

Internal Club Public Relations—A Basic Outline

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PUBLIC RELATIONS involves more than communicating with outside audiences. We cannot assume that all of our members are well-informed about events or activities within their own clubs. Before we develop and implement external public relations programs to educate the media and the general public about Lionism, we need to take care of our members.

ELEMENTS OF INTERNAL PR

I. CLUB NEWSLETTERS/BULLETINS: Every club should publish one.

- A. Frequency: Most clubs publish monthly. More often can strain resources; less often is not timely enough.
- B. Content Suggestions:
 1. Calendar of upcoming club meetings/events; Zone or District events; members' birthdays or anniversaries; other dates of interest.
 2. Feature articles detailing upcoming club projects (times, locations, who the chairs are, type of service or fundraising to be done, how to sign up, etc.).
 3. Articles reporting on completed projects (amount of money raised, number of people helped, etc.)
 4. Articles explaining functions of club administrative committees.
 5. Report recent Board actions.
 6. Summarize recent speakers; promote upcoming presenters.
 7. Introduce and welcome new members through short feature articles. Profile veteran members.
 8. Recognize members for awards and achievements both within Lions and in professions or other service.
- C. Warnings:
 1. Be very careful with humor. Don't embarrass or offend individuals either inside or outside the club. Avoid off-color material completely.
 2. Steer clear of controversial issues whenever possible. If you must take them on, be sure to use a fair and unbiased approach in which all sides of the issue are evenly considered.
 3. Be sure to proofread carefully, especially for dates, times and spelling.
- D. Technical Issues—Design, Layout, Production.

Computers and desktop publishing software offer a variety of options for producing quality newsletters.

 1. Pages: single letter-size, multiple letter-size, legal or tabloid folded.
 2. Basic tips:
 - a. Be careful selecting type size. 10- or 11-point body text works well: Any larger can be difficult to work with, smaller sizes can be hard for some members to read.
 - b. Photos and graphics can be effective, but make sure they're of good quality. Don't clutter up your layout with too much clip art. For Lions logos, use official artwork (downloadable from LCI Web site).
- E. Distribution
 1. Distribution at meetings saves money but leaves out the members who most need to read.
 2. Electronic distribution: Make PDF files—distribute via e-mail and post on club Web site.

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3. For those who miss meetings and aren't wired, traditional mailing is still required. Be sure to maintain an updated postal address list. Remember, every member must receive every issue for maximum effectiveness.
 4. Send copies to District Officers, Zone Chairs, neighboring Lions Clubs, District Newsletter Editor, etc.
 5. Enhance your external PR program by distributing copies to libraries, businesses, chambers of commerce, news media, school and government officials, other service clubs, church groups, prospective members.
- F. Underwriting Costs
1. Newsletters are an administrative expense and should not be paid for with fundraiser proceeds.
 2. Some clubs successfully sell advertising or arrange for free or reduced-cost materials or services in exchange for an underwriting credit.

II. OTHER METHODS OF INTRA-CLUB COMMUNICATION

- A. E-mail: Maintain and use an up-to-date list of members' home and office addresses, but keep limitations in mind.
- B. Telephone: Pros and cons of different structures.
 1. "Phone Tree": No member has to make more than a few calls, but system susceptible to breakdowns.
 2. Phone Committee: Requires more commitment and discipline from members, but can be more reliable.
- C. "Face to Face": Don't waste opportunities for member-to-member communication in settings outside the club. Taking an interest in fellow members leads to better communication and more satisfied, committed Lions.



PUBLIC RELATIONS RESOURCES