

Raising public awareness to generate interest in Rotary club membership

Recent focus groups conducted by RI (of non-Rotarians) indicate that many people are not aware of what Rotary is or what Rotary clubs do. Public awareness and your club's public image have a direct effect on membership growth, so it's important that the membership and public relations committees work together to coordinate their activities and goals. When your club has a prominent, public presence in your community, inviting prospective members to become Rotarians becomes a much easier task to accomplish.

This edition of the *Membership Minute* is dedicated to providing helpful tips and resources on the topic of external communication.

Public relations resources for clubs

RI provides a variety of materials to assist your club in developing and implementing a public relations strategy:

- [Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs](#) (257) is must-read material for club membership committees. This how-to guide offers basic tools and tips for promoting your club's activities to the public.
- [Humanity in Motion public relations tools](#) on DVD and CD-ROM are sent annually to every club. Rotarians should use these to try to obtain free or low-cost placements from their local media.
- Subscribe to the free [Rotary PR Tips](#) e-newsletter.
- [Download PR writing templates, fact sheets, and tips for working with the media.](#)

If your club has consulted these materials but would like additional training to learn more about public relations strategies, consider these resources:

- The [RI Public Image Resource Group](#) member in your region
- Your [regional RI membership coordinator](#)
- Your district public relations committee
- PR and media professionals in your community (invite them to serve as trainers or speakers at club meetings or special events.)

PR professionals can help your club learn how to negotiate for free advertising and media coverage. But sometimes large-scale public relations campaigns come with a price. If your club has a proactive, creative idea for a public relations campaign,

contact your district governor. [PR grants](#) are awarded at the district level on a competitive basis (pending RI Board approval for 2009-10). With a fast-approaching deadline of 1 October, think about collecting ideas from club members for next year's deadline.

Using technology to enhance your club's public image

Rotary clubs should strive to be creative and resourceful when it comes to electronic communication. A modern, sophisticated club Web site is a source of pride for existing members and promotes your innovative club to prospective members. Streaming video, digital audio, [podcasts, and blogs](#) on your site all add to its appeal. Consider embedding video clips from the [YouTube Rotary International](#) channel as well.

If your club does not have a member who is tech savvy or familiar with how to use new media, consult your local business directory to find a new media marketing professional in your community, and invite him or her to speak at a club meeting. Also think about inviting media professionals to your next prospective member information program. (For information on how to conduct these programs, see [New Member Orientation: A How-to Guide for Clubs](#)).

While local news and Rotary club events should be the focal point of your club's Web site, it's also easy to add a fresh, up-to-date, international dynamic by signing up for RI's [RSS feed](#). Find out about RSS feeds and how to sign up at www.rotary.org.

RI also has a [free image library](#) available for clubs. If you want to use a Rotary photograph for a newsletter or Web site, browse the images for something that suits your needs.

Related Survey Results

A worldwide survey of Rotary clubs, on the topic of public relations, was conducted in 2006 by Rotary International.

Review the findings in the [Report of Results: RI Public Relations Survey](#), available on the RI Web site.

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