

A Template to Help Local Kiwanis Clubs Develop & Improve Their Communications, PR and Marketing Effectiveness

The Benefits of Good Communications, Public Relations & Marketing to Your Club

Effective communications, PR and marketing practices have as much value for a non-profit and service organization like Kiwanis as they do for a for-profit group, company or corporation. A service club's ability to more effectively promote itself and its value to the community, to gain favorable publicity, to assist the club's leadership in communicating more efficiently and effectively with the members can provide many benefits. These practices can enable your club to: benefits include the ability of a club to:

- *develop your membership and grow as an organization,*
- *generate favorable impressions and stand out in your community, and*
- *attract new prospective members.*

In addition, these capabilities and abilities enhance the likelihood that you will better retain your members because they will feel additional value in belonging to the club, that other groups will want to partner with your club, and that the general public will be motivated to support the activities and fundraisers sponsored by your club.

What Forms does Communications/PR/Marketing Take?

Some examples of Internal Communications:

- club newsletters
- flyers, posters, handouts, and other printed material
- photographs and visual media
- digital media and presentations
- the club's website and sections/information addressed to members

Some examples of External Communications/PR/Marketing:

- the club's website and the portions intended for the general public
- cultivated relationships with the local media
- press releases, captioned photos and publicity surrounding the service projects, fundraisers, and events your club sponsors
- donated (e.g., psa's) or purchased media or tradeouts
- cultivated relationships with other local groups and service clubs
- joint projects with other clubs/groups that have the potential for additional news and promotional mention as well as incremental service impact
- other advertising and promotion that increases the "presence" of the club in the community

What is the purpose of this template?

This template is one of several recommendations developed by the Capital District Finance Committee and presented to the Board for the purpose of demonstrating tactics and practices that are believed to have the potential to help develop Kiwanis at the local club level. The idea is to pilot several of the recommendations in the attempt to demonstrate and measure their effectiveness in that regard.

This particular template has been developed to provide examples and applications of communications, public/media relations, and marketing practices that are effectively used by many organizations and groups—both for profit and non-profit groups to enhance their organizational performance, their bottom line, their image and reputation.

5 Resources For Clubs Who Want to Improve Their Comm/PR/Mktg Effectiveness

- **This Template!**
- **Guidance and materials available from Kiwanis Int'l**, much of which is available on the KI website. In particular, you will want to get a copy of The Public Relations and Marketing Handbook. In addition, the website contains: templates, materials, psa's, downloads, and a host of useful and professionally developed pieces that are all available for clubs' use. o
- **Resource clubs in your Division/Region** - Clubs that already utilizing some of these practices and benefiting as a result. Connect with the comm./pr chairperson in these clubs. Ask for their assistance with your club's efforts. Meet with them and find out more about their comm./pr/mktg practices and programs.
- **Other clubs in your Division/Region who also want to improve** their comm./pr/mktg effectiveness. Work together, share ideas and reinforce each other's progress.
- **The Capital District Committee for Comm/PR/Mktg** - we're still building membership in order to offer one or more resource persons in each Region. In the meantime, feel free to contact either the chairperson of this committee or the Finance Committee member assigned to this project. We will in turn get you connected with other people and resources that can be of assistance.

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The Capital District Kiwanis Comm/PR/Marketing Template

Section I: Internal Communications & Publicity

1. **Create & implement a club website.** This step is an absolute must

- Develop and utilize its benefits and communication potential both internally with club members and externally with the general public.
- Identify a webmaster, put them in touch with other nearby clubs with strong websites, and put him in touch with the website resources available from KI.

2. **Enhance & upgrade your existing club website** to provide more benefit to your club

- strategize the ways your club website can provide more benefit to members and make a stronger impression on the general public.
- solicit ideas & input from your members as to what other capabilities/information would be valuable and useful to them.
- review other websites, both other Kiwanis clubs & other service groups to generate ideas of other possible enhancements.
- tag all of your print media, press releases and other promotional material with your website address.

3. **Enhance your club's newsletter** (But remember, it's the content and value of the newsletter to your members that's important, rather than its appearance or polish)

- look for ways to freshen and enhance your newsletter this year - you will be surprised how an overhaul or a new feature will grab additional attention.
- encourage more reliance over time on the digital version of your newsletter.
- periodically review other club's newsletters to generate ideas of additional content or features that might be a useful addition.
- encourage your newsletter editor to connect with the other newsletter editors in your Division & Region and to utilize the resources available from KI.

4. **Identify significant club events/activities/initiatives that could benefit from enhanced Communications and Publicity**

- Review the club's current communication strategies and materials. Can they be improved?
- At the beginning of the club year and at the beginning of each quarter, solicit from the club's leaders and chairpersons a list and timing of significant events/activities
- In particular, support the efforts of your Club Development and Membership Committees. These groups need strong, effective communication materials and tactics, e.g.

- > help these committees and chairpersons prep the club about Membership Drives and programs,
- > create and distribute support material for these initiatives, and
- > help with the scripting and training for these programs.
- > serve as a resource to provide assistance with more impactful reporting of progress on these programs, to celebrate successes

5. **Help Communicate & Sell Your Club's Strategic Plan**: There's a very important communications opportunity on deck with regard to each club's Strategic Plan. The presentation and positioning of this plan and the goal of enlisting the support of the club's members is a pure internal communications challenge.

- Strategize and implement this year an ongoing communications and update effort that accomplishes this goal. It will provide the base for your club "gaining valuable traction" for its strategic plan and the club learning and growth that will follow.

6. **Designate a club photographer** to capture creative visuals that can be utilized in many useful ways—Here's some examples:

- for your captioned photos to the news media,
- for enhancements to the club's newsletter,
- for use in PowerPoints, presentations and the club's print materials,
- for the club's Digital Scrapbook.

Brainstorm with your club leaders to generate an endless list of useful applications for this person's output. A picture is worth a 1,000 words and effective photography/visuals are vital to the impact that service organizations strive to make on their publics.

7. **Recognize deserving members** (Nothing motivates like genuine human recognition)

- verbally at meetings, and...
- with photos and captions in the newsletter and on the website

Section II: Media Relations & Publicity

1. **Refer to and utilize the recommendations and guidance provided in KI's Public Relations and Marketing Handbook.** This is an excellent resource for local clubs and contains solid guidance in all of the areas mentioned in this template.

- Implement one or more of these recommendations this year.

2. **Develop a local/area media contact list & build relationships**

- Call and meet with them and identify how they prefer to receive your material.
- Find out their preferences for press releases and photos, examples of what they feel to be newsworthy examples from a service club such as Kiwanis, and what type of frequency of your submissions they will be able to handle.
- Invite them to some of your meetings and activities.
- Stay in contact with them and build a relationship

3. **Challenge your club's comm/pr/mktg person** to connect with the other PR/Comm persons in your Division and Region to share ideas, suggestions, learnings and proof each other's press releases.

4. **For every major service project & fundraiser sponsored by your club:**

- Submit press releases (as frequently as possible & reasonable) with sufficient lead time.
- Provide contact info and follow up with a call to your club's media contact
- Submit captioned photos. Make the photos unique & creative. Avoid "grip & grin". (there's some excellent suggestions for appealing visuals in the KI Style Manual online).
- Submit versions of this same material to the eBuilder each month

5. **Look for special and unique publicity angles—with human interest & unique appeal**

- Special service project
- An up-close and personal article on a veteran member & their contributions to the Community
- A joint project, e.g. with one of your SLP's, with another club(s) or organization

Section III: Public Relations

1. **Extend genuine hospitality to program presenters and to every guest** who attends a club meeting or event
 - Make them feel very welcome and show them every courtesy.
 - Give them a token of appreciation, especially something that's Kiwanis branded
 - Afterward, be sure to send them a Thank You note.

2. **Recognize all individuals and groups who contribute time, effort and money to your Kiwanis activities.**
 - Recognize them at meetings and with special programs
 - Follow up and send Thank You notes and letters
 - Present certificates of appreciation as appropriate
 - Ask how your group can be supportive... then follow through

3. **Build ongoing relationships with each of the groups that your club sponsors and financially supports.**
 - Invite representatives from each of these groups to visit your club annually and show them special attention when they do attend.
 - Ask them to make you aware of their activity calendar and identify either a committee or club members to be a liaison with each of these groups.
 - Encourage your members to serve on the boards of these groups.
 - Don't be bashful about making each of these groups aware of your fundraisers and encourage them to promote them to their members so that attendance and participation is increase and there's reciprocity in the support we are providing each other.

4. **Reach out to your local officials, community leaders and school personnel**
 - invite them to attend your club meetings and activities.
 - provide a special program opportunity for them to address your members and be available to them. (As an example, the Mt. Airy club offers the mayor and President of the Town Council the opportunity to share an update with our members every six months or so.)

5. **Build & develop strong relationships with the other service clubs in your community**
Examples could include:
 - quarterly planning meetings of the leadership of the groups to share calendars and identifying opportunities to assist each other,
 - designate a person to be a point of contact with the other clubs

offer to host joint annual meetings and combined service or fundraising activities...

6. **Explore and identify other possible meaningful partnerships** between your club and other organizations in your community. The goal is to find common ground and identify ways to incrementally serve and benefit the community as well as both organizations.

7. **Join your local Chamber of Commerce, get active and call attention to yourself.**

- Use the opportunity to network, meet other “pro-active” individuals (a great source of new member prospects for your club) and build relationships
- Get active: join some committees and support the organization
- Offer to host some Chamber events - e.g., the Mt. Airy Club has had great success with hosting some of our Chamber’s monthly Business Card Exchanges

Section IV: Marketing (Also frequently referred to as “Branding”)

1. **Motivate and recognize members for wearing the K...** especially in public!
2. **Create and utilize a club marketing brochure.** A basic 4-color brochure template is available from KI and they will print and provide to a club up to 50 copies once you provide your customized information to them.
3. **Assess the signage your club is currently using** with the activities it publicly conducts—service projects and fundraisers. In most cases where clubs have used the same signage over and over, it may need to be upgraded or refurbished. Step back, take a fresh look and consider if the marketing impact of your activity would be enhanced with additional and upgraded signage.
4. **Create and use Kiwanis Business Cards for your club.** These cards are the same size as regular business cards, but they display the Kiwanis logo, an appealing graphic of a child and spell out your club’s information. On the back they can be customized to provide more details about your club. They are a simple and effective way to leave a tangible impression with someone and to invite them to join you at an upcoming meeting (Contact Dave Maloney- Surburban Frederick, MD Kiwanis club, or Jim Jacobs - Mt. Airy, MD Kiwanis Club and they can share a template).
5. **Utilize the excellent Public Service materials available at no cost from KI** - print ads, radio & TV spots and billboard designs.
 - team with the other Kiwanis clubs in your media market
 - approach your local media with these materials,
 - make them aware of the community service that Kiwanis accomplishes both locally, nationally and internationally. Ask for time and space for these Kiwanis public service materials.
6. **Use sponsorships and co-branding where possible in your community.**

The idea is to gain extended visibility and impact for Kiwanis and your club in the same way that commercial concerns utilize these opportunities.

Some examples include:

- sponsor a community event & make sure you’re listed & promoted as such
- sponsor a youth sports team and have your club name on their shirts/uniforms as well as mentioned in signage at the ballpark, on the web, in the programs, in newsletters that the local association publishes, etc.
- identify other low cost/high visibility opportunities to put your club’s name out in front of people, especially groups associated with youth & who are potential new member prospects.

7. Develop and utilize a powerful & memorable presentation this year (PowerPoint is recommended for this purpose). Two good examples of useful applications include:

- a PowerPoint for your club's use with New Member Orientation, and
- a PowerPoint that presents your club and activities, the benefits of membership and some of the contributions you make to the community.

The second example can be used in many ways—for example, if you have large in-door service projects or fundraisers, this PP can be played in the background and accompanied by Kiwanis literature and club reps to speak with anyone who is interested. As an example, the Mt. Airy has developed a PP about our club that we play in the background of our Pancake Breakfasts and when we host Business Card Exchanges as part of our Chamber of Commerce membership.

8. Recycle KI magazines to local doctors offices, libraries and other appropriate locations.