

## Marketing Kiwanis Increases Credibility

BY Lynn Seeden  
Public Relations and Marketing Chair  
California-Nevada-Hawaii District

*“An orange is an orange, is an orange. Unless, of course, that orange happens to be a Sunkist, a name 80 percent of consumers know and trust.”*

*–Russell L. Hanlin, CEO, Sunkist Growers*

Consumers will buy the brand names they recognize because they usually don't trust products or people they don't know. The most compelling reason to market your Kiwanis club is to help your community come to know you, and trust you.

The typical shopper will buy a can of Coca-Cola over a plain-wrap can of soda pop, and travelers will look for a McDonald's before risking Fred's Big Burger. Even when the unfamiliar product is better, consumers will instead trust the names they've heard the most. Therefore, it is important for your community to frequently hear the name .Kiwanis.

Marketing your club will make Kiwanis the brand name of volunteerism in your town. Marketing is not prideful bragging; it is the primary vehicle to establish your credibility in the community.

Kiwanis should be the most talked about group in your city. When there is a need, .Kiwanis. should be the first name that pops into the minds of your local school principals, firefighters, city hall officials, clergy, business people and residents, because they know the Kiwanis club will help. They've often read about your wonderful work in the local paper; they've heard you speak about Kiwanis at the monthly Mayor's breakfast; they've seen you volunteer at community events; they have your club brochure; and they know you as a credible businessperson.

If your club took needy children shopping, provided free immunization shots for kids, delivered hot meals to seniors, or spruced up the Boys and Girls Club, a plug in the local newspaper will compel people in your community to view Kiwanis as a credible, reliable, trustworthy, caring group of volunteers. You will gain members because of this reputation.

Nancy Gillespie, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Vista, California, sends news items weekly to four local newspapers, three television stations, an on-line community calendar, and a nearby radio station. At the very least,. Gillespie said, .every little bit of exposure gives the Kiwanis Club of Vista a little more credibility.

Steve Dreyer is a lieutenant governor and a past president of the Kiwanis Club of Poway. As the executive editor of the Pomerado News Group, publisher of three community newspapers, Dreyer believes Kiwanis members need to become best friends with their local editor. .Most Kiwanis clubs do a bad job of getting the word out (marketing) about what they do,. said Dreyer. .It is based on the concept that to brag. is bad form for a service organization. I couldn't disagree more. Unless we tell the story, no one else will.

Dreyer also suggests every Kiwanis club needs a professional-looking brochure. After all, if Kiwanians want to attract professionals to their clubs and causes, they need to look professional. Dreyer commissioned a four-color club brochure that later won the Kiwanis International first-place award.

Hosting an active Web site and publishing a phone number, Dreyer added, will help the local news media and your neighbors find and communicate with your Kiwanis club.

Here are three things you can do immediately to start your club's marketing campaign:

- always wear a Kiwanis pin,
- place a Kiwanis sticker on your car, and
- publish your club's weekly meeting information in your local newspaper's calendar.

Gillespie concluded that to truly market your club, it comes down to the personal relationship: We just get out there in the community and talk to people one-on-one,. Gillespie said. She even had an impact on the editor of the on-line community calendar: he joined Kiwanis!

*Web extra: Download the Marketing and Public Relations Handbook from <http://www.kiwanis.org/lit/prmanual.pdf>*