

SHINE a LIGHT on ROTARY

Rotary



DISTRICT 9685 – DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICALITIES

plus

“Confessions of a PR Director”

## DA SESSION SUMMARY

A. Congrats now the club's PR expert!

B. Two Major Responsibilities

1. EXTERNAL

- Determine club's need for more high profile PR activities/projects
- Encourage their development
- Develop partnerships with major businesses, Councils, Chambers of Commerce, business associations etc

2. INTERNAL

- Support for all AoS Directors
  - Ask about/suggest PR action
- "Marry" your Membership Director
  - ie have a close relationship
- Be an advisor/mentor to your President
  - Extra eyes and ears to improve club
- Increase your budget – ie to allow results
- Examine website
  - Objectives?
  - Make personal – names and contact details

C. STRATEGIES

- PR Director for 2/3 years
- Picture is worth 1000 words
- Recognise and reward others
- Consider Golden Quill Award – concentrate on presentation

D. PERSONAL BENEFITS

- "Across the club" involvement
- Best and most interesting role on the Board

E. SECRET FOR SUCCESS – PONDER TIME

a. List PR Objectives

b. Consider your intended style of leadership

ie Method of Operation

1. One big committee?
2. One small main committee with specialized sub groups?
3. Do it all yourself

c. List intended actions

## CONFESSIONS OF A PR DIRECTOR

But what are you going to do??.....How are you going to do it??.....How and what should be promoted about our club??.....Why.....well, these questions were racing through my mind when I was elected PR Director at the December's AGM after being in the club and indeed Rotary for only a couple of months. OK, maybe the club was hard-up to find someone but here I was, recently retired, wanting to help others and eager to get involved.

Panic didn't set in for a while – Christmas activities, great weather to play golf and a new project I was involved in, all played a part in keeping me busy.

But then of course the District Conference rolls around, followed by the District Assembly and Expo and finally a training workshop for PR Directors. The realization then suddenly hits you that the time is nigh when your fellow club members are going to look to you to be the “expert”, to inject that something to improve on last year's efforts. My goodness, why did I ever say “yes” to do this role on the Board??

Suddenly there's a glimmer of hope. The President Elect asks all his Board members for objectives and plans for the next 12 months. That age old strategy worked. It made me sit down and think about things – at least some objectives, deadlines and all those other planning aspects that you can draw upon from your prior business life.

July 1 suddenly arrives and from now on you are responsible for PR in your club. At first it sounds good – even rather impressive – but what in the heavens do you do??????

Well after 18 months in the role my advice to new PR Directors would be to work in four areas viz:

- PR with pictures
- PR with words
- PR with promotional material
- PR with your Service Directors

### PR WITH PICTURES

Have you heard the adage “a picture is worth a thousand words”? Well, put it into practice and use your camera – any digital one with a flash will do nicely!! But what do you take photos of?? Fortunately it's simple:

- Every club activity no matter what it is – get others to help by taking photos too
- Every guest speaker at your weekly meetings. In fact if you want, you could even delegate the task to a couple of other shutter-bugs.

OK, so you're not a professional photographer – but if nothing else just remember these two valuable hints:

- One or two people posing front on for a full length picture is boring. Take an “action” shot (even if it's only two people shaking hands). Why not try a creative angle too.
- Get close-ups to reduce or preferably eliminate the meaningless area of the photo between the main subject and the edge of the picture.

And what do you do with all these photos?? Here are a few ways that will provide great results:

- Put a few on each table at your regular meetings – say once every three or four weeks. It a great way to communicate and provide feedback to your members about a project/activity. And you don't have to say anything – remember .....photos are worth a thousand words.
- Add a few words to those that would make a good mini-story and send them to a local newspaper or magazine. However try to slant the article towards highlighting a local individual – newspapers want the personal side of a story that's relevant to their local readers. And if you want to maximize the chance of getting it published, follow up with the editor after you've sent it – remember he can easily “lose” your news item by pressing the delete button.
- Put a photo of last week's guest speaker in your bulletin. It helps to humanize the topic for those who were not at the meeting.
- And of course, for your website – those great photos will certainly add value and have an impact!!

- After a special event display a few A4 size photos on a stand or wall at your club meeting. You will be surprised the interest it will create.

#### PR WITH WORDS

- Does your club have any street banners or even signs to hang up and advertise your club at its outside activities?? (The Rotary wheel plus Rotary Club of ..... is sufficient). It's a great way to promote the presence of your club to the local community.
- Similarly displaying an A-frame can be a great way to promote your club and its projects/activities and does provide an avenue for recognizing any major sponsors.  
Thanks to a creative suggestion by one of our new members, we now display an A-frame beside the main road outside our meeting venue to indicate that our club is currently holding its regular meeting.....and all are welcome.
- Keep your eye out for opportunities to promote your club in the local area. The result of one such example is that our club has a promotional Rotary sign at two entrances of the local shopping plaza – the sign and space cost nothing!!
- This one's a little more personal. Have you even seen a PR/Marketing professional who hasn't got a business card?? Use a layout that's similar to your President Elect's card but just think about the most effective information to use eg I have all my personal contact details and my address plus the club's contact details and meeting times.
- First of all, does your club possess "decent" pamphlets/flyers/booklets promoting your club that can be given to potential new members? If not, then delegate the task to members with appropriate skills and suggest a suitable deadline.

#### PR WITH PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

- Introduce a club shirt to use at external activities. But it's no good having a colour that's a dark blue, grey, black etc. It has to be a colour that stands out - something that is tasteful yet distinctive and is easily recognizable. I have proven through joint participation with other clubs that our lime green shirts stand out in a crowd and play a valuable part in promoting our club to the public - and members are happy to pay \$30 and do wear them.
- During the course of the year your club might distribute promotional material from District or use pamphlets/flyers distributed by RI. These can be very valuable tools to use in promoting public relations and marketing Rotary to others in your community but it does need to be "personalized".  
As an example, this year our District has developed a high-quality Calendar. More value will be gained if a neat sticker is added showing the name of your club, contact details and your club website address. Computers and labels make this an easy job these days.

#### PR WITH YOUR SERVICE DIRECTORS

Don't expect to be bombarded with requests at first. But if you take an interest in their project and activities, offer to take photos, endeavour to put an article in the local paper, assist in some way that can be regarded as PR work, etc you will be in demand and people will really appreciate you as their PR Director – and all the skills you bring to the club.

#### FINALE FOR THE YEAR

Then at one Board meeting the President suggested .....no I think it was an expectation .....that I would submit an entry for the Golden Quill Award presented by District to the club with the best PR program of the year. Well, the club won it that year but it was only because I had concentrated on PR with words, pictures, promotional material and liaised with the other Service Directors. It certainly enabled me to be proud that I was able to assist the club in this way. And what am I doing this year?? Well, the experience has taught me so much about Rotary and I've been able to improve the PR work for the club over the last 18 months. I suppose you could put it down to being a slow learner but you know what – yes I've agree to do the role for the third year!!!  
And strangely enough I've just starting to ask myself those questions again.....But what am I going to do??.....How am I going to do it??.....How and what should be promoted.....

Roger Norman

PR Director, Rotary Club of Turramurra