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***MARKETING AND MEDIA
FOR
ALTRUSA CLUBS DOWN UNDER***

Altrusa International Inc. District Fifteen
2006

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Altrusa International District Five – Media Kit

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1.0 Introduction

Marketing and media relationships are vital to the success of not-for-profit organisations like Altrusa. No matter how important your cause is, how hard you are working in your community, you should not expect that everybody will know about Altrusa not that they will have even heard of Altrusa before. Proactive communications, getting our name out there, is essential to success. There are various forms of media including Television, Radio, Newspapers and magazine articles. Only two keys are needed to open the door to the media:

1. Understanding what they want in a story
2. Making sure the information is provided to them in a clear and timely manner.

1.1 *Why isn't Altrusa a "household" word?*

There are a number of reasons why Altrusa is not well known by the general public. Here are a few of them:

- Altrusa is made up of the word Altruism and USA. Altruism is no longer a commonly used word and many people do not know what it means.
- There is no clear brand identification
- We are very quiet about recognising our own accomplishments
- There is a lack of resources for paid publicity
- We don't market ourselves well
- Lack of communication with the media
- Don't have the one "same thing that we all do i.e. all collect books

So what can we do about it? If we do nothing then it is almost certain that nothing will change. The purpose of this guide is to provide information on how you can go about promoting Altrusa in your community so that everyone knows how wonderful an organisation Altrusa is. It is full of ideas that your club can use to promote Altrusa in your community, most of which are fairly low cost.

1.2 *What is marketing?*

Marketing usually conjures up the picture of a large commercial company deciding what box to package their product in so that it will more likely catch the eye of the consumer. Marketing is not selling. Selling means pushing the completed product to the customer while marketing means learning about your potential members – what they want and what Altrusa can offer them before you try to recruit them. You are "selling" your club if you tell a prospective member, 'Our club meets once a month, we have a scholarship fund and do a mega raffle fundraiser each year'. You are presenting a product not meeting a need. You are marketing your club if you say "Altrusa will give you a chance to pursue your interest in service issues, will offer you a network of personal and professional contacts, will help you make a difference on a local issue and will give you an opportunity to develop and use your leadership skills".

Marketing is a way of seeing yourself through the eyes of your members – and your potential members. Taking a marketing approach allows you to focus on your members needs, be proactive and responsive. It means identifying their needs and then meeting them

1.3 *What are Public Relations?*

Public Relations refers to presenting an image to the public of who or what you are. Altrusans are people who care deeply about their communities, their country, their world and their fellow human beings. They strive to improve things and solve problems everywhere they find them; children, students, senior citizens, community projects and many others have been helped all over the world because Altrusans were there and they cared. Now that is a pretty powerful public image! So why isn't it "out there"? Altrusans are usually quite humble people who are good at doing things without any

thought of personal gain. While this humility is a great virtue because we don't take advantage of the opportunities to raise Altrusa profile we are often losing opportunities to do even more good deeds; doing them on a larger scale.

Altrusans are Public Relations. Our members are the best Public Relations we can have. What members say and do reflects on your club. Do you talk with your friends and other contacts about your club and the projects you do. Do you wear your pin at Non Altrusa events or is it something that you put on for meetings so you don't fined. Try wearing your pin to work or to business meetings.

Spread the word on everything you do, every way you can. Don't be humble! Never miss an opportunity to include information about Altrusa when promoting a particular project. Don't overlook the simple things! Talk about Altrusa activities to your friends. Not only may it lead to new members, at the very least it will generate support for a project when you need it.

1.4 *What is publicity?*

Often we think of a pre-planned "stunt" which is designed to catch people's attention – be it good or bad.

Publicity is effectively free advertising. You can take advantage of the fact that you work serving the community and that this in itself is often newsworthy. The work of community service organisations, like Altrusa, usually is news and of interest to the public. The public empathise with what you are doing and the media are usually quite aware of this. The people that you deal with are often very community minded so basically the public and the media are on your side. Free advertising is the only kind most of us can afford and without the public interest and support our news stories generate we would not be able to raise the fund or recruit the volunteers that make our existence possible

1.5 *Club Media Officer*

In order to provide some consistency it could be a good idea to appoint one person in your club to be in charge of media relations. They should liaise with committees with regard to upcoming events and publicity needs.

Their responsibilities could include:

- Consulting with the clubs committees re promotional requirements for the year
- Publicising special days i.e. World Literacy Day, Make a Difference Day, Add an Altrusan Day, Altrusa Awareness Week
- Developing and implementing a publicity plan for the year
- Liaising with Media
- Identify opportunities to promote Altrusa through merchandise

2.0 Marketing Plan

One of the keys to success when marketing Altrusa in your community is to have a plan. This will usually be much more effective than ad hoc measures taken randomly during the year. It will provide your efforts with some focus.

2.1 *Developing a Marketing Plan*

There are several key steps in developing a club marketing plan.

1. *Identify your market*

In order to identify the needs of your current and potential members, you must first know who they are. Defining the characteristics, interests and needs of your market is vital. Take a look around your community, who are your potential members and what their characteristics are (i.e. age, employment, family responsibilities and personal interests, lifestyle). The easiest place to start is with your current membership and then move beyond this.

2. *Choose your target market*

Once you have identified your market you need to choose which segments you would like to focus on. A focussed approach will usually work much better as you can ensure that your message is built to appeal to a specific target group. Marketing Altrusa to all and sundry is nigh on impossible. What might appeal to young working mums may well not appeal to retired women.

3. *Marketing Strategies*

Once you have identified your target market you need to develop membership strategies that focus on the needs of prospective members in this target group.

- What are their needs?
- What do you offer that can meet those needs?
- What could you offer to meet those needs?
- How do you tell the potential members what you have to offer?

Make sure you match your message to your target audience. Your club may need to adapt to meet the needs of your target market and this may mean making some hard choices so it is important that all members in your club are involved.

You may wish to take an approach involving separating recruitment strategies and retention strategies. What obstacles do your members face when trying to recruit a member (the excuses that people offer)? Take each of these obstacles and identify whether it is something that you are currently doing that doesn't meet needs or not currently doing and therefore a need is not being met or is it price related or delivery related (i.e. day and time of meetings). Based on this you should then identify two or three strategies that your club can follow in the coming year to overcome these obstacles and reach its target markets

4. *Marketing Plan*

Once you have identified your strategies you can then put together a marketing plan. How are you going to put this plan into action? Who is going to do it? What resources will you require? Make sure you get the whole of the club membership behind it.

5. *Evaluation*

It is important that you check from time to time on how you are going. A great plan on paper that is not put into action will not create results. It would be a shame to waste the time and effort that your club has put into developing the plan. So, how often should you review your marketing plan? A quarterly review

would be a sufficient time frame as within four months you should be seeing some results in the number of prospective members attending meetings and the number of members being invited to join. When looking at the evaluation process you could look at the following broad questions:

- What are your actual results so far?
- Is what you are doing working?
- Could you do something differently and get a better result?
- Is there something else we need to do?

2.2 Developing a Media Plan

Each year at the beginning of a new president's term clubs will often sit down and plan out their various projects and activities. Why not add one more function to that annual planning cycle and build your media plan. When do you need to get information out to the public, what information will you provide, and which media will you use. This media plan will normally fit within your clubs strategic plan and marketing plan.

Step 1: Do you have a clear idea of what you want to do?

- Write down one sentence to answer each of the following:
- The single main reason you want a campaign
- The most important message you want to get across
- The type of people you want to hear the message
- A list of the people who might contribute information or help you organise the campaign

Step 2: Draft your media plan

- Brainstorm possible topics and sources/speakers
- Select the topics that best meet the purposes you identified
- Divide this list into radio, newspaper etc
- Alongside each topic put the name of the person(s) you want to use as your source of information
- Draft a media plan (see below)
- Cost your proposals. How will you raise this money?

Step 3: Approach the Media

- Approach the media concerned and see if they are interested in your plan.
- How much air time or column space will they allocate? You may have to scale down the number of topics you had hoped to cover.
- What extra information will they need?
- What are their time deadlines?
- Who will approach the contacts?

Step 4: Finalise your plan

- This will involve adapting or adding to your plan as agreed
- Contacting the speaker and briefing them on the details
- Send media a copy of your plan

Step 5: Conduct the Campaign

- Present the material - If any of the speakers/sources are unfamiliar with the media or if they are from out of town, they might like to be accompanied.

Step 6: Keep copies of all materials

- These may include newspaper clippings, tapes of radio interviews etc

Step 7: After the Campaign

- Thank all those involved

- This may be in person, by phone, letter or advertisement

Step 8: Conduct an evaluation

- Include how those involved felt about the campaign, how well it went and what could be done better

Some other hints:

- In selecting speakers you may choose between people who have a reputation in that field and who may be from our town and “ordinary people” who have first-hand experience in that field.
- If you bring in out-of-town people you might also like to use them in other ways, for example in workshops or in a public meeting.
- Develop contacts in the media
- Remember that listeners and readers will be getting your information whether they want it or not so it is important that you make your material clear, positive and as inviting as possible.

For example an annual Media Plan may look a little like:

Activity/Event	Date of activity/event	Image Building Opportunity	Action	Personnel
Make a Difference Day	26 th October	Article in Local paper about project	Contact Media at beginning of Oct with press release and offer photo of activity	Literacy Committee Chair Media Relations Chair
Mega Garage Sale	20 November	Posters around town Advertising in local paper PSA on radio	Design poster in Oct and distribute in November. Draw up ad and submit to paper Contact radio in Oct and give them PSA for week before	Fundraising Committee Chair Media Relations Chair

Then a detailed plan would be created for each of the key activity/events

Week	Topic	Group	Activity	Newspaper	Other
1 May	Need in community for an xyz machine	Sue from Community Committee	Radio PSA 1	Article	Posters Distributed
8 May	Fundraiser organised for xyz machine	Ellen from Fundraising team	Interview PSA 2	Advertised Feature	Club Newsletter distributed
16 May	Last minute tickets available from	Ellen	PSA 2	Advertisement	
24 May	Successful fundraiser	Ellen		Article	Thank you letters - sponsors
31 May	Presentation of XYZ machine	Sue	Interview with receiving org	Article	
etc					

3.0 Cultivating the media

Developing an ongoing relationship with the media in your town or city is the very best way to go about opening the doors to increased publicity for your club. But how do you go about this. The following steps will help you with this:

1. Identify the media people in your town.
2. Write a letter of introduction to each media person identified and include a brief introduction to your club and what your club has achieved. Include a club brochure if you have one. Enclose details of when and where your meetings are held, who upcoming guest speakers are, what projects you are doing etc.
3. A few weeks after sending the letter make a follow up call to the media person and ask if they have any questions, perhaps invite them to lunch (remember free food attracts and it probably won't hurt for your club to shout a free lunch!).
4. Invite the media person to come along to a club meeting.
5. Continue to involve the media person with club activities and to send press releases etc.

3.1 *Tips for dealing with the media*

An event is only news before it happens or immediately afterwards. Old news is not news, so make sure you contact the media before the event. Both your club and your local media people have a common goal to disseminate the news however; there can be a difference in priorities. Your objective is to gain exposure for the news from your club while the editor and journalists have to retain some level of objectivity regarding the stream of information that hits their desk. What can make the difference between your news gaining attention and being ignored are the relationships you have formed and cultivated with the people who make the decisions. Get to know them, learn their interests and what news stories they value and emphasize this in your stories and you will be more likely to have success in getting your news story published.

3.1.1 Get to know the media in your area

To do this refer to your telephone yellow pages for a listing of all the TV and radio stations and newspapers. You will have to contact each one to find out who is responsible for public service programming. Obtain their direct phone number if they have one and the fax number to their department and of course their email address. Make sure you ask for their deadlines to receive information. Most importantly make sure you keep your information up to date!

In your contacts you could include magazines. What magazines do your members read? If they read them then so might other potential Altrusans. Subscribe to these magazines so that you can get an idea of the type of article they print and the style of writing they use. What sorts of stories will attract their attention?

3.1.2 Size up your audience

You need to identify your audience and its interests and motivations and design your article to meet this. You need to ask the following questions:

- Who am I trying to reach?
- What interests this audience?
- What will motivate them to respond to my message?

These questions are useful in determining what media or publication to use.

3.1.3 Choosing the approach.

There are numerous channels that can be used for publicity. It is polite to only send press releases to one person in each medium (radio, newspaper, TV) rather than using a scatter gun approach and sending it to 5 or 6 newspapers at the same time for example.

Take the time to find out when the various media/publication deadlines are and ensure your press releases arrive with plenty of time.

Local newspapers are interested in promoting community interests and in anything innovative, unusual, or imaginative. Often they work on a shoe string though so may not have a spare reporter to cover your event. So take your own photos and write your own article.

How you deliver your news to the media is almost as important as the information itself. News people don't need to be told to cover "big events". But whether your event is big or small you can help by providing advanced background information about your event.

Have one person be the contact from your organisation to get the word to the news media. Place this person's contact details on every press release. You may need a back up person if this person is not always available.

3.1.4 Following Up

It doesn't matter which media channel you use or which publication or station you approach the importance of following up cannot be underestimated. The media are often inundated with material and a follow up phone call can be used to make sure that the journalist has received your copy and to make sure that the journalist doesn't have any questions. Remember the fact you think your "news" is important enough to follow up on is an indicator to the journalist that perhaps this piece is newsworthy and deserves to be published.

3.1.5 Media Placement Evaluation

After each attempt at getting something out in the media it is a good idea to sit down and work out what worked well and what didn't work so well. Keep cuttings from the newspaper. What bits did they cut? Can you see why? Keep copies of fliers and advertisements etc as they are a good record of what happened for future reference.

4.0 Promotional Opportunities

There are an endless number of opportunities to promote Altrusa. Below we have listed just a few. How many more can you think of?

1. Window Displays in Shop Windows.
2. Newspaper articles
3. Club Website
4. Club brochures
5. Club Newsletter
6. Club business cards
7. Community notices on the radio
8. Listing of your fundraiser on Sky's Living Channel Community Events Noticeboard
9. PSA on Prime TV or other regional tv station
10. Vertical Banners outside meeting venue or near fundraising event.
11. Shopping Mall Displays.
12. Radio Interviews
13. Leaflet Drops
14. Open nights
15. Flyers under car windscreens
16. Wearing Altrusa t-shirts/ or sweatshirts
17. Using Altrusa merchandise i.e. key rings, pens, bags, aprons etc
18. Posters promoting fundraisers or events placed in shop windows
19. Participation in community Fairs and dress up to ensure that you are noticed
20. Hand out book marks at the local library.
21. Notice Board Displays
22. Posters at library, shopping malls, medical centre (include tear off tags with contact number).
23. Sandwich board stand
24. Sponsor Volunteer Award in local newspaper.
25. What's on listing in community news paper
26. What's on listing at local information centre newsletter.
27. Art council diary listing
28. District Council "diary" listing
29. Bookmarks at libraries
30. Leave copies of club newsletter in waiting rooms.
31. Publish a series of Altrusa "sponsored children's books – say based around "Al and Trusa"
32. Recruit a celebrity spokesperson
33. Develop a line of Altrusa clothing
34. Produce Altrusa Banners for outside display
35. Participate in parade days
36. Add an Altrusan Day
37. Volunteer recognition
38. Do a BIG project together
39. Use Altrusa bumper stickers
40. Create an Altrusa Reading Room in every library
41. Spotlight members and their accomplishments
42. Provide leadership workshops to businesses and other organisations
43. Sponsor personal development/growth meeting for the public
44. Buy ad space in the newspaper
45. Advertise in the personals
46. Be listed with accurate information with the Chamber of Commerce, Information Centre, Citizens Advice bureau and District councils
47. Find a mascot – i.e. Al and Trusa, book worm
48. Recommended book of the month
49. Calendar with 12 months of exposure

50. Page on city website
51. Sponsor Volunteer of the month with prize in local paper.
52. Find out what other community support organisations your members are on and promote this too!
53. Develop a club business card and give 5 to each member and hold a competition to see who can give the most out.
- 54.
- 55.
- 56.
- 57.

58.

5.0 Word of Mouth is the best form of advertising

Your members are often the best form of advertising for Altrusa. But what are they telling people. Sometimes it is hard to explain what Altrusa is in a few sentences. You fear going on too long, you don't want to mention Rotary or Lions to get your message across and don't want to put them off either. In this section of the guide we provide a few tips on developing your own "elevator" speech. Does your club have a business card? What a great way to end your elevator speech by handing them a business card that includes the key things that Altrusa is all about and your contact details.

5.1 Creating an Elevator Speech

Creating Your Memorable "Elevator" Speech

By Sheryl Borden, International Communications Chair 2005-2007

We know that communicating a message is easy when you have 30, 10 or even five minutes to present it. But what do you do if you only have 10 seconds? Sometimes this is referred to as the "elevator" speech, meaning you only have a very short time to inform those around you about a specific topic.

In Altrusa, we all know the important things we do in our clubs, the literacy and service projects we undertake, the personal opportunities for growth that we experience, and the opportunities to network in and out of our local clubs. But, can you tell a complete stranger all of this in 10 seconds? And, can you interest them in wanting to either visit or join your Altrusa club? This is called creating your memorable "elevator" speech.

In those 8 to 10 seconds, you need to accomplish two specific things: 1) You must engage the person (or persons) you're talking to, and 2) You must determine if continuing this conversation on a personal level is worthwhile or whether it's just a random conversation.

If you know someone is a viable prospect for membership in your Altrusa club, then you are willing to spend additional time going into further detail about the benefits of membership.

And, if the person knows that you are a member, then they usually don't mind hearing more about the group and the passion you have for being a part of it. So, your ability to communicate a powerful message in that short time is absolutely necessary if you want to attract new members to your club and we all do.

So, what do you say in those 10 seconds? First, you must communicate the value of membership in Altrusa. This means stressing the benefits, the opportunities, the networking, and the growth potential. Then you must convey how membership in Altrusa would benefit the person you are talking to. We all belong to Altrusa for different reasons, and we need to determine what the prospective member wants out of the club in order to determine if the club can meet his/her needs.

Step one is to keep it short! When someone asks you what Altrusa is, you need to have a sentence or two "speech" prepared and on the tip of your tongue, and this will get the other person's attention. If you drone on and on, he or she will lose interest and exit as soon as possible.

Step two is to use language that the person can relate to. We live in a society where to talk in acronyms. For the prospective member, make the benefits of membership in Altrusa understandable at their level – which doesn't mean you are "talking down" to that person. Just don't try to tell them everything at one time – it's overwhelming.

Make your speech memorable by relating a personal story as to why you enjoy being a member of Altrusa. That special story allows you to develop a close relationship with the prospective member, and will undoubtedly help that person to feel more comfortable with you. Another thing you can do is ask questions of the person you're talking to. What do they enjoy doing in their "free" time; do they have a need for meeting new people; do they like specific service activities in the community. This shows that you are interested in the person and what he or she wants – not just what your club wants or needs.

Try it today! Say your "elevator" speech out loud – over and over again until you can easily repeat it to your satisfaction. It should just flow smoothly from your tongue and sound natural. Make sure you are saying it with commitment and with passion. You might even try it on some of your fellow Altrusa members and ask their opinion. Then ask them what their "elevator" speech is. If they don't have one, consider sharing yours with them.

Here are a few examples that you could use. You will need to personalise them so they feel natural to you when saying them but it will give you an idea or two to start with.

- Altrusa is all about women joining together to make their community a better place to live while having fun.
- Altrusa is an opportunity to meet new people, make new friends, and give back to your community.
- Altrusa is a group of women who get together, have fun, meeting new people, learn new things and work together to make their community a better place to live in.

5.2 Don't know what to say to a prospective member?

Sometimes you can get caught out when prospective members ask questions so here are a few tips for some of the more common questions:

Why should I become an Altrusan?

Explain why you became an Altrusan

I became an Altrusan because it was.....

-an opportunity to help many people
-an opportunity for personal enrichment
-a way in which I could contribute to my community
-it gave me "hands on" service in my community
-I was new in town and wanted to belong to a community service organisation
-I enjoy meeting people outside my work
-it brings me into contact with people who have similar interests
-I had heard about the good work that Altrusa does
-I was seeking new friendships
-it was a good way to meet people

Explain what you get out of Altrusa

Through Altrusa, I....

-Have improved my self-confidence
-Enjoy sharing ideas with others
-Have become involved in worthwhile activities
-Developed my leadership skills
-Have made new friends
-Enjoyed socialising and raising funds for service simultaneously
-Travel and meet other Altrusans throughout the country and around the world
-Enjoy good food and fun at club events

I'm TOO Busy

- No member has to attend every single meeting or project event. Participate to the extent that you can.
- Members devote as much time as they want to Altrusa activities. Sometimes family and work circumstances change and the amount of time you can give changes too and that's ok
- Altrusa can provide Altrusans with a break from everything else in your life.

I don't know anything about Altrusa

- Why don't you come along to our next meeting and find out some more
- Let me tell you more
- May I give you this club brochure which has information on the organisation and our club?

5.3 What to do once you have them?

Every year we see new Altrusans join clubs yet Altrusa as a whole isn't enjoying a constantly growing membership. Why not? It comes down to math, the numbers leaving clubs are greater than those joining. For all the marketing we do in our clubs it will come to naught if we are unable to retain our new members.

Often once we have recruited our new member we forget about making sure that their experience with Altrusa meets those very needs that we aimed to meet when marketing to them. We need to make sure that we:

- Find out why the new members became Altrusans and meet their needs as much as possible in the first 6-9 months.
- Provide them with up to date information
- Allow them to meet other new and experienced members
- Let them know what sorts of things the club has done in the past so they have some background information
- Let them know what sorts of things have been planned in the future so they know what is coming up.
- If your club has a strategic plan you could go through this so that they know where the club is heading in the longer term.

It is not only our new members that we need to ensure stay with the club but also those that have been members for a number of year. Your current members may have concerns when you ask them to renew. What can you do?

- There is a lack of orientation for new members - Plan a new member's orientation (not just for prospective members but for the ones that have joined in the last six months to a year). Give them an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about Altrusa.
- Have a short social time at each club meeting and encourage members to mingle
- Introduce new members at club meetings and assign them to committees straight away.
- There is little follow-up on new members
- Encourage the sponsor to continue looking after their new member for the first year.
- Consider putting the new member on the same committee as their sponsor so they will at least know someone.
- Get your new member involved in club and committee activities
- Our meeting place is unattractive - Your meeting place is an important part of your club image. Is the lighting adequate? Can the members hear? Are the meals alright? Is the meeting venue private?
- There is not enough club activity to hold members interest - Ask your members what they would like to do. Hold a brainstorming session.
- Make sure your club meetings are well organised and that meeting start and end on time.
- Invite speakers who will interest and entertain members.
- Identify your member's talents and then develop programmes to utilise these.
- Business Meetings are long and boring - Communicate upcoming business items through your club newsletter in order to keep your members informed and give them time to think prior to the meeting. Deal with the nitty gritty at club board meetings and develop recommendations to go through to club meetings.
- It is difficult for some members to get out at night or in bad weather. Plan activities so that there are some offered on different days and times. Encourage members to participate in activities at different days and times. Offer to car-pool or have a member pick up another.

- There is little understanding of the purposes of Altrusa in the Community - Publicise Altrusa in the community. Plan activities that involve other groups. Develop a Media Plan
- I'm burned out - Make sure you give those that "take the lead" in a number of activities a chance for a rest. They can make valuable contributions to a committee without necessarily being the chair.

Here are a few ideas that you might like to integrate into a membership retention plan.

- Make member retention a number one priority.
- Keep a record of your member's talents and interests and refer to it when developing programmes and getting members involved in activities
- Recognise member achievements at club meetings and/or in the club newsletter
- Introduce new members at meetings and encourage all members to wear their name tags
- Profile members in your club newsletter or at meetings to help newer members get to know the existing members.
- Diversify programming – plan something different such as a special dinner event
- Hold special member events such as a picnic to allow members to interact socially with no business meeting
- Contact members who have missed meetings to tell them they were missed
- Contact members who did not review (exit interview) and find out why not. Is there something you can do to make sure this doesn't happen again?

6.0 Writing

Whether you are writing an article for you club newsletter, for your local newspaper, or preparing a press release for the radio, the overall effect will be better if it is written well.

Your mission if you choose to accept it is to eliminate as many sloppy, lazy and boring words as possible and to make your grammar spotless.....this tape will destroy itself in 10 seconds.....

6.1 Fixing Trouble Spots

Here is a list of the 10 main trouble spots that you should focus on:

1. *Excessive use of punctuation.* The use of exclamation points, italics and the like can be used by many to try and add emotion to words. Rather than using this try and use a more powerful word to say what you mean.
2. *The word "that".* If you can delete the word from your sentence and it doesn't change the meaning or add anything to the sentence, you can delete it. E.g. correcting grammatical errors will mean that you will produce better copy for the media. Try eliminating "that" and you will get more concise copy. Correcting grammatical errors will mean you will produce better copy for the media.
3. *The overused "I" –* Beginning too many sentence with "I" bores an audience. Focus on "you" and the benefits the reader will get.
4. *Words that end in "ly" –* Adverbs can often make a story bland. Try replacing them with more vivid words for example: Altrusans frequently support and use instead Altrusans gather each year to....
5. *Connectors –* And, But, then, furthermore, perhaps, however, because are often used unnecessarily. Eliminate the connecting words and you'll have two strong sentences rather than one.
6. *Pronouns such as "he", "hers", "theirs" –* When you're talking about more than one person or thing, pronouns tend to confuse. You know she is your president's daughter and not your president but your readers probably won't.
7. *Overused vague words like "rather", "thing", "lots", quite a few", "stuff" and "some".* These are often the signs of a lazy writer. You should take the time to find precise words and get rid of these words.
8. *Language that offends –* There a millions of words in the English language to choose from so it is highly likely that you can choose ones that will not cause offence. You should eliminate sexist or racist phrases. Remember to keep your audience in mind when you are editing.
9. *Long Sentences -* Short, descriptive sentences pack more punch. They are more interesting to readers. They are less confusing. Simplify!
10. *Sentences that begin with "there is" or "There are" –* Start sentences with an action verb and your listeners are more likely to pay attention.

(Adapted from Altrusa International, 1998)

6.2 **How to write “good”**

1. Avoid alliterations. Always.
2. Never use a long word when a diminutive one will do.
3. Employ the vernacular.
4. Proofread carefully to see if you words out.
5. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are unnecessary.
6. Remember to never split an infinitive.
7. A writer must not shift your point of view.
8. One- word sentences? Eliminate.
9. Contractions aren't necessary.
10. The adverb always follows the verb.
11. One should never generalise.
12. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
13. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
14. Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
15. Understatement is always best.
16. Exaggerations are a billion times worse than understatement.
17. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
18. The passive voice is to be avoided.
19. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
20. Go around the bard at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
21. Be more or less specific.
22. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “I hate quotations. Tell me what you know.”
23. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
24. Don't ever use a double negation.
25. Capitalise every sentence and remember always end it with point
26. Do not put statements in the negative form.
27. Verbs have to agree with their subjects.
28. If you reread your work, you can find on rereading a great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing.
29. Who needs rhetorical questions?
30. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction. (Remember, too, a preposition is a terrible word to end a sentence with.)
31. Don't overuse exclamation marks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
32. Place pronouns as close as possible, especially in long sentences, as of 10 or more words, to their antecedents.
33. Writing carefully, dangling participles must be avoided.
34. If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.
35. Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixing metaphors.
36. Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky.
37. Everyone should be careful to use a singular pronoun with singular nouns in their writing.
38. Always pick on the correct idiom.
39. Last but not least, avoid clichés like the plague, they are old hat, seek viable alternatives.

This guide is an excerpt from the website
[www.multisystems.co.nz/How to write good.htm](http://www.multisystems.co.nz/How_to_write_good.htm)

7.0 Newsletters

Producing your Altrusa club's newsletter can be rewarding and challenging. Although the primary aim is to communicate club news to members, it can also recognize members and club achievements educate and motivate your members. How can the editor achieve these goals and also make your newsletter sparkle with originality? Here are six easy steps toward starting or improving your Altrusa club's newsletter.

1. Know your readers - Before you can plan an issue you must know who your readers are and what they want and need to know about your club, your District and International.
2. Find the articles - As an editor you should strive for a balance between news stories i.e. reports on projects, business meetings and features, i.e. member profiles and articles that address District and International activities and news. You will also want to include stories about your local club.
3. Write the article – In all your writing strive to “express, not impress”. Your goal is communicating with your audience, not creating a new art form. When writing news stories, follow the basic rules of journalism, cover the who, what, where, when, why and how of the story. Use quotes and avoid flowery language.
4. Make your Publication look interesting – Visual appeal is extremely important. An attention-grabbing layout is far more likely to attract readers than long columns of uninterrupted type. Experiment with bold designs, and if possible use colour. Don't cram too much information into the nameplate or on the front page. The name, a subtitle that clarifies the topic or audience, the name of your local club, number and volume number are sufficient. Use bold headlines for the lead article. Use the daily newspaper as a layout guide to make sure the publication's pages look “newsy”. Add photographs whenever possible. If photos aren't possible, use illustrations or clip art to add interest to pages. Whether your newsletter is printed from a typewriter or computer, keep the design clean, inviting and easy to read. Dividing your publication into departments create a sense of continuity and ensures that the publication regularly covers topics of importance within the organization. Devoting a column in each issue to a specific project or committee guarantees equal coverage to various groups within the club. When cleverly designed, departments also add to a publication's visual appeal.
5. Check sources – Making sure the facts are correct is critical. When a story includes many facts, obtain written confirmation of the story's accuracy. As the Russian proverb says “Trust, but verify”.
6. Always tell the truth – Your newsletter should not be club propaganda. If it is, it will lose credibility. And credibility and communication are what a newsletter should be about. You may never crack a Watergate-style story, but there is great satisfaction in producing a balanced, informative, well-written and innovative publication.

7.1 ***Tips on Publishing a Newsletter***

The following information was contributed by the former Editor and General Manager of *The Daily Reporter*, Cold Water Missouri. The Editor participated in the judging competitions of newsletters for the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan.

Calendar or List of Events

One of the primary purposes of a newsletter is to generate interest and participation in the goings-on in the local club. A calendar can easily be clipped and hung on the refrigerator. It serves as a tickler to remind members of upcoming events. The grid is recommended because it is visual and easy to read. Members' birthdays, special holidays etc can be used to flesh out the material.

Art Elements

A “must have” is art elements of some sort – whether they be photos or clip art. It is important because the art draws the reader eye and breaks up the monotony of a gray/all typeface page. If it is visually interesting the chances of it being read are

greatly increased. Clip art books are available at most office supply stores and bookstores and many disks are available for the computer. Art elements brighten your newsletter.

Vary the Type

All capital letters and all same size type is offensive to the reader. Copy in all caps is tough to read – it strains the reader’s eyes. It also becomes impossible to read copy when all-caps sentences are single – spaced.

Snappy headlines

Newsletter editors need to bear in mind that human animals have a really short attention span when it comes to reading material. Writers have exactly 2.3 seconds to grab the reader’s attention with their headlines. While some headlines like “Free Money” draw the reader into the copy following, others are dull and do not entice the reader into going further.

Column Width

10 cm width should be the maximum size for a single newsletter column. Anything beyond that width is not reader-friendly and creates eyestrain (unless the point size of the type is exceptionally large). When a reader has to draw their eyes along 15 centimetres to read the text then back six inches to the next line, then proceed another six inches.... well, you get the picture. By the time you read a half page of copy, your eyes are exhausted because they’ve had to scan almost 24 feet at a close range. The reader may be inclined to put the newsletter down, not because it’s boring, but because the eyes are too tired to go on reading. (Editors limited to producing their newsletters on typewriters can still comply with this column width idea by typing copy in strips and pasting the newsletter together).

Advertising

Advertising is an excellent practice when budgets are tight. This revenue can certainly be used to improve the quality and appearance of a newsletter, not to mention offsetting postage costs. Twelve issues could be sold as a one package deal – and shouldn’t be a tough sell either. Most members are a desirable target customer group from a marketing stand point. They have a fair amount of disposable income.

7.2 On-Line Newsletters

This is a low cost method of communication. There are a few things that you should consider if looking at creating an on-line newsletter.

1. Importance of Layout & Design.

The importance of layout and design can not be underestimated as first impressions are hard to erase.

- You need to make sure the layout is clear.
- Try to split your information into logical sections.
- Try to have a consistent theme i.e. text, colour etc
- Try to use colours, styles and fonts which compliment each other.

2. Design Scannable Newsletters.

Most people read an online newsletter on their screens and may never print it out. You need to make the text easy to scan by:

- Using short paragraphs
- Using bullet points
- Including plenty of white spacing between topics
- Highlights topics with uppercase or bold text.
- Use meaningful headings and subheadings.

3. Include Newsletter Title in the Subject Field

When emailing your newsletter out you need to make sure that you put the newsletter title in the subject field so that the reader can differentiate your newsletter from junk emails.

4. *Include a Table of Content*

You should put a table of contents at the top of the newsletter. This will allow readers to scan the topics to see if anything in the newsletter catches their interest. It is possible to design your on-line newsletter to move to the “section” by clicking on the item in the content which can make it easy for the reader to go to the piece of the newsletter that interests them.

5. *Design User-Friendly Newsletter*

Peoples computer screens vary in size significantly and you need to remember this when designing your newsletter. Also the email preview pane is usually much smaller than the full screen so make sure that you keep your table width in mind when designing.

6. *Spell Check your Writing*

Always spell check your newsletter.

7 *Style*

Never use two words when one word will do. This will mean extensive editing but your readers will appreciate the effort. You need to make sure you get to the point fast as the internet is not the place to “ramble”. Use adjectives sparingly and avoid jargon. Well written copy looks good.

8 *Test Copy*

Make sure you send a “test copy” to yourself or someone to read before hand before you send it out to “everyone”. This allows you to have someone else give it the once over and avoid having to send out corrections.

7.3 *Ten Commandments of Being an Editor*

The job of newsletter editor is always an interesting one. So here are a few tips, which hopefully will provide a laugh as well as some food for thought.

1. Thou shalt always be truthful
2. Thou shalt always tell the news as stated with no opinions unless so stated.
3. Thou wilt always check for misspelling and incorrect dates in thy copy.
4. Thou will always honour the President (to a degree).
5. Thou shalt always do they best to be on time with thy edition regardless of the thoughtlessness of those reporting the news.
6. Thou shalt always be humble, accept the incorrect data that is given thee until the giver can be bludgeoned to death.
7. Thou shalt always add good tiding and cheer to thy copy so as not to be classified with the doomsayers and sourpusses of thy club.
8. Thou shalt always praise for a job well done and reserve the criticism for the others with less consideration than thyself.
9. Thou shalt do thy best to serve as a mentor to another so as to keep continuity to thy responsible position.
10. Thou shalt exchange thoughts, ideas, methods and any other data with members of other clubs and any other member for the betterment of Altrusa.

8.0 Club Brochures

An effective brochure can be a powerful marketing tool, but equally a poor one can be expensive and ineffective. This section is devoted to providing hints and tips on developing a top notch club brochure.

Remember once you have produced your brochure that it will be of no use whatsoever if you don't get it out into the public domain. You could place brochures at your local citizens advice bureau, information centre, local council offices, approach real estate agents re putting your brochures in with any info packs they give to new residents, How many more places can you think of?

Encourage members to give out brochures by giving them a few each and challenging them to hand them out to a prospective member during the month. Make sure guests at meetings receive a brochure and that you send them to your local media.

8.1 *Tips for creating a winning brochure*

1. *Decide the purpose of the brochure*
Don't try to do too much as you only have one page to do it in. Try to stick to the essential facts. If you have two purposes i.e. attracting new members and general information you may like to create two distinct brochures one for each purpose rather than trying to cram it all in one.
2. *Keep your reader in mind*
Include information that they want to know rather than what you might like to tell them.
3. *Give the cover a lot of attention.*
You want to get people to pick up your brochure so your cover needs to scream "Pick Me!", "Read Me"! You need to focus on creating an attractive cover as this is the only thing that makes contact with potential readers.
4. *Use photos on the cover*
While this can be more costly it also is one of the best techniques for grabbing people's attention. Ideally you want them to be colour.
5. *Colour covers*
Your brochure will often be surrounded by many others. If your brochure is colourful and classy then it is likely to be chosen over other black and white ones. Remember the aim is to get people to read your brochure not just to produce one so that you can say you have done it. A brochure that is not picked up and read is not worth the paper it is produced on.
6. *Make it easy to carry*
Don't use heavy paper stock to impress. 80gsm paper is fine. The paper can be glossy but does not need to be in order to be effective.
7. *Try leaving out key information.*
Ideally you want the reader to do something after reading the brochure. If you leave out key information i.e. price or day or meetings then the reader will need to contact you (don't forget to provide your contact details whatever you do!!) and this will prompt the reader into action.
8. *Producing your brochure*
While it is tempting to produce your own brochures to keep costs down it pays to check with local printing companies about professional assistance with design and production of your brochure. If you want to produce a professional colour brochure you will get a better result from taking it to the experts. You may also be surprised at the cost!
9. *Content*
With content take care not to provide information that dates too quickly. If you are going to get a production run of your brochure then you will end up with a lot of "obsolete" brochures if you provide detailed information that dates quickly.

8.2 What not to do

1. Don't think you can proof read your own writing.
2. Don't ask a brochure to "close the sale". You need to make sure the brochure prompts the reader to act, i.e. contact you and then it is "you" who will "close the sale".
3. Don't try to say everything in a brochure as this cramps the brochures style and is then less likely to get the reader to respond.

9.0 Websites

Does your club need a website? In most cases some sort of internet presence will be of benefit. Generally speaking you should have a website if any of these criteria apply to you:

- You would like to provide information about your business/organisation to the public.
- You would like people to have a good chance of finding you on the internet
- You would like your organisation to have a professional image.
- You would like to sell goods or services over the internet.

Setting up a website can seem an insurmountable task for a beginner but if you know how to surf the internet and use a word processor then you should be able to make a website. The single biggest mistake that most beginners make is trying to do too much too soon. In many cases it is easy to find someone with the expertise in building websites and getting them to do it (but at a cost usually).

The good news is that apart from normal internet connection fees it is possible to build and operate a website at absolutely no cost. The bad news is that it's difficult to work like this and there are severe limitations to what you can do without spending money.

9.1 Website Building Programmes

First there is no such thing as a program which makes good sites. Though some programmes may be more user friendly than other good websites are made by good website designs. To make a great site you need to do a lot of learning. There are no shortcuts.

There are two main ways of creating a website and both are very different:

1. Use a host site that has an on-line "wizard". This guides you through a series of steps which results in a site being constructed for you. The advantage of this method is that you don't need any skills other than using your browser. The drawback is that you are very limited in what you can do with this kind of website.
2. Construct a website on your computer then "upload" it to the internet so that other people can access it. This is the way most serious sites are made.

Some common web page software packages include Macromedia Dreamweaver and Microsoft Front Page. There are many more out there. Each has their strengths and weaknesses. Your choice of package to use will depend on your financial resources and level of expertise. You can check out some brief summaries on website programmes at www.mediacollege.com/internet/design/wedesign03.html

9.2 Hosting a website

Once you have created a website you need to "publish" on the internet. This involves copying the web pages from your computer to your hosts server. There are two main hosting options, Free and Paid.

9.2.1 Free Host Servers

There are a huge number of "free" hosts. Often the best thing is to see if your internet provider has any free hosting services (often the case for very small sites). It can also pay to see if your community has a community site that might host for free the pages of non-profit organisations that are serving the community. By searching free website hosts on Google you will get a seemingly endless supply of possible hosting options. There are catches with using free hosts and these can include:

- Advertising banners – advertising which pops up at the top of your page and may also appear in pop up windows on your screen.

- Ugly URLs – A URL is your website address and often there is not much choice and it would be very rare to be able to use something along the lines of www.myname.com. Sometimes you are assigned an address and have no choice at all.
- No support – There is often little if any support if you have trouble with your site.
- Limited features – you may find that some features simply aren't allowed on website pages. This can include a limitation on the size of your site.
- No guarantee of service – From time to time free hosts simply shut down either temporarily or permanently with little or no warning.

9.2.2 Paid Host Services.

Prices vary significantly so it would definitely pay to shop around. You can use a host that is situated anywhere in the world although often in little old New Zealand it is easier to stick with one of the many NZ providers. Websites are hosted by any of the main internet providers, Xtra, Clear, Actrix etc. Again a search on www.google.com can help. When choosing a host you should look for the following features:

- FTP Access – This is the most common methods of publishing your files to the host server. Make sure you know exactly how to access your host.
- Technical Support – Does the provider offer help installing and running your site? Does this cost extra?
- E-Mail – What email facilities are included?
- Statistics – Most hosts provide free statistics to show how many people are visiting your site (don't use a visitor counter on your page it is considered tacky!!).
- Front Page Extensions – If you are using Front Page to design your site you need to ensure the host can cope with Front Page extensions.

9.3 *Key Steps in Building a Website*

1. Decide whether you are going to build the site yourself or get someone else to build it for you.
2. Determine the purpose for your website. Why will the site exist? What benefits do you expect to get?
3. Plan design, content and promotion of the site. – You should make sure your brand/imaging etc is consistent across the web, club brochures, letterheads and business cards. You also need to plan how you will let people know about your website. That may well mean updating letterheads and business cards etc.
4. Get your domain name right.
5. Choose the right software for designing the site (a step which you can skip if you are using a website designer of course).
6. Plan your content. You need to put together a basic structure for your website with sections and pages logically grouped together.
7. Appoint a website co-ordinator – It is recommended that you appoint one person as your website co-ordinator.
8. Keep it simple and realistic. A simple site done properly will be far more impressive than a complete site which doesn't quite work 100%.
9. When considering content it pays to identify key words that relate to your club and ensure that they appear on most pages in the text. For example using Altrusa, Service, and Community etc as key words which appear somewhere, somehow on each page. This can help Search engines find your site.

9.4 **Characteristics of an Effective Website.**

An effective Website gives people what they want. So what are the key characteristics of an effective website.

1. *Easy to use*
2. *Home Page* – Be clear; tell people what your website is about as soon as they enter the site. Use a consistent navigation format throughout your site. “Back to top” links are useful on long pages and “Home” links are also great for getting a user around your site.
3. *Information* - If you don't have information that interests people and keeps them coming back then it really won't matter about the other design aspects of the site as no one will be looking. Visitors to your site expect to find fairly detailed information on Altrusa's cause and how financial contributions to Altrusa are utilised. Your website needs to be more than an online brochure with contact information, a mission statement and a few bullet points of information. Visitors want more than this; they want an opportunity to act.
4. *Action* - Consider including “Call to Action” asking the visitor to interact by contacting you or entering a competition or subscribing to a newsletter etc. You need to get them involved.
5. *Visually pleasing*
6. *Memorable URL*
7. *Easy to down load.* Internet users simply log off if a site takes too long to down load. Fancy graphics and animations may look great but can severely hamper the down load speed and therefore be less attractive to potential visitors.
8. *Easy Navigation* – Make sure your site is easy to get around otherwise visitors will leave the site (and often not come back!). Keeping your navigation tools (i.e. “Home” links) the same on each page can help with this. 3 click rule – If it takes 8 clicks for someone to dig down to the information they want they will usually exit the site before ever finding it. You should try and make it so the visitor only has to click three times at the most in order to find specific information.
9. *Don't be “Under Construction”* This looks unprofessional and the time you spend creating an “Under Construction” page could be utilised more efficiently actually creating the page.
10. *Photos don't tell the whole story* – Usually words are necessary to clarify the story explaining who is in the photo and what they are doing. You also need to watch the file size and down load ability of photos. Quality of photographs is important. It is far better to have 2 or 3 good quality photos of a consistent standard than 100's of poor quality photos.
11. *Update* – Is your website regularly updated? It is important to keep your website up to date. Visitors will stop coming to the page if nothing changes. Ideally you should update your site every month or so.
12. *Contact* – Contact details for your club or organisation should be easy to access from every page on the site.
13. *Links* - You should have your site linked to others such as the District and International website and even other clubs in your region or District.
14. *Usability* - Check that your website looks good on also sorts of operating systems (Apple, PC's) and with different web browsers (Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator) and with different monitor resolutions (800x600 and 1024x768). You will get people using different systems to check out your site. Does it still look ok?
15. *Style* - If you have lots of content you need to break it up into small readable paragraphs, sections and bulleted lists as this helps with onscreen reading.
16. *Page printability* – If you think your visitors are going to print pages from your website you will need to either design your site so that it is printer friendly or provide a “printer friendly” version of your web pages.

No doubt we have all had experience with poorly designed websites. Have you ever given up in frustration and gone looking for the information you require on another website? Here are some common problems with Websites.

1. Ineffective use of titles and keywords
2. All graphics and no text on main page and content pages
3. Use of Flash animations with no text
4. Overuse of technology. This often leads to an unwieldy slow to down load site.
5. Long sentences
6. Long paragraphs
7. Forgetting to get the visitor to do something (i.e. engaging the visitor)
8. Believing if you build a website "they will come". You need to get the word out that you have a website and where to find it.
9. Horizontal page scrolling You should avoid horizontal scrolling as it can confuse and also make page printing difficult (if not impossible)
10. Poor grammar and spelling mistakes. This detracts significantly from the professionalism exhibited in your website and may lead to the visitor not holding much faith in reliability of the content either.

10.0 Public Service Announcements

You will often see in Altrusa materials references to Public Service Announcements (PSA's). A public service announcement is usually transmitted electronically, via radio or television in a short spot of ten to sixty seconds. In New Zealand you may see this term replaced by "Community Notice" segment on the radio. The best means of ensuring your PSA gets accepted is to determine the format and word limit required by each media organization it is being sent to.

10.1 PSA's for Radio

A PSA usually covers less material than a typical press release (after all you have only got 60 seconds at most) but you should still cover the "who, what, where, when and why" aspects of a press release. The exact requirements for a PSA will differ from station to station but there are some basic features that you should include:

- The title should read "PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT"
- The next line should read the date that you would like your announcement to air.
- Next you should include the name, phone, email and fax of the contact person. This should be followed by the name of your event followed by a brief paragraph with an explanation of what you want aired. At the end of the paragraph you should write '-end-' or '###' as you do in a press release.

You should send it to the radio station at least three weeks in advance. The earlier your PSA is received the better your chance of having it aired frequently and in plenty of time to alert your target audience. Remember – frequency makes all the difference. A quick tip received from one radio station is to send your announcement in again each week during the period in which you want it to air to ensure you get it "on the radio". You may wish to change the content slightly each time but this is not compulsory. Remember to send a wee note to say thank you whether or not your PSA is accepted.

10.2 PSA's for Community Television Message Boards

In New Zealand your main option in this regard is currently Prime. Although you can try sending your notice to TV one or TV 3 for inclusion in the community events section often run at the end of the main News Bulletin. The format for this is usually extremely short, i.e. not more than 25 words.

10.3 Tips for an excellent PSA

1. Write for the ear by reading your effort along.
2. Repeat telephone numbers or dates.
3. Spell out any numbers, dates or other figures.
4. Use phonetic pronunciation (in parentheses) for any unusual words or names.
5. Word count estimate for on-air time:
 - 9 seconds – 25 words
 - 20 seconds – 40 words
 - 30 seconds – 80 words
 - 60 seconds – 160 words.
6. Test your press release by reading it aloud and timing it. If it is greater than 1 minute then start taking a pencil to your article and reducing the content.
7. Often Radio stations may use your announcement several times per week so it may pay to indicate a start date and a stop date in the upper right hand corner of your PSA release.

*The most important thing to remember is
KISS _ Keep it Short and Simple.*

10.4 Sample PSA's

COMMUNITY NOTICE

1 February 2006

SUPER DUPER FUNDRAISING EVENING

The Altrusa Club of ABC is holding a SUPER DUPER FUNDRAISING EVENT at ABC Event Centre on Saturday 3rd February at 6pm. This event is raising funds for ABC Literacy Support Centre. The club hopes to raise X\$ to assist with the purchase of a new library for the centre. Tickets to the event are \$x each and are available from ABC Book shop or by ringing 555689.

###

COMMUNITY NOTICE

1 February 2006

Are you looking for a way to help your community?

Would you like to help those in need throughout your community? Would you like to meet with other people who want to make a difference in our community? Be part of a group that's dynamic and action-oriented? You can be involved in an organisation on the move. Let Altrusa make a difference in your life. For more information call (insert phone number) or check out our website at (insert website address).

###

11.0 Press Releases

Getting an article in your local newspaper can be challenging in some towns or cities but you can improve your odds by making sure that your press release is well written. Also don't forget your smaller community based newspapers. While it is hard to get "good news" in the major daily newspapers the smaller community newspapers are far more likely to be interested in the sort of news that Altrusa clubs have to share.

Newspaper's editorial departments are busy places and not every story that a newspaper would like to cover can be covered. Every day decisions have to be made on what is and what is not included. For example a dramatic sea rescue is going to be in the paper the next day where the news of your clubs annual general meeting is less likely to get the time and resources it needs to become a story when competing with other "harder" news. But there is a solution to this – the press release. Basically it comes down to you and your organisation letting the media know about something you would like to cover. Done well, a press release can almost (but not always) guarantee you coverage.

11.1 When should you prepare a press release

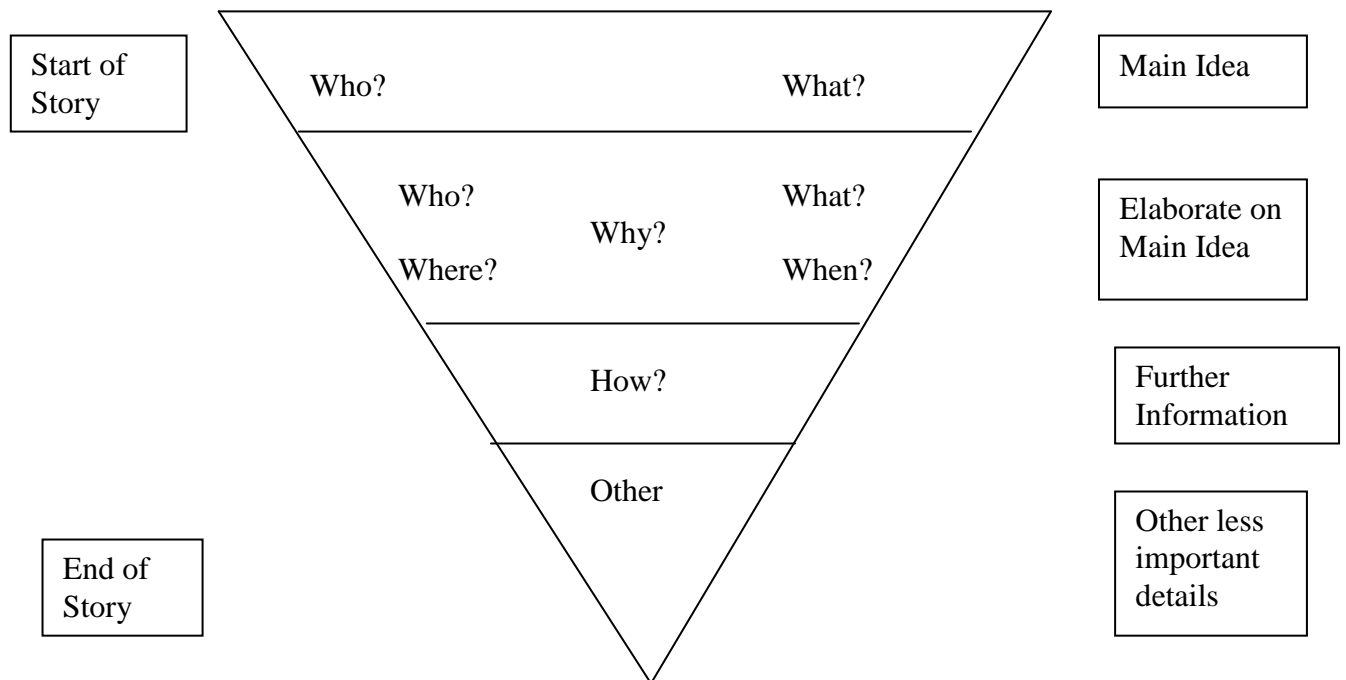
Before writing your press release you need to make sure you have some news to tell. You can get a good guide of the sorts of stories that your local media are interested in by looking at the sort of stories that they publish. For example if you see community organisations with articles in the paper about a speaker that they have had at a meeting or that they have just installed a new president then you could class this as "news" for your Altrusa Club's purpose and prepare a press release and send it in. Here are some occasions when you could submit a press release.

- When you have a guest speaker (especially from out of town)
- A big conference in town
- A major development is planned
- Success stories from your membership
- Success with awards at District Conference or International Convention
- A major fundraiser coming up
- A major project completed
- New President Installed

11.2 Writing your press release

Now that you have your "topic" sorted you need to ensure your press release makes the news. Here are some tips that may help you to get your press release to make the grade.

1. Make sure the information is newsworthy. Make sure you wait until you have something with enough substance to issue a release. If you keep sending journalists no-news announcements then they will quickly start dropping everything you send them into the rubbish. Consider how you can make your information interesting to those who are not involved in this organisation
2. Use the Inverted Pyramid style



3. Tell the audience that the information is intended for them and why they should continue to read it.
4. Start with a brief description of the news, and then distinguish who announced it, and not the other way around.
5. Ask yourself, "How are people going to relate to my message and will they be able to connect with it?"
6. Make sure the first 10 words of your release are effective, as they are the most important.
7. Avoid excessive use of adjectives and fancy language.
8. Keep it brief and simple. Make sure you only deal with the facts. Shorter stories have more chance of being used due to space restriction in any newspaper. A press release that is a giant block of text will often be overlooked in favour of those which are shorter with a greater density of facts. If you are concise there is a greater chance that your press release will be read. In general the press release should not be more than one A4 page using 12 point font (at least).
9. Include Quotes from Relevant people. This allows the story to sound like an interview even though the Journalist doesn't even have to lift the phone. A quote from your president or committee chair or a community leader relevant to the topic at hand can work wonders. Remember you can quote yourself if there is no one else!
10. Make it as easy as possible for media representatives to do their jobs. Don't make the mistake of wasting your chance to catch their attention by filling the first half of the page with your contact details, put that at the end so once they have read it and are "hooked" they have the details they need right there.
11. Keep it legal. The libel and defamation laws of this country are a minefield. The newspaper will cut out anything that could get them – and you- into trouble.
12. Don't get cutesy with catchy titles – Your title should never be more than one line. Titles should tell the readers what to expect (what the subject is). They will scan your title to see if anything interests them. The media look at the title to gain an indication of whether your press release is newsworthy, whether their readers would want to read about what you have to say and in

- what section of the publication would this article best fit. It needs to grab their attention and convince them that your press release is worth printing.
13. Choose your Moment – Timing is all important. Even if you write the best and brightest Press Release that is newsworthy it may well be “trashed” if it is sent out shortly after a major news event occurs.
 14. Keep your article non-specific in terms of date if you are writing a follow up story. Often articles are kept on file until a “gap” appears in the newspaper layout.
 15. Where possible include a photograph (see photograph tips on following page)
 16. Check and Re-check – you should check and recheck all the details including date, time, venue and spelling of names and double check spelling and grammar. If this is not your strong point find another member of your club who can help you. Remember it is quite hard to spot your own “typos”.

11.3 Formatting your Press Release

A press release that is dashed out on the back of a serviette is unlikely to have the same affect as one that is correctly laid out and contains the essential information. As a general rule of thumb you should follow these guidelines:

1. *For Immediate Release* – these words should appear in top left hand corner of the page just under your letter head (in All Capitals).
2. *Headline* – use bold face type. Capitalize the first letter of all words in the headline (with the exception of “a”, “an”, “the”, “of”, “to” or “from”).
3. *Date Line* – This should be the city your press release is issued from and the date you are sending your press release
4. *Format* – use at minimum 2.5 centimetre margin on each side of the page (to give the journalist room to make notes).
5. *Lead paragraph* – The first paragraph needs to grasp the reader’s attention and should contain the relevant information to your message such as the five W’s (who, what, when, where, why). The information should expand on the headline and provide date, time venue etc. If you are informing the public about a fundraiser make sure you include details of where they can buy tickets/make donations.
6. *Text* – The main body of your press release where your message should fully develop. Each paragraph in your press release should be no more than one or two sentences long.
7. *Altrusa* - Include a brief (and I mean a 1-2 sentence max) description of Altrusa/your club.
8. *Contact Information* – you should provide full contact details for your club media spokesperson (include after work hours contact details). The person listed in your contacts must be available. If a journalist is working to a tight deadline and has a query and the contact is not available then the story may well be left out.
9. *Layout* - Make sure you complete the paragraph on one page rather than carrying it over onto the next page. Only print on one side of the paper. Use the word “more” between two dashes and centre it at the bottom of the page if you go to a second page (try hard to keep it to one page!) to let reporters know that another page follows. Use “-end-” or “###” to signifying the end of the press release.
10. *Style* – everyone has their own style of writing but it pays to check out the newspaper/magazine that you are writing for. What style do they use? It usually pays to keep your sentences short and sweet. Every sentence is a new paragraph. This makes a story easier to read. Always write in the present or future tense. Use of the past tense indicates “old news” which is effectively “no news”.

11.4 Power Punch Press Releases

Often it can be hard to say what we want to say on one page let alone one paragraph. Nonetheless a one paragraph press release can be a powerful tool. Who doesn't have time to read one brief paragraph? (And not pages long but rather say 10 lines or so.) The media often do not need to know everything about Altrusa to determine whether your press release is newsworthy. They just need the facts (not the whole history behind them).

11.5 Photographs

A picture speaks a thousand words or so the saying goes. The vast majority of readers look at pictures first. Here are some tips for great newspaper photographs.

1. Make sure all people in pictures are named from left to right and include their titles, such as president etc.
2. Good, sharp clear photographs are welcome.
3. Fill the frame – get as close to the subject as you can- then take a step forward. Too many pictures have the subject off in the distance.
4. Lighting – always avoid light sources from behind the subject. Use the fill-in flash on your camera to reduce shadows on faces etc.
5. Don't just line them up and shoot – try to make the picture more interesting without being corny.
6. Make sure your club banner is in the picture if you can.

Keep an eye on the background there's nothing worse than a picture of someone who looks like there is a tree growing out of his or her head!

Scanned pictures sent via email are great! Please send as a .jpg file at 200dpi. Colour scans are preferred.

11.6 Pitching your press release

Now you have a topic, you have a well written and well presented press release what do you do? Once you have written your press release you should consider writing a "pitch letter" which summarizes the main points of the event and how you would like it covered by the media.

With technological advances the best way to send a press release is via e-mail. This is because e-mailed stories are ready to go straight into the newsroom's system. Preferred format is text only - .txt files. Faxed and mailed stories are perfectly acceptable too, but require "setting", that is someone has to type the story into the system. Handwritten press releases are acceptable, but typewritten or printed from a computer are better because there is less chance of illegibility.

You have two choices when sending out a Press Release, first, sending it out to all and sundry or second, sending it out to select publications. If you choose the later it provides an opportunity to try and curry favour by say sending a bar of chocolate in the envelope with your press release and can also enable following up of your Press release with a phone call to establish the level of interest and offer more information.

It is always better to combine sending a press release with personally contacting a journalist. A five minute phone call will almost always get you more coverage than a press release sent cold.

11.7 Sample Press Releases

11.7.1 Club Awards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Altrusa International Inc of (club name)
(Name, office)
(Address)
(Area code, telephone number)

Local Altrusa Club Receives Service Awards

The (name and description of award) has been awarded to the (club name) for the (Name of project or reason for award). The award recognises (brief description of the awards, who conferred it and why it was established and how often it is given etc). It was received by (name of person or group) at the (name of event and locate) on (date).

(Description of project or performance by the club to merit the award, and person in the club responsible for the achievement. How the award will affect the club, the community and or beneficiaries of the award. Relate the relevancy of any past projects or performance leading to this award.)

Altrusa International, Inc is a worldwide volunteer service organisation of executives and professionals dedicated to improving their communities through personal service. Members combine their talents to develop and finance service projects meeting specific community needs, especially those involving literacy, child welfare, and women's issues. Altrusa has been servicing the (name of town) community since (year formed) and currently has over (number) members. If you would like to find out more about Altrusa then (check out the club website at Or phone).

###

A photo of the award being presented or the committee responsible for the project or of the project itself would be appropriate to send.

11.7.2 Officer Elections/Installation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Altrusa International Inc of (club name)
(Name, office)
(Address)
(Area code, telephone number)

First and Last Name of (City) elected/installed as President of Altrusa International Inc of (Club Name)

(Club City) – (First and last name), was elected/installed as President of Altrusa International Inc of (Club Name) at the club's meeting on (date). During her upcoming term of office) name_ will emphasize (name and briefly describe the focus, goals, beneficiaries etc of upcoming community service projects).

Active in Altrusa since (year), (name) has served as (prior offices held). She is joined on the club board of directors by (name) as President Elect, (name) as Vice president.....(continue for rest of board positions).

Altrusa is an international service organisation with members who are dedicated to improving their communities through personal service. Members combine their talents to develop and finance service projects meeting specific community needs, especially those in literacy. If you would like to find out more about Altrusa then (check out the club website at or phone.....).

###

A photo of the new president and her board of directors would be appropriate to send.

11.7.2 Fundraiser

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Altrusa International Inc of (club name)
(Name, office)
(Address)
(Area code, telephone number)

Altrusa International Inc of (Club Name) raises (number of dollars) to benefit (Beneficiary)

(Club City) – Members of Altrusa International Inc of (club name) continued their local tradition when they (describe event). This year over (amount of money) was raised and more than (number) people participated.

For the last (number of years) Altrusa International Inc of (club name) has sponsored/organised this event. Members have raised more than (amount of money) for (beneficiaries).

In addition Altrusa international Inc of (club name) has developed/supported programs on behalf of (list major past and present projects).

Altrusa is an international service organisation with members who are dedicated to improving their communities through personal service. Members combine their talents to develop and finance service projects meeting specific community needs, especially those in literacy. If you would like to find out more about Altrusa then (check out the club website at or phone.....).

###

A photo of the fundraising event would be appropriate to send.

11.7.4 Make a Difference day

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Altrusa International Inc of (club name)
(Name, office)
(Address)
(Area code, telephone number)

Local Altrusans Make a Difference

(Club City) – Members of Altrusa International Inc of (club name) continue their local tradition of community service by participating in the (year i.e. tenth) annual Make A Difference Day, Saturday, (date). (Describe the event, how many participated, beneficiaries of the activities.)

Make a Difference Day, the largest day of helping others, is sponsored by USA WEEKEND. For the last (number of years), Altrusa International Inc of (club name) has participated in this annual event. Over (insert numbers) of Altrusa Club around the world participate in Make a Difference Day with a variety of literacy focussed service projects.

In addition Altrusa international Inc of (club name) has developed/supported programs on behalf of (list major past and present projects).

Altrusa is an international service organisation with members who are dedicated to improving their communities through personal service. Members combine their talents to develop and finance service projects meeting specific community needs, especially those in literacy. If you would like to find out more about Altrusa then (check out the club website at or phone.....).

###

A photo of Altrusans participating in Make a Difference project would be appropriate to send.

11.7.5 Literacy 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Altrusa International Inc of (club name)
(Name, office)
(Address)
(Area code, telephone number)

Altrusans Get Behind Literacy

In September Altrusa Clubs throughout New Zealand are sponsoring a “Book Give Away” as part of Classic Hits Radio Sunday morning networked children’s programme “That’s the Story” presented by Ronnie. This sponsorship is running from 28 August to 2 October and most Clubs are sponsoring similar programmes locally as part of this “Literacy Month”. Each Sunday on “That’s the Story” children will be invited to enter a competition to win a book with 25 books to give away each week. Each week the winning story will be read by a celebrity during the programme . At the end of the Literacy Book Give Away on the 2nd of October every child entering the competition will go into the draw to win a \$200 book voucher and \$200 worth of books for their school. Also during the week of the 5th -9th of September there will be a day time book give away with 40 packs of books to be won. The local Clubs are running their own programmes in conjunction with Classic Hits Radio. You can find out more about this promotion on Classic Hits website www.classichits.co.nz

The Altrusa Book Give Away is being kindly supported by Jabberwocky Children’s Bookshop. Jabberwocky is a leading supplier of childrens’ books in New Zealand carrying a very wide range of books covering all ages from birth to teens, as well as parenting and teacher resources. Books can be purchased at their shop or through their website www.jabberwocky.co.nz.

Altrusa was founded in Indiana, USA in 1917 and has grown to operate as a voluntary organisation in many countries including USA, Canada, UK, NZ, Russia, the Caribbean and South America. This is broken down into Districts and New Zealand is District Fifteen. Altrusa is an International service organisation, which focuses on literacy – for adults and children. There are 26 clubs in New Zealand and these clubs focus on literacy in different ways. Some provide tertiary awards to assist students attending University, others books for new born babies, or collect used books and redistribute them where needed in the Community (prisons, elderly residential homes, schools etc). Others assist in remedial reading classes and in many other ways. Literacy is emphasized and encouraged in our communities where a need is seen.

(for the local Club to complete) The Altrusa Club in (name of town) is in September (brief description of project). In the past the (name of town) Club has encouraged literacy by (brief description of past Literacy projects).

All these projects have been made possible by the *(name of town)* Altrusa Club fund raising so that these projects can be carried out. If you want to find out more about Altrusa or contact your nearest club, check out our website on www.altrusa.org.nz

###

11.7.6 Add an Altrusan Day

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Altrusa International Inc of (club name)
(Name, office)
(Address)
(Area code, telephone number)

Altrusa Best Kept Secret

Since Altrusa is one of the best kept secrets in our community, the Altrusa Club of (insert name) is celebrating Altrusa Awareness Day on (insert date). The club is (insert details of event, what event, when, where, who, why and how)

Over the past (insert number) years Altrusa International Inc of (club name) has developed/supported programs on behalf of (list major past and present projects). The club meets (insert meeting venue, date, time)

Altrusa is an international service organisation with members who are dedicated to improving their communities through personal service. Members combine their talents to develop and finance service projects meeting specific community needs, especially those in literacy. If you would like to find out more about Altrusa then (check out the club website at or phone.....).

###

11.7.7 New Club Building

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Altrusa International Inc of (club name)
(Name, office)
(Address)
(Area code, telephone number)

Altrusa coming to (insert city name)

On (date) at the (location) a meeting is being held to form an Altrusa Club in (city) The meeting starts at (time).

Altrusa is a women's service club which focuses on helping the local community in a number of ways, but particularly in the area of literacy. While New Zealand literacy standards measure up well against other countries there are still a large number of organisations, including schools, kindergartens and libraries which require assistance as they strive to provide literacy resources for the community. Altrusa clubs are present in 28 communities with over 600 Altrusans working side by side to make their communities better places to live in.

Altrusa clubs focus on meeting the needs of the community that they are situated in. Spokesperson, (insert name), says that often smaller communities embrace Altrusa more successfully due to their close community bond. The Altrusa Club of (extending club) is undertaking the extension into (city)

Altrusa is also a great way to meet other women from with different careers and back grounds. A lot of fun can be had at meetings and while doing community projects. (Spokesperson) suggests the benefits from becoming an Altrusan are numerous but best of all is knowing that you can make a difference. 20 members are required in order to charter the club.

If you are interested in coming along to the meeting on (date) or finding our more about Altrusa you can contact (insert contact names and phone numbers)

###

11.7.8 Convention

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Altrusa International Inc of (club name)
(Name, office)
(Address)
(Area code, telephone number)

Altrusans Attend Altrusa International Convention in (insert location)

(First and Last Name) of the Altrusa Club of (insert city) recently participated in the (insert year) International Convention of Altrusa International in (location) (dates of Convention). (Insert sentence highlighting some aspect of convention, i.e numbers coming from NZ, awards presented/received, workshops attended, etc).

Altrusa (insert club name) supports programs on behalf of (list major past and present projects). (Last name) became a member in (year) and serves on (committee) and has held the office of (list past positions held).

Altrusa International Inc is a volunteer service organisation of executives and professionals dedicated to improving their communities through personal service. Members combine their talents to develop and finance service projects meeting specific community needs, especially those in literacy. Altrusa is recognised for the significant contributions of its members.

###

11.8 Sample Newspaper Articles

Here are a few actual articles that clubs have had placed in their local newspapers.

11.9 General Information on Altrusa and Literacy

11.9.1 The History of Altrusa in New Zealand

Here is some general information on Altrusa in New Zealand that you might find useful for incorporating into a press release in some way.

In March 1966 the first New Zealand club started in Auckland, followed shortly by clubs in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Margaret Maylor an inaugural member of the Auckland club assisted Helen Lindsay, the International Extension officer from Chicago, with the formation of Christchurch club in June 1966. Margaret extended Altrusa into Rotorua in 1973 and Hamilton November 1980. By 1984, the number of clubs in New Zealand had grown to twenty seven and under Margaret's guidance as Leadership Training Co-ordinator, a group of six trainers was appointed and trained to move among the clubs, primarily to inform members on the benefits of forming as a District. In Hastings, Easter 1984 at the Australasian Conference, the delegates passed a recommendation that the International Board of Altrusa International approve the formation of District Fifteen, comprising all the clubs in New Zealand. Approval was granted, and in July 1984, in a postal ballot of New Zealand clubs, Margaret Maylor was elected Governor and installed at the District's first conference, March 29, 1985 Wellington, by International President Verona Bordok.

The new Fifteenth District status meant Altrusa clubs have an annual Conference instead of meeting every two years. Formerly the New Zealand clubs were clubs-at-large and had no voice on the International body based in Chicago.

In the first Biennium of District Fifteen, an idea was born which has become a highlight for this district. A Career Exchange programme was developed which involves District Fifteen hosting an Altrusan from another District for three to six weeks. This is an opportunity to foster greater International understanding and observe aspects of a particular vocation as practiced in another country and so broaden one's career experience. In return the District from which the exchangee comes, hosts an Altrusan from District Fifteen in the next year. The first recipient was Ray Lennie from Scotland who donated a "quaich" a classic small drinking bowl of Scotland. The quaich remains in District Fifteen but has the name of each career exchangee engraved upon it.

In 1995 Margaret Inch from the Wellington club became President of Altrusa International and was installed at the International Convention held in Christchurch. She was only the third President from outside the USA and the theme "Leaders in Service" was born.

Currently a member from the District is the International Service Chair and another is on the International Strategic Planning Committee.

A successful District project in co-operation with the Alan Duff "Books in Homes" foundation involved all clubs in fundraising and presenting book awards to children at schools. Other national projects include the creation of the Altrusa Rose and Magic Mums which many clubs run every year. Currently District is collecting books for schools in Nepal.

11.9.2 Literacy in New Zealand

The foundations for literacy are laid in the early years of a child's life. By the time they reach primary school they have already acquired many attitudes and understandings about language. They have all experienced success in learning and it is the schools and community task to ensure that learning to read and write is as natural and successful as learning to walk and talk.

It is essential that children be exposed to books from birth. Children's efforts in learning to read are greatly enhanced when there is reading to children, reading with children and when children have the opportunity to read by themselves.

Many children in New Zealand do not have access to books in their homes. Parents are poor role models, placing little or no importance on reading and learning. These are the children most at risk of failing to achieve in the education system.

Adult Literacy

Qualifications in NZ population. Significant improvements have been made in the percentage of the population with University degrees. This has doubled between 1996 and 2004. The percentage with no qualifications halved, however the lower levels of tertiary qualifications are experiencing greatest growth. 54% of tertiary participation was sub-degree level in 2002.

Low levels of literacy exist in the workforce but this is falling- 41% in 1985, 32% in 1994 and 25% in 2003

Between 16%-19% of school leavers have no qualifications. A worrying trend if it continues is that the number of under 16 year olds granted permission to leave school, increased from 3% in 1993 to 21% in 1996 and 32% in 2000. Males contributed to 56%-58% of these.

Maori students with no qualifications are over represented, forming between 16%-18% of all school leavers but between 36%-39% with no qualifications.

Pacific Islanders similarly, 6%-7% leavers, yet 9%-10% with no qualifications.

Literacy Aotearoa, a provider of adult literacy services throughout the country, provided services to approximately 5850 adult learners in 2004 with over 230,000 hours of tuition given.

"The extent to which a lack of qualification impedes the progress of young people in the transition from school to work must be of major concern to a nation focusing on an inclusive, innovative economy" Quote from Statistics NZ.

12.0 Other Media Opportunities

Often when we think about the media we think solely of getting an article in the local newspaper or a community notice on the radio. The more adventurous might think of a way of getting something on local or national television. There are other options to consider:

- *Letters to the Editor* - Never forget the humble letter to the editor as a way of thanking the public for their support or commenting on an issue that your club is dealing with or to stimulate discussion or to get “news” out there.
- *Fact Sheets* - Rather than writing a full press release another option is to send a fact sheet to the media which unlike a press release which is structured like a news story, is a simple list of facts that you want to impart to a journalist who will then write their own story. A fact sheet provides what, when, where, why, who and how only.
- *Media Advisory* - These are similar to Fact Sheets. They are principally used to advise media of upcoming events and possible photo opportunities.
- *Interview* - A number of interview programs are aired regularly on local radio stations so you could arrange for appearances by a club member. This is particularly good for advising the public about upcoming events or projects. Should reporters want to interview someone from your organisation then keep the following tips in mind:
 1. Select a spokesperson
 2. Identify the 2-3 key messages that you want to convey
 3. Anticipate the types of questions that reporters may ask and practice your responses in advance.
 4. Be concise in communicating your answers. A 20 minute interview could well result in just a one minute broadcast segment or a single paragraph in a newspaper.
 5. Make sure you eliminate very technical jargon/language.
 6. Maintain accuracy at all times. Always politely correct any inaccuracies in reporters’ questions.
 7. Speak clearly and avoid speaking too fast.
 8. Never guess at your answers. If you are not sure about an answer, say so, and then offer to get back to the reporter with an accurate response.
 9. Be prepared for various interview formats. They may be face-to-face, over the phone, notes may be taken or your comments may be tape-recorded.
- *Create In house experts* - Developing experts within an organization and creating platforms from which they can provide their opinions is vital to securing lasting media coverage. A non-profit organisation should always have a few experts on hand to discuss the organisations objectives, explain the cause or point of view on a particular subject in detail, and provide support to sponsors and donors.
- *Over-the-Street Banners* - You will need to contact your local council and possibly Transit New Zealand (depends on who “owns the road” that you are putting your banner across but the Council will soon tell you the answer to that one!) for permission to “hang the banner”.
- *Other Organisation Newsletters* - Your local council or library or schools will all probably have newsletters which are distributed to members/ratepayers etc. Making contact with these organisations could lead to another “free” avenue for publicising your club events or projects. Organisations to consider contacting include the Women’s Division of Federated Farmers, Friends of the local library, school newsletters, church newsletters and other service organisations like Lions and Rotary.