

Positive PR for Principals

AWSA Conference

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Why is Positive PR Important?

- Schools with great reputations have made a commitment to communication
- The commitment begins with you
- If you don't tell your school's story, who will?
- It becomes part of your staff, school and parent culture





Today's Topics

Community Engagement and Leadership

Building a Network of Support

Marketing Tips for Positive PR in Your School

Creating Connections with Social Media



Three Thresholds of Successful Community Engagement

- Make your targets aware there really is a challenge
- Answer your colleagues' questions – all of them
- Create a clear sense of urgency for your partners to take action

Q: What are your challenges?

Six Keys to Successful Community Engagement

- Be a leader first
- Interact early and often
- Make it easy to participate
- Welcome newbies to the process
- Reward positive contributors
- Tap into existing networks

Q: What key is most critical?

Be a leader first

- Have patience and tact
- Develop a thick skin
- Exercise compassion and tolerance
- Be passionate



Q: Are you being a leader?

Interact Early and Often

- Multiply effort
- Encourage discussion
- Don't ignore
- Timely follow up
- One-on-one contact



Q: How do you interact?

Make it easy to participate

- Invite ideas
- Go to them
- Utilize familiar tools
- Avoid unnecessary change

Q: Do you make it easy?



Welcome Newbies to the Process

- Make beneficial introductions
- Call out good ideas
- Diversify opinions
- Avoid groupthink traps



Q: How welcoming are you?

Reward and Encourage Positive Contributors

- Leadership roles on committees
- Public recognition
- Tell their story to others



Q: How do you encourage?

Tap Into Existing Networks

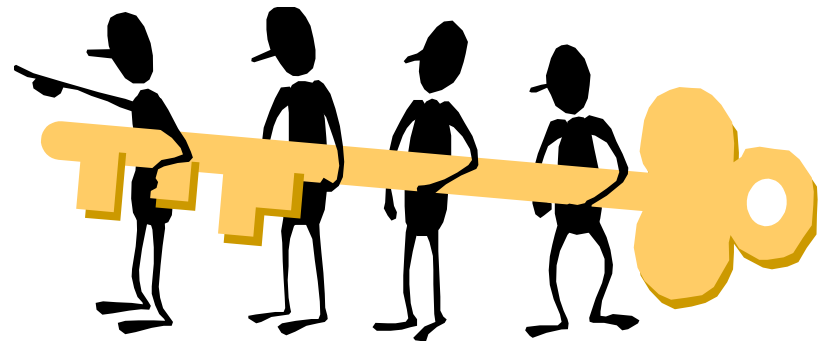
- Colleagues
- Booster clubs
- Civic
- Mom's clubs
- Parent / Teacher



Q: Have you asked for help?

Building a network of support

- Form a Key Communicator Group
 - Who is in your group?
 - Network of informal leaders who establish solid two-way communications
 - Not necessarily your most visible leaders





Why small groups work

- Disseminate accurate information
- Correct misinformation
- Source of input
- Builds support (grapevine)
- Personal face-to-face contact





The power of word of mouth

- Internal stakeholders
- Staff (teachers, assistants, office, substitutes)
- Volunteers





Encouraging positive PR from staff

- Front office staff are often the first impression a parent, media, or business person will have
- Consider customer service training for staff who answer the phone and greet visitors

Possible Channels of Sending Communication

Meetings

Newsletters

Social media

Face-to-face

Committees

Web site

News Releases

Video

Blogs

E-mail

E-newsletters

Phone calls/texts

Robo-calls

Possible Channels to Receive Communication

- “Contact Us” – set protocol to respond
- Face-to-Face meetings
- Surveys
- Focus groups (key communicators)





Positive PR starts in the parking lot

- Take a look at your school grounds with a fresh eye – how is the driveway, grass, windows, and signage?
- Are you using your marquee strategically?
- Look for opportunities to display points of pride





WESTHILL HIGH SCHOOL

NO SCHOOL 1 16

DR MARTIAN LUTHER KING

Attention to detail!



Ask for volunteers...



...or thank community partners.

Visual Points of Pride



"Ambassador" button

Mission statement banner



WHITNALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

By providing the highest quality personalized educational experience, the Whitnall School District engages learners who embrace challenges and are responsible, contributing members of a dynamic global society.

Communications Worksheet here



5 Marketing tools for positive PR

1. Up-to-date web pages
2. Principal newsletter: short articles, digital photos about life at your school
3. Newsletter: email or printed (or both)
4. Brochures and flyers
5. Short, fun videos about celebrations, student projects, or staff highlights



Media Relations

- Local media is hungry for good information
- Put area newspapers and newsrooms on your e-mail list
- Send copies of school newsletters, flyers, press releases, and bulletins to the community's newspaper editors
- Invite media to be guests at key school functions



Use content efficiently

- Re-purpose content for each communication channel
- For example: re-use principal newsletter for a newspaper column or press release
- Or, use a principal newsletter to create a few Facebook posts, a link on Twitter, or for a parent e-newsletter article.





Getting Started with Social Media

So, what is a “hashtag” anyway?



<http://youtu.be/r6zHp-luL6I>



Creating Connections with Social Media

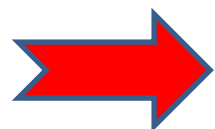
- **Facebook**: create engagement with useful, interesting information
- **Twitter**: “trend” fast-moving news in your district in short bursts
- **Email**: Key tool to build credibility with parents, staff and community supporters
- **Text**: Quickly connect with students and parents



Developing content for social media

- Start with your school calendar
- Add special events, celebrations, seasonal or holiday topics
- Write is on a content calendar – a simple spreadsheet or Word doc
- Best practice: Spend 2-3 hrs /week on social media, post 3-5 times per week

Schedule posts in Facebook



Facebook post creation interface showing the 'Status' tab selected. The text area contains 'Today's update here:'. Below the text area, a dark grey button labeled 'Schedule or backdate your post' is visible. At the bottom, there are icons for a clock and a location pin, followed by a 'Promote' dropdown menu and a blue 'Post' button.



Three Twitter Takeaways

Wisconsin Educators on Twitter:

<http://tiny.cc/Wleducators>

CESA 6 Twitter for PLC and How-To's (click on Resources tab):

<http://tiny.cc/socialadmin>

CESA 6 How to send texts via Twitter:

<http://tiny.cc/socialadmin>

(click on Text from Twitter on left nav)

In Summary...

- Share the facts
- Avoid jargon-talk about real impact on real kids, teachers and your community
- Listen
- K.I.S.S. - 3 talking points
- Encourage 2-way engagement with marketing and social media tools

**Open, honest, direct, regular communication
is always the best practice!**

Resources:



www.wspra.org

- ✓ Communications Plan Worksheet
- ✓ CESA 6 Communications Plan brochure
- ✓ Sample social media content planner
- ✓ WSPRA Spring Conference – Community Engagement – March 8