

# MARINE CORPS LEAGUE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## PUBLIC RELATIONS LESSON PLAN 7 A HOW-TO MANUAL



# INDEX OF LESSON PLAN 7

Click on a subject to take there

VII. Public Relations	Page
A. Definitions and Terms	3
B. Getting Started	3
C. How to write a press release	4
D. Media Advisory	5
E. Cautions (What not to do)	6
F. Useful Phrases to use	6
G. Examples	6

# **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Public Relations helps to create greater Public Awareness, vision, and our mission about who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Public relations:

Creating or changing the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of people by influencing them - primarily with information disseminated through the media.

## **ADVERTISING**

Creating or changing attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions by influencing people with purchased broadcast time or print space.

## **MARKETING**

A plan to inform an audience about a product or service so they will become customers. Marketing includes publicity, but also includes research, pricing, sales, distribution, packaging and advertising.

## **WHY?**

- New members
- Volunteers
- Donations of cash, goods and services
- Community recognition

## **GETTING STARTED!**

- Develop a timetable
- Set priorities
- Create a contact file
- Media: news print, tv, etc.
- Contact person, title, fax #, e-mail, phone #, address (collect business cards)
- Criteria: time frames, space, contact method
- Photos (b/w? Color?) Will they send a photographer to an event?

## **WHO?**

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Radio
- Community access cable television
- Chamber of commerce
- Veteran groups
- MCL Department newsletter

- “Semper Fi” magazine
- Internet
- Web page
- Service groups

## **WHAT?**

- Meetings
- Installation of officers
- Award presentations
- Parades/Color Guards
- V.A.V.S.
- Toys for Tots
- Social functions
- Detachment picnic
- Bus trips
- Dates important to Marines
- Marine Corps Birthday - Nov. 10
- Patriotic Holidays

## **HOW?**

### **Press release for immediate release**

- Who? - MCL
- What? - Toys for Tots
- When? - Date, time
- Where? - Mall, center court
- Why? - Toys for needy children at Christmas
- How? - One new unwrapped toy for any age child

### **HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE**

1. State the event, award or item that you want publicized in the first paragraph. Don't embellish. Editors want to "quick read" what you are trying to communicate as quickly as possible, then make a decision on its news worthiness.
2. Names make the news. Who is it? What is their age? Where do they live? What do they do and why is it that you are seeking exposure for this person? When is the event, if that is relevant, and how is it going to be held. Full names are necessary and a way to reach the person is usually important. Editors and Reporters want to talk to the person you are writing about, not a public relations spokesperson. A PR agent may be number two in important contacts to make.

3. Always include a photograph, if possible, especially if it's a routine announcement. Pictures usually give you more space and editors like to use them because they make a newspaper page more interesting. If a color photo or more professionally done picture is called for, give a "photo op" time that the subject(s) can be photographed.
4. Have somebody else in your company, family, etc. read your press release and search out questions that are unanswered. Newspaper people are very curious and want to know all there is to know even if they don't use everything because of space limits.
5. Be concise; try to get all the facts in 3-5 paragraphs. Send along an additional fact sheet about your company, firm, etc. as a resource. Be sure to supply relevant phone numbers.
6. Don't try to write a story about the item for which you want publicity. Just give us the facts - it's our job to write the story. Most editors don't have the time to pore over multiple page press releases, so try to keep everything on one page.
7. After sending in a news item, it's always good to call the newspaper and ask if the press release was received. It's acceptable to ask if and when the item will be used, but don't quiz a reporter or news clerk, ask for an editor. Normally, he or she will be the only person who can help you.
8. Most news editors are looking for human-interest stories that intrigue a wide variety of people. They are not seeking to promote a particular business but often that happens in the telling of a story. If promoting the company is a primary motive that will be a turn-off not only to the editor but also the reporter who writes the story. If motives are pure and writer detects that, often we will go the extra mile to make sure your company gets the credit it deserves.

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

- Best for television
- Only for newsworthy announcement
- Short and to the point
- Not the same as calling a press conference

#### Other info:

- Contact person - name, telephone
- Identify people - in photo, officers

Short, handwritten note - "Joe, hope you can help us out with this. The (name of your detachment), appreciates your support.

Thanks. Bill"

### **FORMAT**

- Detachment stationary
- All correspondence should be typed!
- Correct spelling
- Photo (people identified)
- Brief, concise, pertinent information, your name and phone # Info sheet on MCL
- Follow up phone call

### **CAUTION!!!**

- Don't send press release without approval of Commandant
- Don't ignore guidelines set down by contact person
- Don't use lengthy press releases
- Don't overextend yourself - it's quality not quantity that counts
- Don't infringe on neighboring Detachment's area

### **USEFUL PHRASES**

- Once a Marine, always a Marine
- Active duty, Reserve and Honorably Discharged
- Semper Fidelis
- To preserve the traditions and to promote the interests of the USMC
- A Band of Brothers

### **EXAMPLES OF MEDIA RELEASE**

#1

The (**The name of your detachment**) Detachment, Marine Corps League, invites **ALL AREA MARINES, FMF Corpsmen and FMF Chaplains** to our next meeting, (day), (date), (time). At the (place – name and address).

The **TOYS FOR TOTS** program is now underway and donations of new toys, contributions, and volunteers are welcome. For Additional information or directions call: (contact phone number)

Semper Fidelis

#2

The (your detachment) Detachment, of the Marine Corps League welcomes ALL AREA MARINES, FMF Corpsmen and FMF Chaplains to our Annual Picnic at the (location) on (day, date). This is a Family Picnic so bring the Kids. There will be games, lots of food, and a good time for everyone. For details call (name, phone #).

Semper Fidelis

#3

The Marine Corps League, (your detachment) Detachment, seeks Corporate support for the Wheelchair Bus Fund of the V.A. Hospital in (location). We are an IRS 501 c (3) charitable organization, and donations are Tax Deductible. For information on how you can help, call (name) at (phone #).

### **WHEN YOU'VE DONE YOUR BEST**

#### **The editor may:**

- Correct misspell words
- Omit contact info
- Run press release after the event
- Not run it at all!!!

#### **What do you do???**

- Contact your contact
- Why did it happen?
- What can you do to prevent it from happening again?

#### ***"KEEP" YOUR COOL"***

### **WHAT ARE YOUR COST**

- Time
- Phone calls
- Postage
- Letterhead
- Copies
- Photos copy expenses

### **AND IN THE END REMEMBER**

- Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- Follow the guidelines of the editor

- Be brief
  - Type
  - Keep an accurate file
  - Have commandant's approval
- In the eyes of the general public, you represent the entire Marine Corps League.

**Use your media sources**

**Use your connections**

**Use your imagination**

**You are the few the proud the Marines**

### AVAILABLE IN MOST LIBRARIES

- Bacon's Publicity Checker
- Beals, Melba - Expose Yourself - Using The Power Of Public Relations To Promote Your Business And Yourself
- Clay, Roberta - Promotion In Print - A Guide For Publicity Chairmen
- Gale Directory Of Publications And Broadcasting Media
- Gebbie Press - "All In One" Directory
- Harris, Morgan - Now To Make News And Influence People
- Mallory, Charles - Publicity Power - A Practical Guide To Effective Promotion
- Thesaurus
- The Broadcasting Yearbook
- The Working Press Of The Nation
- Turner Broadcasting

**END OF LESSON PLAN 7**

