



## ZONCOMM E-NEWSLETTER

April-June 2009

### THE POWER OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

All organizations – no matter what the product or service – can benefit from public relations. Any organization or individual with a message to deliver or a goal to achieve can benefit from a PR effort. You don't need a creative or unusual product or service to gain publicity. You just need a creative idea that meets two criteria: it's newsworthy and it communicates the marketing message. PR is perhaps the best means of getting your message out on a continual basis.

Another perspective of PR has to do with resources. Many organizations find that a relatively modest investment in PR greatly extends the reach of their total promotional program. Cost is one of the great appeals of PR to both small and large organizations; PR can help level the playing field and get the same or better promotional results for a lot less money.

**Differences Between PR and Advertising** – Public relations is a marketing tool that often gets confused with advertising, two related but very distinct activities. PR is a function of promotion in the marketing mix. Several characteristics separate public relations from advertising, but one fundamental difference is that advertising is paid for while public relations is free. (Of course, PR is not absolutely free because PR staff members usually need to be paid for their services – although in Zonta's case, it *is* free because our members volunteer their time and talents thereby saving money).

- **Advertising is paid for and clearly identified in the media as a paid promotion** while PR is relatively free and not identified as such. (Even though a story about a product or organization may have resulted from a publicity campaign, the article never acknowledges that fact.)
- **Control** – With advertising you have almost total control over content, format, timing, and size of the message. With PR there's almost no control over those items.
- **Repetition** – Advertising is repeatable; PR is not. With PR, a media source is going to run a given press release or cover a publicity event only once. To get covered again, you have to provide the media with a new story, or at least come up with a different angle or new spin on the old topic.
- **Credibility** – Consumers are skeptical of advertising. Because PR is promotion in the guise of editorial, feature, or news material, people don't perceive it as a promotion and believe it. Media coverage of your event or story can often appear to the public to be media endorsement of your organization or product.
- **Attractiveness** – Public relations must have an angle, hook, or theme that engages an editor's attention in order for it to have a decent chance of being noticed, read, and used. Therefore, it must appeal to editors and program managers as well as to consumers. An ad has to appeal only to sales prospects.

PR should be fully integrated into all other forms of club marketing (fundraising, recruiting new members/retaining current members, working with service organizations, fundraising and special event promotions, communications, web site, collateral materials, etc.). It is vitally important that a PR committee member be present during strategic brainstorming. PR should always be in the loop to avoid becoming removed and remote from day-to-day club business. If your PR people are not included, ironically then those assigned the task of communicating club messages and information to various outside audiences (the media, the public, and the community) risk becoming the least informed. Half the job of a PR person is disseminating information to the media; the other half is understanding what the organization is really doing.

Public relations can connect your club with anyone who is exposed to the media. Therefore, PR has the broadest reach of perhaps any element of the marketing mix (which consists of PR, advertising, Internet marketing, direct marketing, and sales promotion). The best publicity outlets for reaching consumers are radio, television, newspapers, and consumer magazines. If you want to appeal to a particular industry or profession, target the trade publications they read. One of the best PR vehicles for club communication is the club web site and newsletters.

### **Specific PR-Worthy Activities**

- Provide news releases about club activities (i.e., fundraisers, special meetings, service projects, etc.).
- Encourage your club to publish newsletters about club and member activities along with information from Zonta International – including *The Zontian*, District and Area news.
- Use signs at entrances to the town and/or meeting place.
- Ensure that information about Zonta is sent to all speakers and guests.
- Represent Zonta at meetings where the mission and objectives are important to Zonta.
- Encourage all Zontians to register on the Zonta International web site and use it as an up-to-date source of information.
- Consider the feasibility of a club web site (see ZI web site, section 60) and if established, ensure that it is continually updated.
- In consultation with the club president, submit club success stories in membership and service projects via the web site and/or your club's newsletter and, if newsworthy to the public, with the media. Be sure to share the news with your Area, District, and International contacts as well.

**Define the Scope of PR Authority** – The Zonta PR chair reports to the club Public Relations & Communications Committee Chair (depending upon your club's size) and the Club President – who have approval authority over all major PR activities including copy for press releases, decisions about event planning or special promotions, and what to say to the press. Because effective PR depends on being able to give the media a fast, accurate, and honest response when reporters have questions, the PR chair cannot operate effectively if everything said in PR – in print, in person, and on the phone – has to go to a half-dozen people to get approval. By the time the response is approved, the story has grown cold and the media is alienated. To make PR efforts effective, the PR chair needs to be able to make decisions quickly, which, means a simplified chain of command. For final approval on major PR events, the PR chair should have to circulate copy to no more than two or three people. For media contact, the appropriate spokespeople within the club, such as the president, should be committed to giving priority to media response and to understanding that the press cannot wait.

**PR Committee Duties** – The PR chair in your club is responsible for PR, serving as a liaison between your club and your PR committee (assuming you have more than one person in your club's PR committee), as well as coordinating communication between your club and the press. Whoever your club selects as the PR chair, that person is in charge of PR and is accountable for getting programs done on budget, on time, and in synch with communications objectives.

Prepare for your PR program by putting together a team (depending upon the size and level of activity of your Zonta Club, the committee may simply consist of a one-person PR chair and/or a two- or three-person PR committee), creating a PR plan, reviewing your strategy, and implementing your PR program.

Visit the Zonta District 5 ([www.zontadistrict05.org](http://www.zontadistrict05.org)) or Zonta International ([www.zontza.org](http://www.zontza.org)) web sites for more specific details about Zonta Public Relations Committee duties.

Every PR chair and committee member should do the following to keep up-to-date with your Zonta club's activities:

- Read all Zonta and related service organization publications.
- Attend Zonta area, district, and international meetings.
- Frequently review your club's web site to make sure it's current.
- Frequently visit competitors' web sites to see what they're up to.
- Talk with other organizations to see what they're doing
- Talk to service organizations your Zonta club is affiliated with to see what they're saying about your club.
- Read the daily newspaper to follow journalists who may write about your club or your competitors.
- Become a student of the media. Analyze your evening news from the perspective of the person being interviewed. How well is she getting her message across? What could she be doing better? How could she be clearer?

## CREATING A PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

Before you start a flurry of PR activities, develop a PR plan that clearly defines the audiences, objectives, and key messages you want to communicate.

### Defining Goals and Objectives

- Key messages you want to communicate usually revolve around club benefits or advantages over competitors, special events, or service projects. However, sometimes the message is simply that Zonta cares about women in the local community.
- Marketing Objective – Identify the end result you want PR to help you achieve.
- Define your target audience(s):
  - Consumers – picture the ideal audience in demographic terms
  - Organization or Business – identify industry and people’s job functions
  - Geography – local, regional, national, or global
- Desired Response – Be specific about what you want your target prospect to do, say, think, or believe after exposure to your PR message.
- Media You Want to Reach – Target any media your prospect is likely to read, see, or hear.

**The PR Planning Process** – Quality creative PR concepts come from a deliberate planning process. Planning begins with research, starting with conducting an assessment of both internal and external factors:

- **Internal factors** include your club’s environment, marketing objectives, and product (your Zonta club) features and benefits. Interview key club officers, members, and potential members. Review all current and past PR and marketing materials, including article clippings and tear sheets, PR archives, club brochures, and other promotional publications.
- **External factors** include the target audience, public, and competing service organizations. Determine where the club and its services are positioned in the marketplace, what people (customers, prospects, and the press) think of them, and what story your club wants to tell in order to change public perception and increase or preserve market share (i.e., membership). Thoroughly search Internet and print sources such as articles, case studies, literature, and other relevant publications.

**Budgeting** – PR costs a small fraction of other marketing methods, but it’s not 100 percent free. Factor in the time involved in planning the campaign and writing the PR materials, plus the cost of printing and distributing those materials and following up with the press. Certain public relations tactics (videos) can actually be pretty expensive. The main expenses are out-of-pocket expenses such as printing and postage, and fees paid to outside vendors such as graphic artists, media lists, etc. Since Zonta members volunteer their PR skills and time, it saves your club that expense.

**PR Plan Format** - Most PR plans follow the same basic set-up once budget is determined.

- **Overview** – An executive summary of existing marketing challenges that the PR campaign is designed to meet.
- **Goals** – What you want the PR campaign to achieve
- **Strategies** – Methods by which to achieve your goals
- **Target Audience** – Types of people you want to reach
- **Key Target Media** – Specific publications and programs toward which to direct your PR efforts
- **Recommendations** – Which PR tactics to use, other ideas, and angles for each tactic
  - **Next Steps** – Action plan for who does what and when

**Hone Ideas to Form Creative Promotions** – The first draft of any document is rarely the best effort (that’s why it’s called a *draft*). Now it’s time to go back and define specific details about the recommendations of which PR tactics you plan to use. The more complete and specific your plan is now the easier your job will be later when it’s time to implement the plan. To make your tactics as creative, original, and engaging as possible:

- **Understand that the media is looking for news** – News, by definition, is anything that is new, different, and creative. This holds true in catching the media’s interest.
- **Accept that often the most successful PR ideas aren’t totally unique** – They may just be old ideas with a new creative slant, so don’t worry if you’re stumped for something new.
- **Don’t lose sight of who you’re creating publicity for** – When writing a press release, be careful not to write it as an advertisement because the media doesn’t run advertisements without getting paid to do so. If you want your publicity to work, you must design your campaign from the public’s point of view.

- **Tie into hot news stories, seasons, or holidays** – Create a PR campaign that ties in with a holiday, special event, or other calendar date. Even if that's not the central theme of your campaign, try to work in an element of timeliness. You can usually find coordinating support stories to use for your own publicity.
- **Tie into an emotion** – Promotions usually work if you can make the media laugh, cry, or even feel anger.
- **Research your media** – If you want to get into a certain column of the newspaper or on a specific TV program, read it or watch it every day and pay attention to the types of stories the journalists like to do. Then fit your news item into that medium.
- **Take stock of your assets when going after the media** – Never lose sight of how your message can be manipulated to move the public and get the attention of the media.
- **Use swaps to grab attention** – A campaign that involves some sort of exchange is a popular, effective way to get publicity. In order to capture the media's attention, the swap must be creative and innovative.

**Evaluating PR Ideas** – Here are some questions to help assess whether a particular idea just sounds good on paper or may actually work in real life:

- **Does the campaign have emotional strength?** Emotion, a compelling sense of understanding and feeling, is PR's primary influence because it secures media placements, shapes decision-making, generates awareness, builds interest, increases response rates, and gets the target audience to believe the message is intended for them.
- **Does it demonstrate the message?** Creating publicity initiatives, events, or promotions that demonstrate rather than state commercial messages is what makes them newsworthy.
- **Can the intended audience relate to it?** A winning campaign focuses not just on what you do but also on what your product or service can do for the audience. This encourages audiences to take notice of the message, change their attitudes, opinions, beliefs, or behaviors, and hopefully take the desired action.
- **Is it a step above the ordinary?** PR should showcase your club's natural strengths and assets so that you stand head and shoulders above the competition.
- **Does it answer the basic questions of *who, what, when, where, and why*?** A good PR campaign plan determines what the exact message is, to whom that message has the greatest relevance, and in what aspect of the target's life the message is best communicated. Know precisely why you have a PR program, what you expect from it, and when you expect to see results.
- **What results do you want?** Determine a budget based on what you want to achieve, and decide how you will measure your progress (amount of funds raised, inquiries, etc.).

**Following Up: The Media Blitz** – The two ingredients of PR success are creativity and hard work. The hard work comes in the media follow up. Call every media outlet to which you sent the press. The more you follow up, the more pickups you get. When you call an editor or producer, ask if he received the materials you sent. About half will say they don't have it, don't remember getting the release, or misplaced it. Send it again via fax or e-mail (ask which method is preferred) and then follow up later that day or the next day.

**Working Your ABC Lists** – Break up the list of media prospects into segments – A, B, and C – as follows:

- A – The prime prospects** – These are your most desirable targets. Include the major media that would bring prestige and credibility to your club if they used your piece.
- B – The smaller publications** – These are the small media that you don't view as essential to your PR campaign. They are the least critical and desirable media outlets (like the free weekly newspaper everyone seems to get).
- C – The remaining names** – This list includes everybody else.

Call the Bs first to practice your pitch. Use feedback to refine your script and improve response to your next list. Then call the As. Do everything in your power to convince at least one of these media outlets to run the story. Lastly, call the Cs and let them know about the prestigious new pickups you have from the A list. The Cs are influenced by big names and are more likely to run your campaign because of the endorsement of the A media.

## **MEDIA SELECTION**

Choose the media outlets to which you want to send your press releases and other PR materials. Because of the incredibly low cost per media contact of PR versus advertising, the media selection process is somewhat different. Advertising can cost thousands of dollars per insertion. In PR, the cost per media contact is literally only the cost of distributing another copy of your press release to different media outlets: about a dollar or less per publication or program. Physical distribution is a minor cost component because the media don't charge you a fee to run your PR materials, so you don't have to pay a pickup cost.

As you study media directories and scan the marketplace to see what's out there, add any media outlet to your list that seems to reach your target market in some way, even if these media are peripheral rather than central to your objective. All of those publications you want to advertise in but can't afford should be on the media distribution list to receive your PR materials. PR is a great way of getting coverage in the media that you want to target but can't afford to through advertising. In PR media selection, when in doubt, send it out!

**Targeting Your PR Efforts** – Target your market in any (or a combination) of several ways: by industry, company size, location, job function or title of prospect, application or use of your services, channels of distribution, affinity groups (prospects with similar interests), users of specific services, and consumer buying habits. After you select your target market, you must then research, identify, and collect information on the media outlets reaching your market segments.

**The Relationship Between PR and the Media** – While publicity is free advertising, it's also legitimate news. By alerting the media to newsworthy events, services, and people, you can prompt an editor to cover just about anything. Use PR to communicate your message, build your image, motivate desired behavior, and generate greater revenues and profits for your fundraisers. PR practitioners persuade the media to publish and distribute stories, articles, news, and information that promotes our goals. It's the media – not the publicist – who is the final judge of what appears in print or on the air. Public relations is, at its best, a win-win partnership among publicists (Zonta PR), the clients whose products they promote (Zonta club projects/name awareness), and journalists. Publicists offer assistance by providing what journalists need – ideas, information, interviews, and even ready-made stories – in abundant supply and absolutely free. The media choose from among the press releases, use them as is or reworked, and discard the rest – with no cost or obligation to the publicists who supply the releases.

**Separating Advertising and Editorial** – The smaller the publication, the less of a separation there will be between advertising and editorial. The free local weekly shopper newspapers distributed in most neighborhoods is a good example. Such newspapers are not reporting hard news per se; they're really in the business of disseminating news about people and organizations in the community. If you send them a press release, they usually publish it. If you place an ad, you may be featured in editorial roundups highlighting local organizations and services. Because many publications give editorial favors in exchange for ad dollars, do not suggest such an arrangement when communicating with staff writers and editors because you may run the risk of offending them (only discuss it with ad salespeople). You'll quickly find out whether and to what degree the advertising department can influence the editor in favor of running the PR story of a particular advertiser.

**Turning the Press into a Client** – Most journalists view PR people as resources who can provide both story ideas and access to sources for stories they're working on. If you're a good resource, your relationship with the media will be a win-win situation. PR people should view their role as not only helping Zonta, but also helping the media do their jobs. Treat the media as customers – consumers of your information – and then tailor information that they actually want and can use. When an editor says that he's not interested in running your story, ask him what type of stories he's interested in and what he's looking for so that you can note his preferences in your personal contact list and can then pitch your next idea in terms that will be attractive to him.

When a publication writes a story about you (or your organization), send a note to the writer saying how much you like the article and what response you've received to the piece. Writers like hearing about responses because it tells them that people are reading their stuff.

### **Breaking Through the PR Clutter**

**Use the surround strategy** – Target your PR campaign to cover all the publications central to a market or audience, then spread out to cover all the other media that your target may read, hear, or see. By taking this approach, you can surround

the prospect with your story and message in multiple media. The message not only gets through, but it also reaches its audience through multiple exposures, thereby increasing credibility and making more impressions.

**Having a Go-To Guy** – Establish someone in your club as an expert on a particular topic relevant to Zonta. This person then becomes the source the media goes to first for commentary on that particular topic. This is a great way to break through the PR clutter because if Zonta is the source the media goes to first, your member – and not that of your competitors – is the one being quoted in stories on your topic.

**Offering an Exclusive** – If you want to place your story in a specific publication or program, offer them an *exclusive*. That means this media contact has first the opportunity to run the story. If this media contact accepts, do not release that story to any other media until the story runs first as an exclusive with that publication or program. Offering the exclusive increases the likelihood that your first choice media outlet will run the story because the media love exclusives. If you get into a prestigious print publication through an exclusive, make copies of the story and include it when sending the release or media kit to other publications after it has run. When the other media, especially broadcast, see the reprint they will be more likely to run the story. Pickup in a big national publication serves as a media endorsement of the story to the other media. Endorsements from the media help convince other media to run your release or cover your event.

**Tie in to an Existing Story** – This method is based on the fact that it's easier to piggyback on a story or event that the media are already covering in force than to entice them out for the sole purpose of covering your story. If cameras are already shooting and you walk in with something they can't help but notice, it's as simple as moving a few inches to the left or right for those cameras to turn on you for a few seconds. And those few seconds are really all you need.

### **Broadcast Versus Print**

Some stories are better for broadcast and some for print. The strength of television is visual, the strength of radio is sound, and the strength of print is the wealth of detail that can be included. For TV news, think of colorful, dramatic ways to demonstrate your story (for example, a colorful display). For radio, music provides an instant background. We live in an age of electronic information with people reading less and watching and listening more. Therefore, getting on radio or TV enables you to reach additional prospects who may not read newspapers or magazines. For print, a long list can be impressive (but don't get too detailed because that turns off readers who have no patience for reading much beyond the end of their nose!).

A key ingredient of attracting publicity in any medium, especially in broadcast, is to be accessible, flexible, and accommodating. Give the media first priority, and accept the first suggested time or date unless you absolutely can't do so. Although producers generally treat guests nicely, behave as if producers were customers of your business: you exist to serve their needs – not the other way around. This attitude gets results.

**Public Service Announcements (PSAs)** - In the U.S., broadcast stations are required by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to run free brief announcements that serve the public interesting order to renew its license. For radio, type the 5 Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) on a 3x5 index card and mail it to each station with a letter requesting they read it during the specified dates. For television, use a brief version of your newspaper press release. Read it aloud and time yourself. It should be no longer than 30 seconds. Some TV stations run a community message board service, which is a series of typewritten announcements flashed on the screen. Again, just send the 5 Ws.

### **Radio**

Many people live with radio – in their homes, in their cars, and on the go. It goes places other media can't. Many consider it their primary method of gathering information because they can multi-task while listening. In fact 82% of adults age 18 or older listen to the radio while they drive<sup>1</sup>. This high percentage might also be attributed to the fact that radio is a medium built on habit. People's radio habits tend to vary little day to day. The selective quality of radio has produced loyal listeners. This loyalty assures advertisers of a consistent audience comprised of the type of listener the radio PR campaign is designed to attract. Most large manufacturers have co-op advertising programs for radio through which the manufacturer reimburses the local advertiser.

AM radio reinvented itself when FM became the dominant form for music. Now AM is thriving again thanks to talk radio format. Opportunities to appear on radio talk shows are plentiful. You don't have to be a celebrity to be a guest on a radio

---

<sup>1</sup>Eric Yaverbaum, Bob Bly, and Ilise Benun, *Public Relations for Dummies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., (Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing Inc., 2006), p. 170.

show. Radio talk shows are a great way to get your message to the world because they are always looking for interesting guests with knowledge of a specialized subject of interest to a particular audience and the ability to communicate this knowledge in an interesting, enjoyable, and clear way that provides numerous PR opportunities. Personalize what you know, reach out, and talk honestly and directly to your listeners as if you're having a conversation. Those listeners must feel the force of your personality.

About a third of these shows are general interest; the others cover specialized topics ranging from agriculture and business to sports, health, personal finance, and travel. Radio can be a very important part of the strategic PR mix, one that often gets overlooked. However, it's a very effective and influential form of communication and should definitely be part of your media plan.

**Satellite Radio** – The advent of satellite radio networks enables radio listeners to have more and more control over what they listen to, whether on their radio or over the Internet. As satellite technologies move into the radio space, it is a blessing for PR practitioners. You can actually single out the audience and focus on strong demographic profiles – you can target specific interest listeners across the country or around the world.

One drawback of satellite radio, however, is because it is so new it is nearly impossible to measure. Although national satellite services promise listeners more choice, consistent niche programming, and less commercial distraction, many do not offer local news, weather, and sports. The future of traditional radio will focus on being live and local and on interacting with listeners in a positive way.

### **Television**

PR is the most inexpensive TV commercial of them all, overcoming television advertising's cost constraints. The same public relations campaign that you design for newspapers, magazines, and radio can work in TV, too, provided that you add a visual element to the campaign. The most appealing visuals are dynamic, showing lots of action. The more unusual the visual, the more it will catch a producer's eye and engage the viewer. Campaigns with an inherent visual element work better on TV than those that don't have a visual component.

By watching TV, you'll quickly be able to figure out which programs are a good fit for your PR efforts, and which your target audience is watching. After you've found a program you think you may want to be featured on, watch it a number of times, paying attention to the format and the types of segments it runs. Think of a way to fit your message into the show's format and – even better – one of its regular segments.

### **Print**

Finding out where to send press releases involves some research. Address press releases to the appropriate editors. If you do not have names, address the New Products Editor, the Business Editor, Education Editor, Features Editor, or the editor of whatever column or section you hope to be published in. If your story warrants more attention, that editor will quickly pass it on.

For press releases of only local interest, the telephone directory or Internet may contain all the addresses you need. For more extensive mailings, you will find useful lists through references such as *Bacon's Media Directories* or *Gebbie's All-in-One Media Directory*, trade and educational associations, and chambers of commerce. Most public libraries, as well as college and university libraries, have directories of newspapers and magazines organized geographically and by subject.

If you are just beginning to write press releases, personal contact with an editor can help. Most editors are willing to spend some time talking about the problems of writing press releases for a specific project or meeting. Such a discussion may help get your story used when your press release lands on the editor's desk. Don't overstay your welcome and never carry in your press release to ask about it being printed. The only answer you are likely to get in such a situation is *maybe* because the editor most likely won't know at that point if it can be used.

**Writing and Placing Feature Articles** – Placing feature articles with appropriate trade, consumer, or business publications is one of the most powerful and effective of all marketing techniques. Unlike a news article, which gives a straightforward report of recent events, a feature article is a longer piece that explores its subject in greater depth. Feature articles often present a detailed case study, explanation of technology, or guidance on how to do something.

**Getting More Print Coverage** – The Internet has changed the way business is done in the U.S., but many people view print media such as newspapers and magazines differently. More than 8,000 magazines and 6,900 daily and weekly newspapers are published in the U.S., and nearly 60 million newspapers are sold every day<sup>2</sup>. To promote your club's interests, you still want to reach print journalists and get your business covered in their publications.

If you give journalists a good story idea, you automatically improve the odds of getting into print. If you give the story to them written, packaged, and ready to go, your chances of getting printed increase dramatically. The best way to deliver such a story is in the standard press release.

For more detailed information about press releases and the print media, refer to the Q1 2009 issue of *ZonComm*.

## **PROMOTING SPECIAL EVENTS**

The decision to organize a special event must take into consideration club members' commitment and ability to be involved as well as the financial resources of the club. The entire club membership must vote to do the event. The club president then appoints a chairman or assigns responsibility for the event to an existing committee. Any event can be used to distribute more information about Zonta. Display boards, promotional products, brochures, newsletters, press releases, and information packets are all helpful tools for promoting Zonta.

Here are some tips to draw visitors and gain publicity:

- Tie the event to current events or news.
- Tie the special event to a holiday, anniversary, or other observance.
- Involve local celebrities.
- Make your own news
- Feature an unusual, interesting, or creative event as part of the overall program.

**Determine the Purpose of Your Special Event** – Here are some possible occasions to hold special events:

- To celebrate or commemorate specific events which are important to Zonta and to inform members and the public. Examples include club anniversaries, member installations or anniversaries, and special Zonta holidays (Amelia Earhart Day/Month, United Nations Day, Zonta Rose Day, and International Women's Day).
- To raise funds by reaching beyond club members to increase attendance.

**Set a Budget** – The biggest drawback of holding special events is their cost, and the second biggest drawback is the sheer amount of work they take to put on. When planning an event, the best place to start is your budget because it will dictate the scope, size, and even the creative approach to your event.

### **Jobs for the Committees**

- **Attendance and Registration** – Printing and distribution of tickets.
- **Finance** – Creates budget, determines cost, handles receipt of funds, disburses expenses, and submits final financial report.
- **Venue** – Selects location for event, handles theme and decoration, selects menu, and arranges audiovisual and lighting needs.
- **Program** – Selects speaker and emcee (as appropriate); arranges for president's welcome, invocation, national anthem, entertainment, speaker honorarium or gift, concluding ceremony; prepares script; and arranges for rehearsal as needed. (Note: The Program Committee should refer to the Zonta International Protocol Manual for details on general protocol and order of precedence during introductions. Suggested ceremonies also appear in the manual.)
- **Public Relations** – Prints invitation, programs, and alerts media as appropriate.
- **Extras** – Favors, door prizes, place cards, name tags or badges, Zonta roses

**Back Time to Control Deadlines** - Establish deadlines on your calendar for the Public Relations tools you will want to produce during the year. Consider each tool separately, think about how long each phase of producing it will take, create mini-deadlines for each phase of the project, working backwards until you identify a start date when you need to begin the project in order to have it in hand when it is needed. This is called back timing. Make a separate project calendar listing all the mini deadlines.

---

<sup>2</sup>Yaverbaum, Bly, and Benun, page 196.

**Promote the Event** – Special events are effective publicity vehicles because they help market your club or service to the public, and they're promotable which can get you press coverage.

**Prepare News Content** – For more detailed information on writing press releases, see the Q1 2009 issue of *ZonComm*.

- Start with a list of the facts. Write down the 5 Ws: Who, What, When, Where and Why.
- You will need to write a press release. Try to work the 5 Ws into the first paragraph.
- Be clear about who your audience is. Write your press release to convince the media that this is important news to your audience.
- Always include a release date: the day you want the news to appear. Always include your name and telephone number so the press can contact you with questions.
- Quotes add interest. Consider putting a key phrase in quotation marks and attributing it to your president (obtain her permission prior to distribution).
- Prepare a summary statement about your Zonta Club to be included in every communication.
- Note the availability of photographs and include photo captions.
- Have at least two other people proofread your material.

**Contact the Press** - Begin contacting the press several weeks before your event because only breaking news (i.e. crime and emergency situations) is written the day before. Fax, e-mail, or hand-deliver your press release a couple of weeks prior to the event. At metro newspapers, be specific when choosing the recipient of your press release. If it is news for the community, contact the community editor or reporter. Only use the managing editor as a last resort. If possible, follow up with a phone call the same day you estimate your written material arrived to ask if they received the news release, if they need any more information, and when they think it will run. Find out if your paper has an online community board where you can post your news – regardless of whether it runs in the newspaper or not. Most TV and radio stations also have free online calendars of events on their web sites so take advantage by posting your news there as well. Sometimes talk radio hosts will agree to an on air interview the day of an event, but this must be scheduled far in advance.

**Paid Announcements** – You can always place advertisements on radio, TV, or in print. This might be an appropriate strategy for a fundraiser when you want to control the content instead of an editor. This can be very expensive to do on television because of production costs that are not included in the price of the airtime.

All media research their market share. Ask to see this research to understand what percentage the station reaches and in what demographic groups. Airtime is priced based on audience size. Spots (ads) can be 15, 30, or 60 seconds. Using an ad agency is recommended for broadcast media.

An unfortunate result of our current economy is a lack of available space for community events and announcements because advertising is down. Paid advertising determines the quantity of content space available. So if you have an event to promote, consider buying some ad space to promote it because doing so often encourages publishers to look more kindly at publishing your PR information for free.

Look over the following press release for an example of how to promote a special event. Visit the Zonta International Web site for more examples and templates.

**ZONTA CLUB OF CINCINNATI & JOSEPH-BETH BOOKSELLERS PARTNER FOR  
COUPONS FOR CHANGE FUNDRAISER ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30**

Cincinnati, OH – The Zonta Club of Cincinnati will hold a Coupons for Change fundraiser in conjunction with Joseph-Beth Booksellers at their Rookwood Pavilion store located at 2692 Madison Road in Hyde Park (513/396-8960) on Sunday, November 30, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. For every customer who presents a special Joseph-Beth/Zonta coupon along with their purchases at checkout, Joseph-Beth Booksellers will donate 20% of the total sale to the Zonta Club of Cincinnati (go to [www.zonta-cinti.org](http://www.zonta-cinti.org) to print out the coupons - please note that it is not a discount coupon). In return, Zonta Club members will staff the complimentary gift wrap table available to all Joseph-Beth customers for their purchases that day. Zonta's proceeds will benefit the Zonta Service Fund, Inc., which is the club's non-profit arm through which money is donated to various charitable causes that align with Zonta International's mission to advance the status of women worldwide.

Zonta Club of Cincinnati President Ellen Spaeth said, "We are pleased to be partnering once again with Joseph-Beth Booksellers for Coupons for Change. Our first Joseph-Beth/Zonta Coupons for Change fundraiser raised \$1,200 and we were able to spread the word about Zonta's mission to advance the status of women – both locally and globally. We hope that the Greater Cincinnati community will turn out once again on November 30 to support both organizations in our efforts to help women in the Greater Cincinnati area because it's a win-win deal for everyone."

Past fundraising projects include the Zonta Club of Cincinnati Annual Garage Sale Scholarship Fundraiser, which provides money for the Ann Rasche Scholarships, and the 2004 and 2006 Quilts for Change juried quilt shows raised money for the Greater Cincinnati YWCA and Women's Shelter, the Rape Crisis & Abuse Center of Hamilton County, and the Center for Peace Education to finance classes to teach non-violent

-MORE-

problem-solving skills to students, parents, and teachers at Chase School in Cincinnati. Proceeds from other fundraisers benefit ongoing programs supporting the Visiting Nurse Association, Bethany House Women's Shelter, and the Tom Geiger Guest House.

The Zonta Club of Cincinnati is a service organization comprised of business and professional women dedicated to advancing the status of women worldwide through service projects, advocacy, education, and program funding to build a stronger community. For more information about Zonta and how to become a member, contact the Zonta Club of Cincinnati via the web site at [zonta-cinti.org](http://zonta-cinti.org), call Dawn Trammell at 513/621-3685, or visit Zonta International at [www.zonta.org](http://www.zonta.org).

-END-

## HANDLING THE MEDIA

The number one rule in dealing with the media is to be available. A journalist on deadline for today's broadcast or tomorrow's edition can't wait for you and won't accommodate your schedule. (General rule of thumb about deadlines: If it's a daily print publication, don't call after 3:00 p.m. If it's a weekly or monthly magazine, don't call late in the week or late in the month.) If you're immediately available, you have a good chance of being quoted or covered in the story. Whatever your story, *it is not as important to the media as it is to you*. Media people are under deadline and if you aren't available right now, they'll do the story without you – or skip the story and do another.

**Become Savvy with Media Interviewers** – The press represents a very unique audience that needs to be treated in a special way. Always remember: People in the press are not your friends. *Never* say anything to a reporter that you wouldn't be comfortable seeing in print, hearing on the radio, or seeing on TV. Reporters will not always honor an *off the record* request. If you say it – even if you *say* it's off the record – it's on the record. The media's job is to report and gather news, not promote your product or organization. They're journalists who are doing a job and the job is to do a story in a fair, accurate, and balanced way. If you give them something juicy, they'll use it whether you like it or not.

**Bettering Your Broadcast Interview Skills** – People who are cool and collected in almost any situation may get anxious when facing the prospect of a TV or radio interview. Being a little nervous is healthy and positive because it creates a heightened sense of awareness. By following the basics, you can calm yourself and deliver a credible performance that interests viewers and gets them on your side. You know more about your organization than the reporter who is interviewing you or the audience. You're being interviewed because you're the expert and your knowledge is your strength. Speak from that strength and you will succeed as an effective spokesperson.

### Handling Media Interviews Like a Pro

- **Start with a goal.** Approach all media interviews with a game plan and key messages in mind. Planning ahead and being prepared is the key to a successful interview. First, develop communications objectives – select one or two core messages to convey during the interview. One way to measure the effectiveness of your PR campaign is to count how many of your message points make it into the articles and broadcasts in which you receive coverage.
- **Preview the media outlet.** Educate yourself in advance about the print or broadcast outlet that will be conducting the interview. Familiarize yourself with the show on which you're going to appear. Know the host's name and manner of interviewing, the format of the show, and what is expected of you.
- **Know the audience.** Ask the producer or the advertising sales department for a media kit. Media kits are designed for potential advertisers and usually give details on the audience demographics such as age, income, family, and economic status.
- **Bone Up on Your Topic.** Read through your press releases, media kit, article clippings, brochures and reports, and whatever source material is the basis for your topic. Take notes on interesting highlights and jot these key facts and figures on a few index cards or a sheet of paper to take with you so that you can study it while you wait to go on the air (for radio shows you can refer to it while on the air without the audience knowing that you're using a crib sheet).
- **Take control of the interview.** *Control* is a key word in planning for a successful interview. Work your key message points into the interview early. Answer questions, but always steer the conversation back to what you want to get across.
  - **Work on a definition of what you do and boil it down to a single brief sentence.** Remind yourself of the two or three key messages you want to communicate.
- **Put Together a Tip Sheet.** Create a list of relevant questions – often called a *tip sheet* because it tips off the interviewer about what he should discuss – you want to answer and give this list to radio and TV producers in advance of the broadcast or taping. Program directors and show hosts are busy and often don't have time to read your material, study your press kit, do their homework, and prepare questions to ask you. So they appreciate it if you prepare the questions for them and submit them before your interview. By creating the questions, you can shape the interview, ensuring that the topics you want to cover are discussed during your appearance.
- **Know in advance the major points you want to make and the messages you want to get across.** Compile a list of questions that are likely to surface during the interview and prepare the answers. Practice saying them in short phrases that you can slip into the conversation in case the host doesn't ask questions whose answers help make your point. Prior to the interview, ask the reporter what topics are going to be covered.
- **Be a credible spokesperson.** Always stick to your area of expertise. Before the interview, gather all relevant facts so that you have them ready to use when appropriate. Be clear and concise. How you handle questions that you don't understand or can't answer for lack of information also affects your believability. If you don't understand, ask for

clarification before responding. If you don't know the answer, offer to get information. Then do so at once and get back to the person who asked. Admitting that you don't know the answer is not a mistake, but failing to follow up is.

- **If you're on a call-in show, arrange for two or three friends to call in with prepared questions.** These calls can get things going, save you the embarrassment of a quiet phone line, and ensure that you get to answer the two or three questions you most want to talk about.
- **Have a free fact sheet, special report, booklet, or reprint that you can offer callers or viewers as a giveaway.** This bait piece contains information that expands on one or more of the topics you discuss on the show. Having such a piece can make the difference between tremendous versus minimal lead generation from a radio or TV appearance.
- **Give away tickets to events on the air.** Consider donating a pair of tickets to the station to use while promoting your event.
- **Handle surprises gracefully.** Being a guest on a radio talk show is not always a winning situation. Getting on the show, preparing, and doing the interview take a lot of effort and time. So when you go to all this trouble and the media appearance doesn't work out, you tend to get upset. But don't let it show. Never yell or complain, and always leave people thinking well of you. This positive behavior increases your chances of getting more and better media opportunities.
- **Don't make product pitches on the air.** Focus on what the listeners need or want, and what their problems and concerns are. You come across as a credible respectable expert. The host promoting your organization or event is more effective than you because it amounts to a third-party endorsement.
- **Be prepared.** Bring any materials that you may need to refer to. Prepare your props so that you don't have to sort through your materials during the interview. Have your toll-free or local telephone number and mailing address handy.
- **Be conversational.** Keep the tone informal, especially during a broadcast interview. Use short words and simple sentences to create an air of informality and avoid industry jargon. Use the names of the person interviewing you and the people calling into the show. By using the reporter's first name, you will be perceived as a warm, caring, and courteous individual. Later in the show, refer by name to people who have called in.
- **Make friends.** You want the media to believe you and write favorably about your club. Introduce yourself to the producer, host, or other contact person. Review the agreed-upon format and subject areas of the interview.
- **Ask to see the studio for the set arrangements.** Sit in the chair to check comfort and lighting levels. Perform a full microphone check. Ask for changes if needed.
- **Take advantage of every opportunity to promote your appearance.** Tell all your club members, service organizations, business associates, friends, and family to let them know about the interview.
- **For in-studio shows, leave for the interview early.** This is one interview for which you absolutely cannot be late!

**Mastering Your Look for TV Interviews** – How you sit is very important. Sit up straight, cross your legs at the knee (not the ankle), fold your hands one over the other (not clasped) on your lap, and lean forward slightly in your chair. This *attack* position helps keep you alert and concentrated. Part your lips slightly when listening; your expression will be less stern.

What you wear is important as well; your wardrobe can speak volumes about you. If you don't dress appropriately, your audience will focus on your clothes rather than your message. Avoid wearing very bright or flashy jewelry and don't wear large or dangling earrings – they don't televise well. Choose comfortable, non-constraining clothes so that you can focus on your message and not have to worry about your garments.

**Framing Your Story** – An effective technique for communicating with any audience is to frame your story within the listener's experience. Framing helps organize your thoughts and present them clearly, and also helps the audience absorb key messages quickly and easily. Frames help reporters and editors structure the story – without having to analyze or interpret the information provided. Depending upon your audience and your message you can use framing in several ways.

- **Frame of definition** – helps introduce a new product, service, or concept by answering these four key questions: What is it? How does it work? Who benefits? Why should anybody care? By addressing these four questions, you give the reporter and the audience a concise, well-structured presentation. You also ensure that the story communicates the key points you want to make.
- **Frame of perspective** – The answers to the following questions quickly communicate your organization's mission and goals to those unfamiliar with you: Where were we? Where are we? Where are we going? Why are we going there?

- **Frame of scope** – Appropriate when your organization deals with a cause, illness, condition, or need. The media is probably somewhat familiar with the problem but unaware of its scope. In your press conference, you should ask the following questions, whether they're asked or not: What is the problem? How bad is it? Who has been affected? What measures are being taken to prevent reoccurrence?
- **Frame of clarification** – Used to correct misconceptions. State the misconception, identify it as such, and then give the correction.

**Handling Hostile Interviewers** – Some interviewers like to heighten the entertainment value of their programs or interviews by baiting their guests or trying to get them emotionally involved. Hostile interviewers are the exception and not the rule. Usually, interviewers are very accommodating and are interested in what their guests have to say. However, being prepared for all types of interviewers is important. In any media interview, total and complete concentration is essential. Total concentration becomes imperative when you're dealing with antagonistic, hostile interviewers. So maintain a polite, distant, and measured stance.

**Phone Interviews** – For call-in radio shows that interview you by phone from your home or office, arrange for absolute silence and no interruptions during the interview. Turn off your radio, too. Finally, be sure to have a glass of water handy and that the air conditioner or heater if not turned up too high. You want to be comfortable before you begin because you won't be able to get up and change anything after the interview starts.

**Press Conferences** – Only hold a press conference if you have an important, breaking news story that every media company in town will insist on covering. The story should be major news; reporters and on-air personalities don't want to be dragged away for a trivial announcement. Use press conferences as tools only when you want a large number of reporters who are eager to cover a story with equal access in the most time-efficient manner.

**If the Media Come to You** – Sometimes you may be in the news because of or your expertise about a topic in the news or because of a current crisis, so the media will call you for an interview. While you may be interviewed for several minutes, only 15-20 seconds will appear on tape. This is called a *sound bite*. This is extremely important: **plan what you want say in advance**. Think of the main point you want to make. Write it down, and edit it to 15-20 seconds. Rehearse it until you can say it without reading. Without a plan, you may forget important points that you want the public to know and/or sound unorganized as well as unprofessional.

**Interview Tips** – The segment length is defined by the producer, which severely limits your interview time. Listeners prefer crisp, concise answers, and lose attention if you're windy. Keeping all that in mind, here are some general tips for making your radio or TV appearance a success;

- When asked a question, restate it before giving your answer.
- Be brief – after 20 to 30 seconds, you're probably over answering. If an answer goes longer than that, summarize.
- Demonstrate that you're an authority by using facts to enumerate your points.
- Use dramatic statistics and findings to grab your audience's attention.
- Elaborate beyond yes or no responses. Make specific points and cite examples to bring home each point.
- Don't come off like a stiff – be relaxed and let your personality shine through during the interview.
- Be positive and show enthusiasm and conviction.
- Don't repeat or paraphrase a damaging question. It's okay to interrupt a question based on a false fact or premise.
- End each segment with an upbeat, summarizing benefit of following your advice or using the product you're selling.
- Find something you can show or demonstrate. The most boring visuals are *talking heads* – people being interviewed on camera. You can only get away with straight video with a personality who has strong charm, charisma, or appeal on camera. If you're a great guest – photogenic, enthusiastic, appealing, and maybe a bit unusual – you may be a natural for television and able to get by just on your own appeal, but that's rare. For most people, improve the odds with a clever campaign built around an engaging visual element.
- Read newspapers and watch TV to catch late-breaking news.
- Stay focused and keep talking. Look the interviewer in the eye even if she isn't looking at you. If you look your best and maintain an alert, attractive presence, you'll come across as the kind of person who cares about yourself, your organization, and your audience.
- When talking to the audience, look into the camera lens as if you're looking directly at the person asking the question and talk directly into it.

- If the subject is light, show your sense of humor but don't tell jokes. Short anecdotes are effective. If it's serious, let your feelings show on your face. Generally, it's best to show dignity and calmness instead of going displaying feelings of anger.
- Even if you think you've said something inaccurate, keep talking, perhaps correcting yourself in the next few sentences.
- Allow studio personnel to put makeup on you. It will make you look better.
- Drink water or warm tea with lemon to loosen up your throat. Avoid milk products and powdered donuts.
- Take a few minutes to relax and gather your thoughts.
- Remember posture, eye contact, and gesture rules.
- Stay positive. Remember that you're trying to reach the audience – not the interviewer.
- Have fun! The interview will turn out best if you relax and enjoy yourself. Being enthusiastic about the subject will make the interview a pleasure for the host and the viewers.

## FAQs

**Q #1:** Here's a draft of a press release promoting a special event requesting input from a PR standpoint.

The Zonta club of \_\_\_\_\_ will be honoring 12 outstanding young women on this day with a reception at \_\_\_\_\_ country club. The girls were originally picked by their schools as the outstanding girl in the senior class of her high school. Their resumes were sent to Zonta club of \_\_\_\_\_. Our committee studied their resumes and selected 12 for their outstanding contribution to their school and to their community. These 12 girls, their families and their schools will be honored at the reception on May 8, 2009 - international women's day. Each girl was given a certificate naming her as the outstanding young woman in her senior class. They will also receive a similar award at a special awards ceremony at their school.

**A:** This sounds like a very newsworthy event, so hopefully your PR & Communications Chair or Committee will write a press release about it. With the template I sent you, it should be easy to insert this information for the first paragraph and then proceed with the rest of the press release, which of course can be edited if you don't want to include that much information or you can insert more information about your club instead of so much of the ZI information (see the example I sent utilizing the template).

A few suggestions:

- 1) Instead of saying, "Our committee," replace it with "The Legislative & Awareness Committee" (or whatever the name of the committee is that you're referencing). Look at how articles are written for the newspaper. Unless they're quoting someone, they do not use "our" or "I".
- 2) Insert the actual date of the reception instead of saying, "on this day" – if the publication does not print the press release on the day of the reception, no one will know when it occurred (or will occur). Also, if the press release is being sent out prior to the reception perhaps the publication would like to send out a reporter to cover the event (this would be really an ideal situation, but somewhat unlikely unless it's a slow news day – but you never know so why not give them all the information? It can't hurt to include the date; the idea is to make all the information readily available to the publication to make it easy for them to publish your press release.)
- 3) If the press release will be distributed after the reception, if at all possible send a photograph and be sure to identify each person in the picture. Also, be sure to note that there is a photo included in the header by stating "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – PHOTO INCLUDED".
- 4) Should the May 8, 2009 date be March 8, 2009 (which is International Women's Day)?
- 5) Be sure to include the contact information in case the publication needs more information.
- 6) Print the press release on your club's letterhead to give it more official to the recipient media outlet.

I think this is an excellent way to promote International Women's Day and I wish you the best of luck with your reception and press release! Please let me know if you have any questions or need further explanations or examples

**Q #2:** We are updating our Zonta brochure for the club. Can you please send us copies of what you believe is a model brochure? (do they exist? And, is there any required info that has to be included in the brochure other than what we have now? A draft of their club brochure was attached.

**A:** I have looked over your brochure and think you've made a great start here. I know from personal experience in creating our club's brochure that it is not easy. Take a look at it on our web site as an example to consider (obviously each club's brochure should be unique). The challenge in creating our brochure was to differentiate it from ZI's brochure and yet tie it together with a common message and mutual goals. We looked at a couple of Zonta club brochures that were posted on the ZI web site and at the Zonta Club of \_\_\_\_\_ brochure before deciding upon our final version. We are also extremely lucky to have a professional graphic artist as a member, so if you've got someone familiar with graphics that's willing to help, you may ask for some layout assistance.

I made some revisions to your brochure using the Track Changes feature in Word, which is also described below, in addition to a few other recommendations or considerations for you to think about.

- 1) Is *Area* part of the Zonta Club of \_\_\_\_\_ name? If not, it sounds awkward to me (and also confusing because your club is in District 5, Area 1) but that could just be my personal preference and the general public probably does not know the difference anyway.
- 2) Delete the numbers under the *What is Zonta?* section – I cannot see that they serve any purpose since there are only two.
- 3) Only use quotation marks when you are actually quoting a person (and be sure to identify the person being quoted). Modern writing uses the italic font in place of quotation marks when not actually quoting someone. (FYI: Quotation marks were originally used when printers and typewriters did not have italic fonts to set apart certain words.)
- 4) Under *The Zonta Club of \_\_\_\_\_ Area* section: (a) capitalize the *C* in *Club*, (b) delete the comma after *1961*
- 5) Under *Zonta (I added Club) of \_\_\_\_\_ Area....*: (a) do the two scholarships mentioned have names? If so, use them so that the community can identify which scholarship may apply to them, (b) delete the quotation marks around *Treasure Boxes*, (c) in bullet point #7, change *fund* to *funded*, (d) in bullet point # 8 about the Celestine T. (Maschari) Braunstein Scholarship, spell out *two* (not 2 – numbers under 10 should be spelled out), and spell out *SHS* – don't make people guess what it stands for and should there be a period after the T in Celestine's name? (e) in bullet point #9 about *Advocates for women's issues, hosting educational....*delete the comma between issues and hosting, add *and* and insert parentheses around *i.e. eliminating....*
- 6) Under the *Programs are Funded via:* section (a) either single space the description under *Annual Fall Sale of Gourmet Nuts* or double space the other two fundraiser descriptions for continuity and it just looks more attractive, (b) capitalize *Uniquely* and *Pins* to match the descriptions of the other fundraiser descriptions, (c) capitalize the *F* in *Funded*, (d) *Fund-raiser* should be changed to *Fundraiser* (no hyphen), (e) *Hand-crafted* should be *handcrafted* (no hyphen)
- 7) In the club information box: (a) add periods – should be *P.O.* – and a comma between \_\_\_\_\_ and *Ohio*, (b) since the e-mail address is too long to be written all on one line, put *yahoo.com* on the second line – people will figure it out.
- 8) I would recommend re-wording your *Vision* description because it sounds like you just want your club to be well-known rather than your work and I'm sure that's not your intent. You could say something like: *Increase visibility and awareness of Zonta Club of \_\_\_\_\_ programs to reach and improve the lives of women and families in the \_\_\_\_\_ community* – or something similar that gets your idea across.
- 9) There are two blank pages at the end of the brochure and I cannot eliminate them for some reason. If you have the brochure printed somewhere, this will cost extra for the unnecessary pages so I'd try to delete them if at all possible.

Feel free to contact me either via e-mail or phone if you have any questions or would like more input. Good luck with your new brochure. Please share your final version with us in the district – I know you'll turn out a great product.