



Publicity Tips for Your Optimist Club

Why Publicize Optimist Events?

- To let your community actually see how overall Optimist goals are translated into action.
- A photo of an event just might give a civic-minded person the notion to contact a co-worker or friend who is involved with your club.
- A prospective member may not know that the Oratorical Contest his niece won last year has been a long-standing Optimist Club project. The realization that he could become involved in projects of such importance to his family may weigh heavily in his decision to become a member.
- Your club will increase its local profile with repeated listings in community calendars and post-event photos of activities. This can lead to different involvement and potential partnerships with area businesses.
- Marketing efforts also benefit your club's current members. Nothing inspires an Optimist more than to hear friends and co-workers talking about Saturday's community festival. Club members feel good when they are recognized for putting together a successful event.
- By sending news information about your club to OI, it could be publicized in the OI Magazine. You may even get your club mentioned- in an OI project brochure or pamphlet. The current OI Childhood Cancer brochures mention the Spartanburg, SC club, the Sacramento, CA Breakfast Club, the Pacific Northwest District and the Midwestern and Southwestern Ontario districts. This brochure is distributed internationally.
- The more you advertise, the more your club will be remembered.

Different Ways to Market Your Club

1. Newspapers
 - Press releases. Use them, A LOT. Get familiar with them, VERY familiar with them.
 - a. Recap and summarize the past year's work and how it impacted the community.
 - b. Include photos of each event your club participates in. This should include both before and after the event.
 - c. Send release with pictures announcing new members
 - d. Send release with officer/member installation news. If after the fact, send photo of person(s) being installed
 - e. If a member of the club does something noteworthy (even if not club-related) send a press release mentioning them as a member of the club
 - Use both city and community papers
 - Does the paper have a local community section? Submit releases of interest for this section.
 - Does the paper periodically profile local businesses and organizations? Find out how your club can be profiled.
 - Use the community calendar regularly to list your events (both in print and online)
2. Radio
 - The OI website has PSAs available for download
 - i. Canned PSAs can be used when the club is not currently having an event
 - ii. Canned PSAs can be modified to add local information and how it relates to what the club is doing. Ex: OI & John Hopkins are working together on Childhood Cancer and you can mention what your club is doing to help with this cause.
 - Talk shows. Have a member become a guest, but submit the request well in advance.
 - Many stations will have free advertising for local events.
 - Utilize the stations that your intended audience most likely listens to.
3. TV
 - Take advantage of the cable local access channel to publicize upcoming events
 - Special news segments. Make your event newsworthy.
 - Talk shows. Have a member become a guest, but submit the request well in advance.
 - Use their online community calendar regularly to list your events
4. Libraries
 - Give extra copies of *The Optimist*. Attach a card or sticker with contact information.
5. Community Welcome Kits
 - Get a flyer about your club in the basket
6. Colleges
 - Internal TV, radio stations & newspapers
7. Community Events (alone or become part of larger events)
 - Parades, fairs, sports tournaments, holiday celebrations, etc.
8. Official Proclamations
 - Maybe the mayor can declare the 1st wk of May as Optimist Respect for Law Week

9. Billboards

- Billboard companies frequently carry messages from non-profit organizations. You pay for printing, but display is free

10. Club Business Cards, Brochures and Flyers

- Include the club's day, time and place of meeting, email & web site
- If possible, put the Optimist Creed on the back of the business card
 - a. PASS THEM OUT!
- Create club brochures, benefit and/or fact sheets and have them available at all activities and events.

11. Website

- If you have one, make sure it is listed on all your publications and stationary.
- If you don't have one, then you need to develop one.
- ALWAYS keep it current.

12. Club Banner and Display Boards

- While not appropriate for all activities, some events your club sponsors or participates in will provide an opportunity to display the club banner and/or a club display.
 - If you don't have a display board, consider making one showing the various projects and activities your club is involved with. Use pictures.

13. Neighborhood and church newsletters

- Many of these organizations will post announcements about your event or activity in their newsletters.

14. Other Organizations

- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and local schools
 - a. Let these groups know when your club is having an event that could involve these children. (i.e.: Lawnmower Safety, Essay and Oratorical Contests)
- Donate money to a worthwhile charity to help them get their brochures printed and in the process the club's name could be displayed on them.

15. TALK UP OPTIMISM WITH EVERYONE YOU MEET

Give the Media a Reason

- Is your event new? Unique?
- Is it community-wide?
- If the event is long standing, is it an anniversary?
- Are there going to be any celebrities or well-known experts at the event?
- Is anything crazy or off-the-wall planned?
- Is the event inherently visual? Timely or relevant?
- Are you teamed with another charity?

Media Tips

1. Know your local media-TV, newspaper, radio, community papers
2. Get to know the kind of stories your local media like. Learn the type of pictures which are printed.
3. Find out about becoming an in-studio guest on a TV news or radio show with community news?
4. All media people are constantly under deadlines. They rarely have time to discuss your event with you for more than a minute or two so make it quick, but very interesting. Give them a reason to not forget you. Call midmorning, never late in the afternoon when the evening news is being put together.
5. The media is ALWAYS looking for a story.
6. Newspapers - know which editors cover which news. In general, print reporters conduct longer, more detailed interviews than TV reporters.
7. TV - Appearance is extremely important. Appear relaxed, well-groomed, confident and credible. This requires brief answers. Keep them to 15 seconds or less.
8. Radio - emphases are on your voice. You want to encourage the listener. Let your enthusiasm come through. If you aren't excited about the event, the listener won't be either.
9. Community papers focus mostly on the local community and people. They reach a smaller audience, but one that is focused on a particular part of town. They have a smaller staff so you may have to take your own photos and submit them, but are probably more apt to have your pictures printed.
10. Use the community calendars on a regular basis. Most newspapers print one and also maintain one online on their website. TV stations will maintain an online version too.
11. Be sure to submit your story, press release, etc. well in advance (6 weeks) and continue to send follow-ups right up to the day of the event. This will give you a better chance of getting some coverage.
12. Don't get upset if the press is too busy to cover your event. They get many requests. Be aware of other community events when scheduling your club's activity. Hope for a slow news day on the day of your event.