Report of Results: RI Public Relations Survey

The Membership Development and Public Relations Divisions jointly conducted a survey regarding public relations (PR) practices throughout the Rotary world. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information about Rotary clubs' current public relations resources and initiatives, and the awareness and effectiveness of the PR tools RI provides to clubs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In summary, more than 50% of respondents thought that PR increases community awareness of Rotary, recruitment, and contributions to the club, however less than 50% of respondents thought that PR increases retention and contributions to The Rotary Foundation of RI. 80% of clubs include PR in their annual planning, 77% regularly launch PR efforts to coincide with specific events or projects, 68% regularly have a PR committee chairperson. Of those clubs that have a PR committee, the average committee size is 3 people (including the chair). 62% of respondents feel their club's PR activity has increased over 7 years ago, and half report activities have increased over 2 years ago.

91% of respondents report obtaining PR coverage in newspapers, and fewer than 50% have obtained radio, internet, television, or billboard coverage. Those that have obtained coverage find it relatively easy with internet being the easiest to obtain and television being the most difficult. Of those who have used one or both of the Humanity in Motion kits, newspapers were the most popular media in which to place the PSAs. When asked to choose the three most significant barriers to PR efforts respondents report:

- 1. Lack of interest from media
- 2. Lack of funding for PR efforts
- 3. Lack of PR training
- 4. Lack of ready-to-use PR materials

Lack of funding was reinforced by responses to a question regarding why clubs have not used certain RI resources. They report it being "Too expensive / lack of funding." Additionally, respondents were given a paragraph explaining the RI Public Relations Grants, and then asked several questions about them. According to the respondents:

- Only 42% were aware of the PR grants.
- However, 86% would consider applying for a grant in the future, if the grants were to be continued.

Regarding lack of PR training, when asked if RI's PR resources give adequate training on how to obtain media coverage, 62% of respondents said yes and 38% said no. Those who said no were asked to elaborate. The most frequent responses were that the resources:

- 1. Don't address local needs/requirements
- 2. Need to be supplemented by "in person" training
- 3. Are too general and vague
- 4. Need a specific plan for clubs to follow
- 5. Are too complex and advanced

The top response, "don't address local needs / requirements" is always a concern. When asked whether RI's PR messages are culturally appropriate for their area, 73% said yes and 27% said no. Looking more closely at the responses by region, the cultural appropriateness ranges from a low of about 60% in Western Europe to a high of nearly 80% in Japan, equivalent to the United States.

Those who indicated that RI's PR messages are not culturally appropriate for their area were asked to elaborate. The most frequent responses were:

- 1. Materials don't show local projects / relate to local issues
- 2. Cultures and customs are too different
- 3. Messages are too American (in philosophy, way of describing things, etc.)
- 4. Materials are not in our local language(s)

The topic of training was further explored to reveal that only 34% of all respondents have received PR training. Of those who have received training, most respondents received their training during presidents-elect training seminars, and were instructed by the district PR chair. This is, however, training aimed specifically at club presidents-elect, and club PR chairs and committee members would not likely have admittance to this event. Fewer than 50% indicated receiving training at district assembly a more likely event to which club PR chairs and committee members would have admittance. When asked about the best meeting during which to receive PR training most of the "Other" responses indicated they would prefer a separate meeting exclusively for PR training.

Regarding lack of ready-to-use PR materials, Rotary International produces many PR resources for clubs, including informational brochures, public service announcements, PR guidebooks, and a newsletter. Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had heard of 11 PR resources produced by RI:

- Fewer than 50% of respondents had heard of *Humanity in Motion I Eradicating Polio* and *Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs*
- Fewer than 40% had heard of the Effective PR section of rotary.org, Promoting Peace through International Scholarships, and Humanity in Motion II – Promoting Peace
- Fewer than 20% had heard of the PR Tips e-newsletter and Five Easy Steps: A Guide to Public Image Projects

However, although *Humanity in Motion II – Promoting Peace*, the *PR Tips* e-newsletter, and *Five Easy Steps: A Guide to Public Image Projects* were identified as some of the least frequently heard of or used resources, all three were rated relatively high in usefulness by those that use them.

Respondents were given a paragraph explaining the RI Public Image Resource Group, and then asked several questions about it. According to the respondents:

- Only 21% are aware of the RI Public Image Resource Group
- Only 15% know who their Public Image Resource Group coordinator is
- Of those who know who their Public Image Resource Group coordinator is:
 - o 17% have received support from the coordinator.
 - o 37% have not required support from the coordinator.
 - o 46% have not been contacted by the coordinator.

Lastly, **79% of clubs indicated that they would like additional PR support from RI.** To find out what kind of support they most desire, clubs were asked to identify the most important things they would like RI to provide.

- 1. Additional ready-to-use materials
- 2. PR materials that can be more easily customized by region
- 3. Additional PR materials that can be customized
- 4. Better promotion of existing PR training resources

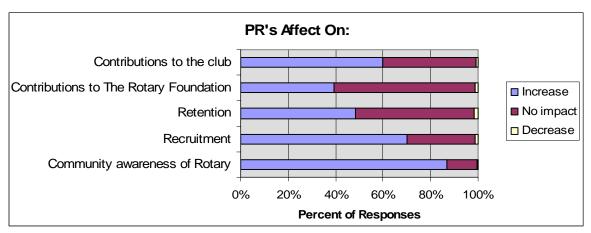
REPORT OF RESULTS

The survey was sent to a random sampling of 3269 Rotary clubs worldwide on 9 October 2006. Because PR initiatives can be long ranging and involve any number of individuals, clubs were instructed to convene a group of 3-4 individuals who have been responsible for PR activities in the club in recent years and have them complete the survey as a group. This was requested so RI could learn about the PR tendencies of the club in general as opposed to the activities led by one particular person in any year.

By 1 December 2006, 756 completed surveys were returned to RI – a 23% response rate. The completed surveys represent 63 countries and geographic areas and 370 districts. The following are the results of the survey.

Approach to Public Relations

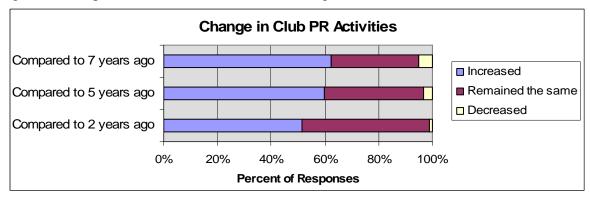
To gauge the respondents' general attitudes about PR, they were asked whether PR increases, decreases, or has no impact on the following elements. As indicated in the following chart, more than 50% of respondents thought that PR increases community awareness of Rotary, recruitment, and contributions to the club, however less than 50% of respondents thought that PR increases retention and contributions to The Rotary Foundation of RI.



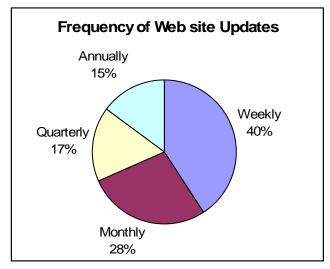
Additionally it was determined that:

- 80% of clubs include PR in their annual planning
- 77% regularly **launch PR efforts** to coincide with specific events or projects
- 68% regularly have a PR committee chairperson
- Of those clubs that have a PR committee, the **average committee size is 3 people** (including the chair)
- 90% indicate that their district leadership emphasizes the importance of PR

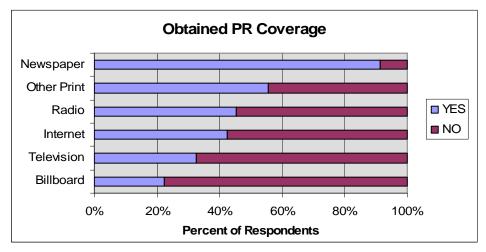
To determine whether clubs' PR efforts are increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same, clubs were asked to compare their current PR activities to their activities 2, 5, and 7 years ago. Their responses are indicated in the following chart.



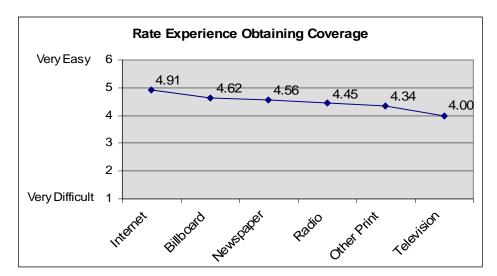
57% of clubs indicated that their club has a Web site. Of those that have a Web site, 84% indicated that it provides information about the club directed to the general public. The frequency of updates to the club Web site is indicated in the following chart.



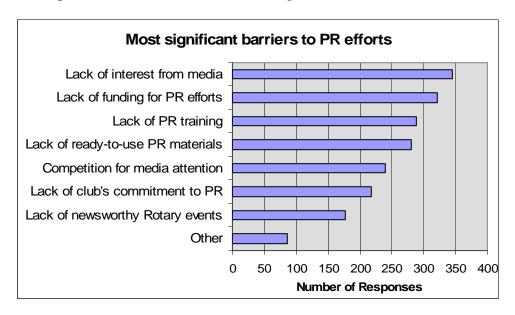
To understand their experience in obtaining PR coverage, clubs were asked whether or not they had obtained coverage in various media. As indicated in the following chart, **most have obtained newspaper coverage**, however **fewer than 50% of respondents have ever obtained radio**, **internet**, **television**, **or billboard coverage**.



Those respondents who have obtained PR coverage in any of the mediums were then asked to rate the ease or difficulty of obtaining the coverage in that medium. As indicated in the following chart, most respondents found obtaining the coverage relatively easy, with internet being the easiest to obtain and television being the most difficult.



Clubs were then asked to choose the three most significant barriers to PR efforts in their area. Their responses are indicated in the following chart.

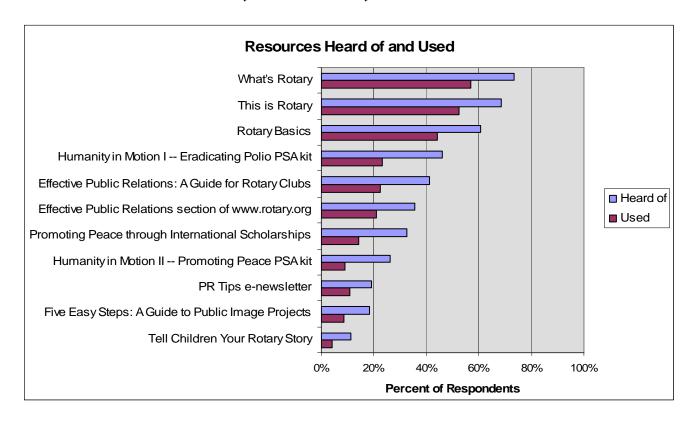


To gain a more complete picture of the barriers facing clubs, respondents were given the option to fill in "Other" factors not listed. The most common "Other" responses were: lack of time, and too few members to devote to PR.

Resources

Rotary International produces many PR resources for clubs, including informational brochures, public service announcements, PR guidebooks, and a newsletter. The following series of questions was asked to determine how aware clubs are of these various resources, how useful they are for clubs, and what RI can do to improve them.

Clubs were asked whether or not they have **heard of** the following resources. Of those that they have heard of, they were asked whether or not they have **used** them. As indicated in the following chart, the only resources that more than half of respondents have both heard of and used are *What's Rotary* and *This is Rotary*.



Of those resources that each club has used, respondents were asked to **rate the usefulness** using the following scale. The results are listed in the table below.

1 = Not useful; 2 = Somewhat useful; 3 = Moderately useful; 4 = Very useful

Average Rating	Resource
3.22	Rotary Basics
3.16	What's Rotary
3.12	This is Rotary
3.09	Humanity in Motion II Promoting Peace PSA kit
3.04	PR Tips e-newsletter
3.03	Five Easy Steps: A Guide to Public Image Projects
3.02	Humanity in Motion I Eradicating Polio PSA kit
2.99	Effective Public Relations section of www.rotary.org
2.99	Effective Public Relations: A Guide for Rotary Clubs
2.90	Promoting Peace through International Scholarships
2.86	Tell Children Your Rotary Story

As indicated in the table, **most resources were considered moderately useful.** Rotary Basics, What's Rotary, and This is Rotary were identified as the three resources that are most frequently heard of and used (as seen in the previous chart) and they also received the

highest ratings by those that use them (as seen in the table). The publication *Tell Children Your Rotary Story* was the least frequently heard of and used, as well as the lowest rated. It is interesting to note that *Humanity in Motion II – Promoting Peace*, the *PR Tips* enewsletter, and *Five Easy Steps: A Guide to Public Image Projects* were identified as some of the least frequently heard of or used resources, however all three were rated relatively high by those that use them.

After rating the usefulness of the resources they have used, clubs were then asked to consider the resources they have **not** used and to explain **why they have chosen not to use them.** By far, the majority of respondents indicated that they did not know the resources existed or they cited general "lack of awareness." Because awareness of the resources was already gauged in a previous question, these responses were filtered out. The remaining responses indicated that clubs do not use certain RI resources because:

- 1. Not familiar with the resources / lack of knowledge about the resources
- 2. Too little time to do PR
- 3. Club members have no interest in PR
- 4. Too expensive / lack of funding
- 5. Not enough club members available to help with PR (5th place tie) Club doesn't need RI's PR resources (5th place tie)
- 7. Do not know where to obtain the resources (7th place tie) Haven't had any opportunities to use them (7th place tie) Messages aren't appropriate for my region (7th place tie)

When asked what **other RI resources** (not listed in question 10) their club uses for PR efforts, respondents indicated:

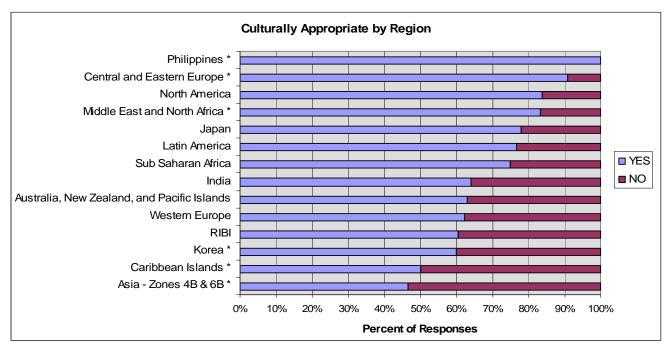
- 1. The Rotarian magazine / regional Rotary magazine
- 2. Rotary Web site
- 3. DVDs / videos (3rd place tie)
 Posters (3rd place tie)

Various program brochures (ie. PolioPlus, RYLA, GSE) (3rd place tie)

When asked if RI's PR resources give adequate **training** on how to obtain media coverage, **62%** of respondents said yes and **38%** said no. Those who said no were asked to elaborate. The most frequent responses were that the resources:

- 1. Don't address local needs/requirements
- 2. Need to be supplemented by "in person" training
- 3. Are too general and vague
- 4. Need a specific plan for clubs to follow
- 5. Are too complex and advanced

When asked whether RI's PR messages are culturally appropriate for their area, 73% said yes and 27% said no. To determine any regional differences in response to this question, the following chart shows the response breakdowns by region.



^{*} Percentages from these regions could be exaggerated due to low response rates.

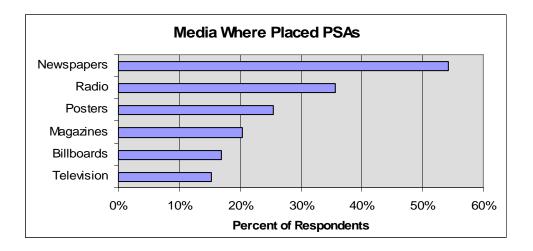
Those who indicated that RI's PR messages are **not culturally appropriate** for their area were asked to elaborate. The most frequent responses were:

- 1. Materials don't show local projects / relate to local issues
- 2. Cultures and customs are too different
- 3. Messages are too American (in philosophy, way of describing things, etc.)
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Because the *Humanity in Motion* public service announcement (PSA) kits are a newer initiative and were sent via post to all clubs, respondents were asked several questions about this resource in particular.

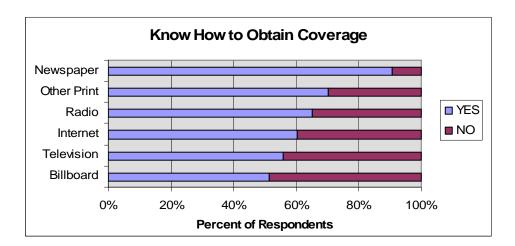
- Regarding *Humanity in Motion I Eradicating Polio* (sent in January 2005)
 - o 6% have used the kit
 - o 49% have not used the kit
 - o 45% do not recall receiving the kit
- Regarding *Humanity in Motion II Promoting Peace* (sent in February 2006)
 - o 8% have used the kit
 - o 46% have **not** used the kit
 - o 46% do not recall receiving the kit

Those respondents who indicated that they have used either one or both of the *Humanity in Motion* kits were asked in which media they placed the PSAs. As indicated in the following chart, **newspapers were the most popular media in which to place the PSAs.**

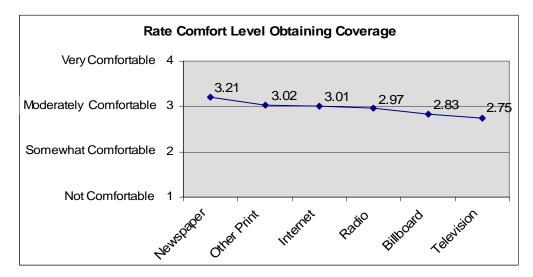


Training

To understand whether or not clubs need training in how to obtain PR coverage, clubs were asked if they **know how** to obtain coverage in various media. As indicated in the following chart, **more than half of respondents say they know how to obtain coverage in each of the identified media.**

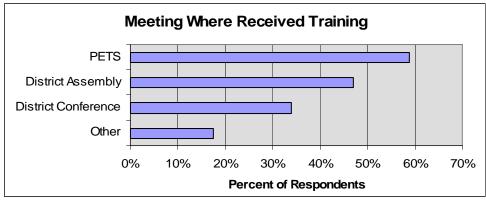


Those respondents who know how to obtain coverage in any of the mediums were then asked to rate their **comfort level** with obtaining coverage in that medium. As indicated in the following chart, **most respondents were moderately comfortable with obtaining coverage**, being **most comfortable with newspaper** and **least comfortable with television**.

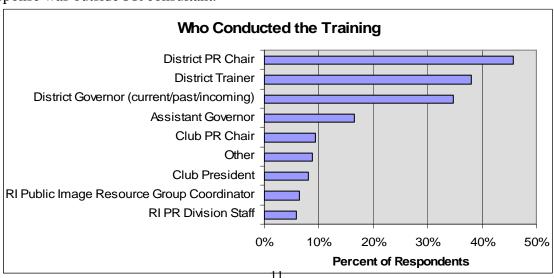


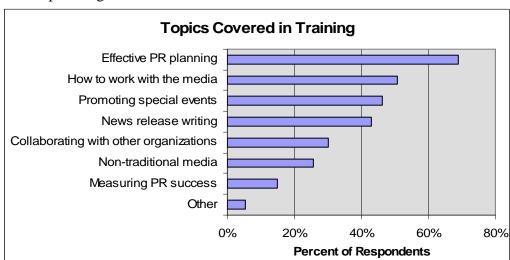
Only **34%** of all respondents said that they **have received training** on how to conduct PR for Rotary. These respondents were then asked a series of questions to obtain more information about the PR training they received.

As indicated in the following chart, **most respondents received their PR training at PETS.** The most common "Other" responses were district PR seminar and district chair training seminar.



As indicated in the following chart, PR training was most frequently conducted by the district PR chair, district trainer, and district governor. The most common "Other" response was outside PR consultant.



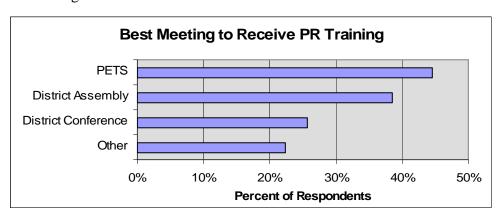


As identified in the following chart, the most frequent topic covered in the training was effective PR planning.

To identify any gaps in the training curriculum, respondents were asked what topics were **not** covered that they think **should be** covered? The most frequent responses were:

- 1. How to work with the media
- 2. Working with non-traditional media
- 3. Effective PR planning
- 4. How to create effective PR messages (4th place tie) News release writing (4th place tie)
- 6. Collaborating with other clubs/districts (6th place tie) How to get funds and/or PR materials (6th place tie) Television and radio PR (6th place tie)

All respondents were asked which meeting they thought would be the **best meeting to receive PR training.** As indicated in the following chart, most chose PETS or District Assembly. However many respondents filled in the "Other" category instead of selecting one of the identified meetings. The vast majority of the "Other" responses indicated that **they would prefer a separate meeting exclusively for PR training.** Many other respondents indicated that they would prefer that PR training occur at a club meeting or club assembly. Still others indicated that the training should be done at small inter-city or regional meetings of several clubs.



Support from Rotary International

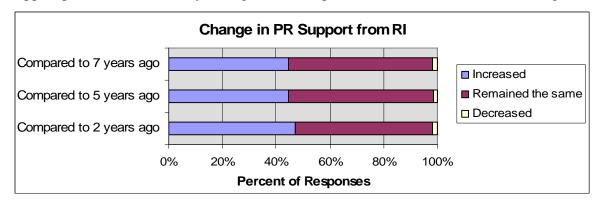
Respondents were given a paragraph explaining the RI Public Image Resource Group, and then asked several questions about it. According to the respondents:

- Only 21% are aware of the RI Public Image Resource Group
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 - o 17% have received support from the coordinator.
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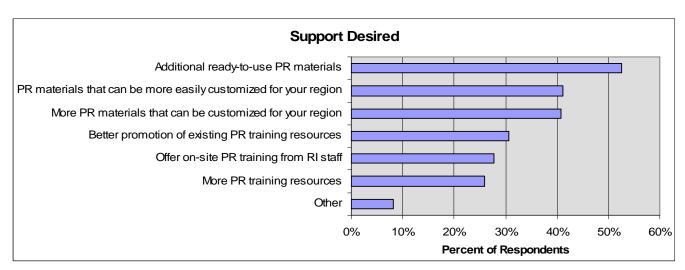
Respondents were given a paragraph explaining the RI Public Relations Grants, and then asked several questions about them. According to the respondents:

- Only 42% were aware of the PR grants.
- However, 86% would consider applying for a grant in the future, if the grants were to be continued.

To determine whether clubs perceive RI's PR support as increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same, respondents were asked to compare RI's current PR support to the support provided 2, 5, and 7 years ago. Their responses are indicated in the following chart.



79% of clubs indicated that **they would like additional PR support from RI.** To find out what kind of support they most desire, clubs were asked to identify the most important things they would like RI to provide. Their responses are indicated in the following chart:



To gain a more complete picture of the support desired by clubs, respondents were given the option to fill in "Other" factors not listed. By far, the most common response was **PR funding/financial support**. Other responses include a comprehensive PR resource list, a pre-packaged club PR plan, and a list of PR best practices from other clubs/districts.

Conclusions

According to the results of this survey, it seems that clubs, districts, and Rotary International are having some great successes with PR. However the results also reveal some challenges and opportunities for action at all levels.

One of the main challenges identified is **awareness of the materials that already exist**. As seen in the graph on page 7, most of the resources provided by RI have very low levels of awareness at the club level and even lower levels of usage. Of those clubs that know the resources exist but don't use them, many cited reasons such as lack of knowledge about what the resources contain, how to use them, or where to find them. When looking at the clubs that have used the resources, most consider them to be useful. Considering this fact, it would seem that a great opportunity for PR action exists if more clubs knew of the resources available to them and how to find and use these resources. Internal marketing of PR resources to clubs and districts should be enhanced.

Another important challenge identified regards **funding**. Lack of funding for PR was identified as the second most significant barrier to PR efforts as well as one of the top reasons why clubs do not use certain RI resources. How to obtain funding was also identified as one of the most important topics that should be covered in PR training. Only 42% of clubs were aware of the RI Public Relations Grants that have been offered in recent years, however 86% would consider applying for a grant in the future if they were to be continued. Considering the high level of concern over lack of funding and the high level of interest in obtaining funding, it would seem that a great opportunity for PR action exists if the RI grants were to be continued in the future and if there were increased efforts in helping clubs become aware of these grants.

One additional challenge identified regards **PR training**. Lack of PR training was identified as the third most significant barrier to PR efforts, and 66% of respondents indicated that they have *never* received PR training. Of those respondents who *have* received training, most received their training at the presidents-elect training seminar (PETS). However, PETS is aimed specifically at club presidents-elect, which club PR chairs and committee members are not likely to attend. Considering the current low level of PR training, it would seem that a great opportunity for PR action exists if more PR training occurred, especially at events like district assembly or separate local meetings held exclusively for PR training where club PR chairs and committee members would be likely to attend. This training should also be conducted by individuals who have a background or experience in PR.

Although clubs face some PR challenges, most seem to agree that PR is important. This agrees with the Rotary Strategic Plan's emphasis on improving Rotary's public image. If clubs, districts, and Rotary International work together to address their PR challenges and opportunities, Rotary's potential for PR can be achieved.