

Public Relations Report – September 2018

The Communications team is going into the fall from a position of strength after rebuilding from last year. The waves from the previous turbulent year have subsided and a dynamic team of five has taken District 99 website up the next level: Webmaster, Diacre Bayishime, Web Strategist, Michael Wilson, Communications Manager Michelle Taylor, and Public Relations Manager, Nick Wilson. All are qualified professionals in their fields of IT, Communications, Digital Marketing and Public Relations. A recent addition to the team as social media manager is Rhys Davies who brings extensive knowledge and experience of D99 and running Friends of District 99 Facebook account.

The website has been upgraded and its focus changed – it's serves as an intranet for the district and where we can share best practices. The team has executed navigation adjustments and added analytics. The set up and extra content for the convention from last year will be carried through – and lessons learned applied – to this year's convention. Testimonials have been added.

A strategic, long term plan is needed for the website, which the team will develop with Glenn Walker.

But the main thrust in the first half of this year will be on empowering VPs of PR. An extremely comprehensive PR Toolkit has been produced and added to the website, listing and explaining the vast variety of tactics that can be deployed by clubs on an a la carte basis.

Situational analysis

Public relations is probably the most poorly understood of the Toastmaster roles.

Only about half of VPs of PR have been trained. Most of those who were, were only given the strategy of their roles: getting guests to meetings, but not the tactics: how this can be done. Nor do they know that there is a communications team that offers mentoring a PR Toolkit, and for some publicity generating events it offers financial support.

Most club officers are probably unaware of the District's website.

The team's quantitative research shows that very few clubs applied last year for PR Program of the year award, and many didn't run PR campaigns.

Solution

The communications team is reaching out with personal emails addressed to named VPs of PR and cc-ing presidents, with their club names in the subject bar. It informs them of the website as a resource, the PR Toolkit, the Of the Year awards, and offers Nick Wilson and Michelle Taylor's service in mentoring. The team wants to glean more best practices from clubs to add to the Toolkit.

We will also work with Area Directors – no response to our reaching out to VPs of PR and presidents is a red light. And we are asking Area Directors to add another question to their club visits “What’s the PR plan – how do you attract guests?”

\$1,000 dollars is assigned from the PR budget to each of east and west for publicity generating events – to be worked out with clubs who are organizing high return on investment events that boost more than one club. A further \$1,000 is assigned to the PRM for travel to visit Grand Prairie, Red Deer and Saskatoon.

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