



Public Relations for Non-Profits

July 12, 2003 talk to AAUW Training Session

Mimi Cunningham
Life Member, Wilmington Branch
President, North Carolina Division, 1984-86



What is Public Relations?

It's not an easy question, and there is no single answer.

How would you answer my question,
What is Public Relations?



What is Public Relations?

Here are some that I like:

- Good performance, publicly appreciated
- PR stands for Performance and then Recognition
- Doing good and getting credit for it.



Non-Profit vs. For-Profit PR

- What's different about PR for non-profits?
 - Agenda is cause-related, not profit motivation, so media tend to be more interested in this as opposed to commercial venture
 - Run by volunteers seeking to do something to make their community better
 - Generating media interest is easier for non-profits
 - For-profits usually have to purchase ads to get message out



Things to Consider

Why do you need or want good public relations?

Who are you trying to reach?
What do you want to accomplish?
What are the messages?
What media are most effective to reach each target audience?
How will you implement the PR plan?
How will you know if you have been successful?



Public Relations Tools

- Mass Media
 - Valuable for disseminating message
 - Builds visibility for organization
 - Informs public of organization's mission and activities
- Direct Mail
- Letters to the Editor
- Radio Talk Shows
- Organizational newsletter



Important Traits for those engaged in Public Relations

- Value personal integrity and fairness
- Value being viewed as a credible and truthful resource by the media
 - Tell the truth
 - Don't play favorites in releasing news
 - Protect a reporter who is doing an "enterprise" story



Tips for achieving media coverage

- Good writing skills
- Enthusiasm
- Nose for what is newsworthy
- Be persistent – be aggressive
- Be technologically literate – e-mail releases
- Make the reporter's job easy by providing adequate information and detail
- Always give a contact name and phone number



Other Secrets from a PR Veteran

- Know the reporter you are courting
- Read or watch the media outlet
- Watch national stories and see if your branch could offer local commentary on those issues
- Send thank you notes when a reporter helps you out



Other Secrets from a PR Veteran

- Monday is a slow news day, so it's a great time to have a news conference
- Timing is important – 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. is best
- Write op-ed pieces for the editorial pages about issues related to AAUW, mention the positions taken by the branch
- Know deadlines of media you're courting