

THE   
FORMULA

PUBLIC RELATIONS
TOOLKIT

LOVE IT.
SHARE IT.
LIVE IT.



INTRODUCTION

This public relations toolkit will provide everything you need to share what your new or existing club is doing in your local community. You'll educate your community about Kiwanis and club activities. You'll represent Kiwanis as a spokesperson by promoting special events. You'll also tell the larger story of Kiwanis International and the impact we make on communities around the world. And, you'll help create public awareness about the Kiwanis brand. Remember, all external communication is [branded Kiwanis](#). This keeps your message simple and easy to understand!

We've designed this toolkit to make your job as easy as possible. New clubs will find resources to publicize special milestones—the charter ceremony, first fundraiser, first service project and first membership drive—to help raise awareness about the new Kiwanis club and its mission. Existing clubs will find resources to publicize service projects and fundraisers to raise awareness about your club and its mission.

Enthusiastic local participation will be the key to your success. We encourage you to customize these materials to fit your club. Feel free to contact us along the way for help, feedback and advice.

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GETTING STARTED

Your Personal PR “Kit”

No one knows Kiwanis better than you do! Enclosed you will find your own virtual public relations toolkit to help you turn that knowledge into relationships with members of the news media. You'll find everything you need to be successful at telling the Kiwanis story to your local media.

Remember, the more publicity you attract, the more you'll share the Kiwanis story with your community, and the more potential new members you'll attract. Be sure to review the kit and customize the materials for your club and for your community.

We've included the following materials:

Public relations training

1. **How to build a media list:** To start spreading the word, you'll need to build a local media list. *Before you start publicizing, you need to find out who should receive these materials.* This is the first step to getting great publicity.
2. **Media relations:** This document will walk you through the best ways to approach the media and give you tips to make sure your pitch and story idea stand out.
3. **Interview training:** This document will help you prepare for in-person and phone interviews with the media, and it provides tips for use before, during and after the interview.
4. **Capturing clips:** This document will help you keep track of any media placements you secure and provides information on how to share clips with the Kiwanis International public relations team.
5. **Website:** Visit Kiwanis.org for additional tools, such as the templates listed below, the Kiwanis logo and brand guidelines.

Templates and tools

1. **Media alert:** This media alert will help you inform your local media about special events, such as the chartering of a club or its first service project. Send these out one week before your event.
2. **Media release:** This release is a great way to spread the word about your new club and what it will do for the local community. You'll see we've made it easy to customize with your information; all you need to do is fill in the highlighted areas. We've also left a placeholder for a quote from a charter club member. Existing clubs can also use this template to announce a new club focus or a new signature project.
3. **Just the Facts:** This document can be sent to the media along with your media release. It's a quick overview of Kiwanis International.

>>**Next section:** How to build a media list

HOW TO BUILD A MEDIA LIST

To spread the word about Kiwanis and to build buzz in your local market, you need to know where to begin—and with whom. The best way to start is by building a media list. Here’s how.

1. Build your media list the same way you would build your professional network.

Relationships are the best starting point when pitching your story. Think for a minute about who you know. Do you have any contacts on staff at the local newspaper or TV/radio stations? Do you know anyone else who might? If so, those contacts might help you get your foot in the door. And if the media professionals you contact say they aren’t the right reporter or editor, they’re usually kind enough to refer you to the appropriate person.

2. Identify the media outlets that might be interested in your story, and start to make a list.

Think about the following types of media that are in your town or within a radius of about 30 miles. For smaller towns, you might want to opt for a larger radius.

- **Print (magazines and newspapers):** What is the biggest newspaper in town? Does your community/neighborhood have a smaller newspaper or a business journal? How about a city or regional magazine that focuses on what people are doing in your community? Try to focus on the biggest media outlets in your club’s community, as well as any neighborhood publications close to your club.
- **TV:** What are the major TV stations in town? Do they have morning or midday shows that feature interesting events or organizations in your community? Do any TV news anchors specialize in philanthropy or service—and for that reason have a natural interest in your story?
- **Radio:** Your club’s project or event would make a great interview opportunity for radio morning shows. Think about the most popular radio hosts in your town. Would they be good fits for a philanthropy or service story? What morning shows do you listen to in the morning?

3. Once you’ve identified media outlets, check each outlet’s website for contact information.

Many stations list contact information for a newsroom, editor or reporter. Search for email addresses and phone numbers to add to your list.

4. Identify the right contacts at each media outlet. Your contacts will have different titles based on media type:

- **Print (magazines and newspapers):** Regional magazine editors, newspaper volunteer section or philanthropy section editors. At smaller newspapers, ask for the name, phone number and email address of the managing editor or special sections editor.
- **TV:** News assignment editor, as well as the producers of the station’s morning, midday and/or talk shows.
- **Radio:** News director, producer of the station’s morning and/or talk shows. Be cautious about approaching “shock jock” stations that may not handle your news in a tasteful manner. Usually, news or talk stations are more receptive to pitches because they have more room for stories that are not timely or “breaking” news.
- **Online:** If the website is run by one individual, you only have one option. If you are targeting an online news site, look for someone who covers community news.

Note: Do not contact the advertising department with a story idea.

5. **If you can't find a particular reporter's email address or phone number on the website, start making phone calls.** Ask the receptionist or newsroom contact for the correct person to approach regarding philanthropy or service. Keep records of everyone to whom you talk, and make sure to get the correct spelling of names, email addresses and phone numbers.
6. **Understand how much time ("lead time") various media outlets need when you distribute press materials to the people on your list.**
 - Daily and weekly newspapers, radio stations and television talk shows usually require about one to two weeks' notice.
 - Magazines usually prefer a few months' notice, so don't expect to see coverage right away. Since most city magazines set their own print deadlines, it's best to simply call and ask how much advance notice they require on a story.
 - Local television and news assignment editors prefer only a week or a few days' notice.
 - Online sources can post items very quickly, so send the information a few days or a week in advance.

Congratulations on building a great media list! Now it's time to get your information ready to send to everyone on your list.

>>Next section: Media relations

MEDIA RELATIONS

We appreciate your efforts to raise awareness about your Kiwanis club. Every opportunity to further Kiwanis' brand awareness and highlight your club will create opportunities to build membership!

Once you've created your media list, pitch your event to create public awareness opportunities. Be sure to use the customizable templates!

Using a new club opening as an example, here's how:

- New club announcement: Write and distribute press release announcing new club.
- Charter ceremony: Write and distribute media advisory.
- First fundraiser: Write and distribute media advisory prior to event. Use the press release to summarize the event's success.
- First service project: Write and distribute media advisory prior to event. Use the press release to summarize the event's success.
- Membership Drive: Write and distribute media advisory.

Be sure to send out your media materials via email and follow up over the phone with your contacts to encourage them to "spread the word."

A step-by-step checklist

- 1. Customize the media release or media advisory.** We've provided you with a "shell" of a release that includes details about Kiwanis. Now you just need to fill in the release with your localized information (community facts, what you're doing for an event, your contact information, etc.) and you're ready to go! Remember: The more local the story, the more appealing it will be to the media.
- 2. Distribute your customized media release or media advisory to your media list.** Email is probably the best and easiest way to send your information in a timely and cost-effective manner. Do not send the release as an attachment in your email. Copy and paste it into the body of the email. Include photos as an attachment. Use a catchy subject line to make sure it doesn't get lost in their inboxes. Be brief, get to the point and emphasize the local angle—but don't be afraid to be creative.
- 3. Make follow-up calls.** After you've distributed your media materials, pitch your story idea to your media contacts. If you email the information, you can begin making your follow-up calls the very next day.
- 4. Be efficient.** When making calls to your contacts, remember:
 - Reporters, editors and producers are almost always working against deadlines, so keep your conversations brief and to the point. The best time to reach print reporters is usually before 3 p.m. (unless the newspaper is an afternoon paper). Television reporters and assignment editors are usually available to discuss story ideas between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
 - Don't ask, "Did you receive the materials I sent?" Reporters hate this question. Try saying, "I sent you information a few days ago. I'd be happy to tell you more and get you additional details if you're interested."

- Be prepared to talk about your story. When you've got your media contacts on the phone, it's a great opportunity to explain more about any events or fundraisers you're hosting.

5. **Think about what the media really want.** Overall, the media love local stories—what's happening to people in their community, how it fits into an overall national trend, what impact it has on other people in town, etc. That's where your story will resonate the most. If you remember three things, remember these three: local, local, local.

In addition, different media outlets respond to different key points. For example, television news programs respond to visual scenes, so make sure you send them visuals—such as photos or even videos—to use as well. Radio stations respond best to one-on-one interviews, so mention that you could come in for an in-studio interview or be available for a live phone interview. Print contacts usually ask for the most detail and for statistics to prove the validity of your story. Print contacts also appreciate visuals.

6. **Realize you might have to re-send the information.** Newsrooms are hectic places, so don't be surprised if your contact mentions he or she has misplaced the news release, or that the materials have been routed elsewhere. Be prepared to send another copy.
7. **Meet deadlines.** While your contacts already have the news release, they may require additional information or want to interview you for a longer story. Always return phone calls and requests for information in a timely manner. Most publications have specific issue dates and deadlines that cannot be extended.
8. **If the media respond, be ready.** Read and review your message points. And remember, media relations is a lot like sales: You may have to talk to many people to close just one deal. But it's worth it—one local story gives thousands of people an opportunity to learn more about your Kiwanis club.

>>Next section: Interview training

INTERVIEW TRAINING

If a reporter or editor is interested in a story about Kiwanis, he or she may want to interview you in person or over the phone. Interviews are a perfect opportunity to share your messages with the public, so make sure you're prepared.

Before the interview

1. **Get as much information as possible about the interview.** Most reporters will share what they hope the article will discuss—and what they hope you will bring to the story.
2. **Know your key messages.** The better acquainted you are with the messages you want to deliver, the more easily your story will flow. Don't memorize a script, but try to make the words your own. Practice answering questions in a quiet space at home or even in front of a mirror. The more you speak your key messages out loud, the more comfortable you will be when it's time to answer questions.
3. **Rehearse with a fellow club member, friend or coworker.** This may sound silly, but practice with another person helps you get comfortable using the message points when you're asked questions during the actual interview.

During the interview

1. **Pace yourself.** If the interview is for a television or radio station, ask whether the interview will be live or taped. Live interviews normally last only two or three minutes, and there is no opportunity for editing. A taped interview might last five or ten minutes, because the reporter will have time to edit the story before it airs.
2. **Think of the interview as a conversation.** You can even think of the reporter as a potential new friend—but be aware that the reporter's main objective is an interesting story. Don't share anything you don't want to see in print or on television. That said, relax—the reporter isn't an enemy. He or she knows you are a volunteer and promoting your club, and might want to help spread the word.
3. **Remember, the media like to tell stories in personal terms.** Think about the impact your club has had on your community or share a story of someone who inspired you.
4. **Weave key messages into your story.** You can make your points most effectively when you can use your personal experiences as examples.
5. **Relax and be yourself.** You don't need to pretend you have information or expertise that you really don't. If you don't know an answer, just say so.

After the interview

1. Ask the reporter whether there are other facts or information he or she will need to complete the story.
2. Find out when the story will run—or ask for the reporter's estimation.
3. Make mental notes about the interview—how it went and what you will do differently the next time.
4. Reward yourself for a job well done!

Additional tips for television interviews

- Know what you want to communicate, and don't be afraid to repeat yourself. Live by your key messages. Develop three key messages to help you tell your story.
- Short answers are better than long ones. Stop talking when you're done making your point.
- This is not a confrontational interview. Smile while you're talking. You'll sound more enthusiastic. This is particularly important if you are doing a radio interview.
- Don't overlap the interviewer's question. Begin your answer when he or she is finished.
- Speak in complete sentences. Practice your sound bites, the sentences television reporters will use, before the interview.
- Avoid jargon, abbreviations and acronyms (e.g., SLP, ICON, etc.). Speak simply.
- Don't repeat a negative. For example: If you were asked, "Aren't you an alien?" you wouldn't reply, "I'm not an alien." You might say, "Actually, I'm from Cleveland."
- Keep your hands free, open and animated. Gesture as you normally would but avoid large gestures. Avoid touching the area of your jacket or shirt if your microphone is clipped there.
- Plan what to say if asked, "Is there anything else you'd like to say?" You should recap each of your message points as a response.
- Always assume the camera is on.
- Resist the urge to lean into or grab the microphone. Look at the reporter, not the camera.
- Television is an intimate medium. Speak in personal, anecdotal terms. Use analogies to illustrate your point. Don't be afraid to tell your story.
- Body language is important for television. Practice by talking in front of a mirror. Leave your arms at your side if standing. Try not to cross your arms if standing or sitting. People will remember how they felt about you more than they'll remember what you said.
- Mention your contact information and the website where people can go for more information.
- Remember, there is no such thing as "off the record."

>>Next section: Capturing clips

CAPTURING CLIPS

It is important to monitor the news media (television stations, newspapers, etc.) for all coverage of Kiwanis International.

If you secure an interview or media placement, we would appreciate a copy of the result. Send it to pr@kiwanis.org. This will help us track the success of our work!

Tips for capturing clips

After your interview, ask the reporter whether he or she knows when the story will air or be printed.

1. Monitor the outlet's website. You can usually search for a specific term within the site to find related articles. It is possible that the story will be published in print or air on TV or radio, but not be posted online. For this reason, it is important to follow up with the reporter to gather as much information as possible about when the story will air or be printed.
2. After you have completed an interview or secured a media placement, please send the following information to pr@kiwanis.org:
 - Date
 - Publication
 - Reporter
 - City
 - Your name
 - Your local Kiwanis club