

# Public Relations

by Sally Hill Wambold

## Shy PR

Shy people know that public relations is important. They can see the value of informing others about the benefits of good service. They know that people can forget how important a service is unless consciousness is raised and awareness of something good is maintained. People can take libraries for granted if they aren't reminded of what they are enjoying. Funding for libraries must be constantly justified. Public relations is the work that reminds the public of what they have and need to maintain.

So, consider that PR is especially important for the person who tends to keep a low profile. And, what's to be done? How can the person with this personality compete with peers who are more outgoing?

One way to promote libraries and librarians is by the written word. Often the shy person does write and explain library procedures and benefits. In the quiet of the study or office, the introvert can focus on what the world needs to know about libraries. When the article is published, libraries are promoted and the shy person has proved that she/he does indeed have something to say.

Smaller settings might be more congenial for the shy person. If this is true, committee work is a natural. There are fewer people in a committee than would be encountered when presiding over a large business meeting. And work in a committee is important. It is also satisfying. An opportunity exists to promote library needs and causes.

Committee work illustrates another aspect attractive to the shy person: behind-the-scenes work. Coordinating an

educational program can be immensely satisfying. It, too, can result in a case of the nerves. But cheering on the speakers is a more comfortable role for the shy person than is speaking to a crowd.

Writing letters to legislators is another prime PR task for the shy person. As with the articles on libraries, the shy person likes to focus during quiet time on composing carefully crafted arguments. Because this is satisfying for the shy person and a solitary activity, it might be done more readily than it would be done by the extrovert. At any rate, the shy person is a good candidate for such work.

Now, if the shy person has artistic talent, the behind-the-scenes work could be creating posters and illustrations, which can enhance meetings, articles, and programs—or Web pages. And Web pages are currently a hot means of

communicating. The shy person as Web master is a star!

Now, the shy person may brave her/his fears on occasion and preside over a business meeting or speak in a small local business meeting, but the PR of the shy person most comfortably fits behind the scenes.

None of this discussion is meant to detract from the PR work of the extroverts among us. Their outgoing skills are a natural asset. It is good, though, to recognize that introverts contribute as well. It is helpful to showcase where the shy person can excel. And it is important to encourage such contributions.

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