

public awareness



Building a brand through Soroptimist's signature program

Building and maintaining a brand image is the foundation of Soroptimist's public awareness efforts. A brand reflects everything associated with an organization, from its members and leadership to its mission and core values.

For Soroptimist, it is the programs that primarily define the brand. To help maintain the brand, clubs must promote Soroptimist programs. The Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Awards, in particular, is a true testament to what Soroptimist stands for and what it strives to do: empower women.

Finding various ways to publicize Soroptimist's signature project is important. To make publicity efforts more effective and help brand Soroptimist as an organization that empowers women, clubs should promote the program, which directly reflects Soroptimist's mission to improve the lives of women and girls.

To effectively promote the Women's Opportunity Awards it's important to consider three things:

1. **Message**—what you want people to know, learn and/or take away from what you are telling them.
2. **Audience**—the people you are trying to reach.
3. **Channel**—the best way to communicate the message to each audience.

Message:

The message that clubs should spread about the Women's Opportunity Awards is that the project is Soroptimist's core program. It provides cash grants for women seeking to improve their lives with the help of additional education and training.

The program empowers women by providing them with the needed resources to enhance their education, skills, and employment prospects—ultimately helping them create a better life for themselves and their families.

Audiences:

When publicizing the Women's Opportunity Awards, it is important to consider several audiences, and tailor the message slightly to fit each one.

- **Eligible applicants**—women who serve as the primary wage earners for their families and are enrolled in or have been accepted to a vocational/skills training program or undergraduate degree program. When communicating with eligible applicants, share that Soroptimist can help provide the resources they need to live their dreams.
- **Community organizations**—places that would allow clubs and members to distribute applications, hang posters, and provide other literature about the program where eligible women can find it. These places have a direct connection to many women in need, so enlist them to help spread the word that Soroptimist is available to assist these women.

- **Media**—reporters who will publicize the program's availability and impact, as well as award recipients' stories. When communicating with the media, provide information on specific places where women can obtain applications; talk about how Soroptimist disburses more than \$1 million each year to deserving women through this award-winning program; and share success stories of past award recipients. For example, Joyce Snow (a 2008 federation recipient) was once a victim of abuse living in a shelter, and never thought she'd have another opportunity to finish college. Now she's on her way to becoming a registered nurse and helping to make a difference in the lives of others. (Visit Soroptimist.org to see Joyce's inspirational video.)

- **Donors**—people who wish to make a contribution to help expand the program's reach. When communicating with potential donors, show specifically how their donation could help a woman in need. Also share with the donors any thank-you messages from award recipients to keep Soroptimist at the top of their charitable giving list.

- **Prospective members**—women who are touched by the program's impact and want to become involved with the Soroptimist mission. Share past recipient stories and let potential members know that by volunteering their time, they can help do great things for women.

Channels of communication:

Soroptimist provides resources to help clubs communicate their messages. Clubs can order brochures/applications from headquarters; download the Women's Opportunity Awards speech and publicity kit; and print customizable information posters to help promote the program. Everything is available in the Program section of Soroptimist.org/members.

Clubs can also direct their audiences to the Women's Opportunity Awards section of Soroptimist's website, where they will find inspirational stories, photos and videos of past award recipients.

In the near future, headquarters will provide a series of colorful ads that clubs can place in local magazines, hand out at women's conferences, or distribute to potential members. Several feature past Women's Opportunity Awards recipients.

The Women's Opportunity Awards program does such good things for women. It relieves them of some of their financial burdens, and gives them the confidence to succeed—particularly during these trying financial times.

When clubs publicize this program, it helps solidify Soroptimist's brand image—an image that portrays Soroptimist as the "best for women." 🌐

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best practices in public awareness

SIA's Public Awareness Review

Over the last couple of years, Soroptimist has taken aggressive steps to find ways to meet the public awareness goals of the Renaissance Campaign. The organization has come to rely heavily on social media tactics to drive its publicity efforts. By using online techniques such as video, polls, blogs and contests, Soroptimist has successfully engaged and involved both members and non-members in its mission of improving the lives of women and girls.

Some highlights:

In 2007, Soroptimist launched a new website to appeal to both members and the public at large. The website showcases the work Soroptimist does to improve the lives of women and girls. This interactive site features fresh content and several interactive components, such as polls and blogs, that entice visitors to return on a regularly basis.

The website contains frequently updated information including a "Check It Out" section, where both members and non-members can learn what's happening in the organization; an "Act Now" section that encourages visitors to take a stand on issues affecting women; and a magazine blog where visitors can post their thoughts and opinions about a magazine topic. Visitors can also view short videos of 2008 awards recipients at Soroptimist.org/video/video_awards2008.html.

As a result of the interactive and informative site, Soroptimist has experienced a spike in the number of non-members who contact headquarters looking to learn more about the organization. Currently, the website gets nearly 30,000 visits a month.

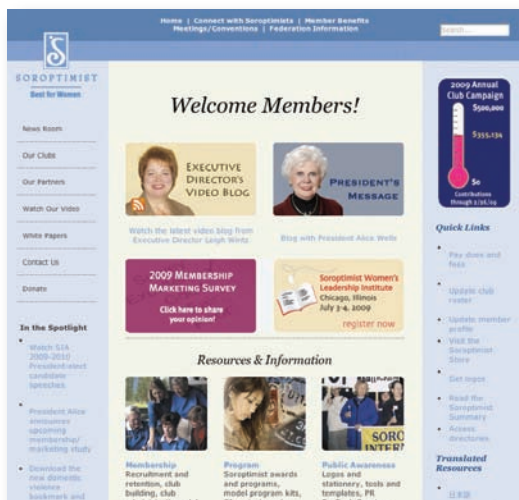
The member's area of Soroptimist.org provides a variety of useful tools and resources for clubs and members. Recent additions to the site include Executive Director Leigh's video blog and President Alice's blog, both available from the homepage of the members' area.

Another successful initiative is the Live Your Dream Campaign, which continues to gain momentum. LiveYourDreamCampaign.org launched in 2008 with a webisode series that tells the amazing story of past Women's Opportunity Awards recipient Sena Kimbrell, who is on a quest to live her dream. This inspirational series received two awards—the W3 award, which honors creative excellence on the web; and the Telly Award, which honors the best local, regional and cable television commercials and programs, as well as video and film productions and other work created for the web.

In addition, the Live Your Dream Campaign and website both received the Communicator Award of Distinction, which honors creative excellence in the communications field. The website also received the MarComm Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement by marketing and communication professionals. To further raise awareness of the Live Your Dream Campaign, Soroptimist held its first-ever Live Your Dream art contest, which asked boys and girls, from kindergarten to 12th grade, to draw a woman who inspires them. Soroptimist held the contest in honor of International Women's Day and U.S. Women's History Month as a way to underscore the many heroic and inspirational contributions of women, throughout history and today. The contest was a fun and engaging way for students to consider how women have and continue to shape the world. It boasted a great response, receiving more than 4,350 entries from several countries around the federation, including Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, the United States, Canada and Brazil. Headquarters even received entries from Australia and Bangladesh!

After narrowing down the entries, Soroptimist opened the voting up to the public and asked them to visit LiveYourDreamCampaign.org to select their favorite drawings. The art contest was a successful initiative that Soroptimist plans to administer again next year.

Clubs can expect to see more great things from Soroptimist soon. In the upcoming months, look for e-cards featuring Live Your Dream art contest winners and a new webisode series featuring a Women's Opportunity Awards recipient and Soroptimist member Tyra Wright-Johnson; a series of inspirational ads that clubs can place in local magazines, hand out at women's conferences or distribute to potential members; and a new organizational DVD in Spanish and Portuguese. 🌐



Visit Soroptimist.org/Members to view Executive Director Leigh's new video blog, and read President Alice's blog—just two of the interactive features on the SIA website.

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