KEY CLUB
FLORIDA DISTRICT

Public Relations Guidebook

Basics of Public Relations

Public Relations is the maintenance of public image through managing communication and engaging with the community. Good public relations (PR) has the power to boost your image, highlight your Key Club's achievements, and improve relationships with the community.

When you tell your club's story through the media, whether it be newspaper reports, flyers, websites or social media, you boost your Key Club's visibility and credibility. Spreading the word about what your Key Club does can define your club in positive terms and position it as an important resource in your community.

"Widespread public recognition will benefit your club in many ways," said Kristian Little, past Kiwanis International public relations specialist.

"With members, it can build pride that leads to better attendance, greater participation in projects and stronger retention. In school, it can help draw new members," he continued, "and in the community, it can definitely make it easier to solicit public support for Key Club projects and fundraisers."

Key Steps to a Good Public Relations System

Evaluate: Review methods of PR used in prior years. Conduct club member surveys to see what medium your members pay attention to the most.

Establish goals: Establish a plan of action for the ways you will be approaching PR in your club.

Use Resources Available: Visit the District website (floridakeyclub.org) as well as the Key Club International website (keyclub.org) as there is an abundance of graphics and resources to help you succeed in your PR tasks. If you have any questions about public relations, contact your Lieutenant Governor or the District Editor at editor@floridakeyclub.org.

P.U.M.P. Up your Writing

PUT YOURSELF IN YOUR READERS' SHOES

- Think about your audience: Who are you writing for? How will they be reading this? What are they looking for?
- Avoid abbreviations. Using constant abbreviations and acronyms can make readers feel frustrated or lost due to unfamiliarity.

USE NUMBERS

- Numbers attract the reader's attention and are effective at simply getting the point across.
- Make sure, however, that the reader understands the significance of the numbers.

MAKE IT ACTIVE

- Use present tense or future tense when possible in headlines.
- By using action verbs, you grab the reader's interest.

PULL OUT A THESAURUS

- Use interesting or intriguing adjectives, as long as you fully understand their meanings and they are comprehensible
- "funny ——-> amusing, hilarious
- "nice"———> amiable, easy- going, friendly
- "small"——-> tiny, miniscule.

Posters and Flyers

Walking down your school hallways, it's impossible to not notice the posters hung along the walls. Posters and flyers are an excellent way to promote your club throughout your school and community.

One easy way to create posters and flyers for your club is to host a service project during a meeting to create promotional items. Not only will members receive service hours during the meeting, but it can also be fun, engaging, and encourage others to join Key Club, as well!

When creating your own posters or flyers, keep in mind the following tips:

- Use clear, bold, and easy-to-read fonts (should be within Key Club graphic standards)
- Refer to the Key Club International Brand Guide for graphic standards: https://www.keyclub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2017/08/2018-Brand-Guide-Updated.pdf
- Make sure it is concise and includes the date, time, and place of the meeting/event
- Keep it simple, uncluttered, and attractive
- Post signs in the school hallways, bath-room stalls, classrooms, the cafeteria, front office, and library.
- Include the purpose of Key Club (after all, we are a service organization and do not just make keys)

Digital PR

In this digital age, it is extremely common to use a variety of electronic media outlets for promotion. Sending emails to members or creating a group in communication platforms effectively keep members connected.

Whenever you are sending something electronically, be sure to proofread. Do not just assume autocorrect will catch everything. Make sure to pay careful attention to any names or acronyms used.

When emailing, the subject line is important because it is the first thing the receiver sees. The subject line should accurately summarize the contents of the email and be eye-catching. Calls to action such as INFORMATION NEEDED or SERVICE OPPORTUNITY can help readers categorize emails with a short glance. Format your email so that the text is in **short paragraphs**, separated by blank lines. Most people find unbroken blocks of text boring and intimidating to read. Take the time to format your message for the ease of others, this will increase interaction and response.

When using texts to communicate with your members, remember to keep the content of the text short and to the point. Don't think of what you want to say; think of what the reader needs to know.

Social Media

Social media is a big presence in the average person's life. Use this to your advantage! Your club can use social media to engage members, share pictures from service projects, and share reminders or promotional items.

Instagram: Instagram is one of the most used social media platforms today. Your club can utilize Instagram to post meeting and event reminders in a fun and engaging way through pictures. It is also an easy way to showcase or recognize your members and follow-up service projects or events with a post. Make sure to follow and repost information from your Division's and the District's Instagram pages too!

Facebook: If your Key Club has a Facebook group, posting on the page is one of the easiest forms of promotion. Members will receive notifications that they can easily view from a device. On Facebook, you can also create events and invite people to sign up or RSVP. You are also able to share photos, information, and videos all in one location. This platform is also a great way to keep Kiwanians informed as many of them may not have an Instagram account.

The Key Club International website also has lots of social media resources including templates and graphics for you to use when working with International Partners and Preferred Charities.

Reaching Out in the Community

Has your club done something great that you want to share with your local media? Compile a list of local newspapers, websites, newsletters, radio stations, cable outlets and television stations that provide news in your community and contact them to spread the word about the difference your Key Club is making.

Find current contact information (usually available on the media outlets' websites) for each one. Once you have reached a news outlet, be respectful of the reporter or editor's time. If they are able to talk, introduce yourself and give a brief background on why you are calling.

When you are contacting any local media outlet, make sure to reach out far in advance of the project and provide full details about the event and your Key Club. If pictures are requested, make sure to send professional, high-quality photos. This will create a strong impression of your club. If a live interview is requested, make sure the club representative is prepared!

Newsletters

Newsletters are a great promotional tool to use to inform members and your school of what your club is doing. These can be included in a school paper or something with a wider audience. While creating your newsletters, make sure to have a catchy title (Ex: Lily's Letters), plenty of graphics and pictures, and interesting articles to attract and keep your readers. People like to see their names and pictures in print, so try to feature your members as often as possible. Please remember to use Key Club graphic standards throughout your newsletters.

To make it easier to create newsletters, here is a simple list to ensure that you are including everything that is needed. These include:

1. Officer Information
2. Important Dates
3. Upcoming events
4. Meeting Schedule
5. Service Project/Fundraiser Information
6. Recap of recent events, meetings, and/or projects
7. Committee Updates
8. Officer Messages
9. Governor's Project and Major Emphasis Information
10. Reminders

Graphic Standards

Graphic standards are Key Club International graphics (the pencil, logos, wordmarks, etc.) that help make the face of Key Club consistent and unified. Brand Guidelines and examples can be found on the Key Club International website under marketing resources.

Photography

Taking quality photos is very important in Public Relations. They help provide an example of what your club does and is an important resource for press releases, social media, and more. Keep in mind these tips when pulling out your camera:

- Action shots are more meaningful than staged group photos.
- Keep the background simple. Make sure it doesn't distract from the subject and that nothing behind the subject affects the image.
- Make sure your subject stands in the best light — it might be bright out, but the sun can cast shadows on a face. Avoid harsh direct lighting, as well. You do not want squinting faces in your photo!
- Capture faces in your pictures; expressions, reactions, moments, emotions and action make great photos.
- Ensure that each person at the forefront of the image can be identified.
- Vary your subjects and make sure to take some pictures of the work being done, too!

Videos

Including videos is a powerful way to make Key Club activities come alive for your members. You can show a video at your club meeting or your recruitment drive, share it through social media, or embed one on your club's website or newsletter. You can either create your own club video or use a video on the Florida Key Club YouTube Channel or Key Club International YouTube Channel. Videos are a useful and engaging public relations tool that can be used to spread the word and understanding of Key Club.

Membership Drive

Although club members should always be on the lookout for students who would make good Key Clubbers, Key Club International recommends that your club have two membership drives. One occurring at the beginning of your school year, the fall drive, and one occurring at the end of your school year, the spring drive. Your Key Club should host a membership drive in the spring to ensure that your club will be active in the summer and successful in the upcoming school year. The following tips will ensure that your club hosts a successful club membership drive:

- **Establish Goals.** Determine the number of new members you are striving for. Provide incentives for present members for bringing new members.
- **Advertise.** Make sure that when members set up your recruitment drive, the entire student body is aware of it. Have reminders for the drive on school announcements, flyers, and posters. Also make sure the location of your Key Club recruitment event is at a highly-trafficked area like the lunchroom or a courtyard. At the table, be sure to also have flyers describing when your meetings are and what Key Club is for potential members.
- **Follow up.** Make sure to keep in contact with the potential new members. If you got the students' emails or phone numbers at the recruitment booth, send a message a day or two before the next meeting reminding them about the time and location.

Building a Website

A club website is not only a great resource for club officers and members, but it also serves as a great place to disseminate information to the public. In most clubs, the job of maintaining a website is usually delegated to the club editor; however, some clubs do choose to add a webmaster to their board to keep up with the responsibility of a club website. Many people associate developing a website with lines and lines of code that might as well be in another language. While this may have been the case about ten years ago, there are many different ways to build a website without having to know how to code at all! One of the most popular options is a Wix website, but resources such as Weebly are also useful!

No matter what platform you choose to host your website (do your research!), the most important aspect of any website is its content. Keep pages full of fun and interactive graphics, be generous with your use of colors, and only use enough text as needed to get your message across.

When people either stumble upon your website or purposefully visit it, they want to be able to find what they are looking for fairly quickly. Create organized menus of pages and shy away from clutter. In your menus, categorize your pages into families of pages. By giving larger categories of options and breaking them down into smaller, more specific pages, you'll make your club's website a breeze to navigate.

Another useful function of your website is to have a widget dedicated to your club's Facebook or Instagram feeds. This will help integrate all of your club's media outlets. To complete your website, make sure to include links to the District and International websites, provide contact information for all of your club officers, and make sure that each page is free of grammatical or spelling errors. If you should ever need help with creating, designing, or managing a website, contact the District Webmaster at webmaster@floridakeyclub.org .