

# **Toastmasters VP Public Relations**

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## Thinking about VP Public Relations? Here are some issues to consider...

The Vice President Public Relations is responsible for coordinating an active PR and publicity programme. Clubs must continually attract new members to be able to survive and grow. Toastmasters International gives guidelines for the role of VP PR, though bear in mind that these are the ideal.

Most human beings have a life, and while I'm sure you would love to spend many days preparing a complete and up-to-date Press Kit which you keep sitting waiting by the phone for when the TV station calls, you will most probably adapt the role to fit in with your own and the club's needs.

### 1. What it involves

- a. Promoting the club to the public / potential members
- b. Producing / editing a club newsletter
- c. General committee duties
- d. Bringing a bit of fun into the club!

#### a. Promoting the club

Having a PR programme (of free publicity), which could include using:

- appropriate local media eg newspapers, radio, notice boards, stall at local event, magazines, other organisation's newsletters, TV
- word of mouth
- internet
- business cards
- promo talks to local businesses and organisations
- flyers/posters
- open evenings

#### b. Newsletter

Ideally monthly, but can be 2-monthly or quarterly (or as randomly infrequent as you like, I suppose)

Aims:

- to create a sense of belonging and achievement among members
- to inform members of Toastmasters news
- to educate members in communication and leadership

You decide (in conjunction with the club):

- how often and how big
- if you are going to produce it yourself, obtain contributions and just edit it, or a combination (the preferred option)
- on a layout
- how you are going to get contributions, and who from (other members and/or non-TM people)
- how you are going to distribute it – printed/photocopied/emailed/on website

#### c. General committee duties

- Attend committee meetings & do general committee work, eg organise social events
- Announce events at club meetings in general business
- Attend TM training and other events
- Arrange for stand-in if you are not able to perform your duties

**d. Introducing some fun** so that members stay and people want to join!

### 2. Time

The amount of time will vary from club to club, and from person to person. Generally these are the time commitments (a rough guess as to the time I devote is in brackets):

**Committee meetings**, PLUS follow up time of things you rashly agreed to do in the heat of the moment [*A meeting every 6 weeks for 3 hours, Follow up time approx 1 hour per month*]

**Newsletter** – will vary depending on how prolific you are, ie how often you want to do it, and the size of the publication. Also on how many times you have to contact another member to beg/cajole/force them to write that article they promised [*2 monthly-ish newsletters take me approx 8 hours per newsletter*]

**Promotion** – this can vary from nothing at all in a month to many hours work depending on what you choose to do [*A monthly newspaper article takes about an hour, while overall the promotional work would average out to about 1-2 hours per month over the year*]

**Other TM events** Again this varies on what you choose to attend – and remember you will probably spend time writing it up in the newsletter [*hazarding a guess I'd say about 1-2 hours per month averaged over the year*]

### 3. Benefits & Challenges

Generally speaking, what you put in is what you get out.

These are the **benefits** I've gained, some by being VP PR, others by just being on the committee:

- More links with club members
- Sense of belonging to the club and to Toastmasters
- Greater understanding of the bigger picture in TM
- Satisfaction of seeing the club develop
- Having a role in General Business
- Greater confidence by being a committee member
- A chance to do what I love doing – writing – and being appreciated for it
- Delegation – eg asking people to stand in for me at meetings
- Liaising with the media and writing a monthly newspaper article
- A creative outlet via the newsletter and publicity material
- Winning the Top 10 International Newsletter Award
- Being able to celebrate people's successes and give them recognition
- Members appreciating seeing their name or photo in the newsletter
- Cooperation with others for newsletter contributions, both within the club and outside organisations
- New skills – desk top publishing and website
- Links with other clubs re promotional material and newsletter

These are some of the **challenges** I've encountered:

- The time to be able to do everything I feel I should be doing in the role
- The time to do everything I do do
- A lack of knowledge of all local media
- The possibility of rejection by local media
- Being rejected by local media!
- Having my newspaper articles, which were so wonderfully crafted, edited beyond recognition
- No new members joining, despite a sizeable amount of promotional work

### Training & resources available

- Club officer training
- Simply by being a committee member
- Support from other club members
- Using your predecessor
- People in other clubs
- Area Governor
- VP PR manual
- PR advanced manual
- Toastmaster publications
- General PR publications

## Examples of newsletter articles:

Membership building article  
Contest results  
Chief judge's remarks  
Goodbyes to members  
Who is on the committee  
Profile of committee members  
Profile of new members  
AGM  
"I have a dream" speech text  
Member's speech text  
Radio interview of club members  
Book reviews  
Winners of club meeting awards  
TLI Day write-up  
Convention report  
Various educational articles eg evaluation, visualisation, appearing confident  
Reminders  
Social function write-up  
Non-Toastmaster (public speaking) events  
Humour  
Quiz  
Crossword  
Cartoons by members