

# Public Relations

The progress made by Rotary worldwide in membership and TRF contributions is satisfactory. RI President D K Lee is elated with the results. But rapid progress can be achieved only if we double our efforts to enhance our image in the society. This calls for a dedicated effort in public relations exercise.

Public relation is any communication between an organization and its publics. It forms a relationship between the club and non-Rotarians in the community. Local newspapers and TV channels have many times neglected news from Rotary clubs. Press ignores Rotary's service efforts in favour of stories about crime, corruption, gossip, cinema and agitations. When the media is allotting so much space for the 'bad' news how do we promote the 'good' work of Rotary?

Rotary addresses the problems in the community. Rotary addresses the bad news. Rotary is not the story. When the essence of a project is determined and the larger community benefit is sold to the journalists,



it becomes a story in the media. The story is not that Rotary is involved, but what is being done.

Regular events and projects that involve the community attracts media attention. Human interest stories of how Rotary affects the individual – that's what media cares about.

As a seasoned leader of Rotary, with immense influence with the Rotarians of your District you can promote excellent relations within the community through the Rotary clubs. One way to popularize Rotary in the community is to make them read about

the 'good' work Rotary clubs are doing. This can be done by gifting a large section of your friends and relatives with the Rotary News magazine, The Rotarian magazine or the sending the club bulletins to a large section of the people in the area.

Rotary International stressed the need for public relations and advocated the need to publish a Rotary magazine. April was designates as the 'Magazine Month.' According to democratic principles and practice, the public is the ruler of the state and it should be informed correctly. Without publicity there can be no public support and without public support every service organization will decay.

This is abundantly clear when we see that after nearly 103 years of existence Rotary clubs have to struggle to raise funds from the public for their noble causes. The day has clearly gone forever for Rotary where the small groups of members know the community and are able to raise the required funds through personal contacts.

Publicity may be an evil substitute to some, but it has come to stay and every year its potency is increasing.

Lack of correct information in a trustworthy medium can create a public opinion which may be formed on wrong basis, yet generally can have a strong underlying justification. Public opinion is omnipotent. Hence the need for a professional approach to public relations in Rotary assumes importance, especially when Rotary is set to achieve the goal of polio eradication and needs contributions to carry on the work of advocacy in India with more vigour.

If Rotary has to survive and prosper, it is essential that it has to be in the good books of the community. Building a public image means educating the people on what is good about Rotary.

To start with, the Rotary publications can help in assisting you to spread the good word around. So, make a list of all the people who matter in your community. Give them more information.

Public relations efforts depend on the attainment of success out of specific action, the right action at the right time.

Start attracting public attention now!



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