

Communication Tips to Increase Your PTA's Visibility

Make a Difference by Using the National PTA Logo and Tagline



The National PTA logo and tagline *everychild.onevoice.* provides every PTA with the single identity for member and community recognition. To personalize the logo and tagline simply center your PTA name above "PTA."

For maximum benefit, this logo should be used on all PTA materials and communications. As a transition, if a "mascot" graphic or other local graphic has been used, consider using it with the president's message or in a special news column within the publication.

To download the National PTA graphic logo, visit www.pta.org and search for "logos," or see the 2006 Summer Service Mailing CD-ROM mailed to each PTA president. Specific information on how to adapt the logo is available in the California State PTA **Toolkit** and online from National PTA at www.pta.org under the Leadership Resources tab.

Make a Difference in Print

Critically evaluate your current newsletter and flyer communications.

Are you providing information that is relevant for your readers?

- At the unit PTA level this would include information that is helpful and informative for parents and of interest to the community.

- Council PTA newsletters should include information to assist unit as well as council leaders. For both PTA levels, upcoming PTA, school and community event dates are important.

For each article ask how many will read it, why is it important, and will readers act upon or respond to the information.

What type of graphics and fonts are being used?

- Graphics, like words, affect the attention of readers. Keep them few in number, appropriate to the article topic, directed to the school level of the audience, sharp edged and well placed. Use similar graphic elements from page to page to maintain reader interest.
- Keep fonts simple. Use non-serif fonts for headlines; for text a serif font is easier on the eye. Use no more than three fonts to a page or to a newsletter for continuity.

Are the articles too long?

Lengthy articles are seldom read. Edit wherever possible, keep sentences simple and keep paragraphs short. Two or three columns and bulleted lists help the reader quickly scan material.

When did your PTA last survey your readers?

Use a survey or return tear-off to determine what your readers are reading and what they would like to see in your publications.

Does the time of receipt of the communication affect reader interest?

Do your readers look for PTA information each week, month, or school quarter? What would happen if the schedule were changed? Would readers and your PTA benefit from an occasional mailed communication?

Is it time to consider language translation?

- Although your student population may speak English well, the parents your PTA wants to involve may not. Translation of materials can be the first step to ensure parents feel welcome and valued within the school community.
- If your PTA cannot print all documents in additional languages, consider a voice mail box with translated pertinent information.
- Use a flyer to assess the translation need.
- Many public agencies have translated materials that can be added to newsletters. Seek translation services on the World Wide Web or through your school district, public agencies or community faith groups.
- Visit the National PTA website, www.pta.org, and in the En Español box click on Más información. For outreach materials in Spanish, visit www.pta.org/local_leader/EnEspanol2005.pdf.

Make a Difference with Electronic Media

Use a PTA website and e-mail or list serve to communicate with members.

Websites must be updated frequently.

- Keep articles brief. Copy should be short enough to view within a single computer screen.
- Use links to appropriate websites to inform your members.
- Never publish a student or adult name, photograph, telephone number or website address without permission.
- Keep graphics simple for quick loading.
- Use larger rather than smaller fonts for easier reading.

E-mail or a mailing list serve makes communication easy.

- Establish a regular schedule for broadcasting and choose relevant topics. Remember busy people will disregard frequent junk mail.
- Keep the messages short and use Geneva or Arial font with few special characters.

- Keep the address base current and honor requests to remove addresses from lists.
- Use the “bcc” method to protect email addresses.

Make a Difference in the Press

Have you worked with your community media: newspaper, radio or public access television?

- Reporters appreciate press releases and faxes about newsworthy events. Establish a relationship with media representatives.
- Determine what services are available from your local public access television station. Some will post upcoming events, air your public service announcement (PSA), or even film and air a noteworthy event.
- See the National PTA **Annual Resources for PTAs** for camera ready print materials. Contact your council or district PTA for film and audio PSAs.

Make a Difference in the Community

What is your PTA visibility in the community?

- Do you send your print or electronic communications to city offices, businesses, chambers of commerce, faith groups, service clubs, elected officials or even to other neighborhood schools? Your effort will be noticed.
- With other neighborhood PTAs, consider a single mailing for important events; eliminate duplicate addresses. Many families have students at more than one school level.

Refer to the California State PTA **Toolkit** and the National PTA’s **PTA President’s Quick-Reference Guide** for additional suggestions.