

Club
Public Relations
Chairman's
Guide



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What is Public Relations?

The term public relations has a very broad definition. Its meaning differs with every situation. As a result, the practices and benefits of good PR are often misunderstood.

Public relations involves all forms of communication—written, verbal and non-verbal. For Lions, public relations includes standard techniques such as writing news releases and distributing promotional flyers. Equally as important are those actions often taken for granted, such as wearing a Lions lapel pin and marching in a parade.

Your Responsibilities

Your job, as public relations chairman, is to:

- create a program that effectively communicates information about your club to the community
- keep your club aware of all PR efforts and results

This publication is designed to help you plan a successful public relations program. If you aren't actively promoting your club's activities, this guide will give you a place to start. If you are already working to communicate your activities to the public, this will assist you in strengthening your efforts and give you some new ideas.

Why is Public Relations Important?

Public relations is vital to a club's success. Too often, it is believed that just conducting a service activity should be enough, that the effort should speak for itself. But, if community members don't know who built the park, conducted the sight screening or collected the eyeglasses, they won't know who to support.

There is a definite relationship between public relations, successful service projects and community support. A good public relations plan will help you foster this relationship and enable your club to reach more people in need.

Public relations can even help your club increase membership. People want to belong to a successful and reliable organization. By actively promoting your club and its worthwhile activities, you'll be projecting a positive image in the community, and showing that your club is worth joining.

So, don't be afraid to tell people about all the good you're doing in the community! It won't undermine the spirit of your efforts, only increase your future service and membership potential.

Reminder About This Guide

This guide was created for Lions all over the world and provides a good framework for your efforts. In your own country, certain specifics may be handled differently. You are encouraged to contact a public relations professional in your area to learn about local public relations strategies.

Where to Begin

Set Goals. Creating public relations materials isn't difficult. Start by reviewing your club's previous efforts. Evaluate what worked, what didn't and why. This will help you decide what communications avenues to pursue.

Determine Budget. Next, determine your budget for the year. Effective public relations programs can be done on a limited budget. You just might have to use a little more creativity to think of ways to communicate your message. You will need to budget for both ongoing public relations efforts and for special events.

Plan Ahead. Read this guide over carefully and begin making your plans for the year. Adequate planning and timely delivery are probably the most important considerations for your public relations efforts. Even the most newsworthy story won't get covered if the news release arrives after the event—or six weeks prior!

Create a Timeline. Determine how and when you will promote your club during the year through on-going publicity efforts and when you will start publicity for your club's special events. Certainly, there will be newsworthy situations that will come up during the year that you'll want to publicize. Planning ahead for the rest of the year will help you handle these more smoothly, and ensure that you create a comprehensive public relations program that will keep your club visible in the community.



Use Resources. In addition to receiving this guide, the monthly newsletter PR Quick Takes is available on the Lions web site at www.lionsclubs.org. The *Update* newsletter, sent to club presidents, also features public relations tips. Refer to these materials when executing all aspects of your PR program.

Inform Club. Decide how and when you will share information with your fellow members and include that in your plan. Be sure to talk to your club president and the chairmen of your club's various events and projects. Make sure they understand what you're trying to accomplish and how they can assist you.

Be Persistent. Remember it is the cumulative effect of all your efforts that counts. Keeping your club visible in the community isn't something that can happen overnight; it takes time. But with careful planning and diligent efforts, your community will recognize and support your club's programs, and ultimately, you'll be helping your club fulfill its goal: to serve those in need.

What is News?

The most helpful question you can ask yourself when considering a promotional strategy for a project is, "Would a non-Lion find this interesting?" There will be times when the answer to this question will be "yes," and there will be times when it will be "no." It is important to understand that some projects, although extremely worthwhile, may simply not be "newsworthy."

It is your job to decide which activities have an interesting "angle" and are worth pitching to the media. For stories to be considered newsworthy, they should be about timely events or activities that:

- enhance your local community (parks, school programs)
- involve the general public or other community groups (fundraisers, used eyeglasses collections)
- perform a public service (vision/health screenings, drug abuse education)

At first, it may seem difficult to distinguish between those activities that have news value, and those that don't. One way to increase your confidence is to go straight to the source—read local newspapers, watch television news programs and listen to a variety of local radio stations to get a feel for the type of news items in which their readers, viewers and listeners are interested.

You should be involved in the early planning stages of all club projects to determine their news potential. Following are some examples of club activities with possible news value:

- Lions Youth Outreach/Lions-Quest
- Melvin Jones Fellow recognition
- Club anniversary special events
- Special fundraising events
- Lions International Peace Poster Contest
- LCIF grants/disaster aid
- Club officer elections/club's major goals
- Special or unique service projects aiding the visually impaired, physically/mentally handicapped
- Major donations
- Youth Exchange
- Recycle For Sight/eyeglasses recycling
- Worldwide Induction Day
- Holiday projects



News vs. Public Service

When creating media materials, PR chairmen should not only keep in mind which events and activities are newsworthy, but also know the difference between news and public service.

News offers information about activities or events that are of interest to, directly affect or involve, the general public; such as the election of officers or the dedication of a Lions-sponsored facility. Public service gives information about a specific topic to help or assist the general public, such as describing the warning signs of diabetes or encouraging volunteerism.

While most publicity activities will center around news, the PR opportunities presented by public service campaigns should not be overlooked. Such efforts can keep clubs visible within their communities during times when there are no newsworthy events or activities to publicize. In many cases, they can also be incorporated into your service activity publicity plans.

Contacting the Media

One of the first things you should do after taking office is introduce yourself to the reporters and editors with whom you may be working during the upcoming year. Begin by creating a list of all the newspapers, radio and television stations in your area along with mailing addresses and telephone numbers. Create a second list consisting of the major activities and projects your club supports throughout the year.

Using the project list as a guide, call each media outlet to determine the appropriate editors or reporters who are likely to cover Lions events. Begin by contacting the following people. If they are not responsible for your type of story, they should direct you to the proper person:

- Small daily or weekly newspapers: general assignment editor
- Large daily newspapers: community events reporter
- Radio and television: news and/or public service director

Larger newspapers or broadcast stations have departments or reporters assigned to special topics such as health, education and entertainment. The person you need to contact will likely depend on the nature of your activity.

Be sure to verify the spelling of each person's name, title and mailing address. You should also inquire about deadlines, so you can avoid contacting reporters during a busy time. They are much more receptive to story ideas when they are not under deadline pressure. Once you have made all your initial contacts, revise your media list, including as many of those details as possible so you can refer to them throughout the year.

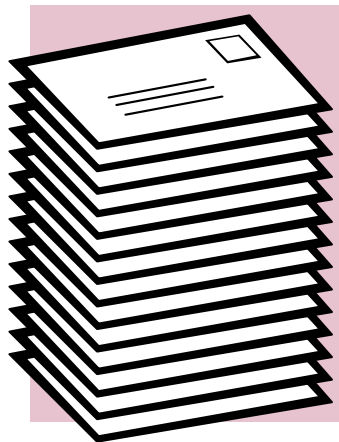
It is important to realize that every Lions news story will not be published or broadcast. The editor of a local newspaper, or the public service or news director of a radio or television station, must continuously decide which stories will be printed or broadcast that day. They will always find room for big news items, but other stories like "Lions Sponsor Health Fair" are included if space is available. It is not unusual for Lions clubs to receive higher quality coverage in suburban and community daily or weekly newspapers, and less in large daily newspapers.

Don't get discouraged if you don't have luck getting placements at first. By being diligent and cooperative in providing newsworthy material to the right media, you will build rapport and be successful over time.



News Releases

The news release is the most basic and widely used method of communicating with the media. A release is not difficult to prepare, although there is an accepted writing style you should follow.



News releases are written in an “inverted pyramid” format. They should answer as many of the questions Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? as possible in the first two paragraphs, which are called the “lead” paragraphs. Subsequent paragraphs should provide additional information in descending order of importance. This allows an editor to trim the release to fit the available story space or broadcast time without losing the main facts. When preparing a news release, keep in mind that a simply written and fact-filled release will get precedence over one that requires substantial editing or even rewriting by the editor.

Tips for Preparing News Releases

- Be sure your release is about a newsworthy event.
- Type the release double spaced on one or two pages. Use your club’s letterhead.
- Keep paragraphs and sentences short, limiting them to a single idea.
- Use quotes to enhance basic information. When attributing quotes, be sure to identify the person’s name and title.
- Include the words “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” at top left-hand corner of the page.
- Include a dateline at the beginning of the first paragraph.

- Your name, or the name of the appropriate contact person, should appear at the top right-hand corner of the page along with a daytime and evening telephone number. Make sure the contact person has a copy of the release.
- Include a one or two line headline summarizing the release in capital letters and center it above the body copy.
- If there is more than one page, type “-more-” at the bottom center of the first page, and “# # #” or “end” at the bottom center of the last page.

See page 19 for news release examples.

Distributing News Releases

News releases should be mailed to only those editors, reporters or news directors on your mailing list who cover your particular type of story. They should be hand-delivered or mailed to arrive at least two weeks prior to your event.

At least one week before the event, follow up with each person on your mailing list. Offer to answer questions, mention photo opportunities, and inquire whether your story is one they might be interested in covering. Learn from their response. Be positive, enthusiastic and persistent in demonstrating why their readers/listeners/viewers might be interested in your story—but be careful not to be overly aggressive. You want to convince your contact that your club is worth his or her attention, and that you are a valuable source of information.

Club Fact Sheet

Creating a club fact sheet is a good way to provide background information about your club to reporters. Since news releases must cover the details of a particular event or

activity, a fact sheet will serve as a useful supplement. The fact sheet should be clear, concise and neat. Fact sheets can be used as hand-outs during community events. See page 28 for an example.

Print Pitch Letters

These letters are often used to suggest a feature story to a newspaper editor, in a situation when a news release is not appropriate. Note that the topics are not about events or activities. Instead, they focus on qualities that would make the subject newsworthy. After sending the letter, be sure to follow up in approximately 1-2 weeks to determine interest and provide additional details. See page 24 for an example.

Interviews

A reporter may ask to schedule an interview to build on information provided in a news release. To ensure your club is well represented, the appropriate spokesperson (you, your club president or a committee chairman) should be prepared to provide accurate information with enthusiasm and confidence. If someone other than yourself is going to give an interview, be sure to help the spokesperson prepare.

Tips for Successful Interviews

1. Know your facts. Verify your facts with the appropriate resources well before an interview. Be ready to offer insight beyond the Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? stated in media material.

2. Prepare key message points. Determine a few key points to make and decide how you will present them. Never answer a question with a simple “yes” or “no.” Use the interviewer’s question as a bridge to bring up the information you want to convey.

3. Give clear responses. Mention your main points early in the interview and keep your answers short so they will fit into an edited piece. Do not hesitate to pause to formulate your responses. It is better to give a few, brief, clear sentences rather than a rambling response. If you do not know the answer to a question, do not guess. Offer to find out the answer, and follow up immediately.

4. Practice. Simulating an interview or visualizing yourself answering anticipated questions will make you appear more confident and competent during an interview. (As silly as it may seem, this really does work!)

5. Mention your club’s name. Avoid saying only “I” or “we.” Mention your club and any other participating organization often by name.

6. Watch what you say. Be careful not to give off-handed opinions. Avoid “off the record” comments—they rarely are ever truly “off the record.”

7. Wear appropriate attire. What you wear says a lot about who you are. Lions should wear business dress and their lapel pin to project a positive image. For television, avoid pinstripes and white shirts.

8. Have fun! Smile. Be conversational. Let the reporter see you as someone who enjoys being a Lion!

Post-Event Publicity

Your publicity efforts are not necessarily over once an activity is complete. As a matter of fact, your best opportunity to make an impression may actually come after the event. Especially in the case of fundraisers and other public events, it is important to report your results to the community. You can do this using one of three methods:

1. News Release: If a reporter did not cover the event in person, consider preparing a brief, one page news release highlighting the project's results. This will enable you to share with supporters how their contributions made a difference. It will also demonstrate to others that your club's programs are successful and worth their future support.

2. Letter to the Editor: If you suspect a results release may not get picked up by a newspaper, consider writing a thank you note to the community via a letter to the editor. This simple effort can leave a lasting and positive impression. In it, you can demonstrate how your club values the public's support, and briefly mention other ways your club is active in the community. See page 23 for an example.

3. Display Advertisement: If a newspaper chooses not to run your letter to the editor, consider placing a small "thank you" advertisement with the paper. Many publications offer not-for-profit groups discounted rates on display ads. Some will even donate un-sold space free of charge. (Discounts should be investigated prior to an event so you can determine when advertising would be most effective—before or after an event.)

Radio and Television

Broadcast outlets can offer your club some wonderful publicity opportunities outside of traditional news coverage. When planning your PR program, you should consider alternatives such as community calendars, public service announcements, talk shows and public access programming.

Radio and television stations have different audience demographics. While television stations target their programming to a very general audience, radio stations target specific groups of listeners. Keep this in mind when approaching radio stations. If you want your message to be heard by adults over the age of 40, do not waste your time with a station that programs for teenagers. To determine which stations to pursue, it is a good idea to listen to different radio stations in your area to get a feel for their audiences and the types of programs they broadcast. Also, pay attention to the types of public service programming they do, like community bulletin boards, public service announcements, etc. Monitor local television stations to find out about their program line-ups too. Once you know which stations regularly broadcast the types of programs you want to target, you can proceed with trying to get your message on the air.



Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

PSAs are brief (10, 15 or 30 second) messages about an organization or service that are aired at no charge on radio and television stations because they offer some type of community service. Notices of fundraising events, projects that benefit the community, public events sponsored by your club and messages about preventing blindness are all appropriate subjects. The key is that the message must benefit your community, and not your club.

Before you begin writing, contact the public affairs or public service director at your local television or radio station for assistance. They will be able to tell you what the station's scheduling and format requirements are, and if they have production assistance available. Oftentimes, stations have a reduced production rate for not-for-profit organizations such as Lions clubs.

Radio PSAs

For radio, PSAs are sometimes read live on-air, so all you would need is to provide the station with a script. Other times, they are pre-recorded, either by one of the station's announcers or a narrator you provide.

Television PSAs

Television PSAs are always videotaped and edited prior to airing. They require more production than a radio PSA, and you will definitely need assistance producing one. Another option with television PSAs is to order one of the PSAs produced by International Headquarters and add your club's information at the end.

Writing PSAs

When writing PSAs, remember that brevity and clarity are of utmost importance. At the most, you have 30 seconds to communicate your message. In that time, you need to:

- get the listener's attention
- show how listeners will benefit
- give reasons why the listener should do what you are asking
- tell the listener where to go, what to do, when to do it and where to call for more information
- identify your club

As a guide, the length of the PSA should follow these rules: a 10-second spot will have approximately 20 words and a 30-second spot will have approximately 75.

Be sure to consider the differences between radio and television. On television, you can use visuals to help communicate your message, on radio, words are your only method of communication. Once you have written your PSA, read it aloud to make sure there are not any tongue twisters and complicated messages that would confuse listeners. The public affairs or public service director may offer help editing your script after you've completed it. See pages 26 and 27 for examples.

Broadcast PSA Pitch Letter

When sending radio or television PSAs to stations, it is a good idea to create a pitch letter to accompany them. The letter will help "sell" the PSA to the program director by reinforcing the PSA's purpose and the club's reason for distributing it. See page 25 for an example.

Public Access Television

Many cable television systems include channels set aside for public access. The publicity potential from these can be enormous. These stations can air PSAs, run videotapes of club activities or about the association, post club events on a community bulletin board or even have club members participate on a community events show or talk show. Some Lions clubs produce their own shows for public access television.

Contact the public service director at your local cable station regarding opportunities for your club to communicate its message.

More Video Options

You don't have to broadcast a video on television to make an impact on your community. Consider showing a video about the association or public service announcements at community events where your club has a booth or using them when you meet with other community groups. Offer them to local appliance stores for use in demonstrating their video equipment. You can also donate them to your local library or video store for loaning.

World Wide Web and E-mail

One of the best new ways to promote your Lions club is through the World Wide Web. The web provides an opportunity to reach out to different audiences. Creating a club web site with an e-mail link is an excellent way to let people from your hometown and all around the world know about your club. Before beginning, check out Lions Clubs International's official web site at www.lionsclubs.org. Taking a look at the site can give you a good frame of reference for understanding what makes a web site effective. Your club site can link to www.lionsclubs.org but duplicating the same design and content is not permitted.

To get a web page started, ask around your club to find out if any of your members have web page design skills. In addition to the experience this person may have, he/she can also purchase a book on designing pages or go to sites on the web that offer instruction. Posting a message at a college requesting a student web site designer is another way to get started.

Once the person who will create the pages is identified, think about content. Be sure to include general information about your club on the web site--when and where it meets, club activities and how to get more information. Have an e-mail link to someone in your club for people to send their questions. Other suggested items to include on your site are photos, a club history and calendar of events. There are many items that could be included--be creative! Once your web site is up and running, register with web search engines so when people enter a keyword search, they will be able to find your web site. Do not forget to put your e-mail and web addresses on the items your club distributes.



Printed Promotional Material

Using flyers and signs to publicize events is a good, relatively inexpensive way to convey your message to your community. Producing them is easy. Simply apply these basic production tips:

- Be sure to answer Who? What? Where? and When?
- Use clear and concise language, don't put too much information on the page
- Print an eye-catching headline at the top of the page announcing the event
- Copy should be either professionally typeset or produced using a personal computer and laser printer
- Use a bold, easy-to-read typeface
- Make sure your club's name and the Lions logo appear prominently on the flyer
- Print on a bright, noticeable paper stock (although copy needs to be readable)

Because you belong to a not-for-profit group, you may be able to negotiate with printers to produce your flyers and posters at a reduced rate.

Visibility is what makes flyers effective. Post them in every conceivable location throughout your area: public bulletin boards, libraries, store windows, bus stops, train stations, etc. Give them to local businesses (including your own), and government or tourist offices to have available for customers. Have fellow club members help you think of all the different places you can post and distribute flyers and signs. Be sure to distribute them a few weeks before your event for maximum visibility.

Photographs

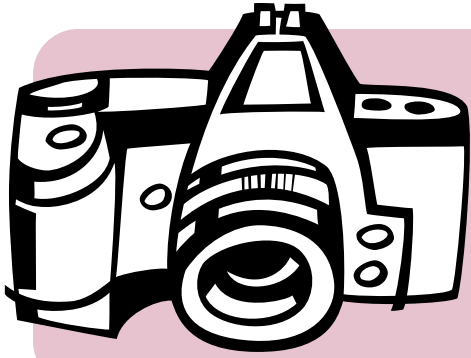
The old cliché is true—a picture really is worth a thousand words. More precisely, good pictures are a very effective tool in your public relations efforts.

Photographs can enhance your club bulletins and promotional materials or can be sent to newspapers for publication along with a news release. Consider making a photo montage of your club's activities and people you've helped for display at a community event. Photographs will also help you document your club's activities for future reference.

Tips For Taking Photographs

- Focus, focus, focus! Even the most perfect shot will be ruined if the image is fuzzy. Poorly-focused photographs cannot be used in any publications or promotional materials.
- Shoot candid photos. Avoid shooting a row of people staring at the camera. (Posed and groups shots are acceptable for club use, and may be used on some promotional materials, but are not ideal for newspapers.)
- If you must pose people for a shot, try and make it look as natural as possible. Check backgrounds to make sure no one has something "growing" out of their head, and frame group shots so you're not cutting off anyone at the knees or feet.
- Get as close to the action as possible. Too many people and too much background will crowd the shot.
- Shoot many photos. The more you shoot, the better your chances of capturing the perfect moment.

Tips For Using Photographs



- Ask your contact at the newspaper if they will accept photographs from outside sources. If so, find out what size, etc. they require. Usually, it will be high-quality, glossy, 5" X 7" (12.7cm x 17.8cm) black and white prints.
- Send a photograph that best describes the story you want to tell.
- Do not write on a photograph. To identify a photo, write the information on a separate piece of paper and tape it on the back.
- Mail a photograph flat, protected by cardboard.

Publicity Ideas

In addition to using the recognized media to spread your club's message, there are dozens of very effective vehicles to help establish your club as a vital part of the community. Any opportunity to tell your community about your club and its activities should be considered. Below are some suggestions, but with a little thought and creativity, you can probably think of many more.

Special Events

Is your club sponsoring an event the community can attend? Try these tips for getting the word out:

- If your community has a electronic message board, ask about getting the details of your event posted.

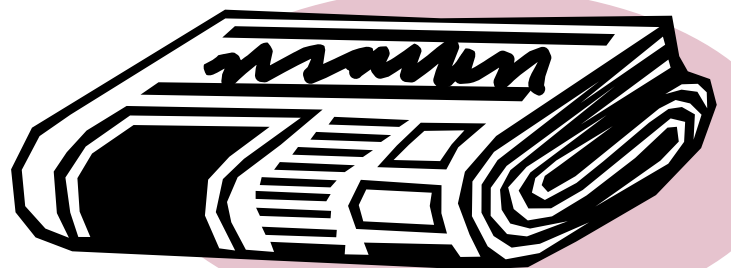
- Buses and trains often have advertising space available that they will donate to not-for-profit groups or only charge for installation.
- At the event, pass out flyers or brochures about your club and its activities. If the event is a fundraiser, hand out information that states how the money raised will be spent.
- Display the Lion logo prominently on all publicity materials and at all activities and events.
- Hand out balloons imprinted with the Lion logo at your event or at the children's ward at hospitals.

On-Going Publicity

Even when your club doesn't have a special event planned, it is important to keep your community aware of your club and its activities. Continual community support will go a long way in making your events and projects successful.

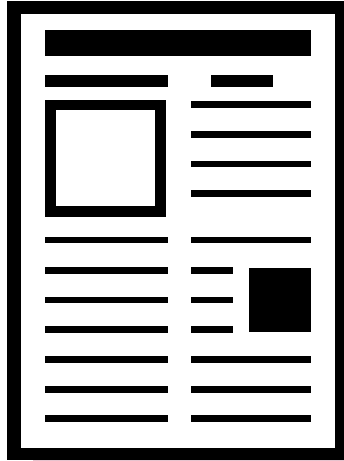
- Approach fast-food restaurants and grocery stores about printing information about your club on grocery bags and tray liners.
- Make sure your club is listed in local phone books and community directories, along with the name of a contact person and phone number. Keep this information up-to-date.

- Government and school district newsletters may publish information about your club, especially if you are involved in a community or school project (such as sponsoring Lions-Quest, a Peace Poster Contest, conducting sight or diabetes screenings, building a recreational center, etc.).
- Show support for your community and gain recognition at the same time by purchasing advertising space in school and community publications for athletic and musical events.
- Wear your Lions pin at all times, and make sure your club members wear their pins too!
- Have a highway sign or marker outside your community. Keep it in good condition.
- Donate a subscription of THE LION Magazine or a copy of "We Serve: A History of the Lions Clubs" to your local library. Contact the Public Relations Department at International Headquarters for ordering information.
- Write a weekly or monthly "Lions Spotlight on Health" series for a local newspaper, focussing on issues such as the warning signs of blindness and diabetes.
- Create a display at your library or historical society about the history of your club or the international association.
- Share news about your club with district and neighboring clubs. They could well be some of your biggest supporters.
- Put information about your Lions club in "Welcome to the Community" packets offered by local agencies or chambers of commerce.
- Invite members of the media to present a program during a club meeting about current issues or aspects of their job.



Newsletters

As PR chairman, you might find yourself with the responsibility of producing your club's bulletin or newsletter. If another club member serves as bulletin editor, you can offer to help with gathering information, writing, proofreading, etc.



The primary function of a newsletter is to make members feel in-touch with club activities and their fellow Lions. The editor's challenge is to create an informative, well-written, easy-to-read publication that members look forward to receiving each month.

Content

Newsletters should contain timely, relevant information. Upcoming events should be highlighted, and results of recently completed projects should be noted. Newsletters can help motivate members by recognizing hard workers, reporting on funds raised and offering explanations on why specific projects were (or even weren't) successful. Issues like declining membership can even be discussed—so long as all sides of a topic are presented. The editor should avoid inserting personal opinion.

By including little known facts about club projects, community issues or individual members you can also make your publication more interesting. Birthday lists are useful, as are monthly calendars of events. Include select news items from the district, multiple district and international levels to make members aware of what's happening throughout the association.

Information should be presented positively and without bias. Humor and an entertaining writing style should be used carefully. (What might be funny to one person, might not be funny to another.) Off-color jokes should never be included.

When finalizing your copy, be sure to take extra time to double-check dates, locations, times and spellings. (No one appreciates having their name misspelled.)

Artwork and Photographs

The use of artwork and photographs can add to the attractiveness and impact of your publication when used appropriately. Art and photos should be of highest quality, and their reproduction should be clear. Amateur drawings, out of focus photos and graphics that do not reproduce well will only detract from, not add to, the appearance of your bulletin.

Page Layout

In most cases, a double column layout works best for newsletters. It is important to give your publication a contemporary feel and a neat, easy-to-read appearance. To do this, be sure that:

- the size of the type is not too small or too big
- items are well-spaced, not crowded together
- nameplate or cover design is clean and simple
- headlines are set apart by larger or boldface type

Production

A newsletter should be either professionally typeset or produced using a personal computer and laser printer. PCs offer the most flexibility, as copy can be easily manipulated.

Many software packages offer templates specifically for newsletter layouts and offer various graphics options. For use in newsletters and flyers, the association's official logo is available on 3 1/2" and 5 1/4" diskettes from the Information Systems Department at International Headquarters. Printed logo sheets are available from the Public Relations Department.

Typewriters should only be used as a last resort—they rarely reproduce well, and can look messy and out-dated (although, they are better than nothing). Handwritten items are also too difficult to read, and should not be included.

The paper color you choose to print your newsletter on should be somewhat neutral and easy on the eyes. Light pastels, beiges, buffs or greys are best. Don't choose a color that is too bright or too loud.

When producing your newsletter, don't be discouraged by limited resources. Check with local printers and photocopy services. Many offer discount options to not-for-profit organizations and can provide suggestions for cost-cutting production measures. A one-page, one-color publication can be just as effective as a four-page, four-color piece if you apply basic principles and a little imagination!

THE LION Magazine

A wonderful way to receive national recognition for a club project or activity is to submit an article to THE LION Magazine. Not all submissions will be published, but articles with photos that explain a project, fundraiser or activity in detail will be considered for publication. THE LION Magazine staff can also write articles as long as you submit complete information.

Do's and Don'ts for THE LION Magazine

Please do:

- Submit detailed descriptions of your club's completed service projects and fundraising activities.
- Tell how much money was raised at your fundraiser and for what purpose is intended.
- Include candid, clear photographs of Lions participating in the project.
- Include the name, address and daytime phone number of a contact person.
- Be patient. It often takes several months for accepted items to appear in print.

Please don't:

- Submit news of club anniversaries, birthdays of long-time members or other social events.
- Send posed photos of people staring at the camera.
- Staple or write on photos, or use an ink pen or marker to write on the back—it smears, often ruining the pictures.
- Forget to identify people in photos and to include the name and number of a contact person for submitted items.

If you have a magazine-worthy article, submit the information along with photos and captions to the Senior Editor, THE LION Magazine, Lions Clubs International, 300 22nd Street, Oak Brook, IL 60523-8842, USA.

Monitoring Progress

Keeping track of how successful your public relations efforts have been will help you refine your PR plan. You'll be able to see what works, what doesn't, and what you may need to improve. It will also help you communicate the importance of PR to club members.

Newspapers/magazines: Record to who and when you send news releases. Clip articles pertaining to your club and its activities from local newspapers, magazines and newsletters. Make sure the publication's name and issue date is on the clipping.

Television and radio: If you or a club member is interviewed for a story, ask the reporter when the story is likely to air and tape the broadcast. For PSAs, ask the station if they provide usage logs and ask radio stations if they provide airchecks.

Other: Keep track of other publicity vehicles by counting volume or frequency. For example, the number of flyers that were posted and handed out, how many days your message was on an electronic bulletin board, how long a billboard was up, etc.

Keeping Your Club Informed

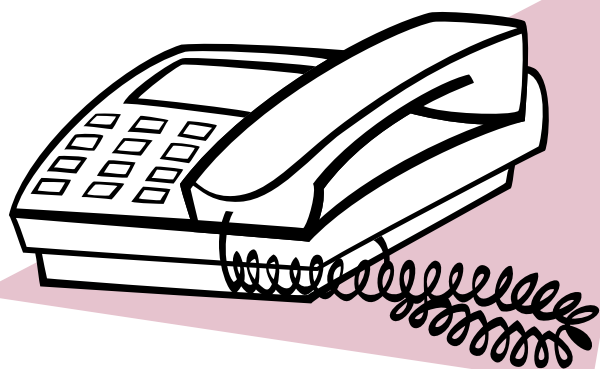
It is just as important to keep your club members aware of your public relations efforts as it is to keep your community in touch with your club and its activities. Having the support of fellow members will help you do your job well. And when you do your job well, the community will respond positively to your club. To effectively communicate to your club you should:

1) explain how public relations benefits your club, and 2) report regularly on your publicity efforts and results.

As mentioned earlier, the relationship between public relations, successful community service projects and community support is a very important one. It is essential for your club members to fully understand this relationship. Take some time to explain this to your club, or include an article about the importance of public relations in your club's newsletter.

Another way to help members understand this relationship is to share publicity results. Tell them about all your publicity efforts: both with the media and around the community. Many people don't realize that posting flyers or carrying a banner in a parade are also public relations activities. Let them know how many news releases you sent out and which publications ran a story. Consider providing each member with a photocopy of articles that mention your club and its members. If your club was on television, tape the segment and play it for all your members. Tell them how many flyers were produced, where they were posted, etc. Encourage members to share feedback they have heard from non-Lions.

Showing club members your public relations successes will help them understand how important your job is. It will also show how public relations is essential to gaining community support. Having this support will not



only help your club with its future activities, but it will also build pride within your club and encourage your members to continue their humanitarian efforts. People want to be involved with something they are proud of. Recognition within the community can foster that. In the end, it will be your club that benefits.

Additional Public Relations Materials Available from International Headquarters

A variety of audio-visual and printed materials are available to help you develop your club's public relations program for the year. To order, contact the Public Relations Department at (630) 571-5466 ext. 363 or 358, fax (630) 571-8890 or e-mail lionpr@worldnet.att.net

Audio-Visual Presentations

Video and slide programs are available on topics related to membership, service activities, SightFirst and association information from the Club Supplies Sales Department. Language availability varies. For a complete listing of programs, refer to the Club Supplies Catalog or request an Audio-Visual Presentations brochure. All languages. (PR-720)

Television and Radio PSAs

Public service announcements that have aired throughout the United States and Canada can be offered to local stations or used for public access programming. They are available at no charge provided a station is interested in airing them. English (and one Spanish) only. A list of PSAs is available upon request.

Public Awareness Print Ad Kit

You can offer these quality camera-ready public service ads to magazines and newspaper editors. If space allows, they may run the volunteerism and sight-related messages free of charge as a community service. English only. (PR-766)

Print Ad Kit

This easy-to-use kit provides camera-ready art and suggested copy for creating posters to publicize fundraisers and general community events. English only. (PR-760)

How To "Get In" THE LION

This article reprint gives tips on preparing articles for THE LION Magazine and offers sound advice on taking effective photographs. All languages. (PR-708)

Camera-Ready Art

This clip art will add a special touch to your club publications. English only. (PR-761)

Official Rules for International Contests

Official guidelines are given for the bulletin, video, publicity, web site and trading pin contests judged at each International Convention. All languages. (PR-763)

Lions International Peace Poster Contest

A four-color brochure about the annual art contest (PR-775) is perfect for distributing to schools in your area to get them interested in participating. A flyer/kit order form has more information for your club. All languages. (PR-785)

The "Think About a World of Peace" Peace Poster Contest video spotlights the contest. English only.



General Information Brochures

A selection of general information brochures are available from the Club Supplies Sales Department. These publications are perfect to hand out during community events. They include *Look at Lions Now* (PR-770), English only, and *Lions... We Serve* (ME-4). All languages.

Fact and History Sheets

These publications containing up-to-date information about the association and its history can also be given out during community events. All languages. (PR-799, PR-800)

Publications List

This guide provides a listing of all the publications available from each division at International Headquarters. All languages. (PR-767)

Billboard Art

Free billboard artwork is available in either an Apple Macintosh Quark or Adobe Illustrator format. Lions interested in the computer disk should contact their local printer to find out which format is preferred. Lions Clubs International is not responsible for any charges incurred from the production or placement of billboards. English only.

Public Relations Examples

These examples demonstrate a variety of proven communication methods to increase your club's visibility within the community. Although achieving public relations success is not difficult, it does take time. The key is diligence and a willingness to experiment with different public relations techniques to see what works best in your community. While it takes a little patience, the results will be well worth the effort!

The following examples may simply be used as inspiration for creating materials or may be adapted and edited to fit club needs. Either way, there is much to be learned from these samples about proper writing style, format and the type of information to include in communication materials.

For instructions on how to prepare these communication tools, refer to the individual sections in this guide.

Marseille Metropole Lions Club

NEWS RELEASE

For Information Contact:
Georges Chastan
Business: 0491 479287
Home: 0491 420061

For Immediate Release

MARSEILLE METROPOLE LIONS ELECT OFFICERS

MARSEILLE, June 19 — New officers of the Marseille Metropole Lions Club were installed during a special ceremony held at the La Cuisine d'Alain Restaurant on Tuesday, June 18.

Claude Robache, a member for seven years, was elected president. In a brief speech to club members, he said his main goals for the coming year are to strengthen membership growth and to increase the club's involvement with the youth of the community.

"Our club's success is directly related to the quality of our members," said Robache, who has brought in nine new members over the past four years. He added, "The needs of our community are changing, and our young people need us more than ever."

The Marseille Metropole Lions already offer two scholarships to graduating students. In addition, the club supports the local children's hospital.

Also installed as officers were: Dominique Rivoire, first vice president; Stephane Cohen, second vice president; Daniel Lambert, treasurer; Paul Muller, secretary; Helène Villarme, director; Chantal Thomas director; Henri Bonte, director; and Nicole Barbe, director.

The next regular meeting is at La Cuisine d'Alain Restaurant on Wednesday, July 3 at 7 p.m. For information, call 420061.

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization. Lions are 1.4 million men and women in 185 countries who volunteer their time and energy to serve their communities and lead the worldwide effort to conquer blindness.

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Atwood Lions Club

NEWS RELEASE

For Information Contact:
Dorothy Livingstone
Business: (905) 223-0091
Home: (905) 493-4748

For Immediate Release

ATWOOD LIONS COLLECT OLD EYEWEAR

ATWOOD, August 12 — Throughout September, the Atwood Lions Club is collecting old, unwanted eyeglasses and sunglasses for the poor in developing countries.

In those areas, eye care is often unaffordable and inaccessible. It is not unusual for an eye exam to cost as much as a month's wages and for a community of hundreds of thousands to be served by a single eye doctor.

"By giving the Lions their used eyeglasses, people can make a big difference in another person's life," said Tony Blackman, Atwood Lions Club president. "A pair of glasses can actually help an adult maintain employment, or a child stay in school."

The Lions will ship the collected glasses to the Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center to be cleaned, categorized by prescription and prepared for free distribution by optical mission teams.

Recycling used eyewear is just one way Lions serve the visually impaired. The Atwood Lions Club also works with Atwood School District to provide students in need with eye exams and new glasses.

To donate used glasses, place them in specially marked collection bins located in Harper Banks, or call Lions Sight Chairman Terry Berringer at 223-8651.

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São Paulo Lions Clubs

NEWS RELEASE

For Information Contact:
Antonio Ribeiro
São Paulo Lions Club
Business: 294-0564
Home: 294-7314

For Immediate Release

LIONS PARK FOR THE DISABLED TO BE DEDICATED JUNE 28

SÃO PAULO, June 13 – Oliveira Park, a playground designed for disabled children, will be dedicated by Mayor Luiz Gomez during a special ribbon-cutting ceremony, at noon on Saturday, June 28.

The park, located at the corner of Centro and Norte, is sponsored by the São Paulo Lions Club in memory of Oscar Oliveira, a Lion who spent the last 20 years of his life helping disabled people in the community.

“Not only did we want to donate something in Ricardo’s memory,” said Pedro Vicente, club president, “we also found a great need for a park for the disabled children in the area.”

Facilities in the park include swings and a carousel that can accommodate wheelchairs.

The São Paulo Lions Club has previously sponsored many community projects for the disabled. They are actively involved with the São Paulo Retirement Center.

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Owensboro Lions Club

NEWS RELEASE

For Information Contact:
Christina Cohen
(502) 717-1013

For Immediate Release

LIONS CLUB DONATES \$5,000 TO CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

OWENSBORO, November 10 — The Owensboro Lions Club will celebrate its 50th anniversary by donating \$5,000 to local charities during a banquet to be held at the Northfield Ballroom on Friday, November 24 at 6 p.m.

At the event, a check for \$1,000 will be presented to representatives from the five beneficiary organizations: Kids Care, Leader Dogs for the Blind, Literacy for Life, Owensboro Senior Center and Dell County Homeless Shelter.

Owensboro Lions Club President Ken Huntly said, "Our club members feel these donations are a great way to mark our anniversary, because giving is at the heart of what Lions are all about."

More than 100 Lions club members from throughout the area are expected to gather for the event that will feature guest speakers State Lieutenant Governor John Mills and Lions Clubs International Past Director George Kramer.

During this past year, members of the Owensboro Lions Club spent more than \$1,500 providing school supplies to children in need. They also recently donated \$4,500 for portable headsets to be used by the hearing impaired during concerts at River Park Center.

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(Letter to the Editor)

Milano Host Lions Club

October 28

Francesco Mazzetti
Editorial Page Editor
Il Giorno
Via Aurelio Saffi
20134 Milano

Dear Mr. Mazzeretti:

The Milano Host Lions Club would like to thank community members for the overwhelming support shown during our Rose Day sales event on October 20. With your help, more than 5,000,000 lire was raised during this year's annual fundraiser.

Collected funds will be used to support the many projects the Lions conduct throughout the year. At least fifty percent is earmarked for sight-related activities, such as providing eyeglasses and examinations to those who could otherwise not afford eye care.

The remaining funds will support other Lions programs, such as purchasing hearing aids and diabetes maintenance kits for those in need.

Special thanks is also extended to the local radio stations for making their listeners aware of the sale.

Your donations will truly make a difference. Thanks for helping us help others!

Sincerely,

Nicola Violo, President
Milano Host Lions Club

(Print Pitch Letter)

Ashford Lions Club

January 27

Sarah Maher
Features Editor
Ashford News & Observer
P.O. Box 451
Ashford, CA 93612

Dear Ms. Maher:

As president of the Ashford Lions Club, I would like to tell you about Joe Hennesy, an outstanding Lion who contributes to the community in many ways. Joe, 46 and a member for seven years, is the guiding force behind the upcoming annual Lions Have-a-Heart Blood Drive, which will be held at Ashford Community College, February 14-15.

As blood drive chairman for the past four years, Joe is credited with doubling its success during that period. His passion for community health issues developed several years ago after assisting with the campaign to find a liver donor for Ashford student Holly Kline. Joe currently serves as a cancer education volunteer and on the fundraising committee at Norridge County Hospital.

The owner of Hennesy's Hardware, Joe has lived in Ashford for 18 years. He and his wife, Cheryl, have one daughter and one son. In the spring, Joe will serve for a second year as the assistant coach for his daughter's city softball team.

Next week, I will contact you to determine your interest in preparing a feature story about this very busy Lion who is making a difference in our community. In the meantime, if you would like additional information, or to set up an interview, please contact me at 717-9394.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Wright, President
Ashford Lions Club

(Broadcast Public Service Announcement Pitch Letter)

Hong Kong Phoenix Lions Club

April 10

Kenneth Choy
Program Director
Hong Kong City Television
117 Shanghai Street
Central Hong Kong

Dear Mr. Choy:

Severe vision loss can be devastating. While many have learned to be aware of the danger signs, such as excessive eye pain and tearing, loss of peripheral vision and intermittent dimming of vision, the biggest tragedy is that several forms of blindness have no warning signs at all. Slowly and silently, sight gradually fades, and before you realize something is wrong, it is too late.

People can often protect themselves from suffering this unnecessary loss by simply having a yearly, comprehensive eye exam.

The Hong Kong Phoenix Lions are committed to educating our community about these facts. You can help by airing the enclosed 30-second public service announcement, "Blindness: The Silent Threat to Sight."

I will be following up with you in a few days to determine your interest in our tape.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Caroline Chung, President
Hong Kong Phoenix Lions Club



Berlin Brandenburg Lions Club

RADIO PSA

Call to Volunteer — 30 seconds

THE GREATEST GIFT YOU HAVE TO GIVE IS TIME, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S DONATED TO A WORTHY CAUSE. AND SOMETIMES, THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU HAVE. EVEN A FEW HOURS A WEEK CAN DO A LOT OF GOOD — BOTH FOR YOU AND THE CAUSE YOU SUPPORT.

BY COMBINING YOUR TALENTS AND THE EFFORTS OF OTHERS, YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIVING WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY. SO GIVE A LITTLE OF YOURSELF. YOU'LL GET A WHOLE LOT BACK.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN VOLUNTEER, CONTACT THE BERLIN BRANDENBURG LIONS CLUB, BY CALLING 030 4827945.

Timberland Lions Club

TELEVISION PSA

Timberland Lions: Celebrating Service — 30 seconds

Visual

kids in classroom

hand putting glasses into collection bin

community center construction

Lions speaking with people at community health fair — club banner in background

Lions assisting people at free eye exam program

montage of old service activity photographs

dissolve into shot of eye bank fundraising event

club members preparing for the festival — making large banner that reads “Thanks for Your Support Timberland”

club member being hugged by child after holiday party

graphic: Lions logo with words “For more information call 515-7059”

Audio

Sponsoring a drug awareness program...

collecting used eyeglasses...

raising funds for the new community center...

These are just a few of the many activities the Timberland Lions have sponsored.

This year is our 45th year of making positive contributions to the community.

And as we look back on a proud past...

we look forward to a future of continued service to Timberland.

Join us as we celebrate our 45th anniversary during the Timberland Summer Festival.

The Timberland Lions Club...serving with pride.

For more information, call 515-7059.

Lincoln Park Lions Club

Fact Sheet

Membership Established in 1968, the Lincoln Park Lions Club currently has 85 men and women members who volunteer their time to perform a variety of community service activities. The group is one of more than 44,000 clubs composing Lions Clubs International, the world's largest service club organization.

Service Programs Worldwide, Lions are dedicated to aiding the blind and visually impaired through programs such as SightFirst, which works to eliminate preventable and reversible blindness. Locally, the Lincoln Park Lions participate in the Lions Recycle For Sight used eyeglasses recycling program. Since 1989, they have collected more than 20,000 pairs of glasses for distribution to needy people in developing nations. The Lions have also assisted hundreds of area residents in obtaining needed eye care and have adopted Highway 55, clearing debris and waste on a monthly basis.

Relationship With Community Youth The Lincoln Park Lions Club sponsors the three Lions-Quest Programs, "Skills for Growing," "Skills for Adolescence" and "Skills for Action," in 60 percent of Lincoln Park schools. Lincoln Park Lions are also annual sponsors of the International Peace Poster Contest in five local schools and youth groups. In 1998, one of the club's sponsored entries was a multiple district winner, advancing to the international semifinal round of competition.

Annual Forum On Drug Awareness Since 1991, the Lincoln Park Lions Club and the Warren County Health Office have co-sponsored an annual community-wide forum during the first week in November to examine the topics of drug awareness and substance abuse. Through a widespread public service campaign, the club increases awareness of these issues. It also aids in the development of new strategies to combat the rise in illegal substance abuse.

Meeting Location Meetings are held at the Lincoln Park Towers, 749 Broadview Avenue, every Wednesday evening at 7 p.m.

For More Information Contact: Sydney Ryan, President
Lincoln Park Lions Club
Phone: (773) 663-5629 Fax: (773) 671-3302

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