

Chapter 4 – Publicity

▶ PSA's

PSA's stand for 'Public Service Announcements'. Radio stations have to do a certain amount of public broadcasting in order to satisfy their Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requirements. This is good for you because that means that they can announce your car wash fundraiser event on their radio station for all to hear. It's basically free advertising for you. To get this free advertising, call the radio station and ask for the community service desk or the public relations person. Make sure to list all pertinent information such as:

Who What Where When
Why How

You should be extremely nice to radio people because radio time is valuable and others also have requests for their events. Sometimes there are many more requests than available time. If you want a spot offer to wash the radio station van for free at your fundraiser. Or give away free tickets on the radio in exchange. If the radio van shows up the D.J. or driver may call on his cellular or PCS phone for a live air link.

“Hi everyone. I'm down here at Gladiator High School supporting the D.A.R.E. program. Bring your car and get a car wash for \$5.00. It's a great cause.”

This will add additional customers and help you make more money. Three to four radio spots at peak driving times during the week before your event on an average local station will net twenty-five to fifty extra cars. I can not stress enough that it is necessary to be very nice to radio station personnel. You will be glad you did. Usually they are personable, have high energy and generally very easy to get along with so this should not be a problem.

▶ Local Newspapers

When you call your local newspaper/papers, ask if they offer free classified ads for non-profit groups. If they do, place an ad. Then call back fifteen minutes later and ask for the community calendar section to list your event. If they have a community calendar section, call back the next day and ask for the newsroom.



If they don't have free classified ads for non-profits ask the operator for the calendar section. List your event. Sometimes they will have a form to fill out. Have it faxed to you and fax it back. Be sure to check one week before your event to see if it's going to be listed if you don't see it listed to date.

Wait until the next day after faxing the calendar section request to call the newsroom about your story. Perhaps your group is raising money for a special trip to go to the championship playoffs in another state, to attend the National Boy Scout Jamboree, for a cheerleading competition, or for a religious event. These stories might be newsworthy. What are you earning money for and how much do you need? A religious event has a good possibility of appearing in the Religion Section, sports events in the Sports Section. Maybe you can hit the front page. Wow! This will give you one hundred more cars. If they refuse to do a pre-car wash story, be gracious. They may have too many other events to cover. If they have space for filler, you may be in luck even if you don't hit page A-1. Lots of last minute events happen in their industry. You never know. Maybe you don't get a pre-car wash story but you get a photographer the day of the event. This will not add cars but it really helps the moral of your group and it will make it easier to get volunteers for other fundraising events. It also does wonders for next year's annual car wash fundraiser. If you need a good quote for your story call 1-888-WASH-GUY for a quote from the author of this book. He loves to put a good spin on a story to help a worthy organization.

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► Cable Stations

Local cable television stations have local news. Car wash fundraiser events make good news the day of the car wash. Car washes with big lines are big news. Pre-wash stories work if the reason for raising the money is newsworthy. That, of course, varies from station to station, region to region and story to story. I can't tell you what's newsworthy and what isn't. I have had lousy stories on T.V. and great stories with no call back. You just never know. You might tell the cable station that both newspapers are coming out on Saturday to take pictures of your event. This will make them want to swoop the scoop and do a story before the event. This could also back fire if not done tactfully. Be careful. I can tell you one thing. If you have a three minute segment on the 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm local news, lots of people will see it.

► Newsletters

Word of mouth is still the best advertising. Your group's members talk to lots of people each day. So keep this event in front of them. You would be foolish not to. But remember you don't have the only newsletter. All the service clubs in town, corporations, colleges, hospitals, government agencies, PTA's parent club organizations, etc. all have newsletters. It certainly wouldn't hurt to ask to have an article or a mention of your event included in their newsletter. Even one paragraph will help you. If every entry in every newsletter nets you five cars, it's worth it. The contacts you make and the goodwill you receive for your organization is worth the effort ten-fold for later community projects and events. By networking with other people who care, you will better your chance of

participating in joint projects, thereby elevating both groups. If a local corporation likes the p.r. you give them, in return you may find yourself being adopted by them as their favorite charity. Always and I can't say this enough, look for the win-win in every phone call, meeting or discussion.

► Faxing

We helped one group fax all the businesses in town. We turned on our blast fax Windows based program and faxed out a cover letter with a pledge sign up sheet to every company in town. We thanked them in the letter in advance for filling out the form and told them that if they filled out all fifteen lines with sponsors that everyone in their company was entitled to a free car wash at our fundraiser. We were really killing two birds with one stone.

First: Filling out a whole pledge sheet for free. Lots of pledge money.

Second: Invited more cars to the event thus making every pledge worth more to the group because we washed more cars.

It was quite exhilarating to find out that many companies not only filled out the form, but also called and asked for more forms to fill out. Some companies just added additional pages themselves and one person re-created our form using an Excel or Lotus spreadsheet and filled that out too. A few companies reminded us after the event that they had completed pledge sheets and to please come pick them up. We didn't even know we had these sponsors. Crazy isn't it.

This particular group we did the fundraiser for was a high school baseball team. They later used these corporate and business contacts to sell small advertising billboards for \$500 each to be placed around the perimeter of the baseball fields.

You can get fax numbers in a number of ways such as:

- Buy a CD ROM with this data at a computer store
- Get a list from the local Chamber of Commerce
- Ask city hall business licenses section for a list

► Flyers

Flyers are a great way to advertise inexpensively. Find a local print shop that will advertise on the back in trade for their printing costs or for a minimal charge. Go to soccer fields, softball games, office complexes, bulletin boards around town and realtor mail boxes inside realtor offices. Don't put them on cars. If a professional organization is helping you such as a mobile car wash or mobile detailing company, hand out their flyers too. Ask Domino's Pizza and other delivery companies to

attach flyers to their boxes or put them in their take out bags. Ask grocery store managers to have box boys put one flyer in each bag of groceries. The local video store, the same thing. Always be on the lookout for good locations to place flyers.

Please fax us your ideas for our next book at
1-888-WASH-GAL.