Hello everyone. I’m excited you’re starting your convention experience with me. This morning, we’re going to talk about making your message matter. Let’s take all the good we’re doing for communities and earn some attention for ourselves, which will help raise awareness of our clubs, which will help gain new members, which will then help us help more kids! That’s why all of this is important. The more hands and hearts we have working with us, the more lives we can positively influence.
Today, we’ll focus at finding ways to identify an emotional connection and why that’s important (advance)
Then, we’ll create the key points you’ll use to tell that story.
The slide deck and script is already available for you online. You can find it at Kiwanis.org/BuzzBuilder.
I’m Steve Hadt and I do public relations at Kiwanis International. My main role in the organization is creating and distributing content through various channels, like paid advertising, media relations, social media and our own channels like Kiwanis.org. I just celebrated my sixth anniversary at Kiwanis. Before I entered the Kiwani-verse, I worked in television newsrooms in Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Indianapolis as a producer and executive producer determining what is news and how to tell the news to our audience. And that’s what I’m doing at Kiwanis, determining the best way to tell our story.
The first step before doing any PR work is doing your annual club assessment. Survey your members and analyze their responses to discover fundraising, service and fellowship opportunities based on what your members love.

Every Kiwanis club is different. The needs in every community are different. Use the Achieving Club Excellence tools to learn your club’s strengths and weakness—its opportunities and threats. The ACE toolkit includes exercises designed to create dialogue, gain perspective and lead to insightful questions that will help your club remain relevant, impactful and strong.

Once you analyze your club’s efforts, you’ll be able to understand the impact it’s making. That will help you effectively tell the club’s story to the media, to potential members, to potential partners and even current club’s members.
Also before you start communicating any message, you want to make sure your club is branded correctly. The number one element of our brand is the logo. When a club doesn’t use the official Kiwanis logo, it hurts all clubs. The only way we as an organization can cut through all the clutter is to have a strong, cohesive brand. After the service we perform, our logo is what holds us together as one organization. Imagine 8,240 clubs all around the world each with their own logo. If that was reality, it would be harder for your club and Kiwanis International to attract the widespread attention we deserve.

We understand you want to show your pride of your club and community. The brand book allows for that with a design that looks like this. It might seem like a little thing, but the logo is how people quickly identify the club is part of the Kiwanis organization. If you are still using the oval, birdcage-globe
looking logo—or another design—change it out for the current Kiwanis logo. You can find the standard Kiwanis logos at Kiwanis.org/logos. There are all different styles and file formats available for you on the website.

Additionally, we’ll create a logo that looks like this for you. It’s free and the digital files come in various styles and file formats. These logos will follow all brand standards so you don’t have to worry about that. It takes a few weeks from start to finish, so plan for that. Clubs can request a custom logo at Kiwanis.org/customlogo.
Once you’re done with your club assessment and communications audit, you can start telling the story of the awesome things your club is doing to help the children in the community. Everything starts with what you are trying to get your audience to remember. We call them key messages. Think of key messages this way: If you were to give a speech or an interview even write an email, what are the most important points you would want people to remember 5 minutes after you’re done.
It sounds easy, but it isn’t. How many messages do you receive every day? Not just in email... but any kind of communication.

Some studies show that the average person is exposed to 10,000 brand messages a day. How many of them do you remember from already today?

Here’s another interesting fact... consumers switch between screens up to 21 times an hour according to a British study. How many times have you glanced from looking at me to your cell phone?

It makes sense that the average person’s attention span is now just eight seconds. You have 8 seconds to catch someone’s attention before they turn to something else.

With our 24/7 lives, that’s not really all that surprising. There’s TV,
radio, Facebook, Twitter, newspapers, billboards, emails, push notifications on your phone, the list goes on and on.

And as more channels are invented, we keep getting exposed to more brand messages.

As an organization and as clubs, we have to cut through the clutter. So how do you do that? We suggest the answer is by telling a great story... not just laying out facts.

We believe Kiwanis has a great story to tell and we believe our Kids need Kiwanis focus will help us hone in on our message.
The research and data shows that emotional connections help your message cut through the clutter and it will get an audience interested in what you’re doing. That’s why we recommend focusing all your messages around helping kids and serving the community. It’s the most compelling storyline we have.

The key message of this presentation: Tell stories in all your communications about the kids you are helping. Whenever talking or writing about a service project, a donation or an anniversary, tell how the club is benefiting the kids of the community. If the project isn’t benefiting kids, should your club be doing it? Have an honest and real conversation with the club.
Let’s look at some examples.
Let’s say we were sending a news release to the media, trying to get coverage about our club’s diaper drive for babies.
We could write it like this... (READ STATEMENT)

It’s very matter of fact. No emotion there. I’ve read a million news releases like this.

(ADVANCE)
But, we can flip the words to focus on who will benefit from our club.
Here’s another way to write the same release... (READ STATEMENT)
Do you feel any emotion in option 2? Personally, it makes me sad to know that newborns are wearing dirty diapers and it makes me want to stop that problem.

We’re still conveying the same information about our service project, we’re just using emotion to cut through the clutter and get the media to report our story.
Let’s look at some examples of Facebook posts. These are real life examples so I’m sorry if I offend anyone. This one from the Clinton Kiwanis Club in Iowa. The post reads: The Clinton Kiwanis Club donated $500 dollars to the United Way Program, Clinton Reads. Thank you for all you do for children!

Great work donating $500 for a reading program. Kids in the community will really benefit.

But this post doesn’t really say that. There’s no emotion. I’m sure the club knows how the money will be spent. Use that information and add some emotion to the post. This post only got 10 likes. It should have received a million for the good work being done in the community by this club.

(ADVANCE)

What if we wrote it like this... our club is proud to help kids
learn to read. Our $500 donation to the United Way will buy 300 books for at home libraries. Help us help kids. Then I added the Kids Need Kiwanis hashtag. I also changed out the picture. If a picture is worth a thousand words, we’re saying a thousand boring words with a picture of a giant check. In my example, we have a picture of a kid reading. Which is more engaging to you?
Here’s another post. Lots of people tagged which will help with distribution. It reads: We need your help. We want Kiwanis initiatives to come to life. We need more people like you. This post is all about us. Nothing about the community. Nothing about the kids. What are these Kiwanis initiatives that we want to come to life? There’s no emotion. (ADVANCE) What if it would have said… Help us help kids. Or kids need help learning to read, but we need more people like you to help them. Better, right? And look, a better photo that shows action. A better photo would be kids. If you’re struggling for photos, you have access to a large database of Kiwanis stock photos that we own. They’re at Kiwanis.org/brand.
Look at this one. Sometimes kids just need a little push in the right direction. Be their guide as part of Kiwanis. The post links to one of the social media videos available on Kiwanis.org/brand so people can learn a little more about our organization. Again, there’s an emotional connection with a strong call to action – be their guide. This is a good post, right?
Let’s look at another example. This is a Facebook event posting to invite people to our next club meeting. Again, these are real life examples, so I’m sorry if I offend anyone from these clubs. Besides the wrong logo, this one doesn’t say anything about what the club does. North Judson meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, which it shows already with the dates of the club meeting. If I share this to my network of people, they don’t have any context or details about what I’m talking about.

(ADVANCE)

Option two: At least it’s a nice cover photo of Kiwanis in the community. This club downloaded it from Kiwanis.org/brand.
The event name is Kiwanis meeting. Anyone inspired by that headline? It doesn’t inspire me.
The details are a little better. The club says drop in anytime and check out who we are and what we do. Join in any of our volunteer programs. So at least we know there are volunteer opportunities, but we don’t know if we’re volunteering to make a difference for kids, pets or the environment.
(ADVANCE)
But look at this one. The event title: Help kids in Haughton thrive.
The details say: Some kids are hungry; some kids need help learning to read. Others need mentors, you can help improve these issues and more. Now I know what I’m going to do if I get involved with this club. And, there’s an emotional connection with a strong call to action – help kids in Haughton thrive.
Again, it’s just re-framing the content that makes it better.
Posting on Facebook and other social media channels is good, but make the most out of the time you’re spending on posting with engaging content. It takes the same about of time to post, whether it’s boring or engaging content. And, once you get the hang of it, engaging content takes just as much time to write as boring content.
Take a look at this one.
The headline: Assemble art boxes for kids.
The description: We need your help putting together art boxes we can deliver to the kids at Detroit City Camp. We have a pallet of supplies, but need people to sort and assemble the kits. It goes on to give more details.
Look at the response, 26 people said they were going. Another 188 people said they were interested in helping. Can you imagine having more than 200 people at basic service project?
This was part of a new club opening event and we paid to promote this event. We spent less than $200.
Of course, not everyone who said they were going or were interested showed up, but 25 people did, and 9 became members of this new club that night.
This is the power of engaging content. This is why this is important...the more people who know about us, the more likely they are to
become members, donors and partners, which allows us to positively impact more children in our communities. If you had the option of helping 30 kids or 100 kids... which would you choose?
Here’s another example. This one is a flyer inviting people to come to an organizational meeting for a new club. The audience we’re targeting is people who don’t have a relationship with Kiwanis already. The goal is to get people to come to a meeting so we can talk about Kiwanis and then convince them to join. “You’re invited to a special night of Kiwanis.” What does that mean? Does anyone know? I haven’t been able to figure it out. Are you going to show up to an event that you have no idea what it’s about? I’m not. Ain’t nobody got time for that. (ADVANCE)
Now take a look at this one. It’s better, right? We at least know Kiwanis is a non-profit dedicated to helping kids. Why kids is capitalized, I’m not sure.
And there’s a picture of kids too. So that’s nice.
But here’s one that I think cuts through the clutter. Big headline that says “Help kids thrive, prosper and grow.” That’s a clear call to action. You’re asking the viewer to do something.
Find out how you can positively impact our community and change the future for children.
Plus a really big picture of smiling children.

If you were walking by a community bulletin board, which one of these fliers would attract your attention?
Which flier do you think would get more people in the door?

You have to have the emotional connection to cut through the 10-thousand messages we see, hear and read every day.
Does this make sense? Does any of this seem like hogwash?
There’s another part of cutting through the clutter besides the emotion. Key messages are more affective when they’re repeated. Repetition is key. What we’re really talking about is consistency – saying the same thing over and over again. Studies show a person has to “hear” the same message seven time before they actually “understand” it. And, there’s one report that I read, that found someone only *hears* your message once every three times you communicate it. That means let’s say you put up a flyer inviting people to your club’s pancake breakfast. The person your inviting needs to see that flyer or be told about the pancake breakfast 21 times before it sinks in that they should come to your pancake breakfast. That’s why this is so hard. It’s just not as simple as putting up a flyer.
For most of us, messages don’t click in our brains right away. We’re not really paying attention. We’re focused on something else. The message was boring. It was ugly to look at. There are a million barriers to why our communications don’t work.

Limited direct access to people is a challenge for all of us.

Email is convenient and easy. But because it is cheap, everyone is doing it and our inboxes are bombarded with email. Direct hard copy mail has come back to be effective; however, it’s expensive. So that limits how many times we can send messages to people and how many people we can reach.

Another barrier…. We have a lot of different people and channels carrying our messages, our messages become diluted, distorted or simply not shared. Just like the logo, people add their own little decorations onto the messages which reduces the effectiveness.

There's also limited funding. Sending fun, lumpy interesting and eye-catching mailings — even oversized postcards — is a great tactic, but
aside from buying advertising space, it’s the most expensive way to reach our members and potential members.

Another barrier... Gatekeepers. We often rely on club leaders and others to carry messages. These gatekeepers might be overwhelmed themselves, or simply not like or be interested in sharing our message even if it is urgently important. They may not understand how important it is to communicate. But a lot of them have taken it upon themselves to decide what's important and what's not important based on their assessment. It's a huge challenge.

Impatience is a challenge. In Kiwanis, we know that it takes at least two years for some messages to reach our members at the club level. That means that around the time we at the top level may be getting tired of a message, it’s really just starting to sink in and activate. We have to be careful not to switch gears too quickly. Often, that means we need to remind leadership to be patient so everyone can catch up together. Have you noticed more and more people are starting to use Kids need Kiwanis? It’s been four years. We love it when we see it on social media, in media reports, anywhere, but we also think, man it's taken forever for this to catch on.

And as with any organization, our messages can’t be one-size fits all. We are working with adult members, leaders, students and alumni of a wide age, socioeconomic and geographic range; and even potential donors and partners. We need to be sure we know well and can segment these audiences.
Still there are more barriers...

The number of messages we receive every day - through social media online, on television and radio, via print for those who still read paper copies. Messages are all around us - videoboards in airports and train stations; pop up ads and sponsored ads online, on everything from the newspaper website you visit to your Facebook or Twitter accounts.

Channels - how many communication channels do you follow? Email. Personal and work. Social media - facebook, twitter, instagram, snapchat, LinkedIn ... and the frequency of messages. At Kiwanis, we post to our social media channels once a day - but we have multiple channels for each area - Kiwanis, the Kiwanis Children’s Fund, membership, and our youth programs - CKI, Key Club, Aktion Club, Builders Club, K Kids - not every group posts every
day, but for consistency and to remain front of mind, it’s important to post regularly. And we’re always fighting the Facebook algorithm and have learned that with FB, it’s pay to play now.

And finally, frequency. The barrage of messages is constant, and Kiwanis is competing with messages coming from thousands of other organizations and businesses.

But all these barriers can be overcome if you find those emotional connections and you keep repeating yourself in all your communications.
Whether written, verbal or visual, you’ll have to keep repeating your message with consistency whenever you can on every channel that’s available.

Key messages should also be:

- No more than three messages—Why three? It’s the number of items our brains remember best. There was that car commercial in the past couple of months that talked all about the rule of three because things that come in threes are innately more appealing than things that do not. Give your audience more than three, and you risk having your information become muddled and confused—or worse, forgotten.

(ADVANCE)

Your key messages should be informative... not be “fluff.” They should be statements that provide solid information.

As we keep talking about, people tend to remember emotions and feelings first, so be light on statistics and data. You don’t have to
avoid statistics and data completely, but too much could mean your audience won’t remember your statistics.

(ADVANCE)
Your key messages should not contain jargon and acronyms. Be careful here because Kiwanis is full of acronyms and Kiwanis-specific jargon. Jargon and acronyms can alienate our audiences—even our own members! It is like we are speaking a secret language they haven’t been allowed to learn, and it become exclusive—in a bad way.

Key messages can be supported by talking points. That’s where you can include statistics, data, and more detailed information.
As we wrap up, the key messages from this workshop are:
1. Key messages are what you want your audience to remember after you’re done communicating.
2. Use emotion to break through the clutter.
3. Rewrite your content to focus on how you’re helping kids smile, laugh, learn and grow up to be great people.
Thank you for joining me today.
We appreciate all you are doing for kids in the name of Kiwanis.