

CLT - Web, Social Media, Marketing

Quick recap

This session on websites, social media, and marketing communications was led by Ken Leja, council chair and webmaster for Multiple District 21, and VDG Dereck Davis, incoming district global leadership chair and local entrepreneur.

The session covered essential marketing concepts including setting goals, budgeting, creating timelines, and utilizing various communication tools effectively, and covered the importance of websites, social media, and effective communication tools for club promotion and member recruitment. It also covered the importance of having both digital and print materials, explaining how to create attention-grabbing headlines, specific guidance on creating news releases, developing brochures, and utilizing such platforms as YouTube and Facebook to promote club activities and attract new members.

The group explored website development options, including a free website service available through the MD's LionsArizona.org domain that uses a WordPress platform. Further, the group discussed social media strategies using such platforms as Facebook, Twitter (*X*), and Instagram. Technical issues were addressed throughout the session, including A/V connectivity issues, as well as a discussion by participants on current marketing practices and challenges with their respective clubs.

Summary

Lions Clubs Marketing Strategy Discussion

The training session focused on websites, social media, and marketing communications. CC Ken led a discussion on marketing and communications strategies for Lions Clubs, focusing on increasing visibility and promoting club activities. He outlined the GMA process (Global Membership Approach) consisting of building a team, vision, plan, and success. The group discussed current communication tools, many of which are underutilized, outdated, or ineffective.

Digital Communication Strategy Discussion

CC Ken discussed the importance of adapting to changing communication technologies and emphasized that, while traditional communication methods such as flyers, brochures, and bulletin boards remain effective, new digital tools can help reach a broader audience more efficiently. In today's environment, no single tool nor media approach is fully effective – what's required is a focused approach (message) delivered via multi-stage platforms and tools, over an extended time to reach audiences for subsequent action.

CC Ken discussed various marketing tools and their effectiveness, including business cards, rack cards, and digital media. He highlighted the importance of using QR codes and explained how digital business cards can provide a personal touch while being more accessible. He introduced a three-panel brochure created for the Diamondbacks game and used as a 'general' marketing tool by Lions clubs. He mentioned that the template for this brochure is being made available to clubs for local printing at a low cost.

Multi-Channel Marketing Communication Strategies

CC Ken discussed the challenge of Lions being a "best kept secret" despite marketing efforts in both Phoenix and Prescott, with a focus on improving communication strategies. He outlined the role of marketing chairpersons, clarifying that while they are officers, they don't need to be experts in all areas – i.e., web design, social media, or graphics design, which are handled by dedicated committees. The discussion covered the GMA approach: build a team, build a vision, build a plan, and build success, with emphasis on creating effective marketing communications sub-committees that include multiple roles and work toward increasing club visibility and promoting events and service activities.

Marketing Case Study

CC Ken discussed the importance of using multiple marketing communication tools, sharing a case study whereby a successful campaign generated \$300,000 in its annual fundraising effort through a wide range of different communications efforts. He emphasized that different tools are more effective with different audiences, and highlighted the need to set goals, create budgets, and plan timelines for effective marketing.

Club Communication Strategy Improvements

CC Ken discussed strategies for improving club communications, focusing on business cards with QR codes that link to club websites and social media. He suggested using the back of business cards for personal messages and contact information. He recommended creating a comprehensive marketing plan that includes brochures, websites, podcasts, and social media presence, and emphasized the importance of using newsworthy content for promotion to local media that is unique, timely, or community-relevant.

He also stressed the importance of maintaining a media list to leverage different communication channels effectively, and discussed the effectiveness of billboards, noting that with high-speed traffic, viewers only see a few words at a time, making complex messages difficult to convey and understood only through repetitive audience messaging.

Media Outreach and Communication Protocols

CC Ken discussed communication timelines for media outreach, explaining that most publications need 10-14 days advance notice, except for magazines which require 2-3 months due to longer printing and shipping times. The discussion covered best practices for media interviews, including preparing key message points and sound bites, and dressing appropriately while representing Lions International.

Marketing Communications Budget Planning

He emphasized the importance of determining a proper marketing communications budget, perhaps allocating a percentage of gross profit for promotional costs. He stressed the need for advance planning in marketing activities, including creating timelines for communications throughout the year and utilizing templates for cost-effective, multi-purpose promotional materials.

Cost-Effective Marketing Strategies Discussion

CC Ken shared insights on cost-effective marketing strategies, emphasizing the benefits of local printing to save on shipping and freight costs. He highlighted the importance of having trusted resources and fresh eyes to review materials, using the example of one company's annual report typo. He also discussed the challenges volunteers face in clubs, noting the rarity of finding

professionals in communications and the need for knowledge in various disciplines (i.e., advertising, marketing, public relations, non-profit media, etc.).

Promotional Materials Budget Planning

CC Ken discussed budget constraints for promotional materials and emphasized finding cost-effective “deals” while maintaining effectiveness. He explained the importance of creating attention-grabbing headlines, suggesting six words for maximum impact, and highlighted the need for newsworthy content that would interest both Lions members and the broader community. He stressed the importance of building relationships with local media and submitting timely, community-relevant news releases to community outlets.

Media Communications Strategy Guidance

He provided guidance on crafting effective news releases and media communications for Lions Club events. He emphasized the importance of including who, what, where, when, how, and why information in the first two paragraphs, keeping the language simple and concise. He also discussed the use of AI-Artificial Intelligence as a drafting tool, noting its usefulness, but cautioning against relying on it without verification. He advised planning media outreach at least 10 days in advance for newspapers and up to three months for magazines. Further, he emphasized the importance of being prepared to speak as a spokesperson for the club during media interviews.

Digital Media Strategies for Lions

The group discussed digital media strategies for Lions Clubs, focusing on ensuring contact information and recognizable logos are included in all digital content. CC Ken and Lion Dereck emphasized the importance of using natural language rather than AI-generated content. CC Ken provided insights on social media specifications, including picture sizes and platform differences, and confirmed that the new website platform can adapt to different device sizes (desktop, tablet, or phone screen sizes). The discussion touched on the WordPress-based club website and mentioned the eClubhouse 2.0 initiative.

Club Digital Presence Strategy

CC Ken discussed the importance of having a website and social media presence for clubs, emphasizing the benefits of digitizing club minutes and other documents to reduce paper storage and posting to the club website as an archival digital resource. He provided guidance on using the correct Lions logo and explained social media jargon, including such concepts as reach, frequency, and image sizing for different platforms. He also highlighted the need for clubs to extend their reach on social media to attract members from broader geographic areas and stressed the importance of having a strong online presence to compete with other organizations in search results.

Lions Clubs Website Platform Options

CC Ken explained the current website platform options for Lions Clubs, including a free WordPress hosting service through the multiple district’s LionsArizona.org domain that uses subdomains and provides organic search benefits. The platform allows clubs to use their own domains while leveraging shared hosting and GoDaddy technical support. CC Ken also mentioned an upcoming Wix-based eClubhouse 2.0 platform that LCI is revisiting, although it's not yet publicly available. It is expected to launch with the new year, with costs potentially ranging from \$25 to \$85 per month per domain.

Lions Club Website Service Presentation

CC Ken presented information about the free website service available to MD21 Lions clubs through the LionsArizona.org domain, which uses WordPress and includes hosting and domain services. The service has been available for 18 months and currently serves about 20 clubs, offering various pre-built templates with options to customize content and add such features as calendars, gallery pages, and blogs. Each club site offers a choice of templates, email systems, and digital archival capabilities. Discussion covered photography guidelines for service projects and website best practices, with CC Ken noting that each subdomain website includes such features as a calendar, member directory, donation capabilities, event photo gallery, and project information, with CC Ken offering to provide credentials and training for implementation.

Marketing Summary

CC Ken concluded with a comprehensive overview of marketing and communications tools available to Lions clubs, including website setup, email systems, and print materials. He explained that clubs can obtain free email addresses through LionsArizona.org domain and discussed the availability of brochures that can be customized with local club information. The group also covered photography guidelines for service projects and website best practices.