**The Path of Least Resistance. How to get your story in the local Media. by** **Mark Jones, Tx Ok District Marketing Team 2019-2022**

**We’re all busy people. Work. School. Life. Even the simple things can add up to a lot of work. Now put yourself in the editor/producer chair at a news organization, trying to deliver the news with fewer people and fewer resources. That’s good news for Kiwanis.**

**Here are a few recommendations for helping them help you.**

**First, plan like they do. Unless it’s a major holiday, a day of remembrance like 9/11, or a sports season, the news industry is not really planning months in advance for anything. Don’t try to change them. A week’s notice is about as far in advance as you’ll get. Check back a couple of days before. Don’t get discouraged. Be persistent but also be helpful.**

**Second, often the easiest way to tell your story is to do it yourself. If a reporter and photographer cover your event, great. If they don’t, that’s not a problem. Shoot video or still photos yourself and share it with them. Give written answers to the questions they’ll likely ask. Provide them a contact person - with that person’s mobile phone number! And don’t think you have to have an expensive camera. Your smartphone is perfect for the job. Just make sure you hold it side-to-side and not up-and-down. Hold your phone the way your TV is oriented and you’ll be just fine.**

**Third, know your media. Look for the outlets and shows that have the time to devote to a positive subject. Getting a local TV morning show interested is far more likely than appearing in an evening newscast. Radio is also extremely valuable and there are various stations and shows to fit the Kiwanis need. We do big things. Look for opportunities to spend the most time talking about them!**

**Fourth, find charity events in which the media themselves are involved. You’ll often find that Kiwanis projects are a great fit. For example, the annual Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots have media partners all over the country. A charity that helps kids has a natural connection with Kiwanis. Use that as your calling card. Make a connection.**

**Fifth, it’s okay to be direct and personal. Journalists tend to have more trust in people they know, even if that connection is through social media. There’s a person attached to that account, in other words. Use that to your advantage. You’ll often have more luck pitching a story to a journalist directly than going to the person who assigns their story. You’ll also get more more engaged journalist if they’re telling the story that they themselves have found. Keep in mind that, although most journalists have a presence on Facebook, their preferred platform is Twitter. Also remember that blasting all of the reporters at a newspaper or at a TV station at one time will have the exact opposite effect. Reporters who realize they’re all pitching the same story from the same person tend to feel a bit, well, exploited. A wise news director once told me that “We are not our audience.” He meant that you need to take your own likes and opinions out of the equation if you want to get your message across. Find out what journalists need to tell your story and give it to them. Be that “path of least resistance”. Help them help you.**