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Promoting Your Club and Rotary



Your key resources for public relations efforts include [*Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs*](#) (257) and Rotary's [Online Media Center](#) where quality, media-ready materials can be previewed and downloaded for free.

Rotary is the world's premier international humanitarian service organization and should be promoted as such. When people are aware of the outstanding humanitarian accomplishments of Rotary clubs and districts, they respect the organization for its contributions to the community, and become more interested in becoming a part of it.

Every Rotary club should develop and execute a successful public relations plan to make their community aware of their club and the organization. Part of your role as club president is to ensure that your club is providing a positive public image for itself in the community and for Rotary in the world.

Responsibilities

As president-elect, you have these public relations responsibilities:

- Appointing and meeting with your club public relations committee
- Reviewing your club's current public relations initiatives, using the Planning Guide for Effective Rotary Clubs (appendix 2)
- Setting public relations goals, using the Planning Guide for Effective Rotary Clubs
- Ensuring that your club is planning projects and activities that will attract positive media attention

As president, you have these public relations responsibilities:

- Serving as the club spokesperson when working with the media, or identifying a fellow club member to serve as spokesperson
- Providing regular updates to business and civic leaders, young people, and other organizations on Rotary's mission and the club's community efforts
- Cultivating relationships with local media and other organization representatives
- Encouraging club members to seek opportunities to further the aims and accomplishments of Rotary through personal, business, and professional contacts
- Seeking publicity for successful service projects or other activities that illustrate Rotary's mission and accomplishments
- Using social media to make your community aware of club events and activities

Through effective public relations, your club will be able to

- Enhance your club's public image
- Gain support and resources for projects
- Build links with other community organizations
- Attract qualified members
- Recognize Rotary members for their contributions to their community
- Correct misconceptions in the community about your club and Rotary

One of the three priorities of the RI Strategic Plan is to enhance public image and awareness. Rotary clubs are encouraged to

- Unify image and brand awareness
- Publicize action-oriented service
- Promote core values
- Emphasize vocational service
- Promote their networking opportunities and signature activities

Club Public Relations Committee

The club public relations committee's role is to develop and execute a plan to inform the public about Rotary and promote your club's service projects and activities. As the main spokesperson for your club, you will help implement and continuously evaluate your club's public relations plan. Your club may amend its bylaws to reflect the specific responsibilities of your public relations committee, adding subcommittees as needed.

When appointing your club public relations committee, select Rotarians who are articulate and knowledgeable about Rotary International and your club. Choose a committee chair with professional public relations or media experience and who is familiar working with the local media.

For more information, see the [Club Public Relations Committee Manual](#) (226C).

Your club public relations committee has the following responsibilities:

- Achieving club public relations goals for the coming year (see the Public Relations section of the Planning Guide for Effective Rotary Clubs in appendix 2)
- Familiarizing themselves with RI public relations resources
- Creating awareness of club activities among club members, media, and the general public
- Enhancing projects and activities to make them more appealing to the media
- Helping to create a public image conducive to membership development

Effective public relations requires time, effort, and planning. Before the beginning of the Rotary year, have the club public relations committee develop an action plan that identifies the audience, strategies, and tools, and the projects and activities that will be promoted. For more information about the components of public relations, see the *Club Public Relations Committee Manual*.

You can order promotional materials and publications at shop.rotary.org, including

- *What's Rotary?*
- *This Is Rotary* DVD

Your governor, assistant governor, district public relations chair, and Rotary public image coordinator can advise and assist clubs in public relations matters. The *Media Crisis Handbook* (515) outlines how to handle adverse publicity.

Answering Questions about Rotary

As the president, you are the Rotary spokesperson for your club. Because you will regularly be speaking to the public at project events, dedications, and other occasions, you should be prepared to answer each of the following questions in no more than 25 words:

- What is Rotary?
- Who are Rotarians?
- What does Rotary do?

Your answers should be positive, factual, specific, and brief. Avoid using Rotary language that non-Rotarians may not understand. Find important key messages in appendix 12. For circumstances that call for a more formal or longer address, consider the following tips:

- Think about who your message is for and modify your presentation to appeal to them.
- Prepare an outline of topics you want to include.
- Practice your address and time it.
- Prepare a list of questions you would like to ask club members.



Call to Action

What will you do to promote your club?

What will you do to promote Rotary International?

How can you prepare to serve as your club's spokesperson?

What innovative ideas will your club try to make your community more aware of Rotary?

Appendix 12: Rotary Key Messages

Rotary is an international humanitarian service organization.

- Rotary members are business and professional leaders who volunteer their expertise, compassion, and power to improve communities at home and abroad in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.
- Rotary is a worldwide network of 34,000 clubs comprised of inspired individuals who translate their passions into social causes that change lives and improve communities.
- Our track record of success is demonstrated by the millions of people who have achieved and sustained a better quality of life through Rotary.

Rotary's top goal is to eradicate polio worldwide.

- Rotary, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and national governments, is close to eliminating the second human disease in history after smallpox with a 99 percent reduction in polio cases worldwide since 1985.
- Rotary members have contributed more than US\$1 billion and countless volunteer hours to help immunize more than 2 billion children in 122 countries.
- Rotary has nearly reached its milestone of raising an additional \$200 million to match a \$355 million challenge grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Rotary is on the forefront of tackling major humanitarian issues facing the world today.

- Maternal and child health, clean water and sanitation, literacy, and disease prevention and treatment are among Rotary's top areas of focus.
- Rotary's goal-oriented business model approach has attracted other organizations to partner with us to address these shared humanitarian priorities.

Rotary invests in people to generate sustainable economic growth.

- Rotary supports grassroots entrepreneurs and helps prepare young people and women for meaningful work.
- Rotary helps communities increase their capacity to support sustainable economic development.

Rotary builds peace and international understanding through education.

- Rotary's Peace Centers program offers graduate degrees and professional development certificates in peace studies to more than 110 applicants each year at seven campus-based centers worldwide.
- Today, more than 600 Peace Fellows are in key, decision-making positions in governments and organizations around the world.
- Rotary's Youth Exchange program fosters international goodwill by enabling 8,500 high school students to live and study abroad each year in 115 countries.

