

Effective Media Relations at a Glance

Lion Rex Smith (13H)
MD13 Public Relations and Marketing Committee

- (1) **Community service.** Have your club develop an on-going, effective community service program. At the same time, establish an ongoing, viable and pro-active communications program.
- (2) **Media Relations.** Good media relations is important to tell your story. Start by making personal one-on-one contacts with the editors and news directors to determine media policy and general interest. Do not seek coverage by going through the advertising department—that's a "No-No."
- (3) **News.** What makes news? Not everything. Make sure your club event or project generates general public interest. The more people and community organizations involved, the greater the media interest will be.
- (4) **Deadlines.** Media deadlines are very important. Unless you are aware of the deadline, a good story can fall through the cracks. Make sure your news release reaches the editorial desk in advance, never late.
- (5) **Preparation.** Good writing is essential if your release gets in print or on the air. Remember the lead paragraph should contain the "who, what, where, when, why." Your story should be written in pyramid style—building from top to bottom with more details as you go. Always double-space the release and make sure your name and phone number are included.
- (6) **News Camera Tips.** If you are shooting, make sure the photo tells the story. No posing—action photos are the way to go. Call in advance and advise the editor of your club project and the photo-ops. For best coverage invite the media to cover and take their own photos.
- (7) **Release Dissemination.** Effective dissemination of your news story is very important. The best approach is personal delivery to the editor. However, if you are well acquainted with the editor a call in advance, then e-mail or fax will be okay. Always be sure to advise the editor how and when your news story will be coming.
- (8) **Thank You.** When you get good coverage, take time to tell the editor or reporter. However, never say thanks for the space; rather be congratulatory for professional writing and reporting. Remember—you'll be coming to them with another news release in the future, so thanks are in order.
- (9) **Look Ahead.** If your story does not make print or get on the air—don't worry or look back. Just use the occasion to determine any mistakes and take corrective action on your next release. There will always be another story.
- (10) **In Tune With The Times.** Make sure your club's community service program is in tune with the times and is supportive of not only the handicapped and needy, but youth and seniors as well. It is especially important that your service program is pro-active and fulfilling the real needs of the community. Projects reflecting civic cooperation make news. Above all, make sure what your club is doing is news-worthy.
- (11) **PR Reporting.** Keep a record of your PR-Media communications coverage and report it to your president and membership. Make them a part of the PR effort.
- (12) **Be Pro-Active.** Remember that an effective Community Service Program plus a pro-active PR-Communications Activity equates to new member acquisition and retention.

Lionism and its good deeds need not be the community's best kept secret—you and your PR program can make the difference between success or failure.