guide throughout their term.
- → Gauge your counterparts! Get a sense for what they need and ask them if they want a specific release. For example, Regional M'GOSKs asked Michaela to make a release on chapter communication. And here it is!
- → Don't reinvent the wheel—dozens of releases are already out there, floating in people's computers, so ask in your Regional/Council Counterpart Facebook Group if someone has made a release on a topic that you're looking for. By networking with one another, we're saving loads of time and energy that can be spent making something new.
 - Ask Michaela or Nick if you need extra help finding one!
- → Make sure you get your releases proof-read by your N'siah or Godol (and us, too, if you would like!). Nothing is more embarrassing than a huge spelling mistake on a release!
- → Be creative! Theme them, use fun fonts, OR, better yet, brand them!
- → Make sure Michaela or Nick receives the final copy. Additionally, upload the file to your Regional/Council Counterpart Facebook Group!

Phone Calls

→ Phone calls are a personal way to connect with your counterparts. Try to touch base with your counterparts via phone at least once a month. This ensures that

- you know what's going on with them and that you are there to assist in any issues they may have.
- → Use your regular counterpart emails to schedule calls. Try websites like Doodle, an online scheduling website, if you have a lot of counterparts.
- → Have an intended purpose with each call—have questions in mind that you want to cover on the call, but of course, leave time for open discussion.
- → **Take notes on the call**! This will allow you to check-in with your counterpart on any goals that you set while on the call. Additionally, if there are any issues you need to explore further, taking notes will allow a reference point as you help them solve their problem.
- → Use additional calls as seen fit. Haven't heard from a counterpart in two weeks? Call them up and get on the same page as them. A phone call goes so much farther than a Facebook message or text, so take initiative and pick up the phone!
- → Apply video chatting wherever possible! If both of you are at a computer, why not have some face-to-face contact, as well. These are ultimately more personal and just as effective.

Facebook

→ First things first, if you do not have a counterpart Facebook group, make one! This is a great spot to send a reminder of a deadline or just pass along a link (like registering for Voice Your Vote!).

The possibilities of Facebook groups:

- ✓ Sharing videos—both promotional and fun
- ✓ Uploading a training video
- ✓ Open forum for counterpart questions
- ✓ Reminder of important deadlines (ex. Have you responded to my email yet?)
- ✓ Including your N'siah/Godol, co, and International counterpart, so they can see what's going on over Facebook
- → Facebook message—love it or hate it, Facebook message *can* be useful in some capacities. These include: friendly, non-business communication with your counterparts, casual reminders of deadlines or scheduling a call...and that's about it! Facebook should **never replace email or calls**. It's harder to stay organized and less professional.

Twitter

→ Twitter can be a fun way to remind your counterparts about anything they should be doing. Just keep in mind, all of your followers will see the tweet too!

- → Have a special hashtag for your counterparts and don't forget to use #TeamMazkirim and #MGOSKMovement!
- → Give special shout-outs and RT about any great work your counterparts are doing!

Meetings and Hangouts

- → Meetings and hangouts are the most effective way to train and bond with your counterparts. Hopefully at the beginning of your term, you had an opportunity to sit down with your counterparts and discuss expectations for their work for the year.
 - Helpful hint: when creating expectations, have them initially set them (of course, feel free to encourage some key points), so that if they ever don't live up to them, they can't disagree with their short-comings.
- → If geography allows it, **continue to meet in person** with your counterparts as often as time permits. This can let them brainstorm with one another, share their frustrations and problem solve with one another.
- → Don't forget to have fun! Whether it's a sleepover or just lunch, the more you bond as a group, the easier it will be to work the rest of the term.

Advice

Help! My counterparts aren't responsive to my emails!

- → You're not alone! That is a universal problem for any council, regional, or even international leader. Especially as a Mazkir(ah), Gizbor(it), etc., your counterparts are generally younger and haven't gotten used to the "BBYO leader norms," such as checking email daily, etc. Be patient, but also help them learn the ropes.
- → Have a set deadline for when they should respond. Whether it's 24 or 48 hours, make sure the deadline is clear and explicitly stated multiples times throughout the email.
- → Are your emails interactive? Are they asking questions? Are you relating the information that you're passing along to them, personally? Ask these questions as you compose your email.
- → Experiment with the format. See what they are most responsive too, and channel that style more often.
- → Be explicit. "Thanks to Michaela and Nick who responded to the last email!" will make others realize that they weren't doing their job. Also, use dates and times instead of "ASAP" or "within the week"

→ Maybe emails don't work. Reach out to your counterpart via a different method of communication. Work out something between the two of you so that both of you are receiving what you need. We're not saying skip the email, but you will have to identify those specific counterparts who may need a continual push throughout the term. Don't neglect them. Foster them and help them along their leadership journey.

Help! I don't know how to tell my counterpart that they aren't doing a good job!

- → In email: the (pardon our language) "crap sandwich" is golden.
 - ✓ Something nice. "Hey Michaela, great job on your email! I can tell you worked hard on it!"
 - ✓ The feedback ("crap"). "Next time, try **bolding** important parts of the email so people don't skim over it! Also pick a darker font so it is easier to read."
 - ✓ End on a good note. "I loved reading through this and I can't wait to read the next one!"
 - ✓ Voila! Your sandwich has been made.
- → If the problem is more serious: **set up a call!** Approach them saying that you wanted to go over some of the work that they've been doing so far and that you want to brainstorm ideas to improve it even further. **This can be applied if the quality of the work is poor, or if they're simply not doing their job.**
- → If it's even more serious (ex. you haven't heard from them in over a month), talk to their chapter N'siah/Godol or your Regional/Council N'siah/Godol about finding out what's up. There's a large chance that you're not the only one experiencing these difficulties, and the problem may need to be addressed by someone who can deliver more consequences.

Help! My best friend is my counterpart and I don't know how to get her to do her job well!

- → This is one of the hardest things you may experience as a leader in BBYO. Working with friends can be one of the most fun, but also, most difficult aspects of being "in charge."
- → Establish "friend time" and "BBYO time." *Don't* ride on your friend about responding to your email while you're grabbing Chipotle for dinner. Especially if they're not being responsive, they probably aren't the type of friend who wants to talk BBYO 24/7, and **you need to respect that**. At the same token, when you are in a "BBYO business" conversation, explain to them that watching Gangnam Style on YouTube for the four teenth time **will have to wait until you discuss implementing a phone tree in the chapter.**

- → If they're really your friend, they should not want to let you down. Help them see it that way—that them doing a good job on board is not only important to their chapter, but something you also feel very strongly about.
- → If problems continue, allow your N'siah or Godol, staff member, etc. help resolve any serious issues that cannot be fixed between you too.

Have another counterpart problem? Email Michaela or Nick and they'll answer it in the next counterpart email

Well, ladies and gents,

It's been fun. Continue to use this guide throughout your term and pass it along to anyone else who could use the advice.

Keep being amazing counterparts to your chapter counterparts as you have been amazing to us.

Submitted with undying love for six full pages of counterparty goodness and our utmost love and dedication to all of you,

We remain,

Michaela Brown and Nick Phillips

Your 68th International Maz<mark>kirah and 88th Grand</mark> Aleph <mark>Mazkir</mark>