



A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL SERVICE EVENT PUBLIC RELATIONS

DO's

1. PLAN YOUR PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT AT MINIMUM THREE WEEKS AHEAD OF YOUR SCHEDULED EVENT DATE.

- Reporters, editors, and producers do NOT like being told the night before about a potential “feel good” story.
- In the case of larger metropolitan campuses, you may have to reach out to the media more than once to get their attention.
- Make sure that you are keeping your list of local media contacts updated.

2. ALWAYS SEEK THE HELP AND ASSISTANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION YOU ARE SUPPORTING.

- Reach out to the organization’s local coordinators who may be willing to be a quoted source for the media.
- Sometimes, the organization’s internal communications personnel will lend you language or ideas for your press release.
- You may also be able to post your event on the organization’s website, lending credibility to your event.

3. ENSURE YOU HAVE A DEDICATED SPOKESPERSON WITHIN THE CHAPTER.

- This could be the Service or Philanthropy Chair, the President, or just an articulate, well-informed brother.
- Make sure that the media has their contact information.

4. KEEP THE CONVERSATION FOCUSED.

- Reporters and producers like to “expand.” Make sure that you have developed talking points and stick to them. Be sure to communicate with reporters beforehand and lay out these talking points. **Anything you say to a reporter can end up in print and/or on television!**
- Focus on things like:

- The amount of money raised or the number of volunteers present
- The years of affiliation between the chapter and the organization being supported
- The total number of brothers participating
- Why your chapter chose this particular event and what it means to the chapter (i.e. focus on *The Great Joy of Serving Others*)
- Brief overview of the event
- Next steps (how will your chapter continue this effort moving forward?)

5. LEVERAGE YOUR PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS TO PROMOTE FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES IN GENERAL.

- Be sure to sing the praises of your chapter and of Phi Kappa Psi, but remember that you can be an emissary of good will for the entire fraternity and sorority community on your campus.
- Point out that many chapters on your campus believe that community service is a fundamental part of the Greek experience.
- If you are co-hosting an event with another organization, make sure that they are prepared and ready to go as well as your own chapter.
- Communicate with your school's fraternity and sorority life office to coordinate PR and coverage of your event.

DON'TS

1. DO NOT PROVIDE UNNECESSARY DETAILS ABOUT NON-EVENT RELATED ISSUES.

- The reporter will probably NOT ask you about last night's party unless you bring it up, and then THAT may become the focus of their story.
- If you get a tough question, turn the tables on the reporter by simply saying, "Today's focus is on philanthropy and giving back to the community." Then repeat your talking points.

2. DO NOT COMPARE YOURSELF TO OR DEGRADE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.

- Saying things like, "Group A couldn't organize a prayer meeting in a convent," or "Group B couldn't count all the money we've raised ... it's got more than two digits." Such comments make you seem mean-spirited and not serious about your community service efforts.

3. DO NOT FORGET TO FOLLOW THROUGH.

- If you promise information, provide it.
- If you promise to show up on time, be there.
- If you promise a certain level of turnout, make sure you deliver.
- If you promise to raise a certain amount, make sure you exceed it.
- Bottom line: don't sell what you cannot deliver.

4. DO NOT BE INSINCERE.

- Reporters and producers can smell insincerity a mile away.
- If your brothers look bored or disinterested in the event, that will translate into the reporting and photos/footage.
- If the media thinks you are holding the event simply as a photo opportunity, it will most definitely squash the story.

5. DO NOT FORGET THAT YOU REPRESENT THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION IN EVERYTHING YOU DO.

- *Everything* your chapter undertakes is a public relations exercise.
- Remember that as you conduct yourself in any activity where you proudly wear our letters, you reflect not only on your chapter, but on ALL of your brothers, students and alumni, worldwide.
- Your conduct can enhance the public's view of our organization; it can just as easily degrade it.