
全體討論：

“提升扶輪公共形象的問題與挑戰及可衡量的結果”

Panel Discussion on “Issues & Challenges in Enhancing Rotary’s Public Image with Measurable Results”

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講稿：

Public image is a reflection of the perception of an entity. The sustainability of any organization largely depends on whether its public image is able to cultivate a favorable environment that supports its development.

For Rotary, it’s no exception.

The general public is more sophisticated in its approach to organizations than before. Whether they are private, public, or not-for-profit, organizations are always closely examined on their meeting of corporate responsibility expectations.

Also, we live in a more sophisticated era in terms of communications. Information travels with lightning speed from one side of the world to another, and especially so with bad news. Organizations who do not possess good public images are more vulnerable when facing with crisis. Rotary is not immune. A small regional disruption can easily explode into an international incident and injure Rotary’s credibility.

Public relations, therefore, is important for Rotary in gaining public trust and establishing a favorable public image. Nowadays we live in a global society

that is increasingly held together by a complex system of linked and rapid communications. Our challenges are 1) understanding who should we communicate with, 2) knowing the effective channels to reach them, and 3) learning to communicate with skill.

First of all, we must identify our target audience. Without knowing our stakeholders and target groups will result in a waste of efforts and resources in conducting our communications. We should not only target at our external audience, but also internal. These include:

- 1) Our existing members
- 2) Potential members
- 3) People in the community in which we serve (the public)
- 4) Other NGOs that we work with
- 5) Media
- 6) Opinion leaders
- 7) Last but not least, our Government

For our internal audience, they need to know our goals, plans and achievements. Effective communications lead to improved relationship from within the organization. Service projects, membership development, The Rotary Foundation, they all required support from our members.

As for our external audience, they need to be informed of who we are, what we do, and how does our work concerns them. In other words, we create a more favorable environment for ourselves through promoting knowledge of Rotary. Informing and educating lead to better understanding and support of the services of Rotary.

Rotary needs effective communications programs in order to build ourselves a respectable image in the world community.

People tend to consider that public image simple means increasing of awareness. However, in gaining of trust, building of credibility is equally important as visibility.

We build our visibility through:

- 1) Advertising
- 2) Billboards
- 3) Posters and flyers, literature and publications
- 4) Events and sponsorship (exhibitions, conferences)

5) Dress codes

Building of credibility, however, requires

- 1) Communicating of our corporate values and philosophy
(What are our core values? Service above self, The Four way tests)
- 2) Telling people of our community commitment and involvement
- 3) How are we helping the needed people
- 4) Our vision of the future world__polio free, water management, elimination
Of poverty)
- 5) Third party endorsement, meaning other people saying good things about
us, in what light are we being presented to the world through the news
media
- 6) Content of our messages, do people trust us more after hearing our
messages
- 7) Perceived ethics, how do Rotarians behave in our own communities.
- 8) Code of conduct (what does Rotary require of their members)

Most importantly,

- 9) Crisis preparedness (how do we respond when faced with a crisis, are we
honest, responsible, willing to change, or are we defensive)

In other words, the general public judge us on what we do, and not on how we look. Our identity that brings us the prestige must be backed by our credible actions.

Yet, building of images required professionals who know this management skill. We cannot expect that all of our clubs are familiar with the skills and the constituents of a good public image. Things that we take for granted might not be acceptable in the eyes of the public. In that sense, our messages to be communicated are most crucial in presenting ourselves in a favorable light.

Training of our clubs about the most effective communications tools and channels, educating them regarding the right concept of public image, helping them to develop messages that builds credibility; these are all the challenges we are facing in order to enhance the Rotary image with measurable results.