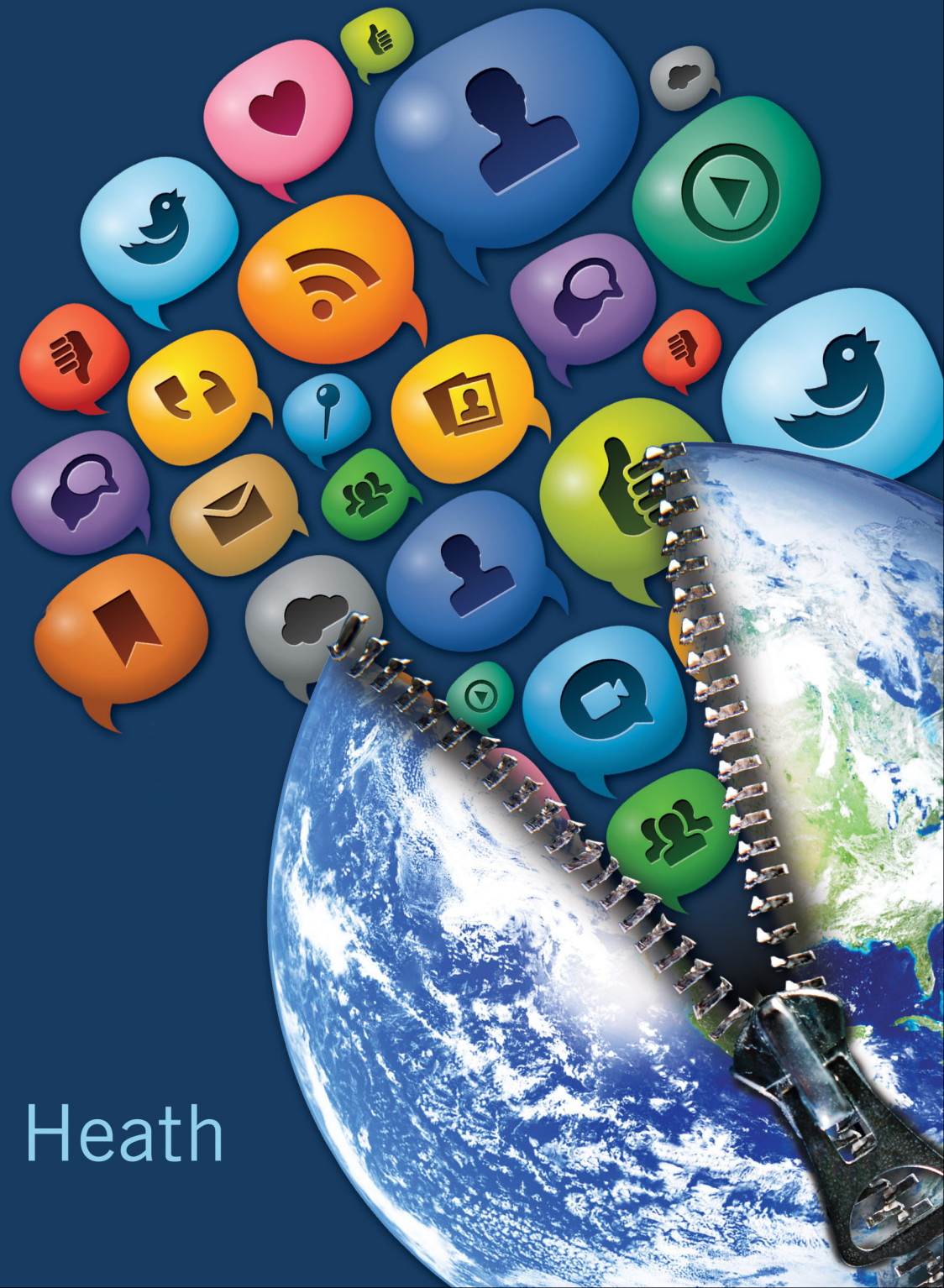


ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
PUBLIC RELATIONS
second edition



Robert L. Heath
EDITOR

Encyclopedia of Public Relations

2nd Edition

Encyclopedia of Public Relations

2nd Edition

Edited by
Robert L. Heath
University of Houston

Volume 1

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- Issues Management

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- Korea, Practice of Public Relations in

- Labor Union Public Relations
- Latin America, Practice of Public Relations in
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- Localize
- Logo
- Lucky Strike Green Campaign

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- Managerial Bias in Crisis Communication
- Managing the Corporate Public Relations Department
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- Marketplace of Ideas
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- Measuring/Measures
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- Media Effects
- Media Fragmentation

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- Media Relations
- Media Release
- Memes
- Mental Models Approach to Risk Communication
- Mentoring
- Military Public Relations
- Minorities in Public Relations
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- Mobile Technology and Public Relations
- Modernity and Late Modernity
- Moral Development
- Moral Philosophy
- Motivation Theory
- Muckrakers (and the Age of Progressivism)
- Multimedia
- Mutually Beneficial Relationship

- Narrative Theory
- Narrowcasting/Broadcasting
- Nation Branding
- Nation Building
- National Black Public Relations Society
- National Investor Relations Institute
- Neo-Institutional Theory
- Network Theory
- New Business Development
- News Services
- News Story
- Newsletter
- News/Newsworthy
- Nineteenth-Century Trends in Public Relations
- Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Nonprofit Organizations

- Objectives
- Online Public Relations
- Op-Ed
- Openness
- Opportunity and Threat
- Organizational Identity and Persona

- Page, Arthur W.
- Pamphlet
- Paracrisis
- Paradox of the Positive/Negative
- Parent/Student Newsletter
- Perjury

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Persuasion Theory	Public Relations Research
PERT Chart	Public Relations Society of America
Philanthropy	Public Relations Student Society of America
Photo-Op	Public Sector
Photosharing	Public Service Announcements
Pitch Letter	Public Sphere (<i>Öffentlichkeit</i>)
Plank, Betsy	Public Sphere Discourse
Podcasts/Audio Sharing	Publicist
Political Action Committees	Publicity
Political Economy and Public Relations	Publicly Held Companies
Political Public Relations	Publics
Political Speech	Puffery
Portfolio	Pyramid Style
Position and Positioning	
Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations	Qualitative Research
Postmodern Public Relations	Quantitative Research
Power, as Functions and Structures	
Power, as Social Construction	Race and Public Relations
Power, Discursive	Railroad Industry in the 19th Century
Power, Symbolic	Really Simple Syndication
Power Resource Management Theory	Reflective Management
Power/Knowledge and Public Relations	Regulated Monopolies
Practice/Practitioner	Reinforcement Theory
Precautionary Principle	Relationship Management Theory
Presidential Press Secretaries	Reliability
Press Agency	Religious Organizations and
Press Kit	Public Relations
Privatizing Public Opinion (and “Publictizing” Private Opinion)	Reputation
Proactivity and Reactivity	Reputation Management
Process Research	Research Goals
Professional and Professionalism	Research Objectives
Professional Project of Public Relations	Resilient Communities
Professionalism in Public Relations	Resource Dependency Theory
Program/Action Plans	Return on Investment
Promotion	Rhetorical Arena (Crisis Theory)
Propaganda	Rhetorical Theory
Psychographics	Right to Know
Psychological Processing	Risk Communication
Public Affairs	Risk Perception
Public Diplomacy	Risk Society
Public Health Campaign	Rules Theory
Public Interest	
Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders	Sampling
Public Policy Planning	Sandbagging
Public Relations	Scales
Public Relations Agency	Search Engine
Public Relations Department	Search Engine Optimization
Public Relations Education, History of	Securities and Exchange Commission
	Segmentation of Publics

- Short Message Service
- Situation Analysis
- Situation Ethics
- Situational Crisis Communication Theory
- Situational Theory of Problem Solving
- Situational Theory of Publics
- Social Amplification of Risk
- Social Capital
- Social Construction of Reality Theory
- Social Exchange Theory
- Social Learning Theory
- Social Marketing
- Social Media
- Social Media Press Release
- Social Network Analysis
- Social Networking
- Social Networks/Niche Networks
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- Socioculture and Public Relations
- Sockpuppet
- Sound Bite
- South Africa, Practice of Public Relations in
- Spain, Practice of Public Relations in
- Speakers Bureaus
- Speechwriting
- Spin
- Spiral of Silence Theory
- Sports Public Relations
- Stakeholder Theory
- Stakes
- Statistical Analysis
- Stewardship of Large Organizations
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- Strain
- Strategic Business Planning
- Strategic Partnerships
- Strategic Silence
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- Symmetry
- Systems Theory
- Tactics
- Tagline
- Tallents, Sir Stephen
- Target
- Terrorism and Public Relations
- Theory of Reasoned Action
- Theory-Based Practice
- Third Culture Public Relations Practitioner
- Third-Party Endorsement
- Trade Associations
- Transparency
- Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change
- Travel and Tourism Public Relations
- Trolling
- Trust
- Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations
in Public Relations
- Two-Step Flow Theory
- Uncertainty
- Uncertainty Reduction Theory
- United Kingdom, Practice of Public Relations in
- United States Government and Public Relations
- Uses and Gratifications Theory
- Utilitarianism
- Vail, Theodore Newton
- Validity
- Video News Release
- Viral Marketing
- Virtual World Sites
- Voter and Constituent Relations
- Warfare and Public Relations
- Web Traffic
- Web 2.0
- Website
- Wiki
- Wire Service
- Word of Mouth Marketing
- Writing
- Zones of Meaning

Reader's Guide

The Reader's Guide is provided to assist readers in locating articles on related topics. It classifies articles into 19 general topical categories: Crisis Communication and Management; Cyberspace; Ethics; Global Public Relations; Groups; History; Jargon; Law; Management; Marketing Communication and Advertising; Media; New Media; News; Organizations; Practitioners; Relations; Research and Analysis; Risk Communication and Management; Theories and Models.

Crisis Communication and Management

Apologia Theory
Bridge
Crisis and Crisis Management
Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication
Crisis Communication
Crisis Informatics
Crisis Renewal Theory
Image Repair Theory
Managerial Bias in Crisis Communication
Paracrisis
Rhetorical Arena (Crisis Theory)
Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Cyberspace

Communication Technologies
EDGAR Online
Home Page
Multimedia
Online Public Relations
Search Engine
Website

Ethics

Codes of Ethics
Codes of Public Relations Practice
Corporate Moral Conscience
Corporate Social Responsibility
Decision Theory
Deontology
Ethics of Public Relations

Moral Development

Moral Philosophy
Situation Ethics
Trust
Utilitarianism

Global Public Relations

Africa, Practice of Public Relations in
Australia and New Zealand, Practice of Public Relations in
Brazil, Practice of Public Relations in
Canada, Practice of Public Relations in
China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, Practice of Public Relations in
Eastern Europe, Practice of Public Relations in
Europe, Practice of Public Relations in
European Association of Communication Directors
Germany, Practice of Public Relations in
Giving, Donations, and Globalism
Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management
Globalization and Public Relations
Globalize
India, Practice of Public Relations in
Institute for Public Relations
International Public Relations Association
Israel, Practice of Public Relations in
Korea, Practice of Public Relations in
Latin America, Practice of Public Relations in
Nation Branding

Nation Building
 South Africa, Practice of Public Relations in
 Spain, Practice of Public Relations in
 Sustainability as a Global Challenge
 Sweden, Practice of Public Relations in
 United Kingdom, Practice of Public
 Relations in

Groups

Citizens Advisory Committees/Panels
 Community Relations
 Environmental Groups
 Political Action Committees
 Strategic Partnerships

History

Activism
 Age of Deference, End of the
 Antecedents of Modern Public Relations
 Barnum, P. T.
 Bateman, J. Carroll
 Battle of the Currents
 Bernays, Edward
 Boulwarism
 Chase, W. Howard
 Colorado Coal Strike
 Committee on Public Information
 Cutlip, Scott M.
 Evolution of Publicity Agencies
 Fleischman, Doris Elsa
 Four-Minute Men
 Hammond, George
 Harlow, Rex
 Hill, John Wiley
 Histories of Public Relations
 Industrial Barons (of the 1870s–1920s)
 Lucky Strike Green Campaign
 Muckrakers (and the Age of
 Progressivism)
 Nineteenth-Century Trends in Public
 Relations
 Page, Arthur W.
 Plank, Betsy
 Propaganda
 Public Relations Education, History of
 Railroad Industry in the 19th Century
 Regulated Monopolies
 Tallents, Sir Stephen

Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations in
 Public Relations
 Vail, Theodore Newton

Jargon

Account Executive
 Account Manager/Account Management
 Accreditation
 Actuality
 Advance
 Annual Reports
 AP Style
 APR
 Association for Women in Communication
 Backgrounder
 Beat
 Benchmarking
 Best Practices
 Bill Stuffer
 Bio
 Boxed Print
 Bridge
 Brochure
 Byline
 Campaign
 Caption/Cutline
 Chat
 Circulation
 Client
 Collateral
 Commodifying Information
 Community Reports
 Composing/Composition
 Co-Optation
 Copy
 Copyright
 Corporate Branding
 Counseling
 Credits
 Culture
 Deadline
 De-Positioning
 Differentiation
 Direct Mail/Direct Email
 Doublespeak
 Editing
 Editorial
 Employee Communication
 Endorsement

Entertainment Industry Publicity/Promotion	Multimedia
Environmental Scanning	Mutually Beneficial Relationship
Event Management	New Business Development
External Publications	News Services
Fact Sheet	News Story
FAQs	Newsletter
Feature	News/Newsworthy
Flack	Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)
Flame	Nonprofit Organizations
Flier	Objectives
Font	Op-Ed
Frame	Openness
Freelance Writers	Opportunity and Threat
Functions of Public Relations	Organizational Identity and Persona
Fundraising	Pamphlet
Ghostwriting	Parent/Student Newsletter
Goals	Perjury
Goodwill	Philanthropy
Government Public Relations	Photo-Op
Government Relations	Photosharing
Graphics	Pitch Letter
Hearing	Political Public Relations
Hold and Hold for Release	Political Speech
Home Page	Portfolio
Hotline	Position and Positioning
Human Interest	Practice
Hype	Presidential Press Secretaries
Identification	Press Agency
Image	Press Kit
Impressions	Privatizing Public Opinion (and "Publictizing" Private Opinion)
Infomercial	Proactivity and Reactivity
Internal Communication	Program/Action Plans
Internship	Promotion
Interview as a Communication Tool	Propaganda
Investor Relations	Public Affairs
Issues Management	Public Interest
Layout	Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders
Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap	Public Policy Planning
Lobbying	Public Relations Agency
Localize	Public Sector
Logo	Public Service Announcements
Material Information	Publicist
Media Calls	Publicity
Media Conferences	Publics
Media Effects	Puffery
Media Relations	Pyramid Style
Media Release	Religious Organizations and Public Relations
Mentoring	Reputation Management
Military Public Relations	Return on Investment
Mission and Vision Statements	

Risk Communication
 Sampling
 Sandbagging
 Scales
 Search Engine
 Segmentation of Publics
 Social Media Press Release
 Society
 Sound Bite
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 Speechwriting
 Spin
 Sports Public Relations
 Stewardship of Large Organizations
 Straight News
 Strain
 Strategies
 Stylebook
 Survey
 Symmetry
 Tactics
 Tagline
 Target
 Terrorism and Public Relations
 Third-Party Endorsement
 Trade Associations
 Transparency
 Wire Service
 Writing
 Zones of Meaning

Law

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission
 (2010)
 Commercial Speech
 Corporate Speech
 Defamation (Libel and Slander)
 Federal Trade Commission
 Free Market System
 Free Speech
 Perjury

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Catalytic Model of Issues Management
 Chase Model of Issue Management
 Communication Management
 Discrimination in Public Relations
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Goals
 Government Public Relations
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Advertising
 Advertising Equivalency
 Brand Equity and Branding
 Cause-Related Marketing
 Guerilla Marketing
 Integrated Marketing Communication
 Marketing

Social Marketing
Viral Marketing
Word of Mouth Marketing

Media

Media Calls
Media Conferences
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Media Mix Strategies
Media Networks
Media Relations
Media Release
Narrowcasting/Broadcasting
Online Public Relations

New Media

Aggregator News Search
App
Astroturfing
Authenticity on Social Media
Black/Dark Websites
Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs
Chat
Citizen Journalism/Reporting
Content Aggregation
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Mobile Technology and Public Relations
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Activism
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Appendix A: Women Pioneers in Public Relations
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Heath has 3 decades of experience in corporate communication and positioning research. He has conducted research on risks related to various hazards, including those associated with chemical manufacturing and community right to know—key themes in community relations.

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Introduction

As I drafted the introduction for the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Public Relations* (EPR2), I revisited the preface published in the first edition (EPR1). I did not appreciate when we produced the first edition how much of a footprint it was and how such projects help us track the movement of the discipline; the journey it is taking toward a relatively uncertain destination. Footprints suggest where a discipline has been, where it is, and where it might be going.

In such projects, we can never forget that we are dealing with a profession. People can be educated, accredited, and rewarded for the quality of their professional work. They can be scorned for engaging in spin. The question is how well academics work with professionals for the good of the profession, the organizations it serves, and the societies where it is practiced. Many of us aspire to make a strong connection between what is good for the profession and what is good for society. Like other academic disciplines and professions, we are variously chauvinistic with enthusiasm for what this profession can do for others and how it can continually be improved by tough love.

Pathways and Wanderings

Where Have We Been?

I appreciate the history of public relations every time I am fortunate enough to participate in useful projects such as the *Encyclopedia of Public Relations*. I have similar feelings when I read a truly interesting article, chapter, or book. The discipline has, and even suffers from, lots of history that is subjected to quite different interpretive lenses.

Many events and traditions have shaped the current professional practice of public relations in many countries, locales, and organizational-individual relationships. Public relations seems to

have left footprints back to the dawn of time even if it got its name (and identity as a profession and academic discipline) only relatively recently. And, all of that is changing for good and bad reasons. We have legendary figures. There are telling moments, events, and challenges. We also have entanglements with various perspectives, such as “propaganda,” and self-interested discourses and other symbolic actions of individuals (think in terms of monarchs) and institutions and organizations (think in terms of corporations, governments, and religious establishments). We even have a history where antiestablishment and other “nonprofits” engage in what can be thought of as “public relations.” It is essential that what came to be known as *public relations* is not something uniquely and originally developed in the 19th century, or in the United States. Nor is it simply a self-interested tool of powerful corporations. It cannot be set aside by substituting it for terms such as *communication management* or *strategic communication*.

Topics that were featured in EPR1 provided evidence of the culmination of a century of professional best practices, primarily in the United States and United Kingdom. It also reflected a research tradition, among academics, that was launched tentatively in the 1970s. By then, as well, there were well-established national and international professional associations specializing in the field and promoting practice-oriented research. Early research often was commissioned to help practitioners do what they wanted to do better. They wanted to refine their skill sets.

Where Are We?

I think the answer to that question is “pretty well along,” as is evident by the scope and depth of topics covered in this edition. It covers some of the same ground and even reprints approximately

150 entries from EPR1. But, we revised more than 190 others from EPR1 to keep them current. We added about 160 new entries and have included an appendix on Women Pioneers in Public Relations. All of that text, especially the new additions, constitutes an advance that serves as evidence of the dynamic state of scholarly and practitioner interest in the current health and challenges of the discipline. So, we see well-defined footprints as evidence of lots of participants in the discussion, both professional and academic.

For EPR2, we added many topics relevant to *new media* and what is generically titled *critical studies*. The first is important because new media deterministically reshape the communication landscape. The latter topic is important because it offers a very robust dialogue and wonderful insights that are shaping the character and worth of public relations and social responsibility of its professional practitioners. We are not only interested in how it can help organizations wisely and ethically to achieve their missions and visions (that pathway is well established), but we also are increasingly committed to the paradigm that the practice is best when it helps make society more fully functioning. This trend seems well grounded in a shift from a compulsive focus on organizational effectiveness to a broad discussion of how the organization can only be effective in its community, as it is constrained and supported by the cultures of the societies where it operates.

Such outcomes presume that we are making progress in the effort to understand the “public relations processes” that are unique to and vital for the practice as a unique, definable aspect of the human experience. So, such focus keeps us mindful of what we are studying and why. But, and here is a major advance, we are increasingly aware of and focused on the “meaning(s)” created for better or worse by social construction fostered by the multiple voices ringing out in society.

For these reasons, EPR2 offers insights into voice, culture, dialogue, discourse aspects of relationships, co-created meaning, constituted meaning, and dozens of other topics. We have moved beyond the simplistic models and commitment to systems theory that was current in the 1990s; changes in the scope and depth of the profession have come as a response to the challenges that

were confronting the public and private sectors as a result of the turbulent 1970s and 1980s. Much of this turbulence accounts for the new public relations paradigms that emerged in the last part of the 20th century and 95% of the topics and research projects that attracted an increasing number of interested and well-educated scholars to the fray.

Most discussants of theory and practice realize that push-button approaches to the practice and theory (and their companion research) are interesting but only a step, a footprint, not the end of the journey. Theories that offer a push-button approach (“take two aspirins and call the doctor”) still play a role in the profession, but the footsteps of a lot of competing positions are kicking up dust. As paradigms have shifted before, they seem certain to do so continually. And, in place of buttons to push, there seems to be a commitment to achieve sound and defensible principles that can, and will, guide professional practice.

Terms such as *control*, *power*, *social responsibility* and *public relations ethics* are seen as rich areas of study and continual refinement rather than settled matters. In part, for that reason, this edition offers substantially deeper and broader discussions of crisis and risk communication, as well as the complexities of power, control, and other similar aspects of the human condition that are thought of by some theorists to best be viewed through a colonial (or postcolonial) perspective.

One can see, embedded in each statement that presumes to tell us where we are, the marks that point the path forward. As such, we invoke a variety of metaphors to capture the state of discussion. We might, for instance, see the path leading to completed and furnished edifices or going into more fog—but with a variety of lanterns to keep the journey from wandering badly. Do we know what the “edifice” is that we are finishing, or are we still in search of its floor plans and blueprints? Do we have a guiding sense of what makes a society fully functioning? Have we firmly staked the foundation of the profession in ways that reflect sound knowledge of and appreciation for its position in the history of human society?

In EPR1, I cited Rex Harlow who is the subject of an entry on his life and contribution in EPR2. Writing in 1977, he observed the following, which again is worth reconsideration:

A review of the history of the definition of public relations shows that the definition has changed considerably over the past 70 years. This historical review reveals how inextricably the development of the definition has been and is bound to the movement of thought and action of the society in which the public relations practitioner does his [or her] work. It shows the present form, content and status of the public relations definition, but even more the effect of environmental factors and change upon its development during the past quarter of a century. (p. 49)

The changes, revisions, additions, and deletions made to EPR2 are, we hope, a result of a wise, judicious, and insightful exploration of the “movement of thought and action of the society” that this work must serve.

Where Do the Footsteps Lead?

We recognize that there is a bias to the U.S. view of public relations in this second edition. That is a function of the number of authors who work and write in the United States. But, despite this inherent bias, and one that is too complex to solve easily, we have added lots of topics that suggest a much more global and complex approach is being devoted to important matters. Thus, instead of only seeing these matters from a U.S. perspective, we try but know that we fall short of the goal of seeing the globe of public relations as the astronauts see the earth.

One of the major advances in EPR2 is to have more authors educated outside of and independent of the U.S. paradigm. Nevertheless, we have a lot of U.S. educated authors, and it is true that the professional practice during the 20th century had a U.S.-centric character to it. Most of the authors contributing their work in *Public Relations Review* and *Journal of Public Relations Research* in the last decades of that century were from U.S. universities and professional practices. We had a generation of U.S. faculty members going abroad on proselytizing missions touting “their” view of public relations as “the” view. At the same time, scholars working outside of the United States wanted to write on topics and in ways that were not welcomed into these leading journals.

One can aspire, however, to find and continue on the path of research and practice in ways that

help us imagine that EPR3 will move ever more away from a U.S.-centric view to one that is more richly global. My experience, however, is that such shifts tend to move more like tortoises than hares. But we should be heartened to recall that the tortoise beat the hare.

Despite the sense that footprints lead in different ways, become blurred, and often wander off in unproductive directions, it is rejuvenating to see all of the footprints in EPR2 as a “state of the discipline.”

The DNA of Public Relations

The array of authors whose voices are heard in EPR2 suggests that no matter how insightful and prescient one researcher and theorist’s voice might be, change is necessarily going to occur discursively and preferably collaboratively. Some persons are likely to think that all of the points of view and opinions, the preferences expressed, are a jangle and a wrangle. But the engagement of interested parties can never be stopped, especially by edict or insistence. Nor do we doubt that however inefficient the process is, it is enriched by engagement, dialogue, debate, as well as temporary misstarts and false directions.

The DNA of public relations is inseparable from the effectiveness of some individual or organization (or both). The assumption defining public relations is well established that skilled and effective public relations (and practitioners) can help make organizations and individuals more likely to succeed. It’s unlikely that such linearity will cease to be the aspiration of professionals and most academicians.

Such logic can give public relations an institutional bias, hence the adherence of some variation of institutional theory. It presumes, as a skilled automobile engineer and a mechanic do, that having an automobile well designed and mechanically fit makes it more successful as a tool to serve someone’s plan to get from point A to point B. Such logic, however, can miss the point that however seemingly desirable such an aspiration might be, the complexity and chaos inherent to the world and human existence argue for flexibility, variety, and adaptability. It is likely to presume, as well, that no matter how many variables are carefully inspected and how well matters are understood, complexity will prevail. Principles are likely to be more useful than prescriptions.

For that reason, the functional, tool-like approach may feature concepts such as mission and vision, goals, objectives, strategies, discipline-specific structures and functions, as well as tools and tactics. This view of public relations is given full-throated support in this edition. But, set against such linear analysis, ignoring complexity and critical perspectives, the “functional” view demands contingency. It presumes that discourse processes and symbolic behavior not only responds to uncertainty but advances through uncertainty—with caution and even luck. This cautious view continues to make inroads into theory and practice that recognize the processes unique to the profession and to the skilled and perhaps ethical implementation of the profession’s defining functions and structures. But, it also suggests that humans are sentient and complex; ethics are contestable matters. Policies, public and private, are dynamic—“under construction.”

EPR2’s examination of the DNA of public relations reasons that the structure and function approach cannot explore, explain, and expand the role that meaning plays in the human condition, including within the care of public relations. Does public relations play a role in societal discourse? Is it a relevant player in how societies individually driven and collectively managed create and instantiate ideas? Is the human being capable of being reduced to processes, or is the nature of humanity in each of its configurations buffeted by socially constructed meanings and variously dynamic identities? Do humans create powerful meaning structures that guide behavior based on seemingly enlightened choices, define and enact relationships and associations (along with inherent dissociations), and supply the resources of power and control as stakeholder exchanges? Do words and other symbols become the reality that humans live, and by the standards of contestable social responsibility? Do humans use words to give themselves the power to bend matters to their interests? Is reality, under such circumstances, recalcitrant and discourse partners contentious? Is their identity merely the enactment of process and behavioral adjustment? Perhaps, and that can account for the success of ants.

But are humans, for better or worse, wordy animals whose discourse, dialogue, and rhetorical enactments shape society, relationships, cultures,

and world views that justify or deny the legitimacy of organizations, actions, and even individuals? How much power is there in the words *parent*, *president*, *king*, *relationship*, *collaboration*, *cooperation*, *consensus*, and on and on? How is power reshaped by terms such as *gender*, *race*, *sexual orientation*, and political assumptions such as *democracy* and *terrorism*?

As one reads the entries in EPR2, noting the breadth of coverage, we hope there is an incentive to recognize and appreciate processes but also to realize the rich importance of meaning for humans as sentient beings. Both (processes and meanings) are important aspects of the DNA of public relations; in that discussion and balance, each author and practitioner might be biased one way or another. But neither side of that quandary can be dismissed or ignored, but rather should be enjoyed for what it offers and where it falls short.

The DNA of public relations is its role and service to others. It lacks separate integrity independent of its roles. For that reason, the question is not what it does for itself—but how it serves and who it serves. Who is its master, or is it master of its own fate? Does it make individuals and organizations more effective? Does it serve to make society a better place to live and organizations a better place to work? Does it help people to know what *better* means and how it can be achieved?

For this reason, the discussion of interests or identities is not a trivial or an indifferent matter for those interested in the practice and research of public relations. They are central and definitional to the human experience as products of the cultural webs in which people entangle themselves. The practice, research, and theory of public relations are limited or enriched by how interests are defined and by the terms that are used to modify that concept. Thus, the DNA of public relations asks us to consider not how public relations operates in a disinterested way, but whose interests are advanced, and whose might be harmed?

Public relations’ nature—its character and legitimacy—and its role in society depends on the interests served, and how. If it is “an” or “the” unseen power, as Scott M. Cutlip (1994) reasoned, it is worth studying for the possibility, probability, or certainty such is the case. As being relevant to ideas that drive process, and processes that shape ideas, public relations can make organizations and

individuals successful in ways that can help or harm the greater interests of community, a society of many levels and interdependencies. It is, as a profession, then central to how outcomes are achieved and what outcomes are successful—and why so. It can, especially as an academic discipline, understand, correct, and support certain ideas and practices as normatively better than others. But it can never, whether as practice or academic study, divorce itself from society.

Because of public relations' ability to help shape and reshape society, which presumes insights into the dynamics of society, David McKie and Debashish Munshi (2009) offered a challenge to the discipline.

No discipline is an island. Public relations education cannot be independent of, or be indifferent toward, the society in which it operates. Without a sense of the different ways that society might be theorized, public relations students and practitioners are limited in their participation in broader dialogues about how public relations contributes to public communication. It is not enough to be technically proficient without being able to make informed contributions to debates about contemporary society and its future development. (p. 61)

By this claim, McKie and Munshi, and they are not alone, aspire to a time when public relations is not viewed as a negative force in society, but something quite positive through its wise and ethical influence on managements and the ability to foster discourses and ideas that help make society the best community that it can be. It is a means by which the human spirit couples with professional practice to truly make society an instrument for the collective management of the risks and self-interests of human society.

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People like to talk about teams. Some even claim, “there is no *I* in *team*,” even though they miss the point that the word *team* contains the letters *m-e*. So, let me say that I (me) could not have done this project without lots of *I*’s.

A project such as the design, development, and production of the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Public Relations* is a team effort. As such, it requires a lot of *I*’s and *me*’s setting aside other projects to pitch in. Perhaps violating the spirit of no *I* in *team*, I’m going to express my (a variation of *me*) gratitude to many who helped bring this project to fruition.

First, I acknowledge SAGE acquisitions editor Jim Brace-Thompson who came to me and said, “Because of the success of the first edition, we would like to do a second.” That actually was an exhilarating opening line of the drama that culminated in the production of this edition. In that regard, *we* as a discipline also need to acknowledge the librarians and others who believed that the cost of the work was money well spent. That is hugely gratifying.

Second, I acknowledge SAGE’s willingness to let *me* pick and invite a first-rate advisory board. As important as that ever is for an editor, this time it was INVALUABLE. I simply did not know a lot of entries and authors that should be selected and invited to contribute because of the expanded array of topics. The entries on new communication technologies, which were recommended by older colleagues and written by younger ones for the most part, enriched this work. The new technologies are a playground and perhaps stumbling blocks for public relations practitioners, and seem best understood as such by our younger colleagues.

Also, I appreciate the Advisory Board members who offered topics and contributors generically under critical theories. I knew just enough to realize what I did not know and appreciate. I did not

know who to ask who would be willing and able to write on what are often quite complex topics.

Third, I appreciated the advice and guidance on topics that fall under the headings of feminism, race, gender, and ethnicity—what seem to be identity topics. That sort of topic is definitionally the nature of societies and cultures. It, and other topics similar to that, are not matters of political correctness. They are core elements of society where public relations is enacted and where it can help or hinder such persons’ narratives. The nature of that stew determines how good the meal is. That appreciation, by definition, extends as well to those who helped to give a much more global topic structure and content for *Encyclopedia of Public Relations, Second Edition*. Several of the Advisory Board members also edited entries as they came in and went through various iterations before going to publication.

To each of the Advisory Board members, you are welcome to see your role as generously in the contribution to the final project as you wish.

I acknowledge so many colleagues who might have been doing any number of activities if not writing entries for an encyclopedia. I believe the culmination of the product and its contribution to academic and professional work are rewarding.

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help make it work. Then, some days later, I started to “make it serve *me*.”

Thank you, Anna, for being one of those who walked *me* through the SRT, both during the orientation and again and again. You made it work for us and did so with such a sense of fun and patience. I found all of the SAGE personnel to have a good sense of work and enjoyment for the project. But Anna and I got into the easy habit of everyday banter as Monday arrived, and she saved me once again as Friday arrived. Anna, I enjoyed working with you. And I would also like to thank Tracy Buyan, project editor, and Diane DiMura and Janet Ford, copy editors.

In the Acknowledgments to the first edition, I noted how the process of pulling off an encyclopedia together is similar to that of the barn raising in the movie *Witness*, starring Harrison Ford. I imagine that many of the younger authors don’t remember that movie. One scene focused on the harmony in an Amish community where everyone young and old, male and female, played a key role as all hands helped raise a barn and nourish those hard at work. That sort of collaboration, cooperation, and camaraderie characterized the crafting of *Encyclopedia of Public Relations, Second Edition*. Our team really clicked.

Robert L. Heath

A

ACCOMMODATION: CONTINGENCY THEORY

Accommodation occurs when public relations practitioners through dialogue, negotiation, and compromise attempt to meet the needs of both their organization *and* a stakeholder group. Contingency theory defines pure accommodation as the polar opposite of pure advocacy in public relations. Pure accommodation can also be termed *capitulation*—when an organization accedes to a public’s demands. Pure advocacy occurs when public relations practitioners attempt to meet the needs or desires of their organization *or* a stakeholder group to the exclusion of the needs or desires of the opponents of the position being advocated. Typically, advocacy refers to the practitioner’s role in representing his or her employer, whether an organization or a client.

Accommodation is a stance or strategic position that a public relations practitioner may choose to take with a public. It is most appropriate when the stance is mutually beneficial for the accommodating organization and the accommodated public.

Accommodation is a central tenet of contingency theory. The contingency theory of accommodation in public relations was introduced in 1997 by a team of researchers led by Glen T. Cameron. Contingency theory posits that ideal public relations practice is constantly influenced by more than 80 variables ranging from the experience of the public relations staff to the credibility of a contending public.

An accommodation continuum ranging from pure accommodation to pure advocacy was developed to illustrate contingency theory and the dynamic nature of public relations practice. Cameron and associates argue that at any particular time a practitioner’s position may shift toward or away from accommodation or advocacy, depending on the presence of influential internal or external variables. Contingency theorists claim that there is no one-size-fits-all normative approach to public relations practice. Evidence that contingencies affect accommodation in *normative* public relations practice is the primary contribution of contingency theory.

Accommodation is compared to two-way symmetrical public relations practice, whereas advocacy is compared to asymmetrical practice. Symmetry and asymmetry are concepts articulated by James E. Grunig (2001) as the essence of the Excellence study.

The role of accommodation in public relations was tested through empirical research, such as interviews and surveys of public relations professionals. The research confirmed that accommodation is usually not the default response in public relations practice. Advocacy is the default. As a situation changes, the most effective practice is dynamic, moving between accommodation and advocacy.

In testing the concept of accommodation, the Cameron team used in-depth interviews to examine variables that affect the level of accommodation by an organization. Practitioners at larger corporations reported that the corporation’s size

often made them more likely to accommodate a powerful external public, such as consumer activists. Corporate culture variables, for instance the position of the CEO in a specific public relations situation, were also identified as potentially strong influences on the level of accommodation. Accommodation is also shown to be affected by predispositions or emotions of organization leaders and/or stakeholders involved in an issue.

Contingency theory also suggests there are ethical implications to accommodation. Contingency theorists argue that there are times when it is ethically inappropriate to accommodate a public. For example, researchers asked whether it is ethical public relations practice to accommodate the demands of a dictator. Furthermore, as a paid representative of your organization it is undesirable, if not unethical, to accommodate an activist group focused on the elimination of your business. For instance, animal rights activists and furriers have goals that are diametrically opposed to those of the fur industry, so accommodation of the activists by that industry is unlikely.

Accommodation in public relations is a useful concept for professionals to consider as they engage in organization-public relationships. The stance of accommodation drives strategies and tactics and is therefore a valuable variable to consider in building or maintaining relationships.

Bryan H. Reber

See also Advocacy; Contingency Theory; Excellence Theory

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ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

The term *account executive* (AE) refers to the practitioner within an agency or public relations firm who is responsible for day-to-day contact with a client or clients. As such, the AE is responsible for managing all agency-client initiatives, including publicity, press relations, special events, crisis communication, the creation and production of communication messages, and media buying and placement. In many instances, AE or assistant AE is the title of an entry-level position in public relations agencies.

In the earlier days of the profession, the AE's function was as the agency's liaison with a client or clients. It was the AE's job to represent the agency to the client. However, in today's consumer-driven environment, the AE is seen as functioning best as the client's representative within the agency. In that role, it is the responsibility of the AE to ensure that the interests of the client are foremost in all initiatives undertaken by the agency on behalf of the client.

Activities performed by the AE include the following:

- Developing and maintaining expertise in the client's business and industry
- Understanding the structure and policies of the client organization
- Scanning the economic, political, and social environment for challenges and opportunities vis-à-vis the client
- Maintaining an ongoing base of information for the client concerning their competitors
- Developing relationships at a minimum of three levels within the client organization
- Acting as consultant to the client with regard to communication planning and implementation,

including advertising, media relations, Web content, media planning, and other activities

- Maintaining day-to-day contact with the client's representative(s) to maintain goodwill and keep the client "in the loop" regarding all activities on its behalf
- Representing the agency at client meetings
- Coordinating activities with the agency's creative director and media director as appropriate
- Monitoring and protecting the agency-client relationship
- Working with the client to develop planning documents
- Summarizing agency-client meetings for distribution within the agency and the client organization
- Ensuring that all creative messaging and other initiatives are fully supported by the client prior to implementation
- Making certain that all members of the agency team assigned to the client's account understand the needs of the client and act accordingly
- Ensuring that all creative is "on target" (*creative* refers to any contracted text, graphics, pictures, and other tactical tools that are crafted for each client)

However, the central focus of the AE has always been—and always will be—to effectively and efficiently manage the relationship between the client and the agency in order to protect the interests of both and to ensure mutual benefit. Moreover, the agency tenure of an AE is directly linked to the maintenance of that relationship.

The appropriate educational background for this position includes public relations, advertising, or journalism.

John A. Ledingham

See also Account Manager/Account Management; Client–Agency Relationships; Public Relations Agency

Further Readings

American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA):
<http://www.aaaa.org>

Public Relations Society of America: <http://www.prsa.org>

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics,
Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.stats.bls.gov>

ACCOUNT MANAGER/ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

The term *account management* refers to the coordination, billing, and evaluation of all activities undertaken by a public relations agency or firm on behalf of a client or client organization. Unlike the account executive (AE) who is in day-to-day contact with a client, the account manager (AM) is a higher-level planner and coordinator working with various AEs and creative and media directors within the agency environment to assess the future needs of the client, to develop strategic plans to meet those needs, and to put in place evaluation strategies to determine the success or failure of programmatic initiatives. In agency tradition, AEs report to AMs. A central concern of the AM is to look for opportunities to grow the agency's business through the expansion of current work undertaken for the client or by working with the client to develop new initiatives. Moreover, the AM may be responsible for several accounts at the same time.

As a senior member of the executive team, the AM also is responsible for initiating, nurturing, and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between the agency and the client. Research indicates that these relationships follow a familiar pattern of growth and decline. The effective AM must understand and appreciate this process, be able to recognize the current phase of the relationship, and if necessary know how to alter that relationship to ensure that it is positive. Moreover, research demonstrates that the dimensions of openness, trust, involvement, commitment, and investment are crucial in managing the agency-client relationship. In this context, "openness" is the degree to which the agency and the client share plans for the future with each other. "Trust" refers to the degree to which the agency or the client follows through on their words with their actions. "Involvement" refers to the willingness of the agency to become actively involved in the business of the client. "Commitment" addresses the need to demonstrate an ongoing interest in helping the client organization achieve its goals. "Investment" concerns the amount of time and energy the agency is willing to put into maintaining the agency-client relationship. A simple

“relationship audit” can provide an illustration of the state of the agency-client relationship as well as indicate areas for improvement.

Despite a substantial increase in the number of AM positions, many companies continue to report dissatisfaction with the ability of the AM to build sustaining relationships with strategic clients. To a large degree, responsibility for the inability to sustain a relationship is claimed to rest, not surprisingly, with the selection of a client. This breakdown in the client/agency relationship usually can be traced to a “poor fit” between the agency’s interests and the client organization’s business.

John A. Ledingham

See also Account Executive; Client–Agency Relationships; Public Relations Agency

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- Strategic Account Management Association: <http://www.strategicaccounts.org>

ACCREDITATION

In the practice of public relations, as in many other fields, accreditation is a credential of expertise, competence, and ethical practice. For instance, the use of the initials “APR” after an individual’s name gives increased credibility as it designates that person as Accredited in Public Relations. It is common to see APR, Accreditation in Public Relations listed as required or preferred among the criteria posted in public relations position announcements. The APR postgraduate certification program was established

in 1964 and has been completed by more than 5,000 public relations professionals.

How does a public relations practitioner become accredited? The process includes application, studying a prescribed body of knowledge, meeting with a readiness review panel, and passing a computer-administered examination. The readiness review panel involves the review and discussion of a candidate’s portfolio. Successful completion of the process recognizes competency in the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to practice public relations effectively.

Competencies tested include the following:

- Researching, planning, implementing, and evaluating programs
- Ethics and law
- Communication models and theories
- Business literacy
- Management skills and issues
- Crisis communication management
- Media relations
- Using information technology effectively
- Knowledge of both historical and current issues in public relations
- Advanced communication skills

“Accreditation is one of the most important credentials a public relations practitioner can achieve,” said Susan G. Barnes in a personal communication on August 23, 2012. She holds an APR accreditation, is a member of the College of Fellows of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), and is vice chair of the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB), the organization that manages the granting of the APR designation. “Accreditation assures potential employers that the practitioner brings a certified level of expertise to an organization. More and more employers are recognizing that accreditation sets job candidates apart and are actively seeking accredited public relations professionals.”

The UAB is composed of several participating professional organizations: the PRSA (the largest professional organization devoted to public relations), the Agricultural Relations Council, Florida Public Relations Association, Maine Public Relations Council, National School Public Relations Association, Religion Communicators Council, Southern Public Relations Federation, and Asociación de Relacionistas Profesionales de Puerto

Rico (Puerto Rico Public Relations Association). The UAB develops the APR examination and policies, while the day-to-day management of the program is conducted by the PRSA. The application, reading list, and downloadable study materials are available on the home pages of the UAB and PRSA.

Other professional organizations also offer an accreditation credential. For example, business communicators may earn the distinction of being an Accredited Business Communicator (ABC) through the International Association of Business Communicators. The Canadian Public Relations Society also offers an accreditation program for individual public relations practitioners. Various groups have differing requirements for years of experience before candidates may take an accreditation examination. The past requirement for at least 5 years of experience is no longer imposed for candidacy for the Accreditation in Public Relations.

Accreditation is one measure of professionalism for public relations practitioners. Other measures include obtaining appropriate educational training, participating in continuing education classes (offered through professional associations), conforming to ethical standards, such as those included in the PRSA Code of Ethics, and maintaining a fiduciary relationship with employing organizations and clients—that is, acting in the best interest of the client or employer. This relationship is similar to the trust one may have toward one's physician, dentist, or attorney—the assumption that they, as professionals, will act in the best interests of all parties.

The programs discussed above are for accreditation for individuals. Accreditation and certification programs also exist for academic programs in public relations. The Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) established the program for Certification in Education in Public Relations in 1989. Through this program, colleges and universities may request independent review and endorsement of their public relations education programs to validate that they meet the high set of standards set by the PRSSA. Achievement of the Certification in Education in Public Relations gives increased credibility and visibility to academic programs in public relations. Similarly, some public relations academic programs are housed within journalism or mass communication programs that are accredited

through the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, or ACEJMC. Information on these programs is available on the PRSSA and ACEJMC home pages.

In support of the APR credential program for individuals, many local chapters of the PRSA organize study groups. Local PRSA chapters have accreditation chairs and cochairs who help interested professionals navigate the process. With accredited panel members serving as advocates of the candidate, the accreditation chairs arrange readiness review panels when candidates are ready to proceed, helping to assure that they are ready for the comprehensive examination administered at test centers throughout the United States. Candidates who participated in this process mention multiple benefits, such as increased understanding of the skills used in their career, increased credibility with their employing organization, and job opportunities resulting from the recognition.

Accreditation is often described as an alternative to licensing in public relations. Proponent Edward L. Bernays long argued for licensing as a means for protecting professionals. He believed that licensing assured that they had the knowledge, talent, and ethics required of professional practice. However, industry leaders generally agree that even after decades of debate on the issue, requiring a license to practice public relations seems unlikely; therefore, public relations practitioners may instead earn Accreditation in Public Relations.

Bonnie Parnell Riechert

See also ACEJMC; APR; Bernays, Edward L., International Association of Business Communicators; Public Relations Association of America; Public Relations Student Society of America

Further Readings

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc>
 Canada Public Relations Society: <http://www.cprs.ca>
 International Association of Business Communicators: <http://www.iabc.com/abc>
 Public Relations Society of America: <http://www.prsa.org>
 Public Relations Student Society of America: <http://www.prssa.org/about/certification>
 Universal Accreditation Board: <http://www.praccreditation.org>

ACTIVISM

Activism is the process by which special interest groups of people exert pressure on corporations or other institutions to change policies, practices, or conditions that the activists find problematic. Activism has generally been seen as one of the catalysts for the growth of the public relations profession, because some of the most significant periods of development in the field featured high levels of activism. More recently, both to make their case and to sustain their organizations, activist organizations view public relations as necessary. Activists generally practice public relations “from the bottom up,” using the strategies and tactics of the field to achieve goals that are not that dissimilar from those of other, more institutionalized organizations. This entry discusses the development of both public relations and activist movements, activists’ use of public relations strategies and tactics, and corporate responses to activism.

Activism and the Development of Public Relations

Activism has been one of the catalysts for the development of public relations throughout the field’s history. Timothy Coombs and Sherry Holladay (2012) suggested that activist organizations were using public relations techniques before the inception of what might be considered corporate public relations.

In the late 19th century, progressive and populist groups in the United States sought to limit the power and scope of monopolistic organizations. The press, partially prompted by activists, sought to reveal problematic conditions caused by corporate practices. Groups seeking reforms pressured organizations through either direct confrontation or increased government regulation. In response, corporations hired the first public relations counselors to tell the organization’s story. For example, Ivy Lee was hired by the Rockefeller family to help craft responses to labor activism.

During the 1950s and 1960s, American corporations were again forced to respond to a wave of activism. A number of significant activist movements reached their peak of influence and public

attention, including women’s rights, civil rights, consumer safety, environmentalism, and the anti-Vietnam War protests. Corporations turned to public relations professionals to anticipate problematic situations and to engage in public debate with activists. Scholars and practitioners alike began to examine the development of activist organizations and the tactics they employed. Activists, as well, began to notice the need for a more sophisticated approach to communicating both with supporters and opponents. For example, Saul Alinsky’s 1971 book, *Rules for Radicals*, offered practical communication suggestions for activists.

In the first part of the 21st century, activism took several forms. Many of the reforms sought by 1960s activists were enacted into law or regulation, spawning government agencies, such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency. However, activists continue to raise issues and monitor the performance of these government agencies. Activism is embraced by a variety of publics with a sometimes dizzying range of agendas. In the United States, the most notable among these are the Tea Party and Occupy movements. Today, there is such a broad range of empowered activist groups that virtually no corporate decision can be made without taking into account the likely reaction of at least one special interest group.

As with most other communication functions, mobile digital technology and social media have revolutionized activism. Activists use Twitter and text messages to organize collective action. This trend has necessitated an increasingly sophisticated response on the part of organizations engaged by activists. According to excellence theory (Grunig, 1992), activism is so closely linked to important developments in public relations that it is now seen as one of the preconditions for the presence of public relations programs.

Development of Activist Movements

Activism generally arises when members of a public perceive some problematic situation, which often entails challenges to an organization’s legitimacy—thus producing a legitimacy gap. Sociological explanations of activism identify major social divisions, such as race, gender, or economic differences, as the preconditions for activism. This view

also privileges ideological motivations for activists. From a public relations perspective, however, it is more accurate to say that activists are driven by issues.

When an organization appears to be responsible for something that harms the public, activists normally respond with a call for some corrective action. For example, the NIMBY (“not in my back yard”) phenomenon often pits otherwise docile community members against organizations that they see as creating problems in their communities.

Activist movements tend to evolve through various stages of development. At each stage, the organization faces various communication and organizational challenges. One fertile area of research is the identification of the various stages in the “life cycle” of activism. For example, Robert Heath (Heath & Palenchar, 2009) identified five stages: strain, mobilization, confrontation, negotiation, and resolution. These stages are not dissimilar to the various life cycle models discussed in issue management.

Activists’ Use of Public Relations

Activists use public relations strategies and tactics to pursue two general goals. The first is to influence public opinion and behavior to rectify the situation they see as problematic. The second is to create and maintain organized, structured, and coordinated efforts. These goals are not that different from those of other organizations, which use public relations both to pursue their strategic goals and to maintain the organization.

The area that has received the most attention from practitioners and scholars is examination of the strategies that activist groups use to pursue their goals. The iconic images of activists tend to involve mass protests or violent demonstrations. However, activists use a variety of strategies and tactics to pursue their goals. Some tactics are confrontational, including boycotts, demonstrations, and symbolic events, which are often designed to dramatize an issue or galvanize public attention.

Other strategies are more informational, designed to raise awareness and increase understanding of an activist group’s issues and proposals for resolving those issues. These tactics typically involve media relations, including news conferences and interviews. Groups with sufficient

resources can run issue advertisements. Websites allow activists not only to provide a great amount of information about their issues but also to direct members and others on how to take action to promote policy solutions.

The final set of strategies employed by activists involves building relationships with the institutions or organizations that the activists hold responsible for a problematic situation with the goal of negotiating an outcome satisfactory to all parties. As is true of a corporation’s use of symmetrical approaches to public relations, this approach is not as widely practiced as the ones described previously. As with other strategic public relations practices, the strategy that activists select depends on how those who run the organization value the role of public relations. Often, the choice of strategies is reactive and prompted by the response of the target of the activists’ efforts.

Activist groups use public relations strategies and tactics not only to promote their causes but also to maintain their own base. An activist group must recruit members, gather resources, and establish the organization as a legitimate advocate for an issue. In addition to gaining public attention for their issues, activists also create communication networks designed to alert members to coordinated action, from organizing rallies and training sessions to urging people to contact elected officials regarding legislation.

Over the course of long campaigns, specifically during the confrontation and negotiation stages, activist groups must maintain member motivation. They also have to compete for members and resources with other activist groups pursuing similar issues. As issues are seemingly resolved and thus fall lower on the public agenda, activists often see membership and financial resources decline. Sometimes activist groups cease to exist altogether.

Activists use a variety of internal tactics, including newsletters and websites to maintain contact with followers, sustain interest in issues, or redefine the group’s issues to those that are higher on the public agenda.

Corporate Responses to Activism

Despite the importance of activism to the development of the field, public relations practitioners or

scholars do not universally value or respect activists. The strategies used by organizations in response to activism run the gamut from attacks and resistance to the formation of cooperative relationships. Christine Oliver (1991) outlined five strategic responses that organizations typically adopt toward activists: (1) acquiescence, which involves giving in to the activists' demands; (2) compromise, which occurs when the organization negotiates with activists to resolve problematic situations; (3) avoidance, which is through concealing problems or otherwise erecting barriers between the organization and outside pressure; (4) defiance, which involves actively engaging opponents in debate, challenging new regulations or proposals for change, or attacking the organization's opponents; and (5) manipulation, typically through co-optation, which involves making cosmetic changes to an organization's practices without changing their substance.

The shape of an organization's response to activism depends on the assumptions of each company's managers toward both public relations and the activists or their organization. Many organizations resist being "managed from the outside" and thus resist pressure from activists.

Michael F. Smith

See also Advocacy; Co-Optation; Lee, Ivy; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Issues Management

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ACTUALITY

An actuality is an audiotape recording of a human news source that is intended to be played as an integral part of a news story prepared for broadcast in an electronic medium and provided through media relations. The term is often used interchangeably with *bite* (or *sound bite*), although purists among media workers consider the two terms distinct both in their definitions and proper use. Specifically, the second edition of the *Broadcast News Writing Stylebook* (Papper, 2002, p. 93) notes that *actuality* is a radio term whereas *bite* is a television term. Of course, the latter would include video.

Nevertheless, those in radio today commonly use the term *sound bite*, so any subtle distinction may be lost on many electronic media news people. Common usage in television coverage of politics also seems to have popularized the term *sound bite* among the lay public, whereas *actuality* seems to be a term that is used and understood almost exclusively among media workers.

Both *actuality* and *bite* (*sound bite*) describe the actual sound of someone talking as a part of a news narrative; for example, the recorded speech of a source from the public relations practitioner's organization who is a newsmaker or who is being used as a secondary source for a news story. An actuality is analogous, indeed, equivalent to the use of a direct quote in print media and thus adds credibility and interest; furthermore, a colorfully expressed actuality often provides a unique—and highly effective—means to emphatically express a fact or point of view. It serves to provide the content of interviews conducted strategically as a communication tool.

An actuality can be part of a story narrative prepared by an electronic media journalist to be aired on a newscast, but this type of recording is often included in a media release prepared by a public relations practitioner specifically for submission to electronic media as an information subsidy for broadcast news programs.

Actualities or bites are to be differentiated, nevertheless, from natural sound, background sound, ambient sound, and other types of sound that may be used as background under the voice track of a reporter or news source. Such background sounds can give the listening/viewing audience a sense of being at the news site, but do not include recognizable, or at least primarily important, speech.

Regardless of the end use of the actuality, there are a number of situations where a public relations practitioner must use caution when preparing and coaching their organization's people to act as a source for actualities: whether it is being produced as an insert into a news release to electronic media, whether the source is a speaker at a news conference being hosted by the practitioner's organization, or whether the source is simply participating in an unexpected interview sought by an electronic media news reporter because the representative is a credible or important source involving the practitioner's organization.

When a public relations practitioner produces an actuality, the utmost care must be taken to exercise technical excellence in recording the spoken words. Poor technical quality may prevent an actuality that accompanies a news release from being used by electronic media or, at best, will detract from the message that the source is trying to convey.

Dean Kruckeberg and Marina Vujnovic

See also Interview as a Communication Tool; Media Relations; Sound Bite

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to announce upcoming meetings, performances, speeches, sports events, news conferences, fundraisers, hearings, rallies, conferences, and other activities. The goal is to tell people about the issue or event in an interesting way to provoke their interest and participation. A good practitioner avoids hyperbole, which puts people off—particularly the editors who decide whether or not to publish the advance.

A good advance begins with the issue or event's main topic (what the speaker plans to say or the main agenda item), the main purpose (to raise funds for a charity, for example), or a key personality (such as the star of a musical performance). This is followed by the time, day (date), and place (with room number) of the event. An advance also reports the exact name of the group holding or sponsoring an event, background information about the speaker or primary issue, other important items on the agenda for a meeting, and mention of other key personalities.

An advance for a print publication or website typically is no more than two or three paragraphs in length. This allows an editor to slip it in almost anywhere in a newspaper, newsletter, magazine, or webpage. An advance for broadcast typically is approximately 25 words and is written as a public service announcement. The advance can also fill space during a broadcast. An advance writer must always remember that a release that doesn't get published or aired is worthless.

Before 1995 or so, advance stories were mailed or faxed to newspapers and broadcast outlets; the distribution process today is more sophisticated. Advances may still be mailed or faxed to local news media, but some editors prefer to receive advances electronically. A writer creates the advance in a word processing program, pastes it into an electronic mail message, and sends the story. A recipient can then copy the advance into his or her own word-processing program, and no retyping is required.

An advance writer also can bypass the middleperson by posting all advances in prominent positions on the organization's website with links to a speaker's biographical information, background material to be discussed at a meeting, and other relevant information. It's a good idea to send advance stories to interested parties on listservs (electronic mailing lists). News media writers may

ADVANCE

An advance is a story that public relations professionals and others send to the news media

be on the listserv, but the list will include names of people who are simply interested in the organization's activities. Advance writers should make sure their lists are accurate and current, for this is a good way to get the advance to the people most likely to attend the event. This tool can be used in other contexts to alert the public to events, such as announced groundbreaking ceremonies.

Michael Ryan

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ADVERTISING

Advertising, as a tool used in public relations, involves the purchase of paid space or time in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, out-of-home media, the Internet, or mobile applications to communicate messages to target audiences. More broadly, advertising encompasses an array of ancillary tools to promote interest in products, services, organizations, candidates, or causes. These include *direct response* (e.g., direct email) and *sales promotion* (e.g., point-of-sale materials, collateral, sweepstakes and contests, advertising specialties, and special events). Advertising can be contrasted with *publicity*, that is, unpaid coverage in the news or entertainment portion of media.

Public relations practitioners use advertising when they want control over a message, including when and where it will appear. In contrast to publicity and other public relations techniques, audiences often are skeptical about advertising because they attribute its purpose to persuading rather than informing. As a result, people often avoid, resist, or discount advertising messages. This entry discusses types of public relations advertising as well as advertising messages, formats, and media planning.

Types of Public Relations Advertising

Public relations advertising takes several forms.

Institutional advertising promotes an organization (versus a product or service) and typically is

used to announce a new corporate identity, to attract investors, to enhance an organization's reputation, or to reach out to local communities by promoting the sponsor as a good citizen engaged in social concerns, such as the environment.

Financial advertising is used by for-profit corporations to announce new financial developments. Securities underwriters routinely publish simple *tombstone ads* when new securities are offered for a client. These ads are published as a matter of public record and a form of reputation enhancement, not as an offer to sell or a solicitation to purchase securities (which requires receipt of a prospectus). Many firms try to attract and reinforce investor interest and to broaden their shareholder base through ads that tout their financial performance. Other financial ads are used in contested tender offers, where proponents or opponents of an acquisition urge shareholders to either sell or not sell their shares to the acquirer. Minority shareholders and activists also use advertising to sway shareholder votes in proxy fights or other actionable agenda items at corporate annual meetings.

Issues advertising enables an organization to speak on an important social problem, situation, or issue in which it has a stake. Advocacy advertising is being used with increased frequency as part of issues management programs to sway public opinion on social issues. In recent years, for example, there's been a sharp increase in commercials airing in Washington, D.C., devoted to pending legislation. These commercial spots target members of Congress and their staffs as well as government officials, lobbyists, and other political advocates. Issue ads also can be run as part of government relations programs: to influence voters in local ballot measures, referenda, and initiatives; and to reach congressmen, state legislators, and local officials when votes are pending on important legislation.

Political advertising is used to lend support to political candidates that a sponsoring organization supports (or to undermine or attack a candidate they oppose). Such independent expenditures are permissible on an unchecked basis following the U.S. Supreme Court's 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (558 U.S. 310).

Crisis advertising involves the use of print ads or broadcast commercials to inform people about how an organization is responding to an adverse situation—such as a natural disaster, strike, or other event that disrupts service or relationships.

Events advertising is intended to promote public attendance or participation in special activities that organizations want to promote. Not-for-profit organizations (sometimes funded by their for-profit partners) use paid ads to create participation in and public support for upcoming fundraising activities.

Not-for-profit organizations use *public service advertising* to promote social causes and ideals (also referred to as *social marketing*). Public service announcements (PSAs) take the form of print ads or broadcast commercials in the noneditorial portions of public media as well as messages that appear in out-of-home media (billboards, transit ads, etc.). Media organizations donate the space or time as a public service—to endear themselves to audiences and to demonstrate social responsibility to their regulators.

Public relations advertising differs from traditional product or service advertising by its focus on promoting an organization's image or advocating a position on a particular topic. However, fully separating product/service promotions from organizational goals is often difficult. Many product advertising campaigns, for example, seek to enhance the organization's reputation while also selling products. Similarly, some public relations firms provide product advertising and related promotional services as part of an integrated marketing communications program.

Advertising Messages

Effective advertising messages focus on a single topic and include a clear call for action. When developing ads, sponsors confront several basic creative decisions. The most important of these is to develop a "big idea" or creative concept around which the message is constructed. Sponsors must choose how direct they wish to be. A *direct* message strategy uses hard-hitting language and images that leave little doubt about an ad's purpose; *indirect* strategies are more subtle so that the intent is less obvious.

Another major creative decision involves whether to use *rational* or *emotional* appeals. An appeal using rational advertising relies on logic and argument strength and uses facts, figures, and illustrations. Rational ads can be particularly effective with audiences that possess the ability and motivation to process complex arguments. Emotional advertising appeals to the heart (versus the head) and tugs at people's affective responses by

relying on illustrations, anecdotes, and related devices. Emotional appeals often draw the interest of people with little previous involvement in a topic.

Ads also can be structured as lectures or dramas. In a *lecture*, a speaker addresses the audience using a first-, second-, or third-person narrative. In a *drama* format, the audience eavesdrops on a scenario involving others and participates vicariously. Dramas provide lessons that are to be inferred by the audience and reinforced explicitly in the ad's closing.

Advertising Formats

Print advertising follows generally accepted conventions but can vary considerably in terms of design (layout, typography, color scheme, etc.). Print ads use a large headline or strong graphic device to attract attention. Headlines telegraph the key message to audiences and are sometimes followed by *overlines* (secondary headlines that appear above the main text). The ad's body copy then presents explanatory or supporting arguments. Most ads end with a strong call to action and a signature element identifying the message's sponsor. Advertising slogans and organizational logotypes serve as continuity devices between messages. Legally required (known as mandatory) disclosures and other pieces of information generally are included in fine print at the bottom of the ad.

Print ads are most useful when a complex or detailed argument needs to be presented or when a response is desired through the use of coupons or forms. Newspapers and magazines usually sell ads in standard-sized formats. Most public relations advertising in newspapers strive for page dominance by using standard advertising units (SAUs) that are at least one-quarter of a page in size, preferably larger. In magazines, half- and full-page ads are the most frequently used formats. Other formats include *double-truck* ads (a two-page spread), multiple-page series, and inserts. Smaller formats can be used in both newspapers and magazines but often fail to generate sufficient attention. Generally, smaller ads are also less efficient because they cost more on a per-inch basis.

Broadcast advertising includes radio and television commercials. Broadcast messages must be especially cogent, draw people into the message quickly, restate key points several times, involve the audience,

and describe the actions to be taken. Broadcast advertising uses a variety of devices to attract attention—sound, music, a familiar voice, or (in television) strong visuals. All of these elements play a critical role and must be used imaginatively and integratively to create a persuasive message that can be told in 10, 15, 30, or 60 seconds—the typical lengths of broadcast commercials. On radio, critical points must be repeated orally; on television, text can be added to emphasize key points (such as a toll-free telephone number to call). Text can be superimposed over video and frequently takes the form of a billboard or a closing title (signature) of a TV commercial.

Web and mobile advertising is becoming increasingly popular. Various types of ads can be purchased on sites operated by third parties (search engine sites, media sites, and many special topic sites that arrange to receive commissions from advertising networks, such as Google, Yahoo!, and MSN). Ads that are all text are primarily intended to drive traffic to websites through prominently featured hyperlinks. Display ads, in the form of horizontal banners, sidebars, *interstitials* (these are inserts between webpages by either the ad network or the website itself, as a user moves from page to page), videos, and various specialty formats often aim to generate favorable brand impressions through incidental exposure, whether or not the user actually clicks through a website where additional details are provided. Click-through rates on websites generally are low (1%–3% of website visit) but can be effective and efficient for some advertisers.

Advertising Media Planning

Much public relations advertising involves purchasing time and space on a one-time or very limited basis. In such cases, the appropriate media outlets—such as a particular local newspaper or a handful of trade/financial publications—are quickly identifiable. However, when advertising is used to sway public opinion over time or in more than a single media market, advertisers need to follow basic media planning principles (the same ones used by product advertisers) to maximize their impact and avoid wasting advertising dollars.

The focal concept in media planning is the *impression*—the opportunity for one person to be

exposed to one of a sponsor's messages. Cumulative exposures are calculated as *gross impressions* by adding together the total impressions created in any particular media buy. The number of exposures created can be expressed in actual numbers of impressions or, more commonly, as ratings. A *rating point* represents 1% of the total potential audience for a message. A particular vehicle's *rating* is the percentage of total audience reached by that newspaper, magazine, radio, or TV show.

Gross rating points (GPRs) are the total percentages reached over a particular time frame when two or more messages appear in combination, whether in the same or in different advertising vehicles or media. The calculation of gross rating points provides a metric for ascertaining the cumulative total number of unduplicated impressions in an advertising effort. Generally, advertisers strive to generate the highest number of possible GRPs that a budget will allow (while avoiding overspending).

Generally, advertisers seek to maximize a campaign's *reach*, the number of distinct individuals exposed to a message at least once (eliminating duplication). Advertisers want to optimize *frequency* or create multiple opportunities for an audience to be exposed to a message. More than one exposure to a message is usually necessary for people to pay attention and to understand the ad's message, but excessive exposure can waste dollars because no additional persuasion effect occurs. Excessive exposure can also annoy audiences so that they disregard or respond negatively to a message. Thus, frequency involves balancing the need for *wear-in* (recall, comprehension) of a message while avoiding wear-out.

Advertisers generally want to gain maximum *effectiveness* by spending the fewest total dollars possible in a campaign. In choosing media, advertisers strive for optimal *efficiency* by selecting media that deliver the largest audience (on either a duplicated or nonduplicated basis) for the same dollars. An important consideration is timing. Some campaigns rely on *continuous* exposure, for example repeating the message in steady increments over a period of days, weeks, or months. However, in many instances by staggering exposure, advertisers can create or maintain *share-of-mind* awareness among audiences. Total expenditures can be stretched by alternating between periods of high

and low levels of exposure (*pulsing*) or between periods of nonexposure and exposure during key time blocks (*flighting*). Because of the high costs of advertising, many public relations advertisements are purposely timed to appear in a specific time period, such as the days before an event, election, holiday, or critical legislative vote. With a few exceptions, such as evergreen public service campaigns, most public relations advertising uses flighting schedules to optimize exposure and minimize costs. The absence of ads during periods of low or no exposure is offset in part by advertising's *carry-over effect*, the period during which people remember a sponsor's name or message.

Cost per thousand (CPM) is the shorthand index used to compare the cost efficiency of two or more media. CPM is computed by dividing the total expenditure for an ad in a particular vehicle by the number of people in the audience and multiplying the result by 1,000. This results in a dollars-and-cents figure that is easy to use and compare. When two media are considered, a \$3.50 CPM compares favorably with a \$4.25 CPM, suggesting that the first medium is more efficient, if it can be assumed that the quality of the audiences reached is the same. CPM rates of \$5 to \$10 are common in consumer media, but the cost per thousand can escalate in business-to-business and other situations where the audiences are small and the rates charged by media for advertising are comparatively high.

Kirk Hallahan

See also *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010); Gross Impressions; Integrated Marketing Communication; Online Public Relations; Public Service Announcements; Publicity; Third-Party Endorsement

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ADVERTISING EQUIVALENCY

Advertising equivalency involves calculating the value of public relations generated media coverage by determining what the air time/print space would have cost if the organization had had to pay advertising rates for it. For example, if a print medium charges \$200 per column inch for an advertisement, a five-column-inch story generated through public relations efforts would have an advertising equivalency of \$1,000. For broadcast media, if a 30-second spot costs \$10,000, then a 15-second news mention would be worth \$5,000.

Although many organizations use advertising equivalency in an attempt to assign a value to public relations efforts, this practice is fraught with problems. For example, historically most newspapers didn't sell ad space on the front page of a business section, the section where strong public relations efforts often appeared. Therefore, for equivalency purposes comparing such a placement to an advertisement was thus an apples-to-oranges situation. There was no true basis for calculating the cost of the space. However, the rise of digital media and the increasing financial pressures on print media mean that ads now appear where they never did before. When someone reads a newspaper online, and many people do, pop-up ads are ubiquitous. Thus, the long-standing flaw in advertising equivalency isn't as clear as it used to be.

A second issue is the public's difference in credibility when comparing an advertisement and an objective third-party story. The majority of the

public today has enough media savvy to understand that ads are controlled in both content and placement by the organizations that paid for them; this naturally engenders a legitimate skepticism about the veracity and motivation behind paid ads. A news or feature story, however, has the credibility boost of being produced by an independent, third party. Although there have been notable media honesty scandals, for the most part people still seem to trust mainstream media sources. Generating a placement in such a source has inherently more credibility than a paid advertising placement. A multiplier is sometimes applied to the advertising rate to compensate for this difference. However, the question then becomes, what is the appropriate multiplier? How much more credible is a story written by a business reporter and placed on the front business page than an ad found on the third page of this same section produced by a company? Given these factors, an attempt to demonstrate the value of public relations efforts through the use of advertising equivalencies can produce more skepticism than it alleviates with an analytical manager or client.

Clearly, the need exists for an adequate and appropriate manner and format to value public relations efforts. Although still used, advertising equivalency has flaws. The inherent differences between advertisements and independent coverage make advertising equivalencies too imprecise to reflect the value and credibility of public relations efforts. If asked to provide such a figure, a practitioner should explain to the client or manager the limits of this method.

Maribeth S. Metzler

See also Advertising; Content Analysis; Media Relations; Publicity

ADVOCACY

Advocacy, the polar opposite of accommodation, plays a central role in public relations. An advocate works in support of a cause; therefore, public relations practitioners are advocates for

their organization or client. But, advocacy in public relations is controversial.

Extensive scholarship in public relations and mass communication argues that advocacy is persuasion and persuasion is asymmetrical communication and inherently unethical. Another school of thought suggests that advocacy is the essence of public relations and that persuasion does not have to be unethical. The trend in public relations favors the notion that, as Kathy Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Bronstein (2006) termed it, “responsible advocacy” is at the heart of public relations practice.

Engaging the essence of this theme, Ruth Edgett (2002) reported that advocacy is a key aspect of public relations, but public relations practitioners are often uncomfortable with this advocate role because the journalism and mass communication tradition in the literature and education of public relations touts the “moral superiority” of objectivity over advocacy/persuasion. This notion is based on the fact that most public relations educational programs are situated in journalism and communication schools, and, in that arena the objectivity of journalism—telling all sides of a story—is lionized. Advocacy, by its nature, is not objective. But that does not diminish its value. Edgett argued that rhetoric, “the art of persuasive communication,” is essential to debate in a free society and has been considered so for millennia. Edgett noted that the “giants” of public relations, including Edward Bernays, all stated unequivocally that their role as public relations professionals was to influence behavior as advocates for their organizations or clients.

The elusive definition of public relations contributes to the debate about advocacy. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) defines public relations as “a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” While this definition notes the importance of mutual benefit, the organization also cites the importance of advocacy. In its statement of professional values, PRSA notes one of the roles of public relations professionals: “We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent. We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate.” In fact, the society itself serves to advocate for the public relations profession.

The key to ethical advocacy is that its goal should be to inform public debate in a truthful manner.

Advocacy is not necessarily monologic, although as noted above that is a criticism put forth by some. In fact, advocacy is likely most effective in a *dialogic* environment. Applying the logic long discussed in rhetorical theory, Robert L. Heath (2007) in writing "Management Through Advocacy," noted that "dialogue transpires in ways in which both parties can learn from one another and consider the strengths of each other's arguments as well as the weaknesses of their own" (p. 60). In short, advocacy is improved in a dialogic environment.

Practitioners seem to support the notion of advocacy as central to their role. Bruce K. Berger and Bryan H. Reber asked more than 700 public relations practitioners what it meant to "do the right thing" in public relations, particularly when an organization was moving in a questionable direction. Most of the practitioners said they would use professional advocacy to mitigate the situation. Their qualitative research identified seven categories of advocacy: loyalty advocacy, self-protective advocacy, rational advocacy, stakeholder advocacy, ethical advocacy, activist advocacy, and exit advocacy. The range of advocacy behavior they identified ran from advocating once for a position and subsequently following the decision of management regardless of its appropriateness, to leaving an organization when advocacy fails to change the direction of the organization. The authors concluded that according to their 700-plus practitioner respondents, "advocacy is the 'right thing.'"

When practiced ethically and effectively, advocacy serves multiple purposes: benefits the practitioner and helps him or her build a reputation for success, benefits the organization as the advocate is able to move its agenda forward, and benefits the public or stakeholder group as it becomes more informed about a product, service, or idea and is able to weigh the pros and cons of the advocate's argument.

Bryan H. Reber

See also Accommodation: Contingency Theory; Bernays, Edward; Dialogue; Rhetorical Theory

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AFRICA, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

The future of public relations and strategic communication in Africa is daunting; however, slow and steady progress by leading nations is showing promise and shining a guiding light for other countries on the continent. Africa is a continent with many disparities, but because communication professionals are innovative and capable of drawing on global influence, the prospect for public relations leadership in Africa is promising.

Africa as Context

Africa, inhabited by 1 billion people, is the world's second largest and second most populous continent after Asia; it comprises a diverse and complex patchwork of 54 countries. These countries range from the large, prosperous, and cosmopolitan to the impoverished and troubled (Mersham & Skinner, 2009, p. 265). It is by far the world's poorest inhabited continent with an estimated 2.3% of the world gross domestic product (GDP). As the following GDP 2010 figures (billion USD) reveal, by this measure, contrasts within the continent are extreme:

South Africa	\$357.2 billion
Egypt	\$218.4 billion
Nigeria	\$216.8 billion
Algeria	\$143.5 billion
Angola	\$85.3 billion
Ghana	\$32.1 billion
Kenya	\$31.1 billion
Tanzania	\$22.6 billion
Zambia	\$16.1 billion
Botswana	\$14.0 billion
Congo	\$11.5 billion
Zimbabwe	\$7.4 billion

Source: World Bank International Monetary Fund Historical Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), April 2011.

Note: Representative sample of 54 countries.

The contrasts between the highest and the lowest performing economies are striking. For example, South Africa has the highest GDP in Africa, with \$357.2 billion, whereas its neighbor Zimbabwe, with \$7.4 billion, is one of the poorest and most divided countries on the continent. Egypt, with \$218.4 billion, has the second largest economy in the Arab world, behind Saudi Arabia, according to the World Bank. However, it is important to note here that Egypt's GDP could be affected by political and economic uncertainty following the "Arab Spring movement," which began in December 2010, and has continued to 2013 with the drafting of a new constitution. Other similar political developments in Tunisia, with \$22.8 billion, and Libya, with \$160.2 billion, could also possibly affect their development and future growth.

Nigeria, with \$216.8 billion, has the largest market (population-wise as well as GDP) in Africa and is one of the fastest growing economies in the world (over 7% a year). Factors resulting from the Arab Spring could well catapult it into the number-two position in Africa. Nigeria plans to be the leading economy in Africa by 2020. Contrast this with its neighboring countries, Côte d'Ivoire, \$22.8 billion, and Niger, \$5.5 billion, whose economies are struggling as a result of recent civil wars. Given this diversity, imagine the variables in public

relations practices and communications that both challenge as well as serve as the foundation for the future in key areas of Africa.

Communication Infrastructure

To operate, communication managers need access to an efficient, diverse, and modern communication infrastructure. Specifically, in the context of new media, huge variations are found throughout the continent. The number of cellular telephone subscribers per 100 inhabitants and the level of Internet access are illustrative of this:

Fixed telephone lines	12 million	1.4 per 100 inhabitants
Fixed (wired) broadband subscriptions	1 million	0.2 per 100 inhabitants
Mobile cellular subscriptions	433 million	53 per 100 inhabitants
Active mobile broadband subscriptions	31 million	3.8 per 100 inhabitants
Internet users	105 million	12.8 per 100 inhabitants
Households with Internet access	n/a	5.7 per 100 inhabitants (estimated)

Source: International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Currently, although not universally so, there remain daunting challenges to public relations practitioners when dealing with Africa: The scarcity of information and communication technology infrastructure, the high cost of international bandwidth, the dearth of relevant local content combined with the lack of cooperation among development partners, and the political instability in many parts of the continent.

Media in Africa

Media channels exist that serve some countries in the African landmass, such as the BBC World Service, Voice of America, Channel Africa satellite television originating from the South African

Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as well as Multi-Choice Africa (MCA). The Nigerian Television Authority International is visible in its international broadcasting through its various cable platforms. However, as practical paths for public relations and corporate communication managers, these channels have limited value: first, in trying to be broadly “African,” they lose much of the localism and relevance on which editorial communications depend; and second, they are essentially limited to particular publics: English-speaking, relatively literate and affluent audiences (Mersham & Skinner, 2009).

In addition, French is widely spoken in many parts of Africa (West and Central) as is Arabic in North Africa. Such diversity suggests that the successful application of multilingual, multicultural media policies is required to meet the requirements of the diverse audiences throughout the continent. So, the need to plan and manage communications at a local level or country by country is essential.

To illustrate this diversity, Kenya currently enjoys 37 TV stations, 161 FM radio stations, 16 newspapers, and 71 consumer magazines, together with a number of trade technical and professional journals and directories. However, Tanzania leads the rest of East Africa with more than 55 newspapers, 63 TV stations, 184 FM stations, and 73 magazines. Social media and mobile marketing are having a huge impact on the way individuals are communicating (Skinner et al., 2012).

In North Africa, Egypt has a mix of state-run and private broadcast media. State-run TV operates two national and six regional terrestrial networks as well as a few satellite channels. About 20 private satellite channels and a large number of Arabic satellite channels are available via subscription. State-run radio operates about 70 stations belonging to 8 networks. Only two privately owned radio stations are operational. In 2010, the country had 200,000 Internet hosts and more than 20 million Internet users.

In West Africa, Ghana has seven TV stations, one state owned and six private. There are over 120 private radio stations, one state-owned, while 12 are community-owned. The Ghana Journalists Association has more than 40 registered newspaper houses; 2 of these are state-owned.

As early as 1959, Nigeria was the first country in Africa to have TV and radio stations. All 36 states operate TV stations and there are now some 70 federal government-controlled national and

regional stations. There are a number of private TV stations in major cities, for example in Lagos and Abuja. There is a similar network of state-operated radio stations typically carrying their own programs, except for news broadcasts. In all, there are more than 120 public and private radio stations operating throughout Nigeria. Similarly, there is also a great diversity of newspapers and magazines, so media plurality is indeed high involving the state, private owners, and communities (Skinner et al., 2012).

The SABC operates four TV stations: Three are free-to-air and one is for-pay TV; eTV, a private station, is accessible to more than half the population. Multiple subscription TV services provide a mix of local and international channels. South Africa enjoys a well-developed blend of public and private radio stations at the national, regional, and local levels. The state-owned SABC radio network operates 18 stations, one for each of the 11 official languages, four community stations, and three commercial stations. There are more than 100 community-based stations that extend coverage to rural areas. As of 2010, South Africa had 4,835,000 Internet hosts and more than 5 million Internet users.

Public Relations Practice

Public relations has been operating successfully for over 50 years in Africa, with more than 12,000 members in the various professional bodies around the continent (Skinner et al., 2012). South Africa is a relatively mature market, with a long tradition of public relations education, professional development for practitioners, and large corporations with international outreach. In 2010, it became the first African nation to host the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, which required an extensive international public relations and marketing plan.

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa, has made rapid strides in developing its public relations industry. The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) attained the status of a Chartered Institute in June 1990 through Decree No. 16, now an Act of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is the only country in Africa to hold this status. In turn, this has allowed the NIPR to regulate the practice of the profession, monitor professional conduct through a Code of Ethics as well as set and monitor academic

and professional qualifications for admission to the Institute and the profession. It currently has over 10,000 members in 36 state chapters and a city chapter in Abuja. In West Africa, the evolution of the Ghana Public Relations Institute reflects the newfound economic prosperity of this country brought about by recent oil discoveries.

In 2011, the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) celebrated 40 years; it has a relatively well-developed public relations industry primarily because of its tourism industry. Like Nigeria, the PRSK is in the process of securing legal accreditation. In other parts of East Africa, the Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU) was established in 1976, the Tanzania PR Institute in 1999, and the PR Association in Rwanda in 2008. Even Gambia, the smallest state in Africa, has a Public Relations Institute. However, in terms of public relations as an occupation, generally most nations in Africa are still somewhat undeveloped.

Linking all of these individual associations in Africa is an umbrella organization called the African Public Relations Association (APRA). It is the successor organization to the Federation of African Public Relations Associations (FAPRA), which was inaugurated in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1975. Thirteen member organizations as well as individual members and corporate clients/corporations now form part of the association. Its secretariat is based in Nigeria. One of the key challenges that the association faces is to strengthen its institutional links with such bodies as the African Union (AU), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and other subregional organizations. Improving this network will give APRA more credibility and access to leading figures in the political and economic arena, while at the same time assuring a presence as part of a wider movement within the continent of promoting a new image of growth and stability under the banner of the "African Renaissance."

Education and Training

Throughout the continent, there are wide educational variations in professional or vocational teaching and training institutions dedicated to public relations and strategic communication. In many cases, mass communication and journalism programs continue to be the flagship offerings (as it

was some thirty years ago in developed countries). In Kenya, there are as many as six universities and several colleges offering degree courses in public relations and strategic communication. Uganda and Tanzania have three each; South Africa has more than 20.

Nigeria now has 65 poly- and monotechnic universities, teaching communications and public relations and offering bachelor, masters and PhD degrees. NIPR conducts its own professional examinations for practitioners as well as offering a Master of Science in Public Relations (MSc) through the University of Nigeria.

The Future of Public Relations in Africa

The increasing growth of political democratic institutions coupled with the adoption of mixed and market economies across Africa have combined to reshape the attitude of government and the public and private sector toward public relations activities. While a few governments see public relations as a propagandist tool, quite a number of public and private sector businesses are considering effective public relations as essential for spreading their message across a terrain occupied by a multiplicity of media.

However, the individual economies of the countries in Africa and their continued viability have been hugely impacted by the world financial crisis of 2008–2009 and the subsequent economic, social, and political meltdowns that continue in key markets that the continent both trades with and receives investments from. The threatened demise of the euro market is particularly worrisome as 40% of the trade from Africa and much of its tourism revenue originates from this region. Fortunately for the continent, Chinese interests and their promised new investment of \$20 billion in the next 5 years has to some extent replaced the declining American and European investments and trade.

The alliance of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) states could bring about new opportunities for public relations in this changing political, social, and cultural landscape. African practitioners, already at the cutting edge of social change, are well placed to take advantage of these new challenges and opportunities.

J. Chris Skinner

See also South Africa, Practice of Public Relations in

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AGE OF DEFERENCE, END OF THE

During the 1960s, the United States experienced the end of the age of deference. The point when deference ended is not clearly marked in the sands of time, but it resulted from a reduced belief in the honesty and ethics (corporate social responsibility) of American business practices. Deference began to wane as people thought that the executive management leading private sector organizations no longer was a legitimate broker of the public interests.

In 1966, Gallup Poll surveys found that 55% of the public had a great deal of confidence in the management capability and ethical standards of American business executives. A decade later, the confidence level had fallen to 16% and continues to hover in that range today (Kelly, 1982). For over four decades, after those post–World War II highs, the polling companies found that company executives and other societal leaders have received very low honesty and ethics ratings from the public.

The Growth of Deference

American business leaders used many of the last decades of the 19th century to create a rationale supporting the concentration of capital as the preferred standard operating financial and business arrangement. During the early years of the 20th century, corporate size equated to productivity in this business arrangement. This premise also added to the tug-of-war that occurred among executives, media reporters, labor leaders, consumer advocates, civil rights advocates, and government leaders to determine whether those trends led to benefits for all or only to the barons of industry. The Great Depression dampened this corporate effort to achieve deference within these disparate groups. Then, during World War II, American industry contributed to democracy, prosperity, and the dream of a new lifestyle. Public relations practitioners helped effectively position companies during these years of the 20th century, resulting in a deference that was earned and granted by the public through statements and deeds.

People in the United States were looking for a morale rebound after the despair of the Great Depression. World War II gave a substantial boost to the collective feeling of well-being and goodwill. Industry had excelled in its ability to innovate, invent, and manufacture materials. A new lifestyle was created by the abundance of goods and materials, research and development achievements, and the country's manufacturing capacity created during the war.

Women and minorities had gone to work in large numbers. The GI Bill trained men and women for new occupations that changed their lives and the national lifestyle. The nation felt that its role in the war had been righteous. Words such as *freedom* and *democracy* became the hallmarks of the age—signaling the challenges needed to be addressed to reconcile business practices and government policy—and the policy preferences of activists. Public policy planning had become joined to strategic business planning.

Challenges to Deference

The civil rights movement was one of many issues that focused on the disparity between claims of a new country dedicated to freedom and democracy and public perceptions or actions to the contrary.

In marked contrast to those values were myriad institutional and cultural barriers against people of color. Thus, the civil rights movement began to scrutinize every aspect of American business and government looking for gaps between promise and delivery. Many gaps were found, and substantial opposition arose to efforts to close these gaps. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed an era when civil rights leaders examined the ability of government and business to deliver on promises.

Without a doubt, the civil rights movement created a foundation for the dozens of activist movements that occurred over the latter half of the century. The antiwar efforts examined the rationale and strategic military choices made in Vietnam. Deference toward the office of the president of the United States hit a low when college students and other antiwar activists chanted, “Hell no, we won’t go” and “Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?”

After having worked successfully to create and then restore confidence in large business practices, many executives and senior public relations practitioners were caught off guard by the growing hostility and doubt that characterized public sentiment in the last half of the 20th century. Faith in the American dream of capitalistic concentration had faded; many people came to believe that the free enterprise system that had produced the most envied lifestyle in the world also resulted in myriad problems.

During the last 3 decades of the 20th century, regulation and legislation were enacted to constrain corporate actions that previously had been acceptable to earlier generations of citizens. Activists from all points of view converged on the federal and state capitols with a list of grievances about corporate behavior. Because of their doubt that Congress and city governments would constrain corporate actions, they became prone to sue government to force it to create and implement regulatory and legislative change.

This outburst signaled that the era of deference had ended. The ringing call for “power to the people” shouted by civil rights activists had become the soul of American politics. Executives were offended by accusations that they were destroying human rights, consumer interests, and the environment.

Businesses and government agencies were caught off guard by this sudden and profound

change. Their initial reactions in the late 1960s and 1970s were to dismiss the critics and denigrate their motives; reactivity was the spirit of the day on the part of corporate and governmental leaders.

Eventually, more proactive measures were innovated and implemented. One of the innovations was the creation of issues management as a strategic response discipline and a corporate program. This move followed a similar initiative that included the creation of the concept and practice of *public affairs*, a term coined by larger companies to reshape the public relations discipline to make it more responsive to government relations. The traditional approach to public relations, these innovators believed, had been slanted toward publicity responses and reputation management rather than the public debate of the merits of various issues of fact, value, and policy. Legislatures became the battlegrounds for dealing with complex issues related to every aspect of society. Topics ranged from civil and human rights to environmental quality and product safety. Governments responded by creating new government agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Regulatory powers and budgets grew rapidly as government was given new charges to protect the public interest.

Corporate responsibility received considerable attention and took on new meaning during this era. First calls asked for responsiveness—businesses must be sensitive and responsive to the interests of their stakeholders. This discussion elevated to the demand for responsibility. A new sense of corporate responsibility carried organizations into thinking in terms beyond merely paying salaries and taxes, providing goods and services, and sponsoring visible philanthropy.

Calls came for organizations to achieve ever higher moral standards, focusing broadly on considerations of fairness, equality, safety, and environmental quality. Executives and their counselors could not simply defend themselves by pointing to the goods and services provided and the incurred costs of change. Defenders of corporate policy learned that some methods of response were clearly outdated, such as responses by electricity generators that the critics could just freeze to death in the dark. Public hearings at all levels of government criticized the fundamental principles and rationale of the private

sector. Such changes in public policy battles justified new approaches to governmental relations.

Two changes occurred that strained or ruptured the relationships between organizations and citizens. One was the failure on the part of business to recognize that the values of American society had changed. Progress was no longer the single rationale for business activities based on executives' preferences. The quality of goods and services was engineered to the point where planned obsolescence prompted a high level of consumer dissatisfaction. The American automobile industry, for instance, was so focused on style and cost reduction that it failed to realize that consumers were more concerned with safety and quality. Imported automobiles set a high standard on both counts. The slogan "Buy American" now rang hollow because that meant going along with American businesses for their sake rather than for the interests of their customers.

The other dramatic change resulted from the creation of new standards of operation and environmental excellence. Slowly, various publics had developed a higher sense of value on all aspects of corporate operation. People were offended by discrimination in hiring and promotion of women and people of color. They came to criticize many business practices as being unfair. They looked at the environment and accused and indicted various industries for health and aesthetics violations. The right of wild animals to a natural habitat came to take precedence over corporate desires and plans to harvest timber in the most cost-effective manner.

Once the demise of the age of deference began, the role of the public relations practitioner changed and smart companies realized that many new functions were needed. An old, and now outdated, sense of public relations and reputation management argued that reporters could say anything they wanted about businesses as long as they spelled the names correctly. This approach to public relations held that favorable publicity could combat unfavorable publicity. Advertising dollars were assumed to mute or soften media criticism. Industry held an elite status with the media. Neither could exist without the other; criticism could only go so far, or it would kill the goose that was laying the golden eggs. This tension has not stopped, but more and more practitioners are now in a counseling position to caution managements that if they like that planning decision, they should be happy to see it

on the front page of the newspaper or at the top of the hour on radio or television news.

Once caveat emptor—buyer beware—was the standard byline for the business community. Industry softened this harsh reality by using their earned deference to say, "Trust us." Thus, people were responsible for the safe use of automobiles, which were built to safety standards preferred by Detroit executives. If consumers hurt themselves or were hurt, they were responsible for their injuries. The bias in understanding and attributing responsibility favored industry. Today, the equation has reversed. People are not responsible for any misuse of a product because they can and do argue that they were not properly warned of the hazards in using the product.

Trust is basic to the business transaction—the relationship between vendor and customer (e.g., product safety) and between vendor and citizen (e.g., trade policies, shifting jobs to a foreign country, or creating sweatshop conditions outside the United States). After having worked hard to build trust and demonstrate that it had earned the public's trust, American industry failed to maintain the level of deference it had earned.

A New Deference for the Future?

This battleground is far from settled, especially through the crafting of new and conflicting zones of meaning. The new corporativism that is operating in business and becoming central to political campaigns is seeking again to lead citizens and consumers to distrust any sense of politics that challenges the prerogatives of business executives. Risk-reward ratios are turning topsy-turvy. Banks that are too large to fail reap rewards from what they do and shift the burden of failure onto customers and taxpayers. New political dynamics argue that individualism, including the personhood of businesses, is now the standard of liberty, especially as interpreted by the Supreme Court in *Citizens United*. Workers are on their own to compete against foreign labor; cheap products are the standard, as are low corporate taxes.

Once freed from the shackles of government restraint, so the advocates claim, business will again burst forward into a new age of deference—to them.

Robert L. Heath

See also Activism; *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010); Corporate Social Responsibility; Executive Management; Government Relations; Hearing; Issues Management; Proactivity and Reactivity; Public Affairs; Public Policy Planning; Publics; Stakes; Zones of Meaning

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AGENDA-SETTING THEORY

During the first 50 years of the 20th century, the focus of social science and the new field of mass media research on the social and psychological effects of new, widespread media technologies and vehicles dominated communication theory and research. In mid-century, however, University of North Carolina researcher Maxwell McCombs and his partner Donald Shaw returned to an earlier theme that focused on the power and effects of media itself. Their three presidential election studies explored the relationship between media presentations of news and the resulting importance that recipients of that news assigned to it. Thus was born the theory of *agenda setting*, which McCombs continued to study for the next four decades. This theory advances the theme that reporters serve as gatekeepers to filter news events and by, their reporting, set an agenda. The agenda results from the kind and amount of attention that are given to news events, especially in the context

of elections, where candidates chase news to keep their views before the voters.

The original agenda-setting proposition was a direct reflection of the 1920s public opinion scholar Walter Lippman's statement that the press formed "pictures in our heads" (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995, p. 266). McCombs and Shaw tested that idea in an exploratory study of the 1968 presidential election coverage in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. What they discovered was a high correlation between what the news media reported as issues and what voters identified as issues. Their findings helped clarify the definition of agenda setting—focusing on the cognitive (awareness) level rather than the affective (feeling) level; in other words, media make voters aware of the issues but do not tell them how to think or feel about the issues. Also identified were suggestions about media's limitations in the process, specifically the impossible task for media outlets of covering all issues. These findings refocused attention on the media as a powerful force in its own right rather than just another variable in the viewers' social and psychological processes.

McCombs and Shaw then used the 1972 presidential election to conduct a more comprehensive study of agenda setting in Charlotte, North Carolina. They expanded the scope of the 1968 study to include voters' information from other people as well as from the media, voters' own personal characteristics, the influence of time on setting agendas, and the role of politics in agenda setting. This study confirmed the general hypothesis from the 1968 study about creating awareness and led them to concentrate on awareness and information as critical stages in opinion formation. It also reconfirmed media limitations in covering all events and issues and clarified how these limitations influenced the complex process of how and why media make decisions to cover or not cover certain issues.

Next came the study of the entire 1976 presidential election year in three communities: Indianapolis, Indiana; Evanston, Illinois; and Lebanon, New Hampshire. This study revealed more contributing factors: (1) newspapers and television influence voters more in the early campaign stages; (2) voters did seem to rank the importance of issues in the same sequence as the media did; and (3) voters with personal characteristics, such as

higher educational levels, more political knowledge, and more interest in political matters were more inclined to use media on a regular basis, making them more likely to be influenced by the media.

These three studies spawned more than 200 studies exploring agenda setting during the next 25 years. Significant studies include the following:

- Doris Graber's 1980 study looked specifically at the strength of the media's influence on voters' judgments; she found that the influence varied depending on environmental circumstances as well as media content.
- Dominic Larsorsa and Wayne Wanta's 1990 study added interpersonal experience to the agenda-setting paradigm of newspaper and television news on issues' importance.
- Scott Hays and Henry Glick's 1997 study extended the agenda-setting idea from its news effects to policy adoption effects and concluded that when environmental conditions in the political entity (the state) and media influences are similar and convincing, "the policy in question is more likely to be adopted" (p. 511).

McCombs then expanded his study to the international arena, studying the 1996 general election in Pamplona, Spain; the 1994 Taipei mayoral election; and the 1993 Japanese general election. He concluded that the idea of what the media presents to voters as issues holds across cultural differences.

McCombs identified two levels of agenda setting: a level that embodies the original concept that media tells voters what to think about, and a second level that adds the idea that media select attributes to cover and exclude others, which creates a way of thinking about what is presented.

From his extensive research, McCombs further refined the roles of agenda setting in terms of how the news media builds consensus. He suggested that the media play four roles in agenda setting and thus must exhibit four traits to build informed communities:

1. The media should be professionally detached, reporting the facts and not determining the pros and cons of issues.
2. One of the functions of news media is to recognize their targeted involvement in putting issues on the agenda.

3. The media are the precursors of issues.
4. The long-term effect of media involvement in issues is the creation of a public agenda.

Criticisms of the agenda-setting focus range from the strength of the media influence to recognition of the effects of interviewing variables on voters' attitudes and behaviors. Everett Rogers and James Dearing identified three distinct agendas: media agendas, public priorities, and policy priorities. They contended that the three agendas interact at various times and to various degrees rather than assuming that the media agenda is always the dominant factor. Denis McQuail claimed that there is insufficient evidence to show a causal connection between different issue agendas, and that this perspective needs more long-term information on party platforms correlated with long-term public opinion panel data.

Sharon Lowery and Melvin DeFleur developed a list of concerns related to the agenda-setting concept, including the influence of different audience categories, the individual characteristics of voters, the role and influence of interpersonal communication on voters' opinions, differences in the importance of issues, and the effects of political candidate advertising in relation to news coverage.

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of the agenda-setting hypothesis is the variety of related theories and perspectives it has spawned. The following studies can all trace their theoretical foundations to agenda setting.

Shanton Iyengar and Donald Kinder's 1987 work described media priming as "an extension of agenda setting (that) addresses the impact of news coverage on the weight assigned to specific issues" (McQuail, 2000, p. 456). They concluded, for example, that priming in news portrayals causes politicians to try to associate themselves with the issues they appear strongest on and disassociate or distance themselves from issues on which they appear weaker to create congruence with the perspectives that the media have presented.

Dearing and Rogers combined agenda setting with other media effects, theories, and concepts, such as bandwagon, spiral of silence, diffusion of news, and media gatekeeping, in an effort to include the social and psychological components of the social scientific approach to understanding the role and impact of media in society.

Nevertheless, framing theory is one of the most visible extensions of agenda-setting theory. Originally proposed by James Tankard, Laura Hendrickson, Jackie Silberman, Kriss Bliss, and Salma Ghanem in 1991, the concept holds that entities can create a media frame to convey a central idea in a chosen context; in other words, they can stage the idea and plan the format in advance. Robert Entman advanced the framing idea to include highlighting certain elements within the frame—in essence, including the most salient ideas to the targeted audience while excluding others.

These adaptations of agenda setting have moved the concept of media influence into the repertoires of other media practitioners, particularly in public relations and advertising, which rely on creating awareness as a condition for motivating behavior.

McCombs is still involved in exploring and refining the future of agenda setting. In a turn-of-the-century review of his work, he outlined two major directions he sees for agenda setting. First, agenda-setting research will continue to move from its journalistic roots to other areas, such as public relations and advertising: “Public issues are not the only objects that can be studied from the agenda-setting perspective” (McCombs, 1997, n.p.). Second, agenda-setting research will continue to study the relationships among factors influencing individuals’ decisions on how to vote and other issues.

In addition to McCombs’s defined directions, a third major direction should be considered: the international study of agenda-setting effects. McCombs’s own Spanish election research and other scholars’ work in different cultural and political settings provide yet another vast arena to explore and think about how media and people interact to decide what’s important.

Barbara J. DeSanto

See also Framing Theory; Political Public Relations

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AGGREGATOR NEWS SEARCH

An aggregator, or reader, is a website or software program that continuously searches multiple websites, including news sites, blogs, and podcasts, for new content. When fresh information is located, it is “aggregated” or summarized into one reader page. The aggregator program illustrates a summary of that material, providing a link to each webpage. This link prevents users from having to constantly visit favorite websites for new information. While there are dozens of aggregators, the most common in 2012 include BuzzFeed, Spokeo, TweetMeMe, Digg, FriendFeed, Google Reader, iGoogle, myYahoo!, Reddit, Stumbleupon, and Yelp. Of the several types of aggregators, the most widely used is a news aggregator that collects news from various news sites. These tools are used extensively by public relations practitioners for environmental scanning and monitoring and to gather information about specific organizations and topics. Examples include Google News, World News Network, Huffington Post, and the Drudge Report. Similarly, search aggregators gather results from multiple search engines based on specified topics selected by users, then filter and organize the information based on user parameters.

Aggregators are also called feed readers, news readers, and RSS readers. Perhaps the most widely known aggregate is RSS, or Really Simple Syndication, which allows users to automatically subscribe to content, such as blogs, news headlines, audio and video, through a single document or “feed.” Web syndication benefits the creator of news in that content is distributed automatically, quickly, and economically. It benefits users because the aggregation is free and requires only one step to

have information automatically delivered from a plethora of sources.

While aggregators are growing in popularity due to time-saving utility, they are not a new technology. The first known aggregator was OpenSearch, which is still used today; it was developed by Amazon.com in 2005 to enable users to easily read search engine results. It follows the format of popular feed services, such as RSS and Atom.

Social network aggregators fetch and deliver content from various social media networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others. Examples of these aggregators include Bottlenose, Doozly, Hootsuite, Sociagg, TweetDeck, Postling, Social-TALK, and Alternion. Public relations practitioners, such as Nicole Van Scoten, a public relations specialist at Pyxl, use social network aggregators for reputation monitoring across social media sites.

With the growing popularity of YouTube and other video sites, literally millions of videos are placed on the Internet daily. Thus, an emerging trend is to use video aggregators that enable users to organize parts or whole segments of videos from Internet video sites. Popular video aggregators include Aggrega, The Daily Feed, Feedbeat, PikSpot, uVouch, VodPod, and WeShow.

Other types of aggregators include email aggregators that combine users' email accounts and can act as social networking platforms. Top email aggregators include Fuser, Goowy, Jubii, Orgoo, TopicR, and Zembe. Data aggregators search databases and compile data to sell to other organizations for marketing purposes. Poll aggregators search for and provide polling data, while review aggregators combine movie, product, or service reviews. Each of these aggregators makes gathering and distributing public relations materials more efficient to target audiences.

Kathy Keltner-Previs

See also Really Simple Syndication

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ALUMNI RELATIONS

Alumni are graduates of a particular school, college, or university. However, former students who did not graduate from a particular school, college, or university are also considered alumni of that institution. An alumna is a female graduate or former female student of a school, college, or university. The plural form of *alumna*, used to refer to more than one female graduate or former student, is *alumnae*. The singular form of *alumni* is *alumnus*. When referring to a male graduate or former male student, use *alumnus* as the singular form and *alumni* for the plural. According to the *American Heritage Book of English Usage*, coeducational institutions usually use *alumni* to refer to both male and female graduates and former students.

Professionals who focus on alumni relations not only build relationships with alumni, but they also nurture and maintain these relationships. Most institutions employ an entire department devoted to alumni relations, and many large institutions have separate organizations that exist to support alumni activities.

Although students who attend or graduate from a school, a college, or a university are automatically considered alumni of that particular institution, they are usually asked to pay dues to join an alumni organization or association. Alumni organizations exist to help sustain a particular institution, and public relations practitioners may be asked to help identify those alumni who are willing and able to give (not just financially) and to facilitate the ways in which alumni are recognized for their efforts. Often, alumni organizations or associations offer various levels of membership, with

increasing increments of membership dues. Many associations offer a lifetime membership to those alumni who are financially able and willing to support the organization at a higher level.

Public relations practitioners who work in the area of alumni relations are faced with the critical task of directing, implementing, and evaluating all communications with alumni. Equally challenging is the fact that alumni tend to be scattered across the globe. Keeping track of alumni who graduated more than 30 or 40 years ago is not easy, and part of the responsibility falls to the alumna or alumnus to provide the alumni organization with updated personal contact information. If alumni organizations offer services and benefits that appeal to alumni, then those alumni should *want* to keep their information current so that they can stay current on news about their former institutions and therefore be contacted about upcoming events, such as reunions and homecomings.

Another way to keep alumni connected who do not live close to the university is to form constituent groups of alumni who are based in other regions of the country or world. This enables alumni who live near one another to meet and hold events and still feel connected to the university and other alumni.

Research is essential to learn what alumni want and how to effectively maintain relationships with them. Surveys are an important and simple tool for alumni organizations and universities to gain an understanding of how their alumni view their respective institutions and how willing they are to support them, whether with time, money, or both.

Managing communications with alumni is an important responsibility of public relations practitioners. Alumni magazines published quarterly or alumni newsletters published monthly are essential to maintaining contact. Offering a section within these communications pieces for class updates and personal information encourages alumni to keep in touch with their former classmates. In the world of electronic communications, alumni websites provide easy ways for alumni to register and keep their contact information current, as well as allowing them to connect to their former institution on a daily basis. The job of the alumni organization is to build the bridge to make this possible.

Alumni recognition also is an important factor in maintaining healthy alumni relationships. Recognizing

all alumni achievements and support, instead of focusing only on those alumni in high positions, goes a long way in showing that the organization cares and takes a vested interest in each individual who attended and represents the institution.

Kelly M. George

See also College and University Public Relations

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ANALYTICS

Analytics refers generically to the systematic analysis of data as well as to the set of tools employed in that analysis. In public relations, analytics have become important tools in the evaluation of online public relations. Analytics are used in *progressive research* (monitoring online activity while a public relations initiative is under way) and *evaluative research* (determining the overall success at the conclusion of a campaign).

The Digital Analytics Association (formerly the Web Analytics Association) defines analytics as the “measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of internet data for purposes of understanding and optimizing [digital] usage.” As reflected by the organization’s name change in 2012, today analytics are applied to a wide range of digital media, including mobile communications and applications.

Analytics are rooted in the ability of these digital systems to track and report user actions in real time. Various firms track digital user usage, including mainstream media research firms, ad networks, and the specialized sites that monitor website, blog, and mobile app activity.

Google democratized analytics in 2005 by providing free information about activity on various websites to site operators and advertisers. Today, similar information is readily available from media sharing and social networking sites used in many public relations programs. Consultants can assist organizations in interpreting the mountain of information available from these various sources as well as data resulting from an organization's own digital activities.

Early analytics focused on website traffic and usage and employed embedded devices, such as logfiles, cookies, and page tagging. Today, information also can be culled whenever a visitor registers on a website, downloads an app, or provides information compiled in a database (such as when requesting information or making a purchase). In many jurisdictions, organizations have both an ethical and legal obligation to disclose how they intend to use the information they collect. This is particularly important if analytics are used to profile a user (techniques known as *predictive modeling* and *behavioral targeting*).

Analytics most commonly take the form of *counts* or *ratios* (computed by dividing one count by another count). Generally, the focus is on measuring a key business or communication success strategy—often called a *key performance indicator* (KPI).

The specific measures that are important vary by the type of content (website, blog, text or microblog messages, wiki, app, etc.) but generally focus on either breadth of exposure or depth of user engagement. Examples include the number of messages opened/viewed, visits/sessions, unique visitors/audience members exposed to message, and duration of time spent with the message. Other metrics trace the type and identity of a referring source. Here special emphasis is placed on the number of click-throughs from one source or message to another as well as click-through ratios.

Content engagement can include measures, such as the number of comments, corrections or updates, replies or favorable ratings, and/or messages saved, printed, or shared. Other measurements are exit page ratios, single-page visits, and bounce rates (visitors who depart with minimal engagement). Conversion ratios represent the percentage of visitors completing a targeted action, such as requesting information or ordering a product. Assuming

sufficient information is available, analytics also can calculate cost per transaction and return on investment (ROI).

Kirk Hallahan

See also App; Campaign; Evaluation; Online Public Relations; Social Media; Web Traffic

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ANNUAL REPORTS

An annual report is one of the main tools used in the investor relations profession. Investor relations professionals focus on educating investors about the true value of the company. As a result, one of the key activities of investor relations is an extensive disclosure on the variety of company involvements in order to enable shareholders to see the big picture of the company's value; these reports feature such topics as corporate structure, products produced, research and development efforts, financial results achieved, new management hires, and merger and acquisition plans.

Disclosure is conducted through individual meetings with investors, roadshows by company

executives to key financial centers, conference calls with investors and analysts, and the especially relevant production of an annual report.

There are two types of annual reports. One type is usually a glossy and upbeat publication that details the company's achievements over the last year. This type of report tends to have many pictures, bright colors, and text in plain English. Publishing of this type of annual report is at the discretion of the company's management; it is not required nor is the content regulated: typically, it starts with a letter to shareholders from the chief executive officer or from the chairperson of the board of directors (corporate speech), and then the content that follows can vary widely from company to company and from year to year.

The second type of annual report, known as Form 10-K, is one that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) requires all publicly traded (and some private) companies to publish. This form must be submitted to the SEC within 60, 75, or 90 days after the end of the fiscal year, depending on the status of the company. After filing, the report is immediately available online through the Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval (EDGAR) system. Companies must also file Form 10-Q, a quarterly report, and Form 8-K, a current report about unexpected important events). Often written in codified legalese, the 10-K annual report is quite difficult to read and understand—it can be as long as hundreds of pages with many footnotes.

The content of 10-K annual reports is strictly regulated: each must consist of four parts and 15 schedules. Part 1 provides a general description of the company's business, including its history, its main markets, its risk factors, and a description of its assets and business processes. Part 2 largely focuses on financial results from the previous year—including financial results, management discussion and analysis of these results, explanation of accounting practices used to display these results, and a detailed explanation of the procedures used to collect the data and ensure its accuracy. Part 3 discusses the company's management team and each manager's compensation and security ownership. Part 4 includes a variety of exhibits and signatures.

The EDGAR system and the 10-K annual report format have been undergoing significant changes. In 2010, in order to make the 10-K more

user-friendly, easier to read and easier to retrieve information the SEC launched a process of changing the report format from text to XBRL, or eXtensible Business Reporting Language. Due to this XBRL conversion, the data in an annual report becomes machine readable and searchable. To achieve this, the annual report is populated with tags that label information in the report using machine code—the tags identify each piece of information in the report. Consistent use of standard tags allows a comparison of reports between different companies. XBRL is still in the early stages of adoption—only large companies are required to use it and many issues still exist with accuracy of the data-tagging process.

Another development that changes the traditional practice of annual report publishing is the *10-K wrap*. A 10-K wrap allows a company to save money by combining 10-K and the glossy annual report. Instead of producing two complete annual reports, the company simply prepares a few pages in color with a few pictures, a letter to shareholders, a brief summary of annual results, and the management interpretation of these results, and then places the required 10-K in the middle. Thus, these few glossy pages wrap around the 10-K, hence the name. Producing a 10-K wrap saves money for the company, yet it still allows the management to provide its opinion and commentary to shareholders on the results of the company's development in the past year. This makes a 10-K wrap a popular option with almost 50% of companies in the United States switching to this format.

According to the National Investor Relations Institute, the average budget for creating an annual report is about \$100,000. On average, a print run for a company's annual report is 60,000 copies. However, annual reports that are posted only online are becoming more and more common. Although the text of annual reports is usually prepared by the investor relations department in cooperation with the finance/treasury and legal departments, the overall design and photography are typically outsourced to specialty agencies.

Alexander V. Laskin

See also Corporate Speech; EDGAR Online; Executive Management; Investor Relations; National Investor Relations Institute

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ANTECEDENTS OF MODERN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Conventional wisdom marks the beginning of public relations as we know it today as occurring during the 19th century, in the United States. A confluence of growing mass media outlets, a desire to reach mass markets, and a need to create public policy support for large industrial complexes fostered the practice and motivated the pioneers of the field to refine and shape the practice to the conditions of their time. Promotional giants, such as P. T. Barnum, used the profession as a honed art, and industries like the railroads and electric utilities used the profession to gain acceptance for uniform operations.

However, it is important to note that although the growth of media outlets offered new challenges and opportunities during the 19th century, many of the functions of the practice were well established by this time. Although working in the 19th century, the pioneers of the practice built on a foundation that arguably reaches back to the dawn of civilizations that are hundreds and even thousands of years old. For instance, these origins are traceable by noting how pageantry and staged events (pseudo events) are virtually timeless. For centuries, leaders of government, religion, and commerce have worked to inspire awe, mystery, and obedience through events staged purely for publicity and promotional purposes.

Mercantile activities have always required persons who can promote products, services, and business opportunities. Explorers opened trade routes and created treaty relationships to spark commerce. Shipping fleets, trade expeditions, and commercial relationships offer anthropologists insights into the forces that shaped cultures.

Governments of many types and in all regions of the globe were crafted by strong central leaders who used communication to manage their reputations, to coordinate ruling structures, and to command the loyalty of the governed. Often, changes in government have been associated with traditional public relations strategies, functions, and tactics. Scholars have identified the antecedents of public relations within the communication efforts to foster the War of Independence, which occurred after some of the colonies in the new America broke away from England.

Public relations is associated with all aspects of cultural growth and change. Political campaigns are the playground of public relations. European monarchies have used pageantry, diplomacy, warfare, executions, and managed marriages to create and change governments. Colleges and universities, in places as recent as colonial America and as old as the centers of education of Alexandria and Athens, used public communication to focus attention on their educational accomplishments. The creation and propagation of new faiths also provided public relations antecedents. Churches, perhaps most notably the Catholic Church, have used techniques to attract and keep converts loyal to the faith.

The historical antecedents of public relations, therefore, are often entangled with communication activities typically associated with what is called *propaganda*. Even well into the early decades of the 20th century, practitioners thought they were engaged in the practice of propaganda. Once that term became associated with manipulation, lying, and deceit, senior practitioners, such as Edward Bernays and John W. Hill, worked to divorce themselves and their practices from that aspect of public communication.

What we today refer to as public relations was born out of this historical plethora of activities. A brief discussion of some of these antecedents illustrates how the practice developed long before the 19th century.

A search for the antecedents of public relations might focus on tools, tactics, strategies, functions, and outcomes that characterize the profession today. Tools and tactics include rallies, events, newsworthy stories, editorials, buildings, logos, and treatises. Strategies are timeless: inform, persuade, identify, collaborate, compete, compromise, and negotiate. The functions provide some of the

strongest evidence: government relations, marketing communication, publicity, promotion, investor relations, employee relations, and student relations. Outcomes seem timeless: motivate people to buy, believe, fear, follow, live, and support. These lists are more suggestive than definitive. The following discussion indicates various examples suggested by these lists.

The range of historical antecedents is more limited if we think only of public relations as an organization's response to and utilization of mass media. If we think of public relations more as a rhetorical process of image, reputation, control, command, marketing, and organizational—even colonial empire—positioning, then it is likely to closely parallel the evolution of fledgling, formal, and ordered societies.

Given that positioning, then the history of public relations can be traced to ancient empires, such as Persia, Egypt, India, and China. The roots of public relations stretch back 4,000 years. They include the creation of the buildings, statues, idols, and governmental communication systems of highly sophisticated ancient societies. The ceremonial burial of leaders, even as deities, is part of the history of public relations. Throughout ancient societies, statues and other carved figures were widely used to capture the personas and personalities of government and religious leaders. Coins often carried a logo or the visage of a leader as a way of uniting that person or image with the national identity of a people.

Researchers seeking to identify the antecedents of public relations are prone to focus on instances of governments asserting power, church communication, mystery, and symbolism. One of the universal needs of people in power or those who seek power is to keep in touch with the opinions of a stakeholding public. A key realization of the powerful is that they rule and control only by knowing and molding or conforming with the opinions of key publics. Thus, for centuries those in power or seeking power have commissioned individuals to "conduct research" into the minds, wills, and motives of targeted publics. Some of this research was conducted by using espionage and even torture.

Antecedents include church communication, used by religious leaders of all kinds to disseminate the doctrine, foster loyalty to the faith, and establish the symbols of the church as a vital part of

people's lives. The antecedents of public relations include all of those sources of power. Power is displayed not only to intimidate but also to foster a sense of loyalty, submission, allegiance, and identification. It would be incorrect to suggest that the power of emperors, kings, sultans, pharaohs, and other magnates was always unwelcome and that allegiance was not warranted. Societies often emerged as people collectively created agriculture, science, and art. Strong central governments were a source of collective power needed to advance scholarship, technology, and commerce. Some researchers see this as part of the public relations of religion and government.

Antecedents of public relations can include the creation and manipulation of mystery, by secular and religious leaders. In particular, religious figures have maintained control and faith by demonstrating their understanding and perhaps even control of the mysteries of life. Uncertainty is uncomfortable; a disseminated (through public relations) certainty is comforting.

In addition to religious identification, antecedents include efforts to foster national identity. Flags, armadas, great walls, giant pyramids, and other symbolic displays are vital components of national pride and allegiance. Counselors of various kinds, in the style of senior public relations practitioners, offered advice and inspired efforts to demonstrate the power and success of governmental leaders. One widely examined antecedent is the public display of opposition and appeals for regime change. Another is the display of leadership. This application of public relations runs through many of the antecedents noted.

Although lost in time or unknown because of the limitations of travel, many roots of public relations were well established by Persian kings and the kings and emperors of China, Japan, and Korea. Refined pageantry, sponsorship of invention, poetry, announcements about agricultural advice and technology, and scholarship, as well as military display were the public relations stock and trade of these civilizations. Magnificent structures, mystery, and physical distance separated the rulers from the people. What was known and believed often resulted from proclamations and statements circulated to the people through the contemporary version of public relations practice. These might include the commissioning of poems, sagas, and

songs. Proclamations of antiquity find modern parallels in statements by corporate spokespersons and presidential press secretaries.

Once Philip II of Macedonia had subdued the regions of the Hellenic peninsula, he commissioned the creation of gold and ivory statues of himself to adorn the temples. He taught his son, Alexander the Great, similar techniques of power display. In one way or another, living beings were proclaimed or suggested to be closely connected with deities. Hannibal's army, like the armies of the Roman Empire, moved with great pageantry. They often proclaimed themselves religious or secular deities and used cruel methods to enforce their power. Symbols of power and spiritual connection were carefully honed tools that are antecedents to modern corporate and nonprofit logos.

Displays of power are a vital part of human history. Leaders by all titles have recognized the importance of developing and disseminating the symbols of power. Such symbols have at least two purposes: to foster identification and loyalty among the faithful, and to promote fear and intimidation in the enemies of the governing regime. Colors are an important part of this display of power. Generations of battle garb featuring England's red and gold with the sign of the lion were pitted against the blue and fleur-de-lis symbol of France. The return of victorious monarchs was carefully staged to foster identification and intimidation through the display of power. Burials, without parallel in Egypt and China, constituted great events used to empower parts of the public and deify rulers. The grand cities, including famous libraries, such as that at Alexandria, were designed to celebrate the prominence, power, and judgment of those who worked to keep themselves as rulers.

The Romans were masters of producing an event executed to have a public relations impact. Thousands of people witnessed long victory processions designed to proclaim the might of Rome and its ability to spread law throughout vast regions. Although the Romans did not invent the circus, they mastered this forum to demonstrate political and religious views. Great arenas were created that required advanced engineering and theatrical skills. Into these circus arenas entered chariot racers, wild animals, gladiators, and victims of religious oppression. Life and death were spectacles to show how the emperor and the people could make just and

final decisions, often merely for amusement, but always for ceremony to demonstrate the power of Rome. Not only were such displays intended to create identification by the people with Rome, but they also were intended to show other nations and competitors for political power how decisive and warranted were the rulings of the current emperor.

Religions traditionally focus attention on key figures symbolic to the faith. It is common for the personages of the faith to be captured and presented in various forms—statues, sacred artifacts, carvings, and paintings—including the personification of Buddha and other figures of various sizes. Paintings and statuary abound displaying the figure and face of Jesus Christ. The cross is a universal symbol, as is the sign of the fish. The Star of David has been a sign of religious affiliation and affection as well as a target of hatred. In 1622, under the leadership of Pope Gregory XV, the Catholic Church developed the concept of propaganda when it instituted the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, the Congregation for Propagating the Faith. Members of many religious orders have been sent forth to propagate the faith, proselytizing potential converts to promise their adherence and support.

This battle for the faithful was ongoing. In 1351, John Wycliffe called for reform of the Catholic Church, including the publication of the Bible in the vernacular. Control of the Bible was an essential tool to display church power. Until the printing press and moveable print appeared in Western culture, the handwork of monks produced Bibles as a vital means for controlling access to the word of God. Bibles were physically as well as symbolically attached to churches.

Missionary activities are ubiquitous. Colors are often associated with religious leaders, such as the purple and saffron of the Dalai Lama. Religious buildings are part of this display, as is the ritual of religious expression. Pageantry and ritual play prominent roles in expressions of faith and allegiance to a religious creed. Parallels to secular expressions can be made. Such parallels do not intentionally undercut religious adherence but indicate the close parallels between lay and secular forms and a public's need to wrestle with mysteries.

Public executions often constituted dramatic events. They attracted crowds, frequently as a means of impressing the public with the laws and

power of the state. The Reformation launched by Martin Luther began with the dramatic event of the proclamation of the wrongs of the church. On October 31, 1517, he nailed the 95 theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. Featured in these claims were denouncements of the role of indulgences in the daily lives of the faithful. Over the next century, many events and actions acknowledged the war among church leaders and the people. This battle included public burnings and other torturous executions of those whose faith put them at odds with the religious and secular leaders popular at the time.

Jousts were favorite pastimes in England, Germany, and France. Although they featured the prowess of individual knights, they were in many ways similar to military maneuvers and grand parades in later times. They provided opportunities for kings and others nobles to display the caliber of fighting equipment, men, and horses that could be brought to bear—sometimes in the pursuit of mercenary work.

The advent of democracy opened the doors to additional antecedents of modern public relations. In many ways, the efforts of Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury in 1215, are quite modern. He mobilized a disgruntled group of barons who confronted King John with ultimatums that eventually matured into the Magna Carta. Similar challenges of government are instrumental to English and American history and are widely recognized as precursors to modern political campaigns. Through intrigue and pageantry, kings sought to control the people of England, for instance. Their rule was challenged by the church, reformation, national identity, and the spirit of the new world.

The events leading to the American War of Independence offer historians a clear link to the origins of public relations. The effort to create the sentiment for a Declaration of Independence required a sustained campaign. It included the use of all of the forms of mass communication of the time. It introduced images, slogans, and icons. It used cartoons. It created events, such as the Boston Tea Party. It mixed ideology with flaunted displays to challenge the authority of the king. At the same time, the Revolutionaries tried hard to avoid a direct clash with the House of Commons because it wanted to showcase the virtues of popular government. Clear evidence of what would be called propaganda by

the turn of the 20th century included the continuing publicity and promotion of the Revolution. Revolutionary leaders sought to create crises that would defame British control. They engaged in issues debates over principles, such as local sovereignty and taxation with representation. Colonists used pamphlets, newspaper broad sheets, and clever symbols, including burned effigies. The tools and tactics of the Revolutionaries constitute a list familiar to current practitioners. It included bonfires, fireworks, heroes and heroines, victims to substantiate claims of atrocities, exhibitions, slogans, speeches, and even crude lantern slides. Legends include Yankee Doodle and The Spirit of '76. The symbols of the Liberty Tree and a chopped snake accompanied slogans, such as "Don't Tread on Us." Committees were formed to create and disseminate the ideology, post lists of complaints, and organize events. Some patriots were skilled at recruiting rebels in taverns, where ample amounts of spirits hardened the patriotic resolve needed to oppose the British government and risk of death for being declared a traitor.

The activism and publicity components that were part of the formation of the new United States government are often included in discussions of the antecedents of public relations. Other aspects of this effort also deserve attention. Perhaps no better example of an issues brief exists than the Declaration of Independence. It was a careful articulation of the complaints justifying resistance to the British government's authority. Particular care was given to placing blame on the king rather than on the House of Commons. Also, as the new government struggled to survive, emissary efforts by Benjamin Franklin constituted early examples of the importance of skillful government relations.

The democratic spirit of popular governance and free election opened the door to myriad political campaign techniques that have long been the stock and trade of political public relations experts. Rumors, lies, and myths provided substance to political campaigns—people born in log cabins, men of the people, and Old Hickory are examples. Songs were crafted to praise one candidate and to defame his opponent.

Nevertheless, among the many antecedents illustrated, the origin of the term *public relations* is obscured. As long ago as 1807, Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, combined

public with *relations* in a statement about the obligation of government to the governed. The more specific coinage combining those terms as a field may have occurred during an address by civil service reform pioneer Dorman Eaton to the Yale graduating class of 1882. Without a doubt, universities were some of the earliest organizations to use public relations. Medieval universities announced lectures and other academic achievements. In the 18th and 19th centuries, intercollegiate athletic competition drew crowds, which resulted in media announcements and student and alumni interest. Formally, and without reservation, by the end of the 19th century the term was specifically and functionally used in the naming of departments and activities by the railroad industry. Now, a fledgling profession by name is able to draw on centuries of practice as it refines techniques influenced by emerging and changing communication technologies.

Robert L. Heath

See also Bernays, Edward; Empire, Public Relations and; Hill, John Wiley; Political Public Relations; Propaganda; Risk Communication; Warfare and Public Relations

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ANTHROPOLOGY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Anthropology, defined as the study of “other” cultures, is relevant to public relations because the occupation continually engages with a range of ethnic, organizational, and occupational cultures. Anthropology is both a research practice, employing its signature methodology and ethnography, and an increasingly interdisciplinary academic discipline that intersects philosophy, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, literary criticism, and linguistics. Anthropology deals with many subjects

relevant to public relations, such as agency, structure, power, community, discourse, interaction, and interpretation. These connections between anthropology and public relations emerged as a consequence of globalization, facilitated by exploration, trade, and colonialism, as well as an interest in the circuit of culture.

The connection between public relations and culture is fundamental, as public relations is involved with “border crossings,” continually crossing cultures within and between organizations and communities. Public relations practitioners are culture-workers, but not only when they are involved in culture-change programs. Public relations is also involved in intercultural communications between different organizations, media and international stakeholders, and publics located in various countries.

Such work used to be referred to as international public relations, although this term has now been partly supplanted by the terms *cross-cultural* or *global public relations*. Public relations practice is discourse work concerned with ideas and opinions within organizations and among stakeholders and the broader public opinion. Public relations practitioners need to engage with cultural beliefs and practices, not just of national and ethnic groupings, but also of organizations, occupations (media cultures, public relations consultancy cultures), and many other communities, both face-to-face and online.

It is possible to think of various political parties as possessing different cultures, but there also are government/civil service cultures, financial/economic cultures, and technologized cultures. Thus, the concept of culture is central to the practice of public relations. It therefore plays a crucial role in the cultural developments where meaning is created, modified, and reinvented during processes of symbolization, representation, consumption and identity formation. Consequently, public relations scholarship, and its attached discipline may usefully engage with and interpret cultural experiences through the lens of anthropology and employ a range of anthropological concepts and terms, for example, ritual, myth, narrative, network, and stereotype. After detailing the emergence of anthropology as a discipline, this entry discusses its implications for public relations theory and practice and its use in public relations contexts. It adds detail

for understanding what has become the efforts of third culture public relations practitioners.

Emergence of Anthropology as a Discipline

Although anthropology has been extensively critiqued for its alignment with colonial powers, exploitation and domination, and its “Othering” (highlighting the perceived weaknesses of marginalized groups as a way of emphasizing the supposed strength of those in positions of power), anthropological excursions have also stimulated the development of reflexive thinking.

Accounts of the development of anthropology as a discipline highlight the significance of Bronislaw Malinowski’s (1884–1942) work in New Guinea and that of Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955). Both had a strong interest in the structure and function of social systems, although their approaches differed. Malinowski sought to determine general laws and to specify the purpose and function of cultural practices within a particular social context. Radcliffe-Brown saw societies as ordered systems whose constituent parts play a role in maintaining equilibrium. He introduced a diagnostic approach to specify the factors that reveal otherwise hidden meanings in social practice. Structural-functionalism was largely concerned with social ordering and conflict resolution in societies that were sometimes presented by anthropologists as being stable and static (Macdonald, 2001).

A significant intervention was made by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, when he argued that language practices, such as the use of metaphor and symbolism in particular contexts, can produce specific situational meaning—which shifted anthropology toward meaning-orientated explorations rather than structure and function. Thus the construction and interpretation of meaning became foregrounded. (See Macdonald, 2001, p. 65, for this highlight of Evans-Pritchard’s contribution.) Evans-Pritchard’s approach is useful in reconsidering the application of systems theory to public relations and the extent to which anthropological origins and perspectives are acknowledged and taken into account. The fact that systems theory in public relations tends to focus on organizations as actors rather than on people as members of cultures may go some way to explaining the influence of functionalism and the delayed emergence of reflexivity.

Implications of Anthropology for Public Relations Theory and Practice

The implications of an anthropological approach to public relations are significant. It encourages a holistic approach to sociocultural environments and is a gateway to social theory. It encourages reflexive and interpretive approaches to scholarship, in particular toward the handling of the term *culture*, in ethnic, international, and organizational contexts. Specifically within organizational contexts, it helps public relations scholarship focus away from the notion of organizational culture as a management possession and to move toward interpretive accounts of organizational cultures and microcultures. Anthropology offers practitioners a conceptual source for reflexive analysis of multiple cultures and a tool for explaining communications issues, challenges, and relationships.

Sources Exploring Anthropology in Public Relations Contexts

The first connection made between public relations and anthropology appears to be that of Dr. Marcia Watson (2005), who constructed a bibliography of sources for U.S. practitioners. However, although it is relatively recent that ethnographic approaches have begun to be employed in public relations, ethnographic research in an in-house environment had been conducted much earlier in the United Kingdom by two organizational studies scholars, Ivan Filby and Hugh Willmott (1988). Attention to anthropology as it relates to public relations has remained a minority interest although it has been highlighted in various sources (L’Etang, 2010, 2011, 2012; Vujinovic & Kruckeberg, 2010). Now there is an opportunity to follow the lead of media anthropology and the more strongly functional marketing anthropology (that uses anthropological and ethnographic insights in understanding consumer behavior) by developing the specialist field of public relations anthropology.

Jacquie L’Etang

See also Circuit of Culture; Culture; Globalization and Public Relations, Socioculture and Public Relations; Third Culture Public Relations Practitioner

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AP STYLE

In June 1953, the Associated Press instituted a classification that would change the history of writing for journalists, editors, teachers, and students. This innovation was named the *AP Stylebook*, which celebrated its 60th anniversary in June 2013. The 1953 edition consisted of 12,000 terms and 100 pages. It was written as a substitution for the first "16-page AP Style Book and the AP Copy Book, known as the Red Book" (Moynihan, 2003).

Although the 1953 edition was the foundation for future editions, Norm Goldstein, AP Stylebook editor for 14 years, stated that the 1977 edition was the beginning of upcoming, more precise versions (Moynihan, 2003). This is because the structure was changed and entries were organized in alphabetical order so that users could find what they needed in a timely manner. Louis D. Boccardi, Associated Press president and CEO, stated in an article on AP Style, "complication of style rules was accompanied by the accumulation of so much fact and information that the effort resulted in 'a Stylebook,' but also a reference work" (DiNicola, 1994, p. 64). Today, the *AP Stylebook* consists of nearly 500 pages.

The Associated Press defines the *AP Stylebook* as the "bible" for journalists and public relations specialists alike. Public relations professionals find the use of the stylebook very important in assisting them in their writing, since their work is routinely disseminated to journalists. Writers can check spelling, capitalization, grammar, punctuation and usage, with special sections on business, social media, food, fashion, and sports. Included is a guide on media law, with practical guidelines on libel law, privacy and copyright, as well as an effort to provide consistency for spelling and usage of digital terms, such as *website* and *email*.

The Elements of Style was originally written by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White and is also an important book that writers use when dealing with style and word usage. This book, first called the "little" book, educates writers on how to use words in the proper manner, how to form meaningful paragraphs and how to use expressions correctly. It also consists of a section that reminds writers of the dos and don'ts in writing. For example, it explains the importance of rewriting and revising. It also encourages writers not to overstate their points and never to make the reader guess what you are stating. This is accomplished by clarifying what one means in a simple, comprehensive way. Subsequent editions were an attempt to modernize what many serious writers considered a classic work that was not in need of an update.

Many journalism teachers consider the *AP Stylebook* the most important tool in assisting students in their classes. It educates students on how to use certain writing techniques in different situations. For example, when using numbers, a student

is taught to always spell out numbers one through nine and to use figures for numbers 10 and above, with some exceptions, such as ages and percentages. The *AP Stylebook* also assists students with punctuation, spelling, government matters, state abbreviations, explanations about how court cases are written, and so forth. Teachers have found that entries within the stylebook, such as “political correctness,” can be used as a good learning tool. These issues open the door to dialogue and student participation about current events. While the *AP Stylebook* does not explicitly state guidelines for inclusion of entries, it makes an effort to take into account changes in language and social trends. A good example is the use of *sexual orientation* rather than *sexual preference*.

The *AP Stylebook* is often used as a guide for proper word usage, punctuation, and spelling for news releases, news stories, annual reports, brochures, media kits, radio and television news broadcasts, online content, and all other aspects dealing with public relations. Writing for the public relations field is similar to writing for journalism; this is why the same rules apply. Professionals have found that AP style is just as important in the profession as it is in classroom settings. The tools learned early on are implemented in one’s career. The *AP Stylebook* is now available in print, online, and in mobile versions, recognizing the needs of today’s professionals for easily accessible content.

Whether preparing a news release or a blog post, professionals and students have learned that writing is the most frequent form of communications. For one to communicate effectively, rules and guidelines must be followed. The *AP Stylebook* sets the foundation for this structure and these lessons learned in this “bible” shape today’s journalists, writers, teachers, and public relations professionals.

Brenda J. Wrigley

See also Writing

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APOLOGIA

In today’s increasingly turbulent and mediated environment, individuals and institutions regularly face criticism for their actions. How they respond to allegations of wrongdoing comprises the form of communication generally recognized as “corporate” apologia. A corporate apologia is a response to accusations of ethical misconduct where the corporation as a social actor has the primary motive of the defense of its reputation and offers discourse in self-defense that denies, explains, or apologizes for its actions.

Although it may contain one, an apologia is not an apology; instead, it is a justification of actions that seeks to present a competing interpretation of “the facts” and, in so doing, repair a damaged reputation. While the success of apologiae at repairing damaged reputations is arguable, a central benefit appears to be the fact that they provide a conclusion for a negative story, one whose purpose is to disentangle individuals and organizations from a difficult news cycle. Given the fact that politicians have teams of strategists and speechwriters, they too are viewed as “corporate actors.”

The ability to navigate apologetic situations successfully is critical, given the high costs of creating a personal or organizational brand, the aforementioned turbulent media environment in which newsmagazines and 24-hour news outlets are incessantly on the lookout for more grist for the media mill, a dynamic and complicated legal environment, as well as the confessional nature of contemporary culture.

Crisis Situations

The study of apologetic communication has focused on understanding the situation that necessitates an apologia as well as explicating the message strategies that constitute this form of address. Regarding any situation that necessitates an apologia, early definitions focused on individuals and

argued that a charge was rooted in an ethical or reputational allegation. More contemporary definitions see apology as the result of allegations against not just character but also the policies of both individuals and institutions.

Given that a “legitimacy gap” exists between societal expectations for corporate behavior and the reality of how such organizations are seen to act, Keith Hearit (2001; 2006) has proposed that the situation that necessitates an apology is better conceptualized as a legitimization crisis; an apology is needed when organizational actions are seen to have violated commonly held public values resulting in public animosity and antipathy toward a company. In turn, this hostility takes the form of social sanction whereby media, consumers, and key opinion leaders criticize said organizational actions.

Apologia Strategies

As to the substance of corporate apology, scholars have spent a great deal of time and effort to articulate the different message strategies used by organizations. One strategy is denial, to reject charges by characterizing them as false. Those not in a position to deny that they committed an act often find it useful to deny that they intended to, for intent is a key factor in gauging culpability. Concomitantly, *bolstering* constitutes an identificational strategy that focuses on the strength and benefits of a past relationship. Corporations, for instance, bolster by reminding constituents of the number of jobs they bring to a community.

Strategies of redefinition are a major category whereby apologists are able to deal with the public perception of their guilt. Differentiation is one strategy where a narrow context is redefined into a broader one. A related strategy of redefinition is that of transcendence. Transcendence differs from differentiation in that the redefinition is to a broader, more abstract context and often has a religious dimension to it. Other strategies of redefinition include provocation, when a social actor claims that it simply reacted to the hostilities of another; defeasibility, used when corporate officers claim they were powerless in the face of forces beyond their control; or a good intentions strategy, where a company claims it had good intentions in creating a specific policy that only recently faces criticism. Finally, in minimization, an institution

seeks to lessen its responsibility by claiming that the problem is actually small or insignificant once it is properly contextualized.

Another strategy of redefinition includes the concept of dissociation. In using dissociations, organizations seek to deal with the problem of their guilt by claiming that criticisms are but an “appearance” and do not accurately reflect the “true facts” of the case. This dissociation often takes one of three forms. First, when the facts that precipitate an allegation of wrongdoing are in doubt, many apologists will employ an opinion or knowledge dissociation. In such an instance, an apologist claims that the media organizations that leveled the charges are trafficking in the realm of opinion and do not have all the facts. A frequent corollary to this approach is to level a counterattack against the accuser.

A second dissociational strategy used by apologists is a scapegoating strategy where the apologist uses an individual or group dissociation. As a rule, organizations go through great effort and expense to craft carefully constructed images; yet when wrongdoing occurs, such companies are quick to bifurcate such images by separating individuals from the group and locating guilt in those individuals. Such a move, then, transfers the guilt from the body as a whole to said individuals who can then be disciplined or fired.

A final form of dissociational strategy is that of accident/essence dissociation; here organizations find it rhetorically useful to claim a criticized act was an “accident” and that, as such, it does not represent the essence of the organization, which is made up of dedicated employees who should not be judged on one aberrant act.

Conciliation messages represent another major category of strategies used by apologists. They are chosen by apologists who decide it is in their best interests to utilize a strategy of mortification in which guilt is accepted and forgiveness is sought—typically in the form of an apology. A concession strategy rhetorically resonates more with audiences than any other approach. Conciliation attempts often are coupled with two additional strategies. The first, corrective action occurs when an organization announces steps that it is implementing to fix a problem and ensure that it does not happen again; and the second, compensation occurs when an organization reimburses victims in the form of monetary reparations.

Competing Tensions

Institutions caught in a wrongdoing face two competing tensions. On one side is the fact that an organization has committed a wrong, and it is the impulse of organizational officers to want to “do the right thing” and own up to their misconduct. Moreover, media and consumers clamor for an apology, the absence of which causes ongoing damage to an institution’s reputation. Finally, drawing from any number of ethical standards, it is easy to deduce that an accommodative message strategy is the preferred ethical response to the crisis situation.

Yet, standing in conflict to this so-called public relations response is the realization that corporate officials who choose to apologize and accept responsibility risk incurring direct costs for the organization in the form of significant liability judgments. Indeed, research has suggested that when caught in a crisis, investors respond to defensive message strategies favorably and view accommodative ones negatively. Hence, to meet its fiduciary responsibilities to its stockholder interests (the only interests enshrined in law) managers conclude that they *cannot* apologize. Organizations typically respond to such a quandary with equivocal communication through carefully crafted statements, which often include a statement of regret—where they acknowledge the tragedy or injury, but carefully construct their account to avoid assuming culpability. Such an approach puts an organization in the position of denying it has done anything wrong but promising never to do it again.

Keith M. Hearit

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Image Repair Theory; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap

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APP

An application (app) is a software program installed on a computer or mobile device that enables a user to perform a specific task. In computer parlance, all programs providing user interfaces are applications. Applications used by public relations practitioners in their daily work include word processing, spreadsheets, database, design, electronic presentation, email, and list maintenance software.

Apps are also employed in online public relations to disseminate information, engage users, enhance a sponsor’s reputation, maintain brand identity and online relationships, and facilitate two-way communication. The two primary types of apps are Web apps and mobile apps.

Web Applications

Organizations have experimented with Web apps since the inception of websites as public relations tools. Early examples included directories and store locators, forums and chats, and search and order processing tools. Organizations also created *widgets* (also known as *gadgets*)—short portable chunks of HTML code used to display organization-related information. Desktop widgets were provided to users to download and display on their

personal computer, while Web widgets were intended for installation on the user's webpages for viewing by visitors. Widgets were deployed to stream news headlines, weather updates from resorts and remote locations, stock quotations, traffic updates, status updates, and videos or rotating photographic images based on the interests of the user.

Web apps are especially evident today on social networking venues, such as Facebook, where for example organizations can feature up to 12 apps on a Facebook page. These include Facebook-provided apps, such as Events and Photos. Owners also can feature free or paid apps available from third-party app developers sanctioned by Facebook. Or Facebook-page owners can pay for development of a custom app that performs a unique function, such as promoting a product or cause via an entertaining game or contest.

Mobile Applications

The term *app* is synonymous with specialized software programs downloaded to smart phones and computer tablets. Apps provide users direct access to information or entertainment fare without the delays or distractions that can result from opening their mobile Web browser. Apps usually feature limited functions and thus are simpler to use. Content can be personalized to the user, who can customize the app's layout and functions based on personal preferences.

Mobile apps serve the same public relations purposes as Web apps. Users can seek answers to everyday questions, improve personal productivity, access news or information, enhance quality of life experiences, be entertained, request information, and place reservations or orders online. Public relations-related content includes, but is not limited to, product selection and use guides, maps and travel directions, transportation and events schedules, coupons and promotional offers, virtual tours, news updates, interactive games and quizzes, contests and sweepstakes, and promotional multimedia presentations.

Organizations can create simple custom apps using do-it-yourself online services or license the use of already existing apps from an app developer. These *white label apps* allow sponsors to feature their own brand and allow limited modifications

to an app's appearance and functionality. Similar to Web apps, organizations can retain an app development firm to create a custom mobile app offering proprietary or complex functions.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Interactivity (Audience); Online Public Relations; Social Media; Website

APR

APR (Accredited in Public Relations) is a voluntary professional certification for public relations practitioners designed to identify professionals with demonstrated competency and experience. Practitioners holding the credential may use the letters "APR" after their names.

The credential was created by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1964, motivated by a desire to enhance the professional image of the field. At that time, it required passing oral and written examinations and a minimum of five years' public relations experience. Since public relations has no mandatory entry standards, such as educational exams or licensing, practitioner accreditation provided a way to distinguish highly competent practitioners from others and offered some form of quality assurance to potential clients and employers. Today, the APR certification is recognized as an important step in the evolution of public relations toward professional status.

The APR program is the largest certification program for public relations practitioners in the United States and has been the most successful in producing accredited members. As of 2013, approximately 20% of PRSA's members were accredited. According to PRSA, the average pass rate over the 5 years between 1998 and 2003 was 62%. Other organizations in the United States and abroad offer similar certification programs. Most notable in the United States is the International Association of Business Communicators' Accredited Business Communicator (ABC) designation. Internationally, a number of public relations professional organizations, including those in Australia, South Africa, and Great Britain, offer accreditation programs with criteria similar to those of current U.S. programs.

In the early 1980s, leaders of several public relations organizations in the United States began advocating for “universal accreditation,” the consolidation of multiple accreditation programs spread among a number of public relations associations. A unified accreditation program would help to standardize professional expectations for public relations practitioners, as well as the consequences for accredited practitioners who violate codes of ethics. Competing interests among professional organizations stymied these efforts for nearly 2 decades. Eventually, PRSA and eight smaller public relations bodies forged a partnership called the Universal Accreditation Program (UAP).

In 1998, oversight for APR certification was transferred from PRSA to the new consortium. UAP partners include PRSA, the Agricultural Relations Council, the National School Public Relations Association, the Religion Communicators Council, the Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development, and several state and regional public relations associations. A governing board composed of representatives from these organizations develops and maintains the accreditation examination and related policies, reviews appeals, and grants the APR accreditation. Day-to-day operations are administered at PRSA headquarters in New York.

Eligibility for accreditation is limited to members of UAP partner organizations who have at least five years of paid, full-time experience in the practice of public relations or in the teaching of public relations courses in an accredited college or university. Nonmembers who belong to member organizations of the North American Public Relations Council and who meet the same employment requirements as members are also eligible. Candidates must pay a fee of several hundred dollars and complete an application form. They may access a study guide, online self-study course, and instructions for preparing a portfolio from the Universal Accrediting Board.

Since its inception, the APR examination has required demonstrated understanding of the public relations body of knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in practice. Until 2003, the accreditation process required a written examination and an oral interview before a panel of accredited peers. In July 2003, after a 3-year period of research and testing, the UAP replaced the oral examination with

a preliminary “Readiness Review,” designed to assess whether candidates are likely to succeed in the written examination. The UAP also revised the written examination to cover 10 specific clusters of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Once a candidate’s eligibility for the exam process has been confirmed, the candidate requests a Readiness Review through a local chapter of PRSA or partner organization. The Readiness Review is a one- to two-hour interview and portfolio presentation before a panel of accredited members. It includes a written submission submitted to the panel in advance that addresses open-ended questions related to the candidate’s position and experiences; a portfolio review; and an assessment of readiness to take the exam. The review panel uses a point system employing standardized criteria to assess the candidate’s responses and supporting materials, and scoring the candidate’s knowledge, skills, and abilities in 16 areas, including public speaking, interpersonal skills, writing skills, and management skills. If any weaknesses are identified, the panel suggests study materials to strengthen those areas. Candidates may not take the written exam until they pass the Readiness Review. Candidates who do not pass the Readiness Review portion of the process may repeat the Readiness Review after a waiting period. Candidates are informed of the panel’s decision by the UAP.

The computer-based written examination contains multiple-choice questions related to 10 competency clusters: public relations history and current issues; business literacy; ethics and law; communication theory; the public relations process of researching, planning, implementing, and evaluating campaigns; management skills and issues; crisis communication; use of information technology; media relations; and advanced communication skills, such as consensus building, consulting, and negotiating skills. The typical candidate requires 2 to 3 hours to complete the written exam.

Practitioners accredited in 1993 or later must document their continuing professional growth every three years in an accreditation maintenance program that requires the accumulation of points in continuing education, professionalism, or service categories. Accredited practitioners must maintain their membership in PRSA or a partner organization in order to continue use of the APR designation.

Although the accreditation of public relations practitioners is widely viewed as a step forward toward professionalism, it alone is unlikely to lead to universal acknowledgment of the value of public relations. However, within the field, increasing recognition of the APR designation is evidenced by public relations job listings that specify “APR preferred” as a candidate qualification. Although little research exists that compares accredited and nonaccredited practitioners, evidence does suggest that accredited practitioners are somewhat more likely to embrace professional values than nonaccredited members.

Accreditation remains a favorable alternative to licensing in the eyes of many practitioners, who view licensure as infringing on free speech rights and unnecessary governmental interference. Enforcement of ethical behavior remains a limitation of voluntary accreditation, however. Unlike failure to attain licensure, loss of accreditation does not prevent an individual from practicing public relations.

Katherine N. Kinnick

See also International Association of Business Communicators; Public Relations Society of America

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ARCHETYPES AND RHETORICAL THEORY

An archetype is frequently used as a metaphor and is an original ideal or classic model that taps into a

primary human experience, such as birth, sex, or death. Prominent archetypes often come in ideographic paired oppositions, for example, light and dark, heat and cold, disease and health. Archetypes are considered to be universal symbols because they are deployed across space, time, and cultures. They help humans make sense of experiences and aid their storytelling. To the extent that public relations has rhetorical groundings, it depends on archetypes.

Archetypes can be either things or ideas. They “exist” whenever a basic commonality can be demonstrated among diverse sets of communicative acts. They link seemingly discrete symbolic acts separated by time, space, and culture and align them into a coherent narrative.

Michael Osborne (1967) argued that archetypes arouse emotion because they provide “a kind of double association. . . . The subject is associated with a prominent feature of experience which has already become associated with human motivations” (p. 116). An archetype facilitates an audience's understanding and experience of community in situations where ceremonial communication is required.

The light/dark metaphor family provides a particularly salient set of archetypes. Osborne (1967) wrote, “It is most illuminating to think of these sources as kind of a spatial family in which light and darkness occupies [sic] the center, and the sun, heat and cold and seasonal sources range out from it in that order of proximity” (p. 117). Light associates with survival and developmental instincts, whereas darkness is associated with vulnerability and fear of the unknown.

Osborne also noted that no rhetorician was more aware

of the potential power of light and dark metaphors than Winston Churchill. When there is societal upheaval and contemporary forms of symbolic cultural identity are swept away, the archetype which represents the unchanging essence of human identity is turned to as the bedrock of symbolism. (p. 120)

Archetypes are also widely employed in coalescing communities. Lacking an inventory of shared symbols, rhetors (rhetoricians) call on archetypes in order to accomplish their metaphorical work.

Archetypal analysis begins with creative speculation. The critic identifies a potential archetype that

is believed to bring coherence to a series of communication acts dispersed over time, space, and culture. In the exploration and testing phase of archetypal analysis, the critic traces the use of the archetypal motif across those same concepts. If the analyst succeeds in showing that the motif recurs in persistent and important ways, they then move on to identifying concepts associated with the recurring image.

In the evaluation phase, the critic assesses how archetype usage illuminates the rhetorical preferences and practices of a culture. The critic can also examine how the meaning of an archetype shifts over time. Osborne (1977) found that the archetype of the sea accumulated new associations over time. In antiquity, it was conceived as a hostile environment that threatened civilization (i.e., the ship of state). However, by the time of the industrial revolution, the sea came to be seen as a place where one could escape the stultifying conventionality and oppressive working conditions of industrial society. The sea was still a challenging place, but one where an individual could test and prove oneself, or fail in the attempt.

Archetype analysis has been applied to diverse phenomena such as films, news stories, and political style, all of which have implications for public relations. Samuel Winch (2005) found that Osama bin Laden was constructed to fit the archetype of the evil genius in press coverage following 9/11. Although bin Laden was portrayed as an evil person, he was also depicted as being exceedingly intelligent, clever, and resourceful: a terrorist superman who was able to adapt to almost any contingency. That depiction created a worthy adversary to justify the “war on terror.” It provided an excuse for the failure to apprehend him. Winch speculated that the evil genius archetype was utilized because it could help most citizens of the United States understand the traumatic events of 9/11 that ruptured their taken-for-granted understandings. Archetypes can be constructed out of communication styles. Robert Hariman (1995) identified four political styles: courtly style, realist style, republican style, and bureaucratic style. These styles are resilient and widespread even after the original social structures that supported them have withered away. Hariman wrote, “We live in a vortex of discourses. Bureaucratic speech can be heard in the bedroom, republican oratory in the sports section, realist tropes in the synagogue and courtly tropes in the evening news” (p. 12).

Archetypal analysis is criticized for contributing to monolithic interpretations of particular archetypes.

Michaela Meyer (2003) argued that the rhetorical critic should demonstrate the multiple and oppositional ways that an audience can and should use when reading a text. For example, via criticism, the audience becomes aware of the deeper significance of the text. Criticism adds nuance and paradox to archetype interpretation.

Rhetoricians who work from an ideological (i.e., critical theory) perspective tend to be suspicious of archetype analysis, especially claims that archetypes are natural and universally understood. An ideological analysis seeks to identify communication practices that support the status quo and reproduce the power relationships supporting that status quo. Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz (1991) argued that ideological analysis ignores symbols that index central thoughts that originate in the workings of the psyche (i.e., both individual and cultural). They proposed that the contents of human consciousness derive both from ideological sources and psychic sources. Neither source of symbols is reducible to the other. Thus, ideological analysis and archetype analysis need to be used in concert in order to provide a fuller understanding of how humans use symbols to create shared meaning and motivate action.

Greg Leichty

See also External Organizational Rhetoric; Ideographs and Rhetorical Theory; Rhetorical Theory

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ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN COMMUNICATIONS

The Association for Women in Communications (AWC) is a professional organization that champions the advancement of women across all communications disciplines by recognizing excellence, promoting leadership, and positioning its members at the forefront of the evolving communications era. This national professional organization also sponsors student chapters. Founded in 1909 with 2,500 members as Theta Sigma Phi at the University of Washington, the organization has evolved from an original narrow premise to now cover a broad range of disciplines. The founding principles of Theta Sigma Phi still serve as touchstones for AWC today: to promote the advancement and responsibilities of communicators, to work for the First Amendment rights and responsibilities of communicators, and to recognize distinguished professional standards throughout the industry.

AWC Annual Awards

The renowned Clarion Awards competition is open to all communicators. The awards annually recognize excellence in communication fields. The International Matrix Award rewards a communications professional for achieving the highest level of professional excellence. The AWC Headliner Award recognizes an AWC member who has recent national accomplishments as well as consistent communications excellence.

AWC Annual Professional and Student Chapter Awards

At the annual conference, the AWC Professional Chapter Awards are presented to AWC professional and student chapters that have excelled in leadership, communications, and community support. This includes the AWC Chapter Star Award and AWC Chapter Excellence Award. The AWC Student Chapters Awards annually recognize outstanding student members, advisors, and chapters

on the basis of leadership activities and contributions to school and community. These awards include the AWC Rising Star Award (highest achievement award for an AWC Student), AWC Outstanding Chapter Award, and AWC Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award.

AWC Nontraditional Awards

The AWC Hall of Fame honors women who have made a significant contribution to the communications field: locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally. The Hall of Fame recognizes those who have displayed the highest professional and ethical standards in the communications field. Given in the name of one of the organization's founders, the National Georgina MacDougall Davis Award recognizes continuous, distinguished service to AWC goals. The award may not be given more than five times in a decade. The Lifetime Achievement Award rewards longstanding professional accomplishments and service to the association. The Ruth Weyand and the Business Pinnacle Award is named in honor of a labor attorney who worked tirelessly for women's rights in the workplace. It recognizes companies with forward-thinking policies toward women and minorities.

Founded in 1997, the mission of the AWC Matrix Foundation is to promote the advancement of women in the communications profession by providing funds for education, research, and publications. It carries out its educational and charitable goals in cooperation with the AWC through three initiatives: (1) The Professional Certification Program recognizes excellence in all areas of communications and provides an opportunity to demonstrate communication and management skills and enhance employment/client potential; (2) The Edith Wortman First Amendment Award honors professional communicators for their efforts relating to First Amendment issues; and (3) The Barbara Erickson Scholarship Fund gives college students an opportunity to meet and mingle with professional communicators by funding attendance at the AWC National Professional Conference.

Bonita Dostal Neff

See also Professional and Professionalism

Further Readings

Association for Women in Communications: <http://www.womcom.org/AWC-Home.asp>

ASTROTURFING

Astroturfing, also known as greenturfing, is a disguising technique used by large organizations to support any arguments or claims in their favor. Astroturfing is usually a public relations, political, and advertising tactic carefully planned by an organization for manipulative purposes, but disguised as a spontaneous grassroots campaign. By giving the appearance of grassroots campaigns, an organization's astroturfing efforts attempt to influence public policy and manipulate public opinion. In fact, astroturfing is the fabrication of a grassroots campaign. The term originated from Astro-Turf, which is a brand of artificial grass carpeting designed to look like natural grass. The term was coined by U.S. senator Lloyd Bentsen in a public statement in 1985.

Astroturfing is distinguished from legitimate grassroots campaigns by its deceptive nature. First, one difference from legitimate grassroots campaigns is that finance is not an issue for astroturfing practice because it is often sponsored by deep pocket organizations. Second, it is driven by the vested interests of organizations and hired public relations, marketing, law, or political consulting firms, whereas grassroots campaigns are driven by the will of individuals or communities. Third, since astroturfing is a fabricated grassroots campaign, there is no strong expectation of public participation or empowerment in the practice. Lastly, unlike real grassroots campaigns, astroturfing uses front groups to mask the sponsoring organizations' true interests and identities. By using front groups, astroturfing organizations try to make fabricated grassroots campaigns appear as independent movements in the public eye.

Because of its deceptive nature, serious ethical concerns underline the practice. Although this practice is prohibited by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) code of ethics, it is not an uncommon practice of corporations, politicians, or public relations firms. Examples include American Chemical Society, American Forest & Paper

Association, Burson-Marsteller, Philip Morris, Procter & Gamble, the Chemical Manufacturers Association, and Union Carbide. For instance, in 1993 Burson-Marsteller, a public relations firm, created the astroturf group the National Smokers Alliance (NSA) to influence federal nonsmoking regulation on behalf of the tobacco industry, specifically Philip Morris. The NSA was originally promoted as an organization made up of individuals and businesses (particularly restaurants) that were against impending laws that would ban smoking in certain public places. Backed by Philip Morris and several smaller tobacco players and with millions of dollars and the help of the aforementioned public relations firm, the NSA ran aggressive campaigns to recruit people to beef up their membership numbers. The NSA, which claimed to be an independent grassroots group, was eventually ousted as a sham when the financial backing of the tobacco industry and strategic direction of a public relations firm were revealed.

Advanced technology and new electronic media certainly accelerate the process of creating Astroturf campaigns. Internet and social media can be used to organize astroturfing campaigns while successfully disguising them as grassroots campaigns. Thus, more emphasis on ethical guidelines for public relations practice is required in this ever-changing environment.

Sora Kim

See also Front Groups

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ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Why do people say what they say and do what they do? What causes behavior? Such questions are common ones in the explanation of human experience and are at the root of attribution

theory. Understanding causality and responsibility is pivotal in interpreting social behavior. Attribution theory explains how we assess the causes of our own and others' behavior. According to attribution theory, in sensemaking interactions reason "backward" from observed behavior to determine underlying causes so that they may be able to predict future behavior or know how to respond in specific interactions.

Although primarily used to examine interpersonal processing, attribution theory has been applied in other contexts. For example, W. Timothy Coombs applied attribution theory to organizations and publics as he examined perceptions of crises, especially as related to organizational reputation. When crisis events occur, individuals strive to explain their causes. If an organization is perceived to be responsible for the crisis, its reputation sustains damage. When conditions of stability (i.e., a history of such problems) and control are believed to exist, organizations are likely seen as responsible. Thus, attribution theory has promise for organizational and public relations research, especially in times of crises. For example, it has recently been employed to examine public support for Haitian earthquake victims and public responses to an oil spill as well as government responses to terrorism.

Three assumptions form the basis of attribution theory: (1) individuals assign causes to behavior, (2) individuals use systematic processes in explaining behavior, and (3) once attributions are made, they influence feelings and subsequent behavior and are resistant to change.

There are two types of attributions: internal and external. Internal (or dispositional) attributions place the cause for behavior within a person, whereas external attributions assign the cause to some factor outside (contextual) the person. In other words, internal attributions focus on the personal aspects of a person, including stable traits or characteristics, such as intelligence or personality; variable behaviors, such as effort; and temporary states, such as mood, stress, or exhaustion. Locating the cause outside the person, external attributions place responsibility on some force or agent in the situation or environment. Such agents include rules and restrictions, task difficulty, resource availability, and chance or luck. Once attributions have been made, they guide individuals in predicting future behaviors.

Considerable research has examined factors affecting the choice between internal and external attributions. For example, Fritz Heider (1958) discussed differences in self versus other attributions. Individuals tend to attribute responsibility for their own failures to external causes (e.g., bad luck) and the failures of others to internal causes (e.g., lack of intelligence or good judgment), and to attribute responsibility for their own successes to internal qualities (e.g., intelligence or good judgment) and the successes of others to external factors (e.g., good luck). Edward E. Jones and Keith E. Davis (1965) discussed three categories of information (i.e., choice, expected behavior, and effects of behavior) that shape whether internal attributions, which they call correspondent inferences, are made. For example, if we believe that someone behaved intentionally, by choice, in a distinctive fashion with low social desirability, we most likely attribute the cause for that behavior internally.

Widely regarded as the father of attribution theory, Heider (1958) said that like "naïve psychologists," people work to interpret human behavior—to understand *why* people behave as they do. Because many interpretations of a specific behavior are possible, he argued that we start to recognize individual patterns of perception, labeled "perceptual styles." Heider's theory has spawned considerable theoretical extension and research.

Most research in attribution theory has revolved around two models: Harold Kelley's and Bernard Weiner's. Kelley's model, or Kelley's cube, is especially concerned with attributions regarding the behavior of others and has been the "primary paradigm for describing how people use information to make social attributions for the behavior and outcomes of others" (Martinko & Thomson, 1998, p. 271). Weiner's (1995) work, involving the achievement-motivation model, is focused on self-attributions.

Although recognizing self-attribution, Kelley's work primarily covers attributions made to explain the behavior of others. Two tenets underlie this work. One is the covariation principle, employed with multiple instances of behavior, which asserts that "an effect is attributed to the one of its possible causes with which, over time, it covaries" (Kelley, 1973, p. 108). That means that when an observer has more than one instance of behavior to evaluate, the observer assesses which outcomes covary (i.e., are associated) with particular causes. The other

tenet is the discounting effect, which is used for single instances of observed behavior and suggests that “the role of a given cause in producing a given effect is discounted if other plausible causes are also present” (Kelley, 1973, p. 113). Specifically, observers assess possible causes relative to one another. These tenets assume rationality where behavior and varying possibilities are carefully examined.

According to Kelley, three types of information are employed in making judgments: consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness. Consensus asks, “Do other people exhibit this behavior in this situation?” If so, consensus is high; if not, consensus is low. Consistency asks, “Does this person exhibit this behavior in other situations like this one?” If so, consistency is high; if not, consistency is low. Distinctiveness asks, “How does this person behave in other situations?” If the person behaves differently, distinctiveness is high; if the person behaves similarly, distinctiveness is low.

Evaluations regarding this information lead to conclusions on causes—person, stimulus, or situation. Attributions are likely to pinpoint the person when there is low consensus, high consistency, and low distinctiveness. Attributions are likely to pinpoint the stimulus (or entity, such as an organization) when there is high consensus, high consistency, and high distinctiveness. Attributions are likely to favor the situation (e.g., event) when there is low consensus, low consistency, and high distinctiveness.

Beyond these three general categories (person, stimulus, and situation), Kelley did not address how information is used specifically in refining evaluations. Although attribution to the person is one of Kelley’s categories, his model does not address varying personal attributions. Assigning cause to effort or ability is an attribution to person. However, findings suggest that these attributions lead to different responses.

Weiner’s interest is in individuals’ interpretations of their achievements. The following are key achievement attributions: ability, effort, difficulty of task, and chance. In Weiner and his colleagues’ work, three dimensions of causality are used to predict these attributions. The first is control locus (i.e., internal vs. external). The second is stability, the degree to which change occurs across time (i.e., stable vs. unstable). For example, ability is seen as stable, whereas effort is variable. The third is controllability, whether something was intentional or unintentional.

First proposed by Weiner and colleagues in 1971 and later modified, this achievement-motivation model primarily dealt with examining one’s own behavior. The resulting judgments influence future beliefs about capabilities. Whereas Kelley’s model looks at processes involved in attribution formation, Weiner’s concern is motivational and behavioral outcomes. Although the focus is self-attributions, especially achievement-oriented ones, Weiner’s more recent work includes attributions of others’ behavior and social responsibility.

Although the Kelley and Weiner models have dealt with self and other attributions, they highlight different facets of related processes. Recently some attempts have been made to integrate the models.

Criticisms of attribution theory include its reliance on normative models, which assume logical processing of information, and lack of recognition of the role of emotion. Further, as Martinko and Thomson (1998) pointed out, as with other complex kinds of information processing, attributions result from the interactions of a number of variables. Several attribution biases are common, including the fundamental attribution error, actor-observer bias, hedonic relevance bias, false consensus effect, false uniqueness effect, self-serving bias, and male gender bias. Other concerns include dependence on experimental tests, issues with generalizability, and insensitivity to actual interaction.

Joy L. Hart

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Image; Interpersonal Communication Theory; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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AUDIENCE MONITORING

Audience monitoring originated to serve advertising and market analysis of radio and television programming. Public relations firms use it to gather public sentiment on an organization's reputation, and government agencies monitor during emergencies. During the 1930 to 1940s, audience monitoring provided critical information for advertisers who used the data to identify key markets for the sale of products and services. Initially, audience monitoring identified radio audiences and the size of an audience listening to a particular show. After Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting (CAB) was developed, audience monitoring continued to identify the best way to sell a company's product. Telephone surveys were used to gather data on the audience, but telephone households were often limited to families with higher socioeconomic status.

Clark-Hooper, Inc., is credited with changing the data collection process for audience monitoring. Instead of waiting to conduct a telephone survey after the program ended, Clark-Hooper, Inc., adopted the coincidental technique. This technique collected audience monitoring data during the airing of the radio program. As result, recall bias was not an issue as it had been previously with CAB's work. These data were more reliable, reduced the sample size (which reduced expenses), and created datasets that could be compared year to year.

Another key pioneer in audience monitoring is A.C. Nielsen, who developed methodologies for

radio and television analysis that are still used today. Nielsen is credited with creating The Audimeter, a mechanized data recorder that collected the following information: status of radio set (i.e., set is on or off), the time of day, the length of time the set was turned on, and the program station. Using The Audimeter, Nielsen was able to create a stratified sample and maintain internal consistency by controlling for the number of radios in the home, geographic location, size of locality, family size, occupation, home, race, and telephone ownership. Advertisers and show programmers received data on public dissatisfaction with programming, frequency, length of tuning, audience flow, reach (duplication among programs), and an estimated size of audience during a commercial break.

Over the past 60 years, audience monitoring has evolved to analyze cross-platform programming (e.g., watching television programs on smart phones or computers). Today information technology provides consumers with unprecedented decision-making power on when, where, and how they watch television or listen to radio programming. Nielsen continues to advance analysis efforts, but audience monitoring is no longer solely used for sale of products and services. Agencies often analyze media reports as proxy for audience feedback. Through qualitative analysis, communicators identify key themes, information gaps and rumors or misinformation, which provide key data inputs for the development of public information messages. Through advances of social media, organizations can monitor public comments and posts created by the general public. The pervasiveness of social media and its use during emergencies led to the development of the American Red Cross Digital Operations Center. It actively monitors social media to inform decision making related to emergency operations and public information activities.

Kathleen G. Vidoloff

See also Emergency Management; Risk Communication

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AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

In Australasia, the practice of public relations is in a state of flux due to the rapid rise of new media and new modes of communication. The increasingly mobile and social basis of communication is challenging for the organization-centered practices of public relations that have grown up in both countries. As Jim McNamara (2010, p. 8) asserted, “The control paradigm of media is collapsing.”

The first public relations professionals in Australia and New Zealand were journalists who moved into the field of media relations. In previous decades, the path between media organizations and public relations—and back again—was well trodden in both countries. Today, the journalist ranks of media organizations are thinning as online media threatens the profitability of traditional media outlets, and media relations is a shrinking component of public relations practice. At the same time, the emergence of public relations as a profession in its own right means that practitioners are now almost exclusively recruited from the ranks of university and technical institute graduates, with specialist qualifications in public relations and professional communication.

The emergence of public relations as a stand-alone profession can be traced back to the close of World War II. In Australia, public relations practitioners in New South Wales became the first to form a professional body in 1949. Today, each Australian state has a division of the national professional body, the Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA). In New Zealand, the profession traces its inception back to 1954, when a group of demobilized military press officers formed what was to become the Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ). In the days before airmail or the Internet, New Zealand and Australia were isolated from developments elsewhere, but relevant information was sought from the United States and Europe, leading countries in the field of public relations.

Public relations was originally practiced as an organizational or political function, and the primary task was to secure positive media coverage. Practitioners worked as consultants or internal organizational media and publicity experts. Anyone—regardless of education, experience, or understanding of ethics—could claim to be a public relations practitioner. There is still no requirement in either country for a public relations practitioner to belong to one of the professional associations, so the role of public relations practitioner has not been regulated or standardized. Titles given to or adopted by practitioners include corporate communications, business communications, corporate affairs, media relations, press officer, in-house journalist, external relations, and executive assistant. Titles that do not include the term *public relations* are sometimes chosen out of a desire to dissociate the position from public relations or in an attempt to elevate the position. The public relations industry in both countries is focused on achieving professional status but is subject to media disparagement.

Acknowledgment of public relations as a “profession” has been complicated by the voluntary nature of PRIA and PRINZ membership. Both professional bodies provide education and professional standards and promote the role of public relations, but practitioners are not compelled to join. In joining either PRINZ or PRIA, practitioners are arguably demonstrating their commitment to the development of public relations as a profession. However, they are also submitting themselves to the external rigor and security to be derived from an accreditation system and a code of conduct or ethical practice. In both countries, practitioners who have been accused of misconduct generally choose to avoid censure by resigning. PRINZ had over 1,000 members in December 2012, while the membership of PRIA stood at 3,000. In both countries, the majority of members are women.

Education has been a key factor in the progress of public relations as a profession. Public relations education is now widely available in both Australia and New Zealand. Students may take degree and diploma courses at universities, polytechnics, and technical and further education (TAFE) institutes. Practitioners can select from a wide variety of short courses run by PRIA and PRINZ or any of a variety of private training organizations. PRIA also oversees an accreditation system for public relations courses, which guides students toward

qualifications that have industry recognition. No similar system exists in New Zealand. PRIA and PRINZ are not, however, the sole organizations serving the interests of public relations practitioners in Australia and New Zealand. The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) has strong membership in Australia, but the New Zealand chapter recently closed. Unlike PRIA and PRINZ, IABC does not offer accreditation examinations for practitioners, nor does it administer a disciplinary process for members who transgress the organization's code of conduct. Accreditation examinations were initially a source of tension for PRIA and PRINZ because senior practitioners resisted the notion that they should take an examination in order to be an accredited member of the professional body; but, there is now greater general acceptance of the accreditation process.

Professional public relations codes of ethics or conduct are now commonplace internationally, and within Australia and New Zealand, PRIA and PRINZ are the professional bodies that devise and implement the codes of ethics. Australia has two separate codes in operation: the Consultancy Code of Practice and the Code of Ethics. The Consultancy Code of Practice has sections on "general standards" and "client relations," as well as guidelines for fees and income. According to the "general standards" section of the code, a registered consultancy

accepts a positive duty to observe the highest standards in its business practice and in the practice of public relations; promote the benefits of public relations practice in all dealings; and improve the general understanding of professional public relations practice. (Public Relations Institute of Australia, 2001, n.p.)

Consultancies are thus charged with responsibility for "professionalizing" public relations and strengthening its reputation. This section also binds consultancies to observe the code, to adhere to "the highest standards of accuracy and truth," to ensure that employees adhere to the code, and to refrain from recruiting the staff of their clients.

The "client relations" section of the code sets out a framework for the conduct of relationships. This section requires consultancies to safeguard client confidences unless required by a court of law to divulge them. Consultancies are also barred from

offering their services simultaneously to clients with competing interests. They may not make unrealistic promises to clients. Soliciting others to engage in unethical conduct on behalf of clients is also prohibited. Australian consultancies are not required to either affiliate with PRIA or apply the Code of Practice. However, a register of affiliated consultancies is operated by PRIA, and only those consultancies that adhere to the code are able to list their services in this widely used directory. Thus, there is a real incentive for consultancies to affiliate. PRINZ also has a register of New Zealand public relations consultancies. However, the absence of a consultancy code of practice means that the list functions as a trade directory rather than as a mark of professionalism.

PRIA and PRINZ each have a code of ethics for individual practitioners. The PRIA code focuses primarily on the obligations of practitioners to clients and employers. Overall, the PRIA code is more extensive, with an emphasis on the activities of consultancies. The PRIA code is designed to ensure that members comply with PRIA's professional standards. Members are required to "adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice and professional competence." Key regulations include public relations practice (honesty, fairness, and confidentiality), business practice (treatment of clients and employers), and commitment to the profession (promoting the profession, building the body of knowledge, and surveillance of other members' practices).

The current PRINZ code of ethics was developed in response to concern over an ethical issue that focused media attention on the profession and tensions in organizational versus societal obligations. In New Zealand the profession faced a major problem following disclosures in a book titled *Secrets and Lies: The Anatomy of an Anti-Environmental PR Campaign*. This 1998 book by Nicky Hagar and Bob Burton mapped a prominent New Zealand public relations consultancy's role in assisting industry to continue the logging of native forests. The book accused the consultancy of a range of activities, including spying, lying, media manipulation, and undermining the democratic process. Following censure, the practitioner involved resigned but has since rejoined PRINZ.

In response to the media criticism and public condemnation of such practices, PRINZ developed a new code of ethics. The code marked a shift in understanding of the role of public relations. Public

relations was no longer conceptualized and promoted simply as a communication role but was explicitly repositioned as an advocacy function that promotes an organization or client's identity, ideas, products, services, or position. The code emphasizes the sensitive judgment required for acceptable and ethical public relations practice: "We must balance our role as advocates for individuals or groups with the public interest. We must also balance a commitment to promote open communication with the privacy rights of individuals and organisations" (Public Relations Institute of New Zealand, 2001, n.p.). Although the code does not specify how that balance should be determined, it does make it unmistakably clear that public relations obligations and responsibilities extend beyond the client to the public interest. Similar to the code of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the PRINZ code of ethics outlines a set of values that guide behavior and decision-making processes. The PRINZ values are advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness. The code then sets out the principles and standards for the practice of public relations in New Zealand. Members are required to balance advocacy and honesty as well as openness and privacy, disclose conflicts of interest, abide by the law, and act in a professional manner.

The codes of Australia and New Zealand are therefore different in orientation. PRINZ has redesigned its code to more accurately explain the advocacy role of public relations and position that role within the context of society, whereas PRIA is more concerned with client/employer relations. However, both codes aim to provide a professional standard for public relations practice and enhance the reputation of the industry. Both PRIA and PRINZ are members of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communications Management, collectively representing 160,000 members. The Global Alliance is a framework for public relations associations to "share ideas and best practices, seek common interests and standards, and better understand the unique aspects of each culture in which practitioners operate" (Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, 2002, n.p.). The Global Alliance has established a protocol on public relations that is based on the "fundamental value and dignity of the individual" (n.p.). This individualistic focus may create challenges for public relations associations that have more collectivist, community-based values. For

example, PRINZ has to balance the dominant Western individualist focus with the more collectivist values of the indigenous people, the Maori. The Global Alliance protocol is based on the principles of advocacy, honesty, integrity, expertise, and loyalty. The ethical standards of the protocol emphasize responsibility to clients, client publics, and an informed society, along with professional competence, development, and commitment to the public relations industry. Membership of the Global Alliance gave PRIA and PRINZ greater access to international networks, knowledge, a virtual ethics forum, news, and examples of best practice. Moreover, the staging of the World Public Relations Forum 2012 in Melbourne saw Australia take a leadership role in the development of what became known as the Melbourne Mandate, which is a "call to action for new areas of value in public relations and communication management" (www.globalalliancepr.org/website/news).

The major practice-related issues confronting practitioners are similar in Australia and New Zealand. Western global business practices have come to dominate the practice of public relations, although they are to some extent balanced by local multicultural and bicultural policies and issues. Information and communication technologies, including the Internet, email, databases, mobile telephones, and personal computers, have all accelerated the process of globalization. Technology is also responsible for enabling public relations practitioners to rapidly disseminate information on behalf of their clients to wide-ranging audiences. However, in Australasia, as elsewhere, technology has also given voice to a wide range of stakeholders and stakeholder concerns, making the work of practitioners more complex and challenging. Public relations is no longer something that is the preserve of the organization. Any individual or community group with access to computers and the Internet can set up websites, issue media releases, and lobby decision makers.

Public relations practice in Australia and New Zealand is characterized by a small market size, which results in a high degree of informalization, accessibility, lack of specialization, and localization. Media relations in the two countries are rendered less formal because public relations and media professionals are often educated together and work together. Common backgrounds and experiences mean that public relations practitioners are able to

informally approach journalists with the expectation that they will receive positive media attention and possible coverage. This degree of informality results in what Norman Fairclough (1995) termed *cultural democratization*, greater accessibility to public figures and a reduction of elitism.

Another consequence of smaller market size is that public relations practitioners are more likely to develop generalist skills rather than specializing in a particular public relations function. Within the smaller consultancies in Australia and New Zealand, practitioners must be able to undertake a range of tasks, such as lobbying, managing events, and developing corporate brand and reputation programs. Although international public relations consultancy firms have affiliates and offices in both Australia and New Zealand, the work is most often based in those countries rather than internationally. Australia has a multicultural policy, whereas New Zealand has a bicultural policy that is enshrined in the Treaty of Waitangi, a document that acknowledges the rights of the Maori. Consequently, localized public relations approaches develop that embrace multicultural and bicultural communication and relationship challenges.

A growing sophistication in the understanding of public relations is evident within both public relations associations. A previous national president of PRIA, Liz McLaughlin (2002), argued that Australian public relations has matured from “words to strategies to leadership” and that practitioners need to work toward being part of the dominant coalition (p. 113). For McLaughlin, the challenge for public relations professionals is to balance the leadership role that public relations plays with a responsibility to society. PRINZ has indicated that public relations is centrally concerned with stakeholder management. In a similar vein, the former national president of PRINZ, Tim Marshall (2003b), promoted the role of public relations as “stakeholder communication, public consultation and education, and reputation management” (n.p.). Public relations has thus moved a long way from its early origins in a press agency to position itself as part of the senior leadership team in organizations, with responsibility for stakeholder management. However, the evolution is by no means complete as public relations continues to undergo significant change due to the rise of social media, mobile communication, and the shifting balance from verbal to visual communication. Just how the profession will

respond to publics that are connected, empowered, and global remains to be seen.

Judy Motion and Shirley Leitch

See also Codes of Public Relations Practice; Culture; Event Management; Functions of Public Relations; Global Alliance; Globalize; International Association of Business Communicators; Leadership and Public Relations; Lobbying; Media Relations; Professional and Professionalism; Professionalism in Public Relations; Social Media; Stakeholder Theory

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AUTHENTICITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Authenticity on social media can be affected by many communication protocols, such as using an actual photo as a profile picture on Facebook and Twitter or using a conversational voice that exudes being genuine and transparent. Thus, the essence of authenticity is being what one seems to be rather than being “inauthentic” and manufactured to achieve some self-serving end. In public relations, advertising, and marketing, having a social media presence that is deemed authentic is vital to efforts to achieve brand equity and branding.

Users of social media believe that the medium should be an extension of reality, as if both persons communicating are right in front of each other. Authenticity is a social construct guided by communication protocols; for instance, most users of social media will not “tweet” or update their statuses with no concern for the audience. Thus, no absolute rules define what constitutes authenticity within social media; instead, social media users must consider authentic what is in each context. What is considered authentic constantly changes and what symbols or signifiers mark something as authentic change based on each context. Authenticity is constructed based on what is inauthentic at the time.

To be perceived as authentic on sites with large audiences, such as Facebook, social media users may choose status updates or post details that they believe their acquaintances will find the least offensive. Similarly, Twitter users, in an effort to negotiate multiple and overlapping audiences, may strategically conceal information and target their tweets to different audiences while attempting to be authentic and portray an interesting personality. Social media users must maintain a balance between personal authenticities—sharing personal information versus keeping certain information private from particular audiences.

In public relations, using social media as a tool for branding and promotion works best when coupled with honesty. Companies need to find the

space between marketing their products or services and maintaining a human connection with their audiences. Using social media to create a personal brand involves the following: projecting who you are clearly and consistently; promising value to consumers; and differentiating your business, product, or service from others. It also allows the business to focus on its strengths. Such efforts require genuineness, which can be destroyed if it is discovered that practitioners are voicing comments about a product for hire while pretending to be “ordinary customers.”

Authenticity is also tied in with trust and credibility. Self-disclosure is important when attempting to gain audience trust. Relationships created through social media are seen as voluntary and are based on trust and mutual reflexivity and self-disclosure. This give-and-take relationship involves honesty and transparency, which lead to authenticity.

Being authentic on social media is not without its challenges, especially for businesses, who are attempting to reach out to customers while trying to control messages.

Sadaf R. Ali

See also Brand Equity and Branding; Credibility; Trust

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B

BACKGROUND

A backgrounder is one of many written public relations tactics that often supports and explains an accompanying news release. It is an in-depth document that provides an information base by offering relevant background information on the reporting organization. Backgrounders can be a good reference tool for journalists, who want an explanation of main areas of interest relevant to their target audiences. They are often included as collateral materials in a press kit or distributed at a news conference.

Backgrounders are similar to a more detailed version of a fact sheet, usually presented in a brief “who-what-when-where-why” outline or bulleted format. The factual information is presented in that traditional list (the five Ws) of journalist topics. The details are featured to make the writing of the story easier and more orderly. Both backgrounders and fact sheets are objective in nature, which makes them different from *position papers*, sometimes called *white papers*. Position papers usually take a stance or position on a particular issue. A position paper uses evidence to make a case for the specific viewpoint of the organization. A backgrounder, however, is a more neutral and thorough examination of either a specific topic or the organization in general.

Backgrounders normally appear on organizational letterhead and are between one and five pages long. They may be written in one of two styles: a concise, inverted-pyramid style; or a longer,

more descriptive narrative style that provides more depth than a news release. It is important to avoid jargon and advanced, industry-specific language unless the backgrounder is designed for a specialized or technically oriented audience, as for a trade publication. Backgrounders are meticulously researched and often require the use of subheads or main points of interest so that the reader can skim and quickly digest the most relevant material.

The content of a backgrounder can include information on organizational management, organizational history, biographical information on the company CEO, target markets, products or services, testimonials, explanations or elaborations of the findings of a survey or other research, and the organization’s website address. Because a backgrounder often provides supplemental information to an accompanying news release, it can contain material on any topic that helps a journalist write a comprehensive story. A backgrounder is usually longer and more general in content than a news release, which is limited to information announcing a specific news item.

When composed for an external audience (such as journalists), it is essential that the backgrounder appear in a journalistically approved style. As with a news release, no payment or compensation is made if the content of the backgrounder is published. Also similar to a news release, backgrounders are sent on the basis of news interest and timeliness for the audience. They can be very valuable for a journalist and are often kept on file for future reference by both journalists and public relations practitioners. However, they should be

updated regularly to keep information current and accurate. Other external audiences for a backgrounder include opinion leaders, regulators, legislators, and special interest organizations. Backgrounders can also be used for internal audiences as an information resource for management and employees. For example, they may supplement content for speeches, annual reports, or internal magazines.

Lisa Lyon

See *also* Fact Sheet; Position and Positioning

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BARCELONA PRINCIPLES

Evaluating the impact and measuring the effect of communications campaigns is one of the hardest parts of explaining and justifying what public relations is and how it can contribute and add value to organizations and society. The Barcelona Principles are a set of guidelines intended to help practitioners articulate how to measure the impact of their campaigns. The principles were developed in 2010 when more than 200 communications and measurement specialists from more than 30 countries met in Barcelona. The principles are described by Robert W. Grupp as “a new declaration of standards and practices to guide measurement and evaluation of public relations.” Seven principles were developed during the conference, which were intended to move the public relations practice forward in terms of measurement and evaluation of campaigns. The aspiration was to provide greater structure, consistency, and rigor to the evaluation process and most importantly challenge and

fundamentally reject long-standing and flawed methods still being applied by practice, principally the use of advertising value equivalents (AVEs). The Barcelona Principles that were developed from the conference are briefly discussed and explained below to provide a context and understanding of their purpose.

1. Importance of Goal Setting and Measurement

Firstly, communication campaign goals should be clearly identified. This principle argues for the goals to also be as quantifiable as possible to facilitate measurement. The measurement identified should address what impact is expected on stakeholders. Critics have questioned the assumption of quantitative measurement's superiority over qualitative, which is equally and, in some schools, more commonly used in academic communication research. This principle and the role of qualitative elements are built on subsequent principles.

2. Media Measurement Requires Quantity and Quality

This principle develops the first principle and acknowledges that some measurement approaches record relevant data (i.e., the numerical scoring or counting of clippings or impressions) but do not adequately account for measurement impact in more qualitative terms, such as tone, credibility, source, and media outlet. This principle therefore suggests building on the first principle and recognizing the nuance of media impact.

3. AVEs Are *Not* the Value of Public Relations

The powerful message and the most reported outcome of the Barcelona conference and the subsequent principles was the confident statement recorded in the third principle that AVEs do not measure the work of public relations. At the conference 92% of delegates agreed with this principle statement. The gap and the challenge, of course, have been to identify what the alternatives are to AVEs. This debate continues and has been reflected in practitioner, academic, and online debates.

4. Social Media Can and Should Be Measured

This principle argues that organizations need clearly defined goals and outcomes for social media. As with traditional media, evaluating quality and quantity is critical. Media content analysis should be supplemented by Web and search analytics, sales and customer relationship management (CRM) data, survey data, and other methods. In addition, the Principles claim that given the scale and volume of social media, technology-assisted analysis may be necessary. Measurement of social media must focus on conversations and communities, not “coverage.” Finally, understanding reach and influence is important, but existing sources are not acceptable, transparent, or consistent enough to be reliable. The suggestion is that experimentation and testing are keys to success.

5. Measuring Outcomes Is Preferred to Measuring Media Results

The fifth principle develops further the first and the second. Clearly the statement rightly supports that outcomes take variable forms, such as attitude and behavior change, policy and practice influence, etc. In essence the principle acknowledges the qualitative component more fully but also expands and explores the scope and influence of research understanding and the importance and benefits of applying consistent research methods and practice from both qualitative and quantitative traditions.

6. Business (read: Organizational) Results Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible

In this principle practitioners are encouraged to record and measure the impact public relations has on traditional business outputs more transparently, essentially measuring the impact on business performance such as sales. This is arguably something many public relations managers have been doing, but the principle reinforces the need in the context of integrated marketing communication strategies where public relations makes a significant contribution that needs to be isolated and measured.

7. Transparency and Reliability Are Paramount to Sound Measurement

The final principle is a clear acknowledgement of the knowledge and understanding that already

exists in academic research across many disciplines. Essentially this relates to conducting research, which falls within the basic structures of methodological practice and aims to achieve reliability, validity, transparency, and therefore research that is replicable where possible. This is an important recognition that demonstrates that practice in public relations continues to lag behind other business disciplines in adopting and using academic research to support and underpin the development of the discipline and practice.

The Barcelona Principles have been subsequently debated at follow-up conferences. They received mixed responses with many practitioners endorsing and supporting them while academics are more challenging and questioning of the impact and effect they have both on practice and on moving the discipline forward. Even if the Barcelona Principles are not particularly imaginative or innovative, they provide some simple guidelines and rules for engagement on the much-debated issue of measurement and evaluation. So far, they have not provided a silver-bullet solution to the problem. What is positive is that they provide a clear and transparent set of basic standards and best practices. They also inspire a mind-set change to support and propose more thorough analysis and measurement of communication campaigns. The principles have made an impact in helping the practice move away from the use of AVEs and place measurement at the center of developing a communications strategy.

Ralph Tench

See also Advertising Equivalency; Analytics; Content Analysis; Goals; Objectives; Qualitative Research; Quantitative Research

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BARNUM, P. T.

Doug Newsom, Judy Vanslyke Turk, and Dean Kruckeberg (2000) concluded that public relations played a substantial role in the growth of America's entertainment industry. They wrote that the tactic of *press agentry*, defined as "a function of public relations that involves creating news events of a transient, often flighty sort" (p. 533), grew up with the entertainment business in the 19th century. Perhaps no one is more completely identified with that tradition than P. T. Barnum.

Newsom, Turk, and Kruckeberg (2000) described Phineas T. Barnum (1810–1891) as one of many "circus showmen" who practiced press agentry (p. 37). If 20th-century public relations grew out of 19th-century press agentry, then public relations practitioners should be familiar both with what press agentry was, especially as practiced by Barnum, and with the effects that Barnum's actions had on the way that public relations is viewed today.

In *The Fabulous Showman: The Life and Times of P. T. Barnum*, Irving Wallace (1959) wrote that Barnum considered himself more of a promoter and a "museum man" than a "circus man" (p. 226). According to Wallace, Barnum did not become a full-time circus proprietor until after his 60th birthday, and even though he "gave the circus its size, its most memorable attractions and its widest popularity," the misconception persists that he invented the circus. In fact, the modern circus was created in England by Philip Astley in 1768.

According to the website www.ringling.com, Barnum joined promotional forces with James A. Bailey and James L. Hutchinson in 1881, and in 1888, the "Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth" first toured America. Barnum died in 1891, and Bailey followed him in the spring of 1906. In 1907, the Ringling brothers of Baraboo, Wisconsin, purchased Barnum & Bailey Circus, their largest competitor. In 1919, the two entities

merged, forming Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey®, The Greatest Show on Earth®, as it is still known today.

A closer look is needed to explore the years of Barnum's life that led up to his circus days.

In the year 2000, Barnum's autobiography, *The Life of P. T. Barnum, Written by Himself*, was reprinted (it was first printed in 1855). In the introduction, Terence Whalen (2000) wrote,

For more than fifty years, Phineas T. Barnum embodied all that was grand and fraudulent in American mass culture. His life spanned nearly the entire nineteenth century, and during that period he inflicted himself upon a surprisingly willing public in a wide variety of roles. Barnum's supporters pointed to his exemplary success as a newspaper editor, lottery agent, museum director, politician, traveling showman and distinguished public benefactor. Barnum's detractors, however, used different names to describe his meteoric career: libeler, swindler, huckster, demagogue, charlatan and shameless hypocrite. (p. vi)

Whalen (2000) also observed that Barnum "desired and deliberately fostered this ambiguous public image" and that it was through his use of the new publishing industry and as a notable author that he constructed this image (p. vi). In the 2001 update of *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Stanley J. Baran confirmed that "mass circulation newspapers and the first successful consumer magazines appeared in the 1830s, expanding the ability of people and organizations to communicate with the public" (p. 251).

After a Danbury, Connecticut, newspaper refused to print a letter from Barnum, he decided to publish his own weekly newspaper, the *Herald of Freedom*, which commenced publication October 19, 1831. Of course, this wasn't without incident. During his three years as editor, Barnum was prosecuted three times for libel and at one point was fined and sentenced to 60 days in jail. But on the day he was released, Barnum made sure it was a "media event and public-relations triumph. He achieved this by assembling carriages for a procession, engaging a band and organizing a large celebration dinner" (Whalen, 2000, p. xiii). Whalen (2000) concluded that "in a more modern sense, Barnum acted as a prototypical spin doctor, for he

understood that the social meaning of an event (or crime) was not given from the start, but could instead be created or manipulated through the emergent mass media" (p. xiii).

Newsom and colleagues (2000) identified Barnum as one of the most famous and successful 19th-century press agents and credited him for creating, promoting, and exploiting the careers of many celebrities. They cited the example of Barnum exhibiting a black slave in 1835 named Joice Heth, claiming she had nursed George Washington 100 years before and reported how newspapers fell for the story, intrigued by its historical angle (Newsom et al., 2000, p. 38). Whalen (2000) claimed that although Heth was reputed to be the 161-year-old nurse of George Washington, it was, of course, "a patent lie." He noted that whereas later editions of Barnum's autobiography "describe the affair in apologetic terms, the original version seems playfully indifferent to issues of truth and falsehood" (p. xiv).

In his autobiography, Barnum wrote that he learned of Heth in the summer of 1835 and paid \$1,000 for her possession. Whalen attributed many factors to why thousands of people paid to see her, including the fact that she looked the part, as she was "withered, blind and toothless; she had also lost the use of most of her limbs" (2000, p. xiv). Newsom et al. noted that public interest in Heth began to die and letters were written to the editor under assumed names, debating her authenticity. Barnum didn't care what the papers said, as long as he got space. Some practitioners today operate from a similar philosophy. They don't care what kind of coverage their client gets as long as the client's name is spelled correctly, an all-too-common philosophy of the press agent, especially in the entertainment industry.

When Heth died, an autopsy suggested her age to be about 80. According to Whalen, even after Heth's death, Barnum continued to try to convince the public of her authenticity. He sent his associate, Levi Lyman, to James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Herald* with a different story. As, Whalen notes, "Barnum had decided it would be expedient to muddy the waters and reinforce the continuing public belief in Heth's authenticity" (p. xv). Lyman told Bennett the autopsy itself had been a hoax and that Heth was alive and well in Connecticut. Bennett reacted as Barnum had

anticipated. Whalen notes, "Bennett, eager to scoop a rival paper, ran the story and attacked the autopsy results. He stood behind the story for a time, but much to his dismay, he soon realized the hoax was on him" (p. xv). But several months later, Barnum's associate Levi Lyman appeared "contrite" and offered another "real" story to Bennett, who was convinced and, in a series of stories, offered a new "full and accurate account of the hoax" (Whalen, 2000, p. xv).

Whalen (2000) observed that "Barnum allowed this account to remain unchallenged until his autobiography, where like a triumphant serial hoaxer, he confessed to having duped Bennett a second (or third) time" (p. xvi). There was a reason why Barnum waited 20 years to write this. In Barnum's words, "newspaper and social controversy on the subject (and seldom have vastly more important matters been so largely discussed) served my purpose as 'a showman' by keeping my name before the public" (1855/2000, p. 176).

Barnum's last sentence of the Heth chapter in his autobiography claimed that "the remains of Joice were removed to Bethel, and buried respectably" (1855/2000, p. 176), but in his book, *P. T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man*, A. H. Saxon wrote that "there is no trace today of Joice Heth in Bethel" (1989, p. 74). Newsom et al. noted that Saxon too had been duped in regard to details about Heth's life. The authors asked, "Was this true? Why not? After all, 'there's a sucker born every minute'" (Newsom et al., 2000, p. 38).

What's interesting about this phrase, wrote Saxon in 1989, is that it is the one statement nearly everyone associates with Barnum, but in fact, it was never spoken or written by him. Saxon unravels the mystery this way: A tale was told by Joseph McCaddon, Bailey's brother-in-law, who was in turn told by Captain Alexander Williams of the New York City Police Department that the expression was first used in the early 1880s by a notorious "confidence man" known to the police as "Paper Collar Joe." His real name was Joseph Bes-simer. McCaddon reported the complete statement as being "There is a sucker born every minute, but none of them ever die" (Saxon, 1989, p. 336).

Whalen told the reader that the first six chapters of Barnum's autobiography are about petty frauds and practical jokes that the people of Bethel, Connecticut (where Barnum was raised), inflicted

on each other. Chapter 7 included the Heth account. Whalen concluded that “Barnum’s stunning success derived from his unique ability to combine short-term sensations with a profitable, long-term strategy” (2000, p. xi), and that “although the individual scenes reek of scandal and low cunning, the narrative voice wins a measure of sympathy through frankness, audacity and irony” (2000, p. xii). Whalen observed that

in subsequent chapters, Barnum portrays himself in a more sympathetic light by showing how he occasionally gave the public its money’s worth. The second half of his autobiography includes extended accounts of Barnum’s three most “worthy” ventures: Tom Thumb, Jenny Lind and the American Museum. (2000, p. xix)

Charles Sherwood Stratton was a 4-year-old Connecticut boy whom Barnum named “General Tom Thumb.” Stratton was less than two feet tall and weighed less than 16 pounds, probably because of a condition called ateliotic dwarfism. Barnum realized the promotion possibilities with this midget were endless; he just needed to make it a really great story. In his autobiography, he writes that he upped Tom Thumb’s age to 11 to emphasize that he was “really a dwarf” (1855/2000, p. 244).

The case with opera singer Jenny Lind shows that perhaps Barnum was trying to control his exaggerations. Whalen stated that Barnum negotiated a contract with Lind and from September 1850 to June 1851, she was “at the center of a carefully orchestrated media storm, and she played to packed houses throughout the nation” (2000, p. xx). Barnum wrote in his autobiography,

I may as well here state, that although I relied prominently upon Jenny Lind’s reputation as a great musical *artiste*, I also took largely into my estimate of her success with all classes of the American public, her character for extraordinary benevolence and generosity. Without this peculiarity in her disposition, I never would have dared make the engagement. (1855/2000, p. 307)

Whalen had this to say about the one other example from later chapters in Barnum’s autobiography: “From Barnum’s perspective, old-fashioned morality was less important than professional

achievement, and thus is the story of his acquisition of the American Museum at the end of 1841” (2000, p. xxii). This event included what people of today might consider deception or false advertising, but Barnum perceived it differently.

Barnum hired a band to perform at the museum, free of charge to the public. But people who came to hear the free music got less than they bargained for—and on purpose. As cited in Whalen, Barnum wrote in the second version of his autobiography in 1869 (*Struggles and Triumphs: Or, Forty Years’ Recollection of P. T. Barnum, Written by Himself*),

I took pains to select and maintain the poorest band I could find—one whose discordant notes would drive the crowd into the Museum, out of earshot of my outside orchestra. Of course, the music was poor. When people expect to get “something for free” they are sure to be cheated and generally deserve to be. (2000, pp. 131–132)

Although these stories provide only a glimpse into the thought processes and dealings of P. T. Barnum, they send a message to public relations practitioners of today that distorting the facts for profitable gain at the expense of the public is not morally right or acceptable.

According to Stanley Baran, the time that the modern national political campaign was born (1896) is about the same time that public relations began to acquire its deceitful, huckster image. He concluded that “a disregard for the public and the willingness of public relations experts to serve the powerful fueled this view, but public relations began to establish itself as a profession during this time” (2001, p. 252). Some might argue that Barnum helped contribute to any misconceptions that the current practice of public relations is like his practice of press agentry.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) was formed in 1947. Although this was a little too late for Barnum, one might wonder whether he would have belonged or would have simply formed his own society. The fact remains that the world is much different than it was in the 1800s. Even if the public is gullible, it is the job of the responsible and ethical practitioner to report only what is true.

In the year 2000, the PRSA board of directors introduced a dramatically revised Public Relations

Member Code of Ethics (available at www.prsa.org). Within the core values of the code is the following statement:

We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public, we are accountable for our actions, and we are faithful to those we represent, while honoring our obligation to serve the public interest.

Is Barnum just the exception to the rule? Scott Cutlip, Alan Center, and Glen Broom offered the following interpretation of this phenomenon called P. T. Barnum:

Barnum's showmanship was evident not only in a canny instinct that enabled him to give the masses what they wanted, but also in his ability to dictate to them a desire for what he thought they should want. . . . Every man has his star. Barnum's star was an exclamation mark. (1999, p. 107)

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See also Media Relations; Press Agency; Promotion; Publicity

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BATEMAN, J. CARROLL

"I believe that public relations is a profession which should concern itself not with manipulation of people but with their continuing enlightenment" (Bateman, 1974, p. 6). So begins the credo that J. Carroll Bateman (1917–1982) wrote for public relations practice.

Bateman was a leader in public relations both nationally and internationally. He served as president of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1967, presiding over the PRSA board meeting in Philadelphia when it voted to establish the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). The national case competition administered by PRSSA is named for him. He served as president of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) in 1980. He devoted his last two years to public relations education after a long and distinguished career as a practitioner.

Born July 13, 1917, in Norwood, Pennsylvania, Bateman was raised in Baltimore, Maryland. He earned a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University and a master's degree from New York University, where he wrote a thesis titled "Communications in Education." He was a reporter and feature writer for the *Baltimore Evening Sun* from 1934 to 1942 before becoming assistant editor of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's *B&O Magazine*. He served in the United States Army in World War II, returned to the B&O Railroad as public relations representative, and was promoted in 1951 to assistant director of public relations for the railroad. He joined the Eastern Railroad Presidents Conference in New York in 1953 as assistant chairman for public relations and advertising.

He served as public relations director of the Milk Industry Foundation in Washington, D.C., from 1955 to 1960. From 1960 to 1979, he functioned as general manager and president of the Insurance Information Institute, a public relations and public education organization supported by several hundred insurance companies in the property and liability field.

Bateman received numerous awards for his contributions to the field of public relations. He was named PR Professional of the Year by *Public Relations News* in 1973. He received the Gold Anvil Award from PRSA in 1975 for his contributions to the profession. During his tenure at the Insurance Information Institute, he received seven Silver Anvil Awards for outstanding public relations programs. He was editor and sole contributor to the *Public Relations Journal's* book review column. He was a frequent contributor to the *Public Relations Quarterly* and the *IPRA Review*, and he served in an editorial capacity with the *Public Relations Review*, *Public Relations News*, and *Journal of Commerce*. Bateman participated in several IPRA-sponsored World Congresses, serving as general chairman of the VII World Congress of Public Relations, which was held in Boston in 1976.

Bateman is revered in PRSSA history for his instrumental role in founding PRSSA during his presidency of the PRSA. He made education one of his initiatives in his term as president of PRSA in 1967. In his acceptance speech in November 1966, Bateman "stressed the advancement of education for public relations practitioners, one of the main goals of his regime" (Simon, 1968b, p. 30). In his inaugural speech as the new president of PRSA, Bateman "stressed his intention to underscore professional advancement through education as one of his chief goals" (Simon, 1967a, p. 37).

Bateman and two other representatives of PRSA met in August 1967 at the annual Association of Education in Journalism convention in Boulder, Colorado, to discuss "the desirability of establishing a single, nationwide student organization affiliated with the PRSA" (Simon, 1967c, p. 47). Formation of the student organization was approved by the PRSA Board in November 1967. It was expected that the first chapters would be activated by the end of the following spring term.

The PRSA Board of Directors on April 4, 1968, "gave formal approval to the formation of nine

chapters of the newly organized PRSSA." The board decision established "the first professional public relations oriented student organization in America sponsored by a national association of public relations practitioners" (Simon, 1968b, p. 30). The first chapters were at San Jose State College, The Ohio State University, University of Maryland, University of Texas, University of Florida, University of Houston, University of South Carolina, Utica College of Syracuse, and West Virginia University. Additional student chapters were established by the end of the year.

In the words of Dr. Frederick Teahan of PRSA's headquarters, the purpose of the student organization was to

cultivate a favorable and mutually advantageous relationship between students and professional public relations practitioners, foster students' understanding of current theories and procedures . . . and make evident and desirable membership in the PRSA—when the student subsequently becomes eligible. (Simon, 1968a, p. 31)

In 1981, when Betsy Plank and Jon Riffel founded the informal organization Friends of PRSSA (now known as Champions of PRSSA), Bateman became a charter member.

Bateman represented PRSA on the American Council on Education for Journalism after PRSA became an active participant in the American Council for Education in Journalism (ACEJ) in 1968. He represented PRSA on ACEJ for 11 years and was a member of more than 20 accrediting visits for public relations curriculum sequences across the country.

From 1973 to 1974, Bateman served as cochair of the Commission on Public Relations Education and was coauthor with Scott Cutlip of the commission's report titled "A Design for Public Relations Education." The Bateman-Cutlip report was considered "a very valuable contribution on the subject of public relations education" (Karl, 1980, p. 62).

A National Case Study competition was established by PRSA in 1973 to allow students in PRSSA to have an opportunity to exercise the analytical skills and mature judgment required for public relations problem solving. Following his death, the name of the competition was changed to honor Bateman in 1983.

In September 1980, Bateman joined the public relations faculty at the University of Tennessee to provide leadership in the public relations sequence. He taught courses in public relations management and public relations cases, advised the University of Tennessee chapter of PRSSA, organized a student-run public relations firm, planned the university's first PR Day, participated in the university's College of Business Administration's Executive-on-Campus program, and convinced the PRSA's board to bring its annual Institute to East Tennessee during the 1982 World's Fair.

After his first quarter of teaching, his doctor warned him of congestive heart failure, urging him to slow down. Bateman wrote to his department head, "My own inclination is to keep going" (Bateman, 1981, n.p.). At age 64, Bateman died suddenly from a heart attack on April 24, 1982. He had participated in the University of Tennessee's second PR Day the previous week. He was survived by his wife of 42 years, Marguerite, a daughter, Carol Anne, and a son, Walter Raymond.

An editorial in the University of Tennessee's student newspaper, *The Daily Beacon*, observed, "Students Lose a Friend." The *Public Relations Journal* devoted a full page to honor his memory in May 1982. He had figured prominently in the 34th national convention of PRSA in November 1981, serving on a panel discussion.

"Carroll was never really satisfied with the status quo of his chosen profession," said longtime friend and public relations colleague Herbert B. Bain, speaking at Bateman's memorial service in April 1982 in Butler, New Jersey. "He always wanted to know more about it, to find better ways of doing things. He continued his university studies at night school and received his master's degree. He wrote articles and books on public relations." Bain acknowledged Bateman's numerous professional recognitions, "and rightly so. For no one ever did more to turn this vocation of PR into a real profession than did J. C. Bateman."

The following version of his credo concluded his remarks to the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Businesses, April 25, 1974:

I believe that public relations is a profession which should concern itself not with manipulation of people but with their continuing enlightenment;

I believe that public relations practice should strive to elevate its audiences rather than to degrade them, and that communications should be addressed to reason and judgment rather than to emotion and prejudice;

I believe that sound public relations comprises policies and deeds as well as words; that it should deal in truth rather than deception; and that it should seek to clarify the issues of our times rather than to confuse them;

While I may undertake to present one side of an issue for public consideration, I believe in the right of those with opposing points of view to present their case also;

I believe that the public interest takes precedence over the interests of those I represent; and I conceive of my functions as being to assist in conforming the interests of those I represent to the interests of the public when the two do not coincide;

I recognize that the consequences of my actions are effected in the minds of men; and because the human mind has unmeasurable potentials for good and evil, I should approach my task with overriding respect for the right of the individual to make his own judgments. (Bateman, 1974, n.p.)

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See also Public Relations Education, History of; Public Relations Society of America; Public Relations Student Society of America

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BATTLE OF THE CURRENTS

One of the most dramatic exchanges in the history of public relations is the “battle of the currents,” a competition started in the late 1880s that sought to determine whether direct current (DC) or alternating current (AC) would become the industry standard for electricity delivery. Specifically, the battle pitted Thomas Edison and the General Electric Corporation against Nikola Tesla, who was backed by George Westinghouse of the Westinghouse Corporation. The exchange is significant in that it is paradigmatic of the personal, political, economic, and public relations battles that occur as new technology matures to the point where one form of technology becomes the industry standard at the expense of another.

Alternating Current Versus Direct Current

On one level, the battle between alternating current and direct current was a straightforward technical question. Direct current is the more simple and uncomplicated form of current. In it, current flows in one direction, such as in a flashlight, where it flows from the batteries to the light. In the battle of the currents, direct current was developed

first and was already on the market—with stations in Manhattan and in other major cities—when alternating current appeared. In Edison’s day, direct current required the construction of a power station every mile or two because direct current degraded as it was transmitted down a power line.

Alternating current is much more complex. Current moves not in one direction, but in both directions, alternating approximately 60 times every second. At the time, unlike direct current alternating current was shown to be able to travel large distances with increasing success, which would allow for the development of fewer and hence more cost-effective power stations. Two other advantages stood out for the selection of alternating current: One, it could easily be sent through narrow copper wire, unlike direct current, which at the time needed larger wire; and two, it could be “stepped up” to high velocity, which enabled large volumes to be transmitted over high tension wires and then “stepped down” to low velocity for use in individual homes and applications.

Clearly alternating current enjoyed a technical advantage over direct current. But Edison had “gotten there first” and believed that he had spent too much money developing direct current to abandon it, even at the urging of some of his fellow colleagues at Menlo Park. After 11 patent infringement lawsuits against Westinghouse failed, Edison decided to go public. Such a decision led to the battle of the currents.

The Battle Is Joined

The battle, depending on one’s perspective, shows public relations at its most innovative and creative, or at its most desperate. As General Electric began to witness the development and popular acceptance of alternating current, Edison and his colleagues went on the offensive with the assistance of his secretary, Samuel Insull. In particular, they claimed that alternating current was unsafe (though ironically, direct current was responsible for the death of 400 people in the great blizzard of March 1888). Indeed, they published a bright red pamphlet, titled “A Warning From the Edison Electric Light Company,” which purported to explain the dangers of alternating current. Harold Passer (1953) wrote,

The Edison viewpoint was that alternating current endangered the lives of all members of a community where it was present. . . . The strategy of the Edison Company was to educate public opinion to the view that AC was an intolerable menace to the American people, fostered upon it by a selfish and profit seeking corporation. (p. 168)

In addition to the arguments against the AC format, the book contained an appendix that listed the names of those killed by alternating current.

Much of the strategy was conducted through the media-savvy Edison and his team. Most of their efforts focused on the supposed danger surrounding alternating current. In 1887, at his Menlo Park laboratory, Matthew Josephson wrote that “in the presence of newspaper reporters and other invited guests, Edison and Batchelor [an associate] would edge a little dog onto a sheet of tin to which were attached wires from an AC generator supplying current at 1,000 volts” (1959, p. 347). The implication, of course, was that alternating power was dangerous. And the fact that members of Edison’s team used the term “Westinghoused” when referring to the act of killing the dogs did not hurt either.

In recounting the efforts by Edison against Tesla and Westinghouse, George Westinghouse noted some of the stunts used by Edison:

I remember Tom [Edison] telling them that direct current was like a river flowing peacefully to the sea, while alternating current was like a torrent rushing violently over a precipice. Imagine that! Why they even had a professor named Harold Brown who went around talking to audiences . . . and electrocuting dogs and old horses right on stage, to show how dangerous alternating current was. (Tesla, 2003, n.p.)

Perhaps the lowest moment of Edison’s storied career came during the battle of the currents. In an effort to show that alternating current was dangerous, he engaged in a subtle, behind-the-scenes effort to get the State of New York to use alternating current to execute a criminal. Although Edison’s involvement in the effort was originally thought to be limited, recent works show that he played a more direct role in its development. The primary electrician was the aforementioned Harold Brown, who led the push for the electric chair

until it was adopted in 1888. When the first criminal, William Kemmler, a fellow from Buffalo who had killed his paramour, Matilda “Tillie” Ziegler, was executed on August 6, 1890, the electrocution required two different jolts of 1,300-volt alternating current; the first lasted 17 seconds, and the second took more than a minute. Indeed, after seeing it, some suggested that hanging was a much more humane way to execute criminals. One newspaper ran the headline “Kemmler Westinghoused.” Richard Moran hypothesized that Edison bribed a reporter to run the story and headline (2002).

Although Edison was offensive and relentless in his efforts to promote direct current at the expense of alternating current, the Westinghouse Corporation was slow to respond and, in its efforts, emphasized the technical superiority of alternating current over direct current. Indeed, H. C. Passer asserted that by the summer of 1888, Westinghouse realized that Edison’s efforts were starting to be effective with a public that knew little about electricity. As a result, the Westinghouse Company finally came out with a booklet in October 1889 titled “Safety of the Alternating System of Electrical Distribution,” which hailed the benefits and safety of this form of electrical distribution. George Westinghouse also went one step further and hired a newspaperman, Ernest H. Heinrichs, a reporter who worked for the *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*, to tell the AC side of the story. In his charge, Westinghouse stated that he wanted to use advertising to correct the negative perception of the safety of alternating current and to rebut inaccurate accounts. Scott Cutlip wrote that Heinrichs led the public relations campaign for Westinghouse by “ghosting a reply to articles by Edison and Brown that had been published in the *North American Review*” (1995, p. 203), which refuted the claims against alternating current. Indeed, research suggests that it took approximately three years of consistent advertising and communication for alternating current to begin to be recognized for its safety and advantages and for it to become adopted as the standard by many municipalities.

Most consider that the battle of the currents was not completely finished until the successful completion of two events. The first was the choice of alternating current to power the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair; this was the first all-electric World’s Fair in history. From then on, 80% of all electrical

devices ordered were for alternating current. The second was the development of hydroelectric power in the late 1890s at Niagara Falls. The consortium that developed the falls included both Westinghouse and General Electric; it chose the alternating current system to deliver electricity throughout the region.

Keith M. Hearit

See also Antecedents of Modern Public Relations; Industrial Barons (of the 1870s–1920s); Issues Management

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BEAT

A beat is the specific assignment filled by a reporter. Each beat is a topic area, usually relating to some aspect of newspaper, television, or radio news. Until recently, the news tradition relied on beat assignments as a means for increasing the expertise and newsgathering ability of key reporters.

Typical beats might include city hall, police, entertainment, finance, social scenes, religion, education, fashion, and sports. Periodically, news organizations have environmental quality and consumer protection beats. Certain news organizations have national and international beats. They might have state capitol, Washington, D.C., or Middle East beats.

By dividing reporters by beats, news organizations can be sure that they cover the important topics, groups, and institutions within their community where news is likely to occur. Once beats are established, reporters are assigned to cover them. This increases the likelihood that the news organization will know what is going on over the full range of news.

Beats add depth to coverage and provide practitioners with predictable opportunities for specific photo-ops. Each reporter can become an expert on the events, people, opinions, and issues relevant to a beat. The dynamics of a community's social scene (society page beat), for example, are quite different—even if interdependent at times—from the city hall beat. Which socialite is hosting which nonprofit event is different from what member of city council is fighting for or against some measure pending before the council. Financial reporting on business trends, economic forces, and publicly traded companies takes special knowledge and insights that differ from sports reporting. Sports reporters need to know the ERAs (earned run averages) of the baseball leagues' pitchers. Financial beat reporters need to know about IRAs (individual retirement accounts).

Just as beats are important for news organizations, they have a parallel importance for public relations. If a publicly held company is hosting a golf tournament, that is sports news, and it is financial news. In the sports page, the company wants its name mentioned as often as possible because that gives it name recognition and brand equity with customers. On the financial section, it wants to be seen as a company that knows how to gain name recognition and sell products. Such an event might make the social page if the CEO gives a large check to some charity. That news also can help drive sales and might attract investors.

Traditionally, the savvy public relations practitioner knows the reporters on each beat who are relevant to his or her practice. Mutually beneficial relationships can develop between reporters and practitioners.

Today, major changes are occurring in the nature of beat. New media, social media, blogging, and many other trends are eroding the universal sense of beat. A reporter is likely to get pictures and even text that originated in a viewer's or reader's cell phone. As newsroom populations are reduced,

more and more newsgathering is derivative of other media sources and lay publics in ways that are blurring the beat tradition.

Robert L. Heath

See also Brand Equity and Branding; Event Management; Media Relations; Media Release; Photo-Op

BENCHMARKING

Benchmarking is the process of creating points or measures against which a public relations campaign can be evaluated. Quite simply, without some form of benchmark, evaluating public relations is not possible. A benchmark, then, is some outcome used to measure a current campaign. For example, businesses and corporations often benchmark quarters and compare how sales, unit production, and shares compare against the previous quarter, or perhaps the same quarter from 2 years earlier.

All public relations campaigns need a benchmark in order to judge progress or against which decisions are made regarding alternate tactics. In most public relations campaigns, there are three separate campaign phases: The *developmental phase* is the planning process of the campaign, where specific benchmarks are established. The *refinement phase* occurs when the campaign is actually underway, and during this phase measurements are taken and compared against the identified benchmarks. The *evaluation phase* occurs when the campaign has been completed and results are compared against initial benchmarks.

Benchmark Objectives

Benchmarks are established based on the campaign's goals and objectives. A *goal* is the campaign's general expected outcome. *Objectives* are specific outputs employed tactically to obtain certain outcomes. For example, a goal may be to increase awareness of a corporation's philanthropy. The goal may be obtained through the use of press releases, brochures, articles in magazines, and so forth. The use of the various media is part of the objective—to increase awareness through these outputs—to achieve an outcome. The outcome

must be measurable, must be tied to the goal, and must clearly come from the outputs. The objectives are then evaluated against the established benchmarks for the campaign.

Unlike many business objectives, which are almost always based on financial or physical objects, a public relations objective often is more abstract. Thus, public relations objectives and their benchmarks are typically of three types: informational, motivational, and behavioral. *Informational benchmarks* set the mark for how much information is getting out in the campaign. *Motivational benchmarks* establish what that information has done regarding attitudes toward the campaign objective. *Behavioral benchmarks* establish whether the target audience is reacting the way the campaign intended. Finally, there is the ultimate evaluation, where the actual behavior desired either occurs at the level expected or does not.

In our business awareness example, benchmarks are created during the campaign's developmental phase to be used both in evaluating the campaign's progress toward meeting its goal and to determine whether the specific informational, motivational, and behavioral objectives are being met. Developmental benchmarks are often obtained from historical and secondary data. These may come from previous campaigns or may be found in industry-wide or media-related publications. For instance, suppose the company had conducted a similar campaign five years earlier. Use of the results from that campaign could be used as a benchmark against which to evaluate the new campaign. On the other hand, a survey may have been conducted that indicated an awareness problem, and the results can be used as the benchmark against which the campaign is evaluated during the refinement and evaluation phases. The survey (or focus group or interview data) is considered primary data—data gathered by the company itself just prior to the developmental phase or as a part of the developmental phase. Thus, developmental benchmarks might consist of attitude surveys (primary data) or secondary data. Secondary data, for instance, are gathered from other sources that indicate how aware key customers are of the company, its products, or its services. Primary and secondary data can be used in combination.

What is important is that the benchmarks are something the campaign can evaluate against

during its implementation. Developmental benchmarks provide data as to whether the campaign is progressing effectively in terms of messages received and understood, whether those messages are motivating the target audience as intended, and whether the target audience engages in the desired behaviors.

Refinement benchmarks should be established across the campaign timeline to indicate whether the campaign is working as expected. Refinement benchmarks can help to determine whether outputs are received, and if they are, whether they are motivating the target public as expected. Good refinement benchmarks typically follow this type of form of strategic planning: “by such and such a date, outcome should be X as compared to the initial baseline.” These benchmarks are extremely important and not only provide a measure of effectiveness but also can pinpoint errors in campaign logic. The ability of a campaign to determine whether certain outputs are working or require a tactics change may well be the difference between the final success or failure of a campaign.

Final evaluation benchmarks are found in the closing stages of the campaign. These benchmarks are set as close to the campaign goals as possible. Thus, final evaluation benchmarks are used to gauge whether the campaign’s tactics meet a projected goal or whether that goal should be reconsidered, the campaign revised or extended, or both. These benchmarks should clearly indicate behavioral intentions—in our example, that people will (1) have increased awareness of the company and (2) will use that awareness to do something that impacts positively on the company. Thus, final surveys or focus groups assess whether the company’s awareness has changed (hopefully for the better) and what that change may yield in terms of business objectives—again, typically financial or production-oriented.

Benchmarking provides the public relations practitioner with information as to why a campaign accomplished what it did and the logic to explain its outcome to clients. A campaign that has no benchmarks cannot provide a client with a clear-cut and empirically related rationale for why something worked (or often more importantly, why it did not work). It does not help if a target audience approached the campaign goal, but the practitioner was unable to show how that outcome was obtained; communication and psychological researchers have found

that if someone engages in an action and does not know why they engaged in it, then it is doubtful that they will repeat the action a second time. Carefully selected benchmarks provide the data that show that a campaign’s information was received, interpreted, and motivated the target audience to do what the campaign intended. They can also show where campaign tactics fell short, where they require reevaluation, or whether they were applied in an appropriate manner.

Without benchmarking, the public relations campaign is not measurable. Benchmarks provide the data points necessary to evaluate the campaign—both during the campaign (and thus providing evaluation points from which tactical change can be incorporated) and at the campaign’s end. Benchmarking should be employed in all types of public relations campaigns regardless of the campaign’s goal: whether to win an election, to manage a crisis, or to promote a product or personality.

Don W. Stacks

See also Focus Group; Qualitative Research; Quantitative Research; Statistical Analysis; Survey

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BERNAYS, EDWARD

Edward L. Bernays was one of the founding fathers of public relations. He invented the name for the emerging profession in 1920. In 1923, he taught the first course in public relations at New York University; he wrote the first book—*Crystallizing Public Opinion*—on public relations; he published the

first article on public relations in an academic journal—"Manipulating Public Opinion: The Why and the How"; and he published in *The American Journal of Sociology*—the same year. He concluded that article with the following paragraph:

This is an age of mass production. In the mass production of materials a broad technique has been developed and applied to their distribution. In this age, too, there must be a technique for the mass distribution of ideas. Public opinion can be moved, directed, and formed by such a technique. But at the core of this great heterogeneous body of public opinion is a tenacious will to live, to progress, to move in the direction of ultimate social and individual benefit. He who seeks to manipulate public opinion must always heed it. (Bernays, 1928a, p. 971)

He saw a broader social mission for the new social technology in a pluralist society. He defined it very simply: "Public relations means exactly what it says, relations of an organization, individual, idea, whatever, with the publics on which it depends for its existence" (Bernays, 1986, p. 35). For that reason, "Public relations counsel functions on a two way street. He interprets public to the client and client to public" (Bernays, 1986, pp. 35–36). Bernays envisioned public relations as a profession: "By definition, profession is an art applied to a science, in which the primary consideration is public interest, not pecuniary motivation" (Bernays, 1986, p. 36). Although his 1998 biography by Lary Tye is entitled *The Father of Spin: Edward L. Bernays & the Birth of Public Relations*, Bernays was an articulate opponent of "image making" (Bernays, 1986, p. 53):

The interest of both public and profession demands that the word "image" referring to public relations be eliminated. Practitioners should cease use of the word to describe their activities. The word "image" makes the reader or listener believe public relations deals with shadows and illusions. This word belittles a profession dealing with hard facts of behavior, attitudes and actions, that requires ability to evaluate public opinion and advise clients or employers on how to adjust to gain socially acceptable goals and to inform and persuade the public. (Bernays, 1986, pp. 54–55)

On p. 67, this argument is repeated in a short statement: "Public relations deals primarily with advice on action, based on social responsibility" (Bernays, 1986). For that reason he was a promoter of public relations research, education, and licensing. He saw public relations as being a social technology that can be used for either good or bad purposes—and as such in need of regulation.

Edward Bernays was born in 1891 in Vienna, Austria, and celebrated his first birthday on board the ship where his parents immigrated to the United States. He was a double nephew of Sigmund Freud (his father Eli Bernays was married to Ana Freud, sister of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis; Sigmund Freud was married to Eli's sister, Martha Bernays). After graduating from Cornell University, in 1913 he traveled to Europe to meet his famous uncle. When back in the United States, Bernays corresponded with Freud and helped him with translations of his works from German into English. James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt wrote that it was because of his relations with Freud that Bernays became interested in social sciences and that he was probably the first "intellectual" in the public relations profession (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 77). This is how Bernays saw his work:

Public relations counsel . . . functions primarily as an adviser to his client, very much as a lawyer does. . . . His first efforts are, naturally, devoted to analyzing his client's problems and making sure that what he has to offer the public is something which the public accepts or can be brought to accept. It is futile to attempt to sell an idea or to prepare the ground for a product that is basically unsound. . . . His next effort is to analyze his public. He studies the groups which must be reached, and the leaders through whom he may approach these groups. Social groups, economic groups, geographical groups, age groups, doctrinal groups, language groups, cultural groups, all these represent the division through which, on behalf of his client, he may talk to the public. . . . Only after this double analysis has been made and the results collated, has the time come for the next step, the formulation of policies governing the general practice, procedure and habits of the client in all those aspects in which he comes in contact with the public. And only when these policies have been agreed upon is it time for the fourth step. (1928b, pp. 38–41)

This fourth step is implementation, or execution of public relations programs. It is here when discussing implementation that Bernays, in the contemporary literature, achieves nearly mythical powers and becomes everything he was fighting against: Stuart Ewen put Edward Bernays in the very center of his *PR! A Social History of Spin* in 1996, while Tye named Bernays the father of spin in his 1998 book. Bernays himself contributed to this mythology when he published his 1962 autobiography three years after retiring and listed 229 of the most important clients he had served, among them: American Tobacco, Bank of America, CBS, General Electric, General Motors, Proctor & Gamble, United Fruit, Westinghouse, and more.

The most articulate criticism of Edward Bernays's work was published by Marvin Olasky in 1987. He wrote,

Bernays is known to some historians for naming the field that he would influence so heavily. In 1922, while Ivy Lee was still referring to himself as a publicity advisor, publicity expert, or publicity director, Bernays was describing himself as a public-relations counsel, and that is the title that caught on. . . . But Bernays did something more important: He gave public relations practitioners pride in their activities. . . . He was able to do so because of his communication skills and a personal belief-structure made up of atheism, Freudianism, and a faith that behind-the-scenes controllers should exercise "social responsibility" by devising clever public relations campaigns to direct "human herds" into appropriate corrals. (1987, p. 80)

Although Ewen's 1996 criticism of Bernays, his work, and his writing came from the left side of a political spectrum, Olasky's criticism is from the political right; Bernays became a symbolic figure for everything to be censured in contemporary public relations, and it is very interesting to see that the U.S. public relations community, academic and practitioner alike, is uncomfortable dealing with Bernays. Yet, if public relations is ever to get widespread recognition for doing something socially valuable, it can achieve this only by confronting Bernays and his legacy.

Bernays said in his 1955 article "The Theory and Practice of Public Relations: A Resume" that

public relations is the attempt, by information, persuasion, and adjustment, to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement, or institution. . . . Professionally, its activities are planned and executed by trained practitioners in accordance with scientific principles based on the findings of social sciences. The dispassionate approach and methods may be likened to those of the engineering professionals which stem from the physical sciences. (1955a, pp. 3–4)

Modernist and positivist approaches to social research and education that are explicit in Bernays's definition of public relations are no longer as popular at the beginning of the 21st century as they used to be in the middle of the 20th century. However, the use of public relations as social technology based on scientific research and education will become ever more present as cohorts of undergraduate and graduate students in public relations from universities around the world enter the market. Bernays's life spanned over a century, but his time is yet to come; public relations has yet to become an art applied to science.

Dejan Verčič

See also Antecedents of Modern Public Relations; Best Practices; Committee on Public Information; Cultural Topoi; Entertainment Industry Publicity/Promotion; Fleischman, Doris Elsa; Image; Lee, Ivy; Lucky Strike Green Campaign; Market Share; Press Agency; Professional and Professionalism; Propaganda; Public Relations; Public Relations Agency; Public Relations Education, History of; Publicist; Society; Spin

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BEST PRACTICES

Best practices are methods or techniques that can be applied reliably in public relations with assurance that such approaches consistently will yield the most effective, responsible, and ethical performance and results. Robert L. Heath (2001) noted that the theme of best practices drives the discipline since the field's professional and academic literature so often addresses the central question: How can public relations practice be improved to increase practitioners' abilities to influence desirable outcomes benefiting the organizations they are serving? Like every other human endeavor, public relations involves probabilities; best practices serve to enhance the probabilities that professionals' endeavors will be successful.

Best practices emerge from the experiences and judgments of leading practitioners, or they may be derived from theory building and academic research. Best practices may be defined, tested, and refined by practitioners and academics alike; in fact, it may well be that during this quest to identify best practices, practitioners and academics are most likely to meet and complement one another. Some suggest that when the reality that public relations is a practical applied discipline is disregarded, the research and theory building of the field may then risk becoming dysfunctional (Heath, 2001).

The fact that myriad options exist in public relations makes identifying reliable best practices daunting. Edward Bernays (1965) wrote in his memoirs

that he had once thought the practice of public relations could be modeled after the practice of law; that public relations could be codified and, just as with law, practiced after precedents were established, applied, and followed. However, Bernays gave up the notion of public relations practice-by-precedent because he found there are simply too many variables to be accounted for in public relations practice, which is further complicated by the fact that the variables so often are constantly changing. Bernays's assessment that public relations is too complicated to be practiced by precedent has implications for best practices. While it is clear that there *are* best practices for given situations in public relations, determining *what* the best practice is in a *particular* situation can be challenging.

Benchmarking is a necessary condition for practices to become "best," because without measurement and evaluation pre- and post-application, a method or technique cannot be judged superior with confidence; benchmarking also clarifies when best practices evolve and become better. In *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, Bernays portrayed public relations as an applied social science to be planned and precisely measured through research. However, Tom Watson (2012) pointed out the irony that there is "little discussion" of measurement and evaluation in Bernays's books and papers (p. 391). By the late 1970s, knowledge gaps in public relations practice were being identified by Mark McElreath and colleagues, along with laments by James Grunig and others that practitioners were not benchmarking adequately. By the 1990s, some gaps in the field's knowledge were being filled by numerous scholars.

Yet, because many researchers have found that "practitioners still talk more about evaluation than actually practice it" (Watson, 2012, p. 396), as organizations increasingly demand documentation of return on investment, identification of best practices in public relations will accelerate. A good predictor was the adoption of the Barcelona Declaration of Measurement Principles at the 2010 European Measurement Summit; it has been widely embraced by professional and academic associations in North America, such as the Institute for Public Relations (IPR), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), and others.

Most agree that public relations constitutes a process. Contemplating public relations practice, Kirk

Hallahan (1993) identified seven paradigmatic models of processes presently used in practice. These include (1) the *four-step process model* (research-action-planning-evaluation), which Hallahan viewed as the default paradigm conceptualizing public relations as an ongoing set of routinized activities without time frames; (2) *plan or program paradigm* focusing on planned or programmed strategies and tactics; (3) *communication/practice style paradigm* focusing on communications produced regardless of process or plan; (4) *organizational/managerial effectiveness paradigm* emphasizing developing effective relationships with the organization represented and meeting of organizational expectations; (5) *behavioral paradigm* stressing the achievement of intended behavioral outcomes among publics; (6) *social problems paradigm* focusing on public relations' response to political or sociological problems and/or opportunities and how practitioners deal with power relationships in society; and (7) *systems paradigm* emphasizing internal and external inputs and communication and action outputs designed to reduce conflict and build consensus between an organization and its publics.

Hallahan noted that none of these provides a unifying framework for the field let alone a fully satisfactory overview of the field. He also pointed out that evaluations for each of the process paradigms is different—for example, the four-step process paradigm evaluation answers the question, “Were all the steps of the process followed?” whereas the plan/program paradigm evaluation answers, “Was the campaign well executed in terms of objectives, strategies, tactics, within budget, etc.?” and for the systems paradigm, “Was equilibrium maintained?”

Which of these—or any other—paradigms is the best practice in a particular public relations application depends on a variety of variables, beginning perhaps with the worldviews of key participants making the public relations decisions. For example, in 1992, Elizabeth L. Toth identified the rhetorical, critical, and systems (or excellence) paradigms as the three major ones. Nearly 20 years later, she called her three-paradigm view “overly simplistic,” and pointed to “at least six . . . in alphabetical order, so as not to suggest any hierarchy”; they are crisis communication, critical theory, feminist theory, rhetorical theory, strategic management theory, and tactical communication theories, including

campaigns (Toth, 2010, p. 714). Other scholars cite additional paradigms, a position with which Toth agrees, because “each one has a different conceptual foci and contributes different knowledge to our understanding of public relations” (p. 714).

No single source summarizes all of the best practices in public relations. It is doubtful that practitioners and scholars would agree on a uniform “code” of best practices, at least in part due to the situational variability that characterizes the field. Certainly, best practices in public relations have evolved over time and will continue to evolve along with the ever-changing field and as a product of both applied and academic theory-based research.

The good news is there are a multitude of resources for practitioners and scholars to create their own individual compendiums of best practices to guide their individual work. For example, there are numerous textbooks about public relations. Three examples are *Cutlip & Center's Effective Public Relations* (Broom, 2009); *Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice* (Lattimore, Baskin, Heian, & Toth, 2012); and *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics* (Wilcox & Cameron, 2012)—although none of these three textbooks index the words “best practices,” all dedicate themselves to summarizing many best practices. *Public Relations: A Values-Driven Approach* (Guth & Marsh, 2012) references “Best Practices in Corporate Communications” on page 170 with a quotation about a recent National Ethics Survey of U.S. companies and values statements from Shane McLaughlin of the Best Practices in Corporate Communications organization. Other recent books about the field cover best practices. For example, *Handbook of Public Relations* (Heath, 2000) has 24 chapters under the heading “The Practice of Public Relations as Change Management” covering best-practice topics, such as use of research, reputation and issues management, risk and crisis communication, relationship building, leadership, ethics, and other specialties “in context,” such as health care, sports public relations, and investor relations.

Academic journals, such as *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Journal of Communication Management*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, and *Public Relations Review*, all publish content and references concerning best practices; many of these have a theoretic grounding or

framework. The professional press, such as *PR Tactics*, *PR Week*, *Inside PR*, *Public Relations Quarterly*, and *Communication Briefings* among many other titles, frequently offer information about best practices, sometimes featuring case studies; many of them, such as *Bulldog Reporter*, have launched really simple syndicator (RSS) feeds with near daily postings, and some periodically offer webinars, as does the Public Relations Society of America. In addition, PRSA has launched a new online academic-professional *Public Relations Journal* and continues to offer resources through its Professional Resources Center; the IPR also posts a great deal of best practice information on its website. In-person continuing education professional development seminars and workshops offered by the International Association of Business Communicators, PRSA, and other national and regional professional organizations as well as their local chapters typically highlight best practices.

Finally, as this second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Public Relations* is being compiled, to test the best practice of search engine optimization (SEO), a September 26, 2012, Google search of “Best Practices in Public Relations” yielded “about” 13 million results in 17 seconds. Leading the results was a 272-page pdf file titled “Firm Voice: Outstanding Best Practices for Public Relations Firms” (Council of Public Relations Firms, 2009). The fourth result was an article titled “The Application of ‘Best Practices’ in Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation Systems” from the first issue of *Public Relations Journal* (Michaelson & Macleod, 2007), and the seventh was a PowerPoint file by Michaelson about best practices in public relations research archived on the IPR website. The other page-one results consisted of various blog entries posted to commercial websites and RSS feeds or on practitioners’ individual blogsites or websites to promote their services.

These are just a few sources of information about best practices available. A long-awaited update to the *Public Relations Body of Knowledge*, PRSA’s attempt to codify the field’s knowledge about best practices—a necessary condition for any occupation to be considered a profession—began but was quickly abandoned in the early 2000s. With the array of research being conducted and information about best practices available in one form or another, it was impossible to marshal

the resources required to complete the update, let alone to simply keep up in the future.

Lynne M. Sallot

See also Barcelona Principles; Bernays, Edward; European Monitor; Theory-Based Practice

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BILL STUFFER

Bill stuffers are one of many public relations tools used to reach targeted audiences. They are especially available for utility companies and other business types that send out periodic billing statements. They are also used by nonprofits, especially activists who know that their mailing lists contain the names of people who are likely to be motivated to take specific actions.

Each month or on some other occasion, thousands of bills are mailed to customers and donors across the nation. Anyone who receives such bills often is aware of the “clutter” of stuff that accompanies the bill. Certain organizations also take these opportunities to communicate with their customers or donors. Today, as well, such stuffers can accompany online monthly bills. Ironically, they seem less like clutter when accompanying a bill, but they also can link to other communication sites.

Bill stuffers can contain information that actually is of value to many patrons. For instance, a utility company might suggest ways its customers can reduce their heating and cooling bills. For these companies, such bill stuffers can be part of their customer relations programs. Activist groups might use billing stuffers to profile the plight of

some group of individuals in society, the need for increased funding, and even legislative initiatives that are favored or opposed by the sponsor who mailed the bill stuffer.

These tools can also be used to shape opinions and motivate the targeted audience. They can suggest that some opinion would be in the best interest of their targets. Insurance companies, as an example, might call their customers’ attention to legislation or regulation that might raise—or lower—insurance rates. Activists, for instance, might indicate how research has discovered an association between a product’s design and consumer health. Utility companies often use bill stuffers to justify support or opposition of some legislation or regulation.

It is easy to imagine that many bill stuffers go unread. Customers and donors have to sort through the clutter accompanying bills to find the message. They may be focused on other tasks, such as paying bills rather than responding to appeals or seeking information. At best, the stuffers reach only persons who are already cognitively involved with some issues. These people might be opinion leaders who pass information, evaluation, and advice to others.

Although such communication tools might be inefficient or ineffective because of the few people they reach—the ones who actually read and respond—they are at the vortex of controversies. One example of such a controversy was during the era of antinuclear plant construction activism. Some electric generating utility companies that wanted to build and operate nuclear generating facilities included pronuclear messages on their bill stuffers. Antinuclear activists argued that this use of message delivery unfairly privileged the utility companies, who could easily reach their customers each month.

Various regulatory agencies have reviewed the use of bill stuffers. Typically, the Supreme Court has ruled that these tools are not a form of regulated or prohibited communication, if they serve a larger public interest beyond the narrow commercial interest of the sponsor. Because of their usefulness and targetability, they have become well established tools of integrated marketing communication that are especially useful for publicity and promotion.

Robert L. Heath

See also Integrated Marketing Communication;
Promotion; Publicity

BIO

Bio is the abbreviation for *biography*. Bios are the life sketches of individuals who represent an organization or business entity. Although bios do not provide the entire life story of a member or leader of an organization or company, they do contain information about a person that establishes their qualifications and experience and as someone bringing credibility to the organization or company.

Items to include in bios are a person's educational background; previous places of employment, with emphasis on management positions held; and awards, achievements, and professional recognitions received. A limited amount of personal data also may be included, such as spouse and children's names, as well as community involvements.

Bios are almost always included as a component of media kits. When a company or organization distributes a media kit, bios of the top executives should be included, along with other background information about the organization. Bios also may be included with a press release, especially if it is an announcement of a promotion within a company, organization, or public relations agency. Depending on whether the press release is emailed or sent by hard copy, headshots of the newsmakers should also be included, preferably in color fit to print. If only black and white photos are available, a note should be included that indicates when color photos will be ready.

Bios also are useful to have available for each member of an organizational team and also for each member of an organization's board of directors. Depending on the organization, bios may appear on websites to familiarize key publics with those that are serving them.

Most often, public relations practitioners are responsible for compiling bios and ensuring that they are kept current. Having bios available only makes the public relations practitioner's job easier, as the content may be used in internal news publications, brochures, and other items.

Credentials contained within bios are crucial for providing credibility for an organization's message. For example, sources with biochemistry degrees speaking about the effects of harmful radiation are viewed as more credible than sources with world

history degrees. Both degrees are meaningful, but biochemistry is more relative to the issue at hand.

Having bios readily available also enhances the public relations practitioner's credibility with the media. When a reporter needs background information immediately for a breaking story, not having to wait for the public relations department to produce it lends credibility to the organization.

Bios most often are written in the third person. They should also avoid editorializing. They should appear on company letterhead but without the contact information that would appear in a press release.

Kelly M. George

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BLACK/DARK WEBSITE

A black or dark website is a dedicated set of web pages that provides critical information to key publics during an emergency or an event that disrupts an organization's operations. As a major crisis communications tool, dark websites are developed in anticipation of events but remain "dark" or "black" until they are needed and can be activated quickly and easily.

Various organizations develop contingency plans for how they will respond to incidents that are likely to occur or that might make them vulnerable. Examples include natural disasters, airline crashes, chemical explosions, oil spills, and outbreaks of infectious diseases. Dark websites can explain what happened, outline the remedies being taken, provide emergency response directions, restore orderly operations, allay concerns, and preserve fragile relationships with key publics.

Today, dark websites are deployed in tandem with various other digital tools: email, text and microblog messages, and already extant blogs, forums, and social networking sites. Web communications are

especially important, however, because the World Wide Web is typically the first place users search for information. Web content managers and technical webmasters (along with media relations, email/text, and social media specialists) play integral roles in an organization's crisis response team. They typically report to the chief public relations officer or the executive directing the organization's communications response.

Because dark websites are created expressly for deployment *if* an incident occurs, they must provide simple, functional templates for how incident-specific information and materials might be posted. Site content typically includes news announcements, updates, fact sheets, Q&As, images, audio sound bites, and video clips.

Links direct visitors to preapproved background information, such as key facts about the organization and its history, the facility/location where the incident occurred (if applicable), safety records, executive biographies, photo archives, videos, and maps. Links are also created and tested in advance to connect visitors to organizational, industry, or community resources accessible during or after the emergency. These often include an organization's human resources/employee benefits group, grief counseling and related services, knowledgeable independent trade groups or industry experts, and local emergency response agencies.

In the early phases of a crisis, dark websites focus on providing timely, accurate, and authoritative facts. Later, they may be transformed into forums for the expression of grief, reflections about what occurred, analysis and commentaries, and explanations about future plans.

Depending on the circumstances, dark websites can be used to replace an organization's main site during a major emergency—but usually only if an organization's operations are shuttered entirely. Alternatively, dark websites typically augment an organization's regular site(s), where a banner, sidebar, or other prominent message is inserted to redirect visitors to the emergency or crisis information without disrupting critical online activities. Finally, issues managers can use independent microsites as dark websites to respond to controversies. These sites have their own web addresses featuring keywords directly related to the controversy. Users are directly referred to the site through promotional communications or find the site through

keyword searches on search engines. Thus, these sites can operate without attracting the attention of the organization's regular website visitors.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Issues Management; Online Public Relations; Website

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BLOGS, VLOGS, AND MICROBLOGS

Blogs, vlogs, and microblogs refer to categories of social media sites and their associated content that utilize such well-known platforms as Blogger, YouTube, and Twitter, respectively. These media share those characteristics that define social media (interactive, user-generated content, etc.) but also may be considered episodic and/or thematic in nature. In other words, content posted on these media tends to revolve around a specific topic or theme, for example cooking or comedy. Despite similarities, blogs, vlogs, and microblogs differ with respect to platforms and content.

Blogs (a contraction of “web logs”) are online, public journals maintained by individuals or organizations (often termed *corporate blogs* for the

latter). Traditional blogs are text-based, and posts typically range from one to three paragraphs with new posts occurring weekly or bi-monthly. Multimedia posts occurring with more frequency have outweighed traditional text posts in recent years.

Blogs are hosted by one of many popular platforms (e.g., Blogger, Tumblr, and WordPress) or via web applications where the platforms are applied to personal websites. Bloggers also include an RSS (really simple syndication) app on main pages so that users in the “blogosphere” can subscribe to updates.

Technorati, a blog search and indexing site, annually publishes a “State of the Blogosphere” study that reports blogger demographics, motivations/consequences of blogging, as well as brands in the blogosphere.

Vlogs (a contraction of “video logs”) use video content as the primary feature. The most popular video-hosting platform is YouTube with more than 800 million unique visitors each month. Other popular platforms include Blip.tv and Vimeo. As opposed to sporadically posted videos, vlogs are episodic in nature and are updated with some frequency, typically bi-monthly. Organizations create channels for followers to subscribe to, and individual videos are rated (like/dislike) and shared on other media (blogs, social networking sites, etc.) by users.

Microblogs differ from the other two because even though they are text-based, the text is limited by the number of characters. Twitter is the most popular of these platforms with more than 600 million users worldwide. The culture of Twitter allows for multiple (140-character or fewer) posts to be made each day. Twitter users can “follow” those people they wish to receive updates from. Most Twitter accounts are public (as opposed to private), which means users can follow other users without prior approval. For organizations, Twitter has become a major medium for handling customer service inquiries.

Public relations professionals may strategically incorporate such media and content into communication programs and campaigns via a direct-to-consumer approach. In using blogs, vlogs, and microblogs, professionals may want to consider the organizational purpose and desired outcomes of using the media, as well as familiarize themselves with the norms of each. Professionals may also want to ensure that appropriate resources

(staff, time, finances, etc.) are dedicated to the use of these media that must be updated and maintained with regularity to be effective. And, analytics tools (Google Analytics for blogs, Channel Stats for YouTube, and TweetStats for Twitter, for examples) can be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of programs and campaigns.

Melissa D. Dodd

See also Analytics; App; Really Simple Syndication; Social Media; Web 2.0

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BOULWARISM

Boulwarism is a pejorative term used in labor relations to describe a take-it-or-leave-it stance by a party engaged in collective bargaining. More generally, Boulwarism is the aggressive effort by management to communicate its positions on economic and labor matters directly to (union-organized) employees and communities.

The concept stems from the no-nonsense approach to employee relations advocated by Lemuel R. Boulware (1895–1990), vice president of employees and communications at General Electric (GE) from 1947 to 1961. Boulware was a native of Kentucky who graduated from the

University of Wisconsin, where he briefly taught accounting and commercial law following graduation. During his career, Boulware held posts with the Easy Washing Machine Company, Carrier Corporation, and Celotex Corporation before becoming operations vice chairman of the War Production Board during World War II. He joined GE as a consultant and also oversaw seven of its manufacturing subsidiaries.

Prior to Boulware being appointed to his corporate post, GE had undergone a bitter seven-week strike in 1946. Boulware's charge from GE management was to overcome the distrust and disapproval among employees and neighbors using innovative solutions that avoided mistakes made at other companies. Boulware's lack of experience in labor relations was considered to be a benefit because he provided a fresh perspective.

Boulware delved into his assignment with the same fervor he used in product marketing and began by conducting in-depth interviews. In his 1969 memoirs, Boulware recounts he identified four key groups of "contributor-claimants": customers, owners, other businesses, and employees. He quickly identified three key areas of neglect on the part of GE: It had failed to explain how it benefited others; it had not geared "its intentions, practices, manners and results as intimately as we could and should to the other fellow's viewpoint" (Boulware, 1969, p. 5); and it had failed to manage people's expectations about what was reasonable, possible, and feasible.

Within 6 months, Boulware outlined a nine-point checklist of what employees wanted from their jobs. These included attractive compensation, improved working conditions, competent supervision, a feeling of job security, respect for human dignity, opportunities for promotion, information about management's goals, belief in the importance of one's job, and satisfaction about accomplishments.

Boulware aggressively promoted these ideas to employees. He also launched an economics education program that addressed the importance of profits, how jobs are created, how profits are earned, who pays the costs of doing business, the sizeable share of taxes paid by business, the causes of unemployment, and the dangers of price and wage controls. Boulware used articles and ads in employee publications and oversaw a massive program of

meetings (using materials borrowed from DuPont) where 190,000 employees were paid to attend three 90-minute sessions on "How Our Business System Operates." GE extended the message to communities by taking out full-page newspaper advertisements in cities with a plant location.

As Boulware explained in 1969, his objective was "the deserving and thus the regaining of favorable regard and the active cooperation of employees and neighborhoods in their own interests" (p. 83). He later observed,

I think the real mission of General Electric or any other private business—as well as a requirement for its survival—has been and is to please people by helping them get all they have come, on the basis of enlightened understanding, reasonably to expect from the business in both material and nonmaterial ways. (p. 5)

Boulware's innovative strategy was grounded in solid public relations ideals. First, he strived to correct causes of people's justified dissatisfaction "by getting them to tell us what was wrong and doing all possible not only to right any such wrongs but also to try to right them in their way and not our own." Second, he hoped to correct information or misconceptions that caused unwarranted dissatisfaction—"no matter how far afield we had to go in our own improved education and in helping our employees update their knowledge—and no matter who of high or low estate had to be contradicted in the process" (p. 84).

Boulware's probusiness stance won respect from business leaders, but GE's unions attacked the company viciously as organizers attempted to increase their power and to address displacements in the workforce in the post-World War II economy. As the subtitle of his later book on the topic suggests, Boulware aimed for "trying to do right voluntarily." Yet his approach was decidedly prescriptive, controlling, and antiunion.

Boulware believed employees at GE and other firms didn't understand how many of the criticisms launched against business were rooted in socialist ideology. As Boulware enumerated his concerns, people thought that all managers and owners were brutes and crooks, that private businesses allowed the privileged to exploit helpless workers in the name of profits, and that brute force rather than individual persuasion or individual worth was a

way for people to get what they wanted. Consistent with Cold War fears about the spread of socialism, Boulware was convinced that communists had infiltrated many unions.

Boulware's disdain for unions was particularly reflected in his views on bargaining—the aspect of his work for which he is most remembered. He believed that rank-and-file union members were uninformed, unsophisticated, and misguided by union leaders. Moreover, Boulware argued that union officials came to collective bargaining sessions with an undue advantage: labor union claims were automatically judged to have merit and to be backed widely by employees and by the public at large. Employers, by contrast, were viewed with skepticism, had little support, and were portrayed as the “greedy, wicked and undeserving few” (Boulware, 1969, p. 107). In fact, the Wagner Act of 1935 and the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 had guaranteed labor the right to collective bargaining and outlawed industrial representation plans (also known as company unions) established in the aftermath of the Colorado coal strike of 1913–1914.

Boulware faulted business leaders for this imbalance and called on them to stand up and tell their story. In his memoirs, he explained,

The plain fact seemed to be that the leftist intellectuals, the nosier of the more leftist union officials and their publications and field organizations, and the federal bureaucracy were operating more and more across the country as the ideological detractors of private business and of the concept of free choice, private property, and limited government on which our unique well-being had been built. (1969, p. 109)

As a champion for business, Boulware challenged attendees at the Harvard Business School's commencement in 1949 to engage in public affairs discussions. “We businessmen are bold and imaginative before commercial competitors. We are cowardly and silent in public when confronted with union and other economic and political doctrines contrary to our beliefs” (Boulware, 1969, p. 163). He added, “We have simply got to learn, and preach, and practice what's the good alternative to socialism. And we have to interpret this to a majority of adults in a way that is understandable and credible and attractive” (p. 165).

To overcome this advantage during labor negotiations in 1948, Boulware obtained permission from the unions to lift the then customary ban on publicity by the parties involved in collective bargaining. Boulware instituted twice daily Teletype dispatches to GE's 140 plants on the progress of negotiations. These bulletins were duplicated for distribution to employees, union stewards, local press, and any other interested parties. Summaries of negotiations also were included in GE's weekly *Employee Relations News Letter*, distributed to 15,000 managers. Local managers were authorized and encouraged to talk to local media, and Boulware regularly engaged the press in New York to tell the company's side of the story.

Reflecting his disdain for the advantages enjoyed by unions, Boulware sought to break the patterns of wage settlements that characterized union negotiations up to that time by staunchly presenting and defending “fair but firm” proposals from the company. Boulware painstakingly researched and fleshed out what he termed a competitive “product” that he believed was both attractive to employees and within the means of the company. Union officials bristled at the tactic. For all of Boulware's talk about balancing common interests, the unions believed that GE was dictating terms and not bargaining in good faith.

Boulware's hardball tactics soon became public knowledge; controversy ensued as media, politicians, commentators, and editorialists took sides. Boulware later explained that he was not inflexible. Indeed, only one of his opening proposals ever became a part of a GE-union contract without amendment. Boulware said he always welcomed unions to provide “any old or new information proving changes would be in the balanced interests of all” (Boulware, cited in Peterson, 1991, p. 147)

Boulware's stance in GE's 1960 negotiations with the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, AFL-CIO, led the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to rule that GE had engaged in unfair labor practices. The NLRB now requires representatives in collective bargaining to negotiate in good faith. This involves a willingness to listen to counterproposals and a prohibition against pro forma refusals to make changes in a package offer. Although none of Boulware's tactics was illegal in the abstract, the NLRB and subsequent court rulings found that the overall effect of GE's tactics was to circumvent the rights of unions.

Boulwarism is an example of an important business concept stemming out of public relations practice. The prohibition against Boulware's negotiation approach is a firmly established principle regularly addressed in labor law. Boulwarism also represents an important—but possibly misdirected—effort to address antibusiness sentiments in modern society. One indirect effect of Boulware's work was the resurgence in probusiness sentiments in the 1980s under the presidency of Ronald Reagan. GE had hired Reagan to heighten the popularity of its weekly TV series in the 1950s, and Boulware sent Reagan on a tour of GE plants where the future president—then a liberal anticommunist—was fully indoctrinated in GE's free enterprise philosophy.

Boulware's work is also a historically important case study of how one organization recognized the importance of building mutually beneficial relationships and how management sought to establish a more balanced relationship with key constituencies. It is also an example of the failed application of what is characterized today as two-way asymmetric communication. Although Boulware's approach to employee education has never been completely assessed, his labor negotiation strategy proved unsuccessful in the long term.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Colorado Coal Strike; Community Relations; Labor Union Public Relations; Symmetry

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BOURDIEU, PIERRE, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) was a French sociologist whose work focused on explaining the operation of the social world in relational terms. Trained as an anthropologist, he combined analyses of day-to-day practice with that of social context in an attempt to explain the ways in which our lives unfold.

For Bourdieu, the key to understanding society is to recognize that the meaning of the attributes of the social world (such as professions, gender, educational qualifications, appearance) can only be understood within the context of the relationships in which they are relevant. This relational context, and the place of a particular attribute within a system of relations, called a field, must be analyzed in terms of its material attributes as well as its symbolic properties:

Individuals or groups are objectively defined not only by what they are but by what they are reputed to be, a “being-perceived” which, even if it closely depends on their being, is never totally reducible to this. Social science therefore has to take account of the two kinds of properties that are objectively attached to them: on the one hand, material properties, starting with the body, that can be counted and measured like any other thing of the physical world; and on the other hand, symbolic properties which are nothing other than material properties when perceived and appreciated in their mutual relationships. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 135)

It is the symbolic level of analysis that Bourdieu uses to explain the nature of power in society. He argued that systems of relations, or structures, are hierarchical and inherently conflict; they are structured in oppositional terms, where the fundamental division is between those who dominate and those who are dominated. These symbolic systems offer ways of understanding the world by organizing it into comprehensible systems (structuring structures); ways of knowing the world through shared meanings (structured structures); and ways of political organization, through their integrative role (for dominant groups) and divisive role

(between dominant and dominated groups). In short, these structures play a major role in creating our habitus—the set of durable dispositions developed and inculcated over time that determine the way we comprehend our social environment and our role within it.

Dominant groups or individuals seek to maintain the fundamental oppositions inherent in structures in order to preserve their dominant position. Consequently, Bourdieu argued that these structures are essentially arbitrary, created through historical determinism and sustained by immediate interests.

In the context of these structures, the expectations and norms set out by them, and the corresponding understandings of the habitus, individuals draw on material, cultural, and social resources or capital to execute strategies that allow them to realize their interests. Bourdieu defined four types of capital: economic (primarily financial), social (relating to the social networks to which one belongs), cultural (relating to educational and cultural background and resulting access to and understandings of cultural artefacts), and symbolic (economic, social, or cultural capital that possesses symbolic value that determines the degree of power associated with it). The level of different types of capital that an individual possesses determines his or her membership in dominant groups.

The transformation of economic, social, and cultural capital into symbolic capital attributes more and different meaning and value to such capital than its material attributes would suggest (Bourdieu, 1984). These meanings are ideological and arbitrary rather than material and disinterested, ultimately generating symbolic value for that particular type of capital. They are understood by individuals as normalized, legitimate social distinctions, and often the interests that underpin symbolic attribution go unnoticed. Because symbolic value is supported by the interests of those who determine which types of capital attract such value and yet is misrepresented as disinterested, it generates symbolic power and legitimacy for those who possess such resources. Bourdieu illustrated this process both generally as well as in specific fields, including education and culture.

Those who have the ability to determine and maintain symbolic classifications and distinctions between types of capital, while disguising the real interests that underpin such distinctions, are those

who enjoy symbolic power in a particular field. These groups or individuals also possess the greatest amount of symbolic capital, since the classifications they promote are those that promote their own position.

Bourdieu's work has been used only to a limited extent in public relations scholarship. Øyvind Ihlen (2005; 2007) used his ideas of capital and relational analysis to interpret the work done by practitioners as a form of extending capital and, particularly, social capital, to help organizations shore up their positions relative to competitors and elite groups in society. Rebecca Harris (2005) used Bourdieu's notion of fields to challenge the apparent neutrality of public relations work when carried out in the context of the gambling industry, while Lee Edwards has focused more on the ways in which Bourdieu can be used to understand the production and maintenance of symbolic power both within the field and in wider society. While limited, this research illustrates an important aspect of Bourdieuan approach: It prioritizes the sociocultural effects of public relations rather than focusing purely on its organizational function (Edwards, 2006; 2009; 2012). As such, it demands an ontological and epistemological shift in the scholarly understanding of public and greater methodological flexibility in research. Nonetheless, the range of insights that a Bourdieuan approach has generated through the work of these three scholars speaks to the potential that he offers for the future of scholarship.

Lee Edwards

See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Theory; Social Capital; Socioculture and Public Relations

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BOXED PRINT

Newspapers, magazines, brochures, pamphlets, and virtually all other publications have a variety of “makeup” options that an editor can select to communicate visually to the reader. Such questions of design are equally important on the Internet and the World Wide Web, both on “landing pages” and elsewhere on a website to encourage, direct, and engage readers. A well-laid-out page spread of a newspaper or other printed publication (e.g., a magazine, a newsletter, or a pamphlet) not only is attractive and inviting but also directs readers across the page spread in a way that can be predicted and controlled. The spread can showcase what the editor wants to emphasize as well as direct readers in the sequential order that the editor or designer wants the elements viewed. Importantly, except for the front and back pages, a publication’s “page spread” of facing left and right pages is usually considered as one visual unit.

Indeed, a knowledgeable and skilled layout editor or graphic designer can predict and control with almost complete certainty how readers proceed in viewing information that is presented on the page spread, using such elements of makeup as body copy (text); headlines, subheads and editorial blurbs/pullout quotes; photographs and other art (e.g., line art) and their accompanying cutlines/captions; and white (negative) space—all of which

can be used to entice and enhance readership and to make information-processing as easy as possible for the readers.

Of course, different publications are used in different ways; for example, newspaper editors know that virtually no one will read the whole newspaper, so they present content (stories and art, including photographs) in a way that helps readers select what is most significant to them and/or what interests them the most. Magazine editors likewise know that few people read a whole magazine cover-to-cover, although they hope readers will be interested in a far greater percentage of an issue’s feature-length stories than would read a similar portion of the myriad stories that are presented in a newspaper. Pamphlets and brochures are most often designed to be read in their entirety and are laid out accordingly—to encourage readership of the whole publication, usually from front to back. The seeming infinity of a website and its links creates another dimension and another set of challenges for content editors who attempt to direct readers.

To add visual interest as well as to feature or spotlight a story or article, boxes are frequently used to surround the print (i.e., the text). Traditional newspaper makeup uses boxed print on occasion to showcase a short human-interest story as well as to brighten a page. “Modular” newspaper makeup depends on boxed print to dramatize a large and important story, and the corresponding text is usually surrounded by a quite narrow “hair-line rule,” which may have either squared corners or rounded corners, that surrounds the story and its accompanying art, for example, photographs and cutlines (more commonly referred to today as captions). The use of boxed print requires at least a two-column story (some editors may argue that at least a three-column story is better), and each page may have a boxed print (it’s usually better to have only one such boxed print per page or else all emphasis can become no emphasis). As a visual element, boxes add “weight” to a page or page spread that helps balance or contrast other visual elements, and thus boxed prints may appear at the bottom of a page to help create page balance.

Of course, magazines frequently use boxed prints (sometimes with a grey or colored screen inside the box on which the text is overprinted) to emphasize or to distinguish the story from others

on a page spread. Brochures and pamphlets may use boxed prints as an integral part of their design theme; for example, copy (text) on each page may be inside a box, or each page may have a border box. Of course, websites use boxed prints a great deal, and many of the guidelines that apply to boxed prints in printed publications are equally valid for websites.

Boxed prints (i.e., text set inside boxes) are highly effective when used well, tastefully, and with discretion to visually communicate that the text inside each box is special in some way; for example, it is more important than or is significantly different from surrounding text. Boxed print may be a “sidebar” story to the main story, may be used to provide balance and contrast to pages, and is often used to brighten pages. However, the public relations person doing his or her own makeup of employee newspapers, magazines, brochures, and pamphlets must remember that there can be too much of a good thing—too many boxed prints on a page or page spread may mean that each one loses some of its potential effectiveness.

Dean Kruckeberg and Marina Vujnovic

See also Layout

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BRAND EQUITY AND BRANDING

The concepts of *brand equity* and *branding* are necessarily intertwined, and they are connected with both advertising and public relations and are informed by impression management theory. Lisa Wood (2000) indicated that there are several different meanings of brand equity: First, it may be construed as the total value of a brand as a distinct asset. In other words, when the brand is actually sold in the marketplace or included on a balance sheet. Second, brand equity may be interpreted as a measure of the strength of consumer attachment to a brand. Finally, it may be considered a description

of the associations and beliefs the consumer has about a particular brand. The distinctions in these various definitions primarily derive from accounting and marketing.

In many cases, financial accountants (preferring the first definition) will use the term *brand value* rather than *brand equity*. The brand's value, relative to the rest of the marketplace, emerges as the overriding consideration. Advertising and public relations professionals generally recognize this first definition, but they tend to be more interested in customer–brand relationships and associations. These professionals will often build on the brand equity concept with ideas, such as *brand identity* or *brand image*.

Brand image is aligned with the needs and desires of a target market by utilizing the “four P’s” (product, price, place, and promotion). The combined success of these factors determines *brand strength*, the degree of loyalty or attachment customers feel toward the brand. Because there are a number of related concepts, Max Blackston (2000) summarized them with the key principle of brand equity; a brand is necessarily intertwined with a product(s), but it is different because there is a consumer investment over time.

Brand equity consists of the incremental, added-value qualities that synergistically combine in the minds of consumers. A brand may be a product, but it can also represent an organization through the creation of a unique identity.

Blackston argued that the fundamental marketing variables (product, price, etc.) are critical values, but the *added value* concept is where the success of branding is truly realized. However, this concept is difficult to define because of its intangible nature. Generally, this idea is indirectly measured or inferred in terms of the consumer's idea of the brand. Even though such inferences will continue, Blackston posited that greater understanding of brand equity may be achieved by recognizing that brand relationships are occurring, interactive processes involving both the brand and the consumer. Relationships are, of course, constructed through communication. The organization is projecting an image, and consumers are providing meaning to the messages. Thus, a relationship between the brand and the consumer flourishes or disintegrates. These brand relationships comprise two key factors that are necessary for synergistic

success: trust in the brand and customer satisfaction with the brand. In other words, added value is realized when these factors are maximized.

The brand's success depends on the creation of a personal link with each consumer, and obviously, this objective is not easy to achieve, but when an organization moves from a self-centered to an "othercentered" (customer-focused) stance, success in these relationships may be eventually achieved. Blackston indicated that the brand relationship concept has been applied to the development of advertising campaigns, but it can be extended to all areas of marketing communication, including public relations. An objective for a desired relationship with the critical stakeholders (the consumers) may provide a guide for the brand's "communication" transactions with each consumer. Because behavioral consistency is essential for long-term relationship success, the sales promotion, packaging, and public relations that are associated with a brand must be consistent. When the consumer is satisfied and trusts these consistent behaviors, they are likely to continue the brand relationship and, thus, added value may be achieved over time in the branding experience. Corporate branding (and brand equity) is the "true" mark of a product or organization. In other words, it can be construed as a unique declaration of identity, quality, trust, and value with the final judgment on those factors resting with the individual consumer.

With the branding concept in public relations (and related areas of communication), four process areas are often considered: (1) creating, (2) maintaining, (3) damaging, and (4) repairing. Creating unique identities for products is challenging, considering the vast array of information that consumers are exposed to in the marketplace. William Wells, John Burnett, and Sandra Moriarty (2003) provided the following suggestions for advertising and public relations professionals as they create messages about their brands:

1. Make the brand distinctive by drawing attention to its qualities/strengths.
2. Utilize a design that aligns with the brand image that you wish to project and send public relations and advertising messages that are generally consistent with other mass media messages.
3. Make the packaging as functional as possible.
4. Product packaging, advertising, and public relations should dovetail. In other words, consistency is repeatedly emphasized.

Organizations need to ensure that their resources are committed to brands that offer the greatest likelihood of success, whether those brands are products or subunits of the organizations with their own distinct identities. As Peter Sackett and Efstathios Kefallonitis (2003) argued, creating a unique brand experience reflects the organization's advantages over its competitors. Thus, the organization maintains its existing customer base and also attracts other consumers.

Sackett and Kefallonitis also emphasized the importance of aligning the consistency, originality, and relevance of the brand experience to the core brand value (i.e., quality or durability) that is being communicated. If this alignment does not occur, organizations will struggle to differentiate their brands in the vast consumer universe of information. They posited that creating brands involves attention to consumers' perceptions of similar brands in the marketplace and, then, designing product features that are not only distinct but also add value to those perceptions. Thus, added value is created and potentially sustained for consumers and organizations.

In many cases, organizations will conduct research (i.e., interviews and surveys) to determine the likely importance of various attributes in brand choice processes. In short, what is missing in the marketplace? What would consumers like to see as they perceive it? Subsequently, a brand is developed that addresses these needs and perceptions, and this data is aligned with information on the target market (i.e., senior citizens). Of course, not all organizations follow these procedures with brand creation, but in general, sophisticated organizations in the modern business environment engage in these rigorous market research activities.

Brian Wansink (1997) advanced some additional thoughts on the brand creation discussion by talking about "re-creating" brands or providing a revised brand perspective for consumers. Many marketing managers believe that brands, like many other natural life cycles, observe the laws of positive entropy; they are created, they

grow, they mature, they decline, and they die. In some cases, brand sales and market share decline because people have lost interest due to changing conditions in the marketplace (i.e., typewriters and the advent of word processing) or because another brand becomes more salient for consumers. Wansink illustrated this recreation with the Arm & Hammer situation in 1969. The product's sales were declining because of reduced home baking and the introduction of ready-to-bake packaged food products. In order to address these issues, the product re-emerged as a deodorizer for refrigerators, freezers, and kitchen sink drains.

The product's sales rebounded. Even though brand creation and recreation are distinct in terms of actual product existence, the same principle guides the success of these processes: addressing the needs of consumers and their perceptions in relation to your product or organizational niche.

Brand recreation can also be considered, in some product cases, a natural maintenance activity. In order to maintain a successful brand relationship (as in many other relationships), some modifications may need to occur. Of course, there are cases where limited brand maintenance occurs because the product continues to address the needs of consumers in its particular niche. However, ongoing communication campaigns are always recommended so that consumers are consistently reminded about the attributes and strengths of the organization or product.

Typically, organizations have different brand maintenance strategies and tactics. For example, some organizations focus on their brand name, making it synonymous with a product class. These corporate brand names appear as the only brand identity. Corporate brands are used when a company operates in a tightly defined market (e.g., Kellogg's with breakfast cereal). Promoting related products is a brand maintenance strategy for the organization as well as for the potential variety of brand names (e.g., Raisin Bran). Standardization strategies may also be employed when companies wish to associate related products or names internationally. Additionally, corporate history can be influential when brands are leveraged or *extended*. With this strategy, a corporate brand name is maintained by association with new products. In other words, the brand name is revitalized and recreated.

As the information age continues, dynamic brand maintenance strategies are necessary. Brand leverage is an example of such a strategy, along with the more general goal of creativity. Maintaining an information-based context may also be useful. In other words, through a medium such as a website, people consume, communicate, and transact with the organization or corporate brand. With website maintenance, the corporation's identity (and that of its associated brands) is preserved in the minds of consumers. Even though some modifications may inevitably occur, the brand is still important because a personal link to the consumer is maintained. Brand maintenance and relationship maintenance are not distinct concepts; they are necessarily intertwined.

In some cases, damage to a brand name's reputation occurs. Malfeasance on the part of managers or the mishandling of crisis situations may provide rationales for why such damage occurs. Because organizations can be construed as brands, there are numerous examples of brand names that have endured injurious circumstances. The debacles that have plagued corporations, such as Exxon (1989 oil tanker mishap) and MCI (misappropriation of corporate funds in 2001 and 2002) are documented in the popular media. Typically, such an event creates a thriving environment for brand damage, especially if stakeholders, such as customers, perceive that the organization does not care or is mishandling the situation.

However, brand identity may also become poorly perceived in an incremental fashion. Over the course of time, without proper maintenance, brand damage will probably occur and, eventually, the brand's image cannot be restored to its prior positive state. If brand identity is perceived as poor (damaged), the brand experience that is created is unfavorable. Corporate brand names can also be damaged by claims from internal and external stakeholder groups, such as the media, that are inconsistent with the organization's story. Such claims can damage brands. However, if the organization can distance itself from the claims and provide evidence of accountability on the part of other parties, brand damage may be limited. On the other hand, social legitimacy and financial stability may be permanently harmed.

The image restoration strategies that are employed by various organizations provide insight

into the subject of brand repair, rejuvenating a damaged brand name.

W. L. Benoit (1995) provided a typology of brand repair and image restoration strategies for corporations: (1) denial, (2) evasion of responsibility, (3) reduction of offensiveness, (4) corrective action, and (5) mortification. Each of these strategies may be effective in particular circumstances. With the first two strategies, if the organization can legitimately deny or not take responsibility for a potentially damaging situation, these communicative stances may be appropriate. Benoit also provides the following suggestions for image repair discourse:

1. Avoid making false claims for brands and provide adequate support.
2. If your organization is responsible, admit this fact immediately.
3. Communicate plans to correct and prevent recurrence of the problem.

The final recommendation might be classified as goodwill, if such actions are designed to enhance a community or group of stakeholders beyond simple repair of brand damage. If customers perceive that the organization is truly acting in their best interests, brand repair begins to occur. It should also be noted that restoration tactics may not involve a long period of time, if the organization is honest with their stakeholders about crises and claims. In these cases, brand damage is limited because the organization assumes responsibility and provides evidence related to claims.

Audience perceptions are critical to brand repair and image restoration. In terms of perceptions, if the organization reminds stakeholders of past good works and relationships through bolstering communication strategies without addressing the critical brand-damaging issue(s), brand repair may not even occur.

Customers may quickly reject the brand, or it may eventually fade from the public scene because such reminders fall into a communicative vacuum chamber.

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See also Crisis Communication; Image Repair Theory; Impression Management Theory; Impressions; Reputation Management

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BRAZIL, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Brazil is unique among the Latin American countries in the area of public relations; recognized for having spearheaded the introduction of the activity and for having traced a remarkable trajectory of the profession. The first public relations department was established in 1914, at the Canadian São Paulo Tramway Light and Power Co. Between 1910 and 1950, the practice was restricted to a few multinational corporations and a handful of governmental bodies. At the time, the practice was in the hands of professionals from a vast range of specialization areas, such as lawyers, engineers, and managers who were being transferred into the country to work for the transnational corporations. Entrusted with this task, those professionals sought to widen their scope of knowledge by traveling abroad and enrolling in short courses sponsored by universities and other learning centers.

In 1954, the Brazilian Public Relations Association (ABRP) was established with the primary

purpose of promoting the practice in Brazil. Several foreign experts, such as Harwood I. Childs, Eric Carlson, and Neville Sheperd, visited the country to teach courses in public relations to local professionals. At that time, ABRP contributed both to the formalization of the profession and to the promotion of research in the field, with the aim of refining and standardizing the teaching and practice of public relations. From the 1950s to the 1960s, the country underwent impressive economic growth and saw the establishment of public relations structures in undertakings, such as Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional (CSN), the national steel producer (1950), General Motors do Brasil (1962), Pirelli (1963), Ceval Arz Gerais Ltda. (Santana) (1969), and Philips (1970).

In 1964, the newly installed military regime embarked on the systematic and articulate practice of censorship and control of the entire communication system. The 1967 law, no. 5.377, regulated the profession and was a step in the deliberate attempt by the state to control communication organizations and institutions in Brazil. In that same year, a university-level public relations course was created at Universidade de São Paulo; other programs were subsequently established throughout the country. The creation of university-level courses in public relations in Brazil underpinned the development of the field and contributed to shortening the distance between academia and professionals. The year 1969 saw the creation of CONFERP, the Federal Board of Public Relations Professionals, whose purpose was to oversee and discipline the professional practice across the country. The board comprises six regional councils whose remit is the supervision of the practice within their respective territories. In 1970, graduate programs were created, including master's and PhD degrees in public relations. Today, a total of 10 different programs are offered throughout the country, including degrees in social communication.

With the approval of law no. 5.377, Brazil began to distance itself from its neighbors, where the practice saw a later start, and where no attempts to institutionalize the profession by force of legislation were registered.

From the 1970s and into the 1980s, the military government made consistent use of public relations to develop a series of nationalist campaigns for the promotion of state initiatives and to mask censorship in the country. Some examples of this practice,

whose underlying purpose was to project Brazil as a “booming” country, are campaigns associated with the country's third victory in the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, including the lyrics of the hymn “Ninety million in action” (the total population at the time), as well as the creation of slogans disseminated in the media to promote the national colors—green and yellow. This self-serving practice led to the misrepresentation of the essence of public relations, which became associated with kowtowing, untruthfulness, and the unethical use of the media.

However, from the second half of the 1980s Brazilian public relations recovered its original vocation and continued to evolve substantiated by four major developments: political overture toward democracy; economic changes; the installation of multinational public relations agencies and the establishment of local agencies; and the advancement of scientific activity in the field. Since then, the empowerment of public opinion has also contributed to stress the responsibility and transparency of undertakings; additionally, corporate social responsibility has become a new dimension of the ethical behavior underlying the relationship between undertakings and institutions and their publics.

By the 1990s, new challenges had emerged, and from 1993 to 1997 they were addressed at CONFERP's National Public Relations Parliament sessions. The initiative was the first attempt to redeem the concept of public relations, and it gathered scholars, researchers, and professionals around the table to discuss the future of the profession and its strategic function in the contemporary Brazilian society. Among the proposals advanced by the group was an amendment to the legislation in force (law no. 5.377), with the intent to extend CONFERP membership to professionals specialized in other fields, with the condition of the submittal of proof of completion of a *lato* or *stricto sensu* program in public relations. Yet, the amendment was never put to a vote in the legislative chamber.

Understanding the practice in Brazil, in particular, and Latin America, in general, requires an understanding of the influence of the sociopolitical forces on society during the second half of the 20th century. Maria Aparecida Ferrari and Fábio França (2011) pointed to the fact that the lack of a specific *corpus doctrinae* in public relations in the region

resulted in a high degree of subordination and dependence of practitioners on concepts and tools borrowed from the North American model, a phenomenon that represents an additional hindrance to the development of the practice of suitable public relations in the continent, particularly in Brazil. The absence of an indigenous public relations model is directly linked to the adoption of the U.S. pragmatic mainstream by the foreign undertakings that began to operate throughout South America from the 1950s. The highly pragmatic and functionalist approach of the U.S. public relations model had a profound influence on Brazilian professionals, whose function was seen and defined as one of safeguarding the company's image and defending its status quo.

At the close of the 20th century, the unremitting demands imposed by globalization and the technological advancements forced companies to respond and adapt to the new reality, by rationalizing processes and speeding up the transmission of data and information. In this new environment, social networks and electronic communication tools were made available, and organizations and professionals alike have seen new horizons open up for the practice. Research shows that since 1990, public relations in Brazil has evolved and surpassed the fields of journalism and advertisement. Today, companies seek professionals who are able to understand the social context and to conceive projects strictly linked to the organization's purpose of meeting the demands of their strategic publics. Today, two major trends can be identified within public relations in Brazil: The first consists of the analysis of the intercultural dimension in the communication process of organizations and governments; the second is the formulation of strategies for survival in increasingly vulnerable scenarios.

The ultimate challenge presented to scholars is the promotion of knowledge to ensure professionals an area of true cooperation in the search to strengthen the brand for organizations and institutions.

Brazil is a true "continent" within Latin America, as a result of its geographical dimension and its population, now rounding 193 million (according to 2012 Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística statistics). It is also recognized as the world's fifth most important economy. Despite its newness, public relations as a profession has

established a respectable position within the large undertakings and government bodies. A challenge yet to be addressed is the introduction of the practice to medium- and small-size companies, which account for 80% of all business activity in the country, and are, as a rule, family-owned and managed.

Today, 110 university-level courses are available in the area of public relations in the country (Ministry for Education, 2012). Additionally, the market for public relations encompasses over 1000 public relations agencies, both domestic and transnational, offering the full range of sophisticated communication and research services, aimed at fostering the relationship between organizations and institutions and their respective strategic publics for the purpose of building consensus and promoting understanding between the parties.

Maria Aparecida Ferrari

See also Advertising; Brand Equity and Branding; Functions of Public Relations; Globalization and Public Relations; Globalize; Marketing

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BRIDGE

Bridge is a term derived from both stage and journalism to mean *transition*. Usage of this word as a

term of art when referring to crisis responses and media training probably results from adaptation by public relations professionals of its many definitions in the related fields of journalism, graphic design or layout, theater, and broadcasting or film.

In journalism, the term's most common definition has meaning to writers and editors alike. Both use *bridge* to mean the "logical transition from the summary information of the lead to the detailed information in the body of the story when using the inverted pyramid structure method of news-writing" (Connors, 1982, pp. 99–100). When used in this context, the term *bridge* serves to explain and expand on the information in the lead. In more general usage, writers use the term to mean "a phrase or sentence connecting two stories" (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 2000, p. 519) or "a few words tying one element of news to another" (Weiner, 1996, p. 78). To editors, *bridge* refers to "a proof-reader's mark indicating that two letters or words should be connected" (Weiner, 1996, p. 78), whereas graphic designers and layout artists use *bridge* to mean "type or art that runs across the *gutter* and links two adjacent pages, more commonly called a *crossover* or *gutter bleed*" (Weiner, 1996, p. 78, italics in original).

In theater, broadcasting, and film, *bridge* conveys not just a changing of scenes, but often a changing of emotion, as well. Public relations educators Doug Newsom, Judy VanSlyke Turk, and Dean Kruckeberg (2000) define *bridge* in terms of its usage in broadcasting as "transitional program music" (p. 519). According to *The Dictionary of Media Terms*, a bridge is a "music cue used to carry us from one scene or one mood to another" (Penney, 1984, p. 27). *NTC's Mass Media Dictionary* expands on that definition and defines *bridge* as "sound effects or music used to indicate a lapse of time, or to link dramatic scenes" (Ellmore, 1991, p. 77). The *Longman Dictionary of Mass Media & Communication* summarizes these ideas with the following entry: "Narrative, sound, or music section used to transition between two scenes or to show an elapse of time or change of mood or locale" (Connors, 1982, pp. 99–100). Finally, *Webster's New World Dictionary of Media and Communications* includes the visual with the auditory, as it includes in its definition "a musical, visual, or other type of transition, particularly between scenes (a *bridging shot*)" (Weiner, 1996,

p. 78, italics in original). An interesting, but also germane, definition of the term used in theater refers to "a narrow platform on which stage lights (*bridge lights*) are mounted, usually called a *light bridge* in the United States or *lighting bridge* in the United Kingdom" (Weiner, 1996, p. 78, italics in original). *NTC's Mass Media Dictionary* notes, "Luminaries and projection devices are accessible during performances" (Ellmore, 1991, p. 77).

In public relations, *bridge* refers primarily to the technique used in a crisis response or while training someone to deal with the media that allows the speaker to take control of the interview. Simply stated, the speaker connects his or her answer to the interviewer's question or subject to a topic of his or her own choosing or to his or her communication points or commercials. Put another way, the speaker *reframes* the question or issue to allow the points they want made to lead the response.

Done poorly, bridging can be offensive and disingenuous to journalist and viewer alike. An example one journalist used to illustrate this point was the response U.S. senator Warner (R-Va.) gave when challenged about whether the Iraqis had taunted the United States in a message. His answer to the question: "I want to turn to this other thing."

Successful use of the bridge starts with communication points, or commercials. These are the one, two, or three things the speaker wants the audience to remember, even if they don't remember anything else. Some public relations professionals prefer message mapping instead of communication points—where all roads lead to a central point—but the intent is the same: The speaker has a message that he or she wants heard.

Once the communication points are established, they become the point the speaker makes first in response to a question. The bridge technique then connects the communication point(s) to a more expansive explanation of the point or to another of the speaker's communication points. Phrases such as "That's such a complex subject . . .," "Your question really relates to . . .," and "You bring up an interesting point, but before I discuss that, it's important to note that . . ." are all good bridges.

A good example of how communication points and bridges interoperate can be seen in the following mock interchange, regarding an accident that claimed several lives:

- Reporter:** “Witnesses claim they saw the aircraft oscillating wildly just before it plowed into those hangers over there. What can you tell us about the maintenance standards of your company and could that have been the cause of this accident?”
- Spokesperson:** “Obviously, we won’t know the cause of the accident until after the investigation is completed (communication point). Your question really relates to our maintenance practices (bridge) and that is a part of our business that we take very seriously (second communication point). We have an extensive training program that requires continual refresher courses and includes an extensive certification process. . . .”

Though allowing the spokesperson to control the interview, the effective use of the bridging technique in the interchange above helped improve the communication between the two parties by providing additional information and perspective on the issue at hand. Had the spokesperson merely stated that the accident was under investigation and provided nothing further, or worse yet, ineffectively used the bridging technique to try to deflect the reporter’s legitimate question, the public would not have been served well, and the relationship between spokesperson and reporter would have become unnecessarily tense and adversarial.

Effective use of the bridge incorporates many of the attributes found in definitions of the term from journalism, graphic design or layout, theater, and broadcasting or film. It connects your lead, or the most important information in the story, to the rest of the story and serves to explain and expand on the information in the lead (journalism). It conveys a changing of scenes and often emotion (theater, broadcasting, and film) when used to connect two communication points, especially if one of those points is a statement of condolence, concern, or regret. Finally, by providing additional explanation and perspective or expanding on particular points, the bridge serves to illuminate and remains accessible throughout the conversation (theater).

Robert S. Pritchard

See also Crisis Communication; Interview as a Communication Tool

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BROCHURE

A brochure is a printed piece of collateral material used for public relations, advertising, and marketing purposes. Brochures are considered a communication tool or tactic and a form of direct media, such as fliers, newsletters, and posters, which reaches its audiences through distribution channels other than mass media (i.e., newspapers, magazines, radio, and television). Other terms used to describe brochures are *pamphlets*, considered simple versions of brochures, and *booklets*, which are brochures that are produced in small, booklike formats.

Every organization, whether corporate or non-profit, needs brochures to convey key messages to particular target audiences. A brochure is a tactic with a specific objective. For example, brochures can educate an employee audience about company policies, inform customers about new products, or encourage members of a community to use a program offered by a nonprofit organization.

Brochures communicate a sizable amount of information to a single reader at a handheld viewing distance. An orderly sequence of information is presented in stages through panels using a common design thread that visually connects all of the panels and helps entice and sustain the reader’s attention.

Brochures are commonly distributed to a target audience interpersonally, in information racks and through the mail in a standard business envelope. In order to be effective, brochures must be strategically sound, which means they need to be targeted toward a particular audience, convey an overall key message, and attempt to achieve a specific objective. Some of the most common objectives in

public relations include increasing awareness about a specific organization and educating the target audience about a specific service or product.

Brochures are produced in a variety of styles, shapes, and sizes. A format often used in public relations is a simple two-fold, six-panel, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ brochure. Another popular format is a one-fold, four-panel, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ brochure, which can be expanded by adding multiple pages. Brochures can be folded and bound in many ways. Letter, broadside, map, and accordion folds are commonly used. A common type of binding for booklets is a saddle stitch, which involves a staple through the spine of the publication.

Brochures need to be created with a unifying design throughout the entire publication, which can be conveyed through an appropriate choice of typeface, line rules, screens and tints, clip art, and color schemes. Brochures are commonly printed in one color, spot color (usually black for the type and another color to highlight specific areas in the brochure), and full color, which is the most expensive to produce. Some public relations practitioners begin with a layout and copy for a brochure and then work with a designer and/or printer to develop the final printed piece. Other practitioners create the entire piece themselves, using any number of desktop publishing programs, such as PageMaker, Quark Xpress, Adobe InDesign, and Microsoft Publisher.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Collateral; Pamphlet

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BUSINESS WIRE

Business Wire is a commercial news distribution service, one of many available today. During its more than 50 years of operation, it has traditionally been either the leader or one of the top two

such services in revenue and number of customers and subscribers. The company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway.

Business Wire got its start by electronically distributing news releases on behalf of public relations clients and has evolved to offer services that include online newsrooms, measurement tools, and more.

Public relations clients—called *member companies*—provide news releases, photos, regulatory filings, multimedia, and other content to Business Wire. For a fee, the company disseminates the information to journalists, investors, researchers, and other audiences simultaneously and in real time, to the geographic market, industry audiences, and editorial desks requested by the client.

The company serves clients in more than 200 different industries through more than 30 bureaus in Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America.

The company also provides a variety of services to help organizations manage their corporate communications and research needs. Publicly traded companies can use Business Wire to meet requirements for public disclosure. Business Wire was the first news-wire to offer to its public company clients a system specific to filings of the Securities and Exchange Commission called Education Department General Administrative Regulations, or EDGAR. The service is also used by financial and research databases and online news organizations who store company news releases distributed by Business Wire and make them available in company news archives.

Founded in San Francisco in 1961 by veteran journalist and public relations executive Lorry I. Lokey, the company started out with seven clients and distributed news releases to 16 news organizations in Northern California. Through the next decade, it expanded its geographic reach by forming affiliations with other wires, such as the Associated Press.

The speed that a news service could distribute information was a major attraction of the service. By 1967, Business Wire's ability to send 100 words per minute—which equates to sending a standard news release in about 5–10 minutes—was the fastest of any service. A decade later, the service reached a new level when Business Wire inaugurated satellite-to-computer delivery of news releases, the first to do so, increasing its speed to 1,200 words per minute. Today, instantaneous distribution is the new norm. As of 2012, Business Wire is the only commercial newswire to own its own patented, Internet-based simultaneous delivery system.

The company continued to expand its services and offices in the 1980s. It also created its Analyst-Wire service, which connected clients with financial analysts, and SportsWire and EntertainmentWire, services that brought sports- and entertainment-related news to key sports and entertainment media.

Later developments, in the 1990s, included the addition of Associated Press (AP) PhotoExpress service for commercial photo satellite delivery, the first commercial website for a newswire and the industry's first multimedia news release.

In 2003, the company became the first commercial newswire to distribute its content over AP's Internet-based delivery platform. Over the next decade, the company added services, such as the Public Policy Wire and Latino Wire, capabilities that enhance search engine optimization (SEO), mobile distribution, and online newsrooms that can be maintained on Business Wire's website.

Catherine L. Hinrichsen

See also Investor Relations; Wire Service

Further Readings

Business Wire: <http://www.businesswire.com>

BYLINE

Byline is the term used for the signature line of a newspaper article or other contributed piece to a news publication. Bylines refer to the author or authors of a news item and appear in conjunction with the dateline and the place where the story originated, if it is not a local story. For news articles received via a wire service, a byline is not reported and credit is given to the respective news service, such as the Associated Press. Internal newsletters may or may not allow for bylines if the articles are written by a staff member.

For public relations practitioners, securing a byline is not as important as it is to reporters. Press releases do not contain a byline; they include only contact information for reporters who need additional information. If a reporter uses a press release to write his or her article, he or she receives the

byline. Even if public relations practitioners issue press releases on behalf of a client, the reporter gets the byline.

If a reporter prints a press release in its entirety, the reporter gets the byline, not the person who wrote the release. Because this sometimes happens, it is imperative that a press release contain accurate information and be written as if it were going to be printed as submitted.

Reporters have an urgency to "get the byline," but there are certain checks in place to ensure that this need for "immediate and frequent reward" does not cause a story to be written prematurely (Mencher, 2000, p. 419).

Mencher made the point that when a reporter was given a byline, that means that they were *actually present* and on the scene before writing the story. Mencher refers to an "old-timer," who commented,

In the old days, a reporter was given a byline if he or she personally covered an important or unusual story, or the story was an exclusive. Sometimes if the writing was superior, a byline was given. Nowadays, everyone gets a byline, even if the story is a rewrite and the reporter never saw the event described in the story. (2000, p. 766)

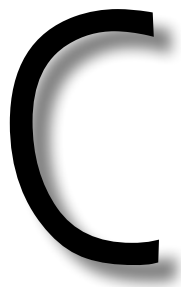
Public relations practitioners should be aware of this issue in journalism and should work to provide reporters with all pertinent facts. Although the public relations practitioner does not receive the byline for the article, it is highly likely that they will be quoted in the article. Whether those quotes are supplied in a press release or given through follow-up interviews with a reporter, the article's truth will fall back on the public relations practitioner and the organization.

Kelly M. George

See also News Story; News/Newsworthy

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CAMPAIGN

A campaign is the strategic design of a series of messages sent to one or more targeted publics for a discrete period of time in response to a positive or negative situation affecting the organization. An organization or agency plans a campaign by utilizing paid messages, unpaid message outlets, such as press releases, or other news events to respond to a crisis affecting the organization or to create a proactive campaign that enhances the corporation's images. The key to the definition of a campaign is that it is created by an organization, such as a profit-oriented corporation, a political candidate, or a social agency, to communicate to a single small audience, such as employees within one office or to millions of persons in multiple audiences across the nation (Moffitt, 1999).

A public relations campaign cannot be assumed when news stories saturate the media covering a natural disaster or reporting a crisis that affects a corporation or an industry. For example, a flurry of news stories reporting the 2010 BP (British Petroleum) oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico or the Toyota sticking brakes crisis in the same year are not campaigns simply by virtue of receiving widespread media coverage. These represent only major news stories that are picked up by media outlets across the nation. However, when BP and Toyota began responding to the news reports with their own messages and explanations of the crisis situations, in essence, each company was conducting a campaign of strategically designed messages

calculated to diminish the crisis and restore their respective corporate images.

Three Elements Define a Campaign

Three factors identify a campaign and distinguish a series of news stories from a series of campaign messages developed by an organization. Also known as the conceptualization model of a campaign, the factors of (1) campaign situation, (2) nature of organization, and (3) traits of the targeted audiences or publics are the few, but crucial, elements that represent the conceptualization of a campaign.

Any campaign is prompted by a campaign situation, such as a crisis affecting the organization or a project developed by the organization. A negative or crisis event can prompt an organization to conduct a campaign to attempt to correct any damage done to persons and the environment and, additionally, to rebuild any damage to the image of the corporation that results from the incident. A proactive, positive project, such as giving additional benefits to the employees, sponsoring a fundraising campaign to benefit research into an illness or disease, or calling attention to domestic violence also demands a well-thought-out, strategic campaign to get the information out to the affected and interested populations.

The nature of the organization is also a factor in any campaign. As its name indicates, a for-profit organization exists on profits from sales of its products or services. A not-for-profit organization, such as a social agency, exists to raise funds from donors and to generate goodwill to benefit its social cause. Political candidates and the organizations

supporting them work to garner votes and financial support to successfully support their candidates. Understanding the various natures and characteristics of organizations leads to an understanding of the campaigns that each conducts.

The third and final element of a campaign is knowledge of and considerations of all the multiple respective audiences that relate to the organization, such as employees, stockholders, community residents, media, truck drivers, customers, activist groups, and competitors or the rest of the industry. Multiple factors enlighten and affect the campaign that an organization plans: consideration of each audience's traits as well as its needs; personality traits; dominant demographics; knowledge, attitude, and behaviors toward the organization; and all the other various images held of the organization. Campaign messages that are most effective are those that appeal to any or all of these traits in the targeted audiences.

Background knowledge of any organization, any campaign situation, and any or all targeted populations define an actual campaign from any succession of random messages found in the media. Knowing the role of each of these elements and how each of these factors affects the others leads to an accurate definition of a campaign and separates campaign communication from other kinds of communication.

Kinds of Campaigns

Not only do the three elements of the conceptualization model of a campaign—campaign situation, organization, and audience—identify campaigns, but these same elements also define types of campaigns. The most accepted conceptual classes of campaigns are commercial, political, and social issue. For each of these kinds of campaigns, the nature of the organization, the campaign situation, and the distinct traits of the audience inherently label and identify the choice of campaign.

The three kinds of commercial campaigns are marketing, advertising, and public relations. Marketing as a field of business was created first; its purpose is to place a company's product or service in the marketplace and, hopefully, carve a unique space and create a singular demand for the product. Advertising emerged from marketing communication as a more specialized and narrow kind of campaign; the singular purpose of advertising

messages is to generate interest in and sell the product or service of the corporation. For these campaigns, the organization is profit oriented, the campaign situation is product sales, and the important audiences are customers, potential customers, and retailers.

For the third kind of commercial campaign of public relations, the project or crisis campaign situation and the targeted audiences are radically different from those of marketing and advertising. In the field of public relations a myriad of campaigns are possible, given the potential for numerous project and crisis campaign situations and given all the other populations (besides customers and retailers) with whom public relations professionals must communicate. Public relations communication is exclusively responsible for crisis communication and corporate image management. This necessitates that public relations is responsible for all kinds of campaign situations outside of sales and for all the other populations outside of customers and retailers. For political campaigns, the common campaign scenario is based on getting a candidate elected or a piece of legislation passed. In terms of important populations, a political campaign obviously targets voters or constituencies and the media as primary audiences.

The final classification of campaign is the social issue campaign. Described as a campaign to benefit society or to benefit a social or charitable cause, it takes two forms. The social issue campaign is a campaign to attract followers and donors to causes, such as National Smoke-Out Day, various environmental campaigns, or the pro-life and pro-choice campaigns surrounding the abortion issue. The second kind of social issue campaign, which is gaining in popularity, is when for-profit corporations support a social issue campaign for altruistic reasons and for image management reasons. This second move for corporations to support social issues blurs the lines between a public relations campaign and a social issue campaign. The assumed definition of a public relations campaign is to foster positive images in all the various populations, but a profit-oriented corporation supporting social causes also makes it responsible for social issue campaigns.

Becky A. McDonald

See also Advertising; Marketing; Public Relations

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CANADA, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

In Canada, as elsewhere, public relations can trace its roots to activities that predate its emergence as a distinct occupation. For example, after French explorer Samuel de Champlain returned from his first voyage along the St. Lawrence and Saguenay rivers in 1603, he published a book about his exploits that was designed to lure settlers to Quebec.

However, it is in the promotion of immigration in the late 19th century, as well as in the education of immigrant farmers in agricultural techniques appropriate to their new homeland, that one finds the rise of public relations as a distinct profession in the public and private sectors. Established in 1892, the Department of Trade and Commerce became the second government department (after the Department of Agriculture) to place a significant focus on publicity activities.

The first government publicists made use of traveling exhibits, lectures, pamphlets, and advertising to promote Canada's agricultural, trade, and commerce interests in the United States and abroad. The federal government also sponsored visits to Canada by clergymen and farmers, then circulated their comments to more than a million citizens of Great Britain. In a grand gesture, they granted 160-acre parcels of free land to each of more than 30,000 Americans.

Development of Public Relations in the Private Sector

Similarly, immigration was a key factor in the rise of private-sector public relations. The railroads, especially the Canadian Pacific (CPR), were important government partners in attempting to populate the West. However, this cooperation was motivated more by political necessity than financial strategy:

Promoting immigration helped curry government support for various railroad subsidies, including large land grants. By the dawn of the 20th century, the CPR had turned its promotional efforts to tourism, using techniques such as press junkets, brochures, and in-house film production.

For its part, the Canadian National Railway (CNR) was a debt-ridden, half-completed system when the government nationalized it in the 1920s. To salvage the operation, the CNR president promoted his firm as a valuable service to Canadians by introducing traveling schools and medical teams to rural communities; the firm also launched a radio broadcasting network that eventually became the foundation for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Many of the early activities in the private sector centered on internal communication. For example, the Massey Manufacturing Co. of Toronto, a farm implements maker, established what has been recognized as the first true employee publication in North America, *The Trip Hammer*. It published monthly beginning in 1885.

Early public relations efforts can often be tied to industries threatened by regulation, if not outright nationalization. These industries developed public relations departments to foster supportive public opinion in the hope of stemming unwanted infringements on their freedoms. As early as the mid-1800s, for example, Quebec brewers employed a form of public relations to counteract that province's introduction of local options on prohibition; the scenario repeated in 1917 against similar restrictive moves.

Other early adopters of public relations included utilities, such as Bell Canada, which established a publicity department in 1914 shortly after ad hoc public relations helped derail proposals to nationalize telephone service. However, it has been suggested that the status of public relations at Bell ebbed once the crisis passed, a pattern that may have been true in other organizations as well.

In many cases, publicity emerged organizationally from in-house advertising departments; the hiring of ex-journalists also brought a public information orientation to marketing communications efforts. Among early journalist-practitioners were George Ham and J. Murray Gibbon of the CPR, John Yocom of British American Oil Co., Charles Fortier of Bell Canada, Yves Jasmin of Air Canada, and Toronto consultant Ruth Hammond.

The birth of public relations consulting firms is similarly tied to people with newspaper backgrounds. The first known Toronto agency was established in 1930 by James Cowan, who had worked at the *Toronto Star*. Publicity bureaus existed in Montreal prior to that time, but there is no reliable evidence regarding dates. Probably the oldest firm still in business, OEB International, was founded in St. Catharines, Ontario, in 1936, by newspaperman Louis J. Cahill, who continued working simultaneously as a journalist for some time.

While there was sporadic growth in the private sector through the Depression, it was not until after World War II that public relations came into its own in English Canada. Public relations experience in wartime propaganda gave communicators skills that could be transferred to the private sector and to new wars against social unrest and expanding regulation.

In French-speaking Canada, public relations blossomed by 1960, when the “Quiet Revolution”—in essence, a turn toward secular, civil society from the conservative, church-dominated society of the past—gave rise to a more consultative society. Local organizations found it advantageous to get their messages across, given more powerful media and the rise of government communications.

Today, public relations is routine within most private- and nonprofit-sector organizations of any size, and public relations specialists perform the same mix of managerial, strategic, and technical work as colleagues elsewhere. While some major public relations consultancies are independently owned, major international firms like Hill & Knowlton, Weber Shandwick, and Fleishman-Hillard have Canadian operations.

Development of Public Relations in the Public Sector

The government did little to develop public relations activities in departments other than Agriculture, Trade and Commerce, and Transport until the 1920s and 1930s, when the problems and opportunities of large scale migration into cities necessitated new social legislation. However, it was not until World War II that public relations activities in the Canadian government reached a truly large scale.

The history of public relations in the public sector is tightly bound to the rise and fall of central communication agencies. At the onset of World War II, the Department of National War Services established the Wartime Information Board to support Canada’s war effort and to facilitate inter-departmental information sharing. The board reported directly to the prime minister. At the same time, the war spurred the proliferation of information services across government. Another federal agency, the Bureau of Public Information, orchestrated speaking tours; produced articles, posters, photos, and films; and took over the printing and distribution of all government documents. The Wartime Information Board absorbed this agency in 1942. Following the war, distrust of central agencies led to the Board’s being renamed the Canadian Information Service (CIS). CIS died a quiet death after the government abandoned domestic activities and transferred the organization to the Department of External Affairs.

Despite the expression of skepticism toward central agencies, public relations services were expanding and thriving, and by 1944, the federal government employed 396 publicity officers. A classification system, established in 1946, set lower end salaries (IS-1) at \$2,400 and higher end salaries (IS-4) at \$4,500.

After a lengthy time lapse, the next major development in public relations occurred in 1962, with the establishment of the Glassco Commission on Government Organization. The war had made Canadians fearful of organizations with too much power or control. Reflecting this bias, the Glassco Commission recommended fragmentation of the communication function. The commission also declared the “right of the public to know”; called for communication officers to “inform” rather than “impress”; and criticized the large number of IS officers in the armed services, the volume of government press releases, and the use of the term *PR*. Commission members recommended the establishment of clear communication policies, guidelines, and training in public relations for government communicators.

After this report, public relations departments in government became known as “Information Services.” Despite the commission’s focus on the information function, members recognized the necessity for some government departments, such

as (1) Health and Welfare and (2) Energy, Mines, and Resources, to seek to persuade on matters related to the public interest.

Another benchmark in the history of public sector public relations occurred with the establishment of the 1969 Task Force on Government Information, chaired by D'Iberville Fortier. Reverting to earlier patterns, task force members championed the development of a central communication agency that could act as a reference center and technical adviser to departments, learn the views of Canadians on government issues and policies, and coordinate departmental resources (especially in crisis situations). The task force published its recommendations in a controversial document titled *To Know and Be Known*. Authors D'Iberville Fortier, Bernard Ostry, and Tom Ford called for the creation of a comprehensive and innovative communication policy that included selection standards and training requirements for public relations practitioners. They also argued that the directors of Information Services should sit on department management committees and report to the highest level of each department executive. In other words, they recommended that public relations should become a management function.

In 1970 acting on the task force report, the Treasury Board charged Jack Donoghue (then director of Information Services at the Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources) with developing a career path for IS officers, and subsequently, Donoghue gained Cabinet approval for a "Career Plan and Manpower Guidelines" (sometimes called the "Y" theory of IS careers) that upgraded and clarified the public relations function within government.

Also in 1970, the government made a second failed try at centralizing the communication function in the body of Information Canada, an agency that came under severe criticism from members of Parliament, government departments, and journalists. Information Canada ceased operations in 1976. Eric Miller wrote a report that explained its failure in terms of orphaned operational responsibilities, a weak and unclear mandate, a sensitive political climate in which everyone assumed a "big brother" mentality about Information Canada, lack of a clear constituency or clientele, lack of support from ministers with clout, isolation from

bureaucratic realities, harsh judgments by the media, and a dependency that came with a cost recovery budget.

Nonetheless, in 1977, shortly after the separatists took power in Quebec, the government made a third effort at establishing a central agency to coordinate public relations activities. The Canadian Unity Information Office (CUIO) had a clear mission: to contribute to the patriation of the Constitution and to foster national unity. To accomplish these tasks, the CUIO established sophisticated public opinion research and media monitoring systems to track constitutional and unity issues. Like its forerunners, the CUIO came under attack almost immediately for being a propaganda tool, partisan in mission and operations. And so the CUIO fell, within months of the conservatives coming to power in 1984.

The next significant development occurred when the Tories commissioned a management review of communications in 1987. As part of the review process, government undertook an occupational analysis of communication functions. They found that public relations specialists were acting as media liaisons, writers, editors, exhibition designers, speech writers, and other creative positions. Subsequently, Cabinet approved a series of decisions that formed the basis for the 1988 *Government Communications Policy*, authored by Assistant Secretary of Communications to Cabinet Mary Gusella, with the assistance of Paul Tellier (Clerk to the Privy Council) and Jack Manion (Assistant Clerk to the Privy Council).

This document was a key development, transforming the work of the government communicator into a strategic management function. The new policy required communication officers to research and analyze the public opinion environment, engage in planning, perform an advisory function, and manage communications. Public relations specialists across the government registered in a massive retraining effort to prepare for their new strategic roles and responsibilities.

The goals of the new communication policy were to set out basic principles of communication within the context of representative government, encourage transparency and the free flow of information between government and citizens, highlight the importance of communication in achieving government objectives, establish a

framework for government-wide management of communication, and provide guidelines for implementing a range of communication activities, such as advertising, publishing, public opinion research, and media relations.

The most recent incarnation of a central communication agency occurred in 1996 with the establishment of the Canadian Information Office (CIO), later renamed Communications Canada. The formation of this agency followed on the heels of the Quebec referendum—a referendum that came within two percentage points of dividing Canada into French and English entities. The federal response was decisive. With ministerial approval, the Treasury Board established the Corporate Identity and Government Communications Division in late 1998. The division had a twofold mandate: to brand the Government of Canada and to renew the 1988 *Government Communications Policy*. Jean-Pierre Villeneuve was appointed to head that renewal process.

Also in 1998, Assistant Secretary of Communications to Cabinet Ruth Cardinal steered a government-wide committee that created a vision statement for the communications community. That vision statement outlined the need for communicators in partnership with stakeholders to develop strategic and operational communication plans; implement communication plans, projects, and activities by using modern communication tools and techniques; evaluate and adjust communication plans and activities, as needed; and ensure a capacity to respond quickly and effectively to crisis situations. The committee also contributed to a competency profile for communicators, part of the Universal Classification System initiative undertaken by the Public Service Commission. The competency profile included categories related to knowledge, cognitive thinking abilities, interpersonal and partnering skills, and specialized and technical skills.

More than a decade after initiating its review of the 1988 *Government Communications Policy*, the Treasury Board issued a revised policy in April 2002. That policy document resulted in a greatly expanded definition of the government communications function. According to the policy, the job duties of communicators range from informing and serving Canadians to environmental analysis; public opinion

research; consultation and citizen engagement; risk communication; crisis and emergency communication; management and coordination; planning and evaluation; internal communication; Internet and electronic communication; media relations; involvement with public events and announcements; advertising; establishment of partnering and collaborative arrangements; marketing; publishing; and the production of films, video, and multimedia products.

Organizations

The two principal professional associations operating in Canada are the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

CPRS is a federation of 14 locally based societies from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland. Its 2013 membership is listed as more than 1,800 members. Similar to the Public Relations Society of America, with which it is loosely affiliated, CPRS fosters the interests and professional stature of the field and offers its members professional development opportunities through chapter programming, an annual national convention, an online resource library, and so on. It has an accreditation program leading to the designation APR; nearly 500 of its members are accredited. CPRS was established in 1948, linking separate bodies in Montreal and Toronto.

IABC has a strong presence in Canada, with approximately 5,000 members as of mid-2012. Its largest chapter worldwide is in Toronto. There are 14 other Canadian chapters within its two Canadian districts—including a chapter in the Caribbean whose members determined that they had more in common with Canadian practitioners than with their more proximate U.S. colleagues. IABC members have access to professional development opportunities similar to those of its sister organization, as well as an accreditation scheme leading to the designation ABC (Accredited Business Communicator). Several of the association's world leaders have been Canadian. Both CPRS and IABC are members of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, founded in 2000.

Canada also has a number of organizations linking practitioners in specific industry sectors. These

include the Health Care Public Relations Association of Canada, with seven chapters; the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education, which embraces communicators from school boards, teachers unions, and provincial ministries of education; and the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education, whose members are drawn from the postsecondary education sector.

Status

Just as in the United States, public relations in Canada is an unlicensed profession. In the 1980s, surveys indicated that up to 60% of practitioners supported mandatory licensing, a call echoed by several CPRS leaders, such as 1987–1988 president Allan Sinclair. Nothing came of these pronouncements, however, and public relations remains open to entry by anyone, though increasing numbers have taken some form of public relations education at the postsecondary level.

The 2001 Statistics Canada census found that 4,360 respondents listed public relations and customer service as their major field of study at the university level. The figure was based on a 20% data sample of those at least 20 years old with a university degree or degrees.

Educational programs in public relations appear most often in community colleges. The exceptions are programs at Mount Saint Vincent, the University of Ottawa (in cooperation with Algonquin College), l'Université Laval, and the University of Quebec at Montreal, which offer the opportunity to specialize in public relations within their communication programs. The University of Guelph, McGill University, the University of Regina, l'Université de Montréal, the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Ryerson University, and the University of Lethbridge (in cooperation with MacEwan University) grant diplomas or certificates in public relations. (These programs do not always fall under the aegis of communication.) Courses relevant to the study of public relations also appear within a number of communication and continuing education programs in Canadian universities, such as the University of Calgary.

Opportunities for graduate work in public relations are limited. Royal Roads University offers an MBA in Public Relations and Communication

Management. A joint program between l'Université Laval (Quebec) and l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux (France) grants a diploma of graduate studies in Public Affairs and Lobbying.

There is some evidence that Canadian public relations practitioners enjoy about the same status as their U.S. counterparts. A 2002 survey by IABC, for example, shows similar rankings on such measures as job satisfaction, job security, and level of managerial responsibility. Indeed, to the extent that links to senior management are a marker of status, Canadian respondents reported somewhat greater access than Americans, and they were more apt to regard the reporting relationship as effective. The average salary of Canadian respondents in the IABC survey was about one-third lower than that of their U.S. peers, when adjusted to U.S. currency; however, they were no more likely to complain that their salary was too low for the number of hours they are compelled to work. As elsewhere, women in the field have increased in number. For example, CPRS membership in 1958–1959 was 13% female; at the turn of the millennium, the figure was 60%.

Peter Johansen

See also Antecedents of Modern Public Relations; Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management; International Association of Business Communicators; Public Relations

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CAPTION/CUTLINE

A caption, or cutline, refers to those identifying words that appear beneath a photograph when it is used to accompany an article or to stand alone in a news publication. If a photograph accompanies an article, the caption or cutline should summarize the article, as the reader may rely only on the caption or cutline for information.

The intention is that captions or cutlines should be interesting enough to entice the reader to read the entire article. “Research repeatedly demonstrates that photographs with captions are most effective at increasing readership and understanding than news stories standing alone. Studies also show that news stories are more effective than photographs without a caption” (Morton, pp. 17–18).

Photographs can be considered among the most effective publicity tools. Single photographs with captions or cutlines are sometimes called “wild art” by editors. These are photographs that are taken with the intent to draw reader interest.

Captions or cutlines should identify all individuals who appear in a photograph from left to right. Be sure to include their titles and their involvement as they relate to the photograph’s purpose. Photograph consent forms should be obtained, especially for anyone under the age of 18.

Most often, public relations practitioners are responsible for writing captions or cutlines for their organizational newsletters or for photographs being submitted to the media. When submitting a photograph with a press release, or as a stand-alone item, submit the caption or cutline in press release format, including contact information. Write in the active tense and try to limit it to no more than three sentences.

Public relations practitioners may be responsible for taking photographs or directing a photographer at special events. Plan out the shots ahead of time by making a list of who needs to appear together in photographs. For example, if board members or staff members will be present in honor of a special guest, work to get these people together for a quick photograph during the event.

When directing or taking photographs, public relations practitioners should try not to have more than four individuals appear in each picture. Photographs that capture people in their natural state

as they are talking or looking at objects are preferred over those that are posed. Avoid, if at all possible, publishing (or taking) photographs of individuals who have alcoholic drinks in their hands or are smoking cigarettes to avoid any liability issues that could ensue.

Kelly M. George

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CASE STUDY

The case study is a descriptive, qualitative research method that analyzes in great detail a person, an organization, or an event. Case studies are found in most applied areas, such as business, law, and marketing, and offer insight into practices and tactics. The case study’s major advantage is the detail and analysis it provides of a specific person, organization, or event; its major disadvantage is that it cannot be generalized to situations other than the one that was studied. A major problem in using case studies is the “it worked here, it will work for me” mode—that is, trying to take specific tactics or messages from one case and applying them to another. Even in situations where cases are within an industry, trying to compare Case 1 to Case 2 is like trying to compare apples to oranges.

Case Study Types

There are three major types of case studies common to public relations: linear, process-oriented, and grounded. The *linear case study* focuses primarily on the entity as the object of research from a historical perspective. Its function is, as Jerry Hendrix (1995) noted, a linear ROPE (Research,

Objective, Program, Evaluation) model. The *process case study* examined the object of research as a unique event within a larger process. As suggested by Allen Center and Patrick Jackson (1995), this case study type included feedback loops whereby campaign strategy and tactics can be revised or changed due to evaluation carried out against planned benchmarks. Both types are linked to some type of communication theory. The *grounded case study*, on the other hand, is crafted around a business objective and relies less on communication. Its function is to demonstrate the business principles in play and typically is based on some business model, such as Management by Objectives (MBO).

Conducting a Case Study

The actual application of any of the three case study types follows a historical review of a public relations campaign, specific event, institution, or person. As such, a case study typically follows a *timeline format* that focuses on the events leading up to, and then follows through to a campaign or event, or it chronicles the individual or institutional life. If the case study takes a problem-solution approach then the case is formatted based on causes and effects, typically following a deductive logic. Regardless of format, the case study usually includes a statement of the problem; a research phase; the goals and objectives of the campaign, event, institution, or person; the communication strategy employed (if employed); and evaluation.

All public relations case studies focus on some element or problem. Defining and stating the problem or element is the first step in conducting the case study. This is typically phrased as a problem, opportunity, or situation and sets the stage for the research phase. Case studies have been conducted on economic, political, environmental, and personal problems. For instance, the handling of the Clinton-Lewinsky affair might provide insight into how to handle a political problem on a personal level. A case study of Dell Computer Corporation might examine how the CEO influences public relations strategies and impacts the bottom line.

The research phase is an exhaustive review of all documents—published and unpublished—relevant to the case. The research phase may also include visits to sites, interviews with participants,

and interviews with representatives from other publics affected by the case. Although there may be interviews, most of the case study's efforts are found in historical research. Historical research tries to examine as many primary sources (original documentation) as possible in order to paint as complete a picture as possible of the case. This requires visiting libraries and other places where documents may be found. In many instances, the case study researcher has to travel to specialized libraries, such as the mass communication collection that houses John W. Hill's personal papers at the University of Wisconsin or the archives of the company or institution under study. The key is to obtain as much original material as possible. This data is followed up with secondary sources: newspaper articles, reports of various industries or the government, and so forth. For instance, in a crisis management case, the researcher might examine stock prices before, during, and after the crisis.

Based on this research, the case's goals and objectives are formally stated and then the communication strategy used to meet the goals and objectives is examined. At this phase of the case study, a content analysis of messages may be employed and key figures may be (re)interviewed. Here the researcher attempts to state specifically the campaign or individual goals and objectives and the benchmarks against which it will be evaluated. In addition, the actual communication strategy and the various written, visual, and verbal tactics employed are addressed. Many grounded, business-oriented cases do not offer great detail here, mainly because they are more concerned with a cause-effect model. In a linear model, the case progresses to the next phase, but in a process model the evaluation of benchmarks is presented and any revisions of strategy and changes of tactics explained.

Finally, the case study evaluates whether the objectives were met and the goals achieved. This is done by reexamining the problem, opportunity, or situation, the goals and objectives, the communication strategy, and the tactics and comparing them against either the benchmarks or some other criteria that provide indications of success or failure. Given the advantage of hindsight, suggestions for improvement may be offered for objectives and goals not met as well as a critical appraisal of output tactics offered.

Importance of the Case Study

Case studies provide public relations practitioners with examples of good and bad public relations tactics. In some instances, a case study provides insight into how a public relations firm operated, such as Karen Miller's case study of Hill & Knowlton. Others might provide insight into how public relations was not employed and the impact of that failure, such as James O'Rourke's Ford Motor Company versus Firestone. Each provides the practitioner with examples of successful and unsuccessful strategy and tactics.

Don W. Stacks

See also Benchmarking; Content Analysis; Goals; Objectives; Qualitative Research

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CATALYTIC MODEL OF ISSUES MANAGEMENT

The catalytic model of issues management explains how organizations can proactively initiate certain issues and stimulate the public agenda with the goal of managing an issue through its life cycle. Richard E. Crable and Steven L. Vibbert (1985) extended Barry Jones and Howard Chase's (1979) process model of issue management by proposing a catalytic model that maintains that organizations should not merely respond to developing issues

and react to the strategies of others but should instead catalyze issue discussions as a means to achieve organizational goals.

The catalytic model segments issues into life cycles with five stages: (1) *potential* stage, when one or more individuals attach significance to a problem; (2) *imminent* stage, when many others accept a problem as a legitimate concern; (3) *current* stage, when the media widely disseminate information about an issue, making an issue a topic of conversation among many stakeholders; (4) *critical* stage, when an issue is ready for decision and groups argue for a resolution in their favor; and (5) *dormant* stage, when policy decisions on an issue have been made or an issue is "resolved." Issues often resurface when new problems are identified, in effect restarting the issue life cycle again, at various stages.

The catalytic approach argues that organizations should not wait for potential issues to become salient to others to start managing them. There are three steps in catalytic issues management.

Situation Assessment. Issue managers need to take stock of potential outcomes that benefit profit or survival motives of the organization. Managers should examine how environmental conditions enable or constrain desired outcomes.

Goal Establishment. Organizations catalyze favorable policy by creating issues and effectively managing them to a desired outcome. Desired outcomes should be solidified into clear goals and objectives. Managers should identify what law, policy, economic, cultural, or informational factors need to change in order for organizational goals and objectives to become reality. Subsequently, managers should assess the potential positive effects of a change against potentially negative effects. If the potential positive effects outweigh the negative, managers determine if the organization can indeed catalyze the desired change through influencing the policy process.

Agenda Stimulation. An organization can work to establish an issue's potential with internal and external publics through tactics that explain the issue as justified and legitimate. Moving an issue to the imminent stage is accomplished by gaining the involvement and endorsement of other groups so

that an issue becomes legitimized in the eyes of many stakeholders. Next, through agenda-building techniques and media relations, issue managers try to position and frame an issue in the mass media, helping it to reach the current stage and become part of the public agenda. In the critical stage, skills such as lobbying are needed to influence public policy and resolve an issue in a manner that benefits the organization.

As a long-term planning tool, the catalytic model enables organizations to initiate desired issue discussions rather than waiting for others to develop trends or favorable policy conditions. While initially conceptualized as a tool for business, research has widely recognized that all forms of organizations—corporate, government, non-profit, or activist—can catalytically manage issues to their advantage.

Erich J. Sommerfeldt

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Framing Theory; Goals; Issues Management; Lobbying; Media Relations; Objectives; Public Policy Planning

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CAUSE MODEL OF RISK AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION

The CAUSE model is an approach to studying risk and crisis communication. Inspired by Lloyd Bitzer's (1968) concept of the rhetorical situation, this model assumes that situations where people are communicating about hazard or threat are beset by predictable tensions. Katherine Rowan (1991, 2009) and associates argued that these tensions are suggested by components of all human communication (i.e., sources, messages, topics, channels, and contexts) and indexed by the letters in the word, CAUSE. When people communicate about

an uncertain danger, a lack of trust or *confidence* is likely. Often there are challenges in gaining *awareness* of danger. Third, even when awareness exists, deep *understanding* of the harm may not. Fourth, because risk and crisis communication situations involve matters where people disagree, there is a need to build *satisfaction* with solutions. Finally, because such situations involve motivating people to move from merely agreeing that some behavior is a good idea to acting on that belief by, for example, locating the exits in a theater, *enactment* is often crucial.

Research on these five tensions and steps for managing them is available in fields, such as communication, psychology, disaster sociology, political science, management, and decision sciences. Scholars and practitioners use the model by asking, in the context studied, what is the *principal* tension or obstacle and what steps reduce that tension?

For example, in 2012, the Metropolitan subway in Washington, D.C., stopped systemwide for 30 minutes on a hot summer Saturday. Temperatures climbed in some cars; occupants began to feel ill. Some riders were tourists who did not know they could contact the train operator through an intercom to report their discomfort. After this event, officials said the stoppage occurred because of a hardware problem and that since their computers are on a “closed loop” system, they were not vulnerable to cyber attack.

To use CAUSE to analyze this situation, one might ask: Did officials' statements earn *confidence*? In many risk and crisis situations, earning confidence is the most difficult step. Were Metro riders sufficiently *aware* of their options if the temperature in their compartment became unbearable? Research shows that people have trouble detecting slow onset problems, such as slowly increasing heat. Did stakeholders *understand* the statement that the computerized system running Metro is a “closed loop” system? Is it the case that closed-loop systems are not vulnerable to cyber attack? Were riders and officials *satisfied* with management of this incident? Will riders continue to use Metro? This final question is raised by the *E* for *enactment*.

After considering such questions, one can determine which tensions were most severe and identify steps to address them. The CAUSE model has been used to explore communication challenges

concerning hazardous chemicals, carcinogens, agricultural biotechnology, terrorism, and emergency preparedness.

Katherine E. Rowan

See also Crisis Communication; Risk Communication

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CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

Cause-related marketing links a product or a company to a charitable cause. The funds that are donated to the charitable cause usually come from a portion of the sales of the product. For example, when a person buys cosmetics from Avon, a portion of the sales profit is donated by Avon to support the breast cancer research cause. In this way, cause-related marketing is an indirect form of corporate sponsorship. It is often used as part of an integrated marketing campaign since it relies on advertising as well as public relations.

The concept of cause-related marketing was first pioneered in the early 1980s. One of the first companies to use it was American Express when the company linked its marketing campaign to the refurbishing of the Statue of Liberty. A portion of profits from credit card use was donated to the Statue of Liberty Fund. Use of the credit cards increased because customers felt they were making a contribution to the cause.

The purposes of cause-related marketing are twofold, and the two purposes must be balanced for the marketing effort to be effective. The first

purpose, of course, is to increase sales. The second purpose should be a socially responsible effort on the part of the company to support a cause and to be a good corporate citizen. When the second purpose is sincere, the first—sales—is better served.

If cause-related marketing is strategically designed, it can be an effective marketing tool that can increase media exposure, help a product cut through media clutter, increase sales by adding an additional benefit to the purchase of a product, and increase the chance of reaching specific audiences. A survey of 2,000 adults in the United States by Cone-Roper found that 78% said they would be more likely to buy a product that supported a cause in which they believed. A little more than half (54%) said they would pay more for a product that supported a cause they cared about, and 66% said they would switch brands to support a cause.

To use cause-related marketing strategically, a company must understand what charitable causes appeal to the customers the company is trying to attract and, at the same time, find a cause that is a good fit for the company and the product. There must be a logical connection between the cause and the target market for the product, the cause must be relevant to the consumers, and equally as important, there should be a logical and strategic connection between the vision and values of the company and the cause. And finally, the relationship needs to show long-term commitment to the cause.

An example of a company that has used cause-related marketing effectively is Avon. Avon's "cause," breast cancer research and related support efforts, is a good fit for the company, the product, and the consumers. Part of Avon's mission statement reads, "Our dedication to supporting women touches not only beauty, but health, fitness, self-empowerment, and financial independence" (www.avon.com). The Avon Breast Cancer Crusade matches the vision and values of the company. It also has an identifiable link to the product—cosmetics—that makes women feel good about themselves. Additionally, the company has shown long-term and genuine commitment to the cause. The Avon Foundation was established in 1955, and in the last 10 years has raised more than \$250 million for breast cancer research, education, early detection programs, and clinical care and support services for women. The Breast Cancer

Crusade is clearly identified and associated with Avon and Avon cosmetics.

One definition of public relations is “doing good and getting credit for it.” For cause-related marketing to have maximum benefits for a company, information about the cause must be integrated into as many elements of the communication efforts of the company as is possible and appropriate. It is not enough to have a cause; the cause must be communicated to the customers. For instance, Avon integrates the pink ribbon—the breast cancer awareness symbol—into most of its advertisements and public relations campaigns. In some cases, whole-page advertisements are used for image and advocacy advertising, promoting the Avon Foundation Breast Cancer Crusade rather than for advertising its products and cosmetics. In product ads, information about the crusade is included, and information about the Breast Cancer Crusade is also prominent on the company’s website and is included in product packaging.

When there is a good fit among the cause, the customers, and the company, the company’s image is enhanced and the customer feels good about the product purchase. An emotional element is added to the relationship between the company and customer, which can help position the company in the customer’s mind and differentiate it in a positive way from the competition. It can help make the company seem less “commercial” and more socially responsible.

A word of caution: If the cause is not consistent with the company or product’s image and does not seem logical for a particular company to promote, or if the cause is not relevant to the target consumers or is not well communicated, then cause-related marketing is useless as a way to increase sales. Furthermore, if the commitment between the company and the cause does not appear to be long-term and genuine, cause-related marketing can backfire. Cone-Roper conducted a survey and 58% of the people surveyed think that cause-related marketing is done only to improve the image of the company. The perception that a company is using cause-related marketing to be self-serving rather than altruistic can result in decreased sales.

Candace White

See also Philanthropy

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CHAOS AND COMPLEXITY THEORY

Chaos theory replaces the common usage of chaos as a state of confusion and disorder with the more structured sense of the concept as movements between order and disorder that, over time, are only apparently haphazard. It provides, sometimes supported by mathematics, guidance that can structure certain disorderly looking, dynamic, and nonlinear systems (i.e., where outputs are not directly proportional to inputs).

Weather, for instance, is a dynamic system; it is difficult to predict and nonlinear in that many consecutive days of sunshine can be succeeded by a sudden storm. However, since 2007 meteorologists have a 95% accuracy record in 3-day forecasting of global weather and earlier weather research stimulated a wider interest in chaos theory. While running computer weather predictions, meteorologist Edward Lorenz found that seemingly trivial rounding differences in input data led to huge variations in outcome forecasts. He popularized his research by asking, “Does the Flap of a Butterfly’s Wings in Brazil Set Off a Tornado in Texas?” and his findings, on the need to be sensitive to initial conditions and to be aware of the possibilities of disproportionate outcomes, fused into the term *the butterfly effect* and stimulated widespread research into tremendous changes arising out of tiny variations. In public relations, chaos theory was first applied to such unpredictable matters as issues, risks, and crises.

Chaos theory is complemented by complexity theory. Both form part of the so-called sciences of uncertainty and share orientations relevant to wider public relations practice and research. Both, for example, foreground the loss of control by

conscious entities, which is a recurring feature in crises and news releases; both acknowledge persistent unpredictability, which relates to adaptability in mindsets and tactics for addressing turbulent change (e.g., radical media restructuring); and both work with nonlinear behavior, which can massively influence everyday activities from event management to investor relations. Both also contribute to the management trend away from imitating the traditional sciences of certainty that motivates the search for measurable behavioral prescriptions for managers to deliver universally predictable outcomes. Instead, they approach organizations and societies as complex response processes in which people engage in multiple communication interactions culminating in collective actions that they may not have intended.

Accordingly, although possible parameters for activist publics and corporate crises can be outlined, neither the result of the activities of the former nor the unfolding events of the latter can be completely controlled or predicted. This sets limits on how much public relations—an organization-centered and purposeful process ostensibly able to strategically manage communication and its outcomes—can succeed. It implies that practitioner claims for assured outcomes should be modest. More positively, complexity's identification of key intervention moments and phases of change in other uncontrollable real-life situations offers pointers on how to reduce, and respond to, disorder in public relations. Its theories liberate practitioners to adjust overly rational management approaches, such as adherence, to plans based on earlier risk uncertainty with contextual awareness and history-sensitive knowledge. Complexity foregrounds the potential for those experiential assets to be effectively combined with the patience to watch and wait for the right moments to act (i.e., where intervention can have large effects). This may involve shifting between spells of smart surrender, and doing virtually nothing, and periods of intensive intervention. Well-timed actions can leverage accumulated local knowledge and assist real-time responses to specific events and agent behaviors, and so achieve more than the preprepared rationale and sustained proactivity.

Complexity theory can be defined as the study of how such actions can emerge, often without planning or central command, from the collective

and self-organizing behavior of relatively basic units, adaptive agents. This is relevant to public relations beyond already existing research on issues, crises, risks, and challenges to reputation. Searching for patterns in nature and change in local interactions between many agents, complexity examines how they can spontaneously produce order, or distinctive patterns, that cannot be predicted either from inputs or from existing environments. Often agents in complex adaptive systems operate around a few simple rules. In business, this may be akin to how two early Google commitments—to producing the best search engine in the world and to following the informal motto: "Don't do evil"—helped take the company from nowhere to the forefront of business.

Beyond business, major contemporary challenges (e.g., epidemics, terrorism, and other risks) involve complex systems challenges; each one has to be met by anticipating and engaging diverse, adaptive entities, whose acts are interdependent. Feedback, or the potential to modify a system's process by that system receiving information about its impact in real time, is central to these interactions. Feedback is nonlinear—think of the immediate screech of a loudspeaker system prior to being adjusted to human hearing—but contributes to adaptation and learning as the system discovers the effects it is producing. From a complexity perspective, feedback informs the system in ways that foster co-creation and virtually continuous self-modification and helps build self-organizing capabilities.

Public relations is currently coming to terms with feedback from self-organizing social media groups that often co-create meaning and coalesce, especially via networks, into powerful players in public opinion and knowledge formation. Wikipedia illustrates how knowledge has moved outside the sphere of limited groups of experts—whether academics, media pundits, or subject specialists—and toward ordinary people. Through the Web these people gain more public trust than expert views and spokespeople pronouncements, and this new phase in the environment impinges on public relations, notably through the blogosphere. The speedy and largely unsupervised feedback processes in the emergent phenomenon of blogging, and its large-scale citation by conventional media, have established it as an economic and social force.

Analysts estimated that the United States had over 20 million bloggers by 2009, with almost 2 million profiting from their work, and almost half a million using blogs as their main source of income.

The role played by public relations practitioners in funding bloggers can distort feedback in favor of their clients in the short term, but at the risk of losing reputation in the medium term, and destroying trust in bloggers as sources altogether in the long term. This is especially true if funding is not transparent; openness of any kind influences the behavior of the agents involved. Agents can be animate, as with stock investors, or inanimate, as algorithms programmed to adjust investments automatically on selected share price movements. In studying how such agents adapt and co-create new states, complexity theorists seek consistent processes, such as emergence, and patterns in all kinds of unrelated complex systems, such as how birds flock, how civilizations rise and fall, and how disciplines evolve and decline. Along these themes, complexity-influenced work has examined interactions between public relations, marketing, and network theory.

As the vocabulary of adaptation indicates, complexity frequently draws metaphors and models from biology and evolution. As a result, just as an ecosystem is greater than the sum of its flora and fauna, complexity researchers look at an organization as a complex adapting system evolving to a whole greater than the sum of its computers, personnel, and premises. In these emerging institutional systems, which are both shaping and shaped by the interplay between buildings, language, and workforces, evolutionary discourse impacts on perceptions and feeds into practices. Biological imagery helps restore the meaning of managing as the sense of coping with, rather than controlling, uncertain environmental conditions. Companies may set margins for return on investment (ROI), but ROI remains vulnerable to co-creation, with agents as fragile as consumer whims and algorithm-generated share-buying.

The business equivalent of evolution's survival-of-the-fittest, or most adaptable species, is sustainable organizational success, which also emerges through coevolution. Dominant coalitions, politicians, and media all constitute interacting parts of organizational systems. Nevertheless, they are just parts, and all are highly sensitive to public opinion,

its interplay with government regulation, and its mediation by public relations. The ramifications of the 2011 British phone-hacking scandal surrounding Rupert Murdoch's News International demonstrate how the interdependence of agents around trust can escalate a crisis across continents. Complexity thinking also suggests that Murdoch's family-heavy board lacks the diversity needed for the media empire to fit a contemporary landscape that is global, diverse, and increasingly transparent. Again drawing from biology where species experiment by blending competition and cooperation between different agents to create innovation and responsiveness, complexity thinking offers diversity lessons to public relations as well as media moguls.

In terms of methodology, chaos and complexity prefer prototypes, provisional trials, and computer-generated experiments or simulations. Rather than setting plans, they emphasize flexible preparation that combines loose prescribing for unknowable contingencies with fast, real-time adaptation by many diverse participants. In general, they lend encouragement to continuous learning from experience, and complexity-influenced public relations theorists argue specifically for deploying action learning, action research, inclusive dialogue, and scenario testing. The shift suggests that provisional approaches better accommodate conditions of volatility and better align with the post-command and control, and post-symmetry, views. These views acknowledge that stability is provisional rather than permanent and is not a desirable end goal for living systems since they risk becoming inert or even extinct. At times, complexity thinkers have advocated deliberate disruptions so that an "edge of chaos" situation can stimulate innovation.

The chaos and complexity emphases on fast adaptation suit present day conditions of rapid and unprecedented change because there is no reliable evidence base for forecasting futures and predicting risk manifestation. In engaging with contemporary shifts between states of order and disorder, these two sciences of uncertainty have a consistent logic. As well as local responsiveness to changing environments, that logic follows from their commitments: to learn from feedback, even when it is painful; to surrender illusions of control, even given the messy co-creation involved in diverse, intelligent, and wide participation; and to deal with the

unpredictable, even if it is nonlinear. They also open a space for transformational change because, although linear progression can produce much-modified caterpillars, only nonlinear pathways allow for the unexpected suddenness of butterflies.

David McKie

See also Crisis Communication; Diversity: Public Relations Profession; Ecology and Public Relations; Postmodern Public Relations; Social Media; Social Network Analysis; Strategic Business Planning; Uncertainty; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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CHASE, W. HOWARD

W. Howard Chase is best known for coining the term *issue management*. A man of unique intellectual and experiential depth, Chase argued for the following statement as the official definition of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1947: “Public relations is an operating philosophy that integrates the corporation into the daily lives of the people it serves” (Crane, 2003, p. 49). With this line of reasoning, Chase was one of a few leaders who recognized that constant change and innovation

were necessary not only for how people practiced public relations but also for how the profession was defined. As businesses were sharply criticized during the turbulent 1960s, he was primed to demand more responsiveness and leadership from practitioners and helped revolutionize the practice in many ways during the 1970s and 1980s.

A Phi Beta Kappa cum laude graduate of the University of Iowa, Chase received the Sanxay Award granted to “the outstanding senior who gives promise of achieving the highest career.” Postgraduate studies included the London School of Economics and Harvard University. Dongguk University in Seoul, Korea, the largest Buddhist university in the world, awarded Chase an honorary doctoral degree in economics. He taught at Harvard-Radcliffe, Drake University, New York Polytechnic Institute, The George Washington University, and the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Connecticut, where he introduced the first course ever offered on issue management.

As the first chair of the Executive Committee of PRSA, Chase was one of many leaders of the profession who helped to found this organization of working professionals. Chase twice received the PRSA’s Gold Anvil Award for “distinguished professional proficiency.”

Chase’s corporate service as officer or director included American Can Company, General Mills, and General Foods. In 1951, Chase assumed the post of political public relations director for U.S. Army Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, in charge of all Republican National Convention arrangements for Eisenhower’s presidential nomination in 1952. Subsequently, he served as assistant secretary of commerce for the initial Korean War mobilization. He also served as deputy administrator for the Office of Defense Mobilization under Charles Wilson, Lucius Clay, and Sidney Weinberg. He served as a trustee at Wellesley College, Sarah Lawrence College, and Mannes College of Music in New York City.

In 1962, Chase created the Council for Management of Change, with the monthly newsletter, *The Innovation and Management of Change* (IMC), as an incubator of his ideas. The newsletter’s thesis was “The principle of responsibility of senior executives today is the successful management of change itself.”

In 1976, he coined the term *issue management* as part of a robust discussion centering on the question: How should management respond to the deep and wide criticism being heaped on corporate America during the 1970s? With the publication of his 1984 book, *Issue Management, Origins of the Future*, Chase presented his signature comprehensive approach to strategic issue management. He defined the new field's objectives, in the debut edition (April 15, 1976) of the newsletter *Corporate Public Issues and Their Management* (CPI), as follows: "to introduce and validate a breakthrough in corporate management design and practice in order to manage corporate public policy issues at least as well or better than the traditional management of profit center operations" (Chase, 1976, n.p.). That same year, the Institute for Public Issues Management, of which Chase was founder and director, in cooperation with the Graduate School of Business at the University of Connecticut, sponsored the first of a series of seminars on issue analysis and techniques for corporate reorganization of public policy functions.

The first Issue Management Process Model, developed by Howard Chase, Barry Jones, and Teresa Yancey Crane, was published in 1977 in a special edition of CPI. (See also Jones & Chase, 1979.) The Public Affairs Council, under President Raymond L. Hoewing's leadership, held its first issues management conference for corporate public officers in 1977, and Chase was a presenter at what has since become an annual event. The Chase Award for Excellence in Issue Management, named in his honor, is annually bestowed by the Issue Management Council.

Speaking as cofounder and chairperson of the Issues Management Association in 1982, Chase offered the following widely quoted definition: "Issue management is the capacity to understand, mobilize, coordinate, and direct all strategic and policy planning functions, and all public affairs/public relations skills, toward achievement of one objective: meaningful participation in creation of public policy that affects personal and institutional destiny" (1982, p. 1). Chase stressed the proactive aspect of issues management that "rejects the hypothesis that any institution must be the pawn of the public policy determined solely by others" (1982, p. 2). In 1984, Chase defined issue management as issue identification, analysis,

change strategy options, action programming, and evaluation of results.

An issue change strategy option is a choice among carefully selected methods and plans for achieving long-term corporate goals in the face of public policy issues, a choice based on the expected effect of each method of employment, cost, sales, and profits. (1984, p. 56)

Action programming entails the use of resources to gain the strategy option selected.

Chase passed away on August 19, 2003, in Stamford, Connecticut. In his address as PRSA president in 1956, he advised practitioners to realize that their profession entailed more than competent or even excellent communication skills. Their profession required that they be counselors to help their employers and clients to more completely win the public's approval by deserving that approval.

Teresa Yancey Crane

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See also Chase Model of Issue Management; Issue Management Council; Issues Management; Public Relations Society of America

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CHASE MODEL OF ISSUE MANAGEMENT

The Chase model of issue management is the original attempt to explain the “new science” of how organizations can and should respond to significant public issues. Developed along with colleague Barrie Jones, W. Howard Chase used the model to feature five key steps: issue identification, issue analysis, issue change strategy options, issue action programs, and evaluation of results. The assumption of the model is that instead of acting as passive reactants to the interests of advocacy groups, corporations can and should use their discourse as an organizational resource, in the same way that they deploy technology, capital, and human resources.

Chase asserted that the tracking of issues and the organizational response to those issues should be systematic to elevate the public relations function of the organization from an auxiliary enterprise to the strategic management level. Early examples of major issue management campaigns include those by the then Mobil Corporation in the 1980s, which offered “observations” about technology, conservation, and government regulation, as well as a campaign by the Insurance Information Institute in the 1990s as a public policy response to the so-called lawsuit crisis.

Issue Identification

The first stage of the Chase issue management model is issue identification. This stage seeks to identify trends, which might become issues. An issue conversely is a matter that is ripe for a public policy decision. Here a futurist research approach is taken toward issues that may affect an organization. Chase recommends that issues be classified according to their type (e.g., social, economic, political, technological), impact and response source (e.g., business system, industry, corporation, subsidiary, department), geography (e.g., international, national, regional, state, local), span of control (e.g., noncontrollable, semicontrollable, controllable), and salience (e.g., immediacy, prominence). As such, since it is impossible to manage every issue, a company must develop a process by which it can monitor any and all related issues.

Issue Analysis

The second stage, issue analysis, involves the application of theory and research to analyze the identified trends and issues. Here social, economic, and political trends are analyzed in an effort to understand which will develop into issues. The use of quantitative (e.g., public opinion surveys, content analyses) and qualitative analysis (e.g., statements by opinion leaders) helps aid the process. The point of such analysis is to use this data to make judgments about issues and set priorities to aid in determining which issues warrant a response.

Issue Change Strategy Options

Issue change strategy options, the third stage of the model, describes an organization's choices about how it responds strategically, using communication as an organizational resource in order to manage an issue to public policy resolution. Chase reviews three issue stances typically taken by organizations: reactive, adaptive, and dynamic. The reactive approach is best characterized as stonewalling. An adaptive approach indicates an openness to change that seeks to offer accommodations as an organization seeks to participate in final public policy decision making. The third approach, and the one advocated by Chase, is a dynamic approach that shapes the resolution of a public policy issue by defining it in such a way that it realizes a resolution in terms that are favorable to the organization.

Issue Action Programming

In the fourth stage, Chase advises management to formulate a company policy to support its change strategy and operate an issue action program. Here, an organization begins with a strategic goal and specific program objectives. It then allocates and coordinates financial and human resources toward the project, determining which information resources are utilized and what messages are communicated through media to specific target audiences. Chase recommends using tracking surveys to determine if a campaign is working to create the desired response and acknowledges adjustments may be necessary.

Evaluation of Results

In the final stage, Chase advocates that such programs must be evaluated systematically. Here an organization must ascertain whether the campaign met its objectives as well as evaluate the performance of program managers. Ongoing monitoring of social, political, and economic changes is also recommended.

Conclusion

It is challenging for an organization to manage an entire public policy issue on its own. While it is difficult to measure the success of issue management, other justifications for engaging in issue management are the positive effects that these efforts have on a company's image as well as the support that issue campaigns are able to build with strategic constituencies who might be needed at a future date.

The long-term effect of the Chase model of issue management cannot be underestimated. It created a whole subset of public relations activity and study, and it helped elevate the role of communication-based public relations activities in organizations. While Chase initially articulated it in terms of corporate objectives, its application to institutions and other organizations is well recognized.

Keith M. Hearit

See also Chase, W. Howard; Issue Management Council; Issues Management

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CHAT

Online chat is the synchronous, interactive, real-time exchange of messages via a mediated source. Traditionally chatting is conducted in “chat rooms” where multiple users engage in text-based conversations about topics of interest (e.g., music, television, sports, dating). With technological advances, video chatting, which allows participants to be seen and heard, has become popular. Some chat rooms provide video chatting capabilities for users who have Web cameras, or users can engage in video chatting with selected others via services, such as Skype, Yahoo Messenger, or Google Talk. Mobile telephones and handheld devices, such as iPads also offer video chatting capabilities.

In one of the first articles to discuss public relations' use of the Internet, including chat rooms and other platforms, G. A. Marken (1998) recognized the opportunities, dangers, and possibilities of chatting for organizations. Marken advised practitioners to stay informed about new technologies, as well as the need for organizations that use resources, such as chat tools to be vigilant about monitoring comments made by clients. This advice is even more relevant for organizations today as chatting continues to be an increasingly important real time organization–public communication tool. For example, the Public Relations Society of America annually holds weekly chats with members on the state of ethics in public relations during September, which it recognizes as “ethics month”.

There are also negative consequences associated with online chat participation. Because chat participants typically present themselves as socially desirable, misrepresentation is common and can range from exaggerating an aspect of one's physical appearance, such as height, weight, or attractiveness, in text-based chats to pretending to be someone else completely for more nefarious purposes. Further, incidents of harassment, from cyberbullying to terrorism, are on the increase in online forums. Research indicates that individuals who participate in high-interactivity social interactions, such as online chat, have significantly reduced face-to-face interaction with family members and friends, hobby group participation, telephone interactions, and television viewing.

These behaviors can have negative implications for practitioners because the ability to build authentic relationships is impeded. Crises occur when public relations agency and corporate department personnel engage in misrepresentations. For instance, some agencies have their own representatives post favorable comments about a client's product or service; however, because the representatives do not clearly identify themselves as such, the posts appear to be written by unbiased, third-party users. Such falsehoods are not only unethical, but potentially harmful to relationships and reputation.

The technology used to allow chatting has been around for decades. The earliest instance of synchronous communication was the 1960's TENEX system, which linked two terminals that allowed text typed into either terminal to appear on both. In 1968, the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), under the U.S. Department of Defense, created ARPANET, a network that became the foundation for the Internet. The introduction in 1974 of transmission control protocols (TCP) and Internet protocols (IP), the rules (protocols) that deliver data between computers, expanded the network to more users.

In 1988, Internet relay chat (IRC) was introduced and allowed multiple participants to chat via connections between servers. Early IRC users faced issues of compatibility, network congestion, slow connectivity, and rudimentary design of the chat features. In 1997, America Online's instant messaging system (AIM) revolutionized chat room usage and allowed access across wide and varying audiences. Although IRC exists on a much more limited scale today, direct website links and greater accessibility to video chatting provide more popular chat options.

Online chatting is popular. Beyond prevalent social uses, such as entertainment, online dating, social support, and gaming, online chat is becoming a common method for providing real-time customer service. Chat functions are also used frequently in education, business settings, by Diaspora and expatriates, and by the aid community, in order to allow interaction among geographically disparate individuals and groups.

Andrea M. Pampaloni

See also Impression Management Theory; Public Relations Society of America

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CHINA, HONG KONG, AND TAIWAN, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Along with Brazil, Russia, and India, China has become one of the world's most rapidly developing markets. Its growing economy is creating new public relations opportunities and challenges within and outside its borders, thereby rousing worldwide interest in China's emergent engagement with the public sphere. These challenges and opportunities constitute the history and status of the public relations practice, professional associations, and public relations scholarship in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Discussion of public relations in Greater China focuses on the nature of Chinese business practices and the forms these practices take within a society noted for its traditionalism and its association of anticapitalist ideology with the West.

Mainland China

Systematic public relations practice began in mainland China during the late 1970s, coinciding with developments in state policy that fostered a greater level of public interaction with private institutions. The "Opening policy" in 1978 had a major impact

because the Chinese government elected to open its country to outside stakeholders; since then, according to Wu, Lin, and Guo (2001), the Chinese economy has transformed into a market-based socialist economy as joint ventures and wholly foreign-owned enterprises established public relations departments. In 1985, Shenzhen University established the first public relations program in higher education, noted Yu (2006). Wu, Lin, and Guo (2001) reported that international public relations companies, such as Hill & Knowlton (1984) and Burson-Marsteller (1985), entered the Chinese market, bringing with them international professionals and standards.

The renewed economic reform policy, declared in the 14th Communist Party of China National People's Congress in 1992, set the stage for countless new business ventures in China and radically shifted the country from isolationism toward development of one of the largest markets in the world. Major events, such as the World Trade Organization accession in 2001, the Beijing Olympics in 2008, and the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, contributed to the advance of public relations practice in China. Moreover, mainland crises rippled through China and influenced public relations practice. From the Asian financial crisis in 1998, bird flu outbreaks in 2001, SARS crises in 2003, and the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, to the more recent food safety crises, public relations has played a critical role in Chinese life, both public and private. These disasters contributed directly to the creation of new public relations strategies in branding communication, business marketing, crisis management, and risk communication. In geographic terms, the profession expanded rapidly during this period from south to north and from the east to west of China. By 2008, Jiang was able to note that three thousand local public relations companies had been founded across the mainland. Correspondingly, professional organizations and qualification systems also emerged to cope with the new development and resulting challenges.

The 2011 annual survey released by the China International Public Relations Association (CIPRA) estimates that the size of the mainland public relations market amounted to 26 billion RMB (US\$4.1 billion) in 2011, with an annual growth rate of 23.8%. Public relations in the mainland primarily focused on the automotive,

healthcare, and financial industries, as well as information technology (Chinapr, 2012). Recent years have witnessed a significant increase of governmental and nonprofit organizational public relations. Furthermore, interactive communication patterns, such as instant messaging (IM), bulletin boards (BBS), microblogs, and strong government and nongovernment digital initiatives have contributed to making the Internet a major forum for public relations (Chinapr, 2012).

The salary satisfaction survey of the public relations industry in China reported that of the 2,658 practitioners who participated, most are from Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou (17PR, 2011), 60% are females, and around 200 are younger than 29 years of age. In the first half of 2011, 80% earned more than 3,000 RMB (US\$473) as their monthly salary. The average income is around RMB 5,600 (US\$882), and the pretax average annual salary is around RMB 67,200 (US\$10,000). The staff turnover rate is 30% and nearly half of the public relations staff works over 45 hours per week, which indicates that public relations is labor-intensive work.

Two major professional associations operate in mainland China. The China Public Relations Association (CPRA), founded in 1987, is the industry's official representative in China. The Chinese International Public Relations Association (CIPRA), established in Beijing in 1991, is a national organization that aims at international cooperation among public relations organizations. CIPRA is mainly responsible for the national vocational qualification certificate system used in China. It publishes two magazines, *Public Relations World* and *International Public Relations*. Each major province or city has its own independent branch. For example, the Shanghai Public Relations Association (SPRA) is the earliest established public relations association in China.

H. L. Dong's (2008) research found that public relations is one of the most popular programs in universities. According to Dong, in 2008, 92% of mainland universities offered courses in public relations. Among them, 14 universities offered undergraduate degrees, 18 universities offered master's degrees, and five universities offered Ph.D. degrees in public relations. The courses are mainly set up under the disciplines of communications, management, and sociology.

Hong Kong

Compared with its recent development in mainland China and Taiwan, public relations emerged in Hong Kong in the 1890s when it was under the control of the British colonial government (SISU public relations research in China, 2010a). Foreign-owned public relations companies, such as Hill & Knowlton, were established there later through cash flows pouring into Hong Kong from American and European investors during the 1960s.

During the 1970s and 1980s, a thriving free market promoted the flourishing of public relations in Hong Kong. Hostel, banking, catering, and shipping industries were among the first to establish public relations departments.

A later, more critical time for Hong Kong public relations was in 1997, which saw its integration with China as well as a turbulent period of economic and health crises. These crises—combined with social, economic, political, and cultural changes and an increased emphasis on business connections with the mainland—created opportunities for professional practice that broadened the function in China to include reputation and crisis management, according to Martin (2009).

In Hong Kong, results of the latest Council of Public Relations Firms (CPRF) of Hong Kong benchmark study estimated that the public relations industry has achieved annual profits of 1.33 billion HKD (Hong Kong Dollar) (US\$17 million), with 2,000 staff serving around 2,865 corporate clients (Eaton, 2011).

According to the 2003 and 2005 annual report of statistics of the Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association and the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong's practitioners from 270 firms number over 5,300: 80% are female, 57% graduated from college, 40% hold master's degree certificates or certificates of completion of public relations postgraduate coursework, 62% of employees work in internal public relations and the rest work as public relations consultants (Cui, 2008). The 2011 salary index shows that workers' monthly salaries range from 25,000 HKD (US\$3,220) to 125,000 HKD (US\$16,000) (ClassifiedPost, 2011). Nearly 71% of practitioners work more than 60 hours per week. The turnover rate is 25%, and they report feeling a great deal of pressure on the job (SISU public relations research in China, 2001a).

Results from the latest survey of CPRF of Hong Kong (Eaton, 2011) show consumer marketing (35%), corporate communications (25%), and financial communications (15%) produce the highest percentages of consultation fees. Despite this, CSR Asia (2008) reported the growing success of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Martin (2009) found this was mainly because of the rise in advocacy and citizen activism from 1997 to 2009. Also, companies in Hong Kong demonstrated superior CSR disclosure when compared to other Asia-Pacific listed companies: 69% of Hong Kong-listed companies disclosed their CSR company policies and codes.

Martin (2009) noted that the major professional public relations organizations in Hong Kong are (1) the International Association of Business Communication (IABC/HK), established in 1983, with more than 500 active participants; (2) Public Relations Professionals' Association Ltd. (PRPA), founded in 1995 as an independent organization composed of public relations practitioners from the commercial and public sectors; and (3) the Council of Public Relations Firms in Hong Kong (CPRF/HK) is the newest professional organization with member firms rather than individual practitioners.

The Hong Kong Shue Yan College first set up undergraduate courses around 1976. The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1987 and Hong Kong Baptist University later in the 1990s opened full-time and part-time master's programs, respectively. Public relations education in Hong Kong generally follows the market development trend and tends to focus on financial public relations, CSR, and investment relationships. Still, Cui (2008) observed that there is no special research institution devoted solely to the study of public relations.

Taiwan

Wu, Lin, and Guo (2001) noted that public relations practice in Taiwan began during the early 1950s under government control. It did not begin to flourish there until 1987 when martial law and restrictions on newspaper licensing were lifted. Beginning in the 1990s, professional fields, such as high-tech public relations and election public relations, emerged.

The *Brain Magazine* conducted a survey of 73 public relations firms in Taiwan and found that the

average turnover of the market in Taiwan was approximately 3.4 million TWD (Taiwan Dollar) (US\$ 0.1 million) in 2004. The largest firm has 130 employees, and the smallest firm has only two. Firm capital ranges from 0.1 million TWD (US\$33,000) to 24 million TWD (US\$0.8 million); the average capital is 0.7 million TWD (US\$200,000).

According to statistics from the Council of Labor Affairs (2011), of the public relations practitioners in Taiwan in 2010, women constitute the majority, and the ages of Taiwanese public relations practitioners range from 20 to 45; 90.5% work in service industries (such as hotels and catering). Average monthly salary is around 48,600 TWD (US\$1,622).

The public relations business types in Taiwan include consumer-oriented industries, high-tech industries, and the health care industry. Tsai (2007) reported that Taiwan's industry is distinguished for having professional political public relations companies that work closely with political parties. Wu, Lin, and Guo (2001) found that these consulting companies play a critical role in urban markets, Taiwanese elections, and the broader public relations field (Wu, Taylor, & Chen, 2000).

Professional associations in Taiwan include the Chinese Public Relations Association, the Foundation for Public Relations, and the Taiwan Public Relations Management Association (TPRMA). TPRMA is responsible for professionally certifying public relations managers and administrators (SISU public relations research in China, 2011b).

Since the World College of Journalism (now Shih Hsin University) opened the first public relations courses in 1963, 30 universities have set up public relations courses. These universities include National Chengchi University, National Chiao Tung University, and Taiwan Normal University, according to Yan (2009). Huang (2004) concluded that the courses offered may be categorized using four subfoci: theories, management, practice, and special topics.

Public Relations in Great China

Generally, public relations practices in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan have shared a similar fate. From their start and through rapid development to their current professional development stage, the same four factors have played important

roles in influencing public relations practices: government, social codes of conduct, the free market, and professional practitioners, according to Wu, Lin, and Guo (2001). These, however, are only the broad similarities; there are many more precise parallels.

First, research in the mainland (17PR, 2011), Hong Kong (Cui, 2008), and Taiwan (Council of Labor Affairs, 2011; Yang, 2003) suggests that more than 50% of employees in all three regions are females. Furthermore, young employees outnumber older ones. Staff turnover rate remains high across the three regions (Cui, 2008; 17PR, 2011; Wu, Lin, & Guo, 2001).

Second, practitioners reported that interaction with the media is the single greatest focus of the practice in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In the mainland, CIPRA's 2011 survey shows that media activities are the central focus of the practice. Martin's 2009 analysis of 20 self-reported areas of the practice found that 100% of public relations consultancies in Hong Kong have a media relations division. Likewise, in 2005 the industry in Taiwan emphasized its media activities, and the proportion of media relations services greatly increased since 1992 (Brain Magazine Newsroom, 2005). Because China has recently been affected by the impact of scandals, including tainted pet food, toys, infant formula, and milk, crisis management emerged as another major area of concern for practitioners (Chinapr, 2012).

Third, public relations companies in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan emphasize relationship building with stakeholders. In that regard, Huang concluded that cultural rules of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism justify relationship building. However, more specifically practitioners employ *guanxi* and give face and favor, maintaining harmony, and constructing an asymmetrical, hierarchical structure of human relationships (Huang, 2001).

Finally, researchers pointed out the need to pay attention to other public relations professional activities. For example, strategic management and crisis management increased substantially as subfields in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan as practitioners increasingly recognized the importance of these disciplines.

*Yi-Hui Christine Huang and
Alice Cheng Yang*

See also Brand Equity and Branding; Corporate Social Responsibility; Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication; Public Relations; Risk Communication

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CIRCUIT OF CULTURE

As public relations practice evolves internationally and grapples with the tides of globalization, the need for a more nuanced and culturally sensitive theoretical base has emerged. Increasingly, post-modernist theory and cultural studies have become rich avenues for public relations theory that seeks to incorporate critical approaches to understanding public relations scholarship and practice. From this orientation, Patricia A. Curtin and T. Kenn Gaither (2007) adopted the *circuit of culture* from cultural studies to public relations.

The model is composed of five components, or “moments,” specifically production, regulation, representation, consumption, and identity. As a nonlinear model, the circuit has no starting point,

and each moment works in concert with the others to yield a shared cultural space in which meaning is created, shaped, and recreated. While each moment is a singular space, the moments work synergistically to create meaning. In the parlance of the circuit of culture, the points at which moments overlap are called articulations, where meanings are both contested and negotiated.

The circuit of culture is a useful tool for analyzing and guiding public relations practice globally. Each moment provides a pathway into this dynamic model, with no moment privileged over the others. The moments are *production*, which circuit cocreator Stuart Hall outlines as the processes by which creators of cultural products imbue them with meaning; *regulation*, which comprises the control on cultural activity; *representation*, the form an object takes and meanings encoded in that form; *consumption*, when audiences decode messages; and *identity*, meanings that accrue to all social networks, from nations to organizations to publics.

The heart of the circuit is consideration of how meaning is created through relationships with special emphasis on power at a micropolitical level and the primacy of culture in public relations. The model holds that public relations is a contested practice that is culturally bound with cultural particulars that are not grounded in Western notions of public relations practice.

In its first iteration, the circuit was used as an organizing framework for understanding cultural implications of the Sony Walkman. The circuit helped explain the uses and identities of the Walkman as a cultural artifact. Since its adoption to public relations practice, the circuit has been used to explore Coca-Cola's failed attempt to launch New Coke in 1985 and to deconstruct the public pressures that ousted a Starbucks café from the Forbidden City in China. It was tested to identify cultural value orientations that influence Arab culture for public relations professionals and scholars. These studies identified the fluidity of meanings within cultural contexts, suggesting challenges and opportunities particularly for practitioners who communicate across cultures, boundaries, and spaces. The circuit of culture advances the notion that public relations is a global practice predicated on effectively navigating differences across publics, organizations, cultures, and nations.

T. Kenn Gaither

See also Critical Theory; Cultural Flows and Public Relations; Culture; Intercultural Communication Theory

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CIRCULATION

Circulation refers to the number of copies of a print medium that are distributed. For the public relations practitioner, circulation figures are important to consider when evaluating an advertising vehicle. When considering circulation figures, it is also important to distinguish between actual subscribers and how many copies are sold directly from the newsstand. Subscribers are most likely to be devoted to the publication—as is shown by the number of people who are renewing subscribers. When meeting with representatives from publications, it is important to gather not only circulation figures, but also the demographic information of the audience the publication reaches.

In the age of technological advances and social media, the public relations professional must consider statistics concerning online subscribers, as well as website hits and click-through rates on the publication's website. According to a 2010 report by the Pew Research Center, every news platform saw audiences either stall or decline—except for the Internet. Also, for the first time more people said they turn to the Web for news rather than to newspapers. The report projected that online ad revenue in 2010 would surpass print newspaper ad revenue for the first time.

The Pew Research Center's report titled *The State of the News Media 2012* indicated that the problems of newspapers became more acute in 2011. According to the report, even as online

audiences grew, print circulation continued to decline, and in 2011, losses in print advertising dollars outpaced gains in digital revenue by a factor of roughly 10 to 1, a ratio even worse than in 2010. When circulation and advertising revenue are combined, the newspaper industry has shrunk 43% since 2000, according to the report.

Public relations practitioners must research publications extensively to understand readership—both in print and online—before making decisions to run advertisements and or pitch reporters for possible placement of a story.

Kelly M. George

See also Advertising

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CITIZEN JOURNALISM/REPORTING

Citizen journalism/reporting is when members of the public actively engage in a process of collective discovery, problem solving, and information sharing on events, issues, and trends through various online forums and digital mobile technologies. Citizen journalists use the same tools as traditional journalists but avoid gatekeepers, such as editors and publishers. This allows independent, unfiltered, and decentralized information in the form of stories, pictures, and videos to quickly and directly reach the public. Although there is debate on whether citizen journalists/reporters are equal to traditional journalists/reporters, they are increasingly becoming noticed by organizations, government entities, and traditional media as a force that can inform the public and influence public opinion. By including, engaging, and partnering with citizen journalists, public relations professionals

can utilize them as critical sources of information as well as extend the reach and influence of their message.

Citizen journalism's prevalence has increased due to access and use of online and mobile communication technologies, such as weblogs, social media, Internet, cell phones, and digital cameras that allow them to potentially have global reach and influence. Citizen journalists see themselves as filling a vital gap in traditional journalism by allowing the public to serve as active consumers and producers of information through dynamic, democratic, and grassroots conversations. Citizen journalists can provide local, real-time, first-person perspectives of news and events that traditional journalists sometimes cannot cover due to shrinking staffs and budgets. They also can serve the same watchdog function of traditional journalism by monitoring, investigating, and commenting on what corporations, government institutions, and even the media are doing, or not doing, and saying.

Some question whether citizen journalists are equal in credibility, accuracy, and professionalism to traditional journalists. Critics cite lack of education or training in journalism techniques, the reporting of rumors, and the idea that any citizen who posts something online is a reporter. Those who argue for citizen journalism reason that they gain credibility through consistent reporting, accuracy, and transparency of sources and methods, have the benefit of community engagement and self-policing to quickly confirm or correct information, and agree that not all online citizen posts are journalism, but some can engage in the act of journalism. Organizations are recognizing the potential influence of citizen journalists by giving them the same access to organizational events and media briefings as traditional journalists. Organizations and media outlets are reaching out to them to provide critical and uncensored information when members or reporters don't have immediate access to an area or in-depth knowledge of an issue. Examples of this include blogging about tornado, flooding, or wildfire damage to a community; real-time updates on information and resources available; and the civil uprisings of the 2011–2012 Arab Spring.

Laura E. Pechta

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Communication Technologies; Social Media

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEES/PANELS

Citizens advisory committees/panels (CAC/P) are composed of individuals, with membership drawn from a cross section of the community, who serve as a link between the public and various organizations that operate in the region by providing counsel and recommendations on matters of public affairs and public policy.

Citizens advisory committees/panels perform key functions for community residents, private interest groups, government, nongovernmental organizations, and private industry. They improve the quality of services by encouraging closer ties between the public and organizations that have an effect on their community, and they make for improved decision-making capabilities that involve perspectives from interested parties who participate in the process. Citizens advisory committees/panels incorporate strategic community relations values, such as the cooperation of key stakeholders, information and perception exchange, and the development of trust, sense of control, credibility, and consensus making.

Through the implementation of public policy at the community level, CAC/Ps provide a level of accountability for government, nongovernmental, and private organizations, opening up decision-making and policy formation processes to concerned citizens while providing resources for citizens to participate in the public policy process.

The use of advisory committees moves the role of external input and influence to an internal

advisory role working within the system. This public/private partnership facilitated by the role of the advisory committee is the “buckle that fastens the administrative process to the dominant institutions, elites, and value in society” (Cottin, 1973, p. 1140). The proliferation of and increased use and dependence on advisory committees is a product of a response to the needs of the citizenry, the needs of government officials, and the demands of special interest groups to work together in reaching compromise and solutions to numerous public policy concerns.

Originally categorized as lay advisory committees, CAC/Ps gained a foothold in U.S. society because, as a representative democracy, they provide a means by which citizens represent their community in addressing particular public affair issues ranging from education to land preservation.

The Western development and use of citizens committees can be traced back to England, where the use of such advisory groups for education and government was seen on a wide scale. In the United States, formal community advisory groups have been in operation since the first presidency. There was a significant increase in the number and types of community advisory groups during World War I, when many governmental commissions had citizens serving in an advisory capacity. Their role expanded during the depression of the 1930s, providing counsel on such topics as national illiteracy and emergency aid. During and following World War II, CAC/Ps expanded into areas of labor-management relations and postwar training programs for agricultural and industrial production.

The development and expansion of CAC/Ps have been driven not just by citizens' desires to participate in the public policy process, but also by national legislation aimed at increasing community input on vital issues. This approach is often called legislative citizen participation.

At the federal level, the 1972 Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463) defines an advisory committee as any committee, board, commission, council, panel, task force, or similar group established in the interest of obtaining advice or recommendations for the president or one or more agencies or offices of the federal government. The act also required that all records of advisory committee meetings be made public, with the exception of those pertaining to the National Academy of

Sciences, the National Academy of Public Administration, the CIA, and the Federal Reserve Board. Federal advisory committees constitute one of the most significant vehicles for special interest group representation and influence on the policy-making process of the national government. This form of government by committee has been termed the fifth arm of the federal government.

In the past 20 years, there has been a tremendous growth in legislated citizen participation in many areas. At present, most federal agencies have mandated citizen participation for many of their programs. The Mental Health Systems Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-398), for example, relies heavily on the voluntary efforts of citizens who advise and govern local community mental health center programs.

Typically there are two types of CAC/Ps: Short-term committees are organized to address specific issues and concerns for a finite time period, and long-term committees address specific as well as sweeping concerns and problems, providing continuous feedback from the community.

There are some typical rules and responsibilities of CAC/Ps across a broad spectrum of organizations. Advisory committees are appointed when there is a definite function to be performed; they are appointed primarily to advise and are not typically requested to perform specific services. Their composition should represent the entire community related to the function to be performed, with membership reflecting various segments of community life ranging from lay representatives to acknowledged experts. Staff members typically are not appointed, but if they are they constitute a minority of any such committee and the chairperson is chosen from among the lay members. Typically, the public is made aware of major recommendations, and the overseeing board or organization controls public announcements.

CAC/Ps are active in areas of education, health, manufacturing, transportation, and virtually every other facet of public policy decision-making that affects communities. For example, within the chemical industry, a CAC/P consists of a group of individuals who live near or around a chemical facility and who represent their community and have made a commitment to meet with the management of the local plant on a regular basis to discuss issues of mutual interest. Members include

environmental groups, civic leaders, business leaders, homemakers, hourly workers, and individuals who represent key elements of a community, such as clergy, health care providers, emergency responders, and educators.

Michael J. Palenchar

See also Community Relations; Crisis Communication; Issues Management; Risk Communication

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CITIZENS UNITED V. FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (2010)

In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* that Congress cannot ban political expenditures based on the speaker's corporate identity. The highly controversial holding overruled two precedent cases, shook the foundation of modern campaign finance law, stimulated a heated debate over the rights of corporations versus individuals in the political process, and resulted in calls for a constitutional amendment limiting corporate political spending.

The case began during the 2008 presidential primary elections, when Citizens United—a conservative, nonprofit advocacy corporation—used individual and corporate donations to finance a documentary film that opposed the candidacy of Senator Hillary Clinton for the Democratic Party nomination. Under the Bipartisan Campaign

Reform Act (BCRA), corporations and unions were forbidden from using general treasury funds to finance “electioneering communications,” which could only be paid for through a corporate or union political action committee (PAC). The BCRA defined an electioneering communication as any broadcast, cable, or satellite communication for or against any identifiable federal candidate made 30 days before a primary election or 60 days before a federal election. The Court had upheld that provision of the BCRA in 2003 in *McConnell v. Federal Election Commission*, reasoning that the law advanced “the important governmental interest of preventing corruption and the appearance of corruption” in federal elections. As written, the BCRA would subject Citizens United to criminal and civil penalties for broadcasting and/or promoting its film on regular or cable television.

The Supreme Court had focused on avoiding corruption in political campaigns as a justification for campaign finance regulation since its landmark 1976 decision in *Buckley v. Valeo*. In that case, the Court ruled that political spending constitutes a form of political speech protected by the First Amendment. To ensure the integrity of the electoral process, however, the Court upheld limitations on political contributions given directly to federal candidates as a means of avoiding real or apparent “quid pro quo” corruption, which it defined as the exchange of money for political favors. On the other hand, the *Buckley* Court found that limits placed on independent expenditures made by natural persons for or against a candidate did not present an equivalent risk of corruption, and therefore those limits violated the speaker’s First Amendment right to engage in political speech.

Two years after *Buckley*, the Court extended First Amendment protection to corporate speech in *First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti*. That case established that the state could not prevent corporations from spending their own funds to purchase advertising supporting or opposing ballot initiatives. The *Bellotti* Court emphasized two factors in its decision: (1) the public’s First Amendment right to be exposed to diverse political views, including corporate perspectives, and (2) the lack of quid pro quo corruption associated with referendums as opposed to candidate elections.

Candidate elections, however, were a different matter. In a 1990 decision, *Austin v. Michigan*

Chamber of Commerce, the Court upheld a state law that prohibited unlimited corporate expenditures—not merely contributions—in election campaigns. To justify the restriction, the Court enlarged its *Buckley* definition of corruption from the exchange of political favors to include the “distorting effects of immense aggregations of wealth” that it believed unlimited corporate spending would inflict on the electoral system. According to the *Austin* majority, corporate expenditures could be limited to prevent corporations from achieving “an unfair advantage in the political marketplace” by using “resources amassed in the economic marketplace.”

Citizens United expressly overruled both *Austin*’s holding and its antidistortion rationale. The Court referred back to its reasoning in *Buckley* to conclude that if restrictions on independent expenditures violated the First Amendment rights of natural persons, restrictions on independent expenditures by corporations or unions would also be unconstitutional. Writing for a 5–4 majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy stated that “[i]f the First Amendment has any force, it prohibits Congress from fining or jailing citizens, or associations of citizens, for simply engaging in political speech.” Any attempt by the state to limit corporate political expenditures to avoid marketplace distortion was characterized by the *Citizens United* Court as an unconstitutional attempt to equalize speech based on the speaker’s identity. The Court also overruled *McConnell* to the extent that it upheld the BCRA limitations on corporate or union expenditures for broadcast advertising for or against an identifiable candidate.

In a sharp and lengthy dissent, Justice John Paul Stevens characterized corporate spending limits as permissible time, place, and manner restrictions that served to keep corporate speakers from clogging up the channels of political communication. In his view, corporations exert too much influence over officeholders and the electoral system and, therefore, corporate spending limits are needed to protect the integrity of the political process. “While American democracy is imperfect,” Justice Stevens wrote, “few outside the majority of this Court would have thought its flaws included a dearth of corporate money in politics.”

Based on *Citizens United*, the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled in 2010 that PACs can accept unlimited amounts

from individuals, unions, or corporations for the purpose of making independent expenditures, as long as those PACs do not contribute to candidates, political parties, or other PACs. Because of their resulting ability to raise and spend large sums of money, these PACs are commonly referred to as SuperPACs.

Citizens United is one of the Court's most controversial recent holdings. Following the decision, many state legislators, local governments, advocacy groups, and unions sponsored measures demanding that Congress pass a constitutional amendment to revoke the First Amendment rights of corporate speakers. Given the unlikely success of a constitutional amendment, some legal scholars have suggested that states enact legislation requiring shareholders to approve all corporate political expenditures.

Nicole B. Cáñez

See also Political Action Committees; Political Speech

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CIVIL SOCIETY

Public relations is traditionally viewed as a business function. In a business-oriented perspective of public relations, practitioners work to help their organization achieve its goals, typically an economic benefit. It supports a variety of organizational activities, such as marketing, brand image, reputation, and public policy issues relevant to

economic benefit. Thus, public relations contributes to an organization's bottom line.

In 2004, Carl H. Botan and Maureen Taylor argued that another approach to public relations was taking place that was just as valuable to organizational survival as the functional practices of public relations. The co-creational approach to public relations reflects a turn to more public-centered approaches that provide a framework for understanding a broader and more profound role for public relations in society. The co-creational approach encompasses theories and frameworks that argue that its role is to facilitate the creation of shared meaning through engagement with organizational stakeholders in a society. Organizations build relationships and those relationships have value to the organization, the public, and the society as a whole.

Civil society theory embodies many of the assumptions of the co-creational turn but takes the level of analysis to a higher, societal level. Civil society is one theoretical framework, along with fully functioning society theory, for understanding a broader societal role for public relations. Civil society may eventually emerge as an umbrella theory for the co-creational approaches to public relations.

Civil society describes a normative/ideal space where people interact and negotiate outcomes. It is an evolving process of engagement, cooperation, and trust. The trust that emerges from cooperative interactions is another type of capital: social capital. One way to understand the value of social capital is to conceive of it as the invisible wealth of a community that strengthens civil society. Ethical public relations communication through such activities as media relations, information subsidies, activism, political communication, and social media all contribute to the ability of people to share ideas and participate in decision making. When people interact, share information, or work in collective action, then civil society is strengthened.

Civil society is not a panacea nor does every type of collective action build social capital or public good for a community. Yet, the relationships that are created by public relations become the foundation of civil society. Through public relations, both functional and co-creational approaches, new relationships emerge. Communication and interactions are generative—one interaction begets

another, which begets another, and so on. Public relations efforts not only build the relationships, they also sustain and improve them.

Key Partners

There are many organizational partners in civil society. Maureen Taylor and Marya L. Doerfel (2005) identified seven key partners in civil society initiatives:

1. Individuals become *publics* when they co-create meaning with others and start seeing that they share interests with others in an issue.

2. *Social cause groups*, such as activists, nonprofit organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), are partners in civil society. Examples of social cause groups include environmental groups, political organizations, social welfare groups, health promotion groups, and human rights defenders. Their collective activities contribute to civil society because they produce and benefit a common or public good.

3. *Societal institutions* comprise another layer of civil society. Societal institutions are long-standing organizations that have the perceived legitimacy to participate in decision making, such as associations of doctors, lawyers, and educators. When the American Medical Association (AMA) or AARP weighs in on an issue, people and politicians listen. Institutions, such as universities, unions, and religious groups, have a role to play in civil society.

4. The *media* are key partners in ensuring that there is a civil sphere. Traditional and new media organizations have the potential to perform an important function in strengthening the civil sphere. They are expected to disseminate accurate information that citizens use to make decisions. The independent media serve as watchdogs to ensure that government officials and businesses are held accountable for their actions. The traditional concept of media was that of television, radio, or print outlets that covered news for a community. The dominant mass communication media had wide dissemination and allowed for shared interpretations of local, regional, national, and international events. Newer forms of media, with more niche audiences, are now competing outlets

for news users and have also emerged as watchdogs and commentators on current events. Today, with the advent of citizen journalism, anyone can post their interpretations of news and events online for others to read, see, or hear.

5. The *business community* plays a role in the development of civil society. Business organizations have opinions on issues, such as regulation, licensing, access to natural resources, price controls, immigration laws, and legal reform. It is to their advantage that their voices also be included in the civil sphere. And, an ancillary benefit gained by the civil society is that with business participation, communicative links with other civil society entities (government and media) are formed.

6. Another partner in civil society is *governance*—the local, regional, and national leaders that participate in policy formation. Government leaders, as well as members of the bureaucracy who support government, need to be accountable to the aforementioned partners. Government leaders need to carefully monitor public opinion and be willing to adapt to the publics' changing needs. In a normative model of civil society, government leaders at all levels understand issues and resolve them in a manner that benefits those they lead. Government leaders take their cues from the multiple discourses of civil society partners.

7. Finally, *international organizations* have an important role in fostering civil society. There are two types of international organizations: donor organizations and supranational groups. In developing and post-crisis countries, the United Nations (UN), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the George Soros Open Society Institute (OSI) provide financial and human resources to help facilitate development. A second kind of international organizational type includes supranational groups, such as the World Bank, World Trade Organization, International Atomic Agency, climate change consortiums, and other global regulatory groups that can shape national and global discourse in the civil sphere. Although, it must be noted that they require the other partners in global civil society to enforce any international practices. For instance, if the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that every child be vaccinated against polio, it

needs the support of many different civil society partners to accomplish this recommendation: the public, local NGOs, media, governance, and other donor NGOs. If one partner in society is unwilling to help, the other partners have a more difficult time accomplishing this objective.

The seven partners create the foundation of civil society. While each partner has its own goals, issues, and needs and represents different citizen interests, civil society is the place to have the inter-related objectives among these different groups come together. When the interests of two or more partners converge, there is a much greater opportunity for them to achieve their goals. For instance, when the business community, social cause groups, and governance agree that something needs to be done to safeguard the food supply, there is a greater chance for collective action. If only one group believes there is a need, that group should reach out to other civil society partners through both functional and co-creational public relations approaches, to build awareness and support. An effective civil society rests in the intersection of all of these partners' interests. In this intersection of interests, the role for rhetorical public relations activities becomes most clear.

Toward a Broader Role for Public Relations in Society

Public relations has a broader role in society than the functional practices of media relations or supporting marketing. Public relations can help individuals, groups, and governments participate in the marketplace of ideas and provide the information that forms relationships. It is in this relationship building function that the field will find the answer to the question, "what does public relations contribute to society?" The answer is clear: Public relations' role in society is to create (and recreate) the conditions that enact civil society. Public relations provides all of the communication functions necessary to build awareness, build relationships, and coordinate action in a society. It gives a voice to the individual, empowers the organization, provides content to the media, and promotes an orientation to others that enables collective action that creates a common good.

Maureen Taylor

See also External Organizational Rhetoric; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Functions of Public Relations; Rhetorical Theory; Social Capital

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CLIENT

The client is the representative entering into a contractual relationship with a public relations firm for the purpose of securing the firm's expertise. The representative can be an individual, such as a political candidate or an entertainer, a department or subsidiary of a larger organization, a corporation, and so on. Firms are hired by that client for any number of reasons ranging from general promotions to strategic planning and issues management. Larger organizations may contract with several firms for needed specializations, such as hiring one firm for international relations work and another firm for crisis management. These relationships may be short term, such as for the duration of a crisis, a particular special event, or the publication of specialized collateral material, and in these cases the client sets up some project-based method of payment for the services. The business may also be long term based on providing longer-standing services through continued counseling or augmenting the organization's staff in particular areas, in which case a retainer method of payment for the services is the usual preference.

The client initiates the relationship, of course, by recognizing a need for some kind of assistance in the area of public relations. The better the client can explicate its objectives, the more likely the result is an efficient and highly successful search. The search can range from informal to formal. In some cases, one representative of the client handles the entire process, and in other cases the team may include several representatives of the organization. Ideally, the team includes the key contact person for the firm and the final decision maker, because these players are critical in establishing the relationship with the firm selected.

If the search is handled informally, it may be based solely on contacts. The client possibly had a productive past relationship with a firm and chose to renew that relationship. If the need for the firm is local, very specific, and specialized and the budget is limited, the search may be a matter of simply determining availability of a local firm.

In the more formal cases, the selection process may be managed either by the client or by a consulting firm that specializes in assisting groups with the details involved in a formal search of public relations firms. Time may be a determinant in whether the client organizes the search or hires out the search process. Using a consulting firm means that the firm identifies the public relations firms most likely to be of interest, manages the request for proposals, and organizes the formal agency proposal processes.

Regardless of whether the client or another firm manages the search, it begins with networking and general research to identify potential firms. The firms viewed as most interesting in terms of perceived capabilities and reputations are sent requests for proposals (RFPs). RFPs are questionnaires designed to narrow the field of potential firms and may include demographic data related to the firm (size, length of time in the field, specializations, and so on) as well as a few screening questions to determine expertise in the client's area or ability to handle the issues at hand. RFPs allow the organization to examine the firms from a distance to determine the firm's expertise, its style, and especially to identify any conflict of interest if one of the potential firms is representing a competitor. RFPs, furthermore, allow the public relations firms themselves to "self-select" their formal participation in the search; for example, some firms may opt out of the process due to other commitments,

or the size of the project is either too large or too small for their preference. The organization then generally chooses three to five firms to interview. The client may want to consider finalists for the continued search process based on variety—of size, services (full service to boutique), location, ownership (independent to multinational)—as well as various specializations. Including a variety of firms allows the client to better assess a range of issues affecting the final decision. Smaller firms with fewer clients may be able to provide more attention to the issue, whereas larger firms with offices throughout the United States and overseas may be better prepared to manage international product introductions or other broader based public relations programs.

The firms considered as finalists in the search process are contacted and asked to put together a presentation (also known as a pitch), which may consist of general information on the firm or a specialized presentation with suggestions for addressing the prospective client's objectives. The more specific the presentation requests, the more conscientious the client must be. Clients may need to consider payment for formal presentations complete with specific program proposals; many such presentations are copyrighted and selection of one firm to implement another firm's program could likely involve legal ramifications.

Following the various pitches, the client then must select one firm. The selection typically focuses on which firm is best qualified to handle the account, which firm best understands the organization as well as its business or service, and which firm the decision makers feel most comfortable in working with or the "chemistry" perceived during this selection process. In some cases, the client may have difficulty choosing between two firms and may request a follow-up interview, often conducted as a conference call or through email.

At this point, the firm generally sets up a contract based on estimations of costs for the objectives to be accomplished. The client and the firm agree on the contract as well as the billing procedures. Billing is frequently managed by a projected cost with monthly billable hours toward that projected cost. Projected costs may or may not include out-of-pocket expenses and commissions for any subcontracted work (e.g., with a printer). Clients can then monitor expenditures and determine

whether the firm is staying within reasonable budgeted programs or whether the progress of the program may warrant additional expenditures.

As is evident, much time is invested in initiating and establishing the firm–client relationship. Once secured, the client representatives can focus on their own jobs knowing that the firm is ably managing the public relations program. The firm formalizes the account team with a designated account executive who is the primary point of contact between the firm and the client. Note that the ideal pitch involves individuals who remain part of the account team. If only the firm’s CEOs manage the pitch, the client should proceed with caution because the relationship is set by those who work on the account daily, not by the CEOs. On the client side, the key contact points and decision-making process should be established and streamlined as much as possible to reduce delays in processing approvals.

Ideally, the firm–client relationship stretches far into the future without the need to undergo another search. Nevertheless, the economy, management changes, and other business developments may lead to a need for a different or an additional firm.

The ultimate goal of the successful firm–client relationship is to achieve what is considered the most efficient contract (per “agency theory” derived from finance and economics research). The burden of demonstrating efficiency is often placed on the agency or firm, yet the client sets the tenor of the relationships. The ideal client who ultimately finances this relationship to secure or augment available public relations expertise stays involved and interested in the public relations program. The ideal client does not micromanage but strikes a balance of trust in the firm and supervision of the firm. Clients should be cautioned that some monitoring may be necessary to ensure that the client interests remain paramount for the firm and to verify that all billing is appropriate and per contract. This balance can be achieved with clear expectations, regular communication, and timely payments for services rendered. The ideal firm similarly provides clear plans and programs, meets deadlines, stays within budget, and communicates regularly.

The successful relationship, then, depends on evaluation—of the public relations program as well as of the relationship itself. Clear and honest communications about the program, as well as any

impending changes to the client organization, are critical to managing expectations and program fulfillment. If the public relations firm does not initiate evaluations at various points in the relationship, then the client may request or implement them. The evaluations may range from informal discussions (although the evaluation should be a specified agenda item if not the sole topic of discussion) to formal checklists that would then be discussed with the agency account executive and CEO as well as key client liaisons.

Pamela G. Bourland-Davis

See also Account Executive; New Business Development; Public Relations Agency

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CLIENT–AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

The client–agency relationship is the state of interaction between an organization (or its representative) and the public relations firm it hires to represent it. Their relationship can be the most important factor in the success of the client’s public relations program and the firm’s ability to serve the client well.

Much of the pressure to maintain the relationship rests with the agency. The ability to build a strong client–agency relationship is one of the most important skills a practitioner can offer. Serving the client requires that the agency staff keep the client’s best interests in mind and share the client’s

understanding of and passion for its business goals, while at the same time working toward the agency's own goals.

Some client–agency relationships have been so strong that they make history. For example, the widely praised handling of the Tylenol product-tampering crisis in 1982 was the result of the bond between Tylenol maker Johnson & Johnson and its firm, Burson-Marsteller. This case is widely recognized as one of the most important in the history of the practice of public relations and exemplifies the ideal client–agency relationship qualities of mutual respect, trust, and understanding of the client's needs.

Client confidence in the agency, free-flowing communication, willingness to compromise on both sides, and collaboration between client and agency are also key. The client wants the feeling of being top priority regardless of what other accounts the agency is working on. The most successful account people remember that on and off the job, they represent not only themselves and the agency but the client as well, and they must exhibit professionalism at all times. In addition, thoughtfulness and consideration of both the agency staff and client contact's work and personal situations can help the relationship flourish.

The client also wants the agency to be problem solvers. Industry leader Harold Burson once said that the counselor's main objective is to identify and deal successfully with a problem. Burson also advised taking advantage of opportunities; developing a set of options and a range of their advantages/disadvantages; honing the ability to get up to speed quickly on a problem and to listen; and knowing the client's business.

The most valuable commodity the agency can offer is its counsel—the ability to advise the client on the proper course of action. The ability to counsel comes with experience, but it also means being able to sift through issues and information and make a recommendation. Even the most junior-level staff member can demonstrate this skill.

The practitioner must balance serving the client with an obligation to the public at large, urges the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the world's largest professional society for public relations practitioners. In its *Member Statement of Professional Values*, PRSA says the

practitioner must serve in the public interest while remaining loyal to the client. PRSA also advises that the agency must disclose on whose behalf it operates, and avoid deceptive practices. The increasing use of technology has seemingly presented new ways in which agencies and their employees are tempted to disregard these tenets, yet they do so at the risk of losing their client relationships and moreover damaging the reputation of the industry.

The client and agency may not always agree. Sometimes counseling means being able to persuade a client who is not open to what the agency has to say. When the agency and client disagree, the agency must decide whether to push to persuade—or challenge—the client. It takes a delicate touch to know when to take that stand, and a strong relationship provides the foundation for respectful give-and-take.

Sometimes the working relationship between the client and agency creates conflict that cannot be resolved, and the result is either a reassignment of those working on the account or a parting of ways. If the client fires the agency, more often than not, it is because the client is not satisfied with the agency's performance. Sometimes, the client expected too much; but in many cases, companies who fire their agencies say it is because of sloppy work. Better communication between the agency and client might prevent such an outcome.

Conversely, a firm might resign the account because of problems with the relationship, such as client mistreatment of account people. Again, in a strong relationship such behavior can be addressed and resolved, preventing the severing of ties.

Ideally, the client appreciates and draws on the agency's level of expertise, looks to the agency to provide direction, and considers the value of the agency's work well worth the cost. A successful agency is able to produce excellent results, maintain a nourishing workplace, and meet its own business goals while nurturing its client relationships to the betterment of both client and agency.

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See also Client; Ethics of Public Relations; Public Relations Agency

CLIP (NEWS CLIP) AND CLIPPING SERVICES

A clip, or news clip, is an actual copy of an article about an organization or company that has appeared in the media. Traditionally, news clips were limited to print articles, but today, “clippings” can consist of print, broadcast, and online media sources.

Clipping services, also known as media monitoring services, monitor the media for references of a client’s organization or company and supply the client with a compilation of the clips. These clips are essential to gauging the success of a media relations campaign because they allow the client to keep track of how many times the organization or company was mentioned and where these articles appeared. Information gained from media monitoring services allows communications professionals to gather important insight about how their organization is being portrayed in the media, what topics are deemed newsworthy, and which reporters are covering the topics.

There are many companies that keep track of media “hits” for an organization on a paid subscription basis. Some companies are limited to one medium, whereas others not only keep track of all media, but also analyze and interpret the numbers. Some of the best known clipping services include BurrellesLuce (www.burrellesluce.com), Bacon’s (www.bacons.com), Vocus (www.vocus.com), Lexis-Nexis (www.lexisnexis.com), CyberAlert (www.cyberalert.com), EWatch (www.ewatch.com), CyberScan (www.clippingservice.com), and a host of other companies that have developed over the past few years.

Originally, only print media were monitored. When Burrelle’s began its service in 1888, only New York City daily newspapers were included in the service. Today, however, Burrelle’s and other companies that provide monitoring services scan not only newspapers but also magazines, radio and TV broadcasts, wire services, and various news programs found on the Internet. Additionally, media from across the United States and international sources are often included in the service.

Monitoring services have taken their products a step further and now monitor the Internet for rumors about a company as well as search for

general news stories. By catching negative chatter about a company in Internet chat rooms and discussion forums, corporations can become aware of any rumor that is circulating online and swiftly respond, if necessary.

Subscribing to these services may be cost prohibitive for small companies and organizations. Annual costs for a media monitoring service can easily surpass \$30,000; therefore, it is necessary to determine whether the considerable cost justifies the means, or if it is practical to subscribe to a more limited service.

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See also Crisis Communication; Measuring/Measures; Public Relations Research

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COALITION BUILDING

Coalition building is the process of developing working relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, or nations for the purposes of mobilizing collective action, sharing information, coordinating communication efforts, or using any combination of these functions. Coalitions are a type of an alliance; however, unlike alliances, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), members frequently organize coalitions for short-term purposes. For example, several NATO nations

formed the Coalition to Disarm Iraq in 2002. In addition to government coalitions, Fortune 500 and nonprofit organizations commonly use coalitions to advance their interests. Given the frequent diversity and competing interests of coalition members, the construction and maintenance of successful coalitions requires skilled facilitation and communication by coalition organizers.

Coalition building is an important part of public relations because it can enable like-minded members to exert increased influence by working together. The synergy of coalitions can enhance credibility for a particular position by demonstrating widespread agreement. Using combined economic, social, and political resources, coalition lobbying can increase clout with key decision makers and boost media coverage. Communication networks among coalition members can facilitate rapid information sharing, which can serve as early warning systems for issues that arise that impact the coalition, its members, or both.

Internal Coalition Building

Internal coalition building occurs when employees create alliances with other employees in an organization. Public relations practitioners commonly engage in internal coalition building when they need additional support to influence organizational decision making. For example, public relations practitioners could engage in coalition building to convince their employer to choose an ethical course of action or respond to a crisis in a particular way. Internal coalition building can occur overtly or behind the scenes. A public relations practitioner could engage in overt coalition building by receiving permission to sit in on key decision makers' meetings. Public relations practitioners also commonly engage in coalition building behind the scenes. For example, a public relations practitioner could meet with other employees informally to seek their support for a position prior to a vote at a meeting.

External Coalition Building

External coalition building differs from internal coalition building by involving members of different organizations. To identify coalition members, consideration should be given to the organization's reputation and how it might help or discredit the

coalition, the organization's position on the issue, whether the organization is easy to work with, and how the organization might contribute in terms of thought leadership, financial backing, and outreach to grassroots advocates.

A coalition might consider inviting unlikely partners if an agreement can be reached regarding the coalition's objectives, strategies, and tactics. By crossing lines, such as ideology and geography, coalitions can enhance their credibility by positioning themselves as representing broad interests. For example, when car manufacturers wanted to oppose a proposed increase in fuel efficiency standards, which could lead to fewer large cars and vans, they created the Coalition for Vehicle Choice, whose members included disabled veterans' organizations and senior citizens' groups, both of which depend on large vehicles for transportation. A second example is the Common Ground Network for Life and Choice, which prochoice and prolife organizations formed in 1999 to increase awareness and support for adoption. In both instances, these coalitions achieved more visibility and progress together than either member could have done alone or with its more common allies.

How coalitions are structured is an important aspect of their formation and management. A common structure is equal partnerships in which each member commits to sharing power from the earliest planning stages to the final efforts. Even relatively minor details, such as who gets to speak first at a dinner event, whose name appears first on an invitation, and who is quoted in media materials, can threaten the vitality of relationships among coalition members. Consequently, organizers in an equal partnership should have coalition members affirm their commitment to equal control. In unequal partnership designs, one or more members assume a majority of the responsibility for the coalition's efforts. Dominant members often fund all coalition costs, develop all public relations materials, and take full behind-the-scenes responsibility for the planning, execution, and evaluation of coalition actions. Prior to preparing materials, dominant coalition members commonly recruit new members for the coalition. New members receive name recognition on coalition materials while the coalition enhances its legitimacy by demonstrating the support of additional members and, implicitly, their supporters. In addition, members

that play minor coalition roles typically receive free media materials from dominant members; in turn, dominant members benefit from the message being further publicized without added cost.

The mobilization of collective action is one of the most powerful uses of coalitions. Skilled facilitation is required to coordinate the coalition's efforts, and either a public relations professional or another type of executive can fulfill this role. The chosen facilitator should have a transformational leadership style, which involves building personal rapport and focusing on collective interests rather than a personal agenda. Transformational leaders are charismatic and can mobilize audiences.

Facilitators must coordinate the development of the coalition's ground rules, which can include desired member behavior, information regarding confidentiality, the identification of who can speak on behalf of the coalition and who can commit the coalition to meet with outsiders, as well as a procedure for ethical decision making. Facilitators working in coalitions with equal partnerships should consider developing the ground rules with the group. Regardless of the partnership design, coalition members should agree on the ground rules as a condition of membership. Coalitions commonly formalize their ground rules in a written document and ask each member to sign it to indicate agreement. Some coalitions follow a win-win or no-deal model by only adopting positions that every member supports. Public relations practitioners have found creative ways to agree in public policy contexts without compromising coalition members' positions. One way is to have coalition members support a general position, which is expressed in all coalition materials. Each member's specific materials can include the coalition's position, as well as its specific stance on it.

Despite having ground rules in place, conflict can arise when developing the coalition's mission statement, goals, measurable objectives, strategies, tactics, and plans for assessment. Facilitators need to embrace conflict rather than shy away from it. Skilled facilitators can draw out quiet coalition members, prevent vocal members from dominating meetings, keep the atmosphere constructive, build morale, and foster relationships among members, which is known as peer linking. The quality of personal relationships among participants is critical to members' ability to work together effectively. This

is especially important, considering the common turf battles that coalition members encounter as they compete for resources in their work outside of the coalition. In addition, facilitators should ensure that every member feels valued. Regular assessments by the facilitator and coalition members can result in identifying any adjustments to the coalition to improve effectiveness, which can include changing the organization's internal procedures. Facilitators should also ensure that there are established communication channels for keeping coalition members informed about the group's activities and achievements.

When presenting the coalition's position to a wider audience, coalitions should coordinate consistent messages among members. Coalition members can reject, agree on, and create new terms to encourage a particular position on a situation. For example, the term *so-called* typically precedes words that coalitions reject, and coalitions can encourage the media to use desired terms and place the qualifying word *so-called* in front of rejected terms. In addition to determining words to use and avoid, coalitions can develop message points for media inquiries and train experts to whom coalition members can refer these inquiries. Sometimes coalitions want to present a united front on contentious issues; however, at other times, members might prefer to coordinate communication privately.

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See also Activism; Collaborative Decision Making; Conflict Resolution; Internal Communication; Lobbying; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Political Action Committees; Public Affairs

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CO-CREATION OF MEANING THEORY

Robert L. Heath pioneered the use of co-creation of meaning theory for public relations in his approach to management of corporate communication. He drew on the work of Eric M. Eisenberg who stressed the need to focus on the concepts of meaning and interpretations as a means for understanding organizational communication. Eisenberg (1984) emphasized how relationships between people both in organizations and outside of them depend on shared meanings. Co-creation allows all parties to contribute to the shared view of organizational and social lives needed for coordinated enactment, as we can learn from Eisenberg (1984).

As Heath (1994) emphasized, co-creation differs fundamentally from a referential view of how words come to have meaning:

A referential view of meaning assumes that people think of the same referent as they interpret the definition of a term or phrase. A co-orientational view of meaning acknowledges the presence of ambiguity, and assumes that one person can understand the other by knowing how that person interprets a word or phrase even if the two people hold different interpretations. (p. 25)

Thus, for instance, both employer and worker share meaning for the activity “work,” but corporations can apply the meaning “cost” to work, whereas employees see it as their identity. A referential approach assumes that both parties look to the activity or thing to define the word. A

constructionist, co-creational view presumes as the basis for shared meaning that meaning cultures, which can differ markedly, depend on meaning that develops through interactions.

Co-orientation assumes that through interaction people develop the interpretations and expectations they need to coordinate their activities. In managing corporate communication, the key issue is to manage the interactions in such a way that compatible zones of meaning are created with and among stakeholders. This presumes dialogue rather than monologue.

In organizational theory, Stanley A. Deetz, Sarah J. Tracy, and Jennifer Lyn Simpson (2000) focused on the “enactment of meanings” (p. xiii) by which learning processes are developed individually and collectively through the use of language. Through interaction, people develop various interpretations of an event. Thus, people’s understanding of an event are framed or reframed through language, stories, and rituals; conversations are useful for creating alternative futures and opening the business to a wider collective learning process.

Co-creation of meaning theory is found in European approaches to public relations. For example, Roland Burkart viewed public relations as the facilitation of dialogic interaction between organization and its publics. Ansgar Zerfass (1996) called dialogues “arguments in which new meanings develop” (pp. 31–32). Just as language in use is an ongoing process, so is meaning creation. The intellectual basis of this view of public relations is contemporary rhetorical theory, which explains discourse tactics as what players use to maneuver in communicative interactions. A key aspect of this view is the creation of many meanings based more on a “battle” of interests than on harmony of interest.

Heath’s (2000) rhetorical enactment approach reasoned “that all of what an organization does and says is a statement. It is a statement that is interpreted idiosyncratically by each market, audience, and public” (p. 4). In a co-creation of meaning theory of public relations, the aim is to find deliberate and pluralistic solutions for problems. By doing this, an organization produces and reproduces its environment and is, therefore, a key actor itself. The key perspective is that by facilitating interactions, new meanings are continually created. That is why this is an open-ended model, a learning process that never stops.

The concept of meaning is a much-debated concept in human communication theory. Meaning can be explained as the “whole way in which we understand, explain, feel about, and react towards a given phenomenon” (Rosengren, 2000, p. 59). A crucial question is whose meaning is created by whom, and what does it mean for interpreting the world?

Recent approaches to the concept of communication are focused on communication as a fundamental two-way process for creating and exchanging meaning, interactive and participatory at all levels. This is a paradigmatic change from a sender/receiver orientation to an actor orientation.

Regarding the character of meaning, many theorists differentiate between connotative and denotative meaning by stressing that the connotative meaning steers behavior much more than the denotative meaning does. A denotative meaning of a phenomenon is the dictionary meaning. It is the literal or overt meaning that is shared by most people of a same language or culture. The connotative meaning refers to subjective associations. In a co-creation of meaning theory, the connotative perspective of meaning is seen as most powerful in steering behavior.

Co-creation of meaning theory is rooted in symbolic interactionism: The idea that reality is not “something out there,” but that human beings construct reality themselves. This idea was popularized by one of the most frequently cited works in social sciences, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Accordingly, reality is a quality pertaining to phenomena we recognize as having a being, independent of our own volition: We cannot wish them away. Knowledge is the certainty that phenomena are real, but possess specific co-created characteristics.

Thus, the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the social construction of reality. Likewise, social structure can be seen as an essential element of the reality of everyday life.

At one pole of the continuum are those others with whom I frequently interact in face-to-face situations—my inner circle, as it were. At the other pole are highly anonymous abstractions, which by their very nature can never be available in face-to-face interaction. Social structure is the sum total of these typifications and of the recurrent patterns of interaction established by means of them. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 48)

Languages, as a shared system of vocal signs, build up semantic fields or zones of meaning that are linguistically circumscribed. While it is possible to say that humans have a nature, it is more significant to say they construct their own nature, or simply, that humans produce themselves through language. This self-production is always, and of necessity, a social enterprise. Humans together produce a human environment, with the totality of its sociocultural and psychological formations. It may be that a given social order precedes any individual organism’s development, but social order is still a human product, or, more precisely, an ongoing human production.

By playing roles, individuals participate in a social world. By internalizing these roles, that world becomes subjectively real to them. Roles represent institutional order. Some of these, however symbolically, represent that order in its totality more than others. Such roles are of great strategic importance in a society, since they represent not only that of the other institution, but the integration of all institutions in a meaningful world. These roles have a special relationship to the legitimating apparatus of society.

Historically these roles have most commonly been located in political and religious institutions. This is no longer the case; today, nongovernmental organizations and corporations have more power than politics and religion. According to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, legitimation is a process best described as a “second-order” objectification of meaning. Its function is to make objectively available and subjectively plausible the “first-order” objectifications that have been institutionalized. It embodies the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectified meanings and justifies them, but in the modern world, there is always a rivalry between definitions of reality; as such, an examination of reality is not inherently functional to resolve meaning conflicts. Rather, social structure and order predict the outcome of shared meaning without which people (and organizations) cannot coordinate their activities and live their futures.

In these ways, symbolic interactionism has inspired scholars to adopt a constructionist view of reality. In 1993, German communication scholars Manfred Rühl and Günter Bentele introduced a constructionist view that human beings reflect the other to themselves, and social reality is a

dynamic process. Thus, constructing social reality is a shared process of meaning construction. In this view, reflective interpretation and conceptualization of meanings are at the forefront in a constant process of de- and re-construction; so, they are a “reflection.” Similarly, Klaus Krippendorf mentioned the “recursiveness” of communication: An ongoing social process of de- and reconstruction of interpretations. That is why Werner Faulstich and other constructionist public relations scholars state that public relations is not just interaction between human beings (e.g., organization and its publics), but societal action where interpretations are constantly de- and re-constructed. Consequently, public relations can be seen as understanding and steering these de- and re-constructions, a view basic to most European public relations theory.

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See also Framing Theory; Social Construction of Reality Theory; Zones of Meaning

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CODES OF ETHICS

A code of ethics is a formal statement of conduct or a set of rules, standards, or guidelines for appropriate member behavior that has been adopted by an organization or professional association. Ethical codes, such as General Motor's *Winning with Integrity* and Microsoft's *Standards of Business Conduct*, have been popular in organizations since at least the 1970s. Codes of ethics were originally created by many organizations and professional associations in the 1950s and 1960s partly in response to specific ethical wrongdoings. Some were even mandated by the courts as part of larger legal settlements. Codes are associated with professions, such as law, marketing, accounting, and counseling. Some professional codes, including the Hippocratic Oath in medicine, have ancient origins.

Ethical codes take a variety of forms. Some are specific legalistic documents with a mechanism for enforcement and signature pages requiring that the employee explicitly agree to abide by the code. Others are very general statements of values or principles that the organization or association aspires to with no specific enforcement provisions. Some codes include vignettes or cases to illustrate ethical conduct and assist in training. Statements of core values or mission statements sometimes serve as the organization's formal declaration of ethics. Codes are typically distributed to members of the organization, may be posted on websites, and in some cases, are prominently displayed throughout the organization.

Codes serve a variety of functions, including protecting the organization from legal liability, constraining and focusing employee behavior, elevating the levels of conduct and limiting unethical behavior, assessing and judging member behavior as a defense against criticism, and enhancing the image and reputation of an organization or professional group. In the latter sense, ethical codes themselves may serve as an issue management, image restoration, or public relations function. Codes also help communicate value positions and ethical standards to stakeholders and facilitate discussions regarding appropriate organizational or professional ethics and values. In this way, codes are often the most important and explicit means whereby organizational and professional values are communicated. It is relatively common, for example, for all new employees to receive copies of ethical codes. Codes and ethics programs are related to improved ethical climate and are particularly important during times of uncertainty, transition, and even crisis.

Ethical codes and guidelines function in part by explicitly clarifying issues of responsibility and accountability. Many corporate codes are designed to clarify issues of conflict of interest, loyalty, and obligations. Increasingly, corporate codes discuss issues of corporate social responsibility and identify larger obligations to society, the environment, communities, and other stakeholders. Some organizations have established ethics officers or committees responsible for both promoting the code and enforcing its standards. Richard L. Johannesen (2002) suggested that codes serve an argumentative function, "to stimulate public and professional

scrutiny of major ethical issues" (p. 201). Codes, for example, discuss the value of a good or ethical reputation and encourage members to interact in a professional and responsible manner with external stakeholders. Ethical codes and value statements, however, should not be seen as panaceas for ethical communication in organizations or among professionals.

Codes of ethical conduct are recognized as one hallmark of a professional community. They suggest that the members of that profession reached consensus regarding professional standards and values and that members agreed to abide by those standards. They may also help create cohesion and professional identity. These codes may allow the association to impose minimum standards and consistency on member behavior. Although there are legal issues regarding enforcement, some professional associations suspend the membership of those individuals who violate ethical codes. Professional groups, such as in accounting, medicine, law, nursing, education, government, psychology, and public relations, have generated sophisticated ethical codes and associated standards for professional conduct.

Associational and professional codes for communication professionals have been used for several years. These include codes for journalists, marketing and advertising professionals and broadcasters, as well as public relations. The Public Relations Society of America, the International Association of Business Communicators, and the International Public Relations Association all developed elaborate associational codes for the public relations profession. These codes embody a variety of professional values and standards and are used to judge and sometimes publicly sanction member behavior. Public relations codes are grounded in larger communication values, such as free speech and free access to information, honesty and truthfulness, and fairness. Public relations codes of ethics were particularly important given its somewhat sordid early history of manipulative and deceptive practices. Ethical codes have helped public relations practitioners clarify professional expectations, maintain higher standards of professional conduct, and, in general, elevate the reputation of the profession.

Although ethical codes are clearly very popular, some critics described them as worthless

exercises in vagueness, irrelevance, and mere window dressing largely designed to avoid responsibility and legal liability. Some critics have even called ethical codes exercises in deceptive public relations. It is optimistic to expect a code of ethics to resolve complex ethics dilemmas and competing values. Codes of ethics, at the very least, however, elevate the level of debate and discussion regarding ethics and lay down a formal record regarding those standards and values to which the organization or professional community aspires. They may enhance the quality of decisions and behavior and provide a basis for making ethical judgments. Although codes are a critical component in improving professional and organizational ethics, they cannot alone be expected to ensure ethical conduct.

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See also Codes of Public Relations Practice; International Association of Business Communicators; Public Relations Society of America

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CODES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

Codes of public relations practice are formalized statements of professional obligations, standards, norms, and conduct adopted by the professional associations of public relations. One of the first initiatives of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) was to establish an ethical code of practice for its members. The desired outcome of this code was to establish clear standards for practitioners, clarify these standards for management, and distinguish ethical public relations professionals from those who engage in deceptive and unethical communication. The importance of codes has not diminished since the creation of the PRSA code. A survey conducted by PRSA in 2000 found that half the members have at some point felt “an extraordinary amount of pressure” to jeopardize their ethical standards (Fitzpatrick, 2002b, p. 119).

Establishing a code of professional conduct and social responsibility is essential because “business exists at the pleasure of society, and its behavior must fall within the guidelines set by society” (Daugherty, 2000, p. 389). Robert L. Heath (1997) explained that public relations specialists are active players in the process of determining social responsibility; “through their comments—as well as actions that reveal their commitment to mutual interests—companies help shape the standards by which they are judged” (p. 132). Standards of social responsibility have increased as activist and watchdog groups have called out organizations seen as not adhering to those standards.

Codes of practice allow practitioners to move beyond relying on “merely subjective judgments” (Day, Dong, & Robins, 2000, p. 406). Patricia A. Curtin and Lois A. Boynton (2000) found that “codes also may reinforce ethical expectations to public relations novices and deter government intervention, thereby enhancing professionalism” (p. 415). The perceived benefits of such codes is manifested in the fact that businesses have “increasingly developed their own codes of ethics and have hired ethics officers to establish standards for what is right and wrong, or good and bad, within the organization” (Leeper, 2000, p. 435).

The three best-known codes for public relations are PRSA's Member Code of Ethics; the International Public Relations Association's (IPRA) three related codes, known as the Codes of Venice, Athens and Brussels; and the International Association of Business Communicator's (IABC) Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators.

PRSA offers the most detailed and complex code (first adopted in 1950) of the three organizations. Its current version, adopted in 2000, features six core values and six code provisions. The values include advocacy for clients and an open marketplace of ideas, honesty, expertise, independence in the form of objective council and personal accountability, loyalty to both clients and the public interest, and fairness. The six code provisions are composed of free flow of information, competition among professionals in a manner that serves the public interest, disclosure of information in a manner that builds trust with the public, safeguarding confidences to protect privacy rights, avoiding conflicts of interest, and enhancing the profession through building trust in all levels of interaction. The code ends with a brief mention of enforcement. Members are asked to sign a pledge to uphold the code with the understanding that "those who have been or are sanctioned by a government agency or convicted in a court of law of an action that is in violation of this Code may be barred from membership or expelled from the Society" (Fitzpatrick, 2002b, p. 135).

IPRA's first International Code of Ethics, the Code of Venice, was adopted in 1961 and revised in 2009. Two subsequent IPRA codes were developed, the Code of Athens in 1968 and the Code of Brussels in 2007. The Code of Venice is composed of 14 general aspirational provisions addressing issues of conduct toward employers and clients, conduct toward public and the media, conduct toward colleagues, and conduct related to digital communication. Provisions are grounded in principles of fairness, conflict of interest, avoiding misleading and false information, and respecting the integrity of communication channels. The second code, the Code of Athens, references the United Nations Charter and its principles of fundamental human rights and human dignity and worth. The 14 provisions include general aspirational provisions as well as more specific behavioral requirements. The code repeatedly advocates preserving

the human rights entitled by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The code asks professionals to perform their duties within the moral principles and rules of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to uphold human dignity, to recognize the rights of all parties involved to express their views, to act in a manner that is respectful of the parties involved—including the interests of concerned publics—and to show loyalty and integrity in order to keep the "confidence of clients or employers, past or present, and all the publics that are affected" (Matrat, 1968). Finally, the code asks professionals to refrain from "subordinating the truth," circulating information that is not based on "ascertainable facts," taking any action that is "unethical or dishonest or capable of impairing human dignity and integrity," and using exploitive techniques "to create subconscious motivations which the individual cannot control of his/her own free will and so cannot be accountable for the action taken of them" (Matrat, 1968). The final IPRA code, the Brussels Code (2007), was designed to address the public affairs function sometimes associated with public relations. This code includes 12 general principles, including integrity, transparency, dialogue, and accuracy.

The IABC Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators has 12 articles and does not include a provision for enforcement, but it seeks compliance through promotion. The code is grounded in three principles: Professional communication is legal, ethical, and in good taste. This code explicitly refers to "honest, candid and timely communication," "free flow of information," "free speech," and "access to an open marketplace of ideas." It addresses confidentiality and conflict of interest and challenges professional communicators to be honest, both with others and with themselves.

While the PRSA, IAPR, and IABC codes share basic values of professional integrity, honesty and fidelity to basic processes of communication, there is debate over the proper function of professional codes. Some argue that effective codes should "provide the grounds for charges of wrongdoing and defenses" (Day, Dong, & Robins, 2000, p. 406). From this perspective, critics argue that most professional codes of practice are "vague, unenforceable, or applied inconsistently" and that they cannot account for the diversity of views in a globalized society (Curtin & Boynton, 2000, p. 415).

Evidence supports claims that professional codes are difficult to enforce. For example, K. R. Fitzpatrick (2002a) pointed out that only “five formal sanctions were imposed against members [based on violations of its code] as a result of PRSA investigations from 1954 to 2000” (p. 105). She argued that “unless one assumes that most of the allegations were groundless, the PRSA enforcement system was clearly ineffective in adjudicating ethical misconduct” (p. 105). In response to such criticism, PRSA’s code revision in 2000 moved away from enforcement toward inspiration as a means for influencing member behavior. Fitzpatrick (2002b) explained that the revised code of PRSA, like the code sponsored by IABC, is “aspirational and educational, designed to motivate ethical behavior rather than punish unethical misbehavior” (p. 111).

Another concern is that professional codes of responsibility are so vague that they are of limited value to practitioners. For example, Curtin and Boynton (2000) explained that the PRSA code “proscribes lying,” but it fails to provide “clear guidance on when withholding information is justified” (p. 415). Consequently, some practitioners have called for operational definitions in the code that clarify the standards and leave less ambiguity. In contrast, other practitioners argue that codes simply cannot “encompass all potential problems” and that “if they are too detailed, then they might be inflexible and unlikely to be read” (Daugherty, 2000, p. 397). Others maintain that some degree of ambiguity is an inherent part of public relations activity and that ethicality of ambiguity is dependent on the intent of the communicator.

A final concern involves the capacity of professional codes to account for the diversity of the multiple cultures that are involved in international business activity. With the advent of globalization, some practitioners assert that professional codes are “unlikely to gain wide acceptance” and that such codes are “so broad as to lack pragmatic application” (Curtin & Boynton, 2000, p. 416). Thus, IABC and IPRA emphasize sensitivity to intercultural issues. These provisions encourage practitioners to alter their practices to avoid insult or insensitivity to members of any culture and to promote universal human rights.

Ideally, codes of professional practice provide practitioners with objective means for proactively

assessing their behavior as they engage in their profession. In response to such concerns, codes established by PRSA, IAPR, and IABC, among others, strive to meet the challenges and evolving standards for ethical communication.

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See also Codes of Ethics; International Association of Business Communicators; Public Relations Society of America

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COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING

Collaborative decision making entails working together rather than independently in a decision making process. Although it can refer to as few as two individuals working together to make a decision, collaborative decision making in public relations typically refers to organizations working together with one or more external publics in a shared decision-making process. Common contexts for collaborative decision making in public relations are community relations and employee relations, and instruments of collaboration range from citizen surveys and public meetings to negotiations, mediations, and search conferences. Done well, collaborative decision making can lead to greater trust among participants and higher quality outcomes that a public views as more acceptable and legitimate than decisions where publics were not involved. Done poorly, collaborative decision-making efforts can leave participants feeling used, undervalued, and distrustful of future interactions.

The spirit of collaborative decision making is evident in early democratic principles, such as the right of citizens to have a voice in decisions that affect them. Early examples in the United States include the ubiquitous town hall meeting, where colonialists debated the future of the fledgling nation. The freedom to share in decision-making efforts has not always come without a struggle, however, as evidenced by the women's suffragist movement to earn voting rights or the labor movement to earn collective bargaining privileges. In response to greater calls for collaborative decision making, the latter half of the 20th century saw more legislation guaranteeing the right of citizens to participate in government-sponsored decision-making

processes. Private organizations also experienced greater protest from publics that resisted being excluded from decisions that affected them.

Today, the techniques used for collaborative decision making are varied and can be targeted at internal as well as external publics. Because different techniques produce different outcomes, choosing the appropriate technique requires public relations practitioners to consider the context and goals of the collaboration. One of the first considerations entails who will have the final decision-making authority. The degree of collaboration in a decision can range from consultation and advisement to full-fledged partnership and control of the decision. Ensuring that all participants in a collaborative decision-making process know from the beginning their likely impact on the decision reduces the potential for later misunderstandings about how decisions were made. Table 1 provides descriptions of several techniques available for collaborative decision making. The table includes typical participants of the techniques as well as typical impacts participants have on decisions.

As the table illustrates, public meetings involve collaborative decision-making techniques where participants act in more of a consultant or advisory role. Rather than making a decision at the meeting, participants typically provide information or feedback to meeting organizers, who then make a decision sometime after the meeting. Benefits of public meetings are that they are open to any member of the public to attend; therefore, decision makers can often access a wide range of knowledge from people who attend. Drawbacks include the sometimes limited nature of collaboration, which may frustrate meeting attendees who want a greater role in the decision-making process. Biased representation is also a frequent criticism of public meetings, since only those most interested in the decision—though not necessarily most impacted by the decision—typically attend.

Advisory committees and advisory panels are also methods of collaborative decision making, where publics serve as consultants to the organization. These methods differ from public meetings in that participation is usually limited to participants who have been purposively selected for their expertise or ability to represent a particular viewpoint. For instance, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) relies on its many advisory committees to

Table I Common Techniques for Collaborative Decision Making

<i>Techniques</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Primary Purpose</i>	<i>Typical Public Impact on Decision</i>
Public meetings (public hearings, availability sessions, scoping sessions)	Open to a wide range of self-selected individuals	To provide information and obtain feedback	Limited—public serves primarily as consultant to organization, which is not obligated to follow recommendations
Advisory committees (advisory panels, advisory boards, citizen juries)	Individuals having some expertise or characteristics vital to the issue	To evaluate the situation and provide recommendations over a period of time and multiple issues	Limited—public serves primarily as consultant to organization, which is not obligated to follow recommendations
Citizen surveys (public opinion polls)	Representative sample of stakeholders	To assess attitudes from affected individuals who may not otherwise participate in the decisions	Limited—public serves primarily as consultant to organization, which is not obligated to follow recommendations
Workshops (study circles, deliberative polling, roundtable discussions)	Interest group leaders, experts, officials	To bring members of the public and organization together in a working session	Mixed—organization is not obligated to follow recommendations
Referenda (ballots)	Self-selected sample of registered voters	To make a choice about whether to approve or disprove the issue on the ballot	Substantial—in most cases, votes are binding
Search conferences	Wide range of individuals representing stakeholders internal and external to organization	To identify shared goals and strategically plan ways of attaining them	Substantial—participants share responsibility for making and implementing decisions
Negotiations (collective bargaining, alternative dispute resolution, arbitration)	Individuals directly and/or legally involved with the issue	To find mutually acceptable solution	Substantial—in most cases, results are binding

evaluate research and make recommendations about issues related to foods, drugs, biologics, and medical devices. The FDA specifically chooses members for their expertise, and members meet frequently over a period of years to assist the FDA in its decision making. As with most advisory panels or committees, the FDA is not obligated to follow its committees' recommendations.

Other techniques in which external publics typically have less direct impact on decisions include citizen surveys and workshops. Surveys can provide

useful input from a representative sample into a decision-making process, although some people criticize that surveys only provide a "snapshot" of opinions at a particular moment. In response, deliberative polls are a type of workshop where a representative sample is selected to attend an intense discussion, often over a weekend or other three-day period. Participants complete questionnaires at the beginning of the workshop and at the workshop's end. Supporters of this technique argue that this provides a truer gauge of public opinion as if the

public had access to the available expertise on the issue. Both citizen surveys and workshops (with or without surveys) are typically used as a component of a larger decision-making process; therefore, their impact on the final decision will vary.

Negotiations, referenda, and search conferences are collaborative decision-making processes where external publics have comparatively more control in formulating final decisions. Negotiations entail participants working together to find some agreeable solution. Referenda are essentially ballots where individuals cast their input on a decision using a formulized vote-taking process. Search conferences are large gatherings where people work together to identify shared goals and strategize ways to reach them. Although serving different needs, negotiations and search conferences both have the advantage of face-to-face deliberation, which referenda do not, and many view face-to-face deliberation as an important precursor of successful collaborative decision making.

The aforementioned techniques represent commonly used processes of collaborative decision making. There are many variations among them and this list is not exhaustive. Organizers can also use more than one technique as part of a decision-making process, such as when public meetings are held to keep a more general audience apprised of a negotiation's progress. In addition to the processes themselves, many guidelines exist to enhance interaction in group decision making. Although exploring these guidelines is beyond the scope of this entry, there is some suggested research listed in the Further Readings.

When planning collaborative decision-making efforts, public relations practitioners should also consider legal, practical, logistical, and philosophical issues. One of the first factors is whether collaboration is legally mandated or conducted voluntarily. This is important because mandated collaboration could involve additional requirements. For instance, legally mandated government-sponsored public meetings typically occur at a specific time in a decision-making process. Although this is not always the case, mandated meetings also tend to be more formal than non-mandated meetings. On the plus side, the formal procedures that accompany mandated collaboration can help to ensure that the process is viewed as fair by all parties. However, the formality of

some meetings can leave some participants feeling constricted in how they can contribute. Finally, some publics can view an organization suspiciously if it only seems to be collaborating because the law says it must. In comparison, if an organization is voluntarily collaborating with publics in a decision, publics can interpret this meeting as more of a "goodwill" effort than if collaboration was required.

Practical issues relate to the topic of the collaborative decision-making effort. For instance, decisions that deal with highly technical topics may hinder participation from nontechnical publics. This may be most apparent in techniques geared to wider, more general audience participation, such as public meetings and public hearings. To offset the power imbalances that can arise from this situation, practitioners often provide nontechnical audiences with access to unbiased, technical support. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for example, provides Technical Assistance Grants up to \$50,000 to communities to assist them in participating in decisions about eligible Superfund sites.

Logistical issues relate to the implementation of the decision-making effort. For instance, if the forum for collaboration is a public meeting, logistical issues include choosing the location, timing, and length of the meetings; soliciting participants and coordinating schedules; and preparing appropriate handouts. Choices about timing and location of meetings can send signals to participants about the degree to which their attendance is valued. Meetings held during holidays or at remote locations, for example, can result in lower turnouts for reasons unrelated to the issue at hand. In addition, if poor scheduling results in a lack of attendance, this can detract from the credibility of the process. Meetings that occur late in the decision-making process can also leave participants feeling dissatisfied and angry.

Philosophical issues refer to the incentives for participants to collaborate. Participation scholar Daniel Fiorino recounted that traditionally people argued that decisions—especially technical ones—should be left up to administrative officials, who would consult as necessary with the appropriate experts, elected officials, and other representative interest groups. He summarized the argument against such an arrangement as having normative, substantive, and instrumental

qualities. The normative argument states that individuals have a right to participate in decisions that affect them and excluding them from the decision-making process thus violates democratic ideals. The substantive argument states that input and knowledge from nontechnical audiences can be as sound, or more sound, than experts' or officials' knowledge or input. For instance, local groups could have a much greater sensitivity to contextual factors, such as culture, which can influence the successful implementation of decisions. Finally, the instrumental argument states that involving individuals in the decision may decrease conflict and increase acceptance of decisions.

As noted in the instrumental argument, when properly executed, collaborative decision making can have the added benefit of reducing conflict among organizations and publics. This requires, however, an acknowledgment of the role that power and control play in the decision. Not everyone is inclined to collaborate with their internal or external publics, preferring to follow an elite model of decision making. Even when parties choose initially to collaborate, at some point, discontinuing collaboration could be strategically better for one or more participants. Roger Fisher and William Ury of the Harvard Negotiation Project coined the term BATNA to refer to the state when the incentives to act unilaterally exceed the incentives to collaborate. BATNA refers to the Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement. Before coming to the negotiation table, shrewd participants have identified their BATNA as well as attempted to learn the other side's BATNA. Collaboration does not necessarily mean compromise or accommodation, especially if participants have identified their BATNA. However, scholars have suggested that parties in a negotiation or conflict should try to identify shared interests in efforts to reach some type of agreement.

Parties attempting to reach some type of agreement can consider the use of traditional or contemporary mediation. The contemporary model of mediation has gained prominence in recent years among some of the people who believe that unaffiliated third parties have biases that prevent them from effectively fulfilling the traditional role as outside, disinterested experts. A contemporary mediator tends to be an insider to the context,

rather than an outsider, and acts in a way that shows his or her passion or deep commitment to the involved parties rather than approaching the situation with a neutral demeanor. In the contemporary model, a mediator's credibility comes from his or her specialized knowledge about the situation. For example, a public relations professional at the national level of a multi-tiered advocacy organization could serve in the contemporary mediation role by facilitating collaborative decision making between one of its state organizations and one of the state organization's affiliates. The public relations professional is deeply invested in his or her relationship with both parties and is committed to finding a mutually beneficial outcome. This person approaches the situation with specialized knowledge of the tensions that can exist in this type of situation. Regardless of the mediation model, a mediator's credibility can influence the quality of the collaborative decision making and, ultimately, whether a mutually beneficial solution can be reached.

There are several ways to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative decision-making techniques. Some of the criteria focus more on process-oriented variables whereas others examine outcomes. Process-oriented criteria examine the success of the implementation effort, including the number of people who participated, the degree of interaction among participants, the fairness of the procedures, and the length of time people deliberated. Outcome-oriented criteria examine the results of the procedures, including the quality of the decision, whether the decision is viewed as fair or legitimate by participants, and participant satisfaction with the decision. Recently, more attention has been given to long-term outcomes, including relationships between organizations and their publics. For example rather than viewing collaboration as simply a one-time event, long-term outlooks consider the likelihood that additional interaction will occur and therefore pay attention to ways to increase trust among participants.

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See also Citizens Advisory Committees/Panels; Coalition Building; Conflict Resolution; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Public Policy Planning

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COLLATERAL

Collateral is a term used to describe promotional materials accompanying an advertising or public relations campaign. Collateral most often includes any print or visual work done in addition to advertising in its traditional form (i.e., print advertisements, radio spots, and television commercials). Examples of collateral materials include newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, fliers, handouts, table tents, cards, ad reprints, direct-mail pieces, catalogs, booklets, magazines, posters, signage, PowerPoint presentations, position papers, backgrounders, websites, displays, and exhibits.

To be effective, collateral materials must meet an objective and communicate directly to a targeted public. Common objectives include increasing awareness of a product, service, or cause; educating audiences about an organization's stance on a particular issue; reinforcing a brand's image; communicating key message points to a particular group of stakeholders; and informing customers about the benefits of a product or service.

Collateral materials can be distributed directly to consumers in person, through the mail, or online. Public relations practitioners who work in

marketing communications are often responsible for collateral materials that support the marketing or sales function. They develop customer newsletters that are more sales-oriented, brochures that explain product features, and magazines geared toward the buyers of a product or service. These practitioners also ensure the proper implementation of the corporate identity system throughout all collateral materials, which may even include posters, fliers, postcards, and pages on the Web.

A brochure is a printed piece of collateral material used for public relations, advertising, and marketing purposes. Brochures are considered a communication tool or tactic and a form of direct media (i.e., fliers, newsletters, posters), which reach their audiences through distribution channels other than mass media (i.e., newspapers, magazines, radio, television). Other terms used to describe brochures are pamphlets, considered a simple version of a brochure, and booklets, which are brochures produced in small book-like formats.

Every organization, whether corporate or non-profit, needs brochures to convey key messages to particular target audiences. A brochure is a tactic with a specific objective. For example, brochures can educate an employee audience about company policies, inform customers about new products, or encourage members of a community to use a program offered by a nonprofit organization. Brochures communicate a sizable amount of information to a single reader at a handheld viewing. An orderly sequence of information is presented in stages through panels using a common design thread that visually connects all of the panels and helps entice and sustain the reader's attention.

A newsletter is a type of publication produced most often by public relations practitioners. Almost all organizations—nonprofit and for profit—create and distribute newsletters to members of their key audiences. With the development of desktop publishing, newsletters have grown in popularity. Although they share similar traits with magazines and newspapers, newsletters are smaller, less formal publications that are directed toward a specific audience, such as employees, customers, donors, volunteers, or shareholders.

Collateral services is an agency term often used to describe noncommissionable forms of service, such as the creation of sales promotion materials, new product studies, research, and merchandising.

These types of services are usually performed on a negotiated fee basis rather than a percentage of an advertising media buy.

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See also Brochure; Direct Mail/Direct Email; Flier; Newsletter; Tactics

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COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PUBLIC RELATIONS

Colleges and universities engage in public relations in order to manage their relationships with key constituencies. Their public relations activities typically are divided into three areas: news, development activities, and alumni relations. The news function is part of a university news service housed under the rubric of university relations or external affairs; development, also called advancement, is located within an office of development, donor relations, or a university foundation; and alumni relations work is by and large conducted within an office of alumni affairs, though often in a partnership with development.

Much of the difficulty in managing public relations is the diverse constituencies to whom a multifaceted educational institution has to address and respond. Not only must a college or university deal with internal publics, such as faculty, staff, and administrators, it also must manage external constituents as broad and diverse as parents, alumni, trustees, clubs, community and business leaders, neighbors, athletic boosters, legislators, governmental agencies, unions, accreditation agencies, as well as area employers who hire graduates. With such a task in mind, universities face a complex public relations environment as they seek to create a distinct brand or narrative story for their institution.

University Relations

The principal location where the public relations work of an educational institution is completed is commonly called university relations. As such, one of the major components of public relations is a news service whose job it is to communicate stories that originate from the campus. University relations officials do this by responding to calls from media who need information, as well as fielding inquiries from the general public. This information takes the form of news releases and feature stories about significant episodes in a university's life, such as hiring a new president or a building dedication; regular occurrences, such as publication of the dean's list or annual commencement ceremonies; as well as newsworthy research and creative activities by faculty and staff members. In larger colleges and universities, intercollegiate athletics typically disseminates sports news separately from the central university news service, usually through a staff led by a sports information director.

As part of its news service, many universities also produce news calls—prepackaged news stories disseminated throughout a state or region and accessed by broadcasters—as well as make their news available through RSS feeds or Twitter accounts. In addition to external efforts, university relations seek to communicate with internal publics through print and electronic newsletters and other media. The chief spokesperson for the university is housed within a university relations department.

A second area of work in university relations is that of special events management. An educational institution is overwhelmed with special events—which can include major grant announcements, technology transfers, new building groundbreakings, orientations, homecoming events, campus races, as well as events that commemorate a university's founding.

A third area of effort is graphic arts and Web design. Such work usually includes the control of the presentation of the institution's brand standards, such as its name and logo, project planning, design and layout assistance for the many places across campus that need brochures and other promotional materials, and a great deal of photography, whether documentary, news-related, or an updating of the faculty and administration photo files. In addition, the development of college and university webpages normally falls under the purview of university

relations, in that this is an area integral to the communication of the university's brand.

A fourth area of work by university relations personnel is the creation and production of university publications, for example view books or alumni or research magazines. Other types of materials produced by university relations are fact books, expert guides, and annual reports.

Finally, additional tasks that fall under the purview of university relations are the development of a campus-specific style manual, offering editorial assistance to departments, engaging in crisis management when matters do not go so well, as well as providing media training to faculty and staff.

Development

Development is a second distinct public relations activity by colleges and universities. The goal is to secure the future of the institution by engaging in systematic efforts to increase financial support. Colleges conduct fund-raising activities to support their endowments, recruit faculty by creating "named" chairs, increase financial aid for students, as well as build and equip new buildings and renovate old ones. Gift giving more often than not is organized into levels that offer increased ranks of exclusivity in exchange for larger dollar amounts.

While always an important part of educational public relations, with the national trend of reduced state funding as well as the variable nature of the business cycle, the need to develop potentially new sources of revenue has taken on an added importance. Consequently, it is becoming increasingly common for universities to engage in major capital campaigns, which in the case of large universities often total over \$1 billion. Indeed, the last few years have witnessed the rise of the *permanent campaign*, in which universities engage in continual and ongoing comprehensive campaigns.

Development activities tend to fall into three types: annual funds, major gifts (including planned giving), and corporate and/or foundation relations. Annual funds consist of the ongoing solicitation of monetary gifts through email, letters, or a phone-a-thon that place an emphasis on small to medium-size gifts. Such gifts are important beyond their monetary value; many institutional rating agencies judge alumni involvement based on participation in annual giving.

A second area of development work is in the area of major gifts. Here development officers frequently spend a number of years cultivating donors with substantial assets in order to lay the groundwork for a direct request by the president or another senior academic official. An important component of major gifts is the use of planned giving specific to people who can make sizable charitable gifts through their estates.

The final area of development work, corporate and foundation relations, is designed to facilitate advancement activities by developing relationships with corporations and nonprofit foundations. Many companies that hire a large number of an institution's graduates or benefit from research partnerships find it in their best interest to aid in the development of university programs, by donating or purchasing technology and equipment, underwriting student or faculty travel, and funding research. Foundations also are an option of universities to solicit support for programs or facilities that serve the priorities of those grant-making agencies.

Alumni Relations

A final area of public relations by educational institutions is alumni relations. It deals with a college or university's efforts to keep in contact and facilitate healthy relationships with a critical public—its alumni.

To develop and maintain pride in an institution, colleges and university alumni associations carry out a variety of public relations activities. One is to facilitate the ongoing communication between school and alumni. To this end, alumni associations publish magazines and electronic newsletters and/or websites that keep alumni updated on significant university activities and career milestones in the alumni ranks. Individuals in alumni relations also host a large number of special events, particularly during the fall (i.e., homecoming). Such meetings are not always located on campus; typically alumni relations personnel make efforts to meet with chapters in major cities, and in some cases, overseas. Other types of organizational events are the creation of specific societies of alumni. They are alumni joined by a common interest or theme, such as those who worked at a campus radio station, those from a close-knit or well-known program, or those from a specific ethnic group.

Alumni often help the institution in tangible ways. Many universities seek the political support of their alumni, frequently in the form of organizing a legislative network to lobby for state support of their programs. Oftentimes alumni also get involved by meeting and recruiting potential students. Recent developments in this area include the creation of mentoring programs to help young professionals get established in their careers.

Universities help their alumni stay in contact through the creation of alumni locators and directories; this helps strengthen ties to their alma mater. Finally, universities use alumni relations as a vehicle by which to recognize their distinguished graduates, usually in the form of distinguished alumni awards. These awards serve as the foundation for future development opportunities for the institution.

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See also Alumni Relations; Employee Communication; Managing the Corporate Public Relations Department; News Services; Public Relations Department; Social Media

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COLORADO COAL STRIKE

The bitter strike waged against the coal operators of southern Colorado in 1913–1914 was one of the first major tests of the emerging field of public relations in the United States.

The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) sought to organize the immigrant workers who worked for some 70 companies in the state. However, the largest and most influential coal operator was the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company (CF&I),

which was 40% owned by John D. Rockefeller Sr., scion of the Standard Oil Trust. Rockefeller took comparatively little interest in the company, which he invested in as a favor to railroad tycoon George Gould. The Rockefellers actually intended to sell their stake in CF&I as soon as market conditions improved, but events on April 20, 1914, squelched any hope of that occurring.

On that Monday morning, as the strike ended its seventh month, a gun battle broke out between Colorado militiamen and armed strikers who had been evicted from company-owned houses and were living in a tent colony near Ludlow, Colorado. Accounts vary about how the skirmish began, but by the end of the day at least eight men and one boy had been killed by gunfire before the tent colony burned to the ground. However, the real tragedy of the “Ludlow massacre” was the suffocation deaths of two women and 11 children who were consumed by smoke after hiding from the crossfire in earthen pits below ground.

The union, aided by sympathetic and sensationalistic newspapers in Denver, quickly blamed the entire affair on Rockefeller and his son, John D. Rockefeller Jr., who had assumed responsibility for the family’s business affairs. Although they were 1,500 miles away from the incident and had not been in Colorado for 10 years, the Rockefellers were labeled as personally responsible for the strike, for the attack by the militia, and for the deaths of innocent women and children.

Newspapers across the country carried glaring headlines for the first several days about the tragedy, but the real pressure came as newspapers in New York and the East covered efforts by Congressman Martin Foster and President Woodrow Wilson to seek a settlement of the strike. Rockefeller had steadfastly refused to meddle with the local managers who, like their counterparts in all other Rockefeller investments, were allowed and expected to operate the day-to-day business. CF&I was a member of a mine operators association that staunchly opposed union recognition, particularly any union led by the leaders of UMWA District 15.

Rockefeller told a congressional subcommittee in early April 1914 that he was not opposed to unions, but JDR Jr. (and presumably his father) staunchly believed philosophically that men should not be forced to join a union and should be able to work anywhere they wished. About the

strike, he had told the committee prior to Ludlow, "My conscience acquits me." Those words would haunt him.

The Rockefellers were helplessly sucked into the fray. A well-oiled publicity campaign was launched by Walter H. Fink, publicity director of the UMWA in Colorado. Protests were also organized in Denver by journalist George Creel and in New York City and Tarrytown, New York (home of several Rockefeller estates) by Upton Sinclair. The socialist writer also picketed the Rockefellers' office at 26 Broadway and went to jail instead of paying a small fine in order to generate even more sympathetic press coverage. The Rockefellers received death threats from the radical members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Sunday services at their church were disrupted. Later, a bomb intended for the Rockefellers exploded in a New York tenement house and killed four suspected protesters.

Rallies were organized in cities around the country, ministers lashed out from pulpits across the country about the brutality in Colorado, and a delegation of miners' wives toured Washington and New York to tell their tales of woe. The Rockefellers were bolstered by positive letters of support from many business people, but crank letters containing threats were also received. For nearly two months, their family homes were under armed guard.

Public Relations Response

After six weeks of intense pressure, John D. Rockefeller Jr., and his staff desperately sought ways to set the public record straight, to rectify the damage to the family's name, and to solve the underlying problem between labor and capital. Therefore, in early June 1914, JDR Jr. enlisted the aid of two consultants, publicist Ivy Lee and industrial relations specialist William Lyon Mackenzie King.

Lee is often referred to as the father of modern public relations, although he always used the term "publicity" to describe his work. Lee was special assistant to the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and, in addition to his regular job, assumed the job of helping one of the nation's most powerful families.

Lee set out to tell the Rockefellers' side of the story by issuing a series of 15 bulletins that were

distributed to as many as 40,000 opinion leaders across the country. The bulletins detailed previously untold aspects of the strike favorable to the coal mine operators. He also sought publicity opportunities for the bulletins to appear in newspapers and served as an intermediary with the press. Lee moonlighted for the Rockefellers as a consultant for the remainder of 1914 and then joined the Rockefeller staff for 15 months in 1915 and 1916, before becoming an independent consultant with the Rockefellers as clients.

Lee gained considerable notoriety for himself and for the emerging field of publicity when information about his activities and errors pertaining to the salaries of union officials, which were contained in his bulletins, became disclosed publicly. The United States Commission on Industrial Relations (USCIR), which had been created by Congress to investigate industrial strife, grilled Colorado officials, Lee, and Rockefeller about Lee's activities. Although the USCIR's intent was to put Lee and Rockefeller in an unfavorable light, the USCIR hearings in 1914 and 1915 also shined the light of public scrutiny on the emerging power of publicity before World War I.

While Lee attended to publicity matters, King focused his attention on resolving the labor problems themselves. King proved to be a turn-of-the-century advocate for improvement of management-employee relations and proposed a mechanism for conciliation that would bring labor and capital to voluntary organization during a time before unions were guaranteed the right to negotiate.

King was almost as controversial as Lee. After being hired to study labor relations problems by the then-fledgling Rockefeller Foundation, USCIR investigators quickly questioned whether the non-profit Rockefeller Foundation (which received a special federal charter in 1913) was misusing its resources to benefit the Rockefellers in Colorado. King had been the labor minister in Canada, until 1911, and was distrusted by American union leaders for his legislation, adopted in Canada, that required arbitration of labor disputes before any strike could be called.

The centerpiece of King's work for the Rockefellers was the Colorado Industrial Plan (CIP), adopted in 1915. The CIP became a prototype for company unions as it created mechanisms for

dialogue between management and rank-and-file employees. The CIP served as a model for American industrial relations until 1935, when Congress passed the Wagner Act, which guaranteed the right of unions to engage in collective bargaining. Moreover, King was successful in persuading young Rockefeller and CF&I officials about the need for employees to participate in management decisions and the value of good working and living conditions.

King, who became prime minister of Canada in 1921, proved to be more than a labor relations specialist. He also became a long-time trusted adviser to the Rockefellers. King (along with Lee) helped prepare Rockefeller for grueling testimony before the USCIR, organized a program of social welfare to improve economic conditions in Colorado, and orchestrated a highly successful three-week visit by Rockefeller to Colorado in October 1915. While in Colorado, JDR Jr. saw conditions firsthand, met with miners in their homes, spoke with community leaders, and committed himself to much needed improvements.

Industry and Humanity, a book penned by King while he served as a consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation in 1916–1918, serves as a treatise on labor-capital relationships that is a precursor of modern public relations thought. Among King's key points are the importance of two-way communication and mutual respect, the importance of stakeholders in organizations, and the value of publicity so that the activities of organizations are widely known and misunderstandings are avoided.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Lee, Ivy

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COMMENTARY, RADIO AND TELEVISION

Radio or television commentary is a spoken explanation or interpretation of an event, activity, action, occasion, or statement by a person to add depth or context to a broadcast. It is an audible expansion of a topic. A person may offer more information on a topic, perhaps giving an illustration or narrative that adds depth or context. At times, a spokesperson from a public relations firm is asked to provide commentary about an event or occasion involving a client during a radio or television broadcast.

A person delivering such commentary uses words that assist in illustrating a point of view or opinion on a topic that may be important during a broadcast. Commentary may be delivered live or as a prerecorded statement. Often broadcasters include a commentator in a live report to discuss an event that is unfolding as the radio or television broadcast occurs in real time.

Commentary occurs on radio and television in many forms. Commentary about sports may be the most recognized form of this type of discussion concerning an organized event. Professional sports games typically have a play-by-play announcer who describes what is happening on the field of play while a commentary announcer gives context to the broadcast by presenting facts and opinions about players involved and the game in general. Political commentary is also an often-witnessed dialogue on network news radio and television stations. Cable television news networks that operate 24 hours a day host programs that often contain commentary from guests. A topic is presented and various people offer audible context and opinion that may inform and educate the audience.

Producers of broadcast programs select representatives from different political parties to comment on certain high-profile platforms during an election. This is known as radio and television commentary, depending on the format of presentation. For example, in the United States, television commentaries usually occur on election nights. Specifically, media establishments, such as NPR or Fox News, may invite university professors who research politics to comment on trends in voting.

Commentary can also take the form of social commentary. When a representative participates in social commentary, he or she uses the opportunity to share opinions or personal experience with an overarching goal of creating social change or providing education about a topic. In modern times, social commentary often centers on gun control, environmental issues, and equality in gender, race, and sexual orientation.

Another common example of social commentary is a religious sermon. Many television and radio broadcasts offer religious sermons that discuss perceived problems within society. Historically, commentary was presented in the streets or on a street corner before broadcast options were available. It has become more important as mass audiences are now available through radio and television broadcasts.

Danae D'Arcy

See also Communication Management; Convergence and Public Relations; Editorial; Interview as a Communication Tool; Marketing; Op-Ed

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COMMERCIAL SPEECH

Commercial speech, for purposes of First Amendment law, has been defined by the U.S. Supreme Court as speech that does “no more than propose a commercial transaction” or, on occasion, as expression “solely motivated by the desire for profit.” Commercial speech receives less First Amendment protection than does speech on political or social issues of public importance because it has traditionally been perceived as having less value in a democratic society and because of the desire to protect consumers from fraudulent business practices.

Advertisements for products or services clearly are commercial speech, but communication

materials, such as informational brochures and issue ads, are harder to classify. In 1983, the Supreme Court held that whether material, such as an informational pamphlet, is commercial speech depends on three factors: whether (1) it was meant to be an advertisement, (2) it referenced a particular product, and (3) its dissemination was economically motivated. These three factors would not be sufficient individually to turn the pamphlet into commercial speech, but the combination of all three supported a commercial finding, the Court said. The Court was concerned that holding otherwise would lead advertisers to combine false or misleading product information with social or political information to avoid government regulation. The Court has not addressed the issue since, although it rejected an opportunity to do so in the 2002 case of *Nike v. Kasky*.

Nike, the multinational athletic equipment manufacturer, became the subject of a public debate about the use of sweatshops overseas in the early 1990s. Activist Marc Kasky sued Nike in California under the state’s false advertising statute, claiming that statements made by Nike in the course of its public relations campaign to restore its public image were false and misleading. Nike argued that the statements constituted political speech, not commercial speech, and were therefore protected by the First Amendment and not subject to the false advertising act. The trial court agreed, but the California Supreme Court held that the speech was indeed commercial speech because Nike is a corporate speaker, it hoped to reach consumers with its message, and it discussed its own business operations. The court said that Nike was free to discuss the issue of overseas labor in the abstract, but it could not discuss its own practices unless it was truthful and nonmisleading. The U.S. Supreme Court initially agreed to hear the case, but reversed itself, sending the case back to California for trial. Nike subsequently settled with Kasky, leaving the state’s Supreme Court decision to stand.

In determining whether a government regulation on commercial speech is constitutional, courts apply a four-part test. Under what it is known as the *Central Hudson* (1980) test from the case in which it was first enunciated by the

Supreme Court, courts must consider each of the following:

- Whether the commercial speech is worthy of First Amendment protection (in other words, it must be accurate and for a lawful product or service);
- Whether the government has a substantial interest for regulating the speech (courts usually consider the government to have a substantial interest in protecting the health, safety, welfare, and morals of the public);
- Whether the regulation in question directly advances the government's interest; and
- Whether the regulation is no broader than necessary to achieve the objective (it cannot restrict the speech entirely).

Although the Court applies the *Central Hudson* test to all commercial speech cases, it reaches different decisions depending on the kind of product or service advertised. For example, the Court has strongly supported the right of truthful, nondeceptive advertising—even of “vice” products and services, such as gambling, alcohol, and tobacco—to protection under the First Amendment. Yet, the Court has consistently limited the advertising of professionals, such as lawyers, accountants, and dentists. Professionals may advertise the price of standardized procedures, but not of more complex services. The Court has also restricted the means by which attorneys may communicate with consumers.

The idea that commercial speech is entitled to any First Amendment protection is a relatively recent legal phenomenon. The U.S. Supreme Court did not even consider whether commercial speech was protected speech until 1942. At that time, the Court held that “purely commercial advertising” was outside the protections of the First Amendment. The case arose when a businessman included a political protest on the back of a leaflet advertising his business to get around a New York City sanitary code banning the distribution of leaflets except for those of a political or informational nature.

In subsequent cases, the Court clarified its reasons for denying First Amendment protection to commercial speech. First, the Court was not worried about the chilling effect of regulation on commercial speech. One of the Court's primary

justifications for protecting political speech is the fear that people will stop speaking out against the government if they can be punished by the government for so doing, but according to the Court, ads would continue regardless of whether the First Amendment protected them because the desire of businesses to make a profit is so strong. Second, the Court concluded that it was easier to determine whether an advertiser's claims were true than it was to determine whether allegations against the government were true. Therefore, while society had to tolerate a certain level of false political speech to ensure robust political discourse, society did not have to tolerate false ads.

In the 1960s, however, the Court began to carve out areas within the commercial speech doctrine that had some First Amendment protection. The Court began by distinguishing purely commercial advertising from political advertising. Political speech did not lose its First Amendment protection simply because it appeared in an advertising format, the Court held. Later, the Court found that a newspaper ad for abortion referral services was not “purely commercial” because it contained important factual information clearly of interest to members of the public.

The Court continues to expand its protection for commercial speech, finding that such speech can be as important to people as political speech, especially in terms of their everyday lives. The Court emphasized the right of the consumer to have access to information rather than the right of the business to advertise. It is the communication itself that is protected, not the speaker. Despite the movement toward greater protection of commercial speech, such speech continues to receive less protection from government regulation than does noncommercial speech.

Karla K. Gower

See also Political Speech

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

At the outset of United States involvement in World War I, President Woodrow Wilson issued executive order 2594 to create the Committee on Public Information (CPI). The CPI served two vital functions during the war: as the "propaganda" bureau of the administration and to publicize voluntary censorship of national media. David Lawrence, a former student of President Wilson at Princeton, and Arthur Bullard, a reporter and novelist, suggested to the president that he establish a publicity bureau and cautioned about unnecessary censorship efforts. Bullard's arguments for such an approach started long before the 1917 creation of the CPI, and in the early days of the CPI, Bullard did considerable work to help develop the organization and its materials.

The idea of using a government agency to sell the war to the people was also advanced by journalist George Creel. After his initial meeting with the president, Creel was appointed chairman of the CPI and was granted full executive powers. Stephen Vaughn (1980) noted that "President Wilson trusted him (Creel) and never considered any other person for the chairmanship" (p. 17). Although Creel had the full support of the president, his appointment was questioned by others, who noted his inability to accept criticism.

John Dos Passos (1962) said that while Creel was "a hardworking man with an inexhaustible self confidence, his failing was snap judgements [*sic*]" (p. 301). Creel was an activist Democrat who believed that Woodrow Wilson was one of the greatest men who ever lived. He tended to view individuals in two extremes. Those who agreed with his position on an issue were great; those who disagreed with him were "skunks." In fact, Creel wrote, "It must be admitted that an open mind is

no part of my inheritance. I took in prejudices with mother's milk and was weaned on partisanship" (Dos Passos, 1962, p. 301).

Creel's family moved to Missouri from Virginia after the Civil War. Creel grew up in Independence and Odessa, Missouri. While working in Kansas City, Creel met Wilson when Wilson (who was at Princeton) spoke to local high school students. Creel worked to get Wilson nominated for the presidency and worked for his reelection in 1916. Creel was a journalist who worked on newspapers in Kansas City and New York before returning to Missouri in 1899 to found the *Independent* with Arthur Grissom. Prior to World War I, Creel moved to Denver and wrote for the *Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News* and later served as the police commissioner.

President Wilson noted the importance of strong national support for the war in his draft proclamation by arguing that "the whole nation must be a team." "To turn the whole nation into a team it was not enough to punish the expression of the wrong opinions. It was necessary to disseminate the right opinions" (Dos Passos, 1962, p. 300). To create this teamwork it was essential to promote the war to the American people. Creel was given the job of selling the war to the citizens of the United States and many other nations.

The efforts of the CPI are important because they are some of the earliest examples of a large-scale promotional campaign. Additionally, individuals who worked in the CPI were some of the founding members of what we now call public relations. Indeed, Edward Bernays used his experiences with the CPI to create one of the early public relations firms and to start such an impressive career that he is called one of the fathers of public relations.

Creel and the CPI created a promotional campaign for the United States and the world. This campaign used all the channels of communication available at the time. Various accounts of their activities are reported. The following quote from C. H. Hamlin and Charles F. Dole presented this description of the various CPI divisions and provides some evidence of the scope of CPI's activities:

This "Committee on Public Information" issued 75,099,023 pamphlets and books to encourage the public "morale." They hired the services of

75,000 speakers who operated in 5,200 communities. Altogether, about 755,190 speeches were made by these people known as the "Four Minute Men." Exhibits were given at fairs, and war films were prepared for the cinema. . . . A total of 1,438 drawings were employed to arouse popular hatred. An official daily newspaper was issued which had a circulation of 100,000 copies. A propaganda bureau was established by the United States, in the capitals of every nation in the world except those of the Central powers. (1927, p. 91)

The CPI used the press, films, and public speakers to reach its audience—the nation and the world. Through these various channels they carried the views of the president as articulated by Creel. The activities of the CPI would surely compare with those of any of the largest public relations/marketing campaigns of recent years. A detailed description of each of the techniques used by the CPI can be found in Creel's 1920 work, *How We Advertised America*.

The second major area of effort by the CPI involved its attempts to censor the media. In the first few weeks after the United States entered World War I, President Woodrow Wilson was granted wartime powers by the Congress. However, the ability to censor the press, which he desired, was not included in these powers. Because President Wilson's efforts to obtain formal censorship privileges through the War Powers Act failed, Creel and the CPI assumed the task. Creel's efforts to establish some form of control are not surprising in light of his admiration of the president and his position as the spokesperson of the administration. Creel was President Wilson's link to the Censorship Board.

The censorship efforts focused on voluntary guidelines that publishers were asked to follow. The June 2, 1917, issue of the *Official Bulletin*, a publication of the CPI, provided more than three pages of voluntary guidelines for publishers to follow so that the press could not be used by enemy nations. On page 12 of that issue's discussion of the voluntary guidelines, news was divided into three distinct categories:

Matters which obviously must not be mentioned in print; matters of a doubtful nature which should not be given publicity until submitted to

and passed by the committee; matters which do not affect the conduct of the war, do not concern this committee and are governed only by peacetime laws of libel, defamation of character, etc.

Descriptions of types of news that would fall into each of the categories were provided.

On page 13 of the June 2, 1917, issue, specific regulations were given by the committee, noting that "the suppression of all news matter which is obviously likely to be of direct utility to the enemy is urged and expected." The December 31, 1917, issue of the *Official Bulletin* provides revisions for the earlier guidelines. These revisions, like the initial guidelines, were mailed to all editors.

How successful were these voluntary guidelines? The CPI issued the following statement in the June 14 issue of the *Official Bulletin*. "While 99 per cent of the newspapers of the country are scrupulously observing the rules of voluntary censorship, a certain few are printing daily information that may expose American soldiers and sailors to deadly peril." This quote suggests that the vast majority of papers were observing the voluntary guidelines.

Even though the press privately expressed dissatisfaction over the techniques used by Creel, all papers, even opposition papers, remained respectful of the regulations until the end of the war. Dos Passos (1962) summarized the position of the CPI as an agency of censorship. "The CPI became the fountainhead of war news for the Washington press corps. The existence of an official press censorship was consistently denied, but editors were safer if their materials had passed through Creel's hands" (p. 301).

The CPI and its chairman were successful in establishing censorship guidelines to which publishers would submit. Even though these guidelines were voluntary, adherence to them was almost universal. Publishers soon discovered that it was simply easier to submit news to the committee rather than take a chance of violating the guidelines. Although no official censorship was available, the Espionage Act made it illegal to spread false reports that would hinder recruiting. Those reports that did not match the official releases of the CPI were viewed as false.

Charles Lubbers

See also Bernays, Edward; Four-Minute Men

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COMMODIFYING INFORMATION

Commodifying information means that organizations focus their information acquisition and public relations efforts on the cost effectiveness or productivity of supplying information to help key markets, audiences, and publics make a wide array of decisions. Many think of public relations as a discipline that provides information. The concept of commodification challenges practitioners to go the extra step of being ever more accountable for the return on investment of acquiring and using information for the interests of building mutual relationships.

People desire information to make decisions they deem valuable. Their desire for information is a function of their involvement, need, or desire to make a decision, according to involvement theory. People experience higher levels of involvement when they need or want to make decisions.

Organizations communicate for two broad reasons: to get out messages (containing information) that management wants to be told and to respond to the needs and wants of markets, audiences, and publics. The desire by management and its stakeholders may or may not be a close fit.

Organizations engage in public relations to supply information to people who want information. Executive management people expect public relations to provide information to targeted individuals to influence their decisions and, often, the choices executives want them to make. For various reasons, executives may want to withhold

information desired by others. Information can drive decisions, whether it is information the organization wants people to have or whether it is information people want.

Typically, it is thought to be more costly to provide people with information the organization wants them to have, if the people do not have some reason for receiving and using the information. This condition leads public relations to be thought of as a mass communication discipline, broadly casting information through the mass media to put it before some small part of the public, even if targeted. People are inundated with information. Thus, attracting attention to information and getting it considered is a serious strategic challenge.

A commodity is something that is bought and sold. It affords ease of transaction and convenience. In the purchase of goods and services, this concept is relevant. Most of the goods people buy are a commodity. It is standardized to make the transaction as easy as possible. In some countries such as the United States, people rarely barter. Goods come packaged as commodities, even fruits and vegetables. This commodification makes the transaction easier, one the buyer may feel he or she has more control over.

Services are also commodified. For instance, routine and even special dental or medical treatments are performed at standard fees. Legal and other professional fees can be commodified so that the purchaser has a reasonable sense of what the service is and what it costs.

As public relations practitioners seek to understand and measure their practice, they should realize the advantages of calculating how much various bits of information cost to acquire and to make available to key publics. Thus, for instance, they can calculate the cost effectiveness of providing such information in an “on demand” format, such as a website, because typically persons who encounter information in that medium are looking for it, rather than randomly skimming the mass media. Members of relevant publics are cognitively involved in searching for, getting, and using key bits of information to make decisions. Information on demand for customers or reporters, for instance, can reduce the cost of disseminating the information.

If businesses, government agencies, or nonprofits attempt to broadly “push” information to markets, audiences, and publics, it is necessarily going

to be more costly in delivery, even if its cost of development remains the same.

This sort of analysis lends itself to standard productivity measures. As a mathematical formula, productivity is the result of output divided by input. If output remains the same (the price charged for a bag of apples, for instance), but costs more (more input) to produce, then productivity declines. If output increases while the level of input remains the same, then productivity rises.

To think in terms of commodifying information, practitioners need to learn to calculate the cost of getting information and providing that information in ways that serve the organization's and its stakeholders' mutual interests.

Output value can be assessed in several ways. One is the reduction in the saved cost of regulation or legislation that is appropriately modified or defeated based on relevant information. Another is the increased marketing impact of getting the right information to the right customers at the right time. A third is the appropriate valuation of publicly held companies because relevant information is available to investors.

Robert L. Heath

See also Executive Management; Involvement; Publics; Return on Investment; Stakeholder Theory; Target

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COMMUNICATION AUDIT AND AUDITING

A communication audit is an assessment tool used for formative, diagnostic, or evaluative research in public relations. The term *audit*, appropriated from the accounting field, has ambiguous meaning in public relations. Both the trade press and academic texts used the term to describe a wide variety of research approaches with distinct objectives, methodologies, and study populations. Some describe a communication audit as a comprehensive study of all an organization's stakeholder

groups and their perceptions of the organization, whereas others define the term more narrowly. In general, all these approaches refer to a research process designed to identify perceptions of the organization or its communication vehicles and culminate in appropriate recommendations for action to management. Communication audits are commonly used by corporations, hospitals, and other large organizations to assess the organization's image among its employees, customers, community residents and leaders, media, and other key publics. Audits are a standard offering of public relations research firms and larger public relations agencies, although various firms may define their audit services differently.

Typically, the audit process begins with an interview with top management to determine the objectives and focus of the audit, specific issues or questions that the audit should address, and key publics to be audited. Then, appropriate methodologies for each group are selected and research instruments developed. Surveys, focus groups, interviews with opinion leaders, and content analysis of organizational publications and media coverage are common research techniques. Often, a package of several research techniques is employed. Data are gathered and analyzed, and a report is written that interprets the research findings and makes recommendations to management for future actions. The findings of a communication audit may serve as a tool to justify a change in strategic direction, to justify funding for new programs, or to help a public relations program gain management approval for such changes.

Types of Audits

In 1977, Otto Lerbinger identified three distinct categories of audits used in public relations: public relations audits, communication audits, and social audits. These terms continue to be used, albeit somewhat inconsistently, and are joined by additional variations on the audit described in the trade and academic press in subsequent years.

Public Relations Audits

The public relations audit assesses the health of the relationships between an organization and its key publics. This type of audit provides insight into

who key publics are and the images they hold of the organization. Surveys and focus groups are often used to determine key publics' levels of awareness of the organization and its products, services, programs, logos and slogans, or key personnel. Rating scales may be used to measure attitudes toward these, including characteristics that the public associates with the organization. The audit may also ask participants to describe and rate their personal experiences or interactions with the organization. Public relations audits may reveal misperceptions about what the organization is or does and disparities between management's perception of the organization and the way the organization is actually perceived by its publics. Recommendations stemming from a public relations audit might focus on tactics to strengthen relationships with key publics.

Communication Audits

Lerbinger's (1977) definition of the communication audit limited it to research to determine whether messages have actually gotten through to intended receivers. Today, such audits focus on evaluating in the eyes of their intended users an organization's communication vehicles, such as newsletters, annual reports, brochures, press materials, websites, and video programs. Typical research methods include readership surveys, content analysis to identify predominate content themes, and measurement of text readability by using standardized formulas that determine reading difficulty based on factors, such as word and sentence length. Respondents may be asked about their actual use of communication vehicles, their preferences for particular kinds of content, and whether they remember particular articles or acted on information; respondents often rate the effectiveness of various communication vehicles they receive on the basis of accuracy, timeliness, and usefulness.

A communication audit can identify information needs that are not being met, distrust of organizational news sources, preferences for particular communication channels, and whether a message is received, is understood, and provoked action. Results of a communication audit may be used to improve the content, design, and distribution of publications, or to revamp or discontinue communication vehicles that are not achieving desired results.

Organizational Communication Audits

Communication audit is a term also used in the organizational communication field to describe research to assess employees' satisfaction with communication in their organizations. Because employee relations is often a key public relations concern, the organizational communication audit may be implemented by public relations managers. The International Communication Association (ICA) audit is the most widely used vehicle for such an assessment. It asks employees to rate how much information they receive on particular topics, such as job duties, pay, and their own performance, versus how much they would like to receive. Respondents also rate the amount of communication they receive from and initiate with superiors, subordinates, and coworkers versus desired levels. An open-ended portion of the audit asks respondents to describe specific interactions they had where communication was particularly effective or ineffective. The data are used to make recommendations to management and may be used to create a network analysis—a diagram depicting the path and frequency of information flow through an organization.

The organizational communication audit can reveal a great deal about the communication climate within an organization. It can identify problems with communication system design, employee information needs that are not being met, and bottlenecks in the communication flow. A limitation of the ICA audit is that it focuses on the amount of communication given and received; it does not ask employees to evaluate the specific strengths and weaknesses of existing communication vehicles. A multitude of studies employing the ICA audit in a variety of settings over the past three decades have confirmed a significant relationship between the communication climate within an organization and employee loyalty and job satisfaction. Employees' preferred source of communication is nearly always their immediate supervisor; however, employees consistently say "the grapevine" and employee publications are their most frequent sources of information.

Social Audits

A social audit evaluates an organization's social responsibility activities, such as voluntary environmental programs, community education programs,

corporate philanthropy and volunteerism, and diversity initiatives. The audit measures public awareness of these programs and perceptions of the organization's performance as a corporate citizen. Most often, survey or focus group research is used to attempt to quantify the contribution of these programs to the organization's image and perceptions of the organization as a good place to patronize or work. Social audits were common in the 1970s, when they were used to assess corporate America's first large-scale social action programs. However, the use of a *social audit* is less frequent, replaced by more recent techniques associated with the practice of issues management, such as environmental scanning.

Comprehensive Audits

Sometimes the terms *communication audit* and *public relations audit* are used to describe a comprehensive audit that evaluates the organization's entire communication program and assesses the image of the organization based on the perceptions of all key stakeholder groups. Such an audit examines every facet of the organization's internal and external communication activities, along with the impact of these tactics on key publics. Research techniques may include interviews, focus groups, or surveys with all levels of employees, consumers, community leaders and media gatekeepers, and critiques of all materials distributed inside and outside the organization, including newsletters, marketing materials, websites, and annual reports. This type of audit is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing public relations position of the organization, to inform the development of long-term communication strategy, and to provide guidelines for future public relations programming.

Other Types of Audits

The public relations literature also describes "crisis audits" (Littlejohn, 1983) and "risk audits" (Ogrizek & Guillery, 1999), both of which are designed to help organizations identify, prioritize, and respond to potential crisis issues. "Public relations agency audits" (Croft, 1997) are described as internal performance assessments to help public relations firms gauge how well they are serving their clients.

Future Trends

The popularity of audits as a research tool in public relations reflects growing recognition of the need to quantify the value of public relations activities. More frequently, formative and evaluative research skills, such as the ability to design and conduct an audit, are expected of communication professionals. To ensure the acceptance of audits as credible research, knowledgeable practitioners or professional research firms are needed to minimize problems inherent in any type of opinion research, such as those associated with sampling and bias in question design. An additional challenge for practitioners is that top management may not always follow through on an audit's recommendations and make suggested changes.

Katherine N. Kinnick

See also Interview as a Research Tool; Issues Management; Measuring/Measures; Public Relations Research

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COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

Communication management can be defined as a set of techniques used in public relations and related activities to conduct programs, campaigns, and projects.

Commonalities Across Disciplines

Growing numbers of organizations recognized that various communications disciplines share common purposes and are moving toward the integration of communications functions. This convergence resulted (a) from recognition of common

strategic approaches used by public relations and related disciplines, (b) by the convergence of media and the rise of shared media, such as the Internet, (c) by the blurring of the demarcation of traditional communications disciplines, including the rise of integrated marketing communication, and (d) from efforts by organizations to achieve greater synergy and efficiency and to reduce redundancies and costs in communications operations. This centralization trend is far from complete, however. Most organizations continue to maintain separate functional units devoted to managerial communications, public relations, advertising, and technical communication. In Europe, however, *communication management* is the preferred term for traditional public relations.

In the academic arena, communication management is consistent with the umbrella concept of strategic communication, which examines how organizations use communications across traditional professional disciplines to achieve stated organizational goals and objectives. Stated another way, strategic communication involves an organization communicating purposefully to advance its mission. Both communication management and strategic communication purposely look beyond differences in disciplines to focus on the similarity of strategic approaches found in various disciplines.

Table 1 compares six conceptual approaches to organizational communications that can be incorporated under this umbrella, although the conceptual focus and techniques/tactics that are

Table 1 Six Domains of Communication Management

<i>Domain (Typical Organizational Unit Involved in Communication)</i>	<i>Goal/Purpose</i>	<i>Traditional Techniques</i>
Management communication Leadership and personnel throughout organization	Facilitate operations of organization; promote understanding of vision, goals; communicate information used in day-to- day operations, including customer and vendor transactions and customer and staff training	Memoranda, contracts, meetings, and presentations; internal electronic communications
Marketing communication Marketing staff	Create awareness and promote interest and sales of products and services; attract, motivate, and retain users, consumers, and customers, including intermediaries in distribution channels	Trade and consumer advertising and product publicity; direct response and sales promotion; personal selling; also facilitate communication among customers and consumers through social media
Public relations Public relations or publicity, human resources, finance or government relations staff	Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with key constituencies; includes consumers and customers, as well as investors, employees, community, and government	Publicity and corporate advertising in public media, interactive media, controlled media, events, personal contacts
Technical communication Technical support, training staff	Train people to reduce errors and improve their efficiency in the use of technology and procedures used in performing tasks important to organization	Procedures manuals, instructions; telephone call centers and computer- and mobile-based assistance programs

*Domain**(Typical Organizational Unit Involved in Communication)**Goal/Purpose**Traditional Techniques*

Political communication Politicians, advocacy groups	Influence voting by general public in elections or decisions by lawmakers or administrators considering legislation or regulation	Political advertising, editorial coverage and editorial page opinions, printed materials, direct mail, get-out-the-vote solicitations/personal contacts; lobbying and grassroots politicking
Information campaigns/social marketing Not-for-profit and governmental agencies	Alter human behavior to reduce incidence of risky behaviors or to promote social causes important to the betterment of community	Public service messages, educational materials, events interventions by professionals, family, and friends

used are often different in each traditional discipline or context.

Communication Management Approaches

Strategic approaches to conducting a public relations campaign date back to at least 1935 when Edward L. Bernays first outlined the components of a public campaign. Since publication of Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center's *Effective Public Relations*, public relations has been described as a four-step process. In 1952, the first edition of the classic textbook described three steps: fact-finding, planning, and implementation or communication, while the fourth step of evaluation was added in the second edition in 1958.

Although this four-step model is preserved as a model of professionalism in programs administered by the Public Relations Society of America (including its professional accreditation and Silver Anvil Awards), modern communication management is grounded in the concept of management by objectives (MBO). This idea, first advocated by management guru Peter Drucker in 1954, posits that all organizational activity should be planned around the attainment of measurable goals and strategies and tactics that can be carefully monitored during execution.

Communications managers typically oversee one of more of the following types of organizational activities:

Programs are long-term efforts to establish and maintain communications between organizations

and key audiences. Programs can include the establishment of *channels* (such as a website), *policies* and *procedures*, and ongoing *activities* (such as events) designed to facilitate communication over time. *Program* is the nomenclature most commonly associated with managerial communication, technical communication, and public relations.

Campaigns are coordinated efforts to promote particular ideas among key constituencies over a specified, often limited, timeframe. Campaigns represent the basic framework used in advertising, political communication, and social marketing efforts. Some communicators prefer to use the term *programs* instead of *campaigns*. The *campaign* term's origin in military strategy implies that a victor must triumph over an enemy in a zero-sum game, whereas many public relations professionals seek win-win solutions.

Projects are limited-purpose activities undertaken to accomplish particular outcomes within an organization. Project management, as a management tool, has received widespread attention in recent years. Unlike a long-term program or campaign, projects are of shorter duration and involve representatives of units working collaboratively to accomplish a complex task. Communications professionals may be participants in, but are not in charge of, various projects—annual reports, special events, websites, and so on. Many projects are undertaken within staffs of communications units.

Roles and Type of Plans

Central to the notion of communication management is planning and organizing a communication effort. The preparation of a formal or written plan is deemed a critical element in effective management. Written plans serve as (a) proposals used to obtain client approval, (b) internal control documents for day-to-day guidance during implementation, and (c) historical records of activities.

Communications managers become involved in the preparation of various keys of planning documents. These include the following:

Strategic plans, which guide the overall direction of the organization or the communication unit for a long-term period (often 3 to 5 years)

Annual plans, which outline specific activities to be taken within an organization's yearly planning cycle

Programs, campaigns, or project plans, which specify efforts to be undertaken to achieve particular outcomes (often without regard to yearly planning cycles)

Contingency plans, which are procedures to be followed in case of possible extraordinary events or crises.

Components of a Program/Campaign Plan

Although the specifics vary by domain, by scope of the activity, and by specific plan type, all communication management plans address the following components. As the section below illustrates, these fall within the four-step framework identified above, but are more specific:

Public Relations Processes and Program Elements

Research

Situation analysis—A description of a problem to be resolved or the opportunity to be exploited, compiled from careful investigation about the organization, its offering(s), the opinions of key publics, and opportunities to communicate.

Planning

Organizational goals—The desired outcome of an organization, stated in specific and measurable

terms, that can be realistically achieved within a specified time frame. These are often stated in terms of activity levels (such as unit sales or revenue), profitability, or efficiency.

Communication objectives—The desired changes in *human behavior* (such as awareness or knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors) that contribute to achievement of organizational goals. Common behaviors addressed include buying, investing, donating, working, and voting. Lifestyle changes might include adoption of particular spiritual or other beliefs, engagement in healthy or satisfying or rewarding activities, or avoidance of risky behaviors.

Action strategies—Recommendations for changes in an organization's offerings, policies, or practices that improve the probabilities of successful communications and thus attaining organizational goals.

Communication strategies—The overall conceptual approach to how communication objectives are to be achieved. Usually, this involves (a) targeting particular audiences—which might be defined as market segments, publics, users, voters, or at-risk populations, as well as intervening publics or influentials useful to teach them; (b) choosing media channels or specific vehicles to reach those audiences; and (c) development of key messages or themes to use in a program, campaign, or project to communicate with key audiences. Themes are typically chosen based on newsworthiness, benefits, and features of an organization's offering, or practical information that people can use to benefit their daily lives.

Execution/Control (Sometimes Labeled Implementation or Communication)

Tactics—The specification of tasks (including activities, events, or the preparation of materials and messages) to carry out the communication strategy. As implemented, the communication quality and progress toward achievement of goals and objectives are monitored.

Staffing—Assignment of duties to specific employees/volunteers, agencies, freelancers, or vendors.

Calendaring—Scheduling of activities based on timely delivery of messages.

Budget—A spending plan that appropriates the financial resources needed to achieve stated communications objectives, estimates costs, allocates spending to specific budget categories, and monitors expenditures to avoid overruns.

Evaluation

Assessment—Predetermined methods for assessing whether a communication effort was successful in attaining the stated communication objectives and organizational goals at the conclusion of the effort.

Accountability

Communication management that follows the MBO approach outlined above places a premium on deploying resources effectively and efficiently with the same rigor and accountability imposed on other unit managers. It rejects erroneous contentions that public relations outcomes cannot be measured. Thus, along with planning, evaluation plays a critical role in the management of communication programs, campaigns, and projects.

Communication managers use five broad categories of measures to assess their effectiveness and efficiency:

Qualitative measures include critical examination of their work product in order to identify deficiencies and opportunities for improvements. These often are for the internal use of the communication unit and are intended to serve as benchmarks for future work.

Output measures examine the materials and message produced in quantitative terms. These involve understanding the extent to which materials or tools were used and exposure to messages by audiences. These measures serve as a proxy (indirect) indicator of an effort's impact.

Activity measures, which have received increased attention in recent years, focus on what audiences do with materials or messages—as intermediate steps that might move them toward taking a desired target. These are most readily evident in assessing new media. Examples include time spent on a website, number of website pages visited, direct replies to email or text messages, the forwarding of messages, blog posts, and the

number of “likes” or recommendations for products or messages.

Impact measures assess directly the achievement of communications objectives (changes in people's awareness or knowledge, attitudes, or actions) as well as organizational goals (achievement of desired sales, contributions, productivity, voting, or risk reduction outcomes).

Financial measures include the contribution of the communication activity to the organization, including return on investment (ROI) and determination of the optimal efficiency when two or more tools are available to achieve similar outcomes.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Campaign; Communication Audit and Auditing; Functions of Public Relations; Integrated Marketing Communication; Measuring/Measures; Strategic Business Planning; Strategies; Tactics

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COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Since humans first used sticks and charcoal to augment the human voice and gestures, communication technologies have shaped the form, content, and dissemination of communications. Today, technology has become an increasingly important topic for public relations practitioners who have an ever-increasing array of tools available to them to communicate ideas.

A 2010 review of public relations history by Margot Lamme and Karen Miller Russell chronicled the advent of various communications innovations over the past 2 centuries. The advent of printing with movable type, books, newspapers and magazines, the telegraph, photography and new illustration reproduction technologies, the typewriter, the telephone, the motion picture, radio, and television all altered the nature of advocacy, promotion, and persuasion. Meanwhile, the newest computer- and telecommunications-based technologies have escalated the rate of change in just the past two decades.

Technology in the Workplace

Today work planning and production is centered on computer screens, while much information flows electronically in real time via the Internet and wireless communications. Intranets (password-protected, Web browser-based communication systems) allow employees in scattered locations to seek and share work-related information through a variety of tools (email and text messages, webpages, mobile apps and webcasts, to name a few). People also can work collaboratively using groupware and group decision support systems (GDSS) software. Popular forms of these tools include forums, wikis, and Web conferences. Meanwhile

extranets permit suppliers, distributors, retailers and others to participate in training programs, to collaborate on projects, and to access needed information (such as order processing and inventory data) via secured virtual personal networks (VPNs).

Similar to other organization units, technology has transformed virtually every aspect of public relations work. Public relations research today employs numerous electronic intelligence gathering tools, including Web search engines, proprietary databases, systems analytics, and specialized research software to conduct surveys and content analyses of media and online content. Virtually all public relations messages are produced in digital forms using word processing, database, graphic design, photographic/videographic, and electronic presentation software. Although digitalization also has transformed modern printing processes, an increasing amount of content is distributed electronically in digital formats via the Internet and World Wide Web, telecommunications networks, over-the-air broadcasting and cablecasting systems, and satellite uplinks and downlinks.

Impact on Public Relations

Whether communication technology has improved the effectiveness and efficiency of the public relations practice continues to be debated. However, new communication technologies clearly have

- *Increased the sheer volume of information* public relations practitioners create, distribute, and manage—a trend that requires thoughtful planning, dissemination and archiving.
- *Required organizations to disseminate information using multiple tools* to reach the same audiences they could access using fewer tools only 2 or 3 decades ago. Audience fragmentation has resulted in an increase (versus a decrease) in the amount of staff and other resources deployed.
- *Placed a premium on timeliness.* However, the haste to distribute information immediately often results in the distribution of incomplete or erroneous information and a blurring of time that did not exist previously.
- *Altered audience expectations about the availability of information.* Indeed, audiences demand information on a 24/7 basis, and now

audiences—not organizations—determine when, where, and how information needs be distributed. To ignore audience preferences can compromise access and exposure.

- *Transformed audiences into producers as well as receivers* of public relations messages. Many online and mobile public relations efforts today solicit immediate replies or prompt the audience to forward messages to their friends, rate content, make recommendations, or create user-generated content.
- *Provided mechanisms for dialogue.* Indeed, interactivity allows organizations to engage in two-way communication with constituents but also facilitates communication *among* various constituencies. The downside of this trend can be biased anecdotal feedback and potentially damaging word-of-mouth, rumors, and gossip.
- *Reshaped organization structures and cultures.* Boundaries that once delimited organizations have dissolved. Hierarchies have flattened. Authority has waned in its significance. Learning and intelligence sharing are imperatives. Organizations also are forced to be more open.
- *Changed social values pertaining to proprietary organizational information, confidentiality, transparency, and privacy.* Users now expect organizations to provide advice and information at no charge but also now expect—more than ever before—that organizations will safeguard personal information provided to them.
- *Enabled the easy manipulation and duplication of an organization's intellectual properties by others,* thus leaving organizations vulnerable to digital attackers, hackers, lurkers, rogues, and thieves.

Technology and Public Relations Messages and Media

Theories of technological determinism suggest that technology shapes the nature of societies, organizations, and the communication process itself. Marshall McLuhan popularized this notion when he observed “the medium is the message” and thus contended that media effects result from the experience of using a particular medium, not its content. Similarly, Joshua Meyrowitz argued that media redefine social geography, while media use patterns among audiences shape group identities, socialization processes, and social hierarchies. Ronald Deibert

similarly suggested that the new media alter how information is disseminated, but also social epistemology (the knowledge shared by people).

Table 1 outlines more than a dozen criteria where public relations tools and media can be differentiated based on their technological characteristics.

Table 1 Technological Considerations in Designing Public Relations Messages and Selecting Media

Primary modality: Ear (sound) vs. eye (text, visuals)

Data format: Digital vs. analog (non-electronic or electronic not using binary code)

Interactivity: High (two-way communication) vs. low (limited one-way feedback) vs. none

Audience processing involvement: High vs. moderate vs. low

Ease of use: Difficult (requires knowledge of software or hardware) vs. easy (limited or no knowledge required)

Mediation level: Personal (nonmediated) vs. quasi-personal (partly mediated) vs. nonpersonal (completely mediated)

Carrying capacity: Unlimited (such as a website) vs. high (e-publications) vs. moderate (email) vs. low (text message)

Media richness: Rich (provides many contextual cues about a message's meaning) vs. lean (few contextual cues, such as a simple data report)

Social presence: Human source present vs. implied vs. not evident

Technological sophistication: Simple (low-tech) vs. complex (high-tech)

Ownership: By a third party (e.g., mass media or social networking sites) vs. message sponsor vs. none

Message control/selection: By third parties/producers vs. by audience/receiver vs. by sponsor/organizer vs. some combination of these

Segmentation/customization of message content for audiences: High vs. limited vs. none

Personalization/choice of display and content options by users: High vs. limited vs. none

Reach: Large audience vs. small audience

Cost per impression: Expensive vs. inexpensive

Best uses: Build mere awareness vs. engagement/interest-building vs. prompting/facilitating action

Although polar extremes are indicated, many of these criteria represent a continuum of options.

To achieve desired outcomes, communication technologies should be deployed strategically and in combination. Importantly, no single communication technology or medium is necessarily the best choice to reach a particular audience segment. Similarly, technologies must be compatible with the content to be communicated.

Various models grounded in technology have been suggested to categorize the tools used in public relations. For example, Laurie J. Wilson and Joseph Ogden (2008) outlined a three-part cluster model based on technology, specifically

the degree to which tools are interactive and personalized. Other models are less technologically based, including practitioner Don Bartholomew's (2010) increasingly popular PESO model, which suggested media exposure can use tools that are *paid, earned, shared, or owned*. Kirk Hallahan's (2004) model of five major public relations media groups identifies three categories where content is delivered through traditional and new communications technologies (*public media, controlled media* and *interactive media*) plus two other groups (*events* and *one-on-one communication*) where technologies can facilitate communication. In Table 2, the

Table 2 Integrated Public Relations Media Model

←Mass Communication High-Tech, Perceptually Based, Low Social Presence, Asynchronous			Personalized Communication → Low-Tech, Experientially Based, High Social Presence, Synchronous	
Public Media	Controlled Media	Interactive Media	Events	One-on-One
<i>Key uses in a communication program</i>				
Build awareness; enhance credibility	Promotion; provide detailed information	Respond to queries; exchange information; engage users	Motivate participants; reinforce existing beliefs, attitudes	Obtain commitments; negotiation, resolution of problems
<i>Principal examples of media</i>				
Publicity/advertising/advertorials/product placements in • Newspapers • Magazines • Radio • Television	Brochures Newsletters Sponsored magazines Annual reports Books Direct mail	Email, instant, text, and microblog messages E-newsletters, e-zines Automated telephone call systems Websites, blogs	Meetings/conferences Speeches/presentations Government or judicial testimony Trade shows, exhibitions	Personal visits/lobbying Correspondence Telephone calls/text messages
Paid advertising in • Transit media • Out-of-home media (billboards, posters, electronic displays) • Directories • Venue signage • Movie theater trailers, advertising	Exhibits and displays Point-of-purchase support DVDs/video brochures Statement inserts Other collateral or printed ephemera Advertising specialties	Vodcasts/podcasts Games Web conferences, webinars, webcasts Information kiosks Intranets and extranets Social networking sites Forums (chats, groups) Media sharing sites Paid text/display Click-through advertising	Demonstrations/rallies Sponsored events Observances/anniversaries Contests/sweepstakes Recognition award programs (often supported with multimedia presentations)	

media listed in the left columns rely on traditional mass communication and high levels of technology, while media in the right columns primarily depend on interpersonal communication and comparatively low levels of technological sophistication.

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See also Communication Management; Dialogue; Interactivity (Audience); Internet Contagion Theory, Online Public Relations; Publics; Transparency

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COMMUNITARIANISM

Chiara Valentini, Dean Kruckeberg, and Kenneth Starck (2012) argued that 20th-century public relations theories failed to peel back essential layers of inquiry. Questions about society itself were rarely explored, with little critical examination of predominant forms of democracy and capitalism.

Also neglected, they reasoned, was a corollary criticism of the concepts on which public relations paradigms were built.

Such neglect has certainly been true of “communitarianism,” an underappreciated and often misunderstood concept, ideology, and body of literature that offers considerable heuristic value to 21st-century public relations scholarship and practice. Picking up that theme, Jacquie L’Etang (2008) argued that communitarianism has significance for several areas of public relations, notably “internal PR, organizational culture and corporate social responsibility” (p. 255). Hugh M. Culbertson and Ni Chen (1997) and Roy V. Leeper (2005) have emphasized the importance of communitarianism as a foundation for two-way symmetry, that is, James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt’s (1984) well-established and widely accepted normative model of public relations. Leeper added that communitarianism has implications for the way in which publics are defined, in the concept of stewardship, in the role of public relations in nonprofit organizations, and in communitarianism’s perspective on public relations ethics.

The concept, ideology, and literature of communitarianism has a long and complex history and remains somewhat amorphous. Communitarianism, of course, is predicated on and begs definition and description of “community.” The preeminent communitarian Amitai Etzioni (1995) said “community” is a shared set of social bonds or a social web that is distinct from one-to-one bonds. These social bonds are morally neutral but nevertheless possess a set of shared moral and social values. Etzioni argued that true communal values cannot be imposed by an outside group or by an internal elite or minority but, rather, they must be generated by community members through dialogue. However, such communal values must not be in tension with overarching core values. Etzioni further maintained that “new communities” are part of a pluralistic web of communities and that people today are members of several communities. Noting that several critics argue that the concept of community has no identifiable designation, Etzioni (2000) used this definition:

Community is a combination of two elements: a) A web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another (rather than

merely one-on-one or chainlike individual relationships); and b) A measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity—in short, to a particular culture. (pp. 222–223)

The concept of communitarianism is most often framed in its opposition and antithesis to classical liberalism. As a philosophical tradition, communitarianism emerged from the Greek philosopher Aristotle, but in its modern interpretations, communitarianism has been theorized as a critique of individualism. Avital Simhony (2001) observed,

One major way of capturing the liberal–communitarian debate is in terms of Sandel’s dichotomous classification of “politics of rights” as opposed to “politics of the common good.” Liberal politics of rights is premised on the Kantian claim that the right is prior to the good. Communitarians question that claim and ground the politics of the common good in a conception of the good life while claiming Hegel and Aristotle as their intellectual resources. According to this classification liberals fail to (and indeed cannot) recognize a genuine shared common good. (p. 69)

Leeper (2005) identified the three most common beliefs that communitarian theorists hold: “First, the liberal position that the state should be neutral in regard to ends is harmful to the development of community. Second, state neutrality with regard to ends is itself a value choice that is not neutral. Third, liberalism sees human rights as transcendent and universal rather than historically contingent” (p. 168). In response to John Rawls’s book, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), critics of liberalism expressed fear for the devaluation of the role of the community in society. Robert B. Thigpen and Lyle A. Downing (1987) emphasized that the main point of contention between liberal and communitarian perspectives is deontological liberalism, with its commitment to human rights and individualism rather than moral liberalism, which communitarians recognize as being necessary to avoid autocracy. Thigpen and Downing (1987) observed that communitarian critics of liberalism are unwilling to abandon the achievements of liberalism in protecting persons from authoritarianism; however, communitarians argue that “moral authority should be

lodged in shared understandings and institutions, not in individual choices” (p. 638).

The contemporary communitarian movement began in 1990, when 15 ethicists, social philosophers, and social scientists met at the invitation of Etzioni and his colleague, William Galston. They explored matters that they believed were negatively affecting contemporary society, including the polarization of debate and the “sound bite” public life that were the results of “teledemocracy.” These scholars were troubled by the pressures that were being placed on people to be labeled in either-or/oppositional terms as well as the tendency of Americans to accept entitlement without a corresponding responsibility. They observed that American civic culture encouraged a strong sense of entitlement but did not encourage a sense of obligation to the local and national communities. They concluded that free individuals require a community that defends them from the state, sustaining their morality through the support of relatives, friends, neighbors, and other community members rather than through government control or fear of authorities. Etzioni (1993) noted,

We adopted the name Communitarian to emphasize that the time had come to attend to our responsibilities to the conditions and elements we all share, to the community.

As Communitarians we also recognized a need for a new social, philosophical, and political map. The designation of political camps as liberals or conservatives, as left or right, often no longer serves. (p. 15)

Thus, the communitarian movement became an environmental movement dedicated to the betterment of the moral, social, and political environment by working with fellow citizens to bring about changes in values, habits, and public policies—allowing communitarians to do for society what the environmental movement was seeking for nature, that is, to safeguard and to enhance the future.

Michael Freeden (2001) said the liberal–communitarian debate of the 1980s and early 1990s has left a residue that is difficult to expunge. However, Sor-hoon Tan (2003) said that those who insist that the two perspectives are incompatible have a narrow—oftentimes unreasonable—interpretation of the opposing side’s perspective,

noting that both liberalism and communitarianism include a wide variety of theories. Tan observed that increasing numbers of both liberals and communitarians are seeking a convergence of what is best in each, that is, the best balance rather than a victory of one perspective over the other.

Communitarianism began receiving some attention in the public relations literature in the late 1980s. Kirk Hallahan (2005) said Kruckeberg and Starck's book, *Public Relations and Community: A Reconstructed Theory* (1988), was the first to argue that public relations should be practiced as an active attempt to restore and maintain a sense of community. Leeper noted that the thesis of the Kruckeberg and Starck book argued that community-building should be the foundation for the theory and practice of public relations, for which perspective coincided with the genesis of the modern communitarian movement that was advocating a proper balance between the individual and the community.

More recently, Kruckeberg and Starck (2004), Starck and Kruckeberg (2000), and Kruckeberg and Katerina Tsetsura (2008) built on what they called community-building theory—arguing that society is an organization's most important stakeholder and that public relations practitioners have inherent responsibilities, not only to their imminent and obvious organizational stakeholders but also to society-at-large, the latter of which is an organization's primary stakeholder. This community-building theory was further developed by Kruckeberg (2007); Kruckeberg and Marina Vujnovic (2005, 2007, 2010); Vujnovic and Kruckeberg (2005, 2010, 2011, 2012); and Kruckeberg, Starck, and Vujnovic (2006) into what these authors call an organic theory. This model of public relations does not place the practitioner's organization at the hub of its universe, which is when an organization is primarily concerned about its relationships with its stakeholders; rather, the organization is only one component of a three-dimensional model of a community in which the organization is equally concerned about stakeholders' relationships with one another. However, despite the shared premises, similarities, and compatibility that these authors' community-building theory and the organic theory have with communitarianism, they have not explicitly used the term *communitarianism* in their work, nor have they

identified themselves to be full-fledged communitarians. Rather, their theoretical perspective borrows primarily from the Chicago School of Social Thought (e.g., Dewey, 1927).

Hanno Hardt (1979) said the study of mass communication must begin with a theory of society. He argued,

... questions of freedom and control of expression, of private and public spheres of communication, and of a democratic system of mass communication must be raised as a part of an attempt to define the positions of individuals in contemporary industrialized Western societies. (p. 35)

This same foundation is requisite for public relations, its scholarship, and its practice. Communitarianism provides a rich literature that can contribute greatly to the public relations scholarship and practice as it continues to evolve in the 21st century.

Marina Vujnovic and Dean Kruckeberg

See also Dialogue; Ethics of Public Relations; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Publics; Stewardship of Large Organizations; Symmetry

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COMMUNITAS/CORPORATAS

Communitas and corporatas are opposite ends of a spectrum from unstructured public interest to

structure and self-interest. In public relations, the terms represent the opposing tensions of public good versus the measurable benefit to an organization. In public relations research, the terms most often appeared in sports contexts, but they can apply to almost any kind of public relations. They provide a vocabulary for discussing the ongoing attempt to balance public and private, or community and self-interested, goals.

Though the terms appear to be almost synonymous with *community* and *corporate*, their usage is not that simplistic. Because Victor Turner originally defined *communitas* in its opposition to hierarchy and structure, the terms today continue to be used largely as a way of labeling outcomes that are more (*corporatas*) and less (*communitas*) tied to a structure. Based on this distinction, a community organization, such as the Red Cross, can still be very *corporatas* in nature while a corporation that emphasizes employee creativity and involvement, allowing for flexible work hours, can function with a greater emphasis on *communitas*. Specific public relations campaigns generally have goals and assumptions that can be located somewhere on this *communitas/corporatas* spectrum.

Communitas public relations focuses on intangibles such as community involvement and goodwill. Community action committees are an outgrowth of a *communitas* approach to public relations. *Corporatas* public relations, on the other hand, is much more bound by structure and self-interest. Measurable objectives, organizational communication goals, and a bottom-line orientation mark a more *corporatas* style of public relations.

In many ways, *communitas* functions as an ideal type for public relations. It is selfless, it is genuine, and it values, in a broad sense, the idea of public good. Because of this, it is, perhaps, too good to be true. Most organizations' public relations pays homage to *communitas* ideals but cannot exist by promoting solely *communitas* ends; on the flip side, organizations that disavow any interest in engagement or individual freedom in favor of a steely-eyed *corporatas* might struggle to maintain legitimacy. The antistructure and antihierarchy that is *communitas* might be appealing, but it is quite possibly unsustainable, existing only temporarily and subject to forces outside the public relations planning process.

One of the biggest *communitas/corporatas* challenges for public relations is living up to a public's expectations. One reason that sports has been a popular context for the application of these terms is that sports tend to fulfill a community-building function. The economic value of a sports team to its community is debatable; at all levels of sport, however, fans have pride in their teams and enjoy being associated with them, as indicated in many ways—wearing team paraphernalia and even painting faces and bodies in team colors. There is an almost childish devotion to the team; fans feel that by cheering, they become part of the team's success. This perspective creates expectations for significant emphasis on *communitas* in a team's public relations. For this reason, managers, coaches, and players often begin postgame comments by thanking fans and giving them credit for supporting the team to victory. Because sports creates such high *communitas* expectations, *corporatas* behaviors can shatter these idyllic illusions and even cause fans to feel betrayed. If the team can no longer afford to keep the star player, or if it trades established players for prospects, or if a season is interrupted because of contract disputes, the *corporatas* nature of sports-as-business (with structure, balance sheets, and contracts) can create public relations problems for the team, players, and management because it violates fans' expectations for a more *communitas*-oriented enterprise. Any business, obviously, must maintain a degree of *corporatas* if it is to be financially successful, but the emotional importance of sport often relegates *corporatas* to the shadows and highlights a need for public relations emphasizing the *communitas* nature of sport.

Existing within this ongoing tension, then, all public relations (sports or otherwise) is both *communitas* and *corporatas*. Certainly, publics might expect and accept sports teams to have a more *communitas* orientation and multinational corporations to have a more *corporatas* orientation, but the team still has to make money and have structure to survive, while the vague notion of being a "good corporate citizen" still matters to corporations, as evidenced by continued social responsibility initiatives. Skillful public relations means meeting public's expectations for where an organization should be located on the spectrum between the two endpoints.

Outside of sports public relations, the concepts of *communitas* and *corporatas* remain notable contrasts on the public relations spectrum. True grassroots social and political movements, at least in the beginning, are at the *communitas* end of the spectrum. They are spontaneous, genuine, and relatively disorganized. They also gain passionate adherents quickly. As the movement gains strength and becomes more organized, however, it is likely to create structures and become interested in self-preservation. This automatically guides the organization's motives and public relations more in the direction of *corporatas*. Because the initial impulse was so *communitas* in nature, however, the organization must continue to appeal to *communitas* goals to maintain the commitment of its members. This *communitas* front, however, is unlikely to remain "pure" *communitas* as the *corporatas* needs of the organization enter the foreground. Mature grassroots movements maintain a delicate balance between the two polar extremes. At the other polar extreme from the young grassroots movement is the orchestrated grassroots campaign, an approach sometimes labeled Astroturf lobbying. In this case, agencies work behind the scenes in a very systematic manner to produce the *illusion* of a spontaneous outcry of publics. This highly *corporatas* approach, wearing a *communitas* disguise, highlights the conflicting desires of public relations to pursue *communitas* ends but demonstrate *corporatas* results. So, the public relations associated with social movements is subject to the balancing act of *communitas/corporatas* as well.

Josh Boyd

See also Astroturfing; Community and Community Building; Corporate Social Responsibility; Image; Sports Public Relations

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COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community and community building represent an alternative framework to the notion of *public* for conceptualizing public relations activities.

For most of the 20th century, the idea of public served as the central concept in public relations theory and practice. The term *public* is used today in varying ways to describe the entire citizenry of a country (the general public) as well people affected by an organization or in a position to affect it (stakeholders). Alternatively, a public is defined as prospective recipients of public relations messages (audiences) or as groups that organize to resolve a situation they define as problematic (activists).

By contrast, a community can be conceptualized as a group of people who share a common experience, identity, or interest and who are joined together through their interaction or communication. Importantly, *communis* (to commune) is the root word for both community and communication. Community, as a concept, has deep historical roots in many cultures but has received increased scholarly interest since the 1980s as a way to describe groups of various sorts. The popularity of the term is evident in everyday references to such ideas as the business community, the educational community, and the minority community.

Geographic Versus Symbolic Communities

Traditional use of the term *community* denotes a locality. A geographic community is a particular region, city, or neighborhood. Many organizations engage in community relations programs to reach out to people in geographic proximity to their operations to foster mutually beneficial relationships.

Yet, communities are not bound by geography anymore. Today, they can be plotted along a

continuum from purely geographic to purely symbolic in nature. In a symbolic community, people are tied together because they interact with one another and share common beliefs, values, and cultural artifacts of life—language, traditions, customs, mores, and so on. Whereas proximity and geographic boundaries once delineated communities, the rise of new communications technologies has redefined communities so they can operate on a global basis.

The rise of industrial life was described by early sociologist Fernand Tönnies as a transformation of human life from *gemeinschaft* or community (a small agrarian village where people all knew one another) to *gesellschaft* or society (where people live interdependently among strangers with whom they have few or only specialized relationships). Early sociologists lamented *anomie*, or an emerging sense of isolation and loss of identity among people, as a deleterious effect of modern life. Later researchers, however, recognized that people engage in various activities that help develop a sense of community and overcome alienation. Sociologists from the University of Chicago (known as the “Chicago school of social thought”), for example, examined how people operated as small communities within the larger urban setting of Chicago.

Collectivism Versus Individualism

People in Western cultures have been described as torn between a desire for freedom (being independent and self-reliant) and a desire to belong (and thus become a part of a larger collectivity). The premium placed on freedom in Western cultures is evident in the American and French revolutions as well as in the early-19th-century American literature that focused on the virtues of transcendental individualism. This rise of intellectual interest in individualism paralleled the growth of capital markets, the polis (nation-state), the nuclear family, and the early beginnings of mass society.

The second half of the 1800s, however, saw an increased awareness in the importance of communal life. This was evident in intellectual thought related to politics, morality, nature and genetics, and the nature of intellectual inquiry itself. Importantly, collectivism as a value orientation or cultural dimension never lost its importance in Eastern cultures, where collective decision making

and self-identity as a member of a larger collectivity are stronger than in Western cultures.

Communities Versus Publics

For organizations concerned about building and maintaining mutually beneficial relations with important constituencies, the difference between publics and communities is an important one.

Communities define themselves and thus exist outside the context of any particular organization. One of the benefits of using community as a framework for public relations work, therefore, is avoidance of various conceptual problems that plague the public construct. Communities are not merely audiences and are not defined by their stakeholder relationship to the organization. Communities are the umbrella grouping within which various publics might exist and from which groups of people might form to address issues.

Communities differ from publics because they organize around common interests, not issues, and are apolitical. Their goal is usually to sustain the group rather than to effect change. In this way, communities are proactive, not reactive. Communities have long and well-established histories and people within them routinely interact by sharing a common culture. By contrast, a public created around an issue often has a short-term life span and brings together diverse people whose only commonality is concern about a common problem.

As the term is commonly used, a public is considered to be made up of individuals, yet communities can be thought of as being composed of individuals as well as organizations and institutions. Communities are often easier to locate and to identify, compared to an issues-driven public that must first make its presence known. Importantly, a single-purpose public can evolve into a community, but the group's focus usually broadens beyond the single issue around which it might have been formed.

Community-Based Theory in Public Relations

Several public relations theorists have called for focusing on community and community building in public relations practice.

Dean Kruckeberg and Kenneth Starck (1988) were the first to argue that public relations should

be practiced as an active attempt to restore and maintain a sense of community. Such an approach places a premium on caring about and for others to create a more human and mutually supportive society. The authors challenged public relations to (1) make community members conscious of their common interests, (2) overcome alienation, (3) use technology to create community, (4) promote leisure-time activities, (5) engage in consummatory (self-fulfilling) communication that can be enjoyed for its own sake, (6) lead in charitable works, (7) help communities share aesthetic experiences, religious ideas, personal values, and sentiments, and (8) foster personal relationships.

L. J. Wilson (1996) similarly argued that creating strategic communities is a means for corporations to foster positive relationships. The following five characteristics are required by corporations: (1) long-range vision, (2) a sincere commitment to community service, not just profit, (3) organizational values that emphasize the importance of people (including trust, respect, and human dignity), (4) cooperative problem solving and empowerment, and (5) a relationship-building approach to public relations.

Other researchers have pointed to the communitarian movement of the 1990s as a potentially ethical framework for public relations. Hugh M. Culbertson and Ni Chen, for example, outlined six major tenets in 1996. These ideas stress the importance of commitment to relationships, interconnectedness and social cohesion, common core values and beliefs, a balancing between rights and responsibilities, empowerment and involvement in joint decision making, and a broadening of perspectives to reduce fragmentation.

Although not using the term *community* per se, various theories related to symmetric communication, symmetric worldviews, two-way communication, and dialogue are all consistent with notions of community. Similarly, the development of communal (versus merely exchange) relationships and community involvement measures has been incorporated into the measure of relationship outcomes in public relations.

Although community can be situated firmly in modern thought, postmodern theorists have especially embraced community as a concept that lends itself to both critical and cultural approaches to the study of public relations. The shift away from

conceptualizing public relations as an organization-centered practice to one in which various social actors engage reflects the importance of power in the community. Similarly, cultural theorists have examined the problems related to universalism versus particularism of public relations practices and how premises of public relations practice must be adapted to particular communities or cultures.

The community construct can be found in numerous aspects of the field, including adoption of new technologies (e.g., the creation of online or virtual communities), risk communication (e.g., community conflict and community advocacy councils), health communication (e.g., community-level interventions and community readiness to change). Other theories in which community plays an important role include public relations field dynamics (community versus self-orientation) and theories of social capital (which measure social cohesion and interaction as a basis for assessing the quality of life).

Three Dimensions of Community Building

Community has been criticized as an abstract, idealized state that can never be achieved. Some would argue that true community can be achieved only where everyone shares an affinity or like-mindedness, where people always like one another, and where consensus is always present. Yet, such an approach to community is improbable in today's pluralistic society.

Others suggest that community exists where people are conscious of others and recognize people's personal needs for expression, growth, and transformation. In such a community of otherness, many points of view are present, but polarization is avoided. Such communities are functional because members support the well-being of the group so that everyone is successful and social order is maintained.

Public relations representatives of organizations can participate in and build communities in three ways:

1. *Community involvement* involves facilitating an organization or cause's participation in an already existing community—the traditional boundary spanning function commonly associated with geographic community relations. Involvement includes socially responsible gestures (such as

attendance at community events) and participation in discussions and dialogues—in order to interact with others as responsible community citizens.

2. *Community nurturing* entails fostering the economic, political, social, and cultural vitality of a community where people and organizations or causes are members—beyond mere involvement. Organizations can be official sponsors of activities, such as a Little League team or a major event. Organizations can also recruit volunteers or engage in philanthropy to help communities. Community-oriented organizations can view their involvement as matters of social responsibility (where no quid pro quo is expected), as relationship building, or as enlightened self-interest in that some reciprocity is expected. True nurturing, however, excludes efforts by organizations that are intended simply to put a positive face on the organization through adroit impression management.

3. *Community organizing* involves the grassroots forging of new communities among disparate individuals or organizations with common interests. Such is the case with the creation of formal or informal groups within organizations as well as efforts to create clubs, associations, and societies outside of an existing organizational context. To the extent that efforts are rooted in social problems, community organizing closely resembles the formation of a social movement. Yet, interests—not issues—define communities.

Public relations practitioners can play varying roles in this community organizing process. In community involvement, public relations professionals are agent representatives of an organization or cause who become active participants in community activities and conversations. In community nurturing, public relations professionals act as program facilitators, orchestrators of events, producers of information, and managers or coordinators of volunteer and philanthropic activities. In community organizing, the roles are as leaders, recruiters, and advocates. The overarching metaphor for all of these roles is *community builder*.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Communitarianism; Community Relations; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Interpersonal

Communication Theory; Philanthropy; Public Relations Field Dynamics; Publics; Relationship Management Theory; Risk Communication; Symmetry; Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change; Two-Step Flow Theory

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community relations is a public relations function focusing on the management and communication challenges organizations need to meet to be welcomed partners in communities where they want to operate. It features interactive networks and social constructions for the benefit of both organizations and community residents as a dialectic of harm and benefit. As dialogue, this process is grounded in participants' rights, corporate social responsibility, and the power of community opinion.

Some general conclusions that can be drawn about community relations:

1. It is inherent to an organization's need to be legitimate, as the right to operate.
2. It sets the foundation for issue contests, crisis response, and risk management.

3. Its complexity requires ongoing, careful, and thorough analysis of relations with various publics.
4. It can be local, regional, national, or global.
5. It is affected by forces in the environment that require ever-changing strategic and interactive approaches.

Historical Development of Community Relations Concept

Community relations developed as a result of dissatisfactions and tensions between organizations and their near publics. Originally, strategic philanthropy in terms of support for the arts, sponsorship of community activities, or jobs was considered to be sufficient to generate goodwill for an organization. Community relations became a matter of serious research as activism brought changes in standards regarding organizational legitimacy.

Historically, in the early stages of 19th-century industrial expansion, businesses were widely viewed as a benefit to a community. New industry provided jobs and supplied the community with an ample tax base. However, as time passed, it became more and more evident that corporations often exacted a toll on each community in terms of layoffs, relocations, pollution, increased health problems, employment safety issues, the attraction of large groups of people, as well as domination of local government.

Initially, activists directed their ire toward specific businesses within a geographical community. As technology and transportation improved, the geographical constraint became less of a central factor. The “voice” of the community became regional, national, and even international. Complaints translated into issues wherever the organization was located.

Groups of critics were being organized with generic names like unions, service groups, and educators to organize and represent certain issues. Those groups became branded by issue: environmentalists (e.g., Greenpeace and Sierra Club), animal rights (e.g., PETA), or senior citizens (e.g., Gray Panthers). Such opposition groups sought to bring organizations into public disfavor, justifying issue debates and seeking constraints over operations as well as attacks on reputation.

These forces resulted in the public relations function of community relations, which was designed to monitor emerging issues, address the acceptability of policies and operations, and assess the strength of relationships between the organization and citizens. Nonprofits and government are faced with similar challenges. The community relations function in public relations is also well established in nonbusiness organizations. It is often central to the survival of the nonprofit organization; for instance, symphonies were no longer merely expected to perform but also to reach out to increase music appreciation in schools.

Consumer Forces

The earliest dissent groups formed were coalitions representing consumers. In the United States, particularly, the organizational power of communities resulted in many consumer laws restricting and regulating business organizations. In response, more organizations dedicated community relations resources to working with consumer activists. The level of sophistication in strategic communication has become quite complex for the organization and publics. A potent activist challenge, for instance, is a local, national, or international boycott.

New Media

Traditionally, protests might be local and personal. Increasingly, even when clashes manifest at business or governmental properties, the criticism and challenge of community relations “goes viral.” This expansion of community discourse via social media helps citizens share grievances and information, especially youth who have become proficient in communicating dissatisfaction. Today, youth protests emerge through tweets, texting, and visual postings about many matters, such as the lack of jobs in Spain, frustration with England’s higher education policies, and concerns about authoritarian rule in what became known as the Arab Spring. Activism can now be more dynamically transparent because digital technology integrates communities in discourse.

Goals for Community Relations

Community relations involves more than appearing positive and offering small benefits to

the community whose goodwill the organization needs. Community relations professionals can help prepare an organization for meeting the challenges in a diverse often unpredictable climate.

Because stakeholders often seek recognition, a hearing, and sincere consideration, the public relations professional must prepare by completing the following series of stages: initiate or reestablish a community relations intent; research internal and external infrastructures, attitudes, requests, and so on; build dialogic bridges; monitor the environment; and integrate the data and actions into a synergistic approach that allows for a mutually beneficial coexistence for organizations and the stakeholders. Both organizations and stakeholders must create trust to support ongoing dialogue. Stakeholders especially need to be integrated into the dialogic process.

Communication: A Metatheoretical Approach to Community Relations

How this evolution of opposition developed to stimulate the need for community relations is attributed by some to the individual who discovers power in joining groups and thus having more of a voice about issues. As advocates of strategic issues management, Robert L. Heath and Michael J. Palenchar (2009) featured the need for dialogue and collaborative decision making. Heath and Lan Ni (2010) reasoned that corporate social responsibility and community relations should link in ways that lead organizational managements to consider whether they are the sorts of neighbors citizens welcome. The type of organization is at minimum *nice*, contributing to community activities, such as sponsoring little league teams and supporting education. The organization is a *good or generous* neighbor if its revenue contributes directly to the community, starting with attractive facilities, good jobs, and other activities that add measurably to the quality of life in the community. The third level of being a welcomed neighbor requires *reflective management*—seeking a synergy whereby the organizational management considers the impact of its operations, its long-term commitment, and the extent to which mutual benefit is a guiding management criterion.

The true test of public relations is if the discipline can sustain an ongoing impact on the major

global challenges facing society today. Public relations is involved in all phases of life, such as biogenic food, AIDS/HIV, building a civil society, association representation, education, and health. The degree to which public relations is consulted and involved in these societal needs depends on the degree of professional preparedness to lead the dialogue on such community matters.

Communication remains the fundamental element in developing community relations from a public relations perspective. However, there have been misdirected efforts to supplant wise management decision making with communication. For example, the liberal versus communitarian debate lacks the stature to qualify as a public relations metatheory for the following reasons:

1. The concepts are primarily posed as a Western world discussion and, therefore, are not as useful for global public relations.
2. The statements presented reflect primarily polarized concepts—liberal versus communitarianism—and, therefore, are either unrealistic or idealized.
3. The discussion is based on a disregard for the understanding of the nature and evolution of communication knowledge.
4. It is impossible to implement or develop as a requirement of societies to conform, even if this applies only to the United States.

As public relations academics attempt to develop the concept of “relationship” as a public relations metatheory they risk failing to develop a sound rationale for community relations. Philip Lesly (1966) noted that this is another attempt to Balkanize the field of public relations into segments. Only through dialogue is ethical communication possible as a basis for relationships. Communication ranges from public communication, including debate, to discussion as rhetorical or persuasive communication, and the emphasis is on dialogue and the co-creation of meaning rather than sharing information.

Through communication, dialogue is established and language constructs the conceptual possibilities of co-created harmony. The dialogic approach carries critical universal structural elements to assure the communication act is truly complete and authentic. This is different from

communication as rules or procedures because it is more of a creative process where engagement and deliberative democracy triumph. In community relations, the fundamental metatheory focuses on the speech act as affected by the self, the episode, the relationship, and culture.

Bonita Dostal Neff

See also Activism; Co-creation of Meaning Theory; Communitarianism; Communitas/Corporatas; Community and Community Building; Corporate Social Responsibility; Issues Management; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Philanthropy; Reflective Management; Rhetorical Theory; Stakeholder Theory; Stakes

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COMMUNITY REPORTS

A community report is a communication tool that is produced and distributed in the format and frequency determined by sound research. Reports can take the form of printed pieces, emails alone or with links to a website, social media applications,

open meetings with the community, one-on-one with influential stakeholders, and other methods. They have many purposes, perhaps the most fundamental of which is to justify the right to operate.

The relationship between an industrial facility and its community is scrutinized, challenged, validated, measured, and ultimately redefined as public expectations evolve. One indication of a socially responsible facility is the extent to which it engages in dialogue with the community. One of these tools, a community report, can be particularly effective when it addresses local issues and concerns and is produced as one component of an overall communications strategy.

Community reports have been around for decades in one form or another, typically published as a subset of a financial, operations, or philanthropic annual report. Today's world of instant electronic communication tools has effectively made the "annual" community report obsolete. Good reports—traditional printed media, or new and emerging media, such as social media—are those that have credibility with their target audiences. A public that has grown comparatively more astute and less accepting over time now requires, and in some cases demands, details about the good, bad, and ugly aspects of facility operations that affect their quality of life. And depending on the historical operations of a facility—including its ability to quickly communicate in response to incidents that directly impact neighbors, such as noise, odor, lights, and emergencies—a comprehensive annual, quarterly, or monthly report may not be sufficient. Recurring or significant problems that disrupt quiet residential life are clear justifications for ongoing communications.

Regardless of the format and frequency of a community report, the starting point is understanding who the relevant stakeholders are and what constitutes meaningful dialogue with them. Only then can a baseline be established and a go-forward strategy implemented that are critical to planning for and measuring the effectiveness of a community report. It is critically important to define the purpose of a community report (informational, educational, image-building, etc.), identify the target audience(s), select a look and feel (printed, electronic, or both), consider when and how often the report is issued/updated, and determine if the goal is one-way or two-way dialogue.

Dialogue with the community means engaging stakeholders and listening to what they tell facility representatives. Done well, good dialogue sets the stage for mutual understanding and respect, clear and open lines of communication, opportunities to identify common ground, and other benefits. One limitation to dialogue is the inability to reach everyone who feels they have an interest in facility operations. Some people or communities farther away from the facility, or special communities of interest within the facility's operational area, may feel excluded. A community report mailed to homes and businesses by zip code is a way of reaching stakeholders beyond traditional community boundaries.

A *stakeholder* is anyone who has an interest in or can influence a business or facility. Stakeholder cooperation or involvement is needed for the facility to obtain and maintain its "license to operate." Stakeholders may be shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, contractors, families of workers, business partners, people whose livelihoods are dependent on the facility, and people who live and work near the facility—the community—which includes local media, elected officials, activists, civic leaders, schools, and residential and industrial neighbors. It is this community stakeholder group, along with employees and retirees, who are the primary audiences for a community report. These stakeholders are at the front line of a facility's efforts to develop and sustain community goodwill and trust needed for reputation management. In good times, this bank of reputation receives deposits through good operational performance and relationship building; on the other hand, reputation hits or withdrawals occur when facility performance negatively affects the community, such as during an accident that requires public action or, at the very least, when operations are more noticeable than usual to nearby residents. Public perception of indifference to a problem caused by a facility, particularly through inadequate communication, can drain the reputation account and test community expectations regarding facility social performance.

Social performance includes all the ways a facility's activities affect society. At a local level it includes employment, contracting, operations, community involvement, security, social investments, and health, safety, and environmental issues. It also reflects the local priorities and issues of

significance as identified through stakeholder engagement. Nationally it might include the impact on U.S. economic and social development; globally it may include the impact and contribution of the company's products and activities.

Such efforts fit under the aspect of the discipline called *community relations*, active alignment of interests between a facility and the local community. Community relations may mean no more than "getting to know your neighbors," talking with them, and inviting them to visit. It might involve good site management—ensuring that neighbors are satisfied that when issues occur, their concerns are handled promptly and professionally. Two valuable benefits of good community relations are goodwill and trust, which are almost always achieved through sincere effort, action, and alliance with community residents. Not to be overlooked are the employees, including retirees, who can be among the best community ambassadors.

A tailored approach is best for determining the content and appearance of a community report. In some cases a letter from the facility manager to the community outlining business and operational performance may be adequate. At the opposite and more expensive end of the spectrum, an elaborate full-color brochure or website with graphs, photos, and text covering such issues as health, safety, environmental impacts, taxes, economic and other issues of local significance, employee volunteerism, and philanthropic endeavors—emphasizing with examples the facility's commitment to be a good neighbor—may be the way to go. Again, producing an effective and well-received report can be leveraged by up-front analyses of community relations, social performance, stakeholder identification, and dialogue as they pertain to the facility-community relationship. A disconnect occurs when a facility's messages do not meet the community's expectations, are regarded as insincere or self-serving, or simply are written at a level that is inappropriate for the readers (the communication relies on corporate/industry jargon and acronyms, misses the mark on topics addressed, etc.).

Health, Safety, and Environment

Among the most important types of community reports are those related to health, safety, and environment (HSE). Environmental and community

activists raise doubts about companies' willingness and ability to reduce their impact on citizens' health and safety as well as environmental quality. In response, concerned companies set goals and improve their environmental performance. A second response is to communicate their corrective actions and the results of those actions to the communities where they operate.

HSE reports can be stand-alone or be part of a broader community report. They tell of the progress being made to change processes and procedures to reduce a facility's potential impact on people's health and safety as well as to protect the environment. Health details relate to changes that might include discontinuing the use or emission of products associated with long-term consequences for people's health. Exposure to some chemicals in sufficient quantity, for instance, might cause respiratory problems or increase the incidence of cancer among community residents. Safety issues relate to sudden occurrences that might harm or kill area residents, such as explosions. Environmental impact statements might include reductions in emissions that change the color of the sky or produce unpleasant odors.

In recent years, under pressures from peers, government, and activists, companies have begun to state their mission, goals, and objectives relevant to HSE performance. For instance, they might report that specific processes are being implemented over a five-year period to reduce the discharge of harmful chemicals into water in the community. Each year they might then indicate how the changes are progressing and how discharges are being reduced to acceptable levels. In some cases, a company will publicly commit to reduce emissions beyond the levels specified in permits issued by regulatory agencies or voluntarily relinquish the "grandfather" status of particular process units that, due to their age, are exempt from current emission standards.

Industries, such as refining, chemical manufacturing, and electrical generation, use trade associations to get members to set and achieve higher standards of HSE performance. They conduct, commission, and respond to research in an effort to understand the technical aspects of each issue. Realizing a bad apple spoils the barrel, they share best practices that can improve the performance and therefore enhance the reputation of the industry. For the chemical manufacturing industry,

industry-wide recommendations made by the Responsible Care Program were initiated through its trade association.

HSE reports often feature specific measures being taken by individual companies. They might, for instance, tell of increased maintenance routines or manufacturing procedures that have been undertaken to achieve positive HSE results, or they may report the installation of new equipment or improved processes to enhance performance.

Some HSE reports are highly technical and specifically tied to best business practices. Others tend to feature image more than substance. They might indicate that a company is committed to a clean, safe, and healthy environment. They even include pretty pictures of birds, sunsets, and equipment, but those reports might not indicate in a fully technical and operational way what constructive changes are being implemented. Early in the modern era of increased openness by industry, graphs illustrating downward trends of emissions were common, because they demonstrated progress over time. Companies were able to take credit for reducing emissions without always focusing on whether the current levels were still too high. As the public grew accustomed to the trend graphs, harder questions were asked, along the lines of "We see you are reducing emissions of certain chemicals; what we want to know is if the level today poses any health risks to us."

The incentive for such reports started in the 1980s when several major operating plant failures alarmed community residents and citizens around the world. Such concern sparked legislation in the United States called Community Right-to-Know. People have a right to know what is occurring in their community that could affect their health or safety. Federal legislation and regulation sparked changes in operations, including communication between companies and area residents.

So that local residents could be informed, state and federal regulatory bodies required companies to indicate what amounts of specific chemicals were being released into the atmosphere. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was one of the organizations spearheading this trend. Data collected by operating plant experts are reported to the EPA and to various state agencies.

Company versions of HSE reports were typically published documents, either pamphlets or booklets.

Often, many more copies of such documents were printed than needed. One solution was to include HSE reports on the company website. This makes the information available to any concerned citizen who wants to better understand a neighboring company's HSE plan and progress reports.

Data tell only part of the story. HSE reports give companies the opportunity to put those data in perspective and to show how changes are being made to improve the HSE conditions of the community. Such reports become part of the community dialogue and planning process when citizen input is obtained. Concerns are voiced and heard. Organizations use sound science and responsible operating procedures to make and report changes and improvements. These efforts become a vital part of these companies' endeavors to demonstrate their concern for citizens of the communities where they operate. They want to be seen as beneficial rather than harmful neighbors. They work to build goodwill.

Reports Add Value to Communications

Consideration must be given to the relationship between the facility and the community—"hot" issues that need attention—logistics, demographics, staff required to do the work, costs, and other factors. Also, recognition must be given to the possible barriers of each interim approach; for example, everyone on the stakeholder list may not have an email address. Whether a stand-alone report is planned or a more comprehensive approach with several elements, it is better to start slow and build momentum than to launch an aggressive communications program and curtail it later due to resource limitations.

The value of a community report is enhanced when stakeholders have an opportunity to provide feedback on the content, style, and frequency of the report. A postage-paid tear-out postcard is an easy way for readers to rate the effectiveness of the printed community report. Keep it simple, with boxes to check and a space for general comments and suggestions. Formal readership surveys also can be productive, as can focus groups and informal conversations with stakeholders. Options for feedback include printed (mailed or faxed), electronic (email or responses to a website), and in-person venues.

Community reports can stimulate dialogue between a facility and its community. Basic or slick in format, mailed to homes or available electronically, if the result is open communication about issues and concerns of mutual interest, and used in conjunction with other regular communications that incorporate the principles of stakeholder engagement and dialogue, a community report is a worthwhile outreach tool.

David B. McKinney and Robert L. Heath

See also Activism; Community Relations; Dialogue; Goodwill; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Public Interest; Stakeholder Theory

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COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

See Resilient Communities

COMPOSING/COMPOSITION

Composition is the process of composing (creating and arranging) type for printing, that is, the letters, numerals, punctuation marks, and other symbols that are used to create written text that appears in a printed publication. Today, it includes text created on computer software and as it appears on the Internet and its World Wide Web. Type was assembled by hand for about 400 years after Johannes Gutenberg invented a printing press in about 1440 that used movable type to print ink on paper. While some 19th-century inventions preceded the typesetting machine that Ottmar Mergenthaler invented in 1886, his Linotype was the first that was suitable for commercial use.

Other metal-casting typesetting machines soon followed that also created raised (i.e., relief) metal “hot type” that was needed for letterpress printing, for example, the Intertype and the Ludlow, both of which also cast one-piece fully spaced lines; and the Monotype, which cast individual type characters in justified lines. While such innovations were a remarkable improvement over the tedious hand composition of individual type characters, the type compositors who used these typesetting machines were nevertheless laboriously slow compared to today’s typesetters who simply use a computer keyboard to set type for offset lithography (planographic) printing—at the normal speed of creating any other type of document on a computer. Indeed, anyone today who does desktop publishing could be considered a type compositor, albeit one lacking in the skills the craft required in past generations of printing technology.

As opposed to the creation of cast-metal hot type, a cold-type process evolved in the mid-20th century that ranged from “strike-on” machines that were similar to electric typewriters of that era, which evolved into the far more sophisticated photocomposition machines that produced type on film and transferred this type directly onto a printing plate. Such cold-type could be used in offset lithography (planographic) printing, which newspapers began using as early as the late 1930s but which became common among even the largest-circulation dailies in the late 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, for their own job-printing needs, public relations practitioners still bought typesetting from those offering photocomposition services (oftentimes the same companies that would do the printing) until the past quarter century or so, when direct computer links to printers made this specific skill obsolete.

To fully appreciate the evolution of type composition and the skills of the type compositors of an earlier era, the practitioner must study the whole process of printing, which is changing rapidly today—more so than it has in the 5½ centuries since Gutenberg’s press began using hand-assembled movable type. Just as was the case with their long-dead predecessors who could rapidly assemble hand-set type, those type compositors who composed type using the Linotype and similar machines of an earlier era—with their large keyboards or other mechanical type selection methods

that differed greatly from today’s computer keyboards—are a disappearing breed. The few remaining Linotype compositors might only operate such machines at a history pavilion for the entertainment of those attending a state fair, in remote areas of lesser-developed countries, among religious sects that eschew today’s technology. Nevertheless, the mystique of this highly skilled craft of the type compositor will never be known by those who today compose type for printing on their computer keyboards.

Dean Kruckeberg and Marina Vujnovic

See also Caption/Cutline; Font; Layout

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts among stakeholders and organizations require attention and the problem-solving capabilities of public relations managers. Public relations scholars have suggested that these managers often help an organization manage its response to conflict and to rapid environmental changes. Researchers have brought together conflict and public relations—for instance, in 1997 Yi-Hui Huang wrote on relationships, in 1995 and 2001 Kenneth D. Plowman covered power, and then in 2005 Plowman connected strategic management with conflict and public relations.

Two-Way Models of Public Relations

Conflict resolution in public relations evolved from the four models of public relations. The most sophisticated of the four models are the two-way asymmetrical and the two-way symmetrical models. As these two models of public relations evolved, James E. Grunig (1989) described the two-way symmetrical model as “public relations efforts which are based on research and evaluation and that use communication to manage conflict and to improve understanding with strategic

publics” (p. 17). In 1995, the new model of symmetry as two-way practices was developed where the win-win zone uses negotiation and compromise to allow organizations to find common ground among their separate and sometimes conflicting self-interests. By doing so, it did not exclude the use of asymmetrical means to achieve symmetrical ends, according to David Dozier, Larissa Grunig, and James Grunig.

Mixed Motives

Although the two-way symmetrical model would seem to be the ideal for conflict management, it is difficult to determine the exact point for appropriate behavior on a continuous scale between two-way asymmetric and two-way symmetric communication. Priscilla Murphy (1991) suggested that a mixed motive version of the two-way symmetrical model might better describe what is happening in the actual practice of public relations because it incorporates both asymmetrical and symmetrical strategies. More recent studies acknowledge the more frequently practiced model is the one termed *mixed motives*.

In mixed motives, each side in a stakeholder relationship retains a strong sense of its own interests, yet each is motivated to cooperate to attain at least some resolution of the conflict. They may be on opposite sides of an issue, but it is in their best interests to collaborate. Mixed motive games provide a broad third category that describes behavior as most public relations people experience it: a multi-directional scale of competition and cooperation in which organizational needs must be balanced against constituents’ needs. These cooperative protagonists struggle to satisfy their own interests with the knowledge that satisfaction is best accomplished through satisfying each other’s interests.

Mixed Motive Model of Public Relations

In 2000, Kenneth D. Plowman, William G. Briggs, and Yi-Hui Huang established a number of negotiation strategies that fit into what Plowman called a mixed motive model for public relations that encompassed the entire spectrum between the two-way asymmetrical and the two-way symmetrical models. It now includes the strategies of contention, avoidance, accommodation, compromise,

cooperation, unconditionally constructive and win-win or no deal, principled, and mediated or cultural. In 2007, Plowman added a tenth strategy, perseverance.

Contingency Model of Conflict

Since 1997, Glen Cameron and his colleagues (see Cancel, Cameron, Sallot, & Mitrook, 1997) have been developing a continuum ranging from pure advocacy to pure accommodation as the basis for a contingency model of organization–public relationships. Accommodation is not viewed in the classic sense as giving in to the other party. Rather, it is “the degree of willingness to entertain change for the benefit of others” (Shin, Jin, Cheng, & Cameron, 2003, p. 9). Research by Shin and colleagues regarding conflicts played out in the media have shown that an organization uses the advocate strategy more when its key stakeholder advocates in an escalating spiral, indicating the media may be a separate power-brokering party. As the field of conflict resolution and public relations becomes more developed, the more complex are strategies, factors, and tactics. This is evidenced by the 86 factors featured by contingency theorists.

In 2010, Cindy T. Christen and Steven Lovaas developed what they called a dual-continuum approach to conflict management in public relations, extending the work of Cameron and his associates. As explained by Plowman in 2007, this dual approach essentially is similar to mixed motives and looks at the advocacy or contention, and accommodation or cooperation to examine these strategies in a non-linear fashion. Christen and Lovaas, as well as Plowman in 1996 and Thomas in 1992, maintained that real-world disputes are far more complex than a single continuum can represent and that in a cooperative or a collaborative, win-win situation where contention and cooperation overlap, there cannot be a single continuum.

Multiple Party Negotiations

Complexity is a major factor in multiparty negotiations that may be the next step in this type of public relations research. In 2008, Plowman undertook a qualitative quasi-experimental design with 11 graduate students taking on different roles in the

hot waste issue in Utah. These students framed the issue, defined their self-interests as stakeholders, and then conducted a series of five role plays on the issue. All nine strategies were paired against each other in different combinations. Findings revealed that contention was the most used strategy but was most often combined with the principled strategy. If those strategies were not successful, then role players turned to avoidance. During the third round, role players started using cooperation and compromise. Using these two strategies created a less confrontational atmosphere and the role players were more inclined to discuss alternatives. The most useful strategy, however, was mediation in resolving the hot waste issue.

Most research in conflict resolution has involved just two-party disputes, but in practicality and especially for public relations, there is more than one stakeholder present. In 1996, Lawrence Susskind and Patrick Field described public relations using terms that essentially equate to one-way and asymmetrical models, then use a version of Roger Fisher and William Ury's mutual gains approach to resolve public disputes in a symmetrical manner. This research in the field of conflict resolution demonstrates that more work needs to be done in multiparty disputes.

A multiparty dispute can be defined as a simultaneous negotiation among three or more parties over multiple issues. The larger the number of participants in these multiple party conflicts, the more difficulty there is in defining the problem and agreeing on an acceptable solution. There is more likelihood of complexity in conflicting positions, the underlying self-interests, and the relationships—as in public relationships among the various parties involved. Mediation seems to be a common strategic direction for the field. In multiparty settings, mediators are usually a part of the negotiation. Their intervention does not alter the structure of the negotiation and is not difficult to accept by the parties involved. Such mediators can come from outside the dispute or there can be several, some acting from their roles inside the dispute.

Mediation, Public Relations, and the Media

In the conflict resolution literature, scholars are beginning to see the advantages of this peer mediation (public relations practitioners or the media),

mediation done by peers in an organization who have a vested interest in that organization. Typically, comediators (meaning two) separately meet with the parties involved within an organization to investigate issues and to find possible solutions to raise in a joint session. In Kenneth Cloke and Joan Goldsmith's view, there is no reason that public relations or the media cannot take on that peer mediation role with stakeholders both in and outside the organization. The stakeholders know the advocacy position of the public relations manager from the initiation of the mediation. The advantages of peer-based mediation are "numerous and well-documented" (2000, p. 31).

Third parties who are seen as having greater insight into the various stakeholders' interests, such as public relations managers and the media, may be seen as more credible and better able to craft recommendations that suit those interests. In 2012, Kenneth Plowman, Susan B. Walton, and Alex Curry conducted a case study involving the media and public relations in a public policy dispute over the building of a professional soccer stadium. In 2003, Shin et al. found that the media only served as a separate power-brokering party and to assure that more information was provided to key stakeholders. It was found that the media, playing a watchdog role of government, were more successful at providing information to all the stakeholders involved rather than helping resolve the dispute in question.

Implications at the International Level

Culture is a powerful force shaping thoughts, perceptions, behavior, and communication. By its very complexity, culture initiates the negotiation tactics of contention or principled negotiation in many instances. The ability to successfully navigate and negotiate across cultures is the key to successful public relations practice globally. Cultural diversity makes communication more difficult. Because knowledge is culture-specific, the more a communicator understands cross-cultural differences, the easier the communication task becomes. Paradoxically, if negotiators can overcome communication barriers, mutually beneficial solutions—the cooperative tactic and win-win solutions—may become easier. Differences, rather than similarities, can form the basis of mutually beneficial solutions. In

a multicultural environment, differences are increased; thus, the opportunities for mutual gain are also increased, according to Huang in 1997.

Directions for Research

Future research has many problems to solve and questions to answer. Public relations and the media's involvement in a conflict should be further explored. What about comparing community negotiation (meaning negotiation with special-interest and citizen groups) in the conflict resolution literature with the activist and segmentation of publics' literature in public relations? Such negotiation implicitly includes multiparty negotiations. It overlaps into the trend in journalism of public or civic journalism, where reporters have a responsibility to help the public understand the context of the news or conflict. This is very similar to the goal of media relations within public relations, to provide information to the media to ensure balanced coverage. What about the role of the public relations manager in such a public dispute? Is he or she an advocate, a mediator, a third party, or an ombudsman? As consideration addresses the concept of relationships among stakeholders in a conflict, it may address how relationships are perceived, differently or alike between the two fields.

Kenneth D. Plowman

See also Accommodation: Contingency Theory; Advocacy; Contingency Theory; Game Theory; Power, as Functions and Structures; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Symmetry

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CONSTITUTIVE THEORY OF LANGUAGE

Constitutive theory of language is an interpretive theory, grounded in hermeneutics, that postulates that language, a fundamental instrument of knowledge, and only language, makes the revelation of the human world possible. The hermeneutic tradition positions meaning at the center of human understanding and cognition. Human beings are language animals; they articulate their existence through language. At the same time, it is through this articulation that humans can change their norms and purpose. Thus, language allows new purposes and new meanings, and without language, the world as we know it and our understanding of it would not exist. The importance of language and meaning has always been at the center of public relations scholarship (Heath, Toth, & Waymer, 2009). Constitutive theory of language can provide a solid point of departure for studying socially constructed meanings and interactions among various groups of stakeholders.

Constitutive theory is the antitype of framing theory, which paints a picture of language within the framework of human life. In contrast, constitutive theory makes it possible to have new understanding and new behaviors as purposes and mental functions cannot be defined, understood, or evaluated without reference to language. Constitutive theory provides a full range of expressive, or symbolic, forms, in which a symbol is a constitutive expression. The constitutive approach postulates that the world does not simply affect human beings by providing a certain state of affairs, to which humans should react, or by creating a chemical condition, through which we produce joy or sadness, for instance. The meanings of *sadness* or *joy* only exist as the world imposes on the human mind. Thus the meaning is endogenous. So understanding and communication are only possible because speaking develops an interpretive position in which the nature of things is revealed, not because words are used as referents.

Charles Taylor, a famous Canadian philosopher and a recipient of the prestigious Kyoto Prize and Templeton Prize, brought constitutive theory to light after studying the works of Johann Gottfried von Herder. Herder, a German philosopher and literary critic of the Enlightenment, critiqued the Hobbes-Locke-Condillac form of theory that tried to understand language within the representational epistemology of Descartes. Taylor argued that Herder distinguished between prelinguistic and linguistic beings: the first ones react to the surrounding world and the things around them, whereas the second ones are able “to grasp something *as* what it is” (Taylor, 2006, p. 18). A notable feature of the language, according to Taylor, is that it involves sensitivity to “intrinsic rightness” in evaluating the connection between the sign and the object, beyond simple aligning (Taylor, 2006, p. 21). This sensitivity refers to issues of the right use of signs. Such sensitivity allows humans to operate in another, semantic dimension, different from the one of animals. Semantic dimension makes humans, or agents, capable of new kinds of relations and new emotions, unique to those possessing the ability to use language. Herder postulated that without language no semantic dimension is possible, and Taylor argued that “to move from non-linguistic to linguistic agency is to move to a world in which a new kind of issue is at play, a right use of signs which is not reducible to task rightness” (p. 22). Thus, the world of agents has a different dimension on which to respond. According to Taylor, behavior can no longer be understood just as the purposive or cognitive seeking of ends.

This reflection, or perceptual judgment, creates a higher-order normative that is not only understood as enunciations (“Their friendship is strong.” “They are made for each other.”) but also as narratives. Narrative provides reflection in terms of time and action of the account (“They must have had some unique bonding experiences.” “They are just as in love as they were many years ago.”). Narratives can be structured in terms of metaphorical or metonymical dimensions, which are only possible in linguistic discourse.

A semantic-perceptual depth of linguistic human beings simply is not feasible in the world of prelinguistic creatures. Humans can go far beyond normal animal communication because animals only understand the explicit meaning of words.

Language provides more than just the possibility of communication as it ensures the possibility of interpretative reflection on explicit object recognition, semantic depth, and explicit narrative formation.

Constitutive theory enables humans to explain creativity and emotional aspects of their experiences through language. Constitutive theory brings our attention toward creative dimensions of our expression, and, as a result, it makes it possible for its own content to exist. Meaning is used in the phenomenological sense: something has meaning because it has relevance or significance. If things are significant in different ways, we refer to them as *new meanings* (Taylor, 1985). In short, the language is existentially constitutive as it accounts for descriptive as well as expressive modes.

Constitutive theory can explain how language gives the possibility of self-interpretation in light of explicitly expressed articulations in social narratives. Because humans are taught to understand and interpret themselves as individuals, or as parts of society, self-understanding is produced through social discourse and thus allows for true subjectivity. When one accepts the constitutive theory of language, they can see a comprehensive and highly complex web of social language interactions that happen as all possible variations of self-interpretations that can be developed and structured by historical, societal, and cultural particularities of various communities. One example might be interpretations of what actions might be considered socially responsible or what might be considered professional or ethical behavior. Self-interpretation and reflection continuously structure the life of human beings and affect all aspects of personal or social experiences, but without language, interpretation and reflection are not possible. Thus, languages *constitute* everything we know about the world.

Katerina Tsetsura

See also Co-Creation of Meaning Theory; Narrative Theory; Rhetorical Theory; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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CONSUMER/CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Public relations and consumer relations share many commonalities. In fact, some may argue that these two functions are “first cousins,” because they both seek not only to develop relationships between organizations and their key stakeholders but also to maintain and strengthen such relationships. To observe how this era of concern for relationship management has escalated, one needs only to channel surf via the radio or television or to skim the headlines of magazine and newspapers advertisements.

Everywhere, people are blasting out “relationship” cries of some kind. Banks, credit card companies, hotels, hospitals, automobile dealers, and the like promise that they are committed to offering “the right relationship” for you. Or type in “customer service” or “relationship management” as key words for an online Internet search; the hit count results are overwhelming.

The heightened concern for consumers can be traced to the early 1960s, when President John F. Kennedy mandated four bills of rights: the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose, and the right to be heard. According to Robert J. Lampman (1988), two more have since been added: the right to enjoy a clean and healthful environment and the right of poor and other minorities to have their interests protected. Subsequent

presidents have also joined forces to encourage Congress to institute policies that serve to safeguard consumers. During his 1962 congressional speech in which he declared the Consumer Bill of Rights, President Kennedy explained the important role consumers (publics) play in our society: "Consumers, by definition, include all. They are the largest economic group in the economy, affecting and affected by almost every public and private economic decision. . . . But they are the only group . . . whose views are often not heard."

This era of consumerism has escalated throughout the years to more than just a plea from consumers to be treated fairly and ethically by corporate America. Today, consumers seek more interpersonal communication among the organizations they patronize. In tandem, organizations have a better understanding of the tremendous financial benefits they can potentially reap by maintaining relationships with the publics they serve. Market research consistently demonstrates that consumers no longer want to be treated as part of the "masses." They desire individualized, personalized service in combination with individualized, personalized information. And, if they aren't pleased with the product or service the organization provides, they are empowered to "move on."

But what is the *value* of a loyal consumer? That question can be answered in a variety of ways and addressed from an array of perspectives. In the business world, success is measured in dollars, one way or another. From a quantifiable standpoint, the value of a faithful consumer equates to repeat business—business that is much more cost effective to capture compared with the costs associated with generating new business.

Let's look at an example. According to experts in the lodging industry, nearly 55% of the business is represented by repeat customers. This means that more than half of the hotel industry's client base revolves around the "maintenance" component. Without the implementation of strategic public relations strategies and tactics to safeguard relationships among its client base, this industry risks falling below the profitability level.

In short, dissatisfied consumers will simply "vote with their feet" and go elsewhere. In fact, market research estimates that U.S. businesses lose nearly \$83 billion each year due to defections and abandoned purchases as a direct result of a poor

customer experience. Nearly two-thirds of consumers said they had ended a relationship due to customer service alone.

Managers need to make themselves available to listen to their consumers so they can analyze or measure organizational performance against the established marketplace standards. Implementing two-way mechanisms for obtaining feedback is a critical aspect of public relations management to enhance customer relations opportunities. Providing customers opportunities for feedback and the two-way flow of communication is an important part of the public relations process. Methods include providing customers with comments cards, a link to provide online feedback via the organization's website, 1-800 consumer telephone hotlines, focus group interviews, follow-up telephone calls, and satisfaction questionnaires. Engaging in "management by wandering around" offers another practical way to monitor the environment of an organization. And, having on-site managers available to personally talk with customers offers yet another chance for consumers to "connect" with the organization.

The previous examples clearly and quantifiably demonstrate the importance of maintaining relationships with external publics. Let us consider one of an organization's most important internal publics—the employees. A plethora of industries monitor and measure the costs associated with turnover and employee attrition rates. Using the example of turnover costs associated with losing an employee who earns \$8 per hour, sponsoring research organizations' results ranged from \$3,500 to \$8,000 in losses, taking into consideration direct, indirect, tangible, and intangible costs.

Aside from quantifying employees in terms of how much it costs to replace them, many scholars and business executives refer to them as "human capital." In short, they are part of an organization's investment and, therefore, represent a valuable asset. Let's put their worth in perspective by comparing them with another corporate asset. If managers of an organization make a financial commitment to purchase brand new, state-of-the-art computers for their employees, equipped with every bell and whistle imaginable, they also expand their commitment in other ways, such as making sure that the computers are maintained and kept "healthy" by equipping them with antivirus programs, that

employees are trained to use them to their full potential, and that their property is secured safely to diminish possibilities of theft. Similarly, these same managers should extend such concern for their “human” assets to make them feel safe, healthy, and motivated to work at their maximum level of potential.

One point that is constant among the consumer relations and customer service/satisfaction literature—regardless of the publics (internal or external), industry, product, or service under investigation—is that consumers are more apt to return (or stay) if they feel some kind of a personal connection to the product, service, or organization.

Relationship management plays a key role in maintaining customer loyalty and enhancing levels of satisfaction. And since public relations is a key component in supporting relationships between organizations and their key consumers, this management function aids in enhancing the consumer/employee retention rate, which, in turn, saves the organization money, thereby contributing to a lucrative bottom line.

When discussing customer service within the framework of public relations, we cannot negate the importance (and the power and influence) of word-of-mouth communication. For example, TARP research indicates that consumers who are dissatisfied tell as many as 16 friends about their negative experience. And a prominent study conducted by the White House Office on Consumer Affairs reveals that 13% of dissatisfied customers will tell 20 people about it. This “tell your friends” communication concept is similar to the multiplier effect, a term borrowed from the economic literature, which explains the trickling down of revenues. For example, when a person travels to a particular city for vacation, the local economy also experiences financial ramifications as well because these travelers spend money on local lodging, restaurants, entertainment facilities, and various other resources, such as gasoline, clothing, and souvenirs. If their experience is a positive one, the multiplier or word-of-mouth publicity may work in that city’s favor (e.g., the visitors will return home and tell friends and family about their favorable experience). If, however, the vacationers had a bad experience, the negative word-of-mouth publicity may work against the city. In short, the visitors are serving as informal public relations ambassadors

for the destinations they visit. To illustrate how this multiplier effect works with regard to social media, think about all the opportunities and tools consumers now have available to communicate with others. Ranging from Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google Plus to Pinterest, YouTube and Instagram, just to name a few, the “you tell two friends” concept has escalated to “you tell virtually any and everybody” via these social media platforms. In short, “word-of-mouth” is now augmented by “word of ‘net.’”

Examples throughout this selection have illustrated how important it is for an organization to maintain a sound public relations program. They also demonstrate how quality customer service supports the public relations function. According to a social media blog by Simon Mainwaring, Mahatma Gandhi was quoted in 1890 and captured the essence of true customer service when he said,

A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not interruption in our work—he is the purpose of it. We are not doing him a favor by serving him. He is doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to serve him.

Consumer relations represents an important spoke on the public relations wheel—one that should not be overlooked. And, consumers are not just defined by external audiences; employees play a dominant role in the success of an organization. Public relations management provides the linking agent between an organization and would-be satisfied consumers. In essence, satisfied customers are the end result of a well-orchestrated public relations program.

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See also Management Theory; Online Public Relations; Relationship Management Theory; Stakeholder Theory

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CONTENT AGGREGATION

Content aggregation is the perusal and collection of specific information from different online sources. Content aggregation is a search and listing of material from any website and may also be generated automatically from information feeds, sometimes utilizing keywords for the search. The process involves distribution of aggregated information to others, such as community members, colleagues, clients, or organizations. Content aggregation is also performed in order to share the collected content with others for a price. Sometimes content aggregation results in a specific website built to provide information on one topic while the information is collected from many different sites. Content aggregation in a simpler form is passing on an already established RSS feed that contains information useful to a certain audience.

This practice is important to public relations as many companies employ specific teams to perform content aggregation to support clients or provide information for marketing purposes. Specific teams may be in-house or a separate company. For instance, a company, such as KeyConcepts, uses computer programs designed to search the Web to gather information about an industry, key business leaders in the field, available jobs, and conferences. The gathered information is compiled into an extensive database.

Some companies hire employees to act as content aggregators, operating solely to source and compile elusive online information about a subject. A content aggregator is an individual, team, or organization that collects online information to use on a specific website or share with others.

Many content aggregators do this work by using keywords that help locate certain information. The information is compiled into assigned formats and used for personal reasons or shared. Professional content aggregators often fall into two fields: those who are hired to search online for certain information and those who make money by finding certain information and then selling it to others.

Content aggregation in its early forms is not a new phenomenon. Certain early websites, such as AOL, included a way to source and distribute content from other sites. Examples today include Internet news sites, Google News, Yahoo, and various social media outlets that allow for niche topics. The process of finding obscure references and information involving certain content is not easy. That is why until the last few years, it has been difficult to perform content aggregation well without an investment in tools that crawl and identify content.

Those who gather content with the express purpose of passing it on to customers are part of a process that can be labeled as syndication. Many companies offer this type of service. They include Moreover, iSyndicate, and ScreamingMedia.

A potential problem with content aggregation is plagiarism. The process can often appear as the theft of content. Therefore, aggregators should take specific steps to collect content for their audience in a legal manner.

Denae D'Arcy

See also Aggregator News Search; Really Simple Syndication; Search Engine; Search Engine Optimization; Website

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis represents the blending of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies focusing on messages. It provides users with an ability to take the qualitative message and quantify it using percentages and frequency counts. Further, content analysis can be used as a measurement tool. Content analysis is used quite extensively in public relations evaluation to better understand messages and how key people (e.g., editors and reporters) react to those messages; however, that use is typically in a

more informal, simple analysis. Hence, content analysis probably is best considered a qualitative public relations research method. Any type of content can be analyzed, including interviews, focus group discussions, editorials, television programming, and news releases, to name a few.

As a method, content analysis provides a way of systematically evaluating message content. If, for example, practitioners were interested in gauging news coverage regarding a promotional event, they might find all newspaper stories relating to that event and subject the stories to a content analysis. They might specifically want to see if the print media picked up a press release and, if published, how it was treated. A content analysis provides a way to evaluate the release's reach—how many papers published it, which is calculated as a percentage or “score.” If all 10 papers in an area picked up the release, the release would have 100% reach. How the release was reported, however, requires additional analysis. The analysis might focus on where the release was printed—which newspaper section, location on the page (above or below the fold, which quarter of the page, and so forth), the tone of the news article (positively reported, negatively reported, or neutrally reported), or the type of article (“straight” news, editorial, or column). Content analysis provides a way of evaluating the press release's impact on the event, albeit in a simplistic way.

Conducting a content analysis requires more than simple counting. The method is the most systematic of all qualitative methodologies and typically requires the practitioner to follow several steps. First, the practitioner must identify the type of content, establish the unit(s) of analysis, create a category system, obtain the messages, code the data in such a way as to quantify it, and establish coding reliability and validity. Each of these phases is critical in conducting and evaluating based on content analysis, especially since the creation of computer programs that can now conduct the mundane and time-consuming task of coding and counting.

Types of Content

Ole Holsti (1969) said there are two types of content that can be analyzed. *Manifest content* is the content physically observable in the messages. It is

simple and requires little analysis. For instance, manifest content might consist of a story's column inches or minutes of air time. It could be the number of times certain words or phrases were found in a story. *Latent content*, on the other hand, is not what is seen but what is unseen; latent content focuses on the underlying messages found in the message or the message's theme(s). Latent content might concern the tone of the message (positive, negative, or neutral), whether a particular theme was being followed through a campaign, or whether editorial content was good, bad, or neutral through a crisis. While manifest content is easy to code, latent content is more elaborate and often employs some measurement scheme or scale to evaluate the theme. Once the type of content is determined, the units to be coded must be determined.

Units of Analysis

Bernard Berelson (1952) suggested that content analysis employs five different units of analysis. A particular evaluation might focus on one or more of these units; the choice is determined by the questions asked. Four of Berelson's units focus on manifest content; in fact, he suggested that content analysis is best employed in evaluating manifest content. Berelson's manifest units are symbols or words, characters, items, and time and space measures; his latent content unit is the theme or thesis. *Symbols and words* are just what they appear to be: individual or company or event names, logos or trademarks, or articles of speech. *Characters* are units that describe such things as race, stereotypes, occupations, or personalities. *Items* are units that typically have a clear purpose, such as advertisements, editorials, television or radio programming, and forms of communication (e.g., newspapers, newsletters, and Internet chat rooms). *Time and space* measures include amount of air time given to a story, location within a newscast of a particular message, number of inches in an advertisement or story, or the physical size of a story, photograph, or advertisement. *Themes or theses* are units of analysis that must be analyzed and represent an underlying meaning; units, such as goodness, badness, sexuality, appropriateness, or fairness are latent thematic units of analysis. When latent content is being analyzed, the units must be specifically or operationally defined.

Category Systems

Once the content and units of analysis have been established, the content must be placed into appropriate categories. A good category system requires that each unit be placed in a unique category and that its placement not be dependent on other category systems. In creating a category system, the purpose of the research is reflected in the categories' meanings; the categories must be exhaustive—that is, all possible categories must be included and almost always include an “other” category; the categories must be independent of each other; and, finally, the category system must reflect a common classification system. Category systems are critical to content analysis reliability and must be defined precisely. A simple category system for adoption of a message includes the categories of “adopted” and “not adopted.” A thematic category system is more complex and requires that theme scales be created and evaluated; a fairness category might include scale items ranging from fair to unfair, negative to positive, and good to bad so that coders make decisions based on how the message was portrayed.

Obtaining Messages

Collecting and copying the actual content can be a time-consuming phase of a content analysis. If the messages are in print, they must be duplicated for analysis; if they are electronic, such as radio or television programming, they must be recorded and duplicated. When there are few messages and they are easily obtainable, then all messages are typically analyzed. When there are numerous messages, the population of messages is usually sampled. In sampling, a representative number of messages are randomly collected and analyzed. Suppose a practitioner wanted to evaluate if local newspapers picked up a press release. After identifying all the papers, each edition for a specified period of time is read and articles based on the release noted and copied. It is important that all editions of the papers are reviewed; some papers have more than one edition and the story may have been “bumped” from a later edition due to breaking news. Further, some papers may have special editions for different regions or neighborhoods. All this must be taken into consideration when obtaining the messages.

Coding

Coding occurs once the messages have been collected. A good content analysis employs at least two people other than the researcher who are trained in the category system to read each message and code the individual units of analysis into the coding system. Coding is as simple as counting the number of times a company's name appears in the media or as complex as determining whether that company's name is portrayed positively. In its simplest form, coding is the placing of the units into the appropriate category or, as in the case of a theme, placing a mark on a series of scale items.

Establishing Reliability and Validity

Coder reliability and validity is an important feature of content analysis. It is the only qualitative method that allows for an estimation of reliability and validity. Coding reliability, a prerequisite for validity, can be computed. Typical reliability estimates are reported using Holst's reliability coefficient or Scott's pi index. Both provide a reliability estimate from 0 to 100%; a coding reliability of at least 90% is desirable, meaning the coders agreed 90% of the time. To ensure that coding is being conducted in a reliable manner, the coders are often trained to code within an agreeable reliability. Coding validity is less quantifiable and is evaluated by the specification of the units of analysis (are they appropriate?), how the units were defined, and whether the category system meets the five criteria specified earlier.

Computer-Assisted Content Analysis

There are a variety of computer programs that perform the actual placement of messages into categories. Computer-assisted content analysis reliability is, however, still dependent on the decisions made by the researcher in creating the content analysis. The computer dependably counts the units as defined to it and places them in the categories if instructed, but if the units are inappropriate or the category system flawed, then the results are questionable. Computers have not proved very useful in thematic content analysis.

Don W. Stacks

See also Focus Group; Qualitative Research; Reliability; Sampling; Statistical Analysis; Validity

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CONTINGENCY THEORY

Contingency theory in public relations refers to the virtue of a strategic approach to decision making adjusted to desires or demands of publics. Contingency theories as a genre in the organizational arena argue that there is no single best way to lead or make decisions. Choices are contingent on factors important to each situation. The contingency theory in public relations features this approach in determining the stance or position of an organization in each organization–public interaction.

When introduced in 1997 by Amanda E. Cancel, Glen T. Cameron, Lynne M. Sallot, and Michael A. Mitrook, the concept of the contingency theory of accommodation in public relations was simplified to a tagline—“It depends.” How an organization interacts with its publics “depends” on or is contingent upon a variety of internal and external variables. Furthermore, that interaction or organizational stance is dynamic—it changes with the situation.

Background

The contingency theory in public relations had its genesis as an extension of concepts central to the excellence theory of public relations, which was developed by James E. Grunig and colleagues. Excellence theory was developed as a normative theory that proposed the most ethical and excellent practice of public relations employed two-

way symmetrical communication between an organization and its publics. Contingency theorists, led by Cameron, began to examine the positive (i.e., how public relations is practiced rather than how it should ideally be practiced) theoretical value of two-way symmetry, which they called pure accommodation.

Rather than proposing a single-best approach to public relations practice, contingency theory argued that public relations strategies are nuanced. Such nuance was developed around more than 80 variables that were based on internal (e.g., organizational culture, organization’s past experiences with the contending public, characteristics of the dominant coalition) and external (e.g., threats of litigation, degree of support for the organization, size and credibility of the contending public) forces that might be at play in an organization’s public relations decision making. These variables were further classified as situational and predisposing. Predisposing variables are those that exist prior to an interaction with a public and thereby predispose the organization to react in a certain way. Predisposing variables include items like organizational culture, the organization’s size, and individual characteristics of people involved. Situational variables are situation specific and include items like the urgency of the situation, the characteristics of the contending public, and potential or clear threats.

These variables, contingency theory posits, affect whether an organization accommodates a public or advocates solely the perspective of the organization. These stances run along a continuum with pure accommodation (i.e., capitulation to a public’s demand) at one end and pure advocacy (i.e., unyielding support for the organization’s position regardless of public pressure) at the other end. Contingency theory argues that the interplay of variables determines where on the continuum an organization positions itself in response to a public’s expectation in each situation.

Key Concepts

Stance

According to contingency theory, the stance an organization takes may run up and down the contingency continuum between pure accommodation and pure advocacy. Whether the organization–public relationship is collegial or adversarial, a position

or stance is taken regarding the most effective way to interact with the public. Stance likely changes as the relationship and external and internal organizational factors vary. In short, the stance an organization takes is influenced by the circumstances in which the organization finds itself.

Stance is further refined by contingency theorists as action-based accommodation or qualified-rhetorical-mixed accommodation. In action-based accommodation an organization may yield to a public's demands or enact a public's solutions. In qualified-rhetorical-mixed accommodation an organization may express regret or apologize for an action or make concessions to the public.

Accommodation and Advocacy

The continuum that visually illustrates the contingency theory has as its endpoints pure accommodation (making concessions to the other party exclusively) and pure advocacy (arguing the organization's own interests exclusively). Of course, either pure accommodation or pure advocacy is seldom the best stance for an organization to take; therefore, stance moves up and down the continuum between the two poles.

Dynamism

Public relations is a dynamic profession. In a world of microblogs, cameras on mobile phones, and a 24/7 news cycle, the situation an organization faces can change in an instant. Contingency theory accounts for this dynamism via its extensive list of descriptive variables and continuum.

Strategy

As noted above, stance is the central concern in contingency theory. The stance an organization takes in an organization–public relationship drives strategy and tactics. Obviously, given the same set of circumstances an organization that is taking a stance closer to pure advocacy will employ different tactics than if it takes a stance closer to pure accommodation. Perhaps persuasion or coalition building is employed when the stance is strong advocacy, while accommodation may simply require meeting with members of the public to explain how their request is accommodated.

Conflict Management

Contingency theory in public relations was initially labeled the contingency theory of accommodation. As scholars began testing and extending the theory, it became clear that the theory was especially useful in describing stance and prescribing tactics when an organization was faced with conflict. Researchers labeled it the contingency theory of strategic conflict management. Today, much of the research embracing contingency theory involves conflict or crisis management. However, it is used in studies of both conflict and collaboration.

Extensions and Applications

Proscriptions

Six proscriptions to accommodation were tested in an effort to bring some parsimony to the unwieldy matrix of variables outlined in contingency theory. In interviews with public relations executives, the proscriptions were identified. Moral convictions, trying to appease multiple publics, being constrained by regulatory bodies, internal organizational jurisdictional issues, attitudes of top management, and being constrained by legal counsel were all identified as proscriptions to accommodate to a public's demands.

Emotions

Not only do the contingency variables affect stance, but scholars have also demonstrated that so do the cognitive and affective responses of the players involved. An emotion-laden contingency model is illustrated by a plane rather than a continuum. Emotional tone, weight, and temperature of a variable can have an additional effect on accommodation. For example, perhaps the internal factors of business exposure and past experience with the contending public are in play, but while the business exposure is substantial, the emotional baggage that accompanies a bad past experience with the public in question gives greater weight to past experience as it affects organizational stance.

Threat Appraisal Model

More recently contingency theory has been extended by development of a threat appraisal

model. This model employs the contingency theory matrix of variables to identify threats to an organization and prescribe appropriate messaging or stances.

Contingency theory has been used to identify organizational stances in a crisis and examine the interaction of legal and public relations counsel in litigation public relations. Contingency theory has been tested and developed in international settings, notably China and Korea.

Critique

Throughout the development of the contingency theory in public relations, some critics have argued that it is nothing more than an extension of excellence theory. While development of contingency theory may have begun as a means to examine the stance of two-way symmetry as normative, its extensive empirical testing and extension since 1997 have carved out its own niche as a theoretical perspective on the practice of public relations.

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See also Accommodation: Contingency Theory;
Advocacy; Excellence Theory

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CONTROL

Control is one of several variables basic to many scholarly disciplines and a basic theme of best practices of public relations. Such is the case because control is fundamental to human existence. People want control over matters relevant to their health, safety, and general well-being. They try to minimize risks or otherwise control them, for example, by acquiring specific knowledge and learning special skills. They may take driver's education to master the operation of an automobile. That knowledge and skill allows them to calculate and adapt to the behavior of other drivers and pedestrians. Traffic rules are created and enforced as a means for controlling the flow of traffic and the operation of vehicles.

Society is composed of many professional roles, such as fire and police personnel, who are expected to assist citizens' efforts to control events in their daily routines. Chefs seek to control the quality of

food. Plumbers work to control the flow of water. Electricians learn means for controlling electricity. The list goes on and on. And, it suggests that control is not inherently bad and often is a positive factor in the quality of life. The challenge of “control” comes into focus when one or more entity works to control another. Even that is not inherently bad. Parents control the movement of infants and children for their safety. The issue is control that is unwanted, unwarranted, and undeserved.

Executive managements of companies want to control factors that enhance their chance of business success. Business entails risk taking; control is a regulative concept to increase the benefits of risk and minimize its harms. That is a basic principle of management. Financial reports announce controls; for example, cost control by technology innovation or personnel layoffs. Executives seek legislation and regulation that foster control over their enterprises. Bellwether companies often advocate, through industry trade associations or government agencies, higher operating standards that can reduce the likelihood that bad-apple companies damage the reputation of an industry by not being able or willing to exert appropriate controls. Or one industry seeks to control its operations by forcing controls onto other businesses. For this reason, the automobile insurance industry advocated more government regulation to achieve safer automobile designs. Such designs help reduce the business liability for insurance companies, as does stricter drunk driving legislation. Society benefits from the exertion of such control.

Products and services are advertised and promoted to help customers increase control over various aspects of their lives. Diet medications are touted to increase weight control; dental products to reduce tooth decay. Savings plans and insurance policies give people more control over their financial future.

On the other side of the coin, activism arises from a desire on the part of citizens—stakeholders—to control aspects of their life. Environmental activists believe that businesses (and various governmental agencies) exert either too much or too little control over their operations in ways that damage the environment. Thus, activists want to control corporate management through legislation, regulation, litigation, or consumer pressure.

Nonprofit organizations serve society by exerting control to solve societal problems where

businesses or government fails to meet the challenge, creates the challenge, or needs special values or skills to meet the challenge. The Red Cross works to help people restore control over their lives when disaster occurs. Health-oriented nonprofit organizations, such as the March of Dimes raise money and apply it to research, therapy, and prevention, to control disease or reduce its impact on individual lives and community health. Fundraising is an essential nonprofit activity seeking to bring stakeholders together to exert control in the interest of the community.

Because control is a central part of human experience, it is vital to the theory and practice of public relations. The concept has received substantial discussion by scholars as well as practitioners. It has strategic and ethical implications for the ways organizations operate and foster relationships with their stakeholders.

The history of public relations is inseparable from the desire and ability of various organizations or persons to direct and control the opinions and behaviors of others. Organizations must be able to control their activities and predict how others respond accordingly. Thus, companies seek to attract customers to help them control—bring order to—their business activities for orderly, well-managed operations. Organizations of all kinds, for instance, want to control the efforts of employees. They want to direct, regulate, and coordinate those activities. One rationale for employee communication is that it helps organizations manage the time and talents of employees to accomplish collectively a specific mission. In contrast, a fundamental motive for activists of all kinds is to oppose efforts by a company, for instance, to exert a level of control in some manner that offends the values, interests, and opinions of activists. In this sense, even labor unions can be activists trying to exert control against management over wages and working conditions.

Interpersonal communication theory and research offer insights into the nature of control and the role it plays in human communication. Carried to an extreme, control can equate with domination that is likely to harm relationships and, in the case of public relations, motivate opposition rather than support by stakeholders. Under the best circumstances, control should be a comfortable balance between the power exerted and

preferred by all parties in a relationship. For this reason, public relations can be practiced as relationship management, based on many factors, including the alignment of interests.

Writing on interpersonal relationships, Frank E. Millar and L. Edna Rogers (1987) featured control as one of three concepts central to the quality of a relationship. The other two concepts are trust and intimacy. Trust and intimacy are relevant to the sorts of relationships public relations practitioners work to build on behalf of clients and employers. Trust refers to a person's or organization's ability and willingness not to exploit or take advantage of the vulnerability of parties engaged in a relationship. Intimacy includes liking. The equation is simply this: Control wisely used builds trust and fosters liking. Organizations must use control strategically and collaboratively as they work to build trust and to be liked—supported—rather than opposed.

Control entails the right and ability of parties to a relationship to define, direct, and limit the actions that transpire to build the relationship and results from the ways participants act toward each other as a consequence of the relationship. Trust results from the responsible use of control. In relationships, each party is vulnerable to the other in various ways. Trust results when each party is willing to support rather than oppose the other and to avoid taking advantage of the other party's vulnerability. Dominance is a function of the willingness and ability of one party to influence outcome and to exert power, without opposition.

Since control is a function of codefinition and relationship development, it is a matter of perception and relationship comfort. The balance between the controls exerted by each party in a relationship is subject to the perceptions and expectations of each party. Various publics, for this reason, may feel comfortable with the amount of control being exerted, for example, by a company or a government agency, whereas other publics may believe that too little or too much control is exerted.

One rationale for public policy battles is the clash over appropriate amounts of control. Activists, for instance, seek to increase their control over corporate activities by increased amounts of regulation or legislation—even litigation. Stakes are a power resource held by the parties in a relationship. Customers hold the stake of buying power. Activists hold the stake of legislative influence.

Companies hold the power of legislative influence as well as their ability and willingness to control their operations as others expect of them. For this reason, issues management has a lot to do with the clash over the dynamics of the public policy arena that lead to or away from the use of control to regulate the affairs of each society.

One remedy to control conflict is for organizations to be more willing to share control with stakeholders thereby leading to aligned interests. Another remedy is to increase controls (such as raising engineering and operating standards to reduce environmental emissions) or to use control for the community interest rather than for the narrower self-interest of the organization or industry.

Another dimension of public relations and control is the role of crisis management and response. A crisis occurs when an organization fails to exert the appropriate amount or type of control over its activities. Crisis management and response entails an organization either recognizing and acknowledging how it must control its activities or suffering a remedy imposed from the outside. One classic crisis management response is to discuss the reason for the crisis, looking to determine whether the organization exerted appropriate amounts of control in the public interest. Such analysis, as lessons learned, can lead an organization to reduce the recurrence of a crisis by learning what control measures reduce the risk that led to the crisis.

Risk communication is a challenge for organizations that create risks and/or are expected to manage and mitigate them in the “public” interest. They are expected to share information that can help stakeholders to understand the risk and determine whether the organization is exerting appropriate controls. This dimension of risk management and communication was very much at play on the part of the airline industry after the terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Airlines were faulted for not exerting appropriate control over what passengers could bring onto airlines, what weapons they could obtain within the airplane, and the ease with which they could gain access to the cockpit.

Control tells a lot about a relationship, and for this reason it is essential to understanding the role and practice of public relations. People expect organizations to exert control appropriate to their role in society. Stakeholders seek to right situations

when they believe a lopsided amount of control exists in a relationship. Public relations practitioners see value in understanding and positioning organizations to foster all stakeholders' sense of what is good for the community, a matter of public interest, and achieved through collaborative decision making.

Robert L. Heath

See also Activism; Crisis and Crisis Management; Fundraising; Investor Relations; Issues Management; Labor Union Public Relations; Public Interest; Public Policy Planning; Publics; Relationship Management Theory; Risk Communication; Stakes; Symmetry; Trade Associations; Trust

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CONVERGENCE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Media convergence refers to several concurrent phenomena: the increasingly blurred boundaries between different media content and delivery formats, the ability to concentrate access to multiple communication technologies in a single device, and the concentration of cross-media ownership and control that began with deregulation in the United States in the mid-1980s. Together, these forces are transforming the global communication landscape and thus have profoundly affected the field of public relations.

From the standpoint of content and technology, much of what has been written about convergence focuses on what media scholar Henry Jenkins referred to as the “Black Box Fallacy,” the idea that we will someday rely on a single communication appliance for all of our needs. As he pointed out,

this fallacy conflates the notion of media content with delivery systems. As the proliferation of devices available for home, mobile, and professional use shows, today's technological capabilities instead make it possible to produce a vast range of items that people can choose from to suit their peculiar needs in different contexts.

Media content is converging in the sense that, for example, a newspaper is just as likely (if not more so) to exist in electronic form as printed on paper; television can be broadcast, transmitted via subscriber cable systems, or uploaded to servers for on-demand online viewing. Furthermore, one might view a particular program—for example, *The Daily Show*—in multiple ways: on cable television, on the television channel's own website and YouTube channel, or on a dedicated site, such as Hulu. The producers can also make clips available for sharing, so that individual content producers can display them along with other content, ranging from a news aggregation site, such as The Huffington Post, to a personal blog, to social networking sites, such as Facebook. The technological convergence described above means that media consumers can view the episode or clip on devices ranging from a traditional television set to a personal computer to a mobile phone, and that viewing may happen at virtually any point in time.

Convergence has numerous implications for public relations practice and scholarship. Practitioners need to be conversant in the production and delivery of media across a broad range of platforms to effectively reach stakeholders. Audience and stakeholder engagement measures face new challenges, as stakeholders may consume organizational messages in one format or on one platform and share, comment, or organize a response via another. While this ability by users to detach the media content from its original context is often encouraged as a sign of stakeholder engagement, it also leads to a loss of control by media producers, who can no longer dictate the specific circumstances in which the media is consumed. As a reaction, consolidated media companies may place demands or restrictions on multiplatform content to maximize profits and viewership of their various properties. The long-term archiving and searchability of any media content stored electronically also means that people may be exposed to content long after it was originally produced, which can make it

difficult for individuals or organizations to leave negative situations behind, even if they have changed considerably since the recorded incident.

Practitioners must therefore take all of these challenges into account when developing and implementing messaging strategies and determining how to measure their effectiveness. For example, many organizations find that mobile apps are an effective means for bringing information and content into the hands of stakeholders to build and maintain relationships. Platform and technology ownership of various channels can play a role in determining patterns of power and influence, such as the interdependencies among Google's search, social networking, document-sharing, and mobile Android spheres, which may affect the visibility and diffusion of content distributed via these channels compared to other means. Policies for the distribution of user-produced apps also vary based on the technology used, meaning that public relations professionals need, more than ever before, to be aware of stakeholder behaviors and preferences when deciding which platforms to include in any communication strategy.

Despite the difficulties posed, the ability to effectively leverage multiple convergent media can allow practitioners to maximize opportunities for reaching and engaging in productive dialogue with stakeholders. The consolidation of mass media coincided with an abundance of platforms for user-generated content; as a result, many organizations are developing and distributing their own media products. The field of media relations is therefore shifting dramatically, as traditional placements become both more competitive and more concentrated. Video, audio, and electronic production skills are in great demand among new hires, in addition to the traditional emphasis on writing and strategic thinking, as public relations firms and departments are becoming increasingly responsible for producing and distributing multimedia and cross-platform content, often on short notice and a limited budget.

For their part, researchers are also increasingly willing to ignore previously distinct boundaries between media channels, treating the media landscape as a system that crosses delivery technologies as well as social contexts, in order to understand the communication environment in which public relations is practiced today. In studying communication

by or about organizations or issues, it can be overly limiting to focus on a single medium, while at the same time the complexity of the convergent mediascape can make it difficult to employ traditional research techniques. For example, the same content may be posted several times, in different contexts, perhaps in some combination of visual and text-based media, which can complicate data collection. Scholars now also face new questions concerning the sharing and consumption habits of content by stakeholders, raising epistemological questions about the relative roles and patterns of influence among media producers, consumers, and technology companies.

Given the social and economic pressures urging organizations to cater to a diverse array of stakeholder communication preferences, and technological advances that simplify the diffusion of information across multiple media, convergence is bound to play an increasingly important role in the design and implementation of public relations strategies and the development of new cross-platform research methods.

Dawn R. Gilpin

See also Media Culture and Public Relations; Media Relations; Mobile Technology and Public Relations

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CO-OPTATION

Co-optation is a strategy used by dominant institutions or organizations to respond to and potentially neutralize activists who threaten to

disrupt the dominant group. The strategy takes a variety of forms, but essentially involves the more powerful organization creating the appearance that it shares the less powerful group's aims, granting some concessions, or sharing power with the less powerful group. The effect is that the activists appear to have earned a compromise or even outright victory, but the underlying behavior of the dominant organization remains unchanged. Co-optation is related to public relations because the strategy often involves communication or forming new patterns of relationships. In critical studies of public relations, co-optation is viewed as a way in which unfair power relationships in society are perpetuated. However, some of the tactics associated with co-optation may actually be good faith efforts by organizations to create symmetrical relationships with activist publics.

Co-optation can take many forms. One of the more common strategies is to identify the organization's opponents and their issues, then invite leaders of the opposition to meet with the organization under the guise of working together to address those issues. Indeed, there might even be plans formulated and partnerships forged. For example, the Sierra Club accepted over \$25 million in donations from Chesapeake Energy Company, a major natural gas producer, to fund the Club's "Beyond Coal" campaign. While many environmentalists support natural gas as a cleaner alternative to coal, the process of extracting natural gas from shale involves some environmentally questionable techniques, such as hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"), which may harm water supplies. During the period that the Sierra Club received the donations, its executive director was a vocal advocate for natural gas. Once the donations were revealed, the Sierra Club severed its ties with Chesapeake Energy but still faced questions from its supporters. Partnerships formed under this type of co-optation typically are widely publicized, and the corporation can claim that it is working with activists to achieve shared goals (e.g., protecting the environment). However, in the long run, the underlying operations of the company are largely undisturbed.

Other forms of co-optation involve borrowing the symbols or language of activist movements to make the dominant organization appear to be cooperating with activists' demands. Some environmentalists have accused corporations of "greenwashing"

their products. Environmentalist Andy Rowell offered the examples of "environmentally friendly" automobiles and "ozone friendly" aerosols that while appearing to be responsive to the problem of air pollution actually mask other environmentally damaging corporate practices. Related to this is the use of front organizations with names that make them sound like grassroots citizens groups, but which are funded by corporate interests. For instance, Americans Against Food Taxes is an organization largely funded by the soft-drink industry to oppose efforts by some childhood obesity advocates to tax sugared drinks.

Some activists even cast suspicion on the process of dialogue between corporations and activists, claiming that corporations use discussion as a delaying tactic. This suspicion creates a double bind for corporations that work in good faith to resolve issues with activists. On the one hand, dialogue is an important component of symmetrical relationships with activists; on the other hand, some activists see dialogue as the first step toward co-opting the movement.

Michael F. Smith

See also Activism; Astroturfing; Front Groups

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CO-ORIENTATION THEORY

Co-orientation occurs when two or more individuals are simultaneously oriented to one another and to something of mutual interest. The assumption is that individuals behave toward each other based on their *perceptions* of the other's views and intentions regarding the object of mutual interest.

For example, after Senator George J. Mitchell returned from one of his many trips to Ireland and Great Britain in his role as mediator, he described the difficult environment in existence when he was trying to help forge the Northern Ireland Peace Accord: "Each side acts based on its assumption that the other side will not keep its promises" (Mitchell, 1999, n.p.).

Groups of individuals, then, also act toward other groups based on perceptions of other groups' views, positions, and intentions. Similarly, organizations and their publics deal with each other based on the collective perceptions of the other's views.

Organization–Public Agreement Versus Perceptions of Agreement

Typically, public relations practitioners use public opinion surveys to determine public knowledge and opinion related to issues important to their organizations. The results are used to determine differences between organizational orientations and positions on issues and those held by various publics. Some refer to the process as "gap analysis," meaning the differences are seen as measures of *agreement* between organizations and publics. Agreement, then, is a measure of how similar or dissimilar an organization's views are to those held by various publics.

Using what is often called a "public relations audit," practitioners first determine "what we think." Second, they attempt to measure or to estimate "what 'they' think" (publics). Third, they assess the magnitude and seriousness of differences between organization and public views. A public relations problem exists when gaps are found, leading to a recommended public relations program to "close the gaps"—to increase agreement between the orientations held by an organization and those held by its publics.

In such cases, public relations strategy typically represents a program of action and communication

(usually dominated by persuasive communication). Implicit to such an approach is the assumption that a public's opinion of and its behavior toward an organization are determined by the magnitude of the gaps—the level of agreement or disagreement. Additionally, there is an assumption that if the gaps are small or there are no gaps, then public opinion and behavior are consistent with organizational needs and views of public interest. Both assumptions are easily challenged.

Actual Agreement Versus Perceptions of Agreement

First, the extent of actual agreement or disagreement usually is not known either to those in an organization or to members of a public, as accurate information is seldom available. Consequently, both sides in organization–public relationships behave toward and react to the other based on their *perceptions* of the others' views and *perceptions* of how close they are to their own views. As T. J. Scheff (1967) pointed out in his explication of "consensus," (a) perceptions of agreement can be independent of the level of actual agreement, (b) the level of actual agreement is not known to those involved, and (c) perceptions of agreement affect the behavior of those involved in a relationship.

Using measures of actual and perceived agreement, Scheff (1967) defined *monolithic consensus* as actual high agreement that is accurately perceived by a majority of those involved. He defined *dissensus* as the state when actual disagreement is perceived accurately by the majority. Accuracy is the key variable, however, as *false consensus* represents a state of actual disagreement that is inaccurately perceived as high agreement. Similarly, Scheff called the state when actual high agreement is perceived as disagreement *pluralistic ignorance*. When those involved have inaccurate perceptions of others' views, they behave inappropriately toward them based on what they erroneously believe to be the others' orientation.

To avoid inappropriate public relations responses and strategies based on misperceptions, organizational intelligence gathering must discern the cross perceptions held by both sides in organization–public relationships. The J. M. McLeod and S. H. Chaffee's (1973) interpersonal model describes how two individuals are simultaneously oriented to an object and to each other—"co-orientation"

(pp. 483–485). Their model extended previous attempts to describe relationship states by incorporating R. F. Carter's (1965) notions of "salience" and "pertinence" (pp. 203–204). *Salience* represents an individual's summary evaluation of the object of orientation. *Pertinence* is the individual's object-by-object comparisons based on attributes that objects have or do not have in common. In other words, an individual's orientations comprise both evaluations and definitions of objects (the top boxes in Figure 1). In addition, an individual holds perceptions of how the other evaluates and defines the object of mutual concern (the bottom boxes in the model).

The parallel orientations and cross perceptions are used to calculate both intrapersonal and interpersonal co-orientational variables (represented by the arrows in the model). *Congruency*, or perceived agreement, represents the extent to which Individual A's own views are similar to A's perceptions of Individual B's views. This intrapersonal variable clearly does not take into account the other person's actual views but surely serves as the basis of A's responses and strategy for dealing with the other person.

Interpersonal *agreement* indexes the similarity of A's and B's views—both salience and pertinence—held by the parties. *Accuracy* measures the extent to which A's estimate of B's views are similar to B's actual views. The interpersonal model can be adapted to public relationships by substituting an organization and one of its publics for the "individuals" more typically conceptualized in the model.

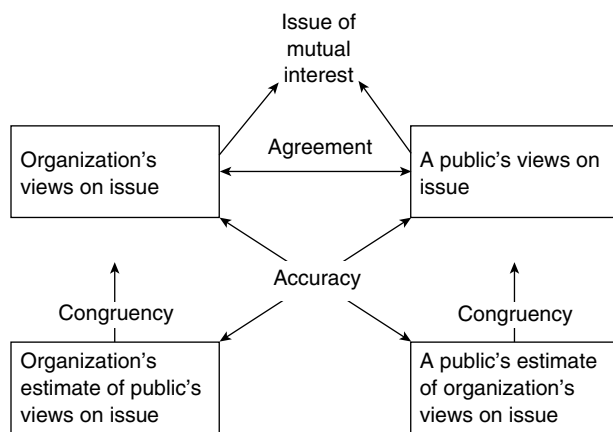


Figure 1 Co-Orientation Model

Source: Adapted from McLeod, J. M., & Chaffee, S. H. (1973). Interpersonal approaches to communication research. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 16(4), 484.

Intraorganizational congruency represents the dominant views within the organization of how close or far apart organizational views (salience and pertinence) are from perceptions of the views held by one of its publics. *Intrapublic congruency* indicates the extent to which a majority of a public perceives a difference between public views and those held by the organization. How the organization deals with its publics and how a particular public deals with the organization are a function of their respective levels of congruency—perceived agreement or disagreement.

Organization–public agreement takes on two values—the extent to which an organization and one of its publics hold similar evaluations of the object or issue of mutual interest and the extent to which they hold similar definitions of the object or issue. For example, even if an organization and one of its publics share similar evaluations of an issue, they may not agree on the details of the issue. Or they may agree on the specific attributes of the issue but disagree on its valence or importance. In most cases, disagreement on either evaluation or definition of issues of mutual interest creates public relations problems.

Organization–public accuracy represents the extent to which an organization's estimate of public views matches that public's actual views and vice versa. Chaffee and McLeod argued that "perfect communication" . . . would not necessarily improve agreement . . . might well reduce congruency . . . (but) should always improve accuracy . . . to the point where each person knows precisely what the other is thinking" (1970, p. 9). Likewise, effective public relations two-way communication leads to high accuracy for both organizational players and those in the target public.

Describing Co-Orientational Relationships

Co-orientational measures of organization–public relationships require data on the following:

1. How organizational management defines and evaluates the issue
2. What organizational management thinks about how each of the target publics defines and evaluates the issue

3. How each of the publics defines and evaluates the issue
4. What each of the publics thinks about how organizational management defines and evaluates the issue

These data—the boxes in the model—are necessary for calculating the co-orientational variables—the arrows in the model.

Beyond describing the levels of agreement, congruency, and accuracy separately, one can combine these variables to describe relationships. The 1967 typology of consensus by Scheff, although not originally intended for this purpose, serves as a model for defining organization–public relationships from the perspectives of the parties involved.

For example, if organizational management and most of a particular public have similar evaluations and definitions of an issue of mutual concern, and they both recognize that they agree, then they have achieved the state of *consensus*. If the organization and its public do not agree on either the evaluation or the definition of an issue, and they accurately recognize that they disagree, then the state is *dis-sensus*. These represent the states of accurate cross perceptions. However, two qualifications apply: (1) agreement or accuracy may not apply equally to both the evaluations and definitions of the issue of mutual interest, and (2) agreement or accuracy may not be shared, thereby producing consensus or dis-sensus from the perspective of only one side of the relationship.

In a case of *false consensus*, one or both sides may think that there is a higher level of agreement than actually exists. Even though there is low agreement on the issue, one or both sides of the organization–public relations perceives high levels of agreement . . . and behaves toward the other based on those inaccurate perceptions. Eventually a critical incident forces a reality check, thus revealing the actual level of disagreement. Lost time and false starts are the costs of these relationships.

Likewise, if one or both sides perceive higher levels of disagreement than actually exist, then the relationship could be referred to as *false conflict* (Scheff's "pluralistic ignorance"). In this state of low accuracy, the actors think—and act—as though they disagree, developing needless strategy based on the perceived disagreement—avoiding,

challenging, undercutting, and criticizing each other. Without outside intervention and facilitation, the parties involved may never develop appropriate strategies for dealing with one another. Waste and lost opportunities are the costs of these relationships.

The public relations problems that result from each of these states call for significantly different strategies. If the organizational actors and a public hold different evaluations or definitions of an issue, a persuasion strategy may be necessary—both inside and outside the organization. If they do not recognize that they agree or disagree, then an information-sharing intervention can increase accuracy.

Absent data on the true state of actual and perceived agreement, public relations strategy—just like behavior in interpersonal relationships—may be unnecessary or inappropriate. One can imagine effort and resources wasted on programs designed to persuade publics to accept positions to which they already subscribe. Alternatively, one can imagine situations in which publics protest imagined or rumored organizational positions that do not accurately represent the organization's actual stance, which might be in accord with those of the publics.

Early co-orientational studies in public relations explored relationships among internal organizational publics, between schools and their community constituencies, and between public agencies and their publics. Recent studies using co-orientational designs analyzed relationships between public relations practitioners and lawyers, as well as between government and corporate practitioners.

The imagery of co-orientational relationships again makes clear the important role of research in public relations. Framing responses to publics and formulating strategy for building and maintaining relationships demand that public relations counsel is informed about the actual and perceived levels of agreement on both sides of organization–public relationships. Accuracy is the critical variable, not agreement.

Glen M. Broom

See also Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Relationship Management Theory

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COPY

Copy is written text that will be printed. It may be informative or persuasive in nature. It can be used in reference to articles that appear in newspapers or magazines. It can also refer to the text of advertising.

In the context of public relations, copy may take many forms. These include press releases, fact sheets, backgrounders, brochures, newsletters, reports, speeches, position papers, and press statements. When writing copy, public relations practitioners must be mindful of the interests of the organizations they represent as well as the needs of their publics.

In order to write good copy, public relations writers must understand the organization and its

purpose for communication and know the public for whom the piece is written. To do this, the practitioner must be certain that the copy answers all pertinent questions while emphasizing the points the organization believes to be most important. To write copy well, it is important to possess an intimate knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation, appropriate capitalization, appropriate abbreviations, and language usage. In addition, good copy is accurate, brief, and clear. It is essential for a writer to be accurate because mass audiences tend to believe what they see and read in the media.

Practitioners are ethically bound to disseminate only that information that is factual and correct; often, their credibility and reputation depend on it. Most writers are limited to a certain amount of space, as measured by column inches or pages, and therefore learn the merits of brevity.

Last, clarity is an important goal because it helps mass audiences to understand the writer's intent. Copy usually follows a particular stylebook, whether that of the organization or a commonly used one, such as *The Associated Press Stylebook*. Stylebooks effect consistency by establishing rules for items, such as correct word usage, weights, measures, capitalization, titles, and abbreviations. Stylebooks should not inhibit creativity, but rather enhance readability via consistency.

Well-prepared copy adheres to the elements of news value, such as timeliness, consequence, prominence, and proximity. Many public relations practitioners follow the inverted pyramid style in their writing as do journalists. When using the method, copy is presented with the most important information first and additional information introduced in descending order. This style is followed in the hopes that it grabs an editor's attention and the piece is published. In addition, it ensures that the most important information is not cut if space is limited. Editing and rewriting are integral parts of the writing process and help writers to meet the goals of providing factual information that is brief and clear while adhering to stylebook rules.

Brigitta Brunner

See also AP Style; Stylebook; Writing

COPYRIGHT

Before the European Enlightenment, there was no concept of copyright. It was the product of a shift from seeing knowledge as divine revelation to seeing knowledge as created by people. In the 1500s, the issue of ownership of intellectual property was largely moot because of the licensing system, because the government granted a monopoly to printing companies, and authors had little say in the matter if they wanted to be published. With the decline of licensing arrangements (in part because of an increasing resistance to censorship), and with both an increasing literacy and a resultant increasing demand for knowledge, the issue of ownership took on greater importance. Two justifications were offered for copyright protection for authors—natural rights and utilitarianism. The natural rights justification was that people had a natural right to dispose of, and benefit from, the product of their labor, whether mental or physical. The utilitarian justification was that copyright was the best means of encouraging the development of new knowledge that benefited society. The first copyright statute in the Western world, the Statute of Anne (1710), was a compromise between the two positions as its full title indicates—“A Bill for the Encouragement of Learning and for Securing the Property of Copies of Books to the Rightful Owners Thereof” (Hesse, 2002, p. 38). The basis of United States copyright law, the federal Constitution, has a similar approach. As set forth in Article 1, Section 8, Congress has the power to “promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.”

What can be copyrighted are “original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression, now known or later developed, from which they can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated, either directly or with the aid of a machine or device” (1997, 17 U.S.C. §102[a]). This includes literary works, musical works, dramatic works, pantomimes and choreographic works, pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works, motion pictures and other audiovisual works, sound recordings, and architectural works, but “any idea, procedure, process, system, method of operation, concept, principle, or discovery,

regardless of the form in which it is described, explained, illustrated, or embodied” cannot be copyrighted (1997, 17 U.S.C. §102[b]).

While it is intended that copyright is invested in the creator of the work, this is not the case for works for hire, either within the normal scope of employment or commissioned works. In these cases, the employer is considered the author. The parties involved in the employment situation may change this by contract.

Copyright exists from the time of the creation of the work and registration is not required. To register for a copyright, a completed application form, a filing fee, and two copies of the work (one if unpublished) are filed with the copyright office. Notice in the form of some sort of recognizable abbreviation or symbol, name of the copyright holder, and the date should be placed on the work in a noticeable place. Although registration or notice are not required, there are certain advantages to registration. For example, there may be pride of ownership in claiming the creative activity, certain copyright infringement actions cannot be initiated absent registration, and no statutory damages or attorney fees can be awarded without registration. Duration of the copyright depends on such items as time when granted, whether the copyright holder is an individual or a corporation, and so on. For individuals, generally the term of the copyright is the life of the author, plus 70 years.

Rights of the copyright holder include the right to reproduce the work, prepare derivative works, and distribute copies. In 1990, a provision was added to the Copyright Act on “moral rights” of the copyright holder, bringing the United States more in line with international copyright laws. Such moral rights include the right to claim authorship and the right to prevent intentional distortion and mutilation.

In spite of the rights of copyright holders, there are certain defenses to copyright infringements. Defenses include independent creation and, in certain situations, compulsory licensing on payment of royalties. It has been suggested that there might be a public need-to-know defense based on the First Amendment in such areas of news photographs or videotapes (Merges, Menell, & Lemley, 2009).

An often-used defense in copyright infringement suits is the fair use doctrine. This doctrine allows

for the “fair use” of copyrighted works for certain purposes, such as news reporting, scholarship, and teaching. In determining whether the use is fair, the courts look at the purpose and character of the use (e.g., nonprofit or not), the nature of the copyrighted work (e.g., unpublished or published, or workbook), amount and substantiality taken, and most important in the eyes of the law, the impact on the market for the copyrighted work. A good discussion of how these factors interact occurs in *Harper and Row Publishers, Inc. v. Nation Enterprises*, 471 U.S. 539 (1969), involving President Gerald Ford’s memoirs.

Somewhat analogous to copyright law is the law regarding trade and service marks. This is covered in the Lanham Act (1946, 15 U.S.C. §1051ff.). Among the differences between copyright and trade or service marks is that copyright protects expression whereas trade and service marks protect goodwill and reputation (Gower, 2003, pp. 96–100).

New technologies make copyright infringement easier to accomplish and harder to enforce. Various encryption systems were established to thwart unauthorized infringements and laws have been put in place to punish circumvention of such encryption devices, but infringements continue.

Knowledge of copyright law is important to public relations practitioners both in protecting their own creative product and in making sure that they don’t infringe on the rights of others.

Roy V. Leeper

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CORPORATE BRANDING

Corporate branding (sometimes referred to as corporate marketing) is defined as the application of typical branding constructs found in marketing to the entire organization, that is, the organization itself becomes the brand—the corporate brand. It has also been defined as the process of creating and maintaining a favorable reputation of the organization and its various components, by sending signals to stakeholders using the corporate brand.

Corporate branding recognizes the full range of organizational stakeholders and their expectations and influence; thus, it can be argued that corporate branding, while not another term for public relations, certainly encompasses the basic elements of the practice. It does not focus on customers, but rather multiple stakeholders, and one of its key attributes is building relationships with those stakeholders. It is in order to say that public relations is the management function that has primary responsibility for the corporate brand.

“Corporate” in corporate branding refers to the Latin *corpus*, meaning the body, and corresponds to the definition of an organization; a group of individuals who come together to meet a need or to pursue collective goals. Corporate branding therefore is applicable to any type of organization, such as nonprofit organizations, political parties, football clubs, and so on.

Corporate Branding: A Multidisciplinary Construct

The roots of corporate branding are acknowledged as based in marketing. However an increasing need for organizations to differentiate themselves on more than products, coupled with the growing number of communication channels, many of which are out of the control of the organization, have provided impetus for organizations to move from positioning products to positioning their entire enterprise toward not only consumers but all

stakeholders. The study of corporate branding has thus resulted in a viewpoint that it must move beyond the influence of marketing models and their emphasis on consumers. This is represented by corporate branding becoming a cross-disciplinary construct benefiting from several academic disciplines, including marketing, strategy, organizational theory, visual identity, and communication.

Viewed as a method for organizations to differentiate themselves by revealing the organization behind products, corporate branding is closely associated with a concept from organizational theory—organizational identity. Organizational identity provides the basis of defining what the corporate brand is by answering the questions of what is central, distinctive, and enduring about an organization. Thus, a corporate brand is composed of those unique attributes that differentiate one organization from another. The old paradigm of “you are what you sell” has been replaced with “you sell what you are.” This includes the organization’s heritage, assets and capabilities, people, values and priorities, its local or global frame of reference, citizenship programs, and performance record.

“Selling what you are” is captured in corporate identity—how organizations describe who and what they are. Corporate identity is how the communication discipline is captured in most literature on corporate branding and has been explained as the projection of organizational identity (the collection of attributes that members use to describe an organization) to primarily external stakeholders. This is done through the organization’s behavior, symbols (visual identity discipline), and communication. Communication in this context may be oral or visual, controlled, uncontrolled (as when employees communicate with stakeholders), and indirect, for example, media coverage. There is no doubt that the literature is describing the practice of public relations. However, it is very rare that corporate branding is explored to any great degree by public relations researchers or textbook authors.

By influencing overall evaluations of the firm, the corporate brand thus becomes a powerful stimulus for overall positive associations. Because managers often want to focus on organizational attributes that they view as the most important, the public relations function may end up projecting or communicating an intended image of the organization or the associations that the organization

wants the stakeholder group to have of the organization. This is sometimes referred to as the communicated identity and it is not always in sync with the actual identity. The fear of manipulation through communicating a desirable and not a real identity, resulting in false or inaccurate images, is a point of discussion within public relations. Because of the nature of corporate branding and the rise of multiple communication channels, many of which are out of control of the communication staff, this strategy is not sustainable. It is therefore imperative that vision, culture, and image are linked. This demands a multifunctional approach where all functions participate, including marketing, strategy, human resources, design, and communication.

Some examples of descriptions used by organizations to different stakeholders include the following: to employees: we are a good, safe place to work; to customers: we stand behind our products and services; to society: we are a good corporate citizen; to investors: our reports and forecasts are reliable; to insurers: we are a sensible risk; to government: because of our economic and social contribution, support us; and to regulators: trust our interpretation of and compliance with the law.

Corporate Branding Tactics

Almost all of the tactics used in corporate branding are found in public relations, including community outreach, corporate advertising, corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication, and certain types of sponsorship. Corporate advertising, paid-for messages placed by the organization telling about the organization, consists of image advertising and advocacy or issues advertising. Examples are general image or positioning ads that announce plant openings, mergers and acquisitions, and innovations, to name a few. Recruitment ads may fall into this category, such as advertising in student newspapers and supporting different events at schools. Similarly, advertising toward the financial sector is a way to release information on financial results or to generate investment.

With advocacy advertising, organizations can communicate their position on topical issues that may or may not be connected with their business activities. This may include taking a position on social or business issues, resolving misunderstandings or countering a negative editorial. Dove

injects social issues into its product advertising by letting consumers know that the firm promotes healthy body images. Shell and its Profits and Principles campaign is likely one of the largest campaigns of this type. The company would like consumers and other groups to believe that the company does its utmost to protect the environment, work with local populations, and have an open dialogue with its stakeholders. Ford and Rolex give out to individuals for personal excellence, respectively, the Heroes for the Planet award and the Spirit of Enterprise, either for environmental work or helping humankind. The companies then advertise in major international media about the granting of these awards featuring the recipients. This type of communication is also called CSR communication, a way to brand the organization as socially responsible. It communicates to stakeholders what the firm is doing that makes it unique and distinct in its social initiatives.

CSR communication might also include statements regarding value chain decisions, environmental compliance, women and minority issues, investment guidelines, support of local community, and so on. Other types of activities are sales promotion, such as purchase-triggered donations, which associate the organization's name with a good cause, such as the Red Cross or Save the Children. There is a large list of companies that are involved in causes or support nonprofit organizations based on their corporate social responsibility.

These types of associations generally receive a lot of scrutiny and many consumers are skeptical of them. Therefore, organizations (on both sides) must be careful when entering into these alliances. Companies must be extremely careful that they "walk the talk," as a legitimacy gap in this area can be disastrous for a noncommittal firm.

There is every reason to believe that corporate branding will be more and more on the agenda of public relations researchers as they catch up with the practitioner community. Public relations is all about helping organizations communicate with their stakeholders in order to help the organization meet its goals. Clearly, the public relations or communication function's main responsibility is taking care of the corporate brand. This requires a deeper understanding of organizational theory

and behavior, topics that are not always on the curriculum of many public relations education programs.

Peggy Simcic Brønn

See also Brand Equity and Branding; Organizational Identity and Persona; Reputation

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CORPORATE MORAL CONSCIENCE

Public relations is sometimes considered the "corporate conscience" because it helps others in management to know and give proper consideration of the concerns and interests of an organization's various publics. As part of their decision making, organizations need to be cognizant of their publics' concerns in order to provide equitable and just decisions. Including the concerns of publics in decisions is inherently ethical because ethical behavior can be determined by consequences on others. Public relations practitioners question the ethicality of decisions by asking the question, "How will our publics see this decision?" The public relations practitioner then acts as a counselor on how the decision and actions may affect the publics concerned, as well as the organization or client.

A conscience should guide behavior along accepted moral principles. Basic to the development of public relations in the 20th century, professionals and academicians attempted to position the practice as an integral part of the moral, social, or ethical conscience of organizations. Practitioners counseled organizations to be more transparent

and operate in ways that benefit society. Nevertheless, others have questioned whether public relations really plays or should play this role.

What Is a Conscience?

According to Sissela Bok (1999), the conscience “is seen as another, and more exacting, self” (p. 94). Bok advised those confronted with dilemmas to engage in a dialogue with their consciences. A conscience should provide guidance regarding what is best. However, defining what is best is the difficult part of ethics: Best could be defined through moral principles (duty and obligation), or best can be determined by desired consequences. Regardless of which paradigm is used, moral decisions should be justifiable to those affected by them.

Ethical decisions involve making choices concerning competing loyalties or values. The right decision should be influenced by moral principles so that they are explicable to affected parties and defensible from a rational perspective. Ethical decisions usually affect others and impact the quality of relationships between the decision makers and those affected by the decision, as argued by Shannon A. Bowen, Brad Rawlins, and Thomas Martin (2010). Because a primary function of public relations is to maintain relationships with strategic publics, public relations professionals should be concerned about the impact of organizational decisions on such relationships.

Historical Foundations of the Corporate Conscience Function

Ivy Lee was the first to develop a statement of principles, published in 1906, that was based on the idea of truthful communication. It encouraged transparency and mediation between corporate behavior and public expectations. Increasing public understanding became the bedrock of his counsel.

Arthur W. Page, named the first corporate vice president of public relations in 1927, endorsed telling the truth, listening to stakeholders, and matching action to talk. Page demanded the vice president position at AT&T, so he could be in a position to influence corporate policy. He believed that the impact of public relations was peripheral if limited to the spokesperson role. Page’s impact was in being an active voice in policy and action that

promoted integrity. His principle, “tell the truth,” meant to be truthful in all situations and to all publics: customers, employees, client, and boss.

John W. Hill was a pioneer in the idea of public relations acting as corporate conscience. Hill (1958) argued, “Good public relations has been called the corporate conscience—an indispensable attribute of modern and progressive business” (p. 173). He maintained that a corporation has a duty of acting with goodwill toward its publics; therefore, practitioners must counsel objectively toward that end. Hill advocated integrity, sound management policies regarding employees and consumers, and disclosure in the public interest. Hill argued that facts should drive public relations, not the other way around, and that people must know what a company is doing to approve of its actions. Hill believed that public relations could serve as a corporate conscience by helping establish policy that is ethical.

Why Public Relations Should Act as the Corporate Conscience

Scholars have called for public relations officers to act as the ethical consciences of their organizations. Although this role is often delegated to other organizational functions, such as legal, financial, or human relations, public relations can offer insight into the ethical decision-making process that other functions cannot. In fact, the following reasons suggest why public relations practitioners are those best suited in the organization to act as the corporate conscience.

Public and Defensible Decisions

Ethical decisions affect others, and as such, should be made public to those affected. John Rawls (1999) asserted that a moral decision, in order to be justifiable, must be able to be discussed and defended publicly. Rawls explained, “The point of the publicity condition is to have the parties evaluate conceptions of justice as publicly acknowledged and fully effective moral constitutions of social life” (p. 115). Steven Phelps Wall (1996) summarized this position by saying “citizens are owed an honest, publicly accessible justification” (p. 502).

Rawls argued that such justification begins with public discussion by those involved in the decision.

Public relations should be involved in facilitating the dialogue between management and stakeholders so that options for mutual gain can be discovered. The best situation is that in which public relations is used to design a mutually beneficial solution with publics and then presents that resolution to the public as required in Rawls's test of morality.

Obligation of Dialogue

Philosophers agreed that dialogue can enhance the ethics of communication because it reinforces the dignity and respect of both parties. Ron Pearson (1989) based his public relations ethics on the dialogical philosophy of Jürgen Habermas who emphasized the crucial function of dialogue in the public sphere as the means for discovering truth. Other communication scholars have equated ethics with dialogical public relations. James E. Grunig and Larissa A. Grunig (1996) included the obligation of dialogue as the rationale for symmetry as a way of satisfying that obligation. Robert van Es and Tiemo Meijlink (2000) argued that symmetrical communication is the "core concept" of dialogue (p. 69).

When not founded on moral principles, dialogue can lead to moral compromise and unethical decisions. In the symmetrical model of public relations, dialogue is used "to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both their organizations and publics" (J. E. Grunig, 2000, p. 12). If the changes enhance and protect the rights of publics, the result can improve ethical behavior. However, an organization could be pressured by some publics to act in a way that harms or violates the rights of others. Amanda Cancel, Michael Mitrook, and Glen Cameron (1999) raised the question of how an organization should deal with morally repugnant publics, particularly when it starts from a position based on morally defensible principles. For example, the civil rights movement illustrates that some decisions, while not popular, are ethical. Public acceptance is not a prerequisite for ethical behavior. Practitioners act as an ethical conscience when they seek principled options to decisions by consulting with key publics and weighing the merits of each interest. Kevin L. Stoker and Kati A. Tusinski (2006) argued that information exchange can lead to the recognition and reconciliation of differences so that an ethical outcome does not suffer moral compromise.

Shaping Values, Culture, and Behavior Through Communication

Public relations is the primary communication function in an organization, internally and externally. This means that public relations can be instrumental in shaping the values, culture, and behavior of an organization. The values of an organization are often expressed in a mission statement, ethics statement, or credo. Public relations practitioners often help to construct these documents as well as enact their tenets in organizational decision making.

Public relations practitioners can be instrumental in fostering an organizational culture that is sensitive to ethical concerns. Shaping the organizational values and culture to include ethically conscientious behavior and regular consideration of the moral implications of decisions can result in more responsible organizational behavior.

More Enduring Decisions Through a Systems Theory Approach

Public relations is uniquely situated to discover, learn, and understand the views of publics. In systems theory terms, public relations acts as a boundary spanner, collecting information from publics in the environment of the organization and using that information in organizational decision making. Acting as a boundary spanner between the organization and publics allows the public relations practitioner to form long-term relationships with publics and incorporate their views into decision making. This means that publics should be more satisfied with an organization that incorporates their ideas and values into its decision making.

Practitioners can enact a dual membership role in the organization and in groups in its environment. The practitioner works to educate each side on the views of the other, while learning the values and ideals of each. Two-way communication is essential because it allows communicators to gain knowledge of an issue from a perspective outside the organization and to incorporate that knowledge into decision making. Understanding the values and legitimate concerns of publics allows the practitioner to act as a moral conscience because it is considering the impact of the decisions on the affected publics.

Listening to publics' needs and concerns and responding to them is often overlooked but are

important functions of public relations when acting as the corporate conscience. When the views of publics are considered in decision making, those publics are respected by the organization, which furthers the relationship. These types of decisions are more enduring over the long term because publics build trust in the organization and see that their ideas can influence organizational policy. When the views of publics are not taken into consideration, the issue is often reopened to debate. Public relations practitioners who act as the corporate conscience and incorporate the values of publics into organizational policy can save the organization resources by resolving matters effectively.

Impediments to Acting as the Corporate Conscience

Even though “public relations professionals seem to be uniquely qualified and situated to gather data and to supply leadership and expertise that can help corporations develop effective and useful ethical standards,” they may not be playing that role (Heath & Ryan, 1989, p. 34). In a 2006 study by Shannon A. Bowen and colleagues, 29.8% of a worldwide sample of public relations practitioners reported that they were in the dominant coalition or reported directly to the CEO. Many of those discussed advising on ethical dilemmas on a regular basis. However, about 70% of that sample of 1,827 practitioners said they had little or no training in ethics. Ethics officers were more likely to be lawyers, human resource managers, or finance managers.

Bowen (2008) found that some practitioners were reluctant to fill the corporate conscience role. Their reasons included a dependency on legal rather than ethical guidelines, a lack of ethical training, limited access to the dominant coalition, and a general discomfort for moral arguments. According to research, each of these hurdles can be overcome. Earning inclusion in the dominant coalition to advise on issues, learning methods of moral reasoning, and understanding social responsibility to the community allow practitioners to effectively argue for the role of corporate conscience.

Public Relations as Corporate Conscience

The ever-growing mandate for corporate accountability and ethical responsibility illustrates that more ethical deliberation is needed in corporate

decision making. The public demand for corporate transparency beckons communication through public relations, so the time is ripe for public relations practitioners to enact the corporate conscience role. Even with this demand, much work remains to be done before practitioners are regularly sought after as a corporate conscience and commonly prepared to enact that role. Although public relations is ideally situated to act as the corporate conscience for the reasons outlined above, it often abdicates that position to other departments.

As research shows, public relations practitioners are generally seen as a corporate conscience late in their careers. More training in ethics is needed in public relations before the majority of practitioners feel adequately equipped to advise on ethical dilemmas, even at the midlevel of the organization. Several factors, such as age and reporting relationships, play a role in the practitioner's ability to function as the corporate conscience. Ethical sensitivity, or the ability to recognize the moral or ethical implications of a situation, also plays a role, as does prior practitioner training in ethics. Despite the difficulties associated with being able to function as the corporate conscience, public relations practitioners are filling this role at forward-thinking organizations, and the demand for ethical analysis conjoint with legal analysis is growing.

Cornelius B. Pratt (1991) confirmed that corporate ethics initiatives are “contingent on public relations practitioners who, as the consciences of their organizations, play an important role in ethical leadership” (p. 231). Ethical obligation demands that practitioners step forward to act as the corporate conscience. If they do not meet this challenge, ethical analysis is likely to lack the views of key publics or be limited to the legal or financial imperatives rather than moral ones, costing organizations losses of credibility and resources. By acting as the ethical conscience of an organization, public relations improves the responsiveness of organizations to their publics and helps contribute to the positive social role of business in society.

Shannon A. Bowen and Brad L. Rawlins

See also Deontology; Dialogue; Ethics of Public Relations; Excellence Theory; Habermas, Jürgen, on Public Relations; Mission and Vision Statements; Moral Development; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Page, Arthur W.; Symmetry

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The relationship between business and society is described through a variety of ways, such as corporate citizenship, but corporate social responsibility (CSR) remains among the most widespread concepts in politics, business, and academia. The notion primarily concerns how corporations should behave by factoring in concerns other than

profit-making. This entry first presents a brief historical overview before discussing various definitions of the concept and then the criticisms of same. The entry ends with a brief discussion of the role public relations can play.

Historical Development

That business should give back to society is a notion probably as old as the institution itself. The patronage activities of trade dynasties in Europe, such as the Medici, are often mentioned as a key early example. Originating in the Italian Renaissance, the Medici supported artists like Michelangelo and scientists like Galileo Galilei out of a genuine interest in the arts and sciences. While this type of patronage is discussed as a form of philanthropy, it is also recognized that the Medici used this strategic instrument to solidify and increase their power and improve their reputation.

Concern for the welfare of workers is another key theme that runs through history. In the 18th century, for instance, some European mining companies provided free medical care, pension schemes, and paid sick leave to their workers. The management style in smaller companies could often be described as patriarchal: the manager was seen to act as a father figure for the workers, shielding them from the workings of the free market system. At the societal level, protection and assistance from above was offered as reward for the humble loyalty of those from the lower rungs of society.

During the later industrial period, so-called company towns were founded both in Europe and the United States. There are examples of companies assuming financial responsibility for the construction and maintenance of the city church, bridges, roads, schools, even houses for the parish clerk and for the poor. This engagement could be motivated in part by a basic need to establish infrastructure where previously none had existed, or it could be based on paternalistic or political motives. In the United Kingdom, for instance, several such company towns were built to promote certain moral values but also to improve the working conditions for the employees. A healthy worker could be an effective worker. Some social welfare measures were also introduced in an effort to staunch the radicalization of the working class during the democratic revolutions that were spreading across the European continent.

The patronage activity of the business dynasties in Europe and the feudal tradition of *noblesse oblige* both find parallels in the U.S. philanthropy developed toward the end of the 19th century. In his essay titled *The Gospel of Wealth* (1889), business magnate Andrew Carnegie argued in favor of an obligation to help others after having satisfied the needs of oneself and one's family. The most well-known quote attributed to him reads: "The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced" (Carnegie, 1889, p. 665).

Some scholars nevertheless see philanthropic activities as a type of legitimizing strategy to be used in the wake of criticism or to circumvent any widespread assessments of business practices. A new form of critical journalism emerged in the United States, which focused on antisocial behavior, poor working conditions, and little consumer protection. Charity and philanthropy were the strategic response to such negative attention, as big businesses wanted to come across as a "good neighbor." During the 1920s and 1930s, this strategy on the part of U.S. business was implemented on a much larger scale and to greater effect than had been the efforts of individual business magnates during the previous century. The strategy succeeded in the sense that business was able to remove regulations and centralize industry despite heavy criticism of monopolistic tendencies, environmental damage, and wage slavery. European companies during the same period were often smaller as compared to their American counterparts, and the state and Church often succeeded in forcing them to look beyond the immediate goal of profit-making. When the modern European social welfare systems began to take shape in the 1920s, discussion surrounding the role of business in society fell out of the public sphere.

During the 1950s, business interests in the United States became so large and so powerful that their relationship with society was an increasingly common point of discussion. The contemporary publication mentioned most often was and remains *Social Responsibility of the Businessman*, by Howard R. Bowen (1953). Bowen argued that business should see beyond profit and loss and take on a responsibility in a wider sphere, consistent with the goal and values of society. What he called the doctrine of social responsibility implied that, if business took on this responsibility voluntarily, many of society's problems could be solved.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the concept of CSR gained a foothold in U.S. business. Again, this was mainly a reaction to criticisms leveled at business. Development was different in Europe, in part because the states played a larger role through welfare systems, and because they enforced stricter regulations. Nevertheless, discussion of CSR resurfaced in Europe during the 1980s and 1990s, due in part to the privatization of public enterprises occurring in several countries and in part due to the new wave of globalization. Many Western companies increased their activities abroad, often in new regions with democratic deficits, questionable human rights records, and widespread corruption. Companies also faced—and continue to face—increasingly daunting domestic challenges related to both the environment and corruption. Against this background, influential institutions, such as the United Nations and the European Union, moved to embrace CSR.

Definitions

Despite CSR having become a *lingua franca* of business and business politics, there is no dominant paradigm of CSR and no commonly agreed on definition. CSR can be defined narrowly as an obligation to pursue profits within the boundaries of society's rules and regulations. This is the minimalist definition advocated by free market liberals. A more common understanding sees CSR as a broad concept requiring that social and environmental concerns be factored into the equation, as well. Business must take into consideration—and seek to either avoid or rectify—the harmful effects of its activities beyond simply what the law requires. The latest definition put forth by the European Union, for instance, reads that CSR is the “responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society” (European Commission, 2011, p. 6).

A classic definition proposed by Archie B. Carroll (1979) asserts that the “social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time” (p. 500). A company must meet its responsibilities in the economic sphere—that is, toward its shareholders, employees, and customers. In the legal sphere, it is required that the company conducts its business within the framework of the law. Furthermore, it is

expected that companies do and will behave ethically, and it is *desired* that they engage in discretionary and philanthropic activities.

Calling attention to social expectations is a reminder that business earns its “license to operate” from civil society and must act in accordance with accepted social norms in order to prosper and survive in the long term. This definition also situates CSR within a historical context: Business conduct that was previously tolerated can now be criticized in the media, thereby illustrating the social and historical contextual nature of such expectations.

Corporate social responsibility can also be seen as a business strategy that helps corporations negotiate their relationships with the wider society. The strategy can include mapping and evaluating the demands of stakeholders and the development and implementation of actions and policies to meet—or ignore—such demands. Following this view, CSR addresses how corporations might handle economic, social, or environmental issues. This type of definition points to the management of externalities that corporations undertake on behalf of their stakeholders, while also illustrating the flexibility of the CSR concept as it allows for descriptive analysis.

It has also been pointed out that the well-being of business is dependent on the well-being of society. “Doing well by doing good” is a popular maxim that builds on the so-called business argument for CSR. The latter proposes that CSR pays for itself by, for instance, improving the company's reputation. A good reputation can attract customers, improve and secure employee satisfaction, attract investors, and create a halo effect, which in turn generates positive media coverage and autonomy. The business argument, however, has been notoriously difficult to prove.

Criticisms

The first criticism of the CSR concept as such came from those adhering to the previously mentioned narrow definition. Doing something that would not be profitable would be detrimental to society's use of the profit-maximizing institution that is business. It would, furthermore, amount to stealing from business owners. If any charitable actions should be taken, it should be at the discretion of

the owners, not the CEO. Another argument relates to the different roles in society. Politicians are elected in part to address problems in society, while business leaders lack the legitimacy to decide on social goals.

Most research seems to conclude that corporations engage in CSR out of concern for their reputation. Corporate social responsibility is thus a business strategy and a form of *long-term* profit maximizing. This has opened business up to other accusations, chief among them the notion that CSR cannot be seen as moral action—it is just an economic strategy, no different from any other in its base motivation. In other words, the instrumental use of CSR is to be questioned. Corporations should behave—period. Aside from such arguments steeped in the thinking of duty ethics, CSR has also been criticized as being an attempt to put a human face on capitalism. It is a form of manipulation, meant to draw attention away from the fact that little is actually done for the public good as a result of the harmful practices of business. Corporations pose as responsible corporate citizens and claim to contribute to sustainable development since they *attempt* to reduce their carbon footprint.

Some critics point to how profit is and will always be the overarching motive of corporations, which leads them to seek to externalize costs wherever possible. Corporations have a very limited economics-based rationality and it is naïve to believe that they could liberate themselves from this rationale, as it is ingrained in the corporate capitalist system. In a scathingly critical book, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*, Joel Bakan (2004) calls the corporation a pathological institution that follows its own interest regardless of the negative consequences thus created for others; so the argument is then that the market needs rules, regulations, and international standards to keep corporations in check. While there is a viewpoint that this argument works for the CSR-agenda, detractors believe that the public, the media, or nongovernmental organizations bringing pressure to bear on corporations is not sufficient. The problem is systemic.

Another type of criticism questions the business argument for CSR and the limits of the CSR agenda. It is not necessarily in an effort to see that the markets reward CSR-focused companies. To the contrary, there are a plethora of examples of highly

profitable businesses functioning with little if any attention paid to CSR and related issues. Some corporations slip under the public radar and thus have no economic incentive to engage in CSR, which is instead seen as a niche strategy—that it makes good business sense for some corporations, in some sectors, on some issues, under certain circumstances. Just as David Vogel (2005) argued in *The Market for Virtue*, the business case is overblown; it is only after a product has passed the price and quality hurdles that CSR might be important. This again underscores how the logic of the marketplace is insufficient in helping to create a sustainable society. If one corporation voluntarily reduced its carbon emissions, that corporation might incur additional costs that are not necessarily rewarded with increased market share. Collective action, in the form of cooperation among corporations, authorities, and nongovernmental organizations, is therefore called for with the goal of leveling the playing field and changing the practices of the sector as a whole. There are clearly reasons to simultaneously embrace and be skeptical about the CSR concept.

The Role of Public Relations

Public relations efforts are often accused of using CSR to set up storefronts for corporations in an attempt to “gussy up” their images. Ceding responsibility for CSR to public relations departments is seen as a hallmark of shallow practice. The very act of communicating about CSR is indeed suspicious, as corporations as a matter of course should concentrate on doing their business in a responsible manner. Flaunting CSR activities in image advertising is a form of embarrassing self-congratulatory rhetoric. Similar criticism goes hand-in-hand with some criticism of CSR motives. Casting CSR in moral terms is not morally proper, since CSR is based in self-interest and is a form of reputation exercise. At the same time, pragmatic reasons for caution can also be identified: One segment of the public is skeptical of CSR rhetoric, thus, corporations need to be careful when communicating about CSR. Attempting to hide the profit motive does not help improve a corporation’s reputation. The good news for corporations is that certain segments of the public also show some tolerance for the notion that corporations can attempt to do good and still want and be able to realize a profit

at the same time. What most public seem to find unacceptable or suspicious, however, is the one-sided presentation of CSR success stories as purely altruistic pursuits.

Accordingly, it is worth reminding that some form of communication about CSR is unavoidable. Silence on the matter of CSR is itself a type of communication signaling either corporate carelessness or a lack of sophistication in relating to stakeholders. If there is agreement with the premise that society is better off with the presence of business institutions, then this also allows for CSR communication of some type. For instance, CSR and CSR-related communication at least have the *potential* to help inform and constitute ethical business practices through stakeholder participation and issues management.

Corporations need public relations to communicate about CSR for a wide variety of reasons, not the least of which are the epistemological ones. Building on the notion of social constructionism, it becomes clear that all types of truth and knowledge build on some kind of human consensus, which in turn necessitates communication. A social constructivist perspective maintains that communication acts to construct and modify reality, social conditions, and relationships. When corporations want to establish truths about their CSR engagement, they need public relations. Scholars, for their part, might want to study how corporations go about constructing such truths, how CSR is defined and implemented, and how corporations use these constructions to achieve their organizational goals.

Corporations do not own the notion of CSR—it is an ever-changing social construct. Corporations also do well when they engage in stakeholder dialogue and regular mapping of their environment to keep abreast of changes. Dialogue focused on CSR must involve multiple stakeholders and the expectations expressed must be met constructively. It is simultaneously worth bearing in mind that friction and disagreement can be productive, but also that the dialogue form cannot rule out power difference and conflicts of interests.

Transparency on CSR issues builds a relationship of trust. Public relations can assist in this endeavor by using examples and hard facts about inputs and outcomes, presentation of motives, successes and failures, as well as testimony from credible third parties. This rhetoric can be used in a

media mixture of reports, Web-based tools, media relations and nonboastful image advertising.

Communication also has the power to constitute organizing practices, and thus aspirational talk might have a positive role to play in bringing about social change. It has been argued, primarily by Lars Thøger Christensen and Langer (2009) that leaders should be allowed to *talk the walk*, thus leaving room for hypocrisy in the sense that CSR communication must stay slightly ahead of other types of CSR action. This position, however, requires empirical research. For instance, the clothing industry has paid lip service to CSR for years; the issue of living wages nevertheless remains very much a concern. In the end there are some specific material problems created by business activities that must be resolved. Public relations efforts have the potential to assist in the pursuit of this goal, but also are easily used to manipulate, which is counterproductive to the betterment of society.

Øyvind Ihlen

See also Ethics of Public Relations; Mission and Vision Statements; Moral Philosophy; Stakeholder Theory

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CORPORATE SPEECH

According to legal scholars, such as Yale's Thomas Emerson (1963), at the core of a self-governing system's freedom of expression is a set of rights assured to individual members of society, which includes the right to form and hold beliefs and opinions on any subject, the right to communicate ideas, opinions, and information through any medium, and the right to remain silent. Constitutional theorists, such as Alexander Meiklejohn (1961) advocate for the freedom of citizens to express themselves and participate in government.

The U.S. Supreme Court's extension of free speech rights to organized entities rests largely on the First Amendment recognition of the public's right to receive information relevant to the self-governing process. It follows that noncommercial, or political, speech by corporations enjoys greater protection than commercial speech, such as advertisements, because it seeks solely to benefit the corporation's interests. The argument for lesser protection for commercial speech is also based on a desire to protect consumers from fraudulent and unethical practices and perceptions that this type of speech has a lesser value than political speech in democratic decision making.

Tracing the legal history of corporate speech reveals the importance of the distinction between commercial and political speech, the difficulties in drawing the line between them, and the vigorous debates that have ensued. The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the 1942 case, *Valentine v. Chrestensen*, established the precedent that commercial

speech receives less protection than political speech. This restricted view was overturned in 1976 with the recognition that "some" purely commercial speech, if truthful and concerning a lawful product or service, should be protected in the interest of the free flow of information, in the seminal case *Virginia State Board of Pharmacy v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council* involving abortion advertising. A defining case in the regulation of commercial speech was the 1980 *Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. v. Public Services Commission*, which set up the four-part test for determining whether restrictions on commercial speech are constitutional. The case struck down a ban on electric utility advertising based on considerations of these questions:

1. Is the speech protected by the First Amendment, meaning is it truthful, nonmisleading, and concerning a lawful product or activity? (If yes, the court proceeds with the other prongs of the test; if no, the test ends and the speech can be regulated or banned altogether.)
2. Is there a substantial governmental interest in restricting the speech?
3. Is the governmental interest directly advanced by the regulation?
4. Is there a reasonable fit between the governmental interest and the regulation?

The test has been applied and reinforced in more recent cases to reject bans in liquor, casino, and tobacco ads.

When corporations began seeking the right to make political and social statements, the legal opinion prevailed that such statements were permissible only if the public issue materially affected the business interests of the corporation. As early as 1961, when an organization of railroad presidents conducted a publicity campaign advocating adoption and retention of laws regulating the trucking industry, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized the right of citizens to inform their government representatives of their desires about passage or enforcement of laws affecting business. The Court's decision in the 1978 landmark case *First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti* rejected this restricted view of corporate freedom of expression and established the contribution of

corporate public discourse to the self-governing process as the primary determinant of corporations' rights to freedom of expression. As expressed in the ruling, this type of speech is "indispensable to decision-making in a democracy, and this is no less true because the speech comes from a corporation rather than an individual." When two years later a privately held utility company was prevented from distributing a pronuclear power insert in its billing envelopes, the Supreme Court ruled in *Consolidated Edison Company of New York v. Public Service Commission of New York* that this violated the First Amendment and established the precedent that the state cannot confine corporate speech to specific issues absent a compelling state interest, using the three-part strict scrutiny justifications for limiting speech: (1) "a reasonable time, place, or manner; (2) a permissible subject-matter regulation; or (3) a narrowly tailored means of serving a compelling state interest."

During the 1970s, the question of whether corporate financial involvement in political activities should be limited was debated. Corporate limits, set by the Federal Election Act of 1971, on political campaign contributions were expanded and candidate contribution limits were upheld in the 1976 case *Buckley v. Valeo*. Questions of whether these political contributions may be made from corporate treasury funds or monies segregated solely for political use, and whether there should be distinctions between profit and not-for-profit organizations, evoked considerable controversy. The Supreme Court ruled that the use of compulsory union dues impinges on employees' rights not to speak. Corporate speech boundaries were again tested in 1986 when a lawsuit challenged a nonprofit corporation for using its general treasury funds to prepare and distribute a special election edition of its newsletter. According to the court, the statute that required this expenditure be made from a political action committee (PAC) did not apply to the nonprofit organization, because that organization's purpose was more similar to voluntary political associations than to business firms. The distinctions between for-profit and not-for-profit corporate free speech were more finely drawn in the 1990 case *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce*. Using the three-part strict scrutiny test, the Supreme Court ruled that because the Chamber was primarily a business

association, and not a political advocacy organization, the state did have a compelling interest to protect dissenting small businessmen and shareholders and to prohibit the use of corporate funds for advocacy of a candidate.

More recently, two cases have changed the legal boundaries of commercial and political speech. Nike argued that a public relations campaign to improve the athletic equipment manufacturer's image in the early 1990s was political speech; however, it was ruled to be commercial speech because it was directed to consumers. This decision reduces the scope of corporate political speech and shifts the focus from the public's right to information to the speaker's right to expression. Finally, the 2012 presidential election was the first since the 2010 *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* ruling that gives corporations the same political speech freedom that people enjoy. The decision overturned a decades-long ban on corporate money in federal elections, and commentators expect it to reshape the way elections are conducted and to have other major political and practical consequences.

Denise P. Ferguson

See also *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010); Commercial Speech; Deliberative Democracy; Free Speech; Nonprofit Organizations; Political Public Relations; Political Speech; Public Affairs

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COUNSELING

Counseling, the *crème de la crème* function of the public relations profession, occurs when senior practitioners give advice to the senior members of an organization. This is often not an easy or enviable position. Advice can help define and redirect the future of an organization as well as refine its communication programs, functions, strategies, and tactics.

In essence, this kind of advice is intended to build, maintain, or repair a favorable relationship between the organization and one or more markets or publics—its stakeholders. If proper, the advice addresses problems that might strain the relationship and increase the quality of strategic relations; but it is important to note that this advice may lead to dramatic or subtle changes on the part of the organization to make it more capable of meeting stakeholder expectations. This public relations counsel can focus on increased standards of corporate responsibility or better ways to achieve those standards. It addresses standards of ethics and helps the management of the organization recognize what it needs to produce a good organization so that it can act with character, legitimacy, and authority.

The advice may focus on what the organization needs to do as well as how to perform that objective. The persons receiving the counsel seek to better understand and respond to some challenge. Counseling by its nature requires experience and tends to be dysfunctional if it only confirms management's preferences. It is best when it brings to bear sound judgment that draws on best practices as well as sage ethical advice. Through years of experience, counselors acquire insights needed to offer such advice. Advice is often based on astute insights into case studies—both successful and unsuccessful. Insights grow because of constant attention to best practices and scrupulous reading of essays and books reporting on relevant public relations research.

Counseling can occur reactively and proactively. In the first case, a management team may call on the advice of a senior practitioner after some problem has reached the boiling point. Slowly, the relationship between an organization and one or more publics has deteriorated. Other counseling expertise was used to solve the problem, but the advice failed to solve the problem. Perhaps, someone thinks, the problem may be a “PR problem”—whatever that means; he or she may unfortunately think that one or two well-crafted messages and perhaps a slick slogan, clever pamphlet, or expeditious Web/social media posting can set the matter right. Often these “Band-Aid” strategies fail because the problem is due to something other than ineffective communication. Counseling is least useful when it focuses only on communication solutions.

Proactive counseling is employed to head off a problem before it starts or before it reaches the boiling point. For instance, a substantial amount of discussion occurred in the 1970s regarding the ability of public relations practitioners to use issue monitoring and other issue management techniques to spot and respond to an array of emerging issues. Experts often thought that if an emerging issue was addressed early enough, the messages the organization disseminated could allay the strain. In some cases, studies eventually found that the strain was not due to an emerging issue that can be “communicated away.” However, thinking about, planning for, and responding in an open and constructive way may lead to a proactive, collaborative decision before combatants become recalcitrant and the problem and solution become ego driven. In this sense, public relations counsel can be conceptualized as a key component of change management.

One of the other types of counsel that is sought in various situations is the advice of attorneys—thus, the concept of legal counsel. Lawyers are often trained to advise clients to respond in different ways than public relations practitioners suggest. Lawyers focus on the status of law and the extent to which some entity might successfully bear the burden of proof in litigation against the organization. This kind of advice might also be inadequate because the problem may arise not because of a difference of legal interpretation, but due to differences in facts, the interpretation of facts, value conflicts, or preferred policies.

These latter aspects of marketing and public policy are squarely in the realm of senior public relations practitioners. Often called on to solve or prevent problems, they may in fact bring problems to the attention of senior management. If the senior practitioner is adequately serving the interest of his or her client or employer, he or she should be tuned into various relationships and watch for their dysfunction. Counselors need to be on guard for strains in the relationships or look for ways to strengthen them.

Counseling requires the ability to solve and prevent problems; the mark of their professional skill is their ability to offer sound and ethical strategic advice. As a senior practitioner once said,

A long time ago, I learned that when management needs advice most, you had better be ready to offer several solutions and be ready to defend each. Also, you better not raise a problem unless you think you have a sound solution. And, you must be ready to raise problems when you see them. And, you had better see them first. (personal communication, December 1992)

Some of the high-water points in the history of the public relations profession occurred when practitioners responded soundly to the need for counsel. Likewise, some of the lowest moments of the profession resulted from unsound advice. Some of the worst counsel crafted communication responses that led to manipulation and lying—and even what some might call the engineering of consent.

John W. Hill (cofounder of the public relations firm Hill & Knowlton) was keenly aware of the challenges of public relations counsel. It requires candor, honesty, and a perspective on how all parties benefit, not just the organization seeking counsel. He recommended the following philosophy:

The extent to which the public relations counsel influences policy depends on whether he can demonstrate capacity for giving sound, practical and objective advice on policy matters. If he can do so, there will be little question about this role in policy decisions. If the practitioner has something to offer, he is likely to get the opportunity. If he has no original or helpful ideas, he is not likely to get very far in policy deliberation. (Hill, 1963, p. 141)

As noted in this observation, Hill was one of many practitioners and academics who over the years challenged counselors to truly make a difference. Going beyond being clever, the challenge is to offer sound and enduring advice that holds up to the measure of time. Public relations can help advance or harm the legitimacy of the organization to operate.

As is true of all professions, public relations is best when it serves the mutual interests of clients or employers and their publics or markets. Conducted properly, counseling—the giving of advice—can distinguish the profession and demonstrate its value to society. Applied improperly, it leads to pejorative definitions of the term *public relations* as fouling rather than fostering the fully functioning society.

Robert L. Heath

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Stakeholder Theory; Strain

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CREDIBILITY

Credibility can be defined as the perception or judgment made by message receivers about the believability of the message source and the truthfulness of the message. Source credibility emphasizes the importance of the message source on the impact of the communication process. Credibility, classically referred to as *ethos*, is a multidimensional construct that was defined and discussed by Aristotle in his treatise, *Rhetoric*. In his analysis on persuasion, Aristotle defined three elements that comprise a communicator's ability to persuade the audience: *ethos* refers to character and integrity of the source, *logos* refers to intelligence or reason, and *pathos* refers to emotions or charisma. Contemporary research confirms and is consistent with Aristotle's postulates. Expertise or competence and trustworthiness are the two source characteristics with the greatest impact on the perceived credibility of the message source.

Expertise or competence is based on the source ability to make correct claims and deliver logical information based on knowledge, experience, intelligence, qualification, authoritativeness, and professionalism. Trustworthiness is assessed based on the communicator's perceived ability to provide valid and truthful information, to be honest and sincere, but also to be dependable and reliable.

Other factors that affect credibility are goodwill or the communicator's benevolent intention toward the message recipients and communicator's attractiveness. Attractiveness, or physical appearance, is especially important in creating first impressions and thus plays a role in message acceptance.

Credibility is an important concept for the profession of public relations as the effectiveness of communication is directly influenced by the stakeholders' attitude toward the communicator. Attitude toward the message source affects the way stakeholders evaluate and accept the message, which determines the success of persuasion attempts to shape attitudes and behaviors of stakeholders.

Credibility is related to trust, which is an essential variable in organization–public relationships. A favorable organizational reputation contributes to initial credibility. Public relations professionals need to distinguish between credibility of the organization as a whole and a communicator's credibility, which often determines the selection of spokespersons when discussing specific matters.

New communication technologies and social media allow image and messages to be carefully selected and constructed; thus, online source credibility is becoming increasingly important in relationship building. Based on the assessed credibility of an organizational website, blog, or another channel, people decide whether to engage in relationships or not. Perceived credibility is influenced by the information seeker's motivation, goal (e.g., seeking entertainment, information, or business), experience, culture, knowledge, and skills. Information seekers assess the credibility of an online source based on multiple dimensions, such as gender, attractiveness, source identification and identity, ownership and sponsorship, theme, and purpose, among many other qualities that are viewed simultaneously.

Danijela Radić

See also Goodwill; Online Public Relations; Persuasion Theory; Reliability; Reputation; Trust

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CREDITS

Credits take a variety of forms across different media but always perform the same function: Attribution for both the people responsible for the content of a particular work and those responsible for the final form and distribution of the content.

When using the term *credits*, the public relations practitioner is usually talking about the texts shown at the end (and increasingly, also at the beginning) of television programs and theatrical films. If examined properly, credits can provide an additional wealth of information beyond the obvious listings, such as what actor played which character and so forth.

All jobs (or positions) listed in credits fall into two broad categories: above-the-line and below-the-line. Above-the-line positions include producers, directors, writers, and actors, while below-the-line positions are technical and production positions: Camera operators, sound recorders, editors, and positions in other hands-on areas where creative input is very narrowly focused.

In general, a producer secures financial backing for a project, from either studios or outside investors. Outside investors range from companies and individuals who finance films for a living (and, therefore, expect a positive financial return on their investment) to individuals providing funds simply because they “believe in” the project.

Producers also serve as liaisons between investors and the other above-the-line production members and can also be responsible for budgeting,

scheduling, and possibly the supervision of day-to-day production decisions.

In the case of documentaries and other potential “advocacy” productions, the credits usually include some sort of acknowledgments section. In the case of independent films (“small budget and no major studio backing for production”), there is usually a very large run of names that falls under the heading “Thanks.” The names usually included are individuals who donated time or services, low-dollar investors, and small contribution financial backers.

With the possible exception of radio dramas (which are almost extinct), credits for radio programs are always given at the end.

Irrespective of the format or media channel, it is important for content creators to list accurate credits. There is an ever-increasing reliance on the Internet and World Wide Web for the cataloging, storage, and retrieval of both old and new information.

The much more porous and granular nature of mass media has resulted in a greater importance placed on intellectual property and the protection (read: control) of its ownership. The proper use of credits makes it easier for proper attribution to be given when works are cited, permission for content use requested and for copyright holders to better defend against infringement.

Michael Nagy

See also Layout

CRISIS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The study of crisis and crisis management is a vibrant field within public relations and beyond. There is a strong imperative for understanding crises and crisis management. All organizations should realize they are vulnerable to crises, so they must prepare for the eventuality. Once management realizes crises are possible or even probable, they need to grapple with what constitutes a crisis and crisis management.

A crisis can be defined as “the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectations of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes” (Coombs, 2012, p. 2). This

definition is a synthesis of many definitions and presents five critical features. First, crises are largely perceptual. Stakeholder perceptions are a driving force in determining if any event is considered a crisis. If customers are online complaining that a product is harmful, this must be considered a crisis, even if management disagrees with the customers’ assessments.

Second, a crisis cannot be predicted but can be expected. Crisis managers know a crisis will hit but cannot say exactly when—a crisis is unpredictable. Third, a crisis violates stakeholder expectations about how organizations should behave. Fourth, a major threat has the potential to harm an organization’s performance. This does not mean the impact always occurs, just that the potential exists. Quick actions by a crisis management team can prevent the crisis from fulfilling its potential. Thierry Pauchant and Ian Mitroff (1992) called smaller problems “incidents.” Incidents are fairly easy to cope with and do not disrupt the organizational routine. Fifth, a crisis can create negative outcomes for an organization, the industry, and/or stakeholders. It can harm any or all three of these entities. Consider an explosion at a petroleum-processing facility that injures three employees. The employees suffered physical and psychological harm. The organization may be shut down for repairs and lose production time and revenue. The safety of the entire industry may come under scrutiny because of the publicity and investigation surrounding a high-profile accident. Nearby residents may have been evacuated after the explosion as a precaution against hazardous chemicals while customers may experience an increase in price as production levels drop.

A crisis extends over a period of time. Steven Fink (1986) described a four-step life cycle for a crisis: (1) prodromal, warning signs appear before a crisis hits; (2) crisis breakout or acute, the trigger event occurs or what we typically think of as the crisis happening; (3) chronic, the time it takes to attend to the damage and disruption from the crisis; and (4) resolution, there is evidence that the crisis is over and no longer a factor with stakeholders. Fink’s work helped people realize crisis management entails more than simply reacting to the crisis. Crisis management could proactively attempt to prevent crises.

Crisis management is “a set of factors designed to combat crises and lessen the actual damage

inflicted” (Coombs, 2012, p. 5). It often is mistakenly equated with having a crisis management plan. The goal is to lessen or even prevent any of the possible negative outcomes a crisis might generate. Crisis management entails a complex set of factors that unfold in four stages: prevention, preparation, response, and learning.

Crisis management begins with prevention or mitigation. Prevention tries to identify the various risks an organization faces. A risk is a potential threat that could escalate into a crisis. Risks include weather threats, worker error or violence, and technology failures. Prevention involves attempts to identify and to mitigate the risks. Identification involves locating potential sources of risk—the organization scans for risks that could manifest into a crisis. Due to social media, some crisis prevention now transpires in view of stakeholders. The term *paracrisis* denotes crisis prevention efforts that occur in public.

Mitigation tries to eliminate or reduce risks; some can be significantly reduced. For instance, an organization uses a hazardous chemical in its production process. The presence of the chemical presents the risk of a hazardous release. This risk is significantly reduced if the organization can find a nonhazardous chemical to replace the one it uses or change the processes to reduce the likelihood of release. Training and monitoring is used to reduce the risks that cannot be eliminated. Prevention and mitigation reinforce the need for crisis management.

Preparation means the organization is getting ready for a crisis because management realizes one might appear. Preparation is what many people in organizations think about when the term *crisis management* is used. The essential elements of preparation are a crisis management plan, a crisis management team, and practicing the crisis management plan. The crisis management plan is an outline for the organization to respond to the crisis. The value of the crisis management plan lies in the preassignment of responsibilities and precollection of critical information. Time is saved during a crisis when people already know their preappointed roles. Time is not lost deciding who should do what. Critical contact names (and how to reach them) were already collected, so time is not lost trying to find who and how to reach someone. One major element to a useful crisis management plan is not making it too detailed or complicated. Each

plan must be adapted as each crisis is unique and a plan cannot cover all contingencies. A crisis management plan includes members of the crisis management team and their contact information, key people or groups that may be useful during a crisis and their contact information, and forms to remind crisis team members the action format, such as logging and responding to outside inquiries about the crisis or documenting actions taken to address the crisis.

To develop a crisis management plan, corporation managers need to revisit their identification of risks. The managers need a crisis vulnerability analysis to determine which types of crises are most likely. Risk analysis indicates what crises are likely to emerge. The crisis management plan needs to fit the most likely crises and must be flexible, a living document. A crisis management plan should be revised at least once a year. During the course of a year, composition of the team may change, key contacts may change jobs, and crisis vulnerability may change.

The crisis management team is composed of those people who enact the crisis management plan and address the crisis. The crisis management team is cross-functional; it comprises people from different sectors of the organization. Each team should have the best mix of knowledge and skills for handling a crisis. Typical crisis team membership includes representatives from legal, operations, public relations, facilities management, and security. Legal expertise is required to ensure that the words and actions of the team do not increase the legal liabilities of the organization. Operations personnel know detailed information about the production process. Public relations personnel are skilled in media relations, are able to handle media inquiries, and can handle timely reporting. A crisis can raise questions about the structure or layout of a facility. Facilities management has the knowledge to answer these questions. Security personnel are often the first to learn of a crisis and to reach the crisis scene. Security also needs to coordinate its efforts with emergency responders, such as fire and medical teams.

Having a crisis management plan and team is pointless if the two never practice. The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) advocates practicing crisis management plans so that management is certain that there are no large discrepancies (e.g., important contacts were not included), there are no mistakes (e.g., wrong phone

number or radio frequency), and that crisis team members work together effectively. Crisis simulation tests the plan and team members. It is possible that some team members are not able to handle the stress of crisis management and need to be replaced. Regular practice helps new members of the team get up to speed and tests any modifications made to the crisis management plan. Practice is costly as participants must take a day or two away from their jobs to be part of the crisis management test. However, without testing, an organization does not know if it has a functional crisis management plan and/or a functional crisis management team.

Technology is influencing the preparation by organizations. Technology can be used to facilitate the work of the crisis team and becomes an important tool for monitoring the development of the crisis, knowing how stakeholders are reacting to the crisis, and evaluating the crisis management efforts. For instance, social media can be monitored for crisis threats and used as part of the crisis response. Crisis informatics is an emerging area of research that studies the intersection of crisis management and technology.

Response is the actual reaction once a crisis does hit. The response encompasses what the crisis management team says and does to handle the crisis. Preparation makes the response more effective, if the organization has practiced. The crisis management team faces physical and informational demands. The physical demands include addressing the damage from the crisis, including injured people in need of treatment, evacuating people at risk, containing and suppressing fires, reinforcing buildings that sustained structural damage, and salvaging equipment. The crisis management team coordinates its efforts with the business continuity team. The business continuity team is charged with keeping an organization functioning during a crisis or returning an organization to regular operation as soon as possible after the crisis. Business continuity teams might use alternate facilities, rental equipment, or temporary staff to help maintain an organization's ability to function. It is important that the crisis management and business continuity teams work in concert to prevent redundant actions or interference with one another.

When a crisis hits, an information vacuum is created. Stakeholders and members of the organization

want to know what happened and why. The crisis management team collects information to discover what happened, and, in turn, is responsible for collecting and disseminating information to various stakeholders. The crisis management team uses a standard list of topics to guide information collection: what happened, what was the cause, who was/might be affected, where it occurred, and how much damage and what kind of damage was sustained. This information is necessary to help make decisions about the physical response. For instance, a crisis team must know what is in a gas cloud created by an accident and where the gas cloud will travel before determining if an evacuation is necessary and who should be evacuated. Stakeholders will be contacting the organization requesting information. The news media, people living nearby the facility, suppliers, clients, and government officials all might contact the organization to get information about the crisis. Social media increases the potential that various stakeholders request information about a crisis. The crisis management plan helps to coordinate the collection and dissemination of crisis information.

Crisis management does not end when the crisis ends. Four key activities must transpire post-crisis: monitor and cooperate with investigations, update stakeholders, evaluate the crisis management effort, and healing. Many crises, such as airline accidents and chemical accidents, take time to investigate to determine their cause (Ray, 1999). The crisis team must help investigators, typically a government agency, and keep abreast of any findings. Reporting results of investigations is one of the points that is communicated to stakeholders in updates. Updates also include any other information the crisis team promised to deliver to the stakeholder during the crisis. For example, an explosion at a plastic manufacturing facility halts production at that site. The crisis team promises to inform employees and the community about the cause of the accident and any corrective measures that are taken. The crisis team informs customers when the facility is operational again. Once the investigation determines the cause of the accident, the crisis team can tell employees and community members why it occurred and what actions can be taken to prevent a repeat of the crisis. Once that has been determined, the crisis team can update customers as to when the facility will be operational.

Experts agree that a crisis should be a learning experience. Therefore, an organization must do all it can to learn from its own crisis experience. To learn from a crisis, the crisis management efforts must be carefully evaluated. The careful post-crisis analysis is called a postmortem. A postmortem is a systematic study of what the crisis management team did and the effectiveness of those actions—it assesses what was done well or poorly. Postmortems are stressful because people fear management is looking for a scapegoat. It is critical that postmortems are not a search for blame, but a search for information. Once evaluated, the crisis team is briefed on its performance. The team learns what it is doing right and what it should change for future crisis management efforts. The next crisis practice should focus on the learning points the team recorded. For instance, if there is a problem coordinating efforts with emergency responders, the next crisis practice should concentrate on the organization–emergency responder interface. The postmortem needs to be structured with a set group of criteria. Results of the postmortem will be better organized if the process is systematic. These are stored for future reference. Storing the postmortem information builds institutional memory about crisis management so that the knowledge can be referenced whenever needed.

Healing involves efforts to further aid stakeholders in coping psychologically with the crisis event. Stakeholders need to grieve over any loss and process the trauma that occurred in their lives. Physical memorials are one way to help grieving. Some organizations have created physical memorials for crisis victims. Online memorials are a common occurrence these days and are created for crisis events (Coombs, 2012). Organizations need to decide how they can facilitate stakeholder healing and what connections they might have to memorialization efforts.

The crisis management process is circular rather than linear. Learning can inform any of the other three stages. Lessons from the crisis may help in prevention (e.g., how to reduce some risks), preparation (e.g., how to improve the crisis management plan), or response (e.g., how better to deal with the news media).

New communication technology has reshaped the crisis management process. A crisis plan should be short but include how to find information that

could be critical in a crisis, such as the location, amount, and types of hazardous chemicals at a facility. The Intranet is a perfect supplemental source to the crisis management plan that crisis managers can access with mobile devices, such as smart phones. Volumes of information can be stored on the Intranet and quickly retrieved by the crisis team during a crisis. Instead of requesting information from another party, the crisis team can access information directly. Of course, this assumes the crisis team has access to the Intranet and that the Intranet remains functional during a crisis. Crisis management teaches the teams to have backups so there should be alternative means for finding the requisite information. Stakeholders expect organizations to integrate the Internet, including social media, into their crisis communication efforts. It is now common for organizations to have either a dedicated crisis website or sections of the organizational website for crisis information. Customers, suppliers, the news media, and community members can be updated quickly by posting information to the crisis website. Again, this assumes the crisis team can access the website during a crisis. This is a fairly safe assumption because crisis-prepared organizations use secure, remote locations to store servers. As a result, even if a facility is destroyed, an organization still has its Intranet and website that the crisis team can access remotely.

Crisis management is a complex process. To be effective, an organization must embrace the entire concept and not declare that it is crisis prepared simply by creating a crisis management plan and team. Crisis management is an ongoing process.

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See also Crisis Communication; Crisis Informatics; Image; Paracrisis; Public Relations Research

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CRISIS AND EMERGENCY RISK COMMUNICATION

Crisis and emergency risk communication (CERC) is a framework developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in response to public health threats, including bioterrorism, that require health communicators to provide strategic, scientifically accurate, timely, and empowering messages to the public.

Health communicators employ risk communication to educate the public on health topics, including tobacco prevention, physical activity, and nutrition. Public education requires the development of risk messages that provide scientific and technical understanding of a specific risk factor, as well as cultural or social beliefs regarding the risk. These risk messages use persuasive appeals to encourage the public to take specific actions to change unhealthy behaviors. In contrast, crisis communicators communicate event-specific information that informs rather than persuades the public. Crisis messages address a specific, unexpected, and nonroutine organizationally based event or series of events, which creates high levels of uncertainty and threat or perceived threat to an organization's high-priority goals. Emergency communicators often create warning messages that alert the public to follow specific instructional

messages to mitigate harm (e.g., an emergency alert instructing the public to take shelter from a tornado).

CERC encompasses the urgency of disaster communication with the need to communicate risks and benefits to stakeholders and the public. CERC incorporates basic risk and health communication campaign tenets by identifying various communication needs of audiences and providing specific messages at various points in the ongoing development of an event.

CERC uses subject matter experts to craft messages that (1) provide scientifically accurate risk explanations and (2) provide the most accurate information to the public, empowering them to make the best possible decision given the uncertainty of the emergency context. Unlike risk communication that allows for a dialogue to occur over an extended period of time, crisis and emergency risk communication fundamentally requires communicators, health experts, and the public to make health decisions within a narrow time constraint with incomplete information; such decisions are often irreversible and their outcome is unknown.

The CERC framework assumes that public health emergencies systematically develop and continue through five distinct phases: preevent, initial, maintenance, recovery, and evaluation. These phases are similar to traditional models of crisis phases found in disaster sociology literature but with the addition of the evaluation phase, which is a critical component of traditional health campaigns.

The prescriptive nature of CERC provides communicators with the opportunity to prepare for and anticipate communication needs and potential problems. The model provides a comprehensive approach to communicating about health risks and empowering the public to take action to self-protect against potential health harms.

The first stage is precrisis, which focuses on monitoring the environment for health risks, developing networks with other government agencies and key stakeholders, developing guidelines and recommendations by health experts, and creating messages and other communication products. Public education and awareness of potential health risks is a critical component of the precrisis stage.

The second phase is the initial event, which requires the health agency to take some form of response action. The first 24 to 48 hours of a public

health emergency is a critical time for public information activities. Health agencies need to establish their authority and credibility by striving to be the first agency to provide information about the event. The first messages disseminated from the agency include empathetic statements by designated agency spokespeople, risk explanations, anticipated outcomes, and broad messages about the health emergency. The length and description of these messages are dependent on the scope and severity of the event. Additionally, the health agency explains what actions are being taken to investigate the public health event and find the source of the public health harm (e.g., using epidemiological investigations to find the source of foodborne illness or infectious disease outbreaks). Finally, the health agency disseminates self-efficacy messages that provide the public with simple, yet empowering actions they can take to protect themselves from harm.

The third stage is the maintenance phase, which can begin a few days into the event and lasts for weeks or months depending on the severity of the event. During this phase, health agencies receive additional information from key stakeholders and data inputs, such as results from laboratory testing or updates from the epidemiological investigation. These inputs inform communication strategy and message development. For example, reassurance messages highlight the response actions of the health agency and how the agency is finding the source of the outbreak. Other key messages include uncertainty reduction and self-efficacy messages. Uncertainty reduction occurs through providing additional health risk explanations and continued messaging on self-protective actions. It is also critical during the maintenance phase to develop a systematic process for monitoring media and gathering feedback from the public.

The next phase of the CERC model is recovery, and messaging focuses on public education and awareness about recovery efforts and returning to everyday public health activities. During the recovery phase, once the immediate health threat has subsided, and health agencies still have the attention of the media and the public, there is an opportunity to transition from emergency messages into preparedness messages (e.g., resupply medical emergency kits, update family disaster plans, advocate for seasonal influenza vaccinations).

The final stage of CERC is evaluating the effectiveness of crisis messages. Conducting a public survey, communicating with key media contacts, or analyzing public inquiries through hotlines or social media messages provide potential data points for analysis. Documenting the evaluation process and sharing the results with both health department leadership and preparedness program staff is essential to updating or refining any communication policies or procedures.

In October 2002 and based on a practiced driven need, the CDC launched CERC as an innovative training course to prepare public health officials for the threat of an influenza pandemic. The training course outlines communication concepts and provides practitioners with skills and tools needed to develop communication strategies, key messages, and other communication products to be used in the event of a health emergency.

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See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Emergency Management; Resilient Communities; Risk Communication

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CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Crisis communication is like the Indian parable about the blindfolded men trying to describe an

elephant. Each man describes only the part he feels, resulting in very different descriptions of the animal. Crisis communication is used in a variety of ways in crisis management. Depending on what article or book is read, a person can discover very different uses of the term. The Crisis Communication Array offers a useful way to organize our thinking about crisis communication. The Crisis Communication Array is a matrix composed of two categories of crisis communication and the three phases of a crisis (Coombs, 2010a).

The two categories of crisis communication are managing information and managing meanings. Managing information is composed of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information. Crisis managers collect crisis information (raw data) and analyze it so it becomes knowledge. Dissemination involves sharing the knowledge with others. Managing meaning involves efforts to influence how people perceive the crisis—for instance by attributing its cause, the character of the organization involved in the crisis, and the quality of its response. Most crisis communication can be assigned to one of these two categories.

Crises are characterized as having phases. The basic three-phase view involves precrisis (prevention and planning), crisis response, and postcrisis (follow-up, learning, and healing). Both types of crisis communication can be found at each crisis stage. The Crisis Communication Array identifies six types of crisis communication: (1) precrisis managing information, (2) precrisis managing meaning, (3) crisis response managing information, (4) crisis response managing meaning, (5) postcrisis managing information, and (6) postcrisis managing meaning. These six types of crisis communication are meant to guide research but are imperfect categories for organizing crisis communication because some efforts blur the distinctions between information and meaning or between phases.

Precrisis managing information includes efforts to scan for threats, monitor crisis-related risks, craft crisis management plans (CMP), tell people about CMPs, and collect information that a crisis team might need during a crisis. The CMP helps to illustrate managing information. The CMP has sections devoted to crisis communication as information. The CMP has complete contact information for the crisis management team near the front of the document. The CMP also contains contact

information for people or groups who might have information that the team needs during the crisis.

Precrisis managing meaning involves convincing stakeholders to accept the need and value in crisis management, encouraging external stakeholders of a CMP's efficacy, and developing a sense of self-efficacy in stakeholders related to the enactment of the CMP. Encouraging external stakeholders about plan efficacy demonstrates managing meaning. Stakeholders, including employees, need to believe that a CMP works (keeps them safe) during a crisis or they will ignore the CMP. Convincing stakeholders of the CMP's efficacy is a function of managing meaning.

Crisis response managing information centers deal with the need to collect and to analyze crisis-related information. Creating crisis knowledge is essential to decision making by crisis management teams and effective warning/notification systems. The effectiveness of a warning system illustrates the importance of managing information during the response. The warning system is designed to protect stakeholders from hazards created by a crisis. Until information is known about the crisis, crisis managers do not know who to warn or what actions those in danger should take. For instance, weather and the types of chemicals released by an accident indicate what geographic location is at risk and if the stakeholders should evacuate the area or shelter-in-place.

Crisis response managing meaning is the most visible and researched area of crisis communication and includes reputation management and repair, meeting crisis communication expectations, and risk communication about the crisis. Reputation management serves as an excellent example of managing meaning during the crisis response. Reputation management in crisis involves efforts to lessen the negative stakeholder perceptions created by a crisis. Corporate apologia, impression management, image restoration theory, and situational crisis communication theory are all used to examine managing meaning through reputation management. Managing meaning during the response is critical because perceptions of the crisis and/or organization in crisis affect future interactions between the organization and its stakeholders. By changing how stakeholders feel about the crisis and/or organization in crisis, crisis managers can minimize the damage a crisis inflicts on the stakeholder–organization relationship.

Crisis experts agree about the crisis communication expectations. These expectations are tactical in nature but do influence how people perceive the organization in crisis and, therefore, are related to reputation management. The crisis team must have an initial response that is quick, consistent, open, and expresses sympathy for victims. Early in the crisis communication, the organization needs to provide instructing and adjusting information. Technology has increased the speed at which people communicate. The same holds true for crisis communication. Expectations are that an organization responds quickly, within one hour of the crisis event. Also, there are growing expectations that crisis teams use the Internet as one communication tool for the initial response by utilizing social media and posting information to a separate website or a special section of the organization's existing website.

Consistent means that an organization is providing a coordinated response that is free of contradictions. Two elements can undermine consistency. The first threat is error. The need for speed in a response can create mistakes about a factual statement. When the crisis team has to correct previous statements, the organizational response appears confused and inconsistent. The second threat results because of multiple spokespersons. The idea of only one person speaking for an organization during a crisis is a myth. As a crisis extends over time, one person cannot continue to speak for an organization day and night. Long crises demand multiple spokespersons. Also, a variety of organizational experts might need to address media inquiries. A workplace violence incident, for example, may require a representative from human resources and one from security to answer questions about preemployment screening and on-site precautions. Reporters want to ask questions directly to experts and don't want the information filtered through one generic spokesperson. Openness refers to the crisis team being willing to discuss the crisis with interested stakeholders, answer inquiries, and disclose information rather than stonewall information. Creating trust that the organization engages in full disclosure should be built prior to and not during a crisis. If an organization has a history of withholding information, stakeholders have no reason to believe that changes during a crisis.

Crises can create a unique stakeholder, the victim. Victims are people who are harmed by the crisis. The harm can be death, injuries, relocation, property damage, financial loss, stress, or inconvenience. Victims want their needs recognized and other stakeholders expect organizations to address any victims. Crisis managers should exhibit compassion for victims, but those expressions of sympathy do not need to include accepting responsibility for their injuries. Accepting responsibility opens an organization to legal claims and financial losses. Sympathy can be expressed without incurring legal and financial liabilities. It is important that the legal department review statements of sympathy. Moreover, crisis managers should check state laws to determine if sympathy statements are exempt from use in court, or if lawyers could use them against the organization in future litigation.

Victims are the reason for instructing and adjusting information. Instructing information tells stakeholders what they must do physically to protect themselves from the adverse effects of the crisis. A consumer needs to know how to identify a defective product and what process they must follow to get a refund, replacement, or repair. People living near a facility need to know when they should evacuate the area after an industrial accident. Adjusting information helps people to cope psychologically with the crisis. Victims and other stakeholders want to know what happened, why, and what is being done to prevent a repeat of the crisis. Of special concern is corrective action, the steps the organization is taking to prevent the crisis from happening again. A crisis creates psychological stress. Adjusting information reduces the stress by helping people to realize what happened and the efforts designed to prevent a repeat of the crisis. For example, when an airliner crashes, future travelers want to know why it crashed and what the airline is doing to prevent a similar crash. Stakeholders are less fearful of a crisis when they understand why it happened and that it is less likely to occur in the future.

Postcrisis managing information includes providing updates about the recovery, efforts to learn from a crisis by adding to the institutional memory, and conducting careful analyses of the crisis management program. Learning from a crisis is an example of managing information because it involves collecting, analyzing, and

recoding information, which can be a valuable resource for the next crisis.

Managing information postcrisis includes organizational change, healing, and coping with risks created by the crisis. Organizational change is related to crisis learning but focuses on managing meaning. An organization might learn from the crisis that structural factors precipitated the crisis. Managers must then convince others of the need to change those structural features. Change management is meaning management and works in tandem with learning.

Crisis communication is the lifeblood of the crisis management effort. Communication carries the vital information needed in a crisis management effort and is critical to shaping stakeholder meanings about the crisis, the organization in crisis, and the crisis response.

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See also Apologia; Crisis and Crisis Management; Discourse of Renewal Theory; Image Repair Theory; Situational Crisis Communication Theory

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CRISIS INFORMATICS

Chris Hagar (2006) coined the phrase *crisis informatics* to describe an emerging field of research that examines how people, information, organizations, and technology are interconnected during a crisis. More specifically, crisis informatics examines the utilization of information and communication technology during mass emergencies. Crisis informatics reaches beyond crises because mass emergencies include disasters and other large-scale societal emergencies. The research includes understanding how first responders employ technology and how people in the community utilize technology during mass emergencies. For example, studies might examine how fire fighters integrate

technology into their responses or how citizens utilize Twitter to both send and receive information during an emergency.

The roots of crisis informatics can be traced back to 2004. In Brussels of that year, the Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM) held its first meeting. It focused on the use of technology in crises and disasters drawing interest from researchers in computer and information sciences. In 2009, ISCRAM became a formal organization that holds international meetings regularly and developed its own publication. A search on an Internet search engine of the term *crisis informatics* results in many hits for papers presented at ISCRAM conferences.

The growing research interest in crisis informatics and funding of that research is testimony to the rapid development of this field. In the United States, the National Science Foundation provided a \$2.8 million grant for Empowering the Public with Information during a Crisis, better known as Project EPIC. Project EPIC is led by researchers from the University of Colorado at Boulder and University of California, Irvine and includes researchers from information sciences, computer sciences, and computational linguistics. One of the research lines in Project EPIC is “Tweak the Tweet” (TtT). TtT seeks to prove a shared hashtag-based syntax that makes it easier to extract emergency information from Tweets. The idea is that the increased information from Tweets can improve the emergency response. TtT combines both citizen and emergency responder use of information and communication technology.

The European Union continues to fund a variety of crisis informatics projects. One such project, WORKPAD (funded at €1.85 million), developed software applications that allow emergency responders to communicate and to coordinate their efforts more effectively and quickly during a crisis. The focus on improving emergency responses demonstrates how crisis informatics can be translated into lifesaving applications.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication

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CRISIS RENEWAL THEORY

See Discourse of Renewal Theory

CRISIS THEORY

See Rhetorical Arena

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a variety of discourse analyses associated particularly with Norman Fairclough, in which the central focus is on the connections between discourse as social action and other facets of social life. More specifically, researchers using CDA are interested in the ways in which power produces and is produced by certain discourses. Broadly, critical discourse analysis allows contextual factors to be taken into account when analyzing text.

All discourse analytic approaches begin with the assumption that spoken and written language is a social practice. Language is action—speech, text, and image are not empty in themselves; they are active and used purposefully and with intent. They persuade, argue, deny, command, and question, among other outcomes. Additionally, a discursive perspective on action assumes that the discourse *itself* is the focus of analysis, rather than the thing to which the discourse refers. Finally, discourses

are recognized to be variable in their meaning, both between and within individuals. There is a wide variety of discourse analytical approaches and within this, a number of approaches to critical discourse analysis that apply theory, data, and methodological techniques differently.

The primary concern of all CDA is the historical and ideological production of social structure and power relations through language. Fairclough pointed out that the relative social positions of those engaged in semiosis results in different discursive representations of social practices. These different discursive representations, or orders of discourse, are both constructed by and constructive of social hierarchies. In this, CDA recognizes that legitimacy is both created and sustained through the meanings produced by language; it adheres to a relational understanding of the world, since the relative positions of individual agents in a field have to be considered in order for their discursive actions to be understood.

Fairclough is perhaps the scholar most widely associated with critical discourse analysis. He argued that texts are both social events in themselves as well as products of social practices. Discourse “figures” in social practice as genres, discourses, and styles. Genres, Fairclough reasoned, are ways of acting; discourses are ways of representing; while styles are ways of being. These are semiotic ways of acting and interacting, which transcend individual texts and reveal “intertextual relations” that characterize sets of related texts. These relations operate at the social level and are relatively stable over time.

Both structures of individual texts as well as discursive themes across texts are illustrative of the three aspects of discourse; therefore analysis addresses the composition of texts, grammatical structures, and semantic constructions. Fairclough pointed out that, although the distinction between genre, discourse, and style is analytically useful in practice, the three are related. Understanding the function of multiple connected texts—for example, a range of press releases focused on different types of a single product, such as a mobile phone—therefore requires a perspective that can address the specific dynamics of each, while also exploring how they work together to create a particular holistic social practice. Fairclough’s ideas on the ways hegemony is produced through discourse have been quite widely used by researchers to

underpin critical analyses of campaigns and other forms of professional communication.

Other researchers have taken a Foucauldian approach to critical discourse analysis as their starting point. Foucault emphasizes the disciplinary effects of discourse, the importance of knowledge to power, and the role played by different subjectivities in discourse. Ian Parker (1994), for example, suggested that a Foucauldian approach should examine the identities presented in the text, the relationships between them, and the themes that underpin these identities. Equally important is to notice modes of expression that are not used, or search for what is not said. Finally, the source of the text and the audience for it are critical to understanding subsequent versions of truth and power relations that are normatively represented in the text. This approach has been adopted in public relations research to good effect, demonstrating the ways in which public relations-generated discourses can privilege certain voices over others, excluding the knowledge associated with less powerful groups from the public sphere. In public relations research, Foucauldian discourse analysis is used sparingly, but effectively. For example, Judy Motion (2005) adopted a Foucauldian approach for her exploration of stakeholder engagement discourses of the New Zealand government, revealing the ways in which such discourses were deployed as a means of stakeholder control rather than stakeholder participation.

In contrast, Theo van Leeuwen’s (2008) framework for CDA focuses on “the primacy of practice” (p. 4) and understands discourse as a recontextualization of social practice. Van Leeuwen’s framework emphasized the connection of linguistic and nonlinguistic practices in texts. This leads to a focus on representations of action and actors in discourse, including not only what is done, but how it is done—performance modes and presentation styles—as well as where and when action is represented. At the same time, in recontextualizing social practice, van Leeuwen argued that discourse legitimizes that practice, offering “answers to the spoken or unspoken questions ‘Why should we do this?’” (p. 105). Through these various foci, the operation of power in particular contexts can be tracked. Lee Edwards and Magda Pieczka (2013) adopted van Leeuwen’s approach for their study of the representation of public relations in trade media, revealing the ways that particular representations of practice

and identity resulted in the construction of an archetypal field equipped to sustain its legitimacy in the face of ongoing critique.

For critical public relations scholars adopting a social constructivist perspective of public relations, CDA is an important tool for research. It enables a detailed deconstruction of public relations texts in ways that reveal not only their ostensible purpose, but also the ways in which the nuanced management of language, so fundamental to public relations practice, produces certain relations between social groups, distributes power to some and not to others, and allows certain types of knowledge to be recognized and others ignored.

Lee Edwards

See also Critical Theory; Cultural Flows and Public Relations; Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Discursive; Power, Symbolic

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CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical race theory (CRT) was conceptualized in the field of legal studies in the 1970s as a reaction to failed attempts at equalizing legal and civil rights of Black Americans after the civil rights movement. CRT not only describes the state of racial disparity in U.S. social systems, it also argues that civil rights efforts have been obstructed, in many aspects, because of systemic neglect to non-White groups.

Critical Race Theory and Public Relations

As an interdisciplinary theory, public relations scholars introduced CRT to public relations to explain identity-based discrepancies among the makeup of practitioners as well as the representation of people of color in research, campaigns, and education. For example, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2011, of the estimated 221,000 public relations specialists in the United States, 18.8% were non-White practitioners.

Among the management ranks, the representation of racial minority groups drops to 6.3%. A critical race examination of this data seeks to describe why the racial disparity among management cadres exists and explores which powerful bodies perpetuate the devaluing of practitioners of color in management.

In academe, an eye-opening CRT study by Donalyn Pompper (2005) found a considerable dearth of research focusing on or even acknowledging racial, ethnic, and cultural issues and publics in published public relations research. Pompper concluded that the field should connect more with research participants by contextualizing their cultural situations; triangulate methods and involve participants in data analysis; and work with international public relations students.

Two CRT concepts particularly relate to public relations: Whiteness and intersectionality. Specifically, CRT seeks social justice for people of color by exposing historically held norms that uphold White culture as the standard for education, economics, health, politics, and social behavior. Whiteness, then, is the status quo by which social power is unequally distributed among authoritative and marginalized groups. Unchecked Whiteness reduces groups to their racial status alone without considering how other identities either jeopardize or privilege them, time and time again. The cumulative effect on social groups' experiences with power and multiple identities is known as intersectionality.

Whiteness and Public Relations

The concept of Whiteness explains that White culture is the standard experience of society and that when one is *not* White, one has a different, alternate, less natural experience. As Whites comprise the largest and most powerful racial group, assuming White as the standard—and non-White experience as the deviation—constitutes a daily, routinized racism against the experiences of people of color.

In public relations, Whiteness emerges in the workplace and in messaging. Research suggests that practitioners from racial minority groups work within the norm of “color blindness” to race. Lee Edwards (2010) suggested this is problematic when practitioners are pigeonholed into raced projects and cannot express to colleagues that race plays a factor in decisions, such as building account

teams. Whiteness occurs in designing campaign messages that essentialize entire cultures into a few diluted, organizationally defined representations or advocate for behaviors that reflect White cultural values. Representations often reflect an organization's meaning about an issue, which can be far different from—and sometimes offensive to—the meanings held by a public. This miss in communication is a common effect of unrecognized Whiteness in campaign design.

Intersectionality and Public Relations

Identities do not exist in a vacuum, nor are they mutually exclusive in how they affect individuals' thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. Rather, demographic and sociographic identities (e.g., race, gender, class, age, sexual orientation, ability, nationality/citizenship, religion, occupation, family composition, and health status, etc.) mix together and reproduce one another to influence how a person experiences different social systems, such as education, laws and legal authorities, health care and public health, criminal justice, and work.

Intersectionality refers to the network of interlocking identities that result in an unequal distribution of power across social groups. One consequence is essentialization of groups, which means assuming that all people who share a demographic then think and behave the same. This dilutes the rich experiences that different, multiple identities bring to individuals and groups, and it alienates publics from organizations. Another consequence is misrepresentation and mis-targeting of groups in media. Finally, social ills like chronic health disparities persist when the effects of intersectionality are left unchallenged because communication is assumed to be a “one size fits all” solution.

Future Critiques

Research should explore the contributions made by important public relations practitioners of color in history. Also, organizations should routinely build coalitions, use myriad social media, and encourage diversity training to help practitioners “unlearn the normalcy of being White” (Varde-man-Winter, 2011, p. 416). Finally, practitioners, researchers, and educators should critique representations of race in each campaign message,

research study, and curriculum because they cannot say the field is colorblind and that race is not an issue.

Jennifer Vardeman-Winter

See also Diversity: Audiences; Diversity: Public Relations Profession; Identity Theory; Minorities in Public Relations; Race and Public Relations

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CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory concerns three main areas: the first is as the object of academic attention of certain traditions of thought, especially the Frankfurt School and their successors; the second is as a set of methods that vary over time but consistently draw from different disciplines to examine root assumptions about knowledge; and the third, which sometimes links directly to political action (e.g., Western Marxism), involves critical views of social power arrangements in society.

Critical theory originated in the European Enlightenment's *raison d'être* and is encapsulated in Immanuel Kant's famous dictum "dare to know." It gathered momentum as proponents not only dared to know, but also dared to act on that knowledge to overthrow the status quo. The key 20th-century moment was the 1917 Russian Revolution that linked theory to action with an international impact. In dramatic form, it posed the question of whether to support the existence, economics, and philosophy of the USSR or to oppose it. Before that revolution, critical theorist Karl Marx was just another philosopher; after it, he was a global point of political reference. Critical theorists in particular were put on the spot and the resulting test of praxis—not just rethinking the world, but remaking it—remains a specter haunting their writings.

Although the internationally supported "Occupy Wall Street" movement has continuities with such radical behavior, direct activism in the West diminished as a major part of critical theory outside public relations. Within public relations, noncorporate and nongovernment activists continue to struggle for recognition. Nevertheless, critical theorists retain elements of European Enlightenment optimism in their belief that applied rationality, the ability to openly question authority, can influence human activities and social structures in a democratic and life-enhancing way. In different approaches, the impacts of the Arab Spring, beginning in 2011, and the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), which began in 2008, reactivated interest in radical interrogations of existing systems.

In the first of the three areas of critical theory, (the relatively narrow academic one), the leading representative in public relations is Jürgen Habermas. Apart from Geert Hofstede, whose functional culture and organizations research became a staple of mainstream management, Habermas features more widely in public relations than any other European theorist. His concept of communicative rationality, which is anchored in "the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech" (Habermas, 1984, p. 10) predates the more limited idea of two-way symmetrical communication. His associated advocacy of the ideal speech situation where all stakeholders participate equally in dialogue and resolve in favor of the best argument has affinities with and

usefully elaborates on the ideal goals for practice. This remains true despite the fact that communicative rationality and symmetry exist in theory rather than in practice.

For Habermas the aim of speech is to reach agreement on action and how to act. Additionally, all participants in conversation should accept a set of responsibilities as a result of taking part. These responsibilities include aspiring to agreement in a fair-minded way, encouraging open (e.g., independent of business, religious, or government interests) debate, listening as well as talking, and honoring any consensus reached. Participation in fair process and acceptance of the outcome becomes, in itself, a legitimating process, which Habermas extends beyond face-to-face talk into mediated communication. Public relations is influenced by Habermasian legitimation theory, which sets out and justifies normative guidelines for the consideration of public issues, and by his philosophy of the public sphere. The public sphere can be a physical place where citizens gather for a democratic exchange of ideas (e.g., a town square) or a media arena. The concept is anchored in, and partially restricted by, Habermas's imaginings of the political interchanges of middle-class men in early modern Europe's communal coffee houses. In what he saw as the subsequent denigration of communication from those conditions to an environment framed by consumerism, mass media, and state intrusions, Habermas positioned public relations, along with advertising and marketing, as powerful, if negative, agents in the decline.

Despite—or perhaps because of—this view, Habermas's writings add value to public relations. He is an informative and forceful advocate of the conditions needed for open public debate and for thinking through a social process for the social legitimation of ideas. Habermas worked to establish necessary preconditions for democratic communication: open access; the creation of public judgment through gatherings of citizens engaged in political deliberations; and freedom to discuss matters of the state, its powers, and its exercise of those powers. He also established a philosophical foundation on which to build long-term behavioral and ethical guidelines relevant to journalists, media policy makers, and communicators and grounded his idealism in an intellectual history of communication. That philosophy serves as a source

of knowledge and as a prototype for public communication that has already been adapted to social participation via technology through considerations of the Internet as a public sphere able to host open democratic discussion by “netizens,” or online citizens. This Internet sphere enables freer debates in relative equality and, as illustrated by the Wikileaks controversy of 2010, can even bring into question the rights of governments to withhold information by simultaneously circulating confidential documents globally.

In critical theory's second main area, its breadth of interdisciplinary methods, the Frankfurt School stands out. The Frankfurt-based Institute for Social Research, as it was originally called, was at odds with both capitalism and communism. The School set out critical theory as an activity that took society as its object and went beyond tensions between individual creativity and conventional organizational and social frameworks to combine Marxist-based criticism with aesthetics, existentialism, hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, and sociology to address a broad spectrum of issues from an emancipatory perspective. Although public relations still works from a narrower interdisciplinary base, it has over the past 15 years substantially widened its original range of influencing disciplines. These include both new and/or increased depth in work on anthropology, complexity science, economics, feminism, “new history,” postcolonial and subaltern studies, postmodernism, psychoanalysis, semiotics, and structuralism.

As the Frankfurt School's members fled the rise of German Fascism, its plural methods spread internationally. For example, in the United States Herbert Marcuse published *One-Dimensional Man* (1964/1991), a book based on a typical Frankfurt theme: the fall of revolutionary potential, and the rise of social repression resulting in an advanced consumer society producing one-dimensional humans with dulled thinking and the desire for oppositional action. Marcuse's response was to advocate “negative thinking” to keep the critical impulse alive. A fellow émigré to the United States, Theodor Adorno (1951/1974), identified a similar loss of hope that philosophy could change the world. In a century scarred by the experiences of atomic bombs in Japan and concentration camps in Europe, Adorno saw the Enlightenment dream of a just and reasonable society as degenerating

into barbarism and a nightmarish “iron cage” imprisoned in the “instrumental reason” of self-interested functionalism epitomized by narrow rationalization in bureaucracy, economics, and technoscience.

More recent critical theory publications are less pessimistic and better attuned to current public relations and social conditions. Zygmunt Bauman’s influential work on *Liquid Modernity* (2000), for example, sees contemporary power as economic, invisible, multinational, and infiltrating every aspect of life, but not in a rigid way. From Bauman’s perspective, the idea of liquid modernity replaces what was formerly theorized as solid, and therefore harder to shift, modernity (as typified by the “iron cage” imagery). Liquid society influences, and destabilizes, the very categories (e.g., ethnicity and race), and social structures (e.g., immigration), on which the societies of modernity are built. Xifra and McKie (2011) observed that by positioning public relations as part of the construction of the liquid fears, lives, and loves that create these fragile, changing, and uncertain times, Bauman raises the status of public relations and recognizes its ability, and responsibility, for making society more fully functional.

As well as exhibiting an interdisciplinary growth by importing outside theorists, public relations has seen an internal growth in material with different and distinct critical edges. New editions of the only two major pre-2000 collections that featured critical public relations have been published. Between them, the updated versions of Jacquie L’Etang and Magda Pieczka’s *Public Relations: Critical Debates and Contemporary Practice* (2006) and Robert L. Heath, Elizabeth L. Toth, and Damion Waymer’s *Rhetorical and Critical Studies in Public Relations II* (2009) include a diverse span extending from outlaw discourse and postmodern lists through critically self-reflective writing to multiple discursive analyses of the role of public relations in manufacturing and sustaining power relations in society. The content from the two collections covers topics from celebrity promotion, church sex scandals, civil society, and science communication to politics, sport, and tourism. These critiques are complemented by special issues of the *Australian Journal of Communication*, *The Journal of Public Relations Research*, and *Public Relations Review* that critically examined ideas from the margins,

race, and revisionist approaches to public relations history.

In the third area of critical theory—not just examining, but opposing injustices in the status quo—Habermas differed from most social critics by concentrating on the power of rationality rather than the power of power. There is a limited, but growing amount of that broader critical theory within public relations (Edwards, 2010). What exists tends to focus on asking tough questions about taken-for-granted inequalities. Most research clusters around critiques of how the field minimizes, or excludes, alternative forms of expression, how it restricts access in favor of the powerful rather than the disadvantaged, and how it stays complicit with big business and political elites. In one of the most direct critiques, Nancy Snow (2010) makes U.S. propaganda explicit in “Operation Iraqi Freedom and the war on terror. . . [with] Weapons of Mass Destruction that never materialized, the manufactured hero-turned-all-too-human Jessica Lynch story, and the marketing of the war as a welcome liberation” (p. 11).

Greater attention to those kinds of critical theory concerns within the field could do much to counter damaging, and widely disseminated, allegations of public relations as “weapons of mass deception” by external critics. The lessons from issues management of talking to all stakeholders, including hostile ones, and unrecognized “stake seekers,” could be applied internally by taking seriously the challenges of critical theorists. Nevertheless, the influence of critical theory on public relations has increased, is increasing, and is likely to continue to increase. One reason is the growing influence of critical theory on other areas of management, especially allied areas, such as organizational communication and, in the wake of the GFC, economics. Other reasons include the globally expanding and pluralizing public relations literature with its associated trend toward greater philosophical breadth, depth, diversity, and openness, alongside the field’s internationalization into countries where critical theory is more common than in the United States and where universities are legally empowered to act as the conscience of society. These combine with, above all, the continuation of powerful economic and social forces seeking legitimacy for controversial topics

and interacting with public relations in the course of that search.

David McKie

See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Dialogue; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Habermas, Jürgen, on Public Relations; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Power, as Functions and Structures; Public Sphere Discourse; Stakeholder Theory

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CROWDSOURCING

Crowdsourcing is a process by which unofficial, distributed groups of individuals (the “crowd”) voluntarily contribute solutions in response to an open call issued by an individual or organization (the crowdsourcer). The term *crowdsourcing* was coined by Jeff Howe in 2006. Continuing the efforts to conceptualize this phenomenon, Enrique

Estellés-Arolas and Fernando González-Ladrón-de-Guevara (2012; see also, Brabham, 2008) featured the participative dynamics that can be evoked by the source:

Crowdsourcing is a type of participative online activity in which an individual, an institution, a non-profit organization, or company proposes to a group of individuals of varying knowledge, heterogeneity, and number, via a flexible open call, the voluntary undertaking of a task. (pp. 9–10)

Crowdsourcing can be used to accomplish a specific task (microwork), create knowledge (“wisdom of the crowd”), vote as a group (crowdvoting), or initiate financial support within the community (crowdfunding). Whether the call asks the crowd to rate a new theme or logo for a brand or to share updates and information during a disaster, crowdsourcing provides a forum for democratic, inexpensive conversations with multiple voices and perspectives within the digital sphere.

While initially conducted offline, advances in communication technologies have expanded opportunities for crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing emerged as companies asked their customers, loyal brand enthusiasts, and influencers about an issue facing the brand in question. The interaction between the companies and these stakeholders is dynamic and occurs in real time through online forums and platforms. Participation through these interactions can provide financial or online reputation benefits for the user (extrinsic rewards) or help the user feel connected and part of the social online community (intrinsic rewards). With the emergence of new tools to communicate directly with audiences, this phenomenon is breaking down the barriers in time and location. Companies can not only have a dialogue with these audiences but can also monitor their keyword searches with specific research techniques, such as data mining, use of Web analytics software to measure time each person spent on site, and social media monitoring software programs to create databases for monitory conversations on the topics sourced.

Crowdsourcing provides advantages to both crowd and crowdsourcer. The crowd enjoys the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits noted above, and the crowdsourcer obtains inexpensive assistance from a wide network. In some cases the input from

the crowd can be superior to input from focus groups and formal work groups because of the relatively anonymous, nonjudgmental format of the discussion. The focus in crowdsourcing remains on the problem, not on the individuals suggesting the solutions.

Among the concerns about crowdsourcing is the nonrandom nature of the crowd. Internet use is high in most countries but is not universal. On some platforms (e.g., Amazon's Mechanical Turk), low-income individuals from third world nations are more likely to participate, while in others (e.g., iStockphoto), the crowd can be highly trained professionals. Crowdsourcers must consider the fit of the likely responder to the goals of the organization when constructing and locating a call. The participation of many low-income individuals for low pay also raises ethical issues, in spite of the voluntary nature of the activity. Implicit participation, in which the crowd is unaware of their contributions, is viewed as an invasion of privacy issue.

Karen Freberg

See also Brand Equity and Branding; Dialogue

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CULTURAL FLOWS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Cultural flows are the dynamic transnational movement of ideas and innovations—physically and virtually—that result in variations of a shared cultural and global consciousness throughout most of the world. Globalization has paved the way for the swift flow of cultural ideas among nations.

Globalization is characterized by the global reach of international media organizations, the ease of travel and migration, the network of ever-evolving technologies and social media that allow instantaneous communication around the world, as well as the growing interdependence of national economies with their interconnected financial and commercial institutions. In addition to the innovations and business practices that have compressed the world, a component of globalization is the increased *consciousness* of the world as whole and *awareness* that the world is connected in a single social space, global public sphere, or “imagined world.”

The concept of cultural flows and an imagined world is attributed to Arjun Appadurai (1996), a cultural anthropologist who described five streams of cultural flows (which he calls *scapes*) that contribute to globalized, shared imaginary experiences. The first stream is *ethnoscape*, which is the shifting of people around the globe through travel and migration, which includes guest workers and international businesspersons and tourists as well as refugees and exiles. The movement of ethnicities contributes to political and philosophical changes among nations. The second concept, *technoscapes*, refers to the way technology, including machinery, hardware, and software, moves across borders, including borders that historically have been impervious. The flow of technology comes from governments as well as transnational corporations

but does not flow evenly to all parts of the world. *Mediascape* includes the distribution and capabilities of global communication networks, including commercial news and entertainment media, films, games, and social media. The mediascape is also the images of the world created by various media as well as the flow of information. *Financescape* is the interconnectedness of financial institutions, currency markets, stock exchanges, and commodity speculations. This concept of global capital flow is the most fluid, complex, and rapidly changing landscape. The fifth conceptualization is *ideoscape*, which is the flow of philosophical and political ideologies. This concept involves the power of nation-states and is closely connected to the flow of Western views of democracy and sovereignty. Cultural flows are fluid and in a constant state of flux; they contribute to a dynamic social coconstruction of reality.

Global cultural flows have created a transnational public sphere for the practice of public relations, and public relations messages contribute to global discourse. However, ideas and innovations do not flow evenly throughout the world; flows are more prevalent from dominant groups with more power, capital, and technology and the cultures of dominant nations are more deeply embedded in the global order. For public relations, this means that Western conceptualizations of practice are prevalent in public relations education and global practice.

While there are financial, political, and social advantages to deliberate global interconnectedness, there are also perceived threats. Cultural flows are seen by some as a threat to cultural identity that could result in global hybridization. The challenge for public relations practice in a global context is to be aware that cultural flows build multicultural societies but not necessarily homogeneous ones. Western public relations practices are often applied in cultures in which cultural differences make Western notions ineffective and not feasible. It can be argued that there is not a global context for public relations, but rather localized practices that respect cultural differences are necessary to achieve organizational goals in transcultural spaces because public relations involves not only messages but also representations of symbols and values. Public relations practitioners who operate in the global sphere must be aware of the

potential for backlash against globalization and possible resentment of globalization and Westernized worldviews. While holding a global perspective, practitioners must strategically localize their strategies to adapt to different cultures and work to make their organizations as indigenous as possible in the countries in which they operate.

Despite influences from a variety of cultures and increasingly globalized worldviews, individual societal cultures still hold different views of the world and even the imagined global social order is affected by the history and context of different groups. Worldviews change slowly and culture has a profound effect on communication. Cultural flows play an important role in the introduction of global ideas, but awareness does not automatically lead to acceptance.

Candace White

See also Circuit of Culture; Culture; Globalization and Public Relations; Globalize; Socioculture and Public Relations

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CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Cultural intelligence (also *cultural quotient*, or CQ) seeks to help communicators understand why some people are able to function effectively in culturally diverse situations, while others struggle. Specifically addressed is the form of intelligence that allows a person to understand and reason in situations involving cultural diversity. In our increasingly global environment, CQ has since been applied to countless disciplines and situations ranging from military operations to religion and family communication, to library

sciences, to public relations. As such, it provides useful information related to how one copes in multicultural situations and is often related to the ability to succeed in culturally diverse groups. In other words, it addresses steps and approaches a person can take to be effective in culturally diverse situations.

Cultural intelligence is complementary to the more familiar concepts of cognitive intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ). In fact, the proposed four dimensions of CQ are based on foundations for the multiple foci of intelligence that outline both mental function and the actual display of behavior. These foci include (1) metacognitive (control of cognition), (2) cognitive (knowledge structures), (3) motivational (ability to focus energy on a task), and (4) behavioral (outward action or behavior).

P. Christopher Earley and Soon Ang (2003) used these factors to help explain cultural intelligence by featuring four dimensions. First, metacognitive CQ involves active thinking, or higher order cognitive processes, related to people and situations as it deals with a person's level of conscious cultural awareness. For example, when those with high metacognitive CQ are involved in cross-cultural interactions, they consciously question their cultural assumptions, reflect during the interaction, and adjust or adapt their cultural knowledge. As a result, those with high metacognitive CQ are more likely to act in culturally appropriate ways, meaning they have an increased chance of achieving their desired outcomes when communicating in cross-cultural situations. As a person makes sense of culturally diverse experiences, the person must judge their own thought processes. In other words, by using awareness and knowledge about one's own culture and the assumptions one may have about other cultures as a tool, expectations and assumptions are adjusted based on a person's actual experiences.

Next, cognitive CQ addresses a person's knowledge of cultural norms, values, and practices. It is believed these norms can be obtained formally, through education, or informally, through personal experiences. Cognitive CQ has three key elements, each of which is believed to influence thoughts and behaviors. These elements include one's knowledge of culture, cultural environment, and one's own culture. As a result, a person with

high cognitive CQ is expected to experience less confusion during intercultural communication. Cognitive CQ may include the simple concept of how cultures are similar or different. When assessing these similarities and differences, a person might take into account rules of specific languages and communication; norms associated with values and beliefs; and overarching business, economic, legal, and political systems.

The third dimension, motivational CQ, features the effort one makes to operate in a culturally diverse situation. Such efforts are thought to be a result of how a person analyzes a situation. Analysis involves looking at triggers, such as a person's perceived ability to accomplish a desired outcome, and the value they place on this end result. If someone has high motivational CQ, that means they probably make great efforts or assign additional energy toward learning about, functioning in, and ultimately being successful in cross-cultural interactions. In other words, motivational CQ involves a person's interest and confidence level during inclusion in culturally diverse situations. Motivating factors may involve anything from the benefits the person thinks he or she attains, to having confidence that he or she can be successful in these situations, to simply enjoying culturally diverse interactions.

Finally, behavioral CQ addresses the way one acts when one interacts with people from a different culture. As such, this dimension includes a person's ability to respond appropriately during these situations and is important because it involves a response to both verbal and nonverbal communication in a fluid environment. Successful communicators are good at decoding communication, which ultimately gives them clues about the sender's motivations and expectations, in order to respond in a socially acceptable manner. Those who have high behavioral CQ are often flexible, making changes to their behaviors based on individual cultural interactions. This means that as dictated by the situation or cultural differences, a person is able to adapt his or her own behavioral responses, such as gestures and accent or tone.

After reviewing the four dimensions of CQ, it is apparent why cultural intelligence is defined as a set of capabilities. Each dimension is distinct, yet each works together to form higher levels of cultural intelligence. This means that CQ can be

cultivated through personal experience, interactions, training, and education. In addition, these capabilities are not culture specific. In other words, cultural intelligence does not address the ability to function in a specific country or region. It does, however, focus on being able to function effectively in culturally diverse situations, which has much broader parameters.

Originally thought of as an individual capability, cultural intelligence was traditionally captured or quantified using the Cultural Intelligence Scale and involved both self-report or observer-report data. However, researchers are beginning to investigate the use of alternate scales as the concept is applied to teams, work groups, organizations, and social networks. As such, the concept of cultural intelligence improving intercultural encounters for the individual is expected to expand far beyond one person's capabilities.

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See also Circuit of Culture; Culture; Intercultural Communication Theory

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CULTURAL THEORY OF RISK COMMUNICATION

Cultural theory of risk communication describes the risk communication process from an institutional and societal level. Whereas the mental models approach features elites (often scientists) as the interpreters of risk, which is then communicated to affected individuals, cultural theory

presumes a more interpretative approach. The theory is based on four premises:

1. Receivers of risk messages are active rather than passive and are members of institutions with cultures that provide interpretative frames for individuals, which may differ from those of elites.
2. Risks are not objective. They evoke different meaning and interpretation for different receivers depending on their cultures.
3. The interpreters of risk information are not individuals per se, but institutions. In any society, risks are managed and communicated by institutions, with different norms, perceptions, and positions in the risk management infrastructures.
4. Institutions are involved in political negotiation when deciding the meaning(s) and ethics of the risks communicated to and with the affected public. Thus, rather than agreement with the judgment of elites, cultural interpretation of risk presupposes the need for consensus at best but compromise at least among the engaged institutions.

Cultural theory provides a vital view of risk perception and risk communication by introducing the idea that risk meaning(s) are negotiated at an institutional and organizational level and exhibit a political character of risk controversies. As such, this theory of risk communication is the bedrock of societal risk deliberation, risk democracy.

Culture presumes that risk is not something objective that can be measured independent from culturally sensitive interpretations. Therefore, risk becomes a social construct, with different meanings to different individuals. Such meanings may differ as to the nature, cause, effect, and mitigation of the risk. It focuses on the ethics of the risk creator and risk bearer. It is likely to ponder whether the impact of risk by industrialization is shared fairly and equally based on a societal risk/benefit/harm metric. Thus, this theory underpins deliberations of that center attention on whether race or income affect the degree to which some segment of the population experiences unequal and unfair levels of risk.

Risk communication is based on the traditional model of information transmission, but it elevates risk decision making to a societal or cultural level.

For instance, its advocates are willing to argue that as technologies advanced in the last two centuries, the world is becoming a risk society. The final outcome of risk communication is to educate people (the receivers of messages) to ensure they understand the risks and, ultimately, the consequences of those risks. Cultural theory identifies receivers as active and privileged to employ different interpretative frames from those of the elite seeking to manage the risk. In other words, institutions follow organizational norms when communicating possible risks within the organization as well as to its publics. In this sense, there is a constant negotiation process of risk meanings and evaluations and power is a constant factor in such deliberations. Moreover, cultural theory focuses on the intrinsic political character of risk controversies and sheds light on the risk meaning–negotiating process and its political nature.

Cultural theory is said to originate in the work of Émile Durkheim and Ludwik Fleck. Anthropologist Mary Douglas was among the first researchers to use cultural theory in her argument for the necessity of researching risk as a cultural phenomenon. She proposed that risks as well as crises are not only scientific events but also political and cultural. In the modern society, the concept of risk becomes the product of large-scale institutions rather than individuals. Consequently, each society and form of social organization defines, interprets, and deals with or manages risks differently. By this logic, it is argued that the rationale for society is the collective management of risks.

Central to cultural theory are the concepts of accountability and politicized risks. Cultures are considered to be systems of persons that hold each other responsible. This mutual accountability has political implications, when assessing, arguing for, and communicating risks to different parties. That is not to say that individuals do not have responsibilities, but rather the level of accountability differs among different persons, depending on their culture or institution. For example, the journalism community has a different notion of risks than a medical or military community. In this sense, the rationale of collective risk management should bring parties together in society as this process is one of constant negotiation and leads to important heuristics, such as the precautionary principle. That principle is used to challenge innovation,

setting forth that the implication of risks associated with innovation must be understood and controlled before deserving public support.

Institutions have the responsibility to represent and publicly communicate this collective view of risk issues and to make certain that they provide the perspectives of all groups. Therefore, institutions are the ones negotiating in this politicized context of risk issues, and these controversies over risk issues are best resolved through compromise and not consensus.

Cultural theory features the typology of four archetypal cultures (also called solidarities): isolates, hierarchy, individualism, and egalitarianism. The grid varies from high to low. The basic assumptions are set into the two axes of typology:

1. The minimum form of commitment to life in a society is represented in terms of strength of allegiance to a group. The axis varies from weak to strong.
2. The extent of regulation inside or outside of the group. The axis varies from low to high.

These two assumptions lead to the four possible forms of social environment proposed by the typology. The four institutional forms described by the typology are interpreted to imply four idealized universal personality types. For example, the four types of people featured are believed to be concerned with different types of risks or hazards. Egalitarians are thought to be concerned with technology and the environment, individualists with war and other threats to the markets, hierarchists with law and order, and fatalists with none of the above. The cultural theory is consequently reduced to solely a psychological risk, perception risk theory based on individual traits. Other applications of this theory use this typology as a base for researching global risks or even for theorizing political science issues.

Cultural theorists expanded the scope and challenges of risk management and communication by featuring the intrinsically political nature of risks. Furthermore, in recent years, the theory has seriously progressed not only to the practical field, but moreover to the research on the politics of collective action and governance.

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See also Infrastructural Risk Communication; Mental Models Approach to Risk Communication; Power, Symbolic; Precautionary Principle; Right to Know; Risk Communication; Risk Society

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CULTURAL TOPOI

Topoi are lines of argument that can be repeatedly used in debates (a *topos* is a single line of argument). General topoi can be employed across many subjects, whereas specific topoi apply only

within a specific discourse field, such as the law. Communicators use topoi to generate arguments or to anticipate arguments they must prepare to refute. Widely used topoi include stock issues of policy debate (e.g., stasis) or lists of values that audience members believe.

This article discusses a system of topoi that developed to characterize cultural discourse within a society. Mary Douglas (1997) recently characterized culture as an accounting system. “Think of culture as essentially a dialogue that allocates praise and blame. Then focus particularly on the blame (p. 129).” From this view, culture involves a clash between competing views of social reality. A cultural topos is a set of coherent premises that supports a particular way of organizing social relations. These premises include perceptions of reality and value premises about what is desirable and good.

The cultural topoi framework identifies the underlying premises of competing accounting systems that participate in the discourse of praising and blaming. The premises that make up these topoi often require considerable effort to uncover because they are automatically accepted, or because they underlie second- and third-order premises that are actually voiced. The cultural premises that constitute the five competing cultural topoi are illustrated in Table 1. They are ordered from left to right in terms of the level of measurement that each cultural topos embodies.

Table 1 Cultural Topoi Compared

<i>Foundational Beliefs</i>	<i>Fatalist Topoi</i>	<i>Egalitarian Topoi</i>	<i>Hierarchical Topoi</i>	<i>Autonomous Individualist Topoi</i>	<i>Competitive Individualist Topoi</i>
Nature	Nature is capricious and unpredictable.	Nature is fragile; its equilibrium is precarious.	Nature is bountiful, if it has a gardener.	Nature is benevolent, if you match yourself to it.	Nature is bountiful and resilient.
Human nature	Human nature is capricious and unpredictable.	Human nature is good, but social inequality corrupts it.	Human nature is bent, but discipline can straighten it.	Human nature is ignorant, but it can be enlightened.	Human nature is self-seeking, but competition channels it productively.
Value imperative	Accept reality; don't try to change it.	Seek equality.	Seek order.	Seek enlightenment.	Seek liberty.

<i>Foundational Beliefs</i>	<i>Fatalist Topoi</i>	<i>Egalitarian Topoi</i>	<i>Hierarchical Topoi</i>	<i>Autonomous Individualist Topoi</i>	<i>Competitive Individualist Topoi</i>
Decision principle	Let fate decide.	Seek consensus.	Legitimate authority decides. The chain of command implements.	One person, one vote.	Let the market decide.
Activity principle	Take what comes your way.	Do it for love.	Practice until you are good at it.	If you do it, avoid coercive entanglements.	Do whatever you do best.
Justice principle	Que será.	From each according to ability to each according to his need.	Give and receive according to rank.	To each an equal portion.	To each in proportion to her contribution.
Measurement level	None	Nominal	Ordinal	Interval	Ratio

Source: Leichty, G., & Warner, E. (2000). Cultural topoi: Implications for public relations. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), *Handbook of public relations* (pp. 61–75). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

The cultural topoi originate in different ways of life that compete with each other. Each way of life is part of a cultural ecosystem that has an inherent requisite variety. Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis, and Aaron Wildavsky (1990) wrote, “Each way of life needs each of its rivals, either to make up for its deficiencies, or to exploit, or to define itself against. To destroy the other (way of life) is to murder the self” (p. 4). The ongoing competition between the cultural forms gives a particular group its unique cultural configuration. At one point in time, a single way of life may dominate a scene, or two ways of life may form a dominant coalition. The remaining ways of life are usually pushed toward the periphery of the cultural system. Indeed, egalitarianism typically appears as an ideology that critiques the status quo. Representative democracy itself is a coalition of cultures in which each way of life has a voice within a differentiated social structure.

The egalitarian and competitive individualist topoi usually vigorously oppose one another. The egalitarian topos privileges the value of social equality, whereas the competitive individualist topos elevates the value of individual freedom. The

egalitarian strongly resists reducing sacred values (i.e., human life) to a cash value, but the competitive individualist insists that everything should have a price (e.g., donor organs). However, cultural collaboration is possible even between these perennial antagonists. Egalitarians and competitive individuals were allies in constraining the reach of the federal government in the early decades of the American republic. Egalitarians feared that a strong federal government would increase social inequality, and competitive individualists feared that a strong federal government would undermine individual liberty. Cultural collaboration is often possible, when a particular strategy serves different ends for each way of life.

The cultural topoi perspective provides several analytic advantages. It offers a richer understanding of rhetorical options than the prevailing discourse of a right/left political spectrum. It provides a parsimonious framework for describing the social construction of reality while enabling cross-cultural comparisons and descriptions of cultural change. It also allows one to anticipate opportunities for collaboration between groups that typically oppose each other (e.g., egalitarian-oriented

democrats and Buchanan social conservatives uniting to oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement).

A cultural topoi framework also provides a springboard for investigating perceptions and discourse about risk. People with different ways of life fear different things. Those who fear ozone depletion are not more fearful than those who fear anarchy; it is cultural premises that alert us to some dangers and blind us to other dangers.

The perspective also explains how audiences come to different interpretations of the same message. To understand how a message is likely to be interpreted, the intricacies of cognitive dynamics do not need to be understood so much as there is a need to understand which cultural topos a message interpreter is applying. The credibility of a message depends on how closely it aligns with the receiver's underlying premises. When a message is consistent with the receiver's cultural premises, inference is facilitated. When it contains premises at odds with a receiver's cultural topos, the message is likely resisted.

Carl Botan and Francisco Soto (1998) defined a public "as an ongoing process of agreement on an interpretation" (p. 21). In many cases, the shared interpretation of a particular public stems from a shared cultural topos. The public relations function participates in the ongoing clash of perspectives that takes place in a democratic society. The cultural topoi perspective represents part of the tacit knowledge of astute practitioners. Such practitioners have a breadth of perspective that enables them to interact with audiences operating from different cultural premises. Public relations practitioners serve as interpretive intermediaries between an organization's management and important publics. They work to find rhetorical positions that enable alignment and collaboration between audiences operating from different cultural premises.

The cultural topoi framework also provides a useful heuristic for characterizing public relations practice. Public relations not only participates in cultural dialogue, but the same cultural processes operate to define and prescribe for public relations practice. In particular, competitive individualist and hierarchical versions of public relations practice have contended with each other since the early decades of the 20th century. Ivy Lee is an icon of competitive-individualist oriented practice, and

Edward Bernays is an icon of hierarchically oriented practice. In addition, egalitarian models of practice are emerging. Fittingly, the dialectic of praise and blame accounting, in which public relations participates, also plays an important role in constituting public relations practice.

Greg Leichty

See also Bernays, Edward; Dialogue; Lee, Ivy; Rhetorical Theory

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CULTURE

Any competent communicator recognizes the importance of adapting a message to the audience(s). As audiences or potential audiences grow increasingly diverse, so too does the importance of understanding culture and cultural background. Whether crafting a basic press release or a major campaign, an awareness of culture, both that of relevant organizations and that of key publics, is critical to public relations practice. In general, culture is defined as understandings and practices shared by a group of people. Certainly, cultural knowledge plays an important role in message design and interpretation.

According to Krishnamurthy Sriramesh, despite some awareness of the important role of culture, research in public relations placed primary

attention on culture for less than two decades, and many scholars agree that still too few studies examine links between culture and public relations. Thus, this area remains a rich and important one for future inquiry.

In keeping with the spirit of that theme, Stephen P. Banks suggested that although culture shapes practice, public relations nevertheless is likely to exhibit some fundamental similarities across modern societies. Despite such uniformity, several key changes in and across societies resulted in variations in public relations practice.

Culture and Public Relations in the 21st Century

Because of such changes, Stephen P. Wakefield asserted that in the 21st century, public relations practitioners face new challenges. Once primarily a domestic undertaking, public relations has gone global. The increased number of multinational organizations, ease of transnational and worldwide communication, and global marketplace redefine the profession. Although some organizations and industries are more often affected, changes reverberate throughout organizational practice. Further, the advent and adoption of new communication technologies also link cultures and shape the practice of public relations, both locally and globally. In 2011, Michèle Schoenberger-Orgad defined the new role of practitioners as intermediaries between the international community and cultures.

Taking a lead on these matters, Sriramesh suggested in 2003 that, in the wake of globalization, the practice of domestic public relations gave way to international public relations, as most organizations are interested in international image and relationships. Thus, rather than maintaining its status as a subspecialty, international public relations and public relations practice essentially are now synonyms. With such changes in outlook and practice, skills in communicating with multiple publics across differing cultures are essential. For example, in her 2012 study, Kate Fitch concluded that although a number of skills were needed (e.g., adaptability), intercultural competence had become a crucial new challenge to professional practice.

Among these challenges are the pressures arising from globalization. On this theme, Sriramesh in 2002 noted that the practice involves increasing

numbers of nations and cultures, and, despite these challenges, Wakefield (2000) cautioned that

precious little information exists to help multinational organizations to understand the global nature of their public relations or to guide them as they develop resources not only to get their messages out to increasingly cross-cultural publics, but also to anticipate and respond to behaviors by those publics that could affect the organizations. (p. 639)

This lack of information hampers efforts and places in jeopardy the achievement of organizational goals. "Multinationals need to understand the nuances of public relations between countries, or even in different regions within countries, and how misunderstandings of those nuances can bring problems on a global scale" (Wakefield, 2000, p. 640). Perusal of recent publications on public relations reveals that many focus on considerations and practice in particular countries or regions; however, much work remains to be done on adapting to the global public relations landscape.

Views of Culture

Work on culture, organizations, and public relations has produced two assessment lenses. One takes a primarily internal focus, viewing organizations as distinct cultures, with their own beliefs and practices, emerging from and adapting to surrounding cultures. The other is more external, examining the role of public relations in adapting to and influencing culture and cross-cultural issues. Separating culture and cultural difference, Wendy Hall proposed in 1995 that they must be addressed on two levels. The first is the organizational level. For example, some organizations, even in different nations, share similar cultures, perhaps due to their type and structure. The second is the national or individual level, which recognizes that culture varies by country with individuals, groups, and organizations being influenced. Understanding of both levels is essential.

Within the first view, each organization is seen as a distinct culture with its own value system (e.g., where particular behaviors or outcomes are more valued). Once entrenched, organizational cultures are relatively stable, though they do evolve and

change over time (e.g., especially with key changes, such as the appointment of a new CEO). If an organization diversifies into new locations, its culture shapes those facilities, but it must also adapt to local culture. Such transitions are easier when organizational and local cultures are similar, and they can be facilitated by public relations efforts.

Within the second view, general cultural characteristics and their influence on individuals are salient. National cultures are very stable, with changes taking place slowly. In addition, distinct regional variations are common. Therefore, in 2000, Doug Newsom, Judy VanSlykeTurk, and Dean Kruckeberg reasoned that the successful public relations practitioner needs to understand a country's government, power structure, laws and legal system, public and private sectors, financial system and markets, and media. In this vein, Gang Han and Ai Zhang's 2009 examination of the shutdown of Starbucks in the Forbidden City deals with the importance of understanding international and national context and the interplay of cultural and intercultural tensions.

Several typologies have emerged that characterize cultural differences. One of the leaders in the study of culture, Geert Hofstede, proposed that four dimensions—individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity/femininity—are commonly employed to describe cultural variation. He later added a fifth dimension, long-term versus short-term orientation. Expanding on Hofstede by proposing eight cultural qualities, Marlene Rossman's system included attitudes about time, formality, individualism, hierarchy, religion, taste/diet, colors/numbers/symbols, and assimilation and acculturation.

Areas of Research

Comparing intercultural communication and international public relations, R. S. Zaharna (2000) described three lines of research. The first, "culture-specific," seeks to pinpoint communicative behaviors common in a culture. A considerable amount of public relations work, especially from the "comparative public relations" perspective (i.e., delineating public relations practice in particular countries or regions), is indicative of this line of research.

The second, "culture-general," attempts to uncover practices common across cultures. For

example, much attention has been devoted to assessing the similarity of public relations goals and functions regardless of the specific location of practice. In 2003, Dennis L. Wilcox, Glen T. Cameron, Philip H. Ault, and Warren K. Agee maintained that the goals of public relations are essentially the same (e.g., creating and sustaining favorable conditions and relationships for operation, assessing the potential for and avoiding opposition and negative situations, and managing crises to minimize damage) regardless of the country or culture of practice. However, a variety of factors make intercultural communication and public relations more challenging: differences in language, customs, chain of command, media and public relations practice, and perception of individuals and nations. Thus, practitioners must learn as much about local customs and culture as possible, but they also need to consult cultural insiders for guidance.

The third area, "intercultural interaction," draws from each of the previous two and examines the communication of interactants from different cultures. Thus, the focus moves "from individual *communication behaviors* to exploring . . . how different behaviors affected the *communication process*" (Zaharna, 2000, p. 90, italics in original). Examples in public relations work are studies examining how public relations programs are evaluated through cultural lenses.

Flexibility is a new job skill created by globalization. As Newsom et al. (2000) noted,

despite the ability to build generalizable theory by incorporating multiple cultures and disciplines, difference among cultures must be addressed. What works in one country might not work well in another country because of national culture, political and economic infrastructure, media systems, and research protocols. (p. 651)

Multicultural Education

Stressing the new era in multicultural education, Kenneth Starck and Kruckeberg (2000) suggested that

a major contribution that public relations educators can make is to help students become interculturally literate, for the sine qua non of this newly emerging global economy is intercultural communication. One of our major goals should be to

promote intercultural literacy among present and future public relations practitioners. (p. 58)

Building and maintaining positive relationships rests on understanding cultural nuances. As Wakefield (2000) asserted, “although the interactions of diverse cultural groups can foster harmony, they also can produce opposite effects, such as more entrenched stereotypes and increased suspicions, misunderstandings, tribalism, and conflict” (p. 639). Clearly, effective communication is essential and public relations practitioners can help shape outcomes.

That messages need to be adapted to audiences is an age-old principle of communication. The increasing cultural diversity of audiences makes this concept an even more important one.

Joy L. Hart

See also Cultural Topoi; Globalization and Public Relations; Globalize; Intercultural Communication Theory

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CUTLIP, SCOTT M.

As the senior author of a leading textbook, *Effective Public Relations*, Cutlip is regarded by many as the father of public relations education in the United States during the second half of the 20th century. He also remains the field's most eminent historian.

Cutlip introduced the study of public relations at the University of Wisconsin School of Journalism in 1946 and continued as a Wisconsin faculty member until 1975, when he became a professor at the University of Georgia, Athens. He served as dean of the Henry W. Grady School (now College) of Journalism and Mass Communication at Georgia from 1976 to 1983 and was a university professor until his retirement in 1985.

A proud native of West Virginia, Cutlip received a bachelor's degree from Syracuse University and a Ph.M. degree in journalism and political science from Wisconsin in 1941. He worked as reporter, weekly newspaper editor, and press secretary to a gubernatorial candidate in West Virginia prior to attending Syracuse, where he worked for three years as an assistant in Syracuse's Bureau of Public Information.

Upon graduation from Wisconsin, Cutlip served as public relations director for the State Road

Commission of West Virginia. Then, during World War II, he served as a public information officer and a counterintelligence officer for the U.S. Army, attaining the rank of major.

In 1952, Cutlip and coauthor Allen H. Center, an official of Parker Pen Company and later Motorola, published the first edition of *Effective Public Relations*, which was updated with new editions in 1958, 1964, 1971, 1978, 1985, 1994, and 1999. The book was widely adopted as a college textbook and translated into Italian, Spanish, Korean, and Japanese editions. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) adopted the book as the basic text for its accreditation examination. Cutlip and Center entrusted the book's legacy to Glen M. Broom, who joined them as coauthor beginning with the sixth edition in 1985.

Cutlip and Center's cornerstone concept was the *four-step public relations process* as a model for organizing public relations programs. The first edition emphasized the importance of fact finding, planning, and communication. The fourth step, evaluation, was not added until the second edition in 1958. The model has been usurped by strategic communication approaches that follow more general business planning models, but continues to be the criteria for judging in PRSA's Silver Anvil Award and many regional competitions recognizing outstanding public relations programs.

Cutlip's other major early contribution was compilation of the first comprehensive bibliography of public relations, produced in 1957 and updated in 1965. Former student Robert L. Bishop produced a third edition in 1974. Annual bibliographies in the Cutlip tradition began to be published soon thereafter in *Public Relations Review*.

Cutlip is familiar to many philanthropic and fundraising professionals as the author of the most comprehensive early history of American fundraising. He also edited a volume on public opinion for public administrators. In 1975, he cochaired with J. Carroll Bateman the first commission on undergraduate public relations education.

Cutlip's passion for public relations history was evident in many of his early scholarly journal articles. He also played a pivotal role in securing the personal papers of many early public relations pioneers, such as John W. Hill and Earl Newsom, which are now preserved and accessible to scholars

at the Mass Communication History Center of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison.

In retirement, Cutlip compiled his extensive research on early public relations in two books. One title examined the roots of the practice before the 20th century; the second tome profiled the work of a dozen leading practitioners from the first half of the 20th century.

Cutlip was honored in 1972 with PRSA's first Distinguished Public Relations Teaching award and in 1990 with the society's Gold Anvil award for the advancement of the public relations. In 1991, he became only the 10th individual—the first in public relations—to receive the prestigious Paul J. Deutschmann Award for Excellence in Research from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Antecedents of Modern Public Relations; Communication Management; Public Relations Society of America

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D

DEADLINE

A deadline is the day and time when a media release or other contact must be in to newsrooms if the story is to have a chance to be aired or printed on that news day. Media correspondents operate in news cycles. They work stories for a specific period of time, within 1 day or over several days. They have deadlines that allow them to properly prepare a story in time to go to press or go on the air.

A deadline is the time when a newspaper or a station can no longer receive a story for a specific printing or broadcast. A newspaper typically has one deadline for each day's printing. Radio might have several deadlines for the various news segments. Most television stations have news deadlines for morning, noon, evening, and nightly news. Deadlines can correspond to the kind of audience the organization is trying to reach—drive time or evening news, for instance. News television stations such as CNN may have hourly news deadlines.

Deadlines are one of the hard realities in the news and public relations businesses. Because of the preparation times that are required to gather news details and prepare stories for print and airing, news departments establish deadlines. Public relations practitioners must know the deadlines for each news venue where they would like to have a story appear.

In preparation for getting reporters' attention to their media releases, practitioners may need a campaign plan that includes set schedules. Part of

setting each schedule is to *backtime*. Backtiming means that practitioners set a schedule starting from the date a campaign must be executed and scheduling backward to set the times when each element of the campaign must be started to meet the deadlines of the various reporters whose attention they seek.

A lot of preparation can be wasted if at some crucial moment the practitioners fail to have the news information to the reporters within the limits of their deadlines. Stories that are pitched too soon may be forgotten by the date of the event. Releases that reach reporters after the deadline will necessarily fail to be printed or aired as part of the regular news.

Because of the combination of campaign schedules and media deadlines, any observant reader, listener, or viewer can predict certain events by what they see happening. For instance, it is not a matter of accident or coincidence that a major star appears on early-morning or late-night talk shows just days before a release of a movie or CD featuring the artist. All of that "news" is carefully timed to meet deadlines and campaign schedules. It is intended to create interest, or buzz, about the movie or CD and enhance sales.

Thus, deadlines affect when the practitioner needs to get information to the reporters in time to pitch an event. Another variation of this theme can become a reality during crisis response. If something newsworthy happens, reporters are likely to contact a company spokesperson, for instance, seeking comment. If the comment comes too late, the story is likely to air or be printed without the

company's side of the story being included. Even worse might be the inclusion of one of the following statements by reporters: "The company did not respond to our inquiries by air time" or "This reporter tried repeatedly to contact the company without success." Such comments indict the company, make it seem guilty, and damage its reputation or image. Experienced practitioners provide recorded telephone message information that allows reporters to find them, perhaps through a pager, at virtually any hour of the day. They know that they must be available as needed to meet reporters' deadlines for a working story, especially one concerning a crisis.

Robert L. Heath

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Event Management; Media Release

DECISION THEORY

Decision theory is the analysis of decision making through the logical, systematic evaluation of decision alternatives. Understanding decision theory is important to public relations because the function involves high-level decision making and counseling the dominant coalition on decision alternatives, particularly as it affects issues management.

Discussing the process, Francis Heylighen (2012, n.p.) wrote: "Decision theory is a body of knowledge and related analytical techniques of different degrees of formality designed to help a decision maker choose among a set of alternatives in light of their possible consequences." This noteworthy definition covers all areas of decision making, whether based in statistics, ethics, management, public relations, or issues management. Much of the literature in the decision discipline discusses it as a mathematical framework for reducing uncertainty. Another definition of decision theory, from the *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science & Technology*, states, "Decision Theory: A broad spectrum of concepts and techniques which have been developed to both describe and rationalize the process of decision making, that is, making a choice among several possible alternatives" (p. 66). Generally, decision theory falls into the areas of decision making under

three conditions: (1) certainty (which is uncommon in issues management), (2) uncertainty or ambiguity, and (3) risk.

Utility

A recurring theme in decision theory is utility. *Utility* is a measure of the benefit of each decision alternative, or what consequences the alternative may bring. Expected utility is the potential outcomes of a decision and their usefulness to the decision maker. Decision theory often holds that the best decision is the one that generates the greatest expected utility.

Tapan Biswas (1997) offered that the decision maker is normally conceived in theoretical decision models as a *utility maximizer*. However, many decision theorists have noted that in reality, people often make choices that are less than maximized, choosing things that result from an imperfect situation or will simply satisfy their needs. Thus, satisficing is when the decision maker is unable to maximize utility because of imperfect information or alternatives but makes do with what is available.

Stephen P. Robbins (1990) explained *satisficing* as "Good enough replaces maximization as a criterion of effectiveness" (p. 263). Because satisficing does not lead to optimal conditions or results, it generally renders a temporary solution. Problems that are not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, including those decisions that simply suffice, prove to be an unstable base for relationship building in public relations.

Factors that influence decision making are complex. John P. van Gigch (1974) wrote, "The search process by which the mind generates alternatives is still only partially understood" (p. 59). For example, consider the pressure of human interaction on the decision. Ronald R. Sims (1994) stated, "Pressure toward conformity . . . is the main factor that leads individuals to make and own defective decisions" (p. 56). Commonly referred to as "group think," the influence exerted by social norms, role expectations, group membership, and fear of negative repercussions is considerable. Decision theory is an attempt to assuage the influences of these factors in favor of a more scientific decision-making framework.

Another factor that influences decision making is the choices, or lack thereof, perceived by the

decision maker as possible or available to him or her. A decision is only as good as the best choice available to the decision maker. However, the decision maker must be free to actually enact an option before considering it a viable alternative, worthy of analysis, investigation, and potential implementation. At this juncture, autonomy and options are vitally important. Frederic Schick in 1997 argued, "Choices presuppose options, and having the option of doing something implies that you think you are free to do it" (p. 9).

Dealing with decisions under conditions of relative certainty, one can employ decision trees listing the various decision alternatives available and the probabilities associated with the outcomes of each.

Decision Making Under Risk: Bayesian Theory

Thomas Bayes, who lived from 1702 to 1761, was a mathematician who first used probability inductively and established a mathematical basis for probability inference. Probability inference is a logical means of calculating, from the number of times an event has not occurred, the probability that it will occur in future trials. In his discussion of decision theory involving risk, Schick (1997) stated: "The maximizing-utility logic of risk is often called *Bayesian*. The Bayesian form of logic assumes precise numerical utilities and probabilities" (p. 38).

This mathematical basis for decision making is called the *Bayesian theorem*. It uses probability theory as logic and serves as a starting point for inference problems. A logical consequence of the Bayesian theorem is *Bayes' rule*, a decision-making rule whereby one acts to maximize the expected posterior utility. In simpler terms, one acts where the probability of attaining one's goal is highest. This concept is analogous to acting on the highest expected utility or value in a decision tree.

Bayes' theorem is being used at an increasing rate in many branches of science and technology, such as drug trials overseen by the Food and Drug Administration, as well as in management, in organizations such as Microsoft. The application of Bayes' theorem requires advanced computing resources and knowledge of applying the theorem to practical decisions.

Decision Making Under Uncertainty or Ambiguity

In decisions being made under conditions of uncertainty or ambiguity, the complexity of choices containing many options of varying utilities poses difficulty. Schick (1997) termed these types of scenarios "multidimensional choosing, multi-attribute or multi-objective choosing" (p. 41). Complexity is compounded when decision alternatives can have unknown utility or unintended consequences. There are two approaches that "solve for" the condition of uncertainty: (1) the maximins rule and (2) the subjective probabilities approach.

Schick (1997) explained the maximins rule as the "option whose worst or *minimal* outcome is the best or *maximal* of the different worst possibles" (p. 37). The concept of maximins, or choosing the option that maximizes the minimum outcome, is a principle that must be carefully implemented to avoid limiting long-term options. In practical application, maximins mean choosing the decision alternative that provides the lowest chance for problems and the highest probability of maximum utility.

In the subjective probabilities approach, research is conducted to gather as much information as possible. Then, with the aid of historical data, experts assign projected probabilities to each decision alternative. This approach is a systematic attempt to reduce the impact of a lack of information on the decision. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to attain precision and apportion probabilities when problems are vague. Indeterminate problems can create imprecision in the tools decision theory uses in measuring weighted averages. The possibility for error or miscalculation is high due to the subjective and indeterminate nature of this approach.

Decision Theory in Public Relations

Decision making is a crucial concern for an organization because it affects all individual and group efforts to make and negotiate decisions and resolve issues. Practically every act in public relations is a result of a decision among alternatives. Application of decision theory to public relations can enhance effective management. Perhaps the most important area of application is issues management or top-level organizational decision making on matters of policy, consequence, and ethics. In

this area, it is necessary to evaluate decision alternatives under conditions of imperfect information (ambiguity or uncertainty) and risk.

Conflict is inherent in decision making, and issues management decisions are often a contentious interplay of competing interests. Decision theory provides the public relations practitioner with a logical and rational framework within which to analyze alternatives and maximize the efficacy of decisions.

Shannon A. Bowen

See also Conflict Resolution; Ethics of Public Relations; Issues Management; Moral Philosophy

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DEFAMATION (LIBEL AND SLANDER)

At one time, the field of defamation was separated into libel (written) and slander (oral). This separation assumed that a more permanent record of the defamation had the potential for greater harm. But with new technologies such as radio and television, with the potential for the spoken word reaching millions of people, and with audio and video recordings being at least semipermanent, the reasons for the distinction have vanished.

The key component of defamation is a statement or inference of fact that has the tendency

either to harm the plaintiff's reputation and lower the plaintiff in the esteem of the community or to harm the plaintiff's business or organization by deterring people from doing business with them. The plaintiff can be an individual, a corporation (either for profit or nonprofit), or some other organization. However, in the United States, the government cannot sue for defamation.

The issue of defamation is important for public relation practitioners because it is the "most common, and perhaps the most serious, legal problem facing the mass communications industry. . . . Nearly every press release, news article, or advertisement holds the potential for a libel suit" (Moore, Farrar, & Collins, 1998, pp. 188–189). As noted by a number of commentators, defamation law is very frustrating and erratic. The lines are not very distinct and do not adequately protect either media or communication professionals from the costs of defending themselves in law suits, nor does the law provide adequate protection for the plaintiff who has been defamed. There have been several suggestions for improvement, such as the American Bar Association's Uniform Correction or Clarification of Defamation Act and the Annenberg Washington Program's Libel Reform Act, but they have not been adopted.

The elements that go into making up a defamation suit are publication, identification, defamation, and fault. The defamatory statement has to be "published" to at least one person other than the plaintiff and the defendant. The scope of the publishing goes to the issue of harm and damages. The plaintiff then has to be identified in some way; otherwise the plaintiff has not been harmed. The identification does not have to be by name if there are surrounding facts that would enable the community to identify the plaintiff. The statement also has to be capable of decreasing the reputation of the plaintiff in the estimation of a relevant community. And since 1964 in *New York Times v. Sullivan* (public officials), and 1974 in *Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.* (public figures/private figures), the plaintiff has to prove fault on the part of the defendant. If the plaintiff is a public official or a public figure, either all-purpose (i.e., occupying a position of pervasive influence in society or having a name recognized by the general public) or limited (involved in a limited public controversy), the level of fault that the plaintiff has to prove is actual

malice, meaning the defendant acted with knowledge that the statement was false or with reckless disregard of its truth or falsity. If the plaintiff is a private figure not involved in a public controversy, there has to be some level of fault proven, but that level is left up to the individual state courts. It is usually some level of negligence, but it cannot be strict liability, which means that if there is publication, identification, and defamation, fault on the part of the defendant is assumed. Negligence is a much easier burden of proof for the plaintiff to meet than is malice, and often, as a result, defamation cases are decided at the threshold level of the classification of the plaintiff as either public or private.

There are defenses against defamation suits based on the First Amendment (*New York Times* and *Gertz*) that are intended to ensure that communication is protected, absent actual malice, and to ensure uninhibited and robust debate on matters of public concern. In addition, certain common law defenses are also available. These include truth that can be proven. In other words, the statement in question does not have to be absolutely true but true in the crux of the charge being made (see *Masson v. New Yorker Magazine, Inc.*, 501 U.S. 496 [1991]). There may be a privilege to disseminate the information. The privilege may be absolutely protected by law or qualified, if the dissemination is fair and accurate. Another defense is the expression of fair comment and opinion, which allows for criticism of plays, restaurants, governmental policies, and so on (see *Milkovich v. Lorain Journal Co.*, 487 U.S. 1 [1990]). There are other defenses that don't come into play as much, such as neutral reportage, consent, and right of reply.

Often what the potential plaintiff is looking for is an apology or a retraction, but negotiations for redress are often unsuccessful, and the issue goes to court (Moore et al., 1998, p. 189). Although an injunction may be possible in some cases (usually not favored because of free speech implications), the usual remedy if the plaintiff succeeds is monetary damages. Nominal damages are awarded if the plaintiff was right but suffered little or no damage to reputation. Special damages are provable out-of-pocket losses. General or presumed damages attempt to compensate plaintiff for damage to reputation. Punitive damages tend to be large in amount and are designed to dissuade the defendant from taking similar actions in the future.

After *Gertz*, plaintiffs cannot be awarded general or punitive damages without meeting the actual malice standard.

Defamation is the most common legal concern of communication professionals. Knowledge of the basics of defamation law is essential for public relations practitioners. Changing technology will lead to even more challenges and a continuing need to keep current in the area.

Roy V. Leeper

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DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Deliberative democracy is an idealized form of sociopolitical discussion in which people are expected to reach consensus about a political decision by way of reasoned argument. The decisions over which people deliberate typically concern how to establish policies, formulate laws, and set up institutions. When citizens or politicians deliberate with one another, they are obligated to provide reasons that justify the decisions, laws, and policies they support. Strict deliberative democracy is rarely, and often with difficulty, realized in practice. However, its advocates argue that it is not intended to be a descriptive theory about how political decision making actually works; rather, it is a normative ideal about how citizens and organizations in a

democracy should conduct discussions with one another. With respect to public relations, deliberative democracy represents a dialogic ideal of how political leaders and organizations should communicate with their publics.

Deliberative democracy differs from other forms of political decision making such as elite rule, aggregation, and bargaining. It differs most from elite rule, particularly in its authoritarian forms, because it emphasizes the right of everyone affected by a political decision to participate and be treated equally in discussions about its viability. Deliberative democracy should also be distinguished from aggregative conceptions of democracy and political decision making. When people deliberate over a decision, they are expected to express, challenge, and above all to justify their reasons for supporting or opposing it. By contrast, aggregative political procedures require people only to express their preferences, and they generally take the model of "one person, one vote." One example is when people vote for candidates or policies in elections; another is when they answer questions about preferences on public opinion surveys. Finally, deliberative democracy should not be confused with bargaining. Bargaining consists of negotiations among people who try to exert certain types of power to promote their own interests, and the best outcome it can achieve is a compromise among rivals. By contrast, deliberation aims for the more demanding cooperative goal of consensus about a political decision that the deliberating group as a whole could agree is most acceptable.

Critics have pointed out several problems with the ideals and procedures of deliberative democracy. One is that the goal of consensus is too difficult for people to achieve under actual circumstances. Particularly in diverse societies—where different groups of people hold incommensurable cultural values, and where media systems are becoming increasingly fragmented—the deliberative process might aggravate disagreements and differences between groups more than it brings about consensus. A second criticism is that people often arrive at consensus by overlooking or excluding the views of society's less powerful members. The public relations profession might aggravate this problem because it is usually wealthy or powerful clients who have greater access to the public discussion and more resources to devote to expressing their views and getting them

accepted. Third, feminist, multiculturalist, and post-modernist critics have argued that the deliberative procedures of expressing and arguing about reasons is ethnocentric and culturally determined; for this reason, those procedures by their very nature discriminate against those who may not be competent in these culturally determined skills. A fourth criticism is that, among all the activities necessary for politics, deliberation ranks relatively low compared to other, more urgent political activities such as educating, organizing, mobilizing, demonstrating, campaigning, fundraising, voting, and ruling.

Defenders of deliberative democracy respond to these criticisms by noting that, even if the act of deliberation may not always be perfectly realized in practice, the deliberative ideal still serves to remind people about communicative virtues and obligations they should honor. First, the deliberative ideal reminds people that they should regard their fellow citizens as reasonable people whose views are worthy of respect and consideration. Second, it reminds people that they should be fair to one another: everyone with a stake in a political decision should be allowed to participate in deliberation and to have equal opportunity to express their views. Third, the deliberative ideal reminds communicators that they should express their views in publicly accessible ways: people who advocate certain decisions should make sure that their reasons for supporting those decisions are both available and understandable to their fellow citizens. Finally, the ideal reminds people that they should hold themselves accountable to others by being willing to answer objections and provide justifications for the decisions they advocate.

The purpose of honoring these virtues is to enable public discussion to take place among people who have different values and worldviews, support different policies and decisions, and have different reasons for justifying their decisions. But on the question of whether public relations contributes to this purpose, there are mixed views.

Critics of public relations claim that the profession undermines deliberative virtues because it typically serves the wealthy and powerful; as a result, it perpetuates an imbalance of power between elites who have greater ability to control public discussion and set its agenda and ordinary people who do not have the resources and abilities to make their views heard. Under such conditions, public relations tends

to work against deliberative ideals of inclusiveness, reciprocity, and equality, and publics tend to be the passive receivers of communications and political decisions rather than active participants in them.

But in defense of public relations, several counterclaims can be made. One is that the influential professional philosophy of dialogic communication coincides with the deliberative ideals of inclusiveness, reciprocity, and equality. Second, public relations efforts that promote social causes and movements could be seen as a political realization of these ideals. Third, when the profession serves the goals of relationship-management, reciprocity is further served because public relations gives people who have complaints about powerful people or institutions a way to not only hear from but also speak to them. Fourth, if the purpose of public relations is to make people's reasons for their actions and decisions public, then it serves the deliberative ideal of accessibility. Finally, public relations enhances accountability because it creates an adversarial marketplace of ideas in which public communicators challenge one another's reasons and justifications; as a result, it enriches public debate.

All of these critics' and defenders' claims, however, continue to be contested.

Thomas Hove

See also Civil Society; Collaborative Decision Making; Dialogue; Marketplace of Ideas; Openness; Public Sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*); Symmetry

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DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics represent the physical characteristics of a population, such as age, occupation,

marital status, household size, geographic location, education, and ethnic background. *American Demographics* magazine uses the acronym RAGE to explain the more popular demographic variables examined by the Census Bureau and other organizations: race, age, gender, and education. For public relations practitioners in particular, demographic characteristics help one to better define target publics and to tailor messages and programs especially for them. For instance, although one organization may be interested in enhancing its awareness among preteens, another organization may be planning to focus on senior citizens when launching a new service.

Demographic information plays a key role in the research process. This information is usually requested when primary research is being conducted. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, sponsoring organizations seek to distinguish demographic characteristics for an array of variables. First, the sponsoring organization can calculate descriptive statistical analyses to examine the mean, medium, and mode in order to describe the population being researched. Further, patterns in the data can be detected.

Second, the sponsoring organization can calculate differential statistical analyses to determine whether particular characteristics serve as predictors of behavior. For instance, an organization may learn that gender significantly influences how much money a person spends on formal dress attire. Or one might determine from the results that age significantly influences the types of media its primary publics refer to when seeking information.

Valuable demographic information can also be obtained via an array of secondary resources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau and other organizations responsible for collecting ongoing demographic and market data about a given population. For example, various research and governmental entities collect data among a broad spectrum of segments, ranging from industry-specific (e.g., retail, health, education, and entertainment) to gender, income, age, and consumer lifestyle activities and trends. With access to the World Wide Web, a plethora of information is now available, free of charge, via the Internet.

However, demographics, independently, may not be the most feasible characteristics on which to focus. Much of the literature recommends

examining demographics in tandem with various psychographic characteristics such as lifestyles, attitudes, and personal values. Together, demographic and psychographic characteristics can paint a vivid picture of a *potential* public. The practitioner also can learn valuable information about the *present* primary publics the organization is serving. For example, managers at a local convention and visitors bureau (CVB) located in Michigan may conduct survey research to learn more about vacationers who travel to this destination. From their research, they learn that most vacationers come from neighboring states because Michigan offers travelers opportunities within a drivable distance. The data further indicate that these travelers represent families with children under the age of 18 years with an average gross family income of between \$40,000 and \$60,000 and at least one parent having earned a bachelor's degree.

The psychographic portion of the research reveals that these travelers engage in outdoor recreational activities; they are very interpersonally oriented, they refer to the Internet when seeking information about making travel plans, and although they are not "cheap" per se, they do value "bang for their vacation buck." This information can aid CVB managers in developing communication programs that further enhance relationships among their key traveling publics. They also can use the information to develop promotional communication campaigns to attract potential new visitors to the area.

Lisa T. Fall

See also Psychographics; Segmentation of Publics

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DEONTOLOGY

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), the progenitor of deontology, is among the most influential philosophers of the Western intellectual tradition. Kant taught and wrote late in the Modern period of philosophy, defined as the 1500s through the 1700s. Kant's doctrines had such an impact on philosophy that they were considered a revolutionary approach, worthy of consideration separately from all other schools and philosophers.

Kant authored an enormous volume of philosophical writings on topics as diverse as geometry, political theory, the physics of time and space, metaphysics, geography, cosmology, and moral philosophy. Kant's moral philosophy and the ethical theory of deontology that developed from his work are of primary concern in public relations.

Who Was Immanuel Kant?

Kant was born in Königsberg, Germany, in 1724, where he lived almost exclusively until his death in 1804. He began his career as a mathematics professor at the University of Königsberg, where he was appointed to a chair of metaphysics at age 46. He went on to become "the first great professor of philosophy" (Beck, 1963, p. x). Paul Guyer wrote that "Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) shook the very foundations of the intellectual world" (1992, p. i). Kant's impact can be seen in almost all subsequent philosophical schools.

Kant was fourth of nine children of a harness maker; evaluations of their economic status ranged from modest to impoverished. He was reared in a

Protestant family and later called the premier philosopher of Protestantism due to his unadulterated belief in individual autonomy. Although Kant's writings were perceived as foreboding, he gained renown for his lectures and drew students from throughout Europe. A former student described Kant's "playfulness, wit, and humor" and, although Kant is often portrayed as a solitary individual, friends lauded his social graces and skill as a conversationalist.

Kant was a productive author, producing 20 books and hundreds of essays, most in German and several in Latin (Sullivan, 1989). He was also an inspiring professor; a former student remarked, "His hearers certainly never left a single lecture in his ethics without having become better men" (Beck, 1963, p. ix).

Kant's Contribution

Kant radically altered the thought patterns in Western culture and turned philosophy inward toward the self. Herbert J. Paton, an emeritus professor of moral philosophy at the University of Oxford, asserted: "Kant contrived to say something new about morality. This remarkable achievement has compelled every subsequent writer on moral philosophy to examine his views" (1967, p. 15). All philosophers must now include Kant in their philosophizing and argue for or against his doctrines because his impact is so great that he cannot be ignored.

Kantian contributions to philosophy include his expositions of moral worth, duty, and good will. Moral worth and duty are arguably the most well-known tenets of his doctrine, but Marcia Baron (1995) explained that these two constructs are tools Kant used to illustrate the crux of his philosophy: the good will. Baron explained, "The good will is manifested in actions done from duty" (p. 183). Actions done from duty differ from actions inspired by inclination or self-interest. Therefore, Kant's discussion of duty provides a means to analyze the good will. Kant's exposition of the morally good will profoundly influenced the course of philosophy.

Deontology: Kant's Moral Philosophy

The term *deontology* is derived from the Latin word for "duty," indicating the central role that

acting from obligation to uphold moral law plays in Kantian philosophy. Deontology is defined as "the ethical theory taking duty as the basis of morality" (Flew, 1979, p. 88). This branch of ethics asserts that an act is morally worthy if it upholds one's moral obligation. Kantian philosophy is a prime example of a nonconsequentialist approach to ethics, meaning that actions are not justified by their consequences. Rather, the consequences of a decision are noted, but they are equal to other considerations. The determining factor in Kantian philosophy is whether the act upholds a universal duty to the moral law as defined by the good will or good intention. However, deontology is too complex to be summarized so briefly, and is best understood as a synergy of its theoretical components. The core theoretical components in deontology (Bowen, 2004a, p. 70) are as follows:

- Transcendentalism and rationality
- The law of autonomy
- The categorical imperative
- Duty
- Dignity and respect
- Intention—a morally good will

Transcendentalism and Rationality

Kant attempted to show the primacy of moral decision making over logical positivism and pure empiricism, which were popular in his day. Deontology incorporates the strengths of both rationalism and empiricism and attempts to avoid the flaws in each.

Kant's contribution to methodology was introducing what he called a *transcendental deduction*. Roger Scruton explained, "An argument is transcendental if it 'transcends' the limits of empirical inquiry, so as to establish the a priori conditions of experience" (1982, p. 23). Kant's philosophy was transcendental because it arose from the elements of human cognition, which are not purely empirical but also based on sensation and intuition. Matt McCormick explained the transcendental deduction as the structure imposed by the mind on external things that makes experience possible. Reality as seen by the mind is a common concept today, but it was a revolutionary idea in Kant's time. The importance of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*

(trans. 1997) is that it restructured the way the intellectual world conceived of reality.

Kant's rationality argument (in the 1977 book *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*) is in direct response to the moral skepticism of British philosopher David Hume, who thought passion was a driving force for ethics. Disagreeing with Hume, Kant held that the rationality of the human agent was a necessary condition for moral decision making. Kant based his theory on the understanding that people have a rational, moral reason that is capable of "determin[ing] how we should act and also be able to motivate us to act on [our] judgments without relying on any prior desires" (Sullivan, 1989, p. 45). Kant defined reason as "the faculty of principles" and believed that the ability to reason was the basis for morally worthy decisions—as opposed to self-interest, greed, fiat, or similar factors. This belief in the individual decision maker forms the basis of Kant's philosophy.

Law of Autonomy

Kant derived the maxims for his moral philosophy from his law of autonomy, which stated, "A moral agent is an agent who can act autonomously, that is, as a law unto himself or herself, on the basis of objective maxims of his or her reason alone" (Sullivan, 1989, p. 48). Kant added that universality is the key on which the law of autonomy rests; he called this "the idea of the will of every rational being as a will which makes universal law" (trans. 1964, p. 98).

The idea of a universal law includes the reversibility concept of the decision maker being on the "receiving end" of a decision. Therefore, if a rational person is free to act autonomously in willing his or her moral will to become universal law, then it must be a moral decision.

Kant articulated the theory that a person has the autonomous power to act as an independent decision maker, using only good will and rationality. His law of autonomy states that a decision should be made through reason, rationality, and moral duty, rather than on the subjective concerns that promote one's personal advantage, or the advantage of the organization or client above others. Kant regarded autonomy as a moral absolute and as an obligation

that provides the basis for a powerful moral norm in the form of the categorical imperative.

Categorical Imperative

The guide to moral decision making that Kant based on the law of autonomy is the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative is a test that can be employed to address ethical dilemmas in practice.

Categorical refers to the fact that all moral agents are obligated absolutely, "not hypothetically or conditionally" (Sullivan, 1989, p. 49). The categorical imperative goes beyond the Golden Rule—do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Kant argued that the Golden Rule is based on merely prudential maxims of self-interest rather than a morally good will and is thus simply a norm of prudential reciprocity. Further, Kant maintained that the Golden Rule does not require "the respect owed others or duties of benevolence to them" (Sullivan, 1989, p. 204).

The categorical imperative is a powerful norm of moral behavior because it is grounded in universal applicability. Paton (1967) argued, "To judge our own actions by the same universal standard we apply to the actions of others is an essential condition of morality" (p. 73). The categorical imperative is a valuable guide for public relations ethics because it reduces the potential for subjective or biased interpretations.

Duty

There are three forms of Kant's categorical imperative, but the most well known is Form 1 from his *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (trans. 1964): "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (p. 88). A maxim is a principle on which a subject acts.

Kant contended that acting according to universal duty is obligated by people's ability to reason and act autonomously and occurs out of reverence or respect for the moral law. Doing one's duty to uphold the moral law results in happiness, in Kant's view. In fact, he defined ethics as being worthy of happiness.

Kant argued that feelings and desires are subjective and that morality would be reduced to

prudence if these were used to guide moral decisions. Sullivan (1989) asserted, “The categorical imperative commands us, not to allow ourselves to be ruled by our feelings and inclinations” (p. 120).

Acting from duty is seen in deontology as morally worthy. Acting from compulsion is still moral but far less worthy. For this reason, codes of ethics in public relations, such as the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Code of Ethics and Professional Standards, rarely have a punitive component. Acting ethically is considered the duty of public relations professionals, and moral worth is found in desiring to be an ethical practitioner and acting accordingly out of a sense of duty.

Dignity and Respect

Form 2 of the categorical imperative is again based on the law of autonomy but focuses on the dignity and respect inherent to all autonomous people. It states, “Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end” (Kant, trans. 1964, p. 96).

This form of the categorical imperative is often interpreted as Kant’s law of justice because it obligates people to respect all other human beings and themselves as well. Kant maintained that all people are deserving of dignity, respect, and self-respect. Scruton (1982) clarified, “The autonomous being is both the agent and repository of all value, and exists, as Kant puts it, as an end in himself” (p. 70).

Every person is equal in Kant’s view, and this assertion was a radical—and dangerous—break with the prevailing view of aristocracy in Kant’s day. In fact, during the reigns of both kings of Prussia—Frederick the Great and Frederick William II—Kant had to exercise extreme care in publishing his revolutionary ideas.

Intention or the Morally Good Will

A morally good will holds the highest moral worth in deontology. Kant (trans. 1964) wrote, “Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a *good will*” (p. 61). Kant discussed the possibility of courage, happiness, and other good characteristics becoming evil when

possessed by the maleficent person. Happiness, he noted, could even inspire vanity and presumption if not complemented by a good will. He concluded, “Thus a good will appears to constitute the indispensable condition for even being worthy of happiness” (trans. 1964, p. 154).

In Form 3 of the categorical imperative, intention is where Kant concludes his test of ethics. Kant conceived of acts in terms of the motivation behind the action. People are obligated to act according to duty, but the intentions behind the action determine the action’s moral worth. Kant believed that ethical actions are undertaken with the intention of upholding one’s duty to the moral law.

Kant believed that a morally good will gives equally high worth and dignity to all people who possess it. He had faith in the ability to reason of the common person, and he argued that one need not be highly educated to understand and possess a moral character. Sullivan explicated, “Kant’s entire moral philosophy can be understood as a protest against distinctions based on the far less important criteria of rank, wealth, and privilege” (1989, p. 197). Kant’s categorical imperative shows that he was a truly egalitarian philosopher because every person, regardless of socioeconomic status, is capable of achieving the highest known achievement—a good will.

Conclusion

There are several advantages in applying deontology to public relations decisions rather than a utilitarian paradigm or less rigorous schools of thought. Utilitarianism asks the decision maker to predict future consequences of an action, often an impossible task. Utilitarianism always favors the interests of the majority, even though a small public might have valuable ethical insight into an issue that would go unattended. Utilitarianism can also be used to justify questionable activities in an “ends justifies the means” approach.

Deontology suffers from none of these drawbacks; furthermore, it offers a consistent, rational, methodical approach to ethical decisions. The clear imperatives of deontology allow organizational values to be followed in a reliable manner. Such consistency can enhance the reputation of an organization as ethical, thereby building and maintaining relationships with publics by allowing the

organization to be known and to regularly meet the expectations of publics.

Kantian deontology has been applied to public relations theory, empirically testing deontological theory, its frequency of use in public relations, and assessing the ethical paradigms of public relations practitioners, as indicated in the suggested readings, along with other applications. Many argue that it is the most rigorous and promising guide for ethics in public relations.

Scholars found deontology to be used in public relations practice, and the commonality of its usage increases with the years of experience and responsibility level of the public relations practitioner. Public relations executives are highly likely to use a deontological framework to help resolve ethical dilemmas in their issues management. Deontology provides public relations' most rigorous means for practitioners to analyze ethical dilemmas. Kant's moral theory is both philosophically sophisticated and immanently practical for use in public relations.

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See also Decision Theory; Ethics of Public Relations; Moral Development; Moral Philosophy; Symmetry

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DE-POSITIONING

Positioning a product or service in a market and differentiating it from the competition are strategies widely viewed as ethical and professional, as long as assertions made in the campaign are accurate, complete, and fair. The same cannot be said for a different practice: de-positioning, which seems to mean undermining a competitor's product or service using any means available.

De-positioning, in the view of some proponents, means attacking a competitor's new idea, product, or service the moment it surfaces. The attack begins even before all the facts are available. It means rushing to get your own new idea, product, or service out even if it isn't fully developed. It means generating sufficient chaos and confusion to discredit a competitor's new product, idea, or service or to spoil its launch.

There are many problems with de-positioning, not the least of which is the damage a de-positioning campaign can do to your own industry. If you attack product X unmercifully, consumers might start to wonder about product Y and product Z, and they

might eventually get around to wondering about your product. An attack against a competitor can actually be an attack against yourself if the campaign has an unanticipated and negative impact on your product or service.

De-positioning also lowers the ethical and moral tone of society generally and of business, fundraising, and other practices specifically. This hurts any organization that is trying to get a fair hearing from the public for a product or service and makes it hard for honest businesses and non-profit organizations to establish and to maintain high credibility with their publics.

An organization that tries to de-position the competition uses questionable techniques that, when publicized, will harm the organization's prospects. It can take years and a good deal of hard work to polish a tarnished image. When those de-positioning activities are exposed, as they surely will be, they will be described as unethical.

Consumers are poorly served by de-positioning activities. If company X really does have a super new product but cannot get it accepted because of the confusion created by company Y's de-positioning efforts, consumers will be the primary losers. Worse, consumers might buy company Y's bad product (rushed off the assembly line before it was ready just to de-position company X's product), rather than company X's superior product. All of this is good for company Y in the near term, but it is bad for everyone else, and it will be bad for company Y in the long term.

Michael Ryan

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DIALOGUE

The dialogic approach to communication goes back to the Socratic notion of dialogue (or dialectic) as a philosophical tool for uncovering truth and discovering knowledge. Modern treatments of dialogue have described it as an interpersonal conversational

technique based on respect and trust, and as an approach, or orientation, toward others.

Dozens of features of dialogue have been identified by scholars and professionals. The five basic tenets of dialogue include risk (a willingness to interact with others and to be changed), trust (fairness and openness), proximity (spontaneous, honest, face-to-face contact), empathy (supportiveness), mutuality (a recognition of shared goals and interests), and commitment (to ethical conversation). As Rob Anderson, Kenneth Cissna, and Ronald Arnett (1994) explained, "Dialogue is a dimension of communication quality that keeps communicators more focused on mutuality and relationship than on self-interest, more concerned with discovering than disclosing, more interested in access than in domination" (p. 2).

Public relations professionals have been interested in using dialogue as a public relations tool for decades (cf. Pearson, 1989). Dozens of studies have examined dialogue as part of web pages, social media, relationship building, and stakeholder communication. Dozens of studies of dialogue have also found that organizations' use of dialogue is limited, and that most professional communicators need more training in order to enact dialogue more effectively.

Dialogue is an ethical process or orientation toward others that tries to avoid treating people instrumentally or letting the more powerful take advantage of the less powerful. Dialogue is a complex communicative skill like public speaking or interpersonal communication, not simply a sharing of information. Posting information to social media websites like Twitter or Facebook is not an example of dialogue. "Talk" does not equal dialogue.

Each dialogic concept is integral to achieving an "ethical" conversation. For example, when individuals or groups with divergent beliefs are interacting, each party must be able to trust that the other party will not exploit them. An activist who agrees to meet with an organizational representative must be able to trust that the organization is not simply trying to distract the group while it secretly lobbies Congress or takes some other action. Without trust, authentic, mutually oriented communication cannot occur. Dialogic interlocutors must be willing to risk, taking a chance that the other party will be honest and forthright.

Authentic dialogue is said to require spontaneous, face-to-face, interpersonal interaction. Both

parties must be committed to the process of dialogue, or conversation, and both parties must be able to interact in real time, and in a face-to-face fashion. Most mediated communication, including social media, are therefore excluded from any dialogic process, unless special processes are created for interaction. Dialogue typically requires two or a few people to be in the same room or interacting in a shared space.

True dialogue is not achieved through sporadic or infrequent interactions. Trust and empathetic understanding are built over time, through repeated conversations and the pursuit of mutually beneficial goals. True dialogue requires commitment to the conversational process.

Dialogue has been studied by an assortment of scholars from diverse fields of study including communication, philosophy, political science, and psychology. As Carl Rogers suggested of his dialogic approach to therapy, dialogue is about “unconditional positive regard” for the other. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paolo Freire (1994) suggested, “Dialogue cannot exist without humility. . . . How can I dialogue if I am closed to—and even offended by—the contribution of others?” (pp. 71–72). And Michael Kent and Maureen Taylor (1998) conceived of dialogue as a public relations tool, with dialogic communication referring to the negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions.

Dialogic denotes a communicative give-and-take and is guided by two principles: First, individuals who engage in dialogue do not necessarily have to agree; quite often they vehemently disagree. However, what they share is a willingness to try to reach mutually satisfying positions. Second, dialogic communication is about intersubjectivity, or understanding the other person(s) well enough to sympathize and empathize.

Implicit in the notion of dialogue is the belief that the orientation that one holds toward others influences the quality of communication and, ultimately, influences the development of relationships. When interlocutors are viewed as alien, or “other,” effective conversation (involving risk, trust, empathy, etc.) is more difficult.

One of the obstacles to using dialogue as a practical public relations tool has been the variety of ways that the term *dialogue* has been used. To political pundits, dialogue often means talk. To political scientists, dialogue often refers to public

forums where political leaders express opinions (public debates). And, until recently, dialogue in public relations was equated with symmetrical theory. The equating of dialogue with two-way symmetrical communication, however, has primarily been the result of casual language use. More recent treatments of dialogue in public relations have focused on dialogue as a framework for effective (and ethical) organization–public communication.

Most public relations treatments of dialogue have made it clear that dialogue is not simply a procedural approach to effective communication. Because everyone in a group is allowed to have a voice does not mean that dialogue has occurred. Rather, dialogue requires professional training in dialogic skills, commitment on the part of organizations and publics to communicate ethically (according to a set of mutually agreed upon conversational rules), and a willingness to try to act in the mutual interest of both organizations and publics.

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See also Activism; Excellence Theory; Moral Philosophy; Symmetry; Website

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DIFFERENTIATION

The concept of differentiation is one of the most basic to human perception. Psychologists have studied the human (and other animals) cognitive processes by which they distinguish one thing from others. This basic ability is essential to survival. For instance, differentiation allows humans to know what is edible and what is not.

By this logic, organizations need to stand out as unique among their competitors for resources. Thus, marketing, management, and communication professionals seek to differentiate their organizations, as well as their products and services, from those of their competitors.

Differentiation results when stakeholders (markets and publics) make attributions about an organization that, at least in part, distinguish it as different or unique in some meaningful way. The assumption is that customers make strategic distinctions among competitors. The most obvious distinctions might be as simple as price, quality, availability, customer relations, and reputation of the organization.

Differentiation is also vital for nonprofit organizations. They work to provide unique community-based services. Thus, some support the arts (museums or theaters). Others address needs of specific populations. For instance, nonprofit hospitals raise money to provide services that might depend on a specialty (burn treatment or cancer treatment) or for a demographic class (children or the indigent). The United Way differentiates itself by raising funds for a variety of charitable purposes. The Light House for the Blind serves individuals who have limited or no vision capability.

Differentiation occurs even in the governmental sector. Some agencies build or repair roads. Others provide emergency and safety (police, fire) response. Some protect water quality, and others handle

solid waste. Various military branches compete for funding based on their unique service to national security. The United States Postal Service competes with commercial package delivery rivals.

Differentiation is a marketing decision. Businesses are differentiated by product line (chemical manufacturing versus farm implement manufacturing) and by product type or line (pickups, SUVs, minivans, sedans, or subcompacts). Product positioning can include filling a market niche, such as high-cost luxury watches versus low-cost sports watches. Discount stores are different from top-end department stores and specialty boutiques.

Placement can also be a matter of differentiation. At the counter of movie theatres one would expect popcorn, soft drinks, hot dogs, and candy, but not pickups and farm equipment. Specialty products are often sold in specialty stores or even by brand name. Apple, for instance, knows and benefits from this principle.

Positioning is also a matter of differentiation. What markets does a company serve? What markets within its industry does it not serve? Is it retail or wholesale? Is it long on service and short on product? Or is it the opposite? Quality is also a positioning decision that can differentiate products and the companies that sell them. Think of the varieties of alcoholic beverages that are available—to satisfy all tastes.

Many of the matters of differentiation mentioned above are the primary responsibility of marketing. Others come closer to the purview of public relations. Some advocate, for instance, that customer relations should be a primary function of public relations. Organizations differentiate themselves by how well they respond to the needs, wants, and concerns of customers. Product support can be a matter of differentiation, as well as the return policy.

Public relations is especially responsible for the character and reputation of organizations. Organizations attempt to differentiate themselves by how they relate to the people in the communities where they operate. Some organizations build rapport and solid relationships with persons in the community. These relationships can differentiate the organization by demonstrating its commitment to the community. They work to prove that they operate in the public interest. The way an organization seeks (or fails) to build goodwill can differentiate it from

other organizations. Is it open? Is it ethical, aspiring to the highest standards of corporate responsibility? Does it share control with the members of the community? Is it willing to work to solve issues, or does it seek to dominate their resolution? Does it foster and work to meet values of its stakeholders, such as working toward a diverse workforce or demonstrating a commitment to environmental protection?

Brand identity and reputation of an organization features the attributes that stakeholders use when they think about it. The strongest theoretical foundation for this line of analysis can be derived from information integration theory. This conceptualization of differentiation assumes that each set of stakeholders can have different (and compatible or incompatible) views of the same organization, including products and services. Employees see it as a good place to work, because it supports them and produces products or services that foster pride among the workforce. Customers may ignore the elements of employee relations but focus on those attributes of the organization most relevant to purchases or service use.

The list of attributes that are used to differentiate one organization from another, one industry from another, or one service group from another is both endless and fairly limited. On the one hand, terms relevant to a set of services in the military may be used to attract recruits to one branch of the military based on its differences; serving in the air force is different from serving in the navy or army. The basic attributes then may be “land,” “air,” and “sea.” On the other hand, one unifying theme across all branches (differentiating them from other organizations) might be “leadership training” and “technology training.” Thus, information integration theory suggests that people carve their experiences into discrete categories and make decisions accordingly.

Product claims are a vital part of product or service differentiation. Marketing, advertising, and public relations specialists work to decide which claims do the best job of differentiating in ways that lead, for instance, to increased sales. Soft drinks are “refreshing,” beauty products make us more “attractive,” and package delivery is “next day” and “overnight.”

Designing, producing, and getting the product or service to the customer is a marketing function.

Letting the customer know about the service is an advertising or public relations function. Here publicity and promotion support advertising to get the message before the stakeholder and create awareness, recognition, and recall. Combined, these functions lead to a motivation to buy, donate, use, attend, and so on.

Beyond publicity and promotion, public relations helps align interests with employees, customers, competitors, community residents, investors, legislators, regulators, and so forth. Public relations also assists organizations with their efforts to differentiate themselves on issue positions as well as to respond during a crisis.

Robert L. Heath

See also Consumer/Customer Relations; Control; Corporate Social Responsibility; Goodwill; Information Integration Theory; Openness; Psychological Processing; Public Interest; Publicity; Reputation; Stakes

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DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS THEORY

Diffusion of innovations theory examines how new ideas, practices, or objects are adopted by individuals and organizations (or other “units of adoption”)—a field of research important to public relations practitioners advocating change.

Beginning in the 1950s, Everett M. Rogers, the leading researcher in the field, developed the most comprehensive model of how innovations are

adopted. The robustness of diffusion theory is evident in how its early focus has changed from examining the acceptance of new strains of hybrid seeds among American and developing-country farmers to Rogers's contemporary analyses of the adoption of new communications technologies.

The major tenet of diffusion theory is that people undergo a five-step process that begins with awareness, followed by interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption. These steps are alternatively labeled knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (acceptance or rejection). The consequences of adopting a new innovation are alternatively categorized as desirable or undesirable, direct or indirect, or anticipated to unanticipated.

According to Rogers, three sets of variables influence the acceptance of innovations. Prior conditions provide a context for the consideration of changes by adopters. Examples include previous practices, felt needs or problems, innovativeness as a characteristic of the individual or organization, and norms (expectations) of the social system in which the adoption occurs.

Characteristics of the decision-making unit relate to systemic or inherent characteristics of the adopter, suggesting that certain individuals or groups might be more open to change. Characteristics include socioeconomic factors (age, education, status, financial well-being, etc.), personality variables (curiosity, open-mindedness, etc.), and communication behaviors.

Characteristics of the innovation itself influence acceptance. Rogers suggested that innovations are more likely to gain acceptance if they provide a relative advantage compared to the ideas they replace or to alternative solutions. Acceptance is also more likely when innovations offer compatibility with existing processes or ideas, simplicity (versus complexity), trialability (the ability to experiment on a limited and risk-free basis), and observability (being tangible and readily inspected).

Rogers posited that the adoption rate for innovations follows an S-shaped curve in which adoption begins slowly but rapidly escalates once a critical mass is achieved. Rates of adoption will then taper off after reaching a peak. The relative steepness or shape of the S-curve explains how some innovations are quickly adopted (sharp, steep rise) or require longer times for acceptance (a wider, flatter curve).

Diffusion theory suggests that adopters can be categorized as to their rate or readiness of accepting new ideas or objects. Rogers alternatively defines and describe these groups as follows:

Innovators—adventuresome, eager to try new ideas; more cosmopolitan than their peers

Early adopters—respectable localites (less cosmopolitan than innovators), usually with a high degree of opinion leadership within the social system

Early majority—deliberate, interacting frequently with their peers but seldom holding leadership positions

Late majority—skeptical, often adopting an innovation because of economic uncertainty or increasing network pressure

Laggards—traditionals who are localites, including near-isolates and people whose point of reference is the past

Advocates for change, such as public relations practitioners, are designated as *change agents* in the parlance of diffusion theory. A change agent is usually a professional person who attempts to influence the adoption process in a way deemed desirable.

Early diffusion research examined the degree of homophily or similarity between the change agent and the adopter. The more these parties share common beliefs, the greater the rate of acceptance. However, most change agents are better educated and enjoy higher socioeconomic status than the people they attempt to influence. This makes these groups heterophilous. To overcome differences, change agents must find ways to establish a commonality between themselves and their target audiences. In some cases, this involves employing opinion leaders, community leaders, sales people, and local agents as third-party intermediaries.

Criticisms of Diffusion Theory

Although more than 4,000 published studies have been completed, diffusion theory treats the adoption of innovations as a rational process in which people thoughtfully consider innovations. However, many low-involvement innovations don't necessarily follow the rational approach

assumed in diffusion theory. Although diffusion theory provides a useful umbrella concept, the exact processes for the adoption of any particular innovation can vary, which makes generalization difficult. Rogers's adoption model is one of several hierarchy of effects models that assume similar linear approaches to how to promote new ideas, although the number of steps and the labels for the stages in each model vary.

Implications for Public Relations

Diffusion theory and the adoption of innovations has been used extensively as a theoretical framework in various closely aligned fields, such as health communication, but only has received limited attention in public relations research, mostly because of the field's recent focus on relationship building and maintenance (versus its role in the promotion of change and change management). However, when segmenting publics, innovators might be compared to active publics, while early majority and late majority groups might be considered analogous to aware and latent publics.

Most of the application of the model in the field has dealt with (a) the diffusion of public relations research within the field and (b) with the adoption of new practices (especially new technologies) by practitioners in the United States and globally. Nonetheless, Rogers's ideas about diffusion and adoption of innovation provide several useful ideas for practitioners as they develop strategies for public relations programs and campaigns. These include the following:

- The importance of stressing characteristics of innovations that increase the probability of adoption
- The importance of prior conditions and characteristics of the adopter; not all adopters are alike
- The importance of creating a critical mass of adopters, particularly by segmenting innovators and early adopters
- Recognition of public relations practitioners as change agents on behalf of their clients

Kirk Hallahan

See also Involvement; Two-Step Flow Theory

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DIRECT MAIL/DIRECT EMAIL

Direct mail has long been a popular form of communicating with audiences and is today going increasingly online as direct email. It is reported that Benjamin Franklin used direct mail as early as 1744 to inform potential buyers of books he had for sale. Public relations practitioners use direct mail methods to reach not only existing and potential customers but also to communicate with donors, volunteers, voters, investors, and myriad other audiences. For example, practitioners may want to distribute newsletters to consumers of specific products; provide notices of public government or school meetings; solicit donations for civic, health, and humanitarian causes; send financial reports to potential investors; enlist support for a political issue, cause, or candidate; or contact consumers about a special promotion or product recall. Many direct mail pieces employ emotional appeals to help engage audiences and keep them reading.

Whether disseminated via the postal system, email, statement stuffers, “take-one” display racks, or as newspaper, magazine, or package inserts, direct mail is the most prevalent form of direct marketing communications. However, according to the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), which has been monitoring response rates for direct marketing campaigns since 2003 and now includes transactional data related to email and online display ads, response rates to direct mail campaigns have dropped nearly 25% during the past decade. Although their 2012 Response Rate Report noted a higher response rate for traditional direct mail than email, the low costs associated with email gave it the highest return on investment (ROI).

Direct mail’s advantage is that it gives communicators a way to tailor and personalize messages in mass and deliver them directly to the specific audiences they want to reach. Typically, internally produced, or “house” lists of names, tend to be the most effective at securing responses, as these people have already been engaged with the organization. “Response” lists include people who have interacted with organizations similar to yours, while “compiled” lists, typically the least effective type, are put together by third-party vendors. Research is critical for identifying the target audiences an organization wants to reach, for compiled lists can be made up of people with very specific demographics, psychographics, income levels, zip codes, hobbies, past purchases, Internet search histories, professional associations, health problems, reading preferences, household type, voter registration, credit history, charitable contributions, pet ownership, and nearly any other documented characteristic or combination thereof. Lists are typically priced on a cost-per-thousand (CPM) basis, with an average rental list of 1,000 names priced around \$50 for one-time use. However, prices can be much cheaper or more expensive depending on the desired audience.

The mailing list industry includes list owners, list brokers, list managers, list compilers, and service bureaus, which support the maintenance and exchange of lists and related databases. Some online direct mail service providers can offer everything from list creation derived from tens of thousands of mailing lists, to message dissemination, to invoice creation for responders, to response tracking over time. Other companies can develop specific automatic electronic mailing list servers that can be used

by organizations for longer term use with designated audiences.

This capacity for audience specificity, computerized personalization, sophisticated evaluation methods, and the cost-effective nature of email in particular combine to make direct mail an attractive communication tool. Traditional direct mail packages typically include such elements as a personalized mail envelope; a personalized letter with an appeal and call to action; various response contact options (e.g., postage-paid return mail, toll-free number, and website); an informational brochure, fact sheet, or pamphlet; and a chit, which is an additional piece of paper or card that highlights a special offer, gift, or additional information. Electronic appeals often include links to purchase, donate, share information via social media, or learn more, as well as opt-in opportunities for newsletters, RSS feeds, and other promotional or news updates.

Diana Knott Martinelli

See also Fundraising; Marketing; Nonprofit Organizations; Persuasion Theory; Return on Investment

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DISCOURSE OF RENEWAL THEORY

Discourse of renewal theory (DRT) describes, explains, and prescribes how crisis communication should emphasize learning, growth, ethical communication, transformation, and opportunity. The theory suggests that, although crises are often characterized as threatening, there is opportunity inherent to these events. Public relations practitioners play a key role in determining whether the communication following a crisis is characterized by a response to the threat or the opportunity. The

DRT shines light on communication choices regarding how a crisis will be resolved, the amount and level of information stakeholders will receive, as well as the trajectory of the crisis.

Underpinnings

Robert R. Ulmer, in his examination of a 1995 plant fire at Malden Mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts, described crisis communication that was less focused on apologia or image restoration and more on positive values and stakeholder relationships. Malden Mills was found to be able to renew, transform, and grow following its crisis. In 2002, Matthew W. Seeger and Ulmer built upon the Malden Mills case and analyzed another plant fire in 1998 at Cole Hardwoods located in Logansport, Indiana, to dig deeper into the role of renewal in crisis communication. Consistent with Malden Mills, the authors identified commitment to rebuild and to the interests of stakeholders as renewal. These cases provided theoretical and practical implications for the theory, including deemphasizing cause, blame, and responsibility in favor of positive stakeholder relationships and values designed to renew, grow, and transform the organization. Ultimately, Ulmer, Timothy L. Sellnow, and Seeger (2011) described the discourse of renewal theory as comprised of four objectives: organizational learning, ethical communication, a prospective vision, and organizational rhetoric. Each of these objectives is discussed in the following section.

Objectives

Crises are essentially failures. To meet the objective of organizational learning, public relations professionals must acknowledge the organization's role in the crisis and explain what it learned from the event. Without addressing learning, stakeholders affected by the crisis will not have the confidence in the organization to move forward. In this case, communication about learning is closely associated with renewal, growth, and transformation.

The second objective of DRT, ethical crisis communication, features openness and honesty. Any crisis communication that emphasizes withholding facts, spinning the truth, or obscuring information would not meet the standards of ethical communication and ultimately would prohibit renewal.

The third objective, a prospective vision, suggests that public relations professionals should create a vision for moving the organization or community forward following the crisis. This crisis communication should emphasize the opportunities inherent to the crisis and ways to transform the current state of the organization or community for the better.

Finally, organizational rhetoric refers to both internal and external organizational communication. Internally, DRT suggests coordinating and sharing ideas effectively. Externally, organizational rhetoric refers to crisis communication that is infused with hope and a commitment to overcoming the crisis.

Applications

Discourse of renewal theory has been used to describe examples of success and failure in crisis communication beyond the initial cases of Malden Mills and Cole Hardwoods. For instance, in 2002, Ulmer and Sellnow examined the public discourse following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as an example of renewal, growth, and transformation. They found that cooperation, positive values, learning, and a prospective vision were central to the discourse following 9/11. In 2005, Seeger, Ulmer, Julie M. Novak, and Sellnow examined the crisis communication of CEO Howard Lutnick after his organization, Cantor Fitzgerald, was destroyed during the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Center where his organization was located. Lutnick was able to generate renewal by focusing on rebuilding the organization based upon the values of honoring those employees who lost their lives and to financially support the families of those employees.

Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger (2009) examined crisis communication responses to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the 1997 North Dakota floods. The authors found stark differences between the cases, with the community of North Dakota better able to generate renewal than the communities impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The North Dakota communities were able to accomplish renewal by emphasizing cooperation, learning, ethical communication, and sound organization rhetoric. Finally, in 2011, Shari R. Veil, Sellnow, and Megan Heald examined the Oklahoma City Memorial as a symbol of renewal for moving past

a crisis (in this case, the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building). They argued that shared values, learning, and optimism were practical steps for public relations practitioners to create renewal through the memorializing process.

Robert R. Ulmer

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication; Crisis Communication

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DISCOURSE THEORY AND ANALYSIS

There are numerous strands of discourse theory, each offering a competing definition and focus of study. The two principal strands comprise linguistically oriented theories and socially oriented

theories. These two strands can in turn be divided between those theorists who take a critical approach and those who do not. For the field of public relations, the most promising school of discourse theory in terms of its application to the field's objects of study is to be found in the area of *critical discourse analysis* (CDA). CDA draws upon both linguistic and social theory and, as the name suggests, is critical in its perspective.

CDA is the application of critical theory to discourse and the creation of new critical theory relevant to discourse. It involves the analysis of texts in their sociocultural context. It may be distinguished from noncritical forms of discourse analysis by its inclusion of the concept of power as a central analytical lens. CDA involves a detailed examination and description of discourse, but it also moves beyond description in attempting to explain social phenomena. It is the explanatory dimension of CDA that distinguishes it from other, noncritical forms of discourse analysis. It is also this explanatory dimension that renders CDA a useful tool for both the analysis and conduct of public relations practice.

According to Norman Fairclough, there are three elements to CDA. The first element is a focus on texts. Initially, within CDA, texts were viewed as written language, including transcripts of spoken language. However, there has been increasing emphasis within CDA upon other elements of text, such as pictures and sound. Although the primary focus remains upon language, these additional elements are now routinely included in the analysis of texts. There are numerous established methods for textual analysis, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches. There are also computer programs such as NUDIST that assist with the organization of qualitative data. These programs are particularly suited for research projects involving large texts or large numbers of texts. The selection of a method is guided by the objectives of the study. For example, Fairclough favors close textual analysis derived from linguistics, which enables a detailed deconstruction of texts.

The second element of CDA is the analysis of the discursive practices associated with the production, distribution, and interpretation of texts. These practices may be institutional, social, and personal. For example, the sending of a birthday card may be a personal interaction, but it may also be an institutional interaction between a business

and its clients. The creation of the card message may involve a professional writer and a manufacturer who then distributes the card through retailers. Alternatively the card may be created by a child and personally handed to a parent. These alternative discourse practices are central to the meaning that is then derived from the card by its recipient. Discourse practices, then, actively contribute to the production of meaning.

The third element of CDA is the analysis of the sociocultural practices that provide the context for the discourse practices associated with texts. This element of CDA draws on critical social theory for its analytical frameworks. Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, and Stuart Hall are some of the major social theorists whose work underpins critical discourse theory generally and CDA in particular. From Althusser, CDA derives the view that ideas can circulate within society and ideologies can operate in ways that are relatively independent of the economic base of that society. Thus, when public relations practitioners attempt to change the way an idea or activity is perceived, they are demonstrating an Althusserian approach to the production of ideas.

Foucault's rich body of work can be seen as part of the foundations of CDA. The view that power and knowledge are closely interrelated concepts, with each contributing to the formation of the other, is Foucauldian. The traditional axiom has been that knowledge is power. To this Foucault added that power is also knowledge and that the two concepts should be considered together. That is, what is to count as knowledge or truth in a society is to a large extent determined by those with power. In turn, that knowledge supports and enhances the powerful. Judges determine guilt or innocence on the basis of precedent established by other judges. Psychiatrists separate the sane from the insane on the basis of guidelines established by other psychiatrists. In both cases, the canon of knowledge is a source of their power, and yet they are also the sources of that canon because of their position of power. A central goal of much public relations work is to establish the legitimacy of particular institutions or actors in relation to areas of knowledge and, in the process, enhance their power.

Foucault also challenged the idea that language is simply a reflection of reality. To this descriptive function, Foucault added the prescriptive notion that the world—including the social world—is

constituted within discourse. Thus in speaking about the world in different ways, we can transform the world as we know it, or we can maintain the status quo. Again, this Foucauldian view underpins any public relations practice that attempts to reframe the way in which events, activities, or objects are viewed. Thus, for example, a ban on smoking in the workplace to protect people from the effects of passive smoking may be reframed as an attack on personal freedom. In attempting to change the discourse, such campaigns aim to change the way in which people think and act.

Gramsci's primary contribution to CDA is the concept of *hegemony*. Hegemony refers to power over society exercised through the dominance of particular ideas, theories, or ideologies. When an idea is so commonly accepted in society that questioning it positions the questioner on the fringes of society, it can be said to be hegemonic. For example, the belief in democracy could be said to be hegemonic in Western countries. Hegemonic ideas are those that are simply taken for granted and thus provide solid starting points for any new position that is seeking legitimacy. They are supported by the dominant institutions within a society, which means that to challenge hegemonic ideas is to challenge the interests of dominant institutions and potentially the entire social, political, and economic structure of a nation.

Stuart Hall, the leading theorist of the cultural studies school of thought, is in some ways similar to Foucault in terms of the significance and breadth of contributions that he has made to CDA and to social theory generally. Hall's 1988 work on effecting change within dominant discourses is, perhaps, the most important both for CDA and for public relations. Central to Hall's analysis of the shift in the United Kingdom from the Keynesian economic paradigm to Thatcherism was the concept of *articulation*. This concept refers to the way in which words may become linked to certain meanings and then shifted and attached to other meanings. Hall explored the limits of such articulations and concluded that though some elements of language are relatively free floating, others are held in place by social, economic, or political forces. An understanding of the concept of articulation is essential for any sophisticated practice of public relations.

CDA was introduced to the field of public relations scholarship in 1996 by an article in *Public Relations Review* by Judy Motion and Shirley

Leitch. This article positioned public relations practitioners as active participants in discursive struggles over sociocultural change. It demonstrated the application of many of the key concepts of CDA, which have been discussed above, in the day-to-day practice of public relations. Public relations practitioners were shown to be actively engaged in changing society through their work in transforming discourse. Since 1996, CDA has emerged as a new paradigm for the conduct of public relations research. CDA can be used to critique public relations practice, and it is particularly useful in teasing out power relationships when multiple stakeholders are involved. CDA also provides a significant toolbox for the research, design, and implementation of public relations campaigns.

Judy Motion and Shirley Leitch

See also Critical Theory of Risk Communication;
Rhetorical Theory

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DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Discrimination and its effects on the public relations workforce are concerns of scholars who

examine the roles of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual preference on practitioner experiences and perceptions of organizational discrimination.

As an issue of gender, the glass ceiling is a subtle but powerful barrier that prevents women in organizations from escalating into the upper management hierarchy. Lack of mentoring, gender stereotypes, and appropriate selection and recruitment, as well as leadership perceptions of certain groups, blend to form the obstacle course that keep women out of management.

Among the earliest studies to examine gender issues in public relations were the Velvet Ghetto studies. This research found that women were limited to lower organizational ranks due to societal and organizational socialization. Female practitioners experienced tension between their roles—a career professional, a mother, a wife, and a supervisor. Women opted for the technician role, carving out a clearer path of nonexecutive duties and responsibilities “because of societal expectations that women be ‘less managerial’—less serious-minded, less aggressive, and less likely to be part of the ‘good old boys’” (L. A. Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2001, p. 262). According to Brenda J. Wrigley (2002), when faced with the glass ceiling, women devised “negotiated resignation” strategies that allowed them to justify the existence of those structural barriers or demote the perceived impact of the glass ceiling’s limitations on their careers. The refusal to confront the structure meant that a woman turned the blame inward, placing the burden of blame “on herself, on a lack of experience or credentials, or not working hard enough. The structure is not questioned” (p. 43).

Scholars believe that feminization of the field leads to decreased prestige for the field and lowered salaries for practitioners. Income gaps between male and female practitioners have been documented since the 1980s. The seminal Velvet Ghetto studies found that female practitioners did not have comparable negotiation skills, which would help them gain higher salaries and full value as workers. The gap remains as Bey-Ling Sha and David M. Dozier (2010) found after controlling for professional experience; women were still earning less than male practitioners.

Pigeonholing is another concern. That includes, in the case of African Americans for instance, being hired into a stereotypical role especially to fill a hiring quota. Such practices, as investigated by

Marilyn Kern-Foxworth (1989) and other academics, often result in limited upward mobility and less access to decision-making power as well as relegation to functionary positions. Pigeonholing often results from being limited to working on race-related projects.

Although pigeonholing can take several forms, the practice of pigeonholing creates organizational tokens who are there for show, are there to handle certain audiences based on the plans of others, and who do not have any policy-making authority. Hispanic and Asian American practitioners often experience the “gap-filling model” of public relations. As gap fillers, these practitioners are selected and assigned to work with specific publics that are demographically similar to the practitioner. Asian or Asian American practitioners may well be hired to communicate solely with their ethnic or racial group; their capacity in the organizations is limited to certain duties such as interpreting or translating. Even if these practitioners want to stop or limit their gap-filling duties and move into another position, they cannot because of the organization’s need and expectations for them to be cultural interpreters.

Current research has shown that the practice of pigeonholing is not a perceived reality in the experiences of nonmajority and minority public relations practitioners. For example, practitioners investigated in Natalie Tindall’s (2009) and Rochelle Tillery-Larkin’s (1999) projects did not perceive any pigeonholing. In fact, practitioners were in managerial, decision-making, and authority positions and shifted between mainstream and niche audience accounts and campaigns. As Tillery-Larkin concluded, “They were satisfied with their jobs and were working on mainstream projects. Further, those who did work on race-related projects had created a niche in which they enjoyed doing so” (p. 241).

Although research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) practitioners is scant, research from Tindall and Richard Waters has shown that this group of practitioners experiences some discrimination, including sexual harassment and the lavender ceiling. For LGBT practitioners, the lavender ceiling may stop practitioners’ mobility into the managerial ranks. The lavender ceiling is the erected barriers—both perceived and actual—that hinder advancement

of LGBT individuals into management and leadership positions.

Natalie T. J. Tindall

See also Feminization Theory; Minorities in Public Relations; Race and Public Relations

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DISCURSIVE TECHNOLOGY

Discursive technology refers to communication expertise focused on maintaining or transforming established social, economic, political, and cultural practices and power relations in organizations, social groups and institutions, or society at large. Judy Motion and Shirley Leitch (1996) featured the concept as part of the argument for applying critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a theoretical approach to examining the role of public relations in society. In this approach, practitioners are seen as discourse technologists, whose technical skills, such as research, campaign planning, message design, and issue framing, are deployed to maintain or transform discourses.

Public relations as discursive technology follows the critical thought developed by Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough, two of the key figures in the field of CDA. Discourse is understood here as a form of social practice. Discourse refers to the view that the use of language in social contexts necessarily either reproduces established power relations and accepted regimes of truth (and knowledge) or challenges and resists them. Any instance of communication can be seen as an act of strategic engagement with the social world through representations of the world, social relations, and

identities that are embedded in language. Critical discourse analysis recognizes that discourse is a mechanism for social domination and sets out to reveal how power and inequality are produced and reproduced through language.

Applying this approach to public relations has implications for how the practice is conceptualized as well as the type of topics chosen for scholarly investigation. At the theoretical level, established approaches to public relations built around concepts of propaganda, persuasion, two-way symmetrical communication, and the liberal democratic notion of the marketplace of ideas (an open public space where ideas can be publicly tested through debate) are problematized by the Foucauldian understanding of discourse. Kay Weaver, Judy Motion, and Juliet Roper (2006) articulated key points on which the discursive technology position is built.

First, behavioristic models of communication effects that underpin theories of persuasion do not fully explain public response to messages because they ignore the way in which language or discourse creates what can be perceived as rational and legitimate. Second, the notion fundamental to discussions of propaganda that truth exists outside language or discourse is shown as untenable; consequently, substantive distinctions between public relations and propaganda are obliterated. Third, accepting the Foucauldian conception of power both an oppressive and a positive, productive force offers public relations theory a more satisfactory insight into the way language use resonates simultaneously across individual, institutional, and societal levels. That communication or discourse is a strategic site for both domination and resistance is highlighted by proponents of the discursive approach as key to public relations inquiry and practice and also in global and international contexts.

Magda Pieczka

See also Critical Discourse Analysis

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DIVERSITY: AUDIENCES

Diversity means many things to many people: age, race, religion, ethnicity, education, gender. But these characteristics merely scratch the surface. Diversity goes far beyond that of a demographic profile. Even bringing psychographic traits, personal attitudes and opinions into the conversation does not demonstrate the depth and breadth diversity represents. In fact, within the perspective of public relations, diversity is so much more than just the identification of groups of people. Further, it is more than just an analysis of audiences. Public relations management allows these distinctive voices to be represented among a very cluttered marketplace of ideas. Said another way, public relations aids in providing society with various points of view so that citizens can make sound decisions based on more than just one perspective. And today, with the onset of the Internet and social media, these myriad voices can be projected all over the world. However, diversity is not a stand-alone concept and cannot be discussed without acknowledging intercultural communication—especially when it comes to public relations.

Similar to the argument that one cannot not communicate, Edward Hall made a simple, yet profound statement in 1959 in his groundbreaking book, *Silent Language*, explaining that culture is communication and communication is culture. Larry Samovar, Richard Porter, Edwin McDaniel, and Carolyn Roy (2013) defined intercultural communication as messages designed by someone from one culture for consumption by someone representing

another culture. This kind of communication occurs when people of different cultures come together and exchange communication—regardless of its type (verbal, nonverbal, etc.). As such, public relations practitioners have an opportunity to paint a very colorful canvas when creating this portrait called “diversity.”

Diversity and External Audiences

From an external relations standpoint, there is no denying that culture plays a large part in influencing behavior and encouraging diversity in today's marketplace. Illustrated by a propensity for more multiculturalism—ranging from diverse food and fashion, music, travel, and architecture, to name but a few examples—organizations continue to rely on public relations management strategies and tactics to connect their key publics with products and services they provide. Some may even argue that it is the multiplicity among consumers themselves that is driving this culturally diverse economy. For example, think about the endless list of subcultures (aka microcultures) that exist.

Defined as a division of a culture within a culture, these enclaves or “pockets of people” personify the true spirit of diversity. From American gypsies and mothers of toddlers in tiaras to gluten-free, Generation Jones, and hipsters, there is no denying the important role public relations plays in communicating carefully constructed messages, by means of explicit information channels, to these unique and varied publics.

To further substantiate the importance of diversity, think about how age cohorts vary. Millennials (born 1981–1992), generation Xers (born 1965–1980), baby boomers (born 1946–1964), and the silent generation (born 1928–1945) have all experienced life through a unique lens. According to Pew Center researchers, this generation sensation is a result of three overlapping processes: lifecycle effects, period events, and cohort effects. In particular, period events (e.g., major events like wars, social movements, economic pressures, technological advancements) and trends influence young adults while they are still developing their “core values.” As a result, each age cohort has its own distinct personality. While millennials are often coined “digital immigrants and digital natives” who have cut their teeth on technology, baby

boomers have made their mark as individualists who work hard and play hard and defy ageism; gen Xers value diversity and adversity—having grown up during turbulent economic conditions. Members of the silent generation were raised during a time period of conservatism and self-sacrifice. Some demographers refer to these generational cohort differences as a “generational divide” where generations tend to collide.

Diversity and Internal Relations

From an internal relations standpoint, developing and maintaining relationships between employees and employers also have implications with regard to diversity. Using ethnicity as a mainstream example to substantiate the importance of diversity as a growth factor, consider the following results, reported by The Futures Company, an international market research firm: ethnic consumers drove 98% of growth in urban areas from 2000 to 2010 and 92% of the nation’s growth overall. Hispanics alone made up 56%. Over the next five years, the buying power of both Hispanics and Asian Americans is expected to grow by 42%, versus 22% for non-Hispanic Whites. From 2010 to 2050, the African American population is projected to grow by 47.9%; Hispanics, by 163.0%; Asian Americans, by 130.3%; and non-Hispanic Whites by 3.3%. What these figures illustrate is that intercultural communication—and being able to understand and communicate with diverse publics (e.g., employees)—is swiftly becoming commonplace criteria for providing a healthy, successful, and productive work environment.

For public relations practitioners, diversity is much more than just a term that encourages multiculturalism and intercultural communication. It is a way of life—a commitment to enabling many voices to be heard—no matter how softly they may speak.

Lisa T. Fall

See also Circuit of Culture; Culture; Demographics; Globalization and Public Relations; Globalize; Intercultural Communication Theory; Marketplace of Ideas; Psychographics; Segmentation of Publics

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DIVERSITY: PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSION

Diversity is usually used to refer to the mix of gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexuality, religion, or other aspects of identity across a particular population. Diversity studies address the underrepresentation of particular populations, the overrepresentation of others, and the effects these have on their power and experience. In the United States, diversity issues are shaped by the history of the civil rights movement; while historically Black American populations were the focus of research, more recently there has been greater recognition of the discrimination faced by Hispanic and other minority communities. In the United Kingdom, there is a substantial heritage of diversity research in organizations stemming from the 1970s, when equality legislation was introduced. In early research, the tendency was to quantify diversity and examine policies and processes that were resulting in discrimination. As the field has become more sophisticated, more work has been done on the *experiences* of people from all kinds of minority populations, rather than simply their representation in the workforce. This has contributed to our understanding of why people from minority backgrounds can still be underrepresented even when policy and process ostensibly treat them equally with members of a majority group.

Diversity in public relations has become a concern that exercises the minds of professionals and researchers, becoming more important as minority audiences have become wealthier, representing a

valuable target market. This is because professionals tend to be White, middle class, and able bodied—and therefore not representative of the wider population. Professional associations have taken this seriously: in the United States, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) provides diversity resources on its website and from 2006 to 2009 one of the largest global consultancies, Hill & Knowlton, sponsored an annual diversity survey, which was in turn well publicized by industry magazine *PRWeek*. In the United Kingdom, the two main industry associations, the Chartered Institute for Public Relations and the Public Relations Consultants Association, both initiated diversity working parties in 2011 and continue to express their support for an inclusive profession. The year 2011 also saw the first major survey of the industry that collected data on the ethnic make-up of the profession. Some U.K.-based consultancies have also initiated specific programs to reach out to more diverse candidates. In the United States, Black practitioners have their own National Black Public Relations Society while in the United Kingdom, a networking group has been set up to promote the benefits of cultural diversity in the profession.

Research on diversity in public relations originally followed the pattern of quantifying numbers of minorities, to explore the extent to which the makeup of the professional body encompasses enough variety to adequately address the wide range of audiences addressed by public relations campaigns. This notion of “requisite variety” continues to prompt both quantitative and qualitative work. Quantitative work seeks to establish the scale of the issue and has underpinned calls by academics to increase the number of practitioners from minority backgrounds. However, it has also been criticized as unrealistic: taken to its extreme, the principle of requisite variety—to match the public relations professionals in an organization with the range of audiences it is trying to target—is impossible to achieve. It is also essentialist, in that it reifies specific aspects of identity (e.g., race, sexuality) while ignoring the ways in which other aspects also shape behavior, attitudes, and values (e.g., class, professional background, gender).

Qualitative work on diversity addresses this matter to some extent, in that it has attempted to access the experiences of practitioners in minority positions in the profession (most commonly, Black,

Hispanic, and other minority ethnic practitioners), in the process revealing their intersectional identities, where privilege and disadvantage play a role in shaping their professional lives. This work has consistently revealed that, even when practitioners have reached a high level of seniority, their career trajectories and workplace experiences have been marked by the experience of being different from the occupational norm, resulting in exclusion from networking opportunities, barriers to career progression, and tokenistic deployment (e.g., assignment to an “ethnic public relations” campaign in the absence of any relevant professional experience), among other things. The findings demonstrate that diversity in public relations is not only about numbers, but also about the experience of difference on a day-to-day basis.

Some researchers have also explored the nature of diversity among audiences, the ways in which public relations campaigns address those audiences, the presence of diversity issues in the public relations curriculum, and the dominance of White, western norms in the profession. Here, the lack of diversity in public relations is seen to result in a blinkered approach to communication that fails to accommodate the demands of a culturally diverse world.

There is some theoretical variety in the approaches to diversity taken in public relations. For example, Debashish Munshi has used postcolonial theory to examine the position of minority groups as the “other,” exploring their experiences of visibility and access to “voice” both as practitioners and as publics. Other researchers have called for more integration of intersectionality theory into public relations, including to notions of identity among publics, demonstrating the shortcomings associated with campaigns that only address people in terms of one aspect of their lives.

It is important to note that diversity is frequently interpreted as relating to race or ethnicity, but it encompasses far more groups than this. Gender is clearly important, and relatively few studies have been carried out on the gender composition of the profession where men are the minority group. Sexuality is another neglected area; in 2013 a book on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender perspectives of strategic communication was published, the first of its kind. Other important aspects of identity that could shape experience as a public relations

professional, such as disability and religion, have still to be addressed at the time of writing.

Lee Edwards

See also Gender and Public Relations; Identity Theory; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Practitioners/Publics and Public Relations; Race and Public Relations; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations

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DOUBLESPEAK

Doublespeak is language that is strategically chosen to distort or obscure reality. It is often associated with misleading advertising claims, unethical politicians, and public relations "spin doctors," who use language to frame a subject in the most positive light. When doublespeak is exposed, it may generate public distrust and be counterproductive to long-term public relations goals.

William Lutz (1989) identified four types of doublespeak: euphemisms, jargon, "bureaucratese," and inflated language. Euphemism is language that sugarcoats negative or unpleasant realities. For example, people have their pets "put to sleep," an overweight boy is "husky" rather than fat, and a down payment is "an initial investment." Jargon is specialized language that may be unique to a particular industry, occupation, or social group. It may be used to intentionally obscure meaning for those who are outside the group. For example, the term *collateral damage* has been used to describe the deaths of innocent civilians in wartime. Lutz wrote that sewage sludge may be labeled "regulated organic nutrients" (1997, n.p.). Bureaucratese is characterized by the combination of jargon with lengthy, wandering sentences that attempt to conceal the truth or confuse the listener. This type of doublespeak may be used by officials who wish to appear to be answering a question or addressing an issue, but who are in fact revealing nothing. Inflated language is intended to make the ordinary seem extraordinary. A common tactic is renaming. Store clerks may become "sales associates," beauty parlors "day spas," and college home economics programs "family and consumer science" majors. Sometimes doublespeak is introduced so successfully that the terms become accepted as the appropriate, standard terms to use.

Doublespeak is often associated with *newspeak*, as coined by George Orwell in his 1949

novel, 1984, in which a fictional government attempts to control public thought through the manipulation of language. However, Orwell did not use the term *doublespeak*. The term entered the popular vocabulary in the United States in the early 1970s as antiwar sentiment spurred challenges to government characterizations of the Vietnam War. In 1972, the National Council of Teachers of English created a Committee on Public Doublespeak to expose the misuse of language by government, military, and corporate officials. The committee began publishing a newsletter in 1974 that eventually became the *Quarterly Review of Doublespeak*. Although the newsletter ceased publication after more than 20 years, the committee continues to present an annual Doublespeak Award for “language that is grossly deceptive, evasive, euphemistic, confusing or self-contradictory and which has pernicious social or political consequences” (National Council of Teachers of English, 2003). Recent awards have gone to the tobacco industry (2000), the Department of Defense (2001), and a state school system that removed references to Judaism from a literary work about Jewish life in Europe (2002).

Scholars of doublespeak agree that the growth of mass media, advertising, and public relations has contributed to the ubiquitous presence of doublespeak. In particular, demands from news media for spokesperson accessibility and quick public comment may lead pressured officials to resort to doublespeak.

Although most scholars denounce the use of doublespeak, it has been noted that intentional ambiguity may be helpful to organizations confronted by multiple challenges in turbulent environments. “Strategic ambiguity” (1984), according to Eric Eisenberg, strikes a balance among being understood, not offending others, and maintaining one’s self-image. He contends that by employing vague, ambiguous, equivocal communication, organizations may avoid creating factions and smooth the path for organizational change. Whether the strategy is ethical, Eisenberg notes, depends on the goals of the communicator.

Katherine N. Kinnick

See also Puffery; Spin

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DRAMATISM AND DRAMATISM THEORY

Conventional rhetorical theory tends to focus attention on how discourse influences the way people think. Formulated by Kenneth Burke, dramatism adds depth to rhetorical theory. It provides insights into how language and its connections to thought can be studied as modes of action rather than ways of conveying information. Thus, Burke devoted his massive study of language and society to the analysis of symbolic action, based on his proposition that “language is primarily a species of action, or expression of attitudes, rather than an instrument of definition” (1968, p. 447).

In his early years in the 1920s and 1930s as a literary critic, Burke began to create his theory of dramatism to assist his ability to perform insightful literary criticism. Burke began his career as a literary critic but soon expanded that interest to analyze and critique all discourse, especially that which leads to cooperation and competition in society. This evolution saw his influence grow beyond literary criticism to social criticism. He influenced the thinking of scholars in literature, rhetorical theory, sociology, history, communication, and political science, for instance. His theory of dramatism allowed him to offer some of the richest existing critiques of how the free market system can work to the advantage of some while disadvantaging others.

In this context, Burke revealed how the term *progress* can be the guiding light for a society. Any act can be done in the name of progress. Such commitment, he reasoned, was often at the heart of the conflict between business leaders and other groups, such as laborers and environmental activists. One group's progress might justify sacrifice on the part of another group.

This innovative contribution to literary criticism and social commentary began with a deep curiosity into the workings of the poet's, dramatist's, or novelist's mind. Burke was looking for a critical apparatus that would allow him to disclose the reason or motive behind the creation of any work of literature. He believed that it was necessary to unlock the bond between the writer and the reader, a special relationship in better literature. In better literature, readers and authors participate—act—together in the experience of literature. A work of literature does not report the feelings—hope, for instance—of the author. Rather, it evokes those feelings in the reader.

He noted early in his inquiry that a poem or other literary device is not a mere report. That is, the poet who feels joy at seeing nature—a tree, for instance—writes a poem not to report or convey knowledge about that tree, but to evoke a similar experience at enjoying the symbolic tree characterized in the poem. This line of thought led Burke to discount the element of communication by conveying knowledge—*epistemology*—as being less important than the creation of action—*ontology*. He argued that the reader does not interpret and respond to the poem as a report but as a symbolic experience—an act. The author, by this reasoning, wants the reader to participate in the experience rather than to receive a report of the experience.

By this logic, Burke argued that Hamlet's plight appealed, not because he reported his circumstances and feelings, but because Shakespeare was capable of having the audience share in the symbolic action of feeling betrayal and revenge. Attitude is the objective of literature, not knowledge gained by report.

Central to his theory of dramatism was the distinction between motion and action. A truck rolling down a hill is in motion. If a bystander decides to jump into the truck and bring it to a stop, that is action. Action is differentiated from motion by the intervention of moral choice and attitude. Motion

occurs without morality. Action is the essence of morality. For this reason, Burke believed he could shed light on the moral choices being made and advocated by the voices of society.

Because of his societal interests, Burke was able to reason that property is not a thing but an action. This conclusion is substantially relevant for the application of dramatistic theory to public relations practice and ethical inquiry. In a capitalistic society such as the United States, much of the discourse of public relations is devoted to the promotion and defense of property. Promotion and publicity dramatize the joys of ownership and participation. It is not merely knowing that a new car line is now on the market; the sponsor of such discourse is not conveying information but inviting customers to participate in—enact—the joys of property ownership. Buying is action.

Activists are likely to elevate the concept of ownership beyond the limits of property to the privileges and responsibilities of society. Thus, if a business owns property, such as a coal mine, it can do what it wants with that property, including strip mining, according to one terminology. By the activists' interpretation of property, however, the mine is part of the total property of the nation, collectively owned. Thus, the business must act according to larger rather than smaller interests on matters of property ownership.

One of the key elements of dramatism is its awareness that words are propositional. The word *teacher* reports something about a person in that profession. More important, however, it is a command for specific action. People who share the symbolic substance *teacher* are expected to respond through action—to teach. Thus, fathers are supposed to father and mothers to mother. Preachers preach. Firefighters fight fires. Legislators legislate. Regulators regulate. Investors invest. Critics critique. Activists become active. In each case, the action implied or mandated in the role-based label goes beyond the informative report to a spirited motivation to action—to participate in the action or symbolic action.

Sigmund Freud gave Burke insights into the associational nature of words and the motives that came from those words. On social issues, Burke was prone to consider the guidance of Karl Marx, who suggested ways to disclose the hidden traps of action embedded in words. Some of the most

interesting sets of terms, Burke mused, were those associated with work and workers in the 1920s and 1930s. The symbolic action of labor and management, thus having implications for employee communication, can work out so that management is boss, giving direction and determining the limits of reward and the requirements of each job. Burke opposed asymmetrical relationships of this kind. Labor should participate in the definition and, therefore, the enactment of work and reward.

Burke reasoned that motives are shorthand terms for situation. The reasoning behind this conclusion is based on Burke's experience with a photography exhibit at an art show. He was fascinated by how a photographer could take different pictures of the same subject. By using differently colored lenses, the same subject could look unique in each photograph. From this experience, Burke reasoned that people see reality through terministic screens. In other words, as each different colored lens gives a unique view of reality, so does any terminology. Each terminology is a way of seeing uniquely and a way of acting uniquely. Terms, thus, prescribe actions. Words are not only natural, but they also add dimensions to nature. They characterize, define, and introduce attitudes into nature. Words mediate between nature and persons' minds.

As public relations practitioners, along with others, communicate about some product, service, or issue, they use words that invite the target of those messages to participate—act—in accord with the screen offered by the terminology. This kind of reasoning suggests why there is a clash between activists and corporate spokespersons. Activists call for the enactment of "environmental responsibility." That action word challenges citizens to achieve some preferred state by acting responsibly toward the environment. Activists call for higher environmental standards by dramatizing the dire consequences of failing to do so. Companies respond with their facts and images of progress.

By this logic, Burke came to define *dramatism* for the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* as "a method of analysis and corresponding critique of terminology as designed to show that the most direct route to the study of human relations and human motives is via a methodical inquiry into the cycles or clusters of terms and their functions" (1968, p. 445). He reasoned that terms become meaningful and motivational as

clusters. Each cluster focuses attention on a primary term that is modified by secondary terms. In a piece of discourse, a central term might be modified by defining terms as it is developed by an artist or some other advocate.

In the realm of public relations, the central term might be *purchase*. One rationale for public relations is to increase revenue through increased sales. Purchase is a motive. What is to be purchased? That is the product or service promoted. Ads offer excellent examples of such symbolic action. They show "satisfied customers" using the product. Soaps and creams moisturize, keeping skin healthy and young looking. The symbolic action here is the product as a fountain of youth. The car roaring across the countryside is freedom, power, and status. To buy is to participate—enact—those terms as terministic screens. Participation joins the interests of the consumer with the seller.

As Burke argued, dramatism deals with relationships. Is the relationship of buyer and seller, in these cases, one of mutual benefit? Is the terministic screen imbalanced in its implications for the participants? Does one party benefit disproportionately? Will it lead to cooperation or to competition, which can even foster buying from the competitor or seeking the services of a litigator? Each choice is an enactment of various conflicting or competing terminologies.

Robert L. Heath

See also Activism; Internal Communication; Persuasion Theory; Rhetorical Theory

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E

EASTERN EUROPE, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Eastern Europe refers to the eastern part of the European continent, though the term itself can be used in geopolitical or cultural contexts besides the geographical one. For decades, Eastern Europe was an ideological construct that was a synonym for the socialist countries of Europe during the Cold War. Eastern European countries are often referred to as transition countries because of their political, economic, and social transitions from a single-party political system toward a pluralistic society, and from a centrally planned economy toward a market economy. Countries of the region are at different stages of their transitions, as some are European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members and have reached the end of transition, whereas others are struggling with the establishment of democracy and market economy. The Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, and Bulgaria are members of the EU while Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, and Ukraine are at earlier stages of their transitions. The latest independent country of the region is Kosovo, whose independence has not yet been recognized by several countries, dividing even the EU.

Public relations has played a vital role in the economic and social transition but public relation's role in the political transformation is dubious. The evolution and practice of public relations in Eastern

Europe has been described as "transitional public relations" that helped organizations adapt to the changes from a planned economy to free market economy. Although several scholars dismiss propaganda as a form of public relations, nevertheless propaganda is a heritage that has had an influence on the evolution and practice of public relations in the region.

During communism, governments and governmental organizations were discredited and distrusted as many officials and the political elite abused their positions. Not only in Russia but also in Ukraine and Poland, the notion of "Black PR" entered the vocabulary of political public relations in the 1990s, contributing to an overall negative image of the profession. Black PR refers to the manipulative and unethical political campaigning during elections with the aim of creating negative images of political rivals. Several books and websites in Russia are devoted to the theory and practice of Black PR. They detail strategies and tactics about fooling people, creating bad images of political rivals, lying about other candidates' plans and strategies, or reacting to rivals' actions. In some cases it has also been utilized in the corporate sector to discredit rivals.

Politics has a great influence on the practice of public relations in several Central and Eastern European countries. Many local consultancies have political affiliations, and public tenders and state contracts are won by these agencies rather than independent, international consultancies. So networks and links are often more important than professionalism. Informal clientelistic networks

are very strong in the region where political elites and the media are strongly linked. Media moguls and oligarchs own several media outlets to protect their own business interest. Media institutions can be linked to political and business interest, which in turn determines how the media are perceived as fitting into the clientelistic system (Örnebring, 2012).

According to the 2012 European Monitor, Eastern European practitioners experience ethical challenges in their everyday life more frequently than their colleagues in Western or Northern Europe. Practitioners have strong beliefs in national or international accreditation systems, which could contribute to the improvement of the profession's reputation.

The professionalization of public relations shows a diverse picture across the region as it is more professionalized in some countries than others (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). National associations are fully functional in most countries; however, after the initial booms in memberships during the 1990s, many associations struggle to keep memberships active by making it worthwhile to join these organizations. Public relations education has a very high standard in Eastern Europe, though in many countries it remains theoretically orientated rather than skills and practice based. Regional differences are prevalent in public relations literature, as some countries have very limited books on the subject in the local language while other countries can boast of dozens of books written by local authors. American standard textbooks have been translated into some languages. Some countries have launched monthly periodicals, but after a few years these journals disappeared but were revived as online magazines (e.g., *PR Herald* in Hungary or *piar.pl* in Poland).

After the accession to the European Union in 2004, the public relations sector of the Central European countries has become one of the fastest growing, though some markets are showing signs of saturation. The global financial crisis of the early 21st century hit hard the public relations sector of the region, where shrinking public relations budgets mean the lack of new business opportunities for consultancies and the loss of long-term clients.

The role of social media in public relations is widely recognized but not fully understood by

many Eastern European organizations. Specialized social media agencies tend to be more popular than standard consultancies, which often lag behind the latest know-how and developments of social media. Internet penetration is uneven in the region: in Estonia, for example, 80% of the population use the Internet and the entire country has the capacity for wireless Internet access while in neighboring Russia only 44% of the population use the Internet.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) continues to be a hot issue in Central and Eastern Europe, which is characterized by weak civil societies. Multinational companies have played a leading role in introducing environmentally friendly technologies together with a new management culture that addresses social and environmental issues. Local companies often interpret CSR as philanthropy, sponsorship, or simply as a marketing tool.

More than two decades of experience coupled with a growing number of well-qualified practitioners have contributed to the growing professionalization and sophistication of the public relations industry in Central Europe. Some public relations agencies have specialized exclusively on the Eastern European market to develop communication strategies for the Central and Eastern European region as more and more clients demand a regional approach.

Gyorgy Szondi

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; European Communication Monitor; Political Economy and Public Relations; Political Public Relations; Propaganda; Social Media

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ECOLOGY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Ecology is the study of relationships that organisms have with each other and with their natural environments. Its development from the 19th century was strongly shaped by science-oriented subjects, especially biology and earth science. Since the mid-20th century, that orientation has been supplemented with human ecology, defined as the study of the—albeit largely destructive—effects of human behavior on natural systems. The study of human ecology has had the laudable aim of learning how to reduce or reverse ongoing planetary degradation. Ecological historians link the 20th century's growing awareness of planetary vulnerability through the arrival of atomic weapons and their capacity to make human life extinct; the human contamination of Earth's basic ecosystems resulting in the death of birds and the potential extinction of plants and other species reported in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962); and the visible fragility of the blue Earth as photographed from space by astronauts.

In public relations, the main reactions to the growing environmentalist movement accompanying that perceptual shift vary across three main groups. The first group is practitioners concerned with environmental issues. They tend to fall into two opposing camps. On one side are the proenvironment activists who speak for the planet and its organisms and, sometimes, to give voice to the concerns of scientists attempting to track ecological risks and their likely impact on the earth. From Greenpeace to the World Wildlife Fund, these mainly amateur, but sometimes paid professional, practitioners make a case for prioritizing ecological issues from whale preservation to reducing nuclear power to lowering greenhouse emissions. On the other side are corporate practitioners whose employers stand accused of assaulting environmentalism and environmental activists through expensive lawsuits and a range of strategies designed to discredit them or their views. Such practitioners have been labeled merchants of doubt for selling uncertainty to a public lacking the expertise to understand sound science. They use persistent calls for levels of proof, which are underwritten by the research of small groups of corporate-funded scientists, beyond reasonable scientific doubt.

Corporate practitioners seek to influence opinion against proenvironment initiatives that have

cost implications for business and to influence publics in favor of weakening existing environmental legislation. Social critics from outside public relations offer fierce criticism of the field's activities in relation to the environment whether it is greenwashing by covering a tree-denuded landscape with green paint, or astroturfing, which replaces authentic grassroots groups by artificial groups created (and often paid for) by agencies, or downplaying the long-term effect (e.g., by running campaigns that suggest that the damage from BP's oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 is over when the scientific jury is still out). Government practitioners can participate on both sides. They punish polluters and send a message that environmental damage is not acceptable yet downplay long-term effects in situations where their bosses may have degrees of culpability (e.g., the failure of the levees in Hurricane Katrina in 2005; the lack of well-developed and implemented drilling regulation prior to the 2010 BP Macondo well blowout).

The second group includes public relations academics. With the exception of issues, crisis, and risk management scholarship, ecology and the natural environment do not feature frequently or prominently in the public relations literature. Indeed, the use of the term *environment* itself is frequently restricted (e.g., in the excellence project and insider public relations histories) to the business or social environment rather than referring to, or including, the natural world. A few 21st-century scholars have argued that the field needs to take climate change on board as a potential megacatastrophe on a global scale and use public relations to engage with the business, ecological, and social dimensions of that threat in ways that might enhance rather than diminish the profession's social standing. They document direct links between the methods of the tobacco companies in denying the health risks of smoking and the denial of global warming. They contend that the antienvironmental lobby's future notoriety may exceed the severely damaging reputation costs of public relations support for the tobacco lobby, particularly if the environmental crisis denial industry diverts resources that could have been used to mitigate climate change (and its impacts) to answer demands for the establishment of further proof of global warming before taking preventive steps.

The third group consists of public relations educators. Ecology has evolved over time but is grounded in the study of the world around us and learning from that study to sustain that world. Ecological literacy, one of its recently emerging forms, connects with the work of Howard Gardner and 21st-century pedagogical searches for the kinds of minds needed for existing and future challenges. Both ecologists and educators seek to identify key intelligences and competencies. Ecological literacy, or how to foster learning that prepares people for the unprecedented environmental challenges of the contemporary world, is a clear contender. This new stage of ecology involves Daniel Goleman, who uses it not only to integrate his major work on emotional intelligence with his later work on social and ecological intelligence in an age of transparency, but also to offer a major upgrade in key contemporary skills. Ecology and public relations have had limited positive contacts, but linking them through education has enormous potential for transforming courses, students, and practitioners.

David McKie

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Environmental Groups; Environmental Scanning; Issues Management; Risk Communication; Risk Perception; Risk Society

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EDGAR ONLINE

EDGAR Online is an online subscription service (www.edgar-online.com) used to access a database of Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) public filings. For a fee, investor relations and corporate public relations officers can gather financial information on their company and on similar, competitive companies using the EDGAR database. EDGAR Online, Inc. is listed on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation (NASDAQ) under the symbol EDGR. Subscriptions are paid on a monthly or quarterly basis, and usage is limited to a certain number of documents per term, with an additional fee for each additional document accessed. The database may be searched by filing type, date of filing, company name, or person name. Though EDGAR Online is not affiliated with the SEC, it serves as a carrier of information from the SEC to the consumer.

EDGAR stands for Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval. The SEC mandates that all publicly traded companies must file their annual, quarterly, and current reports, along with reports on stock sales among company executives (Form 144), with the SEC for review and public dissemination. The typical annual (10-K) or quarterly (10-Q) report includes financial statements, messages from the company's leadership, and information regarding company performance and future plans. Current reports (8-K) partially fulfill material disclosure requirements; they usually include press releases of updated information regarding changes of management, mergers, or acquisitions.

The EDGAR live filing system began on July 15, 1992. Originally documents were sent to the SEC by diskette or magnetic tape. With the introduction of computers, files could be sent via modem. They are now transmitted over the Internet via high-speed lines (T1 or ISDN) or FTP servers directly to the SEC. In 2001, the SEC began accepting transmissions of Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) files, which show photos, graphics, and formatting. The documents that are filed with the SEC are later publicly disseminated through services such as EDGAR Online. Subscribers to EDGAR Online may be stockbrokers, analysts, shareholders, investment bankers, or others interested in timely information pertaining to public companies. This

subscription service, in addition to providing access to public company filings, offers international public company reports, normalized financial data for company comparisons, financial news, initial public offering (IPO) alerts, stock quotes, charts, and investor relations services. EDGAR Online also presents a full range of hosting, intranet, and Application Programming Interface solutions to bring public company filings onto company websites and news sites.

In addition, EDGAR Online offers a free service, Free EDGAR, which can be found at <http://www.freedgar.com>. Users of Free EDGAR must register with the site by supplying name, address, telephone number, email address, and occupation. Free EDGAR offers only the most basic access to filings and is meant for use by individuals. Only one free file can be viewed per day, but additional filings can be viewed for a fee. The one-filing-a-day limit allows EDGAR Online to offer a public service while answering the demand for its subscription service by professionals and serious stock researchers.

Emilee V. Fontenot

See also Annual Reports; Investor Relations

EDITING

The verb *edit* is defined in the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as follows:

1a. To prepare (written material) for publication or presentation, as by correcting, revising, or adapting. . . . c. To modify or adapt so as to make suitable or acceptable. 2. To supervise the publication of (a magazine, for example). (Dictionary.com, 2003, n.p.)

The word *editor* first came into use around 1712, and the French word *éditer* was established in 1784. By 1793, the word *edit* was connected with the publishing process (Dictionary.com, 2003, n.p.).

Today's public relations professionals use editing in many kinds of publications, including newspapers, newsletters, annual reports, brochures, and news releases.

In his article, "Protect Your R.E.P.! Revise, Edit, Proofread," Philip Vassallo stated that many

factors are involved in the writing process, among them editing. Editing corrects for good sentence structure, proper word and grammar usage, and correct spelling of words and people's names. One way to check written documents is by reading them aloud several times for errors.

The revising process is an important part of the editing process. No document is ever final. One must revise several times to improve one's work and make it less confusing and reader-friendly. This process is sometimes time consuming, but it has great payoffs.

Stylebooks such as *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* and *The Elements of Style* are helpful resources for editing. Both books deal with proper writing style and word usage. The importance of editing, revising, and rewriting are all explained in the stylebooks. They help guide writers in the right direction by showing them a simple, comprehensive way to produce their work. With careful editing, not only is writing easy to read, but it is more widely understood.

Public relations professionals know the importance of editing. Pieces such as annual reports, brochures, and proposals all require thorough editing before the final document is printed and read by the public.

Whether the writing job is big or small, editing is necessary. Although it often requires effort and time, it is a major part of the writing and publication process. No writer can assume that his or her work is accurate and error-free on the first draft. One should always carefully read one's work and correct errors. Using multiple editors is also a good tactic.

Brenda J. Wrigley

See also Layout; News/Newsworthy; Writing

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EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Editor is a very broad title for people who work for organizations such as book publishers, newspapers, and magazines. Editors are usually distinguished by the particular function they oversee. Some examples of editorial titles are *executive editor*, *managing editor*, *copy editor*, *page editor*, *section editor*, *headline writer*, and *photo chief*. Generally editors set the editorial policy for their publication. They are responsible for determining issues such as the design, content, focus, and audience of the publication. Editors also make day-to-day decisions on what's important to readers, on content, and on ethics. They may ask questions of reporters and authors to strengthen their piece and check facts for accuracy. In addition, editors may rewrite parts of a piece or change the order of presentation to make it more readable and appealing. Some editors are involved in managerial decisions; for example, they may hire and fire personnel, and they may give input and sometimes final say on editorial budgets, including salaries, travel budgets, other expenses, and equipment budgets.

A *publisher* is typically the chief officer of a newspaper, magazine, or publication. This role is often determined by the nature of the publication. Publishers are the on-site authority for the organization; for example, they may set the editorial policy of the publication, including the political stance it favors. In newspapers, publishers typically reserve their editorial input for the opinion or editorial page, where writers tackle social and political issues affecting their communities. Often publishers oversee the fiscal health of the publication, thus serving the interests of a higher authority such as a newspaper chain, communications conglomerate, publishing company, or stockholders. Because these higher authorities want a return on their investment, the publisher must determine the best ways to produce a profit margin, to minimize or at least carefully control operating expenses, and to maximize market share and general revenue through such avenues as paid circulation, advertisements, commercial printing, and Internet subsidiaries. In general, publishers delegate editorial, advertising, and production oversight to subordinate editors and managers in each respective department, maintaining overall control by monitoring market share,

profit margins, revenues, operating expenses, and other factors. Publishers can also be ombudsmen and address public concerns; the "public" may include readers who question the content or display of a story, photograph, or headline; readers who want to praise the newspaper or magazine for its work; and readers who complain about everything from missed home deliveries to the opinions expressed by columnists. Often publishers become members of civic organizations and become involved in charities and sponsor local events. They often deem it essential to be visible in the communities they serve because of the widespread belief that the publication is a community business and therefore benefits from a healthy community.

Brigitta Brunner

EDITORIAL

An *editorial* is an article in a newspaper or magazine that presents the view of the editor or a guest columnist on a particular topic. The purpose of an editorial is to interpret, to advocate, or to entertain. Sometimes editorials are intended to persuade, and sometimes they are written to provide background on an issue so that readers may draw their own informed conclusion.

Editorializing is expressing an opinion. This is appropriate in editorials but not in news articles, in news releases, or in any unattributed statement. The news convention of objectivity requires that news articles and news releases limit their statements to reports or statements that are verifiable. For example, the statement "More than 50 people attended the library open house" is verifiable. In contrast, the statement "A lot of people attended the open house" is a judgment and an example of editorializing. An opinion does not belong in a news article or news release (written by a journalist or public relations practitioner, respectively) unless it is attributed to a source. (For example: "'A lot of people attended the open house,' said Ann Lee, director of the library.")

Editorials appear on the editorial page in newspapers, along with columns and letters to the editor, to distinguish them from news articles, which are intended to provide objective reports. They are

useful in stimulating readers to think and to reach conclusions. They also provide a personality to the newspaper, magazine, or organizational publication. In editorials, readers may find more than just the facts. As John McClelland, editor of the Longview, Washington, *Daily News* and past national president of Sigma Delta Chi (predecessor to the Society of Professional Journalists), said, "To have a personality a paper must have strong convictions and opinions. And it must support those opinions and convictions consistently" (Waldrop, 1955, p. 14).

Editorializing in a news release can be the kiss of death to good media relations. When busy editors receive news releases that include editorializing, they may discard them immediately and then in the future discard releases from the same organization even before opening them. When public relations practitioners write news releases, they should carefully avoid editorializing, or including unattributed opinions, to protect good relations and maintain credibility with news media editors.

When practitioners write columns and guest pieces submitted for a publication's editorial page, editorializing is fine. Editorializing has its place, but it is not in the news article or news release.

Bonnie Parnell Riechert

See also News Story; News/Newsworthy; Writing

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EFFICACY/SELF-EFFICACY

Efficacy is defined as the capabilities people have to produce an effect. Self-efficacy refers to how much people believe in their own capabilities to perform or complete tasks. Self-efficacy is different from self-esteem. While self-esteem is a general feeling of self-worth, self-efficacy is concerned

with the judgment of being capable of accomplishing a specific task or goal. Self-efficacy influences how people feel, think, act, and motivate themselves. When people have high self-efficacy with regard to a certain situation, they feel confident, facilitate cognitive processes, and motivate themselves to complete tasks by confronting challenges. When they have low self-efficacy, on the other hand, they reveal anxiety and helplessness and try to avoid difficult tasks. The concept of self-efficacy was introduced by Albert Bandura's social learning theory and social cognitive theory. The concept has been adopted in public relations practices especially with regard to health campaigns to explain and predict publics' responses to campaign messages. For instance, when health messages promote self-efficacy, publics are more likely to reveal a higher level of self-efficacy and enhanced efforts to manage threatening health situations.

Bandura proposed that there are four antecedents of self-efficacy: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological cues. In other words, there are four ways of developing self-efficacy. First, people tend to have strong self-efficacy when they achieve accomplishments and are successful at tasks. Mastery experiences and successes build a strong sense of self-efficacy. If people experience a consistent pattern of success in performing tasks, then they will have a high degree of self-efficacy in approaching future accomplishments of the tasks. Second, through social modeling or vicarious experience, people strengthen their self-efficacy. When people observe others like themselves succeeding at tasks, they feel confident that they can complete the same tasks with desirable outcomes. Observing the failures of others, on the other hand, casts doubts about their ability to complete the same tasks. Third, through social persuasion, people's self-efficacy can be strengthened. When people are convinced by someone's verbal encouragement that they are capable of succeeding at tasks, they tend to have increased self-efficacy and exert more effort to complete tasks. Fourth, physical and emotional cues can be used to judge self-efficacy. People tend to perceive anxiety, tension, and depression as an emotional deficiency to perform tasks and also consider the lack of physical strength and stamina as indicators of physical deficiency. These physiological cues may affect the outcomes of the tasks.

People may perceive low self-efficacy when they are physically ill and feeling pain. Thus, mastery experiences (performance accomplishments), observing others to succeed at tasks (social modeling), having positive encouragement from persuaders, or relying on physical and emotional cues are required to develop a sense of self-efficacy.

The underlying attributes of self-efficacy include cognitive, affective, motivational, and selection processes. In other words, self-efficacy, or beliefs of personal efficacy, regulates human functioning through cognitive, affective, motivational, and selection processes. Much human behavior is regulated by forethought, which involves cognitive process. This cognitive process enables people to predict the occurrence of future events and develop the means of achieving their control over the events. People with high self-efficacy set challenges for themselves and visualize successful outcomes that provide guidelines for performance. The higher a person's self-efficacy, the higher the personal goals are set. Self-efficacy also influences the amount of stress, anxiety, and depression people experience in threatening situations. People with high self-efficacy tend to believe they can manage threats and lower emotional deficiency such as stress, anxiety, and depression by exercising control over the threats. This is another key impact that self-efficacy has on human functioning. In addition, self-efficacy plays an important role in the self-regulation of motivation. Human motivation is often generated by goal aspirations and the careful assessment of costs and benefits anticipated for courses of action. People with high self-efficacy are likely to motivate themselves as they seek to achieve goals and exert efforts to produce desirable outcomes. Finally, self-efficacy affects how people make choices about their activities and environments. Self-efficacy determines the kind of life people choose to live. People tend to avoid tasks they feel exceed their capabilities while pursuing those they feel competent to perform. Through selection processes, people can have control over possible outcomes. This means that people with high self-efficacy, thus, make choices to control their destinies through personal decisions and efforts. They approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than dwelling on the potential negative consequences. When they fail,

they try to recover their self-assurance by exerting more efforts since they believe destiny is controlled by their personal decisions and efforts rather than external locus such as fate or luck. However, people with low self-efficacy are likely to lessen their efforts or quickly settle for solutions when faced with difficulties.

Self-efficacy also affects people's information-seeking process. The way people process, weigh, and integrate sources of information is determined by their beliefs in efficacy. People tend to seek more information and want to obtain further information when they have high self-efficacy in tasks. Researchers also found that provided information has positive impacts on people only if they believe in their capabilities to handle the arousal produced by information. Thus, by ensuring self-efficacy in persuasive messages, one can enhance the positive impact of provided information.

Because self-efficacy is found to be an important factor that affects how people feel, think, and behave, it has been studied in multiple disciplines such as health communication, education, organizational communication focusing on leadership aspects, and government communication for policy makers. For instance, self-efficacy tends to determine people's choices of health-related behaviors such as smoking, drinking, regular physical exercise, and self-examination of illness. Whether people make decisions involving the selection of activities (e.g., quit smoking or stop drinking) is influenced by judgments of self-efficacy. For example, people with low self-efficacy to control their smoking behavior tend to have a lower motivation level because they think they cannot attain the goal. As a result, they are more likely to give up the task than those with high self-efficacy.

Sora Kim

See also Social Learning Theory

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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency management is the broad term used to describe the strategic planning and management process by which communities mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from varying types of emergencies, disasters, and catastrophes. Emergency management is similar to risk and crisis management and communication for an individual organization. However, emergency management also includes the strategic and tactical coordination of police, fire, ambulance, and other community services. Emergency managers must also coordinate efforts with county and state emergency management departments and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) depending on the size and scope of the disaster. If an emergency or disaster overwhelms local capabilities, aid is requested from larger agencies with additional resources. The role of public relations in emergency management is typically as the public information officer who promotes community preparedness, delivers official statements, and responds to media inquiries. Smaller county and city emergency management departments are often departments of one, responsible for managing the response efforts and communicating with the public.

The emergency management process includes four interlinked phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. *Mitigation* includes the strategies and tactics enacted to prevent or reduce losses in a disaster. *Preparedness* includes the development and testing of emergency plans through continuous exercise and evaluation. *Response* includes the immediate actions taken just before, during, and after an actual event. *Recovery* consists of those activities that continue beyond the emergency period to restore critical community functions.

FEMA has established the Emergency Management Institute to offer comprehensive training for emergency managers who are often current or former police officers or firefighters. The institute now also offers a higher education conference to better incorporate the latest research into emergency management education, training, and practice. In 2007, FEMA's Emergency Management Institute convened a working group of emergency management practitioners and academics to outline core

principles of emergency management. The working group determined that in order for emergency managers to promote safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters, emergency management must be comprehensive, progressive, risk driven, integrated, collaborative, coordinated, flexible, and professional. The International Association of Emergency Managers, a nonprofit educational organization representing more than 5,000 emergency managers worldwide, has since endorsed these principles.

Shari R. Veil

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Resilient Communities; Risk Communication

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EMPIRE, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND

The relationship between public relations and empire highlights gaps in the understanding of public relations' historical development and its role in global economics. An historical approach can identify important aspects of imperialism that required public relations work, possibly best encapsulated in the German term *öffentlichkeitsarbeit*—broadly “working with publics” or indeed political propaganda or counterinsurgency. Yet, the connection between capitalism and colonialism raises wider questions about the public relations occupation and its ideological assumptions.

Imperialism may be defined as the justificatory hegemonic ideology that supports a centralized expansionist state policy; its corollary, colonialism, may be seen as the implementation of that policy on foreign, but annexed territories. The term *empire* is sometimes employed in Anglophone literature to refer to the former British Empire, although empires were also held by many European powers including France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Germany. Adding to this discussion, scholarly interest has addressed the communicative practices of these empires. This discussion also examined the promotional work done on behalf of such power blocs. These insights add an important, new dimension to our understanding of public relations work and its connections to diplomacy, political communication, and propaganda in the context of those nation-states. In this line of analysis, for instance, Nicholas (2010) has pointed to illustrative examples in Europe and the United Kingdom in particular.

Imperialism and the accompanying expansionism may be seen as part of globalization and may involve military conquest, territorial gains, political agreements, and economic spheres of influence. Since such activities may be resisted, imperialism has been associated with violence as well as exploitation.

From a Marxist perspective and that of some economic anthropologists, imperialism is both political manifestation of and inevitable consequence of capitalism. Competing explanations of 19th-century imperialism highlight the importance of external dynamics and domino effects on the periphery of Europe and political responses to economic problems, according to Peter Burroughs in 2008. Postcolonial and subaltern writers highlight the reinvention of imperial imperatives through public diplomacy and nation-building programs that aim to promote democratic practices and civil society (Dutta, 2009). Two of the pioneers in this discussion, Mohan J. Dutta and Mahuya Pal, wrote that postcolonial theory “primarily engages with the dominant power of the West that imperializes developing nations by advancing the modernist logic of progress and development to justify global capitalism” (2011, p. 197).

The concept of empire necessarily invokes dualisms of center and periphery; colonizer and colonized; colonization and decolonization. It invokes race and color, class and caste, religion, differential

gender relations, and processes of stereotyping and prejudice. Such tensions have been productive in helping us understand the concept of *Othering* and its implications for research practice and for public relations scholarship and understanding of public relations’ international roles and paths of development. That said, there appears to have been little critique of the inherent power relations implicit in such globalizing phrases such as “Think global, act local” or “glocalization” that exemplify an assumed position of dominance.

Over time, there have been many empires and those of ancient times (Egypt, Greece, Rome) receive some coverage in public relations texts, often as examples of public communication or rhetoric. Public relations histories have tended toward the progressive, framing the practice in the spirit of *kaizen*—continuous improvement—both in terms of ethics and effectiveness. In such stories the presence of propaganda is not necessarily a disadvantage but a rhetorical advantage in providing a dark past that may be contrasted with an improving present and bright future.

The dominance of an organizational focus, Edwards (2011) emphasized, has tended to distract from the role of public relations in wider discursive value positioning, such as wealth accumulation as progress and dominance of those from the Northern hemisphere and Western perspectives. Narratives of imperial power, empire, and colonialism were promoted through a range of internal and external communication techniques directed at citizens in colonizing countries as well as those in the colonies, including lectures, print and broadcast media, events and public holidays, and symbolic configurations such as philately.

Public relations literature on global and cross-cultural themes generally focuses on professionalization. While authors acknowledge colonial rule as significant in terms of the history of the occupation, they do not usually provide historical and political context in any depth, explore institutional and governmental relationships, or attend to decolonization processes and its side effects. Likewise, important concepts in any consideration of empire, colonization, and colonialism, such as nationalism, cultural identity, and race, receive little attention.

The politics and business of empire are mixed with a range of communicative strategies and

activities and, in some cases, stimulated advocacy, campaigns in cross-cultural contexts. In short, empire is part of the historical legacy of public relations and further contributes to culturally contextualized understandings of the practice of public relations and its emergence across the globe.

Jacquie L'Etang

See also Globalization and Public Relations; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations; The Subaltern and Public Relations; Tallents, Sir Stephen

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EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

Employee communication is the context in which messages are communicated internally to an organization for direct and indirect strategic organizational purposes. It serves within an organizational context as well by the channel, level, and networks used to most effectively and efficiently communicate to or with employees.

Two themes are apparent in employee communication. First, such communication efforts typically manage or improve relationships among employees within an organization, including relationships between employee and supervisor, employee to employee, and supervisor to supervisor. Noting the rich array and use of human messages in organizational settings, Zaremba (2012) pointed out that they are used primarily to manage relationships and are concerned with individual needs of organizational personnel.

These messages can influence organizational climate and culture and are characteristic of activities related to performance evaluation, communication training, and morale building as the relational element of employee communication. Second, employee communication assists personnel to be more effective and efficient in production and service. These types of communication messages focus on company and product and service knowledge and managing the day-to-day work environment. This is intended to help employees be better informed and smarter workers.

Information is presented through task messages. Because of the importance of such messages, Zaremba (2012) observed, particular attention is needed to messages relevant to employee job responsibilities or maintenance messages explaining guidelines, rules, policies, and other procedural information. Although the themes of relational and content messages are not mutually exclusive due to the diverse nature and function of organizations, they do provide a distinction between employee and internal communication. Employee communication is focused on using human messages to manage and build relationships, whereas internal communication is focused on using task and maintenance messages to manage workflow within the organization.

Employee communication can be understood in relation to other organizational communication

functions. Depending upon the size, type, and purpose of an organization, the number of organizational communication functions may vary. They can include image or identity management, advertising, media relations, marketing, financial affairs, community relations, government relations, crisis management, and employee relations.

Although some organizations may have formally established employee or internal communication programs, others may not but still manage a variety of functions that address information sharing, morale building, and product or service understanding, among other activities. All organizations should have some form of employee communication program. In large, high-profile companies such programs constitute an entire department and are formal and highly visible. In smaller companies, employee communication functions tend to be isolated, informal, and managed by a variety of personnel.

Beyond the prescribed communicative functions within organizations, channels or media help define how relationships and information are managed in the context of employee communication. The three most common means used to facilitate the goals and objectives of employee communication are through face-to-face, written, and electronic channels. Face-to-face channels should be used more frequently in activities requiring relationship growth and development. Often employee communication strategies include human resource, personnel, and training functions. Activities and programs related to such topics as employee orientation, compensation, benefits, employee assistance, continuing education, and personal and professional development training necessitate a certain level of face-to-face interaction. In large organizations these functions can be highly specialized and handled by numerous individuals. In smaller organizations, these functions are handled by few individuals with less specialized expertise. In some organizations, management personnel are responsible for most, if not all of the employee communication activities and programs. Commonly, these activities focus on improving relationships and require a great deal of face-to-face interaction and are viewed as relational rather than content functions of employee communication.

Another channel used frequently to facilitate employee communication activities is the written or print channel. This form of print medium varies

greatly by frequency, depth, and focus. Some organizations produce quarterly print materials of issues in great depth, while other organizations produce weekly materials of less substance. Companies like Hallmark Greeting Cards produce a daily form of employee correspondence (*Noon News*) to regularly update company personnel. The nature, purpose, and available resources of an organization in many ways determine the frequency and depth of such publications. Whereas face-to-face channels work well for relational goals of employee communication activities, print channels serve both relational and content goals. Many times written channels are used to announce and coordinate the relational activities of employee communication in face-to-face settings. Print publications also assist employees to develop product or service knowledge or manage quality control and other work content issues within the organization.

Like print publications, the third medium of electronic channels assists in managing messages in both a relational and content manner. In addition to being similar in structure to print channels, electronic channels have become a rapidly growing means of managing employee communication functions. In particular, use of intranets has become an important feature for developing, implementing, and maintaining a strong employee communication program. Intranets provide specific and secure content for employee access.

This type of channel or medium use for all organizational members, especially the employee or internal communication specialist, has had a noticeable impact in three ways. First, the duties and responsibilities of the communication professional have become more electronically and technologically oriented. One who works in employee communication must be proficient in navigating the networked system of an organization. This proficiency entails computer application software knowledge in word processing, database management, desktop publishing, presentational software, the internal email system, social media, and any specialized software programs related to the function and structure of the organization. In larger organizations, the technical functions of employee communication can be quite specialized. In midsize to smaller organizations the electronic and technological competencies may be shared by a number of employees.

The second noticeable impact intranets have had on employee communication activities is that they have improved the accuracy and timeliness of information demanded in the modern workplace. Electronic forms of communication through intranet capabilities have enhanced the communication practitioners' ability to provide accurate and timely information to employees at all levels and to streamline the use of information to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of production or services. Intranets have also improved communication between employees and supervisors. Many intranet systems have been structured to support employee communication functions in human resources and personnel, such as recruitment, selection, and retention of employees. In large organizations, intranets have helped organizations coordinate activities in an accurate and timely manner between such communicative functions as media relations, marketing, and crisis management.

The third noticeable impact in the function of employee communication is that intranets have provided some control in response and interaction time. Intranets have enabled employees and supervisors to communicate in both asynchronous and synchronous ways. Asynchronous communication (communication that is not in real time), as well as synchronous communication (interaction in real time through electronic channels), has created much flexibility for organizational members. The ability to manipulate time and space have influenced the desire and need to interact face-to-face.

The level of interaction is another means to help explain how relationships and information are managed in the context of employee communication. Level of interaction refers to the number of participants in a communication encounter. Employee communication takes place at interpersonal, group and team, organizational, public, and/or mass-mediated levels. Although mediated forms of communication such as email, intranets, teleconferencing, and video conferencing continue to be popular levels of interaction, contemporary employee communication activities require substantial interaction at all levels. Social media or Web-based communication channels such as blogs, wikis, social network sites, and other dialogue-creating media continue to reshape the interpretation of levels of interaction and redefine the boundaries of professional and personal communication practices to

create an every-way flow of communication with enormous message volume and rapid message transmission.

A distinction again can be made between employee and internal communication. Employee communication or messages of relational nature are more frequently managed at interpersonal and group or team levels. Internal communication or messages of a task and maintenance nature are usually present at all levels but are managed at the organizational, public, or mediated levels as well. New forms of social media continue to move employee communication from processes of information control and distribution to strategies and tactics for connection and dialogue.

The final influence to consider when defining employee communication is the networks within an organization. Formal networks are the prescribed, official routes for sending messages, and informal networks carry unofficial messages when sender identity may or may not be known by other organizational members. Employee communication activities assist in moderating, regulating, and modifying organizational networks. Whereas traffic and speed of information is closely managed on the formal network, accuracy is vitally important in managing the informal network. The complexity of formal and informal networks is determined in some ways by the size of the organization. Larger organizations tend to have more complex networks.

Consequently, the functions of employee communication are determined by the complexity of each network. In addition to recognizing the level of network complexity, the communication practitioner must assess the network's ability to improve relationships among employees and to assist individuals in the production or service goals of the organization.

Employee or internal communication is used to strategically communicate to or with employees. It is defined by the functions it manages and is best understood by its relationship to the channels, levels, and networks it serves within specific organizational settings.

Terry M. Cunconan

See also Communication Management; Communication Technologies; Internal Communication

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ENCROACHMENT IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Encroachment in public relations practice and research takes place when nonpublic relations professionals come to manage the public relations function. When a marketing personnel gets hired, promoted, or moved laterally to serve as the public relations manager role, he or she encroaches the public relations function. It is an especially serious problem when top management assigns the top public relations position to individuals with little or no training or experience in public relations and corporate communication. Because of what public relations can add to the planning and operations of an organization, its full impact can be lost if the person managing this function does not understand and appreciate what it brings to management-level decisions. Encroachment also compromises practitioners' career opportunities and development.

Three forms of encroachment have been identified: authority, structural, and functional. Authority encroachment has to do with the personnel assignment to manage the public relations department or unit. Structural encroachment subordinates the public relations unit to other units in the organizational hierarchy. Functional encroachment occurs as other departments or units take on activities that expand into the traditional operational realm of public relations or communication management.

Two factors affect the extent to which authority encroachment takes place: (a) other units' involvement in "traditional" public relations functions

and (b) public relations practitioner's ability to serve in a managerial capacity. Units such as marketing, legal, investor relations, and fund raising may have a damaging impact on traditional public relations efforts because they deny some or much of the influence public relations can exert over corporate and communication policy. For example, Martha Lauzen observed that if the marketing department becomes involved in traditional public relations, top management becomes more likely to fill managerial positions of public relations departments with someone other than a senior person in the public relations unit or discipline.

In addition, public relations' authority in the organization is likely to decline when practitioners less frequently serve in a managerial capacity. To reduce encroachment, it is vital that public relations managers take responsibility and be accountable for the success or failure of the organization's public relations program. They need to be respected by others in management so they truly are the organization's public relations expert. They must make communication policy decisions.

Other variables increase authority encroachment, including gender, length of experience, and managerial competence. The increased number of women in public relations raises concern that the profession will be "feminized" and therefore marginalized by managements that "don't take women seriously." Practitioners need to know their discipline as well as the type of organization they serve. If they can't bring such knowledge to bear on increasing the organization's effectiveness, they are likely to suffer encroachment. The ability to resist encroachment increases as they become more experienced in the practice of public relations. They advance the influence of their department if they continue their education and training. Public relations can resist encroachment by being unique and generating its own budget resources, rather than expecting to receive a portion of another department's budget.

Once senior management acknowledges that its organization is challenged by a wide array of stakeholders whose goodwill is needed but is not necessarily forthcoming, then public relations is more likely to resist encroachment. Nothing, unfortunately, does as much good for the role of public relations than for an organization to suffer a major crisis. Once an organization learns that it cannot

take itself for granted, encroachment seems to become less of a challenge; practitioners receive more access to management during turbulent times. Practitioners are given more decision-making power as their value is recognized, sometimes by the test of the fire of crisis.

One of the most important defenses against encroachment is for public relations to be managed by a person who understands the uniqueness of the profession. It loses power and responsibility if it is subordinate to departments such as marketing or corporate legal counsel. Lauzen found that at the managerial level, as public relations and marketing units share domain similarity (the degree to which the two departments share the same goals, skills, or tasks) and as resource dependency between public relations and marketing units increases (the degree to which a member of one functional area must obtain resources from another area to accomplish objectives), marketers tended to become more involved in public relations activities. Further, as marketers became involved more in “managerial” public relations activities (community relations, employee communication, media relations, promotions and publicity, fund raising, public affairs and lobbying, and financial or shareholder relations), more authority encroachment occurred.

Functional encroachment by legal counsel is likely to occur during crisis management. Exploring this hypothesis, Kathy R. Fitzpatrick and Maureen S. Rubin found that the traditional legal strategy was the most prevalent crisis response (simple denial of guilt or acting indignant followed by no comment or saying as little as possible) when general counsel’s influence prevailed during a crisis. Denial and “no comment” tend to be dysfunctional crisis responses. In contrast and supportive of the theme of collaboration rather than encroachment, Jaesub Lee, Stella M. Jares, and Robert L. Heath reported that organizations with an “excellent” culture (i.e., symmetrical communication system, organic structure, participative culture, and strategic planning) lead to collaboration between public relations officers and legal counsels during crisis management.

Kathleen S. Kelly reported that when senior public relations practitioners possess little managerial competency (e.g., environmental scanning or strategic planning), the fund raising department is more likely to structurally encroach into public relations. She argued that even the equal status in

structure (which was often imposed by the organizational headquarters) may lead to the fund raising department’s functional encroachment on public relations because of the imbalance in power, access to the dominant coalition, and resources, particularly during unstable or environmentally turbulent times (e.g., less funding, layoff, recession, and economic downturn).

Academics and practitioners worry that encroachment may affect identity, job satisfaction and turnover, role development, effectiveness, autonomy and control, and other related matters. For example, as non-public relations professionals head public relations units or enact “traditional” domains of public relations, there may be a professional identity crisis or confusion—what is and what is not public relations. Encroachment muddles differences between public relations and other functions.

When encroachment occurs, the public relations practitioner, especially one who aspires to be a manager, may be dissatisfied with the supervisor and may leave the organization. Further, when public relations is managed by an individual from another profession, attention to a variety of strategically important publics tends to be limited, such as those that result in environmental blunders. Encroachment can result in ineffective job performance.

In addition, encroachment threatens the autonomy of the public relations unit and the decision-making authority of public relations practitioners, potentially making public relations practitioners nonmembers of the dominant coalition. It may limit new practitioners’ opportunities to observe, learn, and develop into roles as public relations managers or counselors to the top management. If left unchecked, research findings suggest that encroachment is likely to give public relations less control over its own destiny and career opportunities and dim the chance of survival as a separate entity.

As academics and practitioners have discovered, protecting one discipline against encroachment by another is a vital professional challenge. Practitioners should ask for more responsibility by demonstrating that they add to and defend the value of the organizations which they serve. They must do so because of the uniqueness of their profession, which can be lost if marginalized by another discipline.

Jaesub Lee

See also Executive Management; Management Theory; Matrixing/Matrix Management

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ENDORSEMENT

An endorsement is an expression of approval from a third party, usually on behalf of a product, service, cause, or candidate. Endorsements are useful persuasive tools that can appear in publicity, advertising, or other direct forms of communication. They can be either explicit (stated) or implicit (inferred by the audience).

Endorsements can influence a person's knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors in several ways. First, they are often contained in separate communications from other promotional messages. They thus provide an additional opportunity for exposure. Second, endorsements can catch the attention of audiences because they come from entities familiar to audiences, who might otherwise ignore a message

direct from the entity being endorsed if it is unfamiliar. Third, audiences often perceive endorsers to be expert, trustworthy, or independent (with nothing to gain in making a recommendation). Thus endorsements can be more credible than messages disseminated directly by an endorsed entity.

Media Endorsements

Explicit endorsements involve both public approval and a *recommendation* of a product, service, cause, or candidate. Public relations practitioners often seek explicit endorsements from third parties as an important strategy in a program or campaign. Explicit endorsements (1) provide important and often prestigious exposure to reach key opinion leaders and other target audiences and (2) provide the basis for subsequent communications that the endorsement was obtained.

Editorial Page Endorsements

Both candidates and sponsors of initiatives and referenda routinely seek editorial support from influential media. Candidates or advocates conduct *editorial board meetings* to share their positions and to seek editorial support. Endorsements are especially influential and can turn out voters in elections involving local candidates, ballot measures, and nonpartisan races where voters—especially independents—are undecided or otherwise have limited sources of information.

Critics' Endorsements

Reviews by critics play a critical role in programs in the arts, where publicists seek recommendations of performances and exhibitions to create positive “buzz” or word-of-mouth advertising. Positive reviews can stimulate ticket sales, whereas negative reviews can reap ridicule and result in a low turnout. However, popular entertainment such as movies can attract a huge numbers of fans despite being panned by critics.

Editorial Product Endorsements

Reporters and editors routinely recommend products in stories and often create vehicles for making product endorsements that are coveted by organizations. Probably the best-known example

is the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval accorded to products that meet minimum performance standards (and advertise in the magazine). Other examples include the “*Motor Trend* Car of the Year,” the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings of colleges and universities, Top 10 lists of various sorts, and the numerous “best in town” designations of local businesses accorded by local media. In magazines such as *Consumer Reports*, the product ratings have been shown to correlate with audiences’ perceptions of product quality.

Advertising Endorsements

Product endorsements by famous people have become a popular creative strategy for advertisers. The extensive research about product endorsers suggests that celebrities can attract attention and interest to messages, but their personas and experience must be congruent with the endorsed product or service to be compelling. Cynical consumers discount endorsers who are merely selling their name. Nonprofit and political organizations often enlist celebrities to appear in public service advertising and related messages because they are affected by a problem personally or believe in the cause. Celebrities, government officials, researchers or experts in a particular field, and other notables can endorse causes by signing petitions and statements in paid advertisements, issuing statements or proclamations, appearing at special events, or being interviewed by the press.

Nonmediated Endorsements

Organizations often seek out various other kinds of endorsements to bolster promotion of products, services, or causes. Although these efforts can be used in publicity or advertising, the endorsement serves other purposes as well.

Alliances

Organizations that enter into arrangements to produce or market products or services essentially provide an endorsement of one another. Joint ventures, airline code sharing, franchising, dealerships, authorized software developer designations, affinity marketing programs, and other partnerships have become prevalent because of their cross-promotional opportunities.

Ratings and Designations

Organizations routinely seek out forms of public approval to distinguish themselves from others. Examples include *bond ratings* by research firms such as Moody’s and Finch’s, movie ratings, CD and electronic game *content ratings* from media review boards, *safety ratings* from organizations such as Underwriter’s Laboratories, and *performance* and *satisfaction ratings* of automobiles, computers, and other products by firms such as J. D. Powers & Associates. *Accreditation* is sought by colleges and universities as well as by many professionals who are not required by law to obtain a license to practice. Some products seek approval from professional organizations, such as Crest toothpaste’s “Seal of Approval” from the American Dental Association. In a similar way, producers of foodstuffs adhere to strict standards to be certified as Kosher, and beef producers prominently feature *gradings* such as “USDA Prime.”

Testimonials

Positive comments from satisfied users of products or services or satisfied citizens can serve as powerful endorsements that can appear in ads and editorial features (such as application stories in trade publications) or that can involve presentations, site visits, or one-on-one exchanges between endorsers and others. In a similar way, consultants, advisers, sales representative and agents, professionals in helping professions, community leaders, and other opinion leaders can guide others in evaluating products, services, causes, or candidates. The goal of a public relations program might be to encourage such endorsements by opinion leaders and other influential people.

Philanthropy

Organizations that contribute funds to social causes essentially make statements of support through their actions. That support, in turn, is used by the supported organization to demonstrate to others the breadth and depth of support that exists for its programs. The number and size of contributions and the prestige of the donors are often cited by recipient organizations as indicators of why others should become involved. In a similar way, organizations can express approval of worthy

causes by sponsoring volunteer programs, providing in-kind support, offering facilities, or accepting contributed merchandise for use by the organization. Sponsorship of a philanthropic activity involves a dual endorsement process: Contributors lend credence to charitable or other activities while the recipient organization recognizes and subtly endorses the cosponsor.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Two-Step Flow Theory

ENGAGEMENT (STAKEHOLDERS)

Public relations is founded on the principle that engagement requires an understanding of and dialogue with stakeholders. Stakeholder theory developed in academic studies that examined business ethics as well as incorporating communication and management models. It concerns the relationship between organizations (mostly from a corporate perspective) and those people and groups that could be defined as stakeholders. Naturally, such relationships depend on how well organizations and their stakeholders engage with one another.

In 2007, Xu Wu suggested that much public relations activity is best described as stakeholder relations with key areas of work such as issues management and crisis communication. The importance of stakeholder theory to public relations has been highlighted in 2009 by Stefan Wehmeier whose Delphi study of scholars and practitioners found it to be the second most relevant theory to current practice (after agenda building) and comfortably the most important theory for the future. Terence Flynn in 2006 argued that the role of public relations managers is to act as relationship builders between and advocates for both their organizations and multiple stakeholder groups. However, in 2008, John A. Ledingham reasoned, the attributes of relationships (such as trust, openness, involvement and commitment) differ from concern for the needs of stakeholders.

Peter M. Smudde and Jeffrey L. Courtright, in a 2011 article, contended that stakeholder management has an inherent rhetorical nature, particularly in the way that an organization's stakeholders are

identified and how relationships are maintained and, in circumstances of change, are improved through co-created meaning. Similarly, Kenon A. Brown and Candace L. White in 2010 have noted that managing stakeholder relationships helps avoid the worst effects of a crisis situation.

A major concern of stakeholder theory is identifying who can be defined as stakeholders. Smudde and Courtright noted that the need to engage with stakeholders so as to maintain and improve relationships. These practices are reactive and proactive. Reactive stakeholder management concerns learning lessons from past events whereas proactive requires anticipating and influencing future activities, environments, and relationships.

In addition to the different theories of stakeholding and definitions of stakeholders, scholars and practitioners have investigated technological developments that portend fundamental changes to the way that organizations interact with their stakeholders. Terence Flynn advised a move away from thinking of organizations and their publics as simplistically involved in a two-way process to seek an equilibrium that satisfies the mutual interest of all parties.

The conduct of those relationships is based on communication and, as Rian van der Merwe, Leyland F. Pitt, and Russell Abratt (2005) stated, technology has changed stakeholder communication behavior. Stakeholders communicate with each other publicly, thereby becoming more vocal and influential in their interactions with organizations.

To understand how organizations engage, recent studies have examined the type of online communication in which they engage. In 2010, Sora Kim, Jae-Hee Park, and Emma K. Wertz sought to identify and categorize Web-based messages that top corporations (Fortune 500 companies) use to engage with stakeholders. Of these groups, shareholder needs were found to be addressed most often and activist needs least often. Such a gap could be a signpost to a potential threat to an organization's reputation.

Another study of top corporations in 2010 by Svetlana Rybalko and Trent Seltzer has categorized ways of engaging with stakeholders on Twitter into dialogic and nondialogic. The authors found that along with other websites, weblogs, and social networking sites, Twitter is being underutilized by organizations to facilitate dialogic communication

with stakeholders. Relationships are not determined by technology, but by how it is used.

Van der Merwe and colleagues suggested four ways that organizations can respond to the Internet-generated stakeholder based on whether their approach is proactive or reactive and the minor or major extent of the approach. The four ways are as follows:

1. *Redundancy (minor/proactive)*—ensuring there is no need for stakeholders to embark on Internet initiatives that may threaten the organization by attempting to balance all interests
2. *Resourceful (major/proactive)*—creating a Web presence that may be harmful if someone else does it, such as complaints sections where people can air grievances
3. *Reformative (minor/reactive)*—remediating problems as they arise
4. *Removal (major/reactive)*—embracing a website or getting rid of it through legal action

Stakeholder theory has the potential to help the profession clarify the purpose of relationships with different groups especially based on roles and interests. Stakeholder theory attempts to categorize stakeholders in order to develop strategies that are appropriate to those particular interests. These frameworks relate to the capacity of some groups to exert influence based on the interest, or stake, they have in an organization. The strategies may vary according to the type of information that is exchanged and how well stakeholders are able to interact with the institutions in question.

Ralph Tench

See also Crisis Communication; Dialogue; Issues Management; Stakeholder Theory; Stakes

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ENLIGHTENMENT AND MODERNITY

In northern and central Europe, public relations is rooted in the concepts of enlightenment and modernity. In German-speaking countries, it is still called *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*, which is literally translated as “working in [the] public sphere” and can be defined as “working for the public, with the public, and in public.” In many other European countries, public relations is also referred to as an organization’s obligation to “relate to [the] public sphere.” *Öffentlichkeit* is seen as an outcome and therefore, a quality of public communication in society; it means “which people talk how about

what.” Although some normative elements can be found in these sociological approaches, this view differs from the community-building approach developed by Dean Kruckeberg and Kenneth Starck in 1988, who defined public relations in a normative way, as the social conscience of an organization that contributes to mutual understanding among groups and institutions and brings harmony to private and public policies. This definition reflects a premodern approach to public relations.

In many European public relations approaches, the concept of *legitimation* is used to describe how an organization, as the exponent of one of the institutions in the social system, coproduces public policies and thereby the empirical realization of institutions. An organization is legitimate as long as there is no public discourse concerning its legitimation. Although the social sciences have been used to define the concept, legitimacy is neither a moral nor an ethical principle but, rather, is related to the empirical issue of what is good and justifiable for the members of society. “The legitimacy of an organization is a measure of the extent to which the public and the public sphere at a given time and place find the organization sensible and morally justifiable” (Munck Nielsen, 2001, p. 19). It is therefore a fundamental empirical and not a normative approach and is rooted in a modernist approach to society.

Franz Ronneberger and Manfred Rühl stated in 1992 that, in managing the communications of an organization, management cannot avoid having an empirical function in the development of society. Ronneberger claimed earlier that clarifying the different perspectives in public discourse, thereby furthering the development of public opinion, is the most important role of public relations. Werner Faulstich sees public relations as interaction in society itself: It makes something publicly known and creates public discourse. Thus, we may argue that communication management is part of the “social structure of public meanings” because of its social construction of community. In this way communication management is defined as part of the larger societal communication system, much like journalism and advertising. Most of the German and Danish public relations researchers, such as Hans-Jürgen Arlt, use such a social science paradigm, which can be seen as an outcome of modernist thinking.

At the end of the 18th century, reasoning was seen as a fundamental human activity for the first time. Descartes said, “*Cogito, ergo sum*” (I think, thus I exist) and emphasized individual power to create a rational world. The same idea was expressed by philosophers like Immanuel Kant, who explained that in a modern world people should no longer act as national subjects of the powerful but as citizens who are able to rule the world themselves by citizenship and rational thinking and acting. Traditional authority, according to George Ritzer in 2000, became unacceptable and “irrational, that is, contrary to human nature and inhibitive of human growth and development” (p. 12).

Modernity contrasts with the premodern, traditional idea of an ideal social structure. Modernity was developed by great 19th-century sociologists such as Auguste Comte and Henri De Saint-Simon, who maintained that human evolution should be seen as an irrefutable development toward improvement and that this improvement began in their time. The concept of modernity can explain the period of the Enlightenment. Well-known contemporary scholars devoted to modernity are Jürgen Habermas and Anthony Giddens. At the end of the 20th century, they in turn were highly criticized by postmodern scholars such as Jean Baudrillard and Michel Foucault.

Sociologist George Ritzer characterizes the Enlightenment by the belief that people could comprehend and control the universe by means of reason and empirical research. The view was that because the physical world was dominated by natural laws, it was likely that the social world was, too. Thus it was up to the philosopher, using reason and research, to discover these social laws. Once they understood how the social world worked, the Enlightenment thinkers had a practical goal—the creation of a more rational world, as Ritzer explained. In the Netherlands, the word *voorlichting* was until recently used as an equivalent for public relations. In the 18th century, science and knowledge were no longer seen as the possessions of the elite only but as things that had to be diffused among all members of society. The means for this diffusion was *voorlichting*, which can be translated as “enlightening.” The idea of *voorlichting* is based on *sapere aude*, an expression of Immanuel Kant that literally means “dare to know” and that ultimately meant that “all people

must be willing to be informed on what is going on and made enlightened, so that they can take part in the ongoing debate about and development of society.” Besides education, voorlichting was seen as the main way to help people be informed and so came to be defined as “giving full information to all people to mature and emancipate.”

Many people who were afraid of this enlightening of ordinary people expressed a more traditional view of society. They preferred to use voorlichting to show people how to behave as good citizens and to control them. The history of voorlichting can therefore be seen as a history of the battle between information and emancipation on the one hand, and education and persuasion on the other, but always under the (“Dutch uncle”) dogma of “knowing what is good.” In all theories of voorlichting the rather pedantic premise is that it is given for the benefit of the person or group to be enlightened, even when the persons involved do not want to be enlightened at all or at least not in this way.

In the period of the Enlightenment, the idea was that human beings create society, and that society in turn creates its institutions, and thereby the reality for human beings, in a dynamic process. This is the basis for a constructionist view of public relations.

Betteke van Ruler

See also Fully Functioning Society Theory; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Power, as Social Construction; Public Sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*); Public Sphere Discourse; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY PUBLICITY/PROMOTION

Public relations practitioners who work in entertainment-related industries and fields often specialize in publicity and promotion. Publicity is media coverage generated in newspapers, in magazines, on radio, on the Internet, and on television. In most cases, coverage is intentionally placed by an individual rather than a news reporter covering an assigned story for publication. Publicity can be sought by any individual, but those who specialize in it are called publicists. Many public relations practitioners, even though not labeled publicists, frequently are involved in some activities that generate publicity. Some even specialize in media relations, a subset of public relations, which involves forming on-going positive relationships with media gatekeepers.

The entertainment industry encompasses a wide variety of organizations, including performing arts centers, museums, orchestras, opera companies,

Broadway theatres, aquariums, amusement parks, record companies, motion picture corporations, television networks, sports operations, and major artists who have become corporations in themselves. All of these organizations need specialists who publicize and promote their activities. The objective for most specialists is to sell something—CDs, movie tickets, tickets to a show or concert, or even an image.

The publicity and promotion activities in entertainment-related industries are typically part of the marketing mix: product, place, price, and promotion. Unlike the term *publicity*, *promotion* is an umbrella word that encompasses advertising, public relations, sales, and sales promotion. Practitioners who work in entertainment may also handle advertising. In a performing arts center, for instance, practitioners create advertisements that run in local newspapers. They produce brochures and other publications for patrons and series subscribers. They work with a sales force to develop sales materials for telemarketers who specialize in group sales or series renewals. Sales promotion techniques give the target audience an incentive to buy the product. For example, in the performing arts, the practitioner may coordinate an artists' reception for theatergoers or hold a special drawing for tickets on Facebook. In almost all aspects of entertainment promotion, the use of social and digital media has become commonplace.

Publicity plays a large part in entertainment. An entire field of journalists reports on the expansive world of entertainment to satisfy their public's interest. Publicists in the entertainment field focus their time on gaining coverage for their clients or organization. They prepare press materials and pitch stories to media gatekeepers. They work with feature editors of metropolitan newspapers, associate editors of magazines, assignment editors of television news shows, producers of television programs, news directors and program directors of radio stations, bloggers, and a myriad of other journalists. A skilled publicist studies the work produced by a particular journalist and the editorial environment of the publication or show in an attempt to develop an interesting angle tailored for that particular media outlet.

A nonprofit organization, the Entertainment Publicists Professional Society (EPPS), was formed in 1991 and provides a forum for members to

share their expertise and exchange information. With chapters in Los Angeles and New York, the society describes itself as "the premiere organization for entertainment publicity and marketing professionals." Some of its objectives are noted on its website:

To serve as a professional resource for the entertainment industry and academic institutions in matters involving entertainment public relations

To provide members with regular and special programs that explore current issues, the latest advancements and future directions of the profession

To encourage the highest professional standards

The EPPS conducts educational programs for working publicists and offers monthly panels with national talk show bookers, morning show producers, and other noteworthy media gatekeepers.

Four models are widely accepted to describe the evolution of public relations: press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetric, and two-way symmetric. Many public relations professionals in entertainment practice the press agency/publicity model, which focuses on persuading and influencing opinion, but an expert in entertainment publicity and promotion also relies heavily on research and strategy.

Press agency is closely associated with publicity in the entertainment world. Press agency is the practice of attracting the attention of the press through techniques that manufacture news. Methods associated with press agency include staged events, publicity stunts, faux rallies or gatherings, spinning, and hype. A common practice in the late 1800s and early 1900s, press agency is not part of mainstream public relations. Rather, it is a practice primarily associated with major entertainment-related events such as Hollywood premieres and boxing matches. The goal of press agency is to attract attention rather than gain understanding. Even today, however, the term *press agent* is sometimes used interchangeably with *publicist* in traditional Broadway theatre and motion picture industries. Today's entertainment industries are populated with publicists rather than press agents. Publicists are individuals skilled in media relations and attempt to get the name of their clients or

events in the media by carefully constructing messages that inform, educate, and persuade. Some are astute in branding and positioning strategies to aid the careers and success of their clients.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Barnum, P. T.; Bernays, Edward; Lucky Strike Green Campaign; Press Agency; Promotion; Publicist; Publicity

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ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

Environmental groups can either be a major source of work and irritation for public relations or a very helpful supporter. Almost all organizations today must address environmental issues at some point. Beginning in the late 1960s and extending to the present, Congress has enacted and reauthorized laws that affect all aspects of business, from raw materials used to production processes and by-products. Current practices are not the only ones impacted. Many organizations are being forced to deal with the environmental impacts of activities that took place decades ago. And for every environmental issue with which an organization must deal, there seems to be at least one environmental group ready to scrutinize its words and deeds.

In terms of the national or international environmental groups, some deal with broad environmental concerns, and some are fairly focused on a single issue. Many of these groups have clear and even stated political agendas. While a large, parent group will focus on issues with broad impact, local chapters of a group take up specific issues of local

concern as well as support the larger group. Some environmental groups are not connected with a national organization and are composed entirely of local citizens who have banded together to address community concerns. Thus, in environmental matters, public relations must be prepared to deal with a broad range of interests and agendas. Some general categories of groups based on their approaches to issues are discussed in the following sections.

Radical

This category includes groups such as Earth First! and Greenpeace. Although they cover a broad range of environmental issues, they are grouped together because of their very visible and often contentious approach to issues. These groups have taken a lesson from Edward Bernays's approach by using staged events (probably more sensational than Bernays would have approved of) to generate media coverage, a major goal of such groups. They want the widest possible dissemination of their position and message, and they are willing to go to great lengths to achieve that goal. Some examples include Earth First! members chaining themselves to trees or engaging in tree sits (camping out in a tree for weeks on end), Greenpeace members repelling on Mt. Rushmore on July 8, 2009, to unfurl a banner calling for leadership in the fight against global warming, or Greenpeace members driving dinghies around oil tankers to protest shipping too close to sensitive shores (directed not only at the oil companies but at the government as well). Although they sometimes accomplish the goals of saving trees or coastal ecosystems, these actions are designed to reach a mass audience through media coverage. The events have visual appeal and are unusual, two attributes public relations often strives for when trying to place a story. Sometimes it even appears that these groups understand media relations better than the public relations staffs charged with addressing the negative press these groups generate for the target organizations. To reach the online world, Greenpeace makes good use of Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, YouTube, Google Plus, and Pinterest, extending indefinitely and very broadly the documentation of their actions.

Animal rights activist groups, such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), are sometimes considered

radical. ALF has been known to go as far as violating laws by breaking into labs or fur farms to free animals. They are quite unrelenting in their approach to their cause, advocating vegan diets and complete elimination of all animal products.

When faced with groups such as these, public relations practitioners are in a very difficult situation. These groups do not like to compromise and seem to thrive on direct confrontation. Confrontation is what they are trained for, and they know how to use it to gain even more media attention. Some organizations do try to confront these groups, with mixed to disastrous results. Others try to ignore them and hope they'll go away or the media will find a new story to cover. There is no one answer for how to deal with these groups. Each situation and the temperament of the targeted organization will to a large degree determine what public relations can and can't do. The only certain approach is to try not to do anything that will inflame the situation any further.

Mainstream Activist

Groups such as the Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation have broad memberships across the United States. They are more centrist than the radical groups, although they, too, have well-defined political agendas. They approach these agendas through professional lobbyists and grassroots organizing. While they certainly can, and have, approached businesses and governments in a radical manner, their typical approach is through media and political pressure and influence. Basically, these organizations are structured and behave very much the way many businesses do, with elected presidents and boards, national offices, and strategic planning for both accomplishing their environmental agenda and maintaining and increasing their membership. For example, the Sierra Club offers environmentally sound investment packages for its members. (It should be noted that many radical groups also follow such organization, but their approach to issues gives them a very different outward appearance.)

One key to understanding such groups is to understand their membership. Organizations such as the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society (not just concerned with birds but also with habitat conservation and a range of environmental

issues) have state and many local chapters and even publish magazines. Although their members do join to support an environmental cause, the groups use social functions to maintain support and cohesion. The Sierra Club offers national vacation opportunities centered on environmental themes, and local chapters have outings and activities, not all of which are environmentally related. Local Audubon chapters go bird watching, hold annual bird counts, and have meetings with noted speakers. The end result is that people identify with the organization and thus write letters and often vote in accord with the organization's positions. National endorsements can be important, but a strong showing on local issues can have an even greater and more direct impact on organizations, because changes in the local operating environment can sometimes be more critical to organizations than national issues. The organizations also take full advantage of social media and email. Members of the Sierra Club receive a weekly (frequently more often) email message to sign a petition or send a message to government officials about various issues. The messages come already written but allow for personalization, contain contact information specified by the member, and go directly to the appropriate official (president, Environmental Protection Agency administrator, senators, U.S. representative, governor, etc.). As much as social media and the Web have been useful to corporations, they have been a major boon to non-profit organizations and advocacy groups.

Unlike with radical groups, there are realistic possibilities for interacting constructively with mainstream activist groups. These groups must balance the pursuit of their environmental goals with the need to maintain approaches consistent with the perspectives of their members. Certainly there are points beyond which these groups will not bend, but often there is both room and willingness to negotiate on issues. For example, if organization X is willing to preserve the most sensitive natural areas on its complex as wildlife areas, it may be able to work a compromise with the environmental group criticizing it about plans for plant expansion and even get the group to endorse the revised plans. The key to success here, as in any negotiation, is to understand the values and constraints of the other side and create a match with the organization's desires. When such

a compromise can be reached, the organization should realize good opportunities for positive press about its environmental efforts.

Quiet Workers

Another type of environmental group consists of those who maintain a relatively low profile while working to achieve their goals. These groups rarely, if ever, assume the attack posture of a radical group, but they do occasionally use political and media pressure to push their point. More often than not, these groups look for appropriate partners to help them achieve their objectives. For example, the Nature Conservancy partners with government bodies and businesses to preserve important natural places; its website lists its partners and describes the work they are doing together. The conservancy uses established science to determine which areas are essential for protecting important ecosystems and then does everything it can to protect those lands. The conservancy uses everything from conservation easements to gifts of land or land purchases in its attempt to ensure stable ecosystems for the future.

The Ocean Futures Society, headed by Jean-Michel Cousteau, takes a slightly different approach. Ocean Futures, as the organization and Cousteau names indicate, is concerned with protecting the world's oceans. Membership in the society is free. It has a well-established education function that originally focused mainly on children but now has broader appeals. The society provides information and experiences that it hopes will impress upon participants the importance of healthy oceans and the general environment to the health of humankind. The underlying goal is to create a broad public base that values the oceans. These efforts are made possible through many partnerships, some of which seem natural (Body Glove, Catalina Island Camp, and Force Fin) and at least one of which seems unusual (Dow Chemical, proving that a historical environmental "villain" can work constructively with some environmental groups; Dow also partners with the Nature Conservancy). All partners are listed on the Ocean Futures website and include links to their corporate websites.

Clearly, environmental groups such as these provide opportunities for constructive partnerships, enabling organizations to generate positive

environmental coverage for themselves. Finding an appropriate partner (there are no oil companies listed as Ocean Futures partners) is the key, and a task public relations practitioners are well suited for.

Local Community Groups

These groups form around issues of specific concern in a community. Although some members may belong to larger environmental groups and call on them for support, the focus is on the conditions in the immediate area. Examples of these types of groups include Lois Gibbs and other Love Canal (New York State) residents, inner-city groups who form to fight industrial pollution and landfills in their neighborhoods (these are often minority groups and fall under the environmental justice movement), and the many citizen groups that came together to fight environmental problems at U.S. nuclear weapons production facilities.

Members of these groups may start out without much knowledge or information, but they tend to acquire it quickly. Personal safety and the safety of one's family are key motivators to action. These groups may also lack power, particularly when compared to the organizations they often oppose. But that should not be a reason to overlook them. Lisa Crawford and the residents around the Fernald (Ohio) nuclear weapons plant got their problems on the cover of *Time* magazine and successfully sued the U.S. Department of Energy, winning compensation for lost property value, health problems, and lifetime medical monitoring. They educated themselves about air and water pollution, the effects of radiation, and remediation technologies. They made everything that happened at the plant their business. When the media had a question about something happening at the plant, they would go to Crawford for a quote. And this group connected with groups at other weapons facilities to exchange information and tactics for dealing with their problems. The pressure exerted by these community groups, individually and as a whole, played a major role in forcing the government to clean up the weapons facilities. By the time they reached the actual cleanup phase, the cleanup organization at Fernald consulted with the local citizens on most cleanup decisions, major and otherwise, rather than simply tell them what the decision was on a course of action.

The power of local community groups should never be underestimated. The media love an underdog, and there are few more appealing than a group of mothers fighting for the health of their children. Emotional appeals are very common with these groups, especially in the early stages of a conflict. An organization can rarely win such a battle, and more often than not looks extremely callous when trying to do so. The proliferation of social media enables community members to spread their views more easily and effectively than ever before. The group's concerns must be taken seriously and addressed in a meaningful manner. At this point, an organization often becomes involved in risk communication. Dealing with these groups successfully, and with all other environmental groups, requires that an organization be able to support its claims with specific actions taken to address environmental concerns.

Overall, an issues management approach should be used to address environmental groups and their concerns. The ultimate goal is to be prepared through research and informed anticipation. Organizations can influence environmental regulations and anticipate objections to their actions that groups will have. Public relations can accomplish this task through monitoring national and international groups on the Web and social media in order to track environmental concerns and also find appropriate partners for positive environmental activities.

Maribeth S. Metzler

See also Issues Management; Risk Communication

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

Environmental scanning is an ongoing method of gathering information from the environment for use by an organization in strategic decision making and issues management. It is an early warning system for changes, issues, and reputation of the organization—a type of radar to monitor trends in order to help top management plan for the future. In addition to detecting emerging issues and helping avert crises, the strategic intelligence provided by environmental scanning can also help quantify existing problems.

Although environmental scanning or monitoring appears to have originated in the business management arena, David Dozier referred to it in the context of public relations as “the gathering of information about publics, about reactions of publics toward the organization, and about public opinion toward issues important to the organization” (1986, p. 1).

In addition to detecting threats and opportunities for the organization, environmental scanning also encourages future-oriented thinking in the organization's decision makers.

As a research method designed to bring information into the organization, environmental scanning is a function of an open system, which uses either two-way asymmetric or two-way symmetric models of communication.

Relevance of Environmental Scanning to Public Relations Professionals

Environmental scanning is important in public relations because successful management of dynamic organizations depends on the ability of the senior leaders to adapt to a rapidly changing external environment. Because management can become insulated from key publics, the public relations practitioner uses environmental scanning

data to help keep the dominant coalition in touch with the opinions of those critical to the organization's success or failure.

Collecting and processing intelligence about the environment also makes the communication manager a useful and necessary part of the organization's management decision-making team. Those who don't do environmental scanning are often not included in the dominant coalition. Dozier and Larissa A. Grunig (1992) wrote, "This is one source of power that practitioners can use to redefine the public relations function and alter its vertical and horizontal structure" (p. 412).

The news cycle is now 24/7. Global audiences are empowered to share their opinions with and about the organization. As a result, organization leaders and communication professionals face information overload with the availability of more data than they can efficiently and effectively process. Having a formal environmental scanning program can help identify the sources of information most important to the organization. A scanning program, therefore, is a way of separating the wheat from the chaff.

Conducting Environmental Scanning

There are few guidelines on how to do environmental scanning. Scanners should have a deep understanding of the industry in which they operate and know the players in that arena as well. Scanners should watch for signs of change, look for signals of potential events on the horizon, study forecasts of experts, and write abstracts to crystallize thoughts. Interviews with key decision makers in the organization and a review of the current strategic plan may help develop an initial list of trends and issues to monitor.

To develop the objectives of the scanning program, the public relations practitioner must decide the level of resources to devote to scanning. A shift in power between organizations and publics who can now produce, consume, and instantly share content about the organization has increased the need for environmental scanning. Doug Newsom, Judy VanSlyke Turk and Dean Kruckeberg (2013, p. 63) called this shift a move to "more actual two-way symmetrical communication."

To meet the objectives of the scanning program, scanners must identify the specific media or

environment levels to monitor. In the legacy media era of the second half of the 20th century, scanning levels had relatively clear distinctions between the local environment, the industry environment, and the global environment. While high-speed, digital access to global audiences softens the boundaries between levels of scanning, analysis of a wide range of areas including stakeholders' opinions remains essential. According to the American Marketing Association (2012), "environmental forces considered are the political, cultural, social, demographic, economic, legal, international, and ecological factors."

Both informal and formal methods can be used to gather information. Samples used in casual research may not be scientifically representative but may still be beneficial as is listening in social media interactions. Practitioners also scan by studying traditional mass media, social media, blogs, and specialized media specific to their organization's industry. They may confer with a network of contacts like colleagues and experts within their industry, advisory boards, online forums, or political and community leaders. Input from phone calls, letters, emails, website comments, Twitter feeds, and other communication channels may be useful as well. More formal methods of gathering market research data through surveys and focus groups may be used, along with ongoing communication programs with the organization's priority stakeholders.

After information is gathered through the scanning process, it must be analyzed and interpreted for the dominant coalition. The public relations professional should help interpret and incorporate it into strategic decision making.

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See also Research Goals; Research Objectives; Strategic Business Planning; Strategies

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ETHICS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations has been roundly criticized as a field and professional practice with ethics that are based on manipulation and “spin.” Public relations ethics should be discussed, researched, and refined because of the weighty responsibilities of the function within an organization and its ability to wield influence in public policy as argued by Robert L. Heath, Shannon A. Bowen, Maureen Taylor, and others.

Scholars define *ethics* as the study of what is right and wrong, fair and unfair, in how we should make decisions. Ethics assumes that truth and morality exist and can be discovered through the rules, values, and principles that govern—or should govern—behavior.

Organizational Conscience: Power and Responsibility

Attitude and behavioral changes resulting from the power inherent in public relations are demonstrable. Public relations has the power to define issues, thereby shaping public opinion by deciding what information is important and thereby altering perception of an issue. Public relations pursuits such as public affairs and lobbying,

political communication, corporate communication, and activist communication all shape the societies in which we live. Add to this list the ability to shift financial markets and alter supply and demand, and it becomes clear that public relations is powerful. The power to influence society means that public relations holds a responsibility to the public interest and society itself to be ethical. That responsibility is argued to far outweigh concerns of self-interest or advocacy on behalf of a client.

Organizational Role: Public Relations as Ethics Counsel

Systems theory explains that the public relations practitioner is a boundary spanner, holding roles both inside the organization and in publics outside the organization. To understand the publics outside an organization, the public relations practitioner must maintain effective and open communication with them, sometimes joining their groups to understand their viewpoints. He or she acts as a representative of the organization’s position while meeting with publics, and while meeting with management acts as a representative of publics’ opinions.

The relationships that the public relations practitioner maintains with publics outside the organization are unique because they provide valuable information to top management on how those publics view certain topics, the values each public holds, and how that public is likely to react to a given decision. This input can become a crucial part of strategic decision making. It can also help to identify issues and solve them proactively before they become major problems. In general, this boundary-spanning role puts pressure on public relations practitioners to be ethical. In performing the public relations functional ethically, a positive social role is created in which public relations facilitates the information needed in society and helps facilitate civil society.

Spin and Credibility

The credibility of the public relations field has been called into question by numerous critics. Research analyzing how the term *public relations* was used found consistent use of the term *public*

relations to suggest manipulation of the truth to a dubious end. In 2003 and 2009, Shannon A. Bowen found that even university students majoring in public relations held negative misperceptions of the discipline and misunderstood its basic responsibilities early in their course of study.

In actuality, ethics is an important consideration to both practitioners of public relations and scholars who teach and study it. The major industry associations of public relations all have codes of ethics and offer ethics seminars and training for practitioners. The discipline contains scholars who research and refine the ethics of public relations as their life's work. Ethics is a part of the public relations curriculum in classrooms around the globe and was recommended to be the top priority of study for graduate students in public relations by the Commission on Public Relations Education in 2012.

The dubious historical beginning of public relations, confusion of public relations with propaganda, and a contentious relationship with journalists have all contributed to the reputation of public relations as an unethical or manipulative pursuit. Although this misconception is prevalent, honest communication and discovery of the truth are utmost concerns in the public relations discipline and professional practice. Even early practitioners such as John W. Hill argued for rigorous ethical standards; he believed that public relations should be the ethical conscience in an organization.

Of course, cases of ethical violations exist within public relations. These cases become infamous examples to which critics often refer in attempting to discredit the field. What those outside the discipline often fail to understand is that public relations is in the business of solving potential issues before they become problems or crisis situations that would be worthy of media notice. This proactive problem solving is the issues management function of the field. Success in public relations often means resolving an issue before anyone complains about it, thus saving the business untold sums of money it might have spent on lawsuits, media relations, lobbying, compliance, strikes, and so on. Success in issues management is often measured in terms of ethical decisions, averted crises, and money saved by an organization. Thus, the victories of public relations are often unsung.

Approaches to Public Relations Philosophy and Ethics

Scholars have attempted to conceptualize a body of knowledge on ethics of public relations. Public relations scholars have applied moral philosophy to public relations ethics and found it a fruitful area of study. However, few public relations practitioners have studied moral philosophy or ethics; and most tend to rely on situational ethics, personal experience, or self-interested risk versus reward analyses of dilemmas rather than rigorous philosophical analyses. A situational approach to ethics is problematic because it sees no universal or generally applicable moral norms but looks at each situation independently. The lack of guidance given by situational ethics limits its usefulness; furthermore, it is normally employed by those with very little ethics training. Scholars found that public relations courses and texts give little attention to the topic of ethics.

Most appropriate for the study of public relations ethics are the philosophical schools of utilitarianism or consequentialist theory and deontology or nonconsequentialist theory. Consequentialism bases the choice of what is ethical on the projected consequences of the decision. Consequentialism asks us to predict the possible outcomes of our decisions and perform a cost-benefit calculation among the potential outcomes. The ethical outcome is that which generally has the most positive consequences and the least negative consequences. Utilitarianism is the most popular type of consequentialist ethics, defining as ethical that which produces the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Nonconsequentialist ethics uses a different measure of what makes an act morally worthy. Worthiness is defined as doing one's duty to uphold moral principles that apply equally to all people. In this school of thought, ethical behavior is based on what is morally right in principle, rather than on the projected outcomes of a decision. The consequences of a decision are not ignored, but they are not the decision-making guide used in contemplating the correct option among alternatives. Deontology is the most prominent type of nonconsequentialist ethics.

Doing one's duty to follow moral principles objectively is how deontologists define ethical

behavior. For example, the maxim “It is wrong to lie” would be a universal moral principle, because a lie only works under an assumption of truth. Society would lose this assumption of truth if all people lied whenever it suited their own, subjective interests. Therefore, we can generalize that lying is morally wrong because it is not consistent with our duty as rational agents to uphold moral principles and it becomes logically contradictory when applied. This type of reasoning has proven to be beneficial to the practitioners and organizations who employ a deontological paradigm. Deontological ethics increases with the age and moral development of public relations practitioners.

Public Relations as the Organizational Conscience

Many public relations studies over the years supported the idea that public relations practitioners should act as the ethical conscience of their organization. They are seen as naturally filling this organizational role because of their expertise in relationship building, conflict management, reputation management, and communication with publics. However, they must study ethics in public relations to effectively fill this role.

Applying these ethical models to public relations practice and educating public relations practitioners about the approaches to analyzing a moral dilemma are primary concerns in this field. For public relations to mature, grow in responsibility, and perform the role of ethical counsel or ethical conscience of the organization, practitioners must be well versed in ethics and trained in ethical analysis. Forward-thinking organizations are embracing this idea today. The growth of public relations ethics will ensure that it can overcome a dubious beginning and perform a positive function in society by providing information and by building and maintaining relationships between organizations and the many publics that they serve.

Shannon A. Bowen

See also Civil Society; Codes of Ethics; Corporate Moral Conscience; Corporate Social Responsibility; Deontology; Hill, John W.; Issues Management; Moral Development; Moral Philosophy; Public Interest; Symmetry; Systems Theory; Utilitarianism

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ETHNOGRAPHY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Ethnography is concerned with making sense of human action, however complex, contradictory or taken-for-granted, by exploring the sociocultural context within which those actions take place. As a research approach, ethnography can offer more nuanced understandings of the social significance of contemporary practice and the interrelationship between public relations and broader economic, political, and cultural processes. Grounded in interpretivism, ethnography uses culture as a lens through which to study public relations—whether societal, organizational, or occupational.

Culture can be understood as the historically transmitted patterns of beliefs, values, and symbols that are relevant to a social group and that shape members' understanding of, and behaviors within, a particular environment. The cultural meanings uncovered will be grounded in subjective, socially constructed contexts, which are informed by the social world in which individuals find themselves. Ethnographic accounts provide detailed "thick" or "emic" description, or "insider accounts." The aim is not to seek precise analyses of the practice but to produce historically sensitive generative resources that add to the varying accounts of public relations emerging from different professional and sociocultural contexts around the world.

Ethnography seeks to explore what people do and why they do it, as well as their expectations and aspirations for the future. It offers voice to those being studied. Several sources of data are used including the following: participant observation, direct observation, interviews and conversations, diaries and life histories, photography, audio or video recordings, document analysis, and artistic genres such as poetry and storytelling. When engaging with ethnography, it is imperative that researchers display a commitment to entering the social world they are studying, both physically and emotionally, and locate themselves within their research as cultural interpreter in order to make sense of the environment and reflect upon their role in gathering and interpreting the data. The principal method used, therefore, is extended

participant observation, which encourages what Harry Wolcott refers to as intimate, long-term acquaintance.

Opportunities for ethnographies of public relations are diverse. A researcher undertaking a corporate ethnography of the London headquarters of an international agency, for example, might seek to become part of that organization as either a paid or voluntary member of the team in order to interpret the nature of professional relationships within the organization—such as those between the account director and junior account executives. Observational work would include a symbolic analysis of the use of material artifacts within the department and the ways in which work and social spaces are arranged within the office to reinforce the particular managerial positions within it as well as how the team operates within the broader cultural context of the organization. Ethnographic techniques can also be used to explore the ways in which internal and external stakeholders make sense of a corporate brand, as well as the production and communication of public relations messages, or to develop a holistic interpretation of a particular public's attitudes, behaviors, and experiences. Ethnographic data could then be used by organizations to improve their communication strategies and ensure that they develop messages and utilize communication channels that resonate with the cultural values, expectations, and communicative behaviors of their target audiences.

In addition to classic ethnographic methods, public relations scholars are engaging with more diverse approaches, including autoethnography and netnography. In contrast to traditional ethnography, which has been largely concerned with studies of cultures in unfamiliar contexts, autoethnography is concerned with the exploration of the relationships between self (auto), public relations practice (ethnos), and the writing and research process (graphy) with the aim of translating a "familiar" culture to an audience of cultural "outsiders." One example might be a study that considers the professional tensions between academic, practitioner, and personal identities when carrying out pro bono work for a local activist group. Netnography (or virtual ethnography), on the other hand, is concerned with observing a website or websites and related discussion forums over a period of time and analyzing user-generated content

and the messages members post to one another. With an increasing shift in power away from practitioners and into the hands of publics who are able to share their stories and to generate their own forms of promotional content online, understanding how their activities shape the virtual environment and, importantly, how what is being spoken about online impacts upon their success is vital to organizations.

There are obvious ethical challenges associated with any form of ethnographic research such as consent, disclosure, power, and representation. Ethnographers of public relations will follow the ethics codes associated with the academic discipline and those of the relevant professional associations and any institutions collaborating in the research. It will also be important to take into account ethical issues raised by the specific socio-cultural environment under study and the personal beliefs and ethics of research participants.

Scholars are becoming more open to broader cultural approaches to the study of public relations. Ethnography offers public relations scholarship and practice the opportunity to consider broader visions and forms of practice and diversity in experience.

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See also Anthropology and Public Relations; Culture; Qualitative Research; Society; Socioculture and Public Relations

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EUROPE, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Although rarely named as such, public relations in Europe is thriving, with a multidimensional European identity. In 2012, Europe consisted of 51 countries. Europe had no pancontinental individual membership public relations association for practitioners until 2006, when the European Association of Communication Directors (EACD) was established by members from 23 different countries. European academics and teachers have their own regional association: European Public Relations Education and Research Associations (EUPRERA), established in 1989, but based on an older network of professionals, educators, and researchers, called *Confédération Européenne des Relations Publiques* (CERP), established in 1959.

The only book so far that gives insight into the uniqueness of Europe is *Public Relations and Communication Management in Europe*; experts from 27 countries provided insight into public relations in their countries (van Ruler & Verčič, 2004). All over Europe, universities offer programs in public relations (communication management, strategic communication, communication, information), and

academic research is a fast growing field, mostly done from a sociological perspective.

Public Relations in Old Europe

Some textbooks state that public relations arrived in Europe after World War II, together with the Marshall program. Most public relations experts in Europe believe, however, that the Anglo-American ideas mixed after World War II with existing concepts of public relations, although never referred to as “public relations” and never studied as such.

Günter Bentele placed the development of the German public relations profession in the middle of the 19th century. The first press offices in politics and business as well as in communities, associations, and corporations originated in this period. The first political press department, called *Ministerial-Zeitungsbüro* (governmental bureau of newspapers), was established in 1884 in Prussia. The middle-German town Magdeburg established a municipal press office in 1906. Alfred Krupp, founder of the steel company Krupp, established the first press department in a private company in 1870: Krupp had been aware of the necessity to hire a “literate”—as the public relations officer had been called in these days—in 1866. The duty of this literate was to read newspapers that were considered important to the firm and to write articles, brochures, and correspondences to publicize the firms and its products.

Jacque L'Etang placed the beginning of public relations in England in the 1920s. It started to play a benign role of publicizing government policy and informing the public. Local government contributed to public relations ideology through concepts of professionalism and a public service ethos. As early as 1923, concepts of neutrality and public interest became standards of respectability as public relations sought professional status.

According to Jozsef Katus, public relations originated in the Netherlands in the 17th century. Prior to that, the system for the provision of information to benefit shipping, trade, and industry on developments abroad was no longer adequate. Consular civil servants were ordered to report regularly on events in the country where they were stationed that might be important for these sectors. By gathering information in a purposeful and systematic way and

making it available to those interested, authorities began the institutionalization of government information in support of the economy.

Betteke van Ruler argued that the Enlightenment, as developed in the 18th century in France and Germany, influenced the evolution of public relations practice in the Netherlands. In the 18th century, science and knowledge were no longer seen as being relevant only for the elite but had to be diffused. The means for this diffusion was *voorlichting*. This concept is based on an expression of Immanuel Kant: *sapere aude* (literally “dare to know”), which was meant as “all people should feel the need to be informed on what is going on and have to be enlightened, so that they can take part in the ongoing debate about and development of society.” The administration as well as all kinds of civil society organizations started to introduce *voorlichters*, specialists who travelled around (they were also called “wanderers”) to give information about health, good farming, housekeeping, education, politics, etc. So, the profession as such is rather old in the Netherlands. Modern public relations departments in corporations emerged at the beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, the Dutch claim to have the oldest professional association in the world, established in 1946.

European Body of Knowledge

In October 1998, EUPRERA initiated the European Public Relations Body of Knowledge project (EBOK). The purpose of this project was to codify the existing body of public relations literature of European origin and to enable its fuller use and recognition, which was restricted by linguistic, cultural, and administrative barriers. With Karl Nessman's statement in mind—that although many ideas have crossed the Atlantic, public relations theory and practice in Europe have developed rather independently—it was questionable whether the parameters of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Body of Knowledge would fit the view of public relations in Europe. EUPRERA, therefore, began to feel the need to understand what the United States and Europe have in common and how they differ, and to chart the public relations idiosyncrasies in European countries. In order to investigate these issues, a project team of people from the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden, and Switzerland

undertook a Delphi study in 1999 and early 2000, with participants from practice and science from 26 European countries. (For a full report of the research and the method used, see Ruler, Verčič, Bütschi, & Flodin, 2000, and Ruler & Verčič, 2002). This study gave a grounding for many issues, one of which is the naming of public relations in Europe, and second, its definition.

Defining Practice and Research

Names for “public relations” in Germanic and Slavonic languages mean “relations with the public and in the public” where “public” itself denotes a different phenomenon than it is generally assumed to mean in the public relations discipline in English. This entry takes the German term for “public relations” as an example, but similar explanations apply to other Germanic and Slavonic languages (and thus covering much of the Northern, Central and Eastern parts of the European continent). The German term for “public relations” is *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*, which literally means “public work” and is explained as “working in public, with the public and for the public” (Nessmann, 2000). This denomination contradicts the mainstream (U.S.) understanding of public relations as management of relationships between an organization and its publics.

Ever since these Germanic and Slavonic translations of the term *public relations* had been introduced to these languages, it was obvious to the natives that their terms mean something else than the original (U.S. English) term, as Karl Nessmann argued. However, it would be wrong to just stop here with the recognition of this terminological problem as being a matter of language only. *Öffentlichkeit* does not mean “public” as in publics, audiences—it means first of all “public sphere,” and to be more specific: “that what is potentially known to and can be debated by all.” *Öffentlichkeit* is an outcome and a quality of public communication in society. By equating *public* with *Öffentlichkeit* “an analytical dimension is lost, namely that an essential aspect of public relations is that it is concerned with issues and values that are considered as publicly relevant, which means relating to the public sphere” (Jensen, 2000).

This line of public relations thinking was developed in Germany, beginning with Albert Oeckl in

1976, and in the Netherlands by Anne van der Meiden in 1978 and is represented in other European countries. These theorists reason that public relations is not only about relations with the public(s), but also creates a platform for public debate and, consequently, a public sphere. As Franz Ronneberger and Manfred Rühl argued, public relations is to be measured by the quality and quantity of the public sphere, which it coproduces through its activities. Quality and quantity in the public (sphere) relate to *öffentliche Meinung*—which can be translated as “public opinion.” This public opinion is, however, not viewed as an aggregate of individual opinions, as conceived in public opinion polling, a psychological approach to public opinion. In the sociological approach, opinion has a qualitative as well as a quantitative dimension. The quality is a type of democratic political authority, the foundation on which democracy is built, according to Jürgen Habermas. Its quantity is related to such questions as: Who is in the debate and who is not?

In this societal approach, public relations serves the same kind of (democratic) function as journalism does, as they both contribute to a free flow of information and its meanings and to the development of the public sphere: in size (“How many people are involved in public life?”), in level (“What is the level at which we discuss public matters?”), and in quality (“What are the frames used in the debates?”). Taking a cultural approach to communication, theory building in public relations is closely related to journalism in many European countries, not because the practitioners must deal with journalists, but because of these overlapping functions in society.

For many European scholars public relations produces social reality and, therefore, a certain type of society. That is why many European scholars look at public relations from a sociological perspective instead of an economic, psychological, or organizational perspective. In this respect the European use of “public” and “public relations” can mean something totally different than it typically does in the United States.

European Characteristics of Public Relations

The Delphi study mentioned above revealed no single definition of public relations in Europe but four defining and evaluative characteristics as

distinct aspects of public relations rather than as mutually exclusive views:

1. *Reflective*: to analyze changing standards and values and standpoints in society and discuss these with the members of the organization, in order to adjust the standards, values, and standpoints of the organization accordingly. This role is concerned with organizational standards, values, and views and aimed at the development of mission and organizational strategies.
2. *Managerial*: to develop plans to communicate and maintain relationships with public groups, in order to gain public trust or mutual understanding. This role is concerned with commercial and other (internal and external) public groups and with public opinion as a whole and aimed at the execution of the organizational mission and strategies.
3. *Operational*: to prepare means of communication for the organization (and its members) in order to help the organization formulate its communications. This role is concerned with services and is aimed at the execution of the communication plans developed by others.
4. *Educational*: to help all the members of the organization become communicatively competent in order to respond to societal demands. This role is concerned with the mentality and behavior of the members of the organization by facilitating them to communicate and aimed at internal public groups.

Although regional differences in Europe are understandably large, the participants of this Delphi research project accepted these characteristics as a means for defining the domain. According to statements from several countries of Europe like Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, it seems to be questionable whether public relations is restricted to maintaining relationships with certain public groups. It became obvious that in many countries public relations is (also) seen as the public relationship any organization has with "society" and the search for a "license to operate" any organization needs (see Jensen, 2000; Ronneberger & Rühl, 1992). This highlights the importance of the reflective and educational characteristics (see also Ruler & Verčič, 2005).

Betteke van Ruler and Dejan Verčič

See also Eastern Europe, Practice of Public Relations in; Empire, Public Relations and; European Communication Monitor; European Public Relations Education and Research Association; Germany, Practice of Public Relations in; Spain, Practice of Public Relations in

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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNICATION DIRECTORS

The European Association of Communication Directors (EACD) is the largest European network for in-house communication professionals from all industries and fields. Currently serving more than 2,200 members, the EACD was established in 2006 to foster diversity, overcome cultural barriers,

and formulate communicative norms and expectations. The association meets the needs of communication professionals working internationally, providing networks, support, and international perspectives, which are crucial to debate and embrace the exciting new challenges of an ever-changing communication landscape.

Regional Initiatives

By addressing and discussing the communication professions in both a pan-European and a regionally specific context, the EACD's Regional Events intend to strengthen the network of its members to promote the association's vision, while sharing the accumulated knowledge of all members. The EACD Regional Debates bring together public relations and communications professionals for best case presentations, informative discussions, and networking opportunities. In addition, the EACD hosts regularly Coaching Days, where qualified speakers offer intensive training sessions. In the form of two- or three-hour workshops, members can learn in depth about a particular aspect of communications.

Furthermore, the EACD members can join Working Groups, which ensure a cross-industry exchange of opinions and information. EACD Working Groups offer regular meetings and workshops to discuss specific topics and collaboration on papers and guidelines for particular issues. Currently, the EACD offers 13 Working Groups on topics such as social media, risk and crisis communications, and corporate social responsibility.

Publications, Surveys, and Services

The EACD offers a variety of publications and services to its members. In order to provide practical solutions to a wide variety of communication problems, the EACD publishes instructional service brochures written by experienced communicators. Additionally, EACD members enjoy a subscription to *Communication Director* magazine, a leading resource for information and analysis on corporate communications and public relations. Within the European Public Relations and Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) framework, the EACD cooperates with 11 renowned universities on the annual European Communication Monitor, a survey offering an overview of the working environment,

trends and challenges faced by the European communication landscape.

EACD members can also engage in an interactive social network, the EACDnet, to share knowledge, events, and job vacancies. Working and Regional Groups host their individual online platform to continue discussions, organize events, and connect with peers.

Main Events

Meeting annually in Brussels, the EACD gathers more than 600 top communication directors and spokespersons to take part in the European Communication Summit. Hearing keynote speeches and presentations by more than 70 distinguished expert speakers, participants debate strategies and tools, methods, and best cases within the different fields of European communication, such as corporate communication, public relations, media relations, and political communication.

The European Communication Award is given to the individual or institution whose communication efforts over the past year stand out on a European level. The winner of the award is voted for by members from a short list compiled on the basis of the annual results of CARMA International's CEO Stockwatch Index. Previous winners have included the European Central Bank (2008), euronews (2009), Sergio Marchionne of Fiat (2010), Peter Löscher of Siemens (2011), and Marc Bolland, CEO of Marks and Spencer (2012).

Vanessa Eggert

See also Europe, Practice of Public Relations in; European Public Relations Education and Research Association

Further Readings

European Association of Communication Directors (EACD): <http://www.eacd-online.eu>

EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION MONITOR

The European Communication Monitor (ECM) is a transnational trend survey of communication and public relations practice in Europe conducted

annually since 2007. It has developed into the most comprehensive research into communication management and public relations worldwide with 2,185 participating professionals from 42 countries in 2012. Each year the ECM improves the understanding of the professional practice of communication in Europe and monitors trends in strategic communication to analyze the changing framework for the profession. The ECM is supported and organized by the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA), the European Association of Communication Directors (EACD), and *Communication Director* magazine. This alliance is supported by industry sponsorship from Ketchum Pleon.

The research framework includes variables along five key factors: personal characteristics of communication professionals; features of the organization; attributes of the communication function; the current situation of strategic communication; and perceptions on future developments.

In 2012, research questions were introduced about ethical challenges and standards; professional accreditation and certification systems; the practice of communication in organizations; integration and coordination of communications; professional training and development; management, business, and communication qualifications; and recruitment of young professionals.

The monitor is based on a range of theories about public relations and communication management including reflective communication, integrated communication, corporate communications, and strategic communication. Other examples are theoretical concepts such as polyphony of communication, communications competencies and skills, ethics and moral conduct, and professionalization.

Ralph Tench

See also Europe, Practice of Public Relations in

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EUROPEAN PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

The European Public Relations Education and Research Association, EUPRERA, is a leading

European nonprofit association promoting education, research, and practice of public relations in Europe. It represents more than 600 public relations professionals across 50 different countries. It was founded in 2000 and is legally based in Brussels, Belgium. The association has four major objectives:

1. Stimulating knowledge creation, dissemination, and exchange of all forms of European public relations research
2. Sustaining cooperation and partnerships among its members to advance ground-breaking European public relations research, education, and practice
3. Promoting public relations education across countries that is connected with professional practices
4. Supporting and disseminating the development of novel public relations methods

Based on its goals, the association's primary target groups are academic staff, researchers, students of universities and institutions offering public relations programs, national organizations, and to some extent practitioners interested in research and education. To achieve its objectives, the association is mainly involved in four activities:

1. The organization of annual conferences and spring symposia
2. The organization of PhD seminars
3. The promotion and support of pan-European projects in public relations education and research
4. The recognition of excellence in public relations research through different prizes and awards

A major contribution of EUPRERA is the organization of its annual conference, in collaboration with a selected university in Europe, which takes place every year in a different country. The annual conference has become the major venue for European and international scholars to present, share, and discuss the latest developments and research in public relations. Since 2007, PhD seminars for doctoral students in public relations and communication management are held just before

the annual conference. During these seminars, doctoral students can present their ongoing work, get feedback from senior scholars and peers, and establish a valuable network for the future careers.

Since 2008, spring symposia are also organized in different European cities. The scope of organizing spring symposia is mostly managerial and project related. Spring symposia are primarily meant to help members in developing and strengthening new or existing partnerships, to debate important matters related to the business and management of the association, and to present new project proposals or discuss together existing projects. Projects can deal with educational matters, such as the MARPE (Master in European Public Relations) project, or knowledge creation such as the European Communication Monitor project, which investigates the status of the practices of public relations and communication management in Europe. Each member can propose a new project, but an approval by the board of directors is needed to be officialized. Besides the spring symposia, EUPRERA offers its members the possibility to access its network, which can help them in coordinating different research efforts, including helping project members to search and obtain funds.

Central to EUPRERA's mission is the development of a body of knowledge and expertise in European public relations and the recognition of novel theoretical and practical approaches in public relations. The association awards each year the Euprera Jos Willems Award for best bachelor thesis and the Euprera Jos Willems Award for best master thesis and every two years the Günter Thiele Award for best dissertation. The latter is given in partnership with the University of Leipzig's Foundation for the Support of PR-Studies (SPRL), Germany. The award ceremony takes place during the annual conference and winners are invited at EUPRERA expenses to come and present their work.

History and Structure of the Association

EUPRERA was established after CERP Education and Research, a subgroup of CERP (*Confédération Européenne des Relations Publiques*—European Confederation of Public Relations). Due to the growing emergence of public relations programs in European universities, Jos M. Willems, prior president and secretary general of CERP Education

and later of CERP Education and Research, and other members of CERP Education and Research felt the need to become independent from the confederation and to dedicate their energies to promoting public relations education and research. During the General Assembly held in December 2000 in Milan, Italy, the members voted for the constitution of a separated and independent organization, which was called EUPRERA. Because of his role played in public relations education and research, Willems is considered the founding father of EUPRERA.

The main authority of EUPRERA is the General Assembly, which consists of all registered members. The General Assembly meets yearly, usually during the annual conference. An executive board of five members, including a president (either the past president or the president elect), a public relations and administration director, and two executive directors, comprises the EUPRERA Board of Directors. The board's main task is to manage the operation of the association, the budgets, which are set by the General Assembly by all voting members, and the running of all projects. All positions are based on a general election in which EUPRERA members choose the candidates from a pool of nominees for a 2-year term. The president is elected from the board of directors and represents EUPRERA to its external publics, at the General Assembly and at official occasions. The working languages of the association are English and French. French is the only language used in legal matters as the association is registered and governed by Belgian law, whereas English is the official language used by the board of directors, the General Assembly, and in all main activities.

EUPRERA is mostly financed through its membership fees and sponsorships. In some instances, for example, in relation to some pan-European research and educational projects in the domain of public relations, the association can obtain sponsorship from project corporations and national public relations associations, as well as some funding from supranational organizations (e.g., European Union, UNESCO, trusts, and foundations).

EUPRERA has become a leading association to promote the exchange of information among its members about educational models, programs, and academic courses; to confer about educational standards and programs; and to promote the

development of a body of knowledge in European public relations research. The association is a member of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management and it has established cooperation with many international associations in public relations, communication management, and business communication.

Chiara Valentini

See also Europe, Practice of Public Relations in; European Communication Monitor; Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management

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European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA): <http://www.euprera.org>

EUROPEAN SOCIAL THEORY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Using social theory to understand public relations recognizes the importance of cultural, political, technological, and economical environments of organizations. Among scholars working within this tradition, public relations is seen as a social activity where organizations are embedded in social environments and governed by structural preconditions and thereby altered through organization–environment relations. In other words, it is a tradition describing organizations as parts of social webs that constrain and enable practices and thus, rather than individuals or organizations, society is stressed in the analysis of public relations.

A general feature is to offer diagnoses of the present and analysis of the interconnectivity of the past and the present. For instance, it asks questions such as what social changes could be related to the development of public relations and how has it been used to promote or obstruct social changes? At heart, are the communicative aspects of public relations—the construction and interpretation of meanings and discourse practices—the essential feature of the practice?

Scholars in this stream of research rest their work on such contemporary social theorists as

Jean Baudrillard, Ulrich Beck, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, Jürgen Habermas, Bruno Latour, Niklas Luhmann, and Jean-François Lyotard, and even to such classical theorists as Karl Marx and Max Weber. This is not to say that these theorists have shown particular interest for public relations. Apart from Habermas, who criticized it for its contributions to the decline of the public sphere, the social arena where citizens meet to reach consensus in matters concerning the common good by the use of open-ended discourse and rational argumentation, there are no references to, or analyses of, public relations in the work of these theorists. Instead their work is used by public relations theorists as a framework to analyze and interpret public relations activities.

By using the label *social theory*, the structural dimensions are put forward in the work of these theorists; but social theorists take very different standpoints in ontological, epistemological, and axiological issues. Social theory is, among social sciences in general a diverse concept. In some cases, the work could be unified under a common tradition as *postmodernism* (a tradition arguing for a “crisis in the social sciences,” as the idea of an objective truth is seen as obsolete), *critical theory* (a tradition where the aim of research is seen as to uncover injustice in society and show the path for equality and democracy), or *structuralism* (a tradition where the actions or functionalities of singular elements are seen as consequences of structural conditions).

In other cases the unifying component is the conceptualization used as *social structures* (the framework of institutions, roles, positions, and relationships regulating the actions of social actors creating continuity over space and time), *reflexivity* (the ability of social actors to escape structural conditions and critically investigate the conditions for their own practices), or *trust* (a dimension of social interactions where one actor is willing to rely on another actor in a situation where there is lack of information about future circumstances).

Additionally, scholars are unified by their interest in certain themes: *structural transformations* (social changes and their drivers, consequences, and dynamics), *power* (the distribution of resources and other circumstances regulating the positions between social actors), or *risks* (threats to human existence). However, despite certain similarities in

traditions, concepts, and issues, it is impossible to place social theorists in a unified paradigm.

These traditions, conceptualizations, and issues are represented in research on public relations. This diversity in interests and assumptions is reflected when the works of social theorists are used to analyze public relations. The unifying element is not so much theoretical standpoints, conceptualizations, or the issues studied; rather it is an idea about the aims of research.

Approaches

There are two main approaches among scholars using social theory to analyze public relations: (a) an analytical approach and (b) a normative or critical approach. The former features *understanding* as the primary aim of their research. By that, they want to overcome the ideas of simple causalities between actions and effects where social actors are reduced to objects and social activities are reduced to mechanisms. The ambition is not to prescribe or explain the use or effects of certain models, approaches, or strategies; instead, scholars want to make sense of public relations and comprehend the practice and its conditions and consequences.

Those holding a critical approach take a normative vision where the practice is scrutinized in regard to societal ideals. Here the aim is to critically examine whether the use of public relations contributes, promotes, counteracts or obstructs transparency, equality, participation, and other values regarded as socially desirable. In both approaches the organization in itself is not seen as the main object. Instead, focus rests on the social contexts as well as roles, functions, or positions organizations and other social actors holds in these circumstances and how they use public relations to create, recreate, change, or fulfill these conditions.

Themes

The questions raised by scholars using social theory are diversified and vast; however, there are two returning themes building the core of the tradition.

1. *What structural conditions promote, counteract, or sustain the practice of public relations?*

Here analytical scholars have pointed toward the industrial revolution and how it entails a replacement of traditional forms of production and organization with forms promoting rationality, predictability, and efficiency. This leads to specialization and a division of labor where communication in conjunction with other means becomes an instrument to gain control over production. Additionally, public relations becomes a means used to construct an appealing appearance to attract investors, separate mass-produced products from others, and ensure support from stakeholders. These usages of public relations are intensified as the industrialization develops and takes new forms.

Globalization, individualization, mediatization, and other forms of transformation lead to contradicting and inconsistent requirements and increasing complexity where public relations becomes a managerial tool frequently used for interactions and identity constructions. Similar developments are pointed out by critical scholars but here the developments of capitalism are at the core and the use of public relations is featured as a means to gain ideological control. Thus, scholars point out how the development of public relations is intertwined with development of modern mass media and the commoditization of audiences where individuals are reduced to consumers and where media content and public relations aim for the legitimization of capitalistic system.

2. *What consequences does public relations have for society as a whole, certain spheres (markets, civil society, culture), certain situations (war, elections, crises), or certain groups of actors (women, employees, minorities)?* Here critically oriented scholars have shown how public relations is used as a strategic means by prominent actors to gain positions and resources and, by that, gain dominance. By the use of systematically distorted communication, they promote institutional goals, products, images, and ideologies to sustain or resist social changes. As discourse is seen as essential for how we perceive the world and things around us, public relations becomes a tool for domination and for the distribution of privileges and reproduction of social orders. In line with this analytical approach, scholars argue for a constructivist perspective where public relations is seen as an important aspect of how collective ideas and

perceptions are constructed. However, rather than see the use of public relations as something restricted to prominent actors, analytical scholars have shown how public relations is used by a number of different types of actors with competing aims and different consequences.

Magnus Fredriksson

See also Bourdieu, Pierre, and Public Relations; Commodifying Information; Foucault, Michel, and Public Relations; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Habermas, Jürgen, on Public Relations; Modernity and Late Modernity; Political Economy and Public Relations; Public Sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*); Race and Public Relations; Risk Society

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EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

Evaluative research is a relatively new area of public relations, which provides tools to systematically measure the impact of public relations campaigns and strategies. The foundation of this discipline consists in the belief that the effectiveness of public relations is measurable. However, a question mark still exists concerning whether public relations programs can be monetized through evaluative research. On one hand, scholars who believe that public relations is rooted in social science recommend the use of both quantitative and qualitative evaluative methods. On the other side of the spectrum, marketing-oriented scholars believe that evaluative research should only be comprised of quantitative methods. A review of the development of evaluative research should provide a general

understanding of the two approaches that currently exist in evaluative research. In addition, this entry provides an overview of the practitioners' approach to evaluative research.

Public relations evaluation became a widely discussed topic more than 60 years ago, when the need of a more complex evaluation system emerged. The scholastic literature can be tied back to the measurement of attitudes in the 1920s. After World War II, evaluation studies were mostly U.S.-based and either business or mass communication oriented. Two decades back, Walter K. Lindenmann established a cornerstone in evaluative research when publishing his "Effectiveness Yardstick" study. Trying to overcome the hasty judgments of the era, Lindenmann established three levels of evaluation on a vertical progression: output, outgrowth, and outcome. The outputs represent the basic level of measurement for an organization. At the second level, public relations professionals should possess more complex research skills and knowledge. The outgrowth measures the attention, understanding, and retention of messages. In order to measure these elements, practitioners should use a wide spectrum of research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, and extensive polling. At the last and most sophisticated level, public relations practitioners should have advanced knowledge of research. The outcomes measure the attitude, opinion, and behavior change. To do this, experimental and quasi-experimental observation, participation, audits, data analysis, and before-and-after polling could be used. The scholars that followed Lindenmann emphasized that evaluative research should be entirely tied back to the objectives of the public relations campaign.

The evaluative research in marketing is based on the core belief that public relations programs are economically embedded and their outcome should reflect in the return on investment (ROI) and, eventually, in sales. If following this approach, public relations practitioners would monetize the outcome of their activities by using media metrics and evaluating promotional events. ROI is predominantly used in media relations. One way to account for ROI is by comparing the amount of money invested in a public relations campaign to the outcome, in terms of attitude or behavior

change. For example, if a media campaign for a new detergent generated 50,000 impressions and the value of those 50,000 impressions is \$1,000,000 that means that one should have invested less than \$1,000,000 in order to obtain revenue.

A more controversial marketing-oriented evaluative research consists in advertising value equivalencies (AVEs). Scholars tend to disagree with this approach, but some practitioners are still using AVEs to quantify their public relations efforts. To calculate AVEs, the media coverage is converted to the price of paid advertising within the same media outlet. This value is then multiplied and adjusted according to the number of words or paragraphs, tone, position on the page, and so on.

Besides these two core differences between the social science and the marketing-oriented approach to evaluative research, discrepancies exist between how scholars and practitioners view evaluative research. Although scholars discussed a holistic approach to research, practitioners have mostly used two types of evaluative methods: outputs and outcomes. In analyzing events and media coverage, public relations practitioners predominantly use metrics such as attendance to meetings, media monitoring, and media content analysis. Despite this limitation, public relations associations have been struggling to create common evaluative research standards. In the United Kingdom, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) has become a leading forum on public relations evaluation, while in the United States the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) has a leading role. The organization has published evaluation guidelines and a series of articles about public relations measurement in different industries. In the United States, IPR at the University of Florida has taken a role in educating the public relations professionals on best practices of evaluation and measurement. IPR has published many papers written by practitioners, including a dictionary of public relations evaluation terminology. These papers explore a large spectrum of issues, from how to link the evaluation to the corporate objectives or how to measure public relations in the nonprofit sector, to the importance of ROI and proving the value of public relations.

Following the chronological development of public relations evaluation and measurement, one should not overlook the European Summit on Measurement, which reached its fifth edition in

2013. The summit has attempted to establish a set of evaluative principles. The foundation stone was set during the second summit, when a set of seven principles were established:

- the importance of goal setting and measurement
- measuring the effect of outcomes is preferred over outputs measurement
- the effect on business results can and should be measured
- media measurement requires quantity and quality
- AVEs are not the value of public relations
- social media can and should be measured
- transparency and replicability are paramount to sound measurement

Although these principles are still not largely used, the European Summit on Measurement aims to educate public relations professionals and generate common practices.

Thus, evaluative research is still in its early beginnings. Public relations scholars should work on developing the existing models and a theory, while practitioners should try to reduce the dissonance between what should be done and what is done.

Rebeca A. Pop

See also Benchmarking; Formative Research; Public Relations Research; Qualitative Research; Quantitative Research

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EVENT MANAGEMENT

Event management, also known as special event planning, provides a valuable tool by which for-profit and nonprofit organizations specialize public relations campaigns. Event management is a means for achieving publicity and recognition for their organizations and establishing and maintaining relationships with key constituents through direct contact. When executed well, event management can add greatly to the profile and prestige of organizations.

Types of events utilized by organizations include new building dedications, fundraisers, product launches, board meetings, and community or arts sponsorships. While the different incarnations of special events are limited only by the imagination, the primary categories of special events are open houses, fundraisers, project groundbreaking or completion, holiday celebrations, grand openings, promotions, and commemorations and anniversaries.

Special Events Defined

Special events represent those circumstances in which organizations have to deviate from communication-driven public relations, advertising, and marketing efforts by meeting directly with clients. Some events may have a non-media-related purpose, though typically they are structured to fit within the framework of the organization's public relations plan. They facilitate direct communication with customers, often by bringing them to a business or institution, though they may occur at a designated third-party site.

An event can enhance organizational image by presenting a company as proficient and professional, thereby adding to its prestige. In so doing, they provide "ready to be consumed" media images and stories that can achieve third-party support for public relations efforts.

Many special events for nonprofit organizations are organized around a fundraising theme or purpose. They frequently are designed to provide people with a meaningful experience by which they enjoy participation or entertainment in exchange for a donation to a worthy cause or a political candidate.

Factors in Successful Special Events

To be successful in developing effective special events a number of factors should be considered. First, in order to generate media attention, an event should be newsworthy in its own right. Second, events work best when there is a meaningful link between an organization and the event, such as efforts by women's fitness apparel companies to fight breast cancer (health). Third, if there is to be a product link, it should be evident but not intrusive; more direct approaches tend to turn consumers off. Finally, the event itself should be well planned and executed in order to make the experience distinct and memorable.

How to Plan Special Events

When planning a special event, there are a number of important considerations to take into account. First and foremost, a special event needs to be a part of a larger public relations plan. It should follow traditional public relations techniques of research, planning and budgeting, implementation, and evaluation. Furthermore, an event must be promoted effectively to generate both media and public interest.

While standard public relations practices are necessary, special events do have a number of unique characteristics that require specific planning and focus. While attention to detail is necessary in all public relations activity, it is even more critical in event management; success depends on the mastery of numerous small details.

From start to finish, an event planner must keep in mind several important concerns. First, care must be taken in choosing the timing and location of the event. The event must not conflict with other major events. If the occasion is to be held outside, contingency plans regarding weather must be made. Additionally, thought must be given as it concerns signage, transportation, and reception, as well as necessary banners and other promotional materials that effectively represent the organization's image. There also is the problem of providing tickets; tickets provide event managers a means by which to gauge interest and to manage attendance; yet the distribution of tickets is never problem free.

Another feature of special events is that they characteristically require production and technical

assistance in the form of a stage, audio-visual equipment, microphones, and lighting. If they are not already in possession, most of these types of equipment, as well as tents, booths, fences, tables, and portable generators, are available for rent.

Special consideration revolves around the choice of food and beverage and must take into account the image the organization wants the special event to promote as well as modern drinking and dietary habits and concerns (vegetarianism, food allergies). The same concerns often surround the need for entertainment. Entertainment must not offend, be booked and paid, and again, reflect positively on the organization.

Risk management is a further concern. It clearly goes without saying that safety procedures need to be spelled out and followed. Contingencies that must be planned for include the weather, illness, heart attack, and overconsumption of food or drink; as a result, if liability insurance is not enough, necessary insurance riders must be procured for the event.

A major issue of event planning is that of security—both in keeping unwanted guests or activists who would seek to disrupt the event out as well as to ensure the safety of those who are inside.

Finally, though it is less than glamorous, proper sanitation requires attention. Indeed, some companies have taken to renting trailers with generous “powder rooms” to get away from the indignities of port-a-potties. Planning should take into account the collection and disposal of trash.

Keith M. Hearit

See also Campaign; Cause-Related Marketing; Community Relations; Consumer/Customer Relations; Entertainment Industry Publicity/Promotion; Photo-Op; Program/Action Plans; Publicity

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EVOLUTION OF PUBLICITY AGENCIES

As did other corporate specializations during the 19th-century industrial revolution, the evolution of publicity agencies progressed naturally, organically. Practitioners who innovated publicity agencies learned their practice and its distinguishing characteristics in the service of various employers or individual clients. These often were politicians, but they also included large companies and non-profit organizations that were just beginning to learn the value of professional communications. The evolution of mass media, competitive industries, government programs, war, and industry led to many specializations as activities became routine, named, and professionalized.

Practitioners for many enterprises learned and honed the skills necessary to make their employers and clients “public.” In 2010, Kirk Hallahan (2010) emphasized how organizations need to be known; publicity is a strategic function for accomplishing that goal. The skills, opportunities, and abilities that characterized 19th century industrial changes demanded publicity. Professionals were increasingly willing to meet that need.

P. T. Barnum honed the skills of publicity and promotion in the mid-19th century. He needed a large market to sustain his spectacles. He needed to create awareness for what he offered and differentiate his show from his competitors who also were engaging in publicity.

The same was true of railroads. They were perhaps the most important industry of most of the 19th century. Owner and investors were often granted land to create rail systems. They needed to publicize the potential profits of such investments. They also needed to attract populations to areas opened by the railroad. That provided revenue from passengers as well as freight to and from new towns.

Thus, what came to be called public relations was a developing professional practice by the onset of the 20th century. The skills developed in many countries and for various reasons were now being bought and sold as professional services, through what came to be called publicity agencies. The standard tactic of the practice was press agency.

Professional publicity and promotion occur in two forms. The practitioner either works in an agency–client relationship or as an employee. The person or team is employed and charged with the responsibility of attracting attention, forming positive or negative attitudes, and motivating individuals to move toward outcomes sought by the sponsor.

This model of publicity and promotion was not unique to the 19th century, but became tailored to the societal and commercial interests and the available means of communication unique to the era. What became well-established professional agencies in abundance in the 20th century started as in-house operations or one-person services in the 19th century. Thus, to understand the practice as it is known today, we need to know how agencies began and evolved.

The first publicity agency in the United States was formed in Boston under the name Publicity Bureau. It was the amalgamation of the talents of George V. S. Michaelis, Herbert Small, and Thomas O. Marvin. The exact history of the firm is clouded in mystery, but it formed in the first years of the 20th century. Its client list included Harvard University. The men who forged this agency, like previous decades of peers in the trade, had come to publicity through the experience of newspaper work. Knowing the wiles and ways of journalism, they understood how journalists looking for stories wanted individuals to interview and copy that could be readily incorporated into the next newspaper edition or magazine issue.

The utility industry engaged local newspapermen to get stories into print that could favor one company's interests against those of another. In the Battle of the Currents (late 1880s and 1890s), George Westinghouse, aided by Samuel Insull, arranged for local newspapermen to write stories featuring the benefits of alternating current. This engineering and business initiative was opposed by Thomas Edison, who used similar tactics to applaud the safety of direct current.

Edison used a variety of publicity stunts and government relations in an effort to paint alternating electrical current as unsafe and thus an unwise industrial standard for electricity use in people's homes.

The evolution of the publicity bureaus was the natural progression of the emerging mass communication industry. News hounds and editorial writers, as well as feature story journalists, were creating a market for news by, among other tactics, finding fault with industrial barons. Bad news sells newspapers. But so does product publicity. Large industries created and responded to growing mass markets. National industrial and commercial complexes supplanted local businesses. Industrialized products began to supplant products sold by local word of mouth and established local manufacturers. To create and reach mass markets, publicity attracted attention and created brand awareness through mass media.

The Civil War was a battle of regions as well as of news stories. Careers of generals and presidents hung in the balance between favorable and hostile news stories. Out of this experience arose the American Red Cross, through the publicity and promotion efforts of Clara Barton. She and other reformers called for corporate, government agency, and private citizen support to identify, understand, and solve social problems that were often associated with poverty, disease, and disaster.

The evolving publicity bureaus recognized the link between corporate and robber baron image and a willingness to serve society. The amassing of wealth carried with it the stigma of ruthlessness. To soften this image, countless barons made philanthropic contributions and thereby fostered the future of nonprofit agencies. Publicity bureaus were a means for bringing the industrial baron and charity together. Once the relationship was forged, publicity was used for both parties. Names such as Rockefeller and Carnegie became widely associated with philanthropy, thanks to the work of experts in publicity. Favorable publicity was often an answer to the ostensible evils of amassed fortunes, unfair labor conditions, poverty, disease, and other economic disadvantages.

Early on, agencies realized the virtue of client relationships. They built personal and professional relationships with their clients, blending the

interests of the agency and the client. They knew that the continuing and future business for their agency depended on the ability to make a difference for clients. The leaders of these agencies recognized that success led to more success.

One of the earliest publicity firms formed and eventually combined the talents of George F. Parker and Ivy L. Lee. Parker contributed his journalistic skills, knowledge of the media, and desire to achieve clients' goals to one of the first publicity agencies. By 1904 when he helped found Parker and Lee, he had years of experience working for Democratic political organizations and major candidates. He had played a key role in the election of Grover Cleveland to the presidency of the United States in 1884. He understood the subtleties of message positioning and media relations. He wrote and placed stories. He staged events. He created excitement and organized rallies. He knew what reporters believed to be good news fodder and was able to provide it for his candidates and against their opponents. By the early 1890s, he had opened a small office in New York City that served as campaign headquarters. He recognized that reporters need to know where to find people who know where and how stories are developing. Parker was able to share these vital skills and well-honed best practices with his new partner, Ivy Lee, who became legendary for the development of client relationships and tactical options.

The history of public relations is inseparable from the needs of an individual or organization to be public, to get out its messages; agencies resulted from recognition by certain persons that they have special skills that can be sold. Where the profession goes and how it matures are uncertain, but it will forever wrestle with the aura of the professional who can influence media coverage and content. The early publicity bureaus knew this fact and sold their services, and sometimes their souls.

Robert L. Heath

See also Barnum, P. T.; Battle of the Currents; Client; Client–Agency Relationships; Differentiation; Ethics of Public Relations; Government Relations; Integrated Marketing Communication; Lee, Ivy; Nonprofit Organizations; Press Agency; Press Kit; Promotion; Publicity; Railroad Industry in the 19th Century

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EXCELLENCE THEORY

Excellence theory explains how public relations as a management function can contribute to the planning and response processes necessary for organizational effectiveness. *Excellence* was the term adopted from management theory to represent the theoretical foundations for the landmark study funded by a \$400,000 grant from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation. The excellence study, headed by James E. Grunig, resulted in the publication of three books: James E. Grunig's 1992 *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management* (theory and literature review); David M. Dozier, Larissa A. Grunig, and J. E. Grunig's 1995 *Manager's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management* (principles for implementing the research findings); and L. A. Grunig, J. E. Grunig, and Dozier's 2002 *Excellent Public Relations and Effective Organizations: A Study of Communication Management in Three Countries* (findings and theoretical refinement of excellence theory). The 2002 book observed, "The major premise of the excellence theory states that communication has value to an organization because it helps to build good long-term relationships with strategic publics" (p. 57).

The excellence study spanned over a decade and quantitatively studied 312 organizations on an international level; it included qualitative research in 25 of those organizations. It included organizations of all types, including corporations, government agencies, nonprofits, and associations. The team of researchers sought to identify key factors that make public relations "excellent" in its contribution to organizational effectiveness, its role as a management function, and the ideal

internal composition, structure, and role of the function. The organizations selected to participate in the excellence study either had records as excellent communicators and served as best-case exemplars or were known for poor communications, serving as examples of what impedes effective public relations.

By reviewing literature drawn from many disciplines, the team developed and tested theoretical propositions. Those propositions and research-based conclusions helped to form the excellence theory and were refined into the principles of excellence.

Factor analysis of the data, the mathematic search for data clustering around underlying patterns, revealed what the researchers labeled the “excellence factor.” The excellence factor comprises several characteristics that span organization size and type, culture, and other influences, allowing them to be labeled “generic” principles of excellence. These characteristics are the backbone of the excellence theory, providing a normative yet practical guide for how public relations can make the maximal contribution to an organization.

The excellence factor consists of 10 principles of excellence that apply generically across organizations, industries, sizes of enterprise, and cultures:

1. *Value of communication*, as seen by the CEO and top management of an organization. CEOs who placed higher value on public relations favored a communication function in their own companies with many of the attributes of excellence and were likely to have more effective public relations units. Senior public relations practitioners in these organizations were likely to participate in the overall strategic management of the organization.

2. *Empowerment in the dominant coalition to contribute to strategic organizational functions*. Active participation in strategic planning is necessary for public relations to contribute to organizational effectiveness, but access to the high-level process is difficult to attain. Public relations contributes frequently in the organization’s response to social issues and routine operations. It contributes less frequently to strategic planning, except in organizations in which the CEO places high value on the public relations function.

3. *An integrated public relations function*. This allows public relations to work harmoniously across the organization, with other functions, toward strategic goals. Public relations should not be subsumed by marketing or vice versa, but the two functions should work side by side. Integrating the public relations function allows it to facilitate communication across many departments or functional areas in an organization, staying consistently on message.

4. *Headed by a manager rather than a technician*. Public relations roles can be divided into the broad categories of *technician* (based on skill sets such as writing) and *manager* (based on business management knowledge such as research and advising). Senior public relations practitioners who perform primarily a management role rather than a technical role contribute to organizational effectiveness and excellence in the communication function.

5. *Model of public relations preferred by an organization*. Four models of public relations were examined: press agency (publicity), public information (dissemination of accurate information), two-way asymmetrical communication (scientific persuasion), and two-way symmetrical communication (mutual understanding). Both two-way models are based on research; both one-way models describe a simple output of communication. Although the two-way asymmetrical and the two-way symmetrical models are effective and present in excellent organizations, the two-way symmetrical model provides a vehicle for dialogue with publics. Dialogue through the symmetrical model results in long-term relationship building and maintenance. Therefore, the two-way symmetrical model is deemed the most excellent approach to conducting public relations.

6. *Knowledge of the communication department to actually practice the ideal type of excellent public relations*.

- The knowledge of *research methods* required to implement the two-way models poses a problem for some practitioners, limiting their potential for excellence.
- Knowledge of *managerial functions* such as budgeting, evaluating research, managing a

staff, and planning goals and objectives, is necessary for excellence.

- Knowledge of both *research and strategic management* must be present and used for public relations to contribute at the highest level.

7. *Activist pressure to force the organization to communicate with external publics.* The excellence study found organizations with higher levels of activism pressure had higher levels of successful public relations. Activist pressure encourages public relations to tackle important issues of organizational policy, to proactively manage issues, and to contribute at higher levels of strategic planning in the organization.

8. *Organizational culture, structure, and other employee-related variables.* Organizations with participative rather than authoritarian cultures, and organic rather than mechanistic or highly stratified structures, produce more efficacious public relations. Symmetrical, dialogical systems of internal communication and high levels of job satisfaction contribute to excellent public relations.

9. *Embodying diversity*, particularly in relation to the status of women in a female-dominated profession. Researchers hypothesized that a diverse public relations department could better understand and represent diverse publics in the organization's environment.

10. *Ethics and integrity* embodied across all roles in the public relations function, but specifically in advising top management (Verčič, L. A. Grunig, & J. E. Grunig, 1996; Bowen, 2008, 2009). Ethics take on a central role in the public relations function when building credibility and strong relationships with publics, in issues management and in crises. Top public relations executives not only act as ethical counselors to their CEOs and dominant coalitions but also offer input on the values of publics.

Organizations with a rigorous ethics training program and codified decision-making paradigm were more excellent than those that simply attempted to be ethical without investing resources in defining, training, and analyzing ethics.

Excellence theory provides a normative guide for how public relations should be conducted,

structured, and implemented. It delineates the factors that help public relations contribute to organizational excellence. This study provides empirical evidence to support the principles of excellence, and it explains how and why certain factors contribute to outstanding public relations. Pressure is increasing on many public relations professionals to justify expenditures on communication, to show how the function contributes to the bottom line of the organization (return on investment), and to show that nebulous concepts such as corporate reputation translate into a competitive advantage. Excellence theory shows that public relations does enhance the operation of an organization by maintaining two-way, balanced communication with the publics on whom the organization depends. Most importantly, excellence theory offers a way in which public relations can contribute to both organizational rectitude and the flow of communication in society for the good of the citizenry—in an *ethically responsible* manner.

Shannon A. Bowen

See also Dialogue; Ethics of Public Relations; Issues Management; Publicity; Symmetry; Systems Theory

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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Executive management consists of the personnel at the top of the organizational chart. Currently the term *C-suite* is used to refer to these corporate leaders.

These executives are charged with conceptualizing and operationalizing their organizations. They set the mission and craft the vision of the organization, create and implement the budget, lead strategic planning, and foster the organization's reputation and internal culture. They select operating standards, design and defend brand equity, foster the culture of the organization, and set the tone for the quality of relationships that are developed and maintained with the organization's stakeholders, including investors, markets, publics, and targeted audiences. Although they realize they must adapt their organization to the environment in which they operate, they often work to bend society to the satisfaction of the organization's need for resources.

The executive management team is divided by function. Function heads take their titles from the unique activities, functions, structures, and disciplines for which they are responsible. The person at the pinnacle of the organizational chart is the chief executive officer (CEO). In most organizations, whether business or nonprofit, this person reports to a board of directors. The typical executive arrangement empowers the board to hire, fire, and reward a CEO. The board helps set the direction—mission and vision—of the business, as well as advises its strategic planning. Nonprofits often have a similar arrangement; for instance, the CEO of a university is the president (or chancellor), who reports to a board of trustees. Many foundations and charitable nonprofit organizations

have a similar structural arrangement, with a board serving in a planning oversight capacity.

Beneath the CEO is a layer of executives, each one of which is responsible for her or his set of functions. The chief financial officer (CFO) or treasurer is accountable for the financial health of the business as well as its compliance with Securities and Exchange Commission regulations, in the case of a publicly traded company. The chief operating officer (COO) is responsible for the operations intended to make the organization successful because they generate revenue. Rare is the organization that does not have some variation of CEO, CFO, or COO—by whatever title. The CEO might also be president or the COO might be president, especially if the CEO is chairman of the board.

Various organizations, depending on their nature and position in any economy, will have additional function heads at the C level, or the persons at this level might hold the title of executive vice president, vice president, or manager. The specific titles are sensitive to the culture of the organization and the industry or nonprofit sector where it operates. Persons at this level might be in charge of marketing, public relations or public affairs (or corporate communication), technology, domestic activities, global activities, manufacturing, and other areas. In the nonprofit world, a typical title at this level would be the chief development officer, who is in charge of raising money.

The executive management team creates and manages the organization using a set of strategies framed in terms of management by objectives. In the broadest terms, it selects a set of desirable outcomes and formulates a budget to support the strategies needed to achieve these outcomes. Formulation of the budget is the means by which the organization applies revenue to achieve its mission and vision.

Executives are responsible for line and staff functions. A line function is anything that is vital for the success of an organization. For instance, in a manufacturing company, its manufacturing operations would be a line function. Staff functions are advisory to the persons who are responsible for line functions. In many organizations, legal counsel and public relations serve in staff capacities. Persons thus work in a matrix whereby key sets of line

and staff functions are interdependent for the success of the organization.

In companies that are primarily committed to marketing, public relations may be a line function supporting the marketing effort. In other companies, such as multinational petrochemical businesses, public relations is likely to be under the public affairs functions and operate as staff. As such, the public relations persons are responsible for helping to create and implement the communication philosophy and strategies of the organization.

In organizations committed to issues management, senior public relations personnel are involved in strategic planning, the development of standards of corporate responsibility, issue monitoring, and issue communication. This structure is most typical of businesses that work to positively position themselves in the public policy arena as well as engage in traditional marketing activities.

Businesses with a serious commitment to public relations may have a chief communication(s) officer (CCO), who is responsible for the communication function. As such, the person is likely to be a member of the executive cadre that develops the rationale and methods for fostering relationships, including dealing with activists and other stakeholding publics.

Relevant to the practice of public relations is the level in the organizational chart held by the most senior practitioner. The culture of many companies dictates the disciplines that persons must have mastered to serve at the highest levels by whatever name. For example, multinational petrochemical companies may have an engineering or legal counsel bias that results in communication personnel not rising above manager levels. In companies where marketing is the primary culture, public relations reports to marketing and is primarily limited to publicity and promotion.

For over a century, senior practitioners and leading academics have recommended that the counseling function of public relations be vital to the success of any organization. Public relations personnel can support the organization's efforts to raise revenue, but they can also help it reduce costs if effective public relations and human resources collaborate to reduce turnover and build the organization as one that is preferred by workers. Costs may be reduced by having effective

customer relationships and more collaborative rather than contentious relationships with activists. The same is true for public relations counsel prior to, during, and after a crisis. Senior practitioners can also serve as a vital part of the conscience of the organization, providing insight to ethical challenges.

Robert L. Heath

See also Activism; Issues Management; Management Theory; Managing the Corporate Public Relations Department; Marketing; Public Affairs; Publicly Held Companies; Securities and Exchange Commission; Stakes; Target

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EXPERIMENT/EXPERIMENTAL METHODS

An experiment is what John Hocking, Don Stacks, and Steven McDermott have labeled the *sine qua non* of all research. The experiment is a carefully controlled research study that allows the researcher to state within certain limits that a relationship exists between two elements and what causes the relationship to change. The experiment, as John Pavlik has lamented, is underrepresented in public

relations, partly because of a limited theoretical base and the applied nature of public relations. Another reason for its lack of use may be the 24/7 nature of public relations practice.

The experiment is a very powerful research method that is extremely limited in its ability to generalize to other situations. The limitation is based on the fact that the experiment requires as much control as can be placed on the actual implementation of the study. When an experiment is conducted, the researcher attempts to keep all other influences constant, varying only what is manipulated (the “independent” variable) and observing its effect on the “dependent” variable. The dependent variable, then, is dependent for its result on the manipulation of the independent variable. Because most experiments attempt to test a theory that makes predictions based on the relationship(s) between the independent variable and the dependent variable, an experiment predicts—or hypothesizes—the expected relationships. On the basis of a theory, the experiment is conducted, data are collected, and the results are submitted to a statistical analysis in a way that allows the researcher to state with a certain degree of confidence that the experiment’s results were based on hypothesized relationships and not on measurement or other types of error. Error is what the experiment attempts to reduce when the researcher establishes control.

There are a number of different experiments, each based on the degree of control placed on the study. The most controlled experiment is the laboratory experiment, where the researcher attempts to keep all possible sources of error—“spurious variables,” as Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley (1963) call them—out of the study. Relaxing control somewhat results in an experiment that simulates what happens when other variables are allowed to influence the hypothesized relationships. Relaxing the study even more results in a field experiment, where the study is conducted in a natural environment, but still with certain degrees of control.

Relationships, Causation, and Control

To better understand what the experiment does, one must understand relationships, causation, and control. A relationship in public relations

would be a tactic (independent variable) and the outcome expected (dependent variable). Thus we would expect a particular relationship if a press release were written poorly, contained explicit or vulgar language, and was the opposite of what the targeted publication typically published (this would be a negative relationship). For an experimental relationship to exist, the independent variable must cause change in the dependent variable, and there should be no other sources or extraneous variables that might have caused that change. The experiment helps to verify that cause–effect relationship by establishing that changes in the independent variable cause changes in the dependent variable, that the effect follows the cause, and that no third variable (or other unhypothesized variables) caused the change. To establish this, the researcher must establish control over the experiment.

Control, as previously noted, means that all possible sources of error—or invalidity, as Campbell and Stanley label it—have been accounted for. In an experiment, what is unknown is what the research worries about. There are seven sources of error or invalidity that the researcher attempts to control: *history* (what occurs before and during the experiment), *instrumentation* (impact of the measures used), *maturation* (how time impacts on the experiment), *mortality* (knowing who dropped out of the experiment), *regression* (potential problems associated with choosing people due to extreme scoring), *selection* (biased sampling of participants), and *testing* (impact of being tested on later tests). If the experiment is designed in such a way as to nullify each of the seven sources of invalidity or error, then the results can state, within some margin of safety, that one variable caused a change in another.

No other research method can establish causation; indeed, that is the primary reason for conducting an experiment. Surveys, focus groups, interviews, participant observations—all lack the formal control necessary to state that changes in one variable caused a change in another.

Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs

In 1963, Campbell and Stanley published *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*, a seminal work that established what

has become the standard set of experimental designs. They placed these designs into three classes: preexperimental, true experimental, and quasi-experimental. The preexperimental designs do not randomize participants to different independent variable manipulations (the “experimental conditions”) and do not provide a control group that receives no manipulation to test against for spurious relationships. The true experimental designs randomly assign participants to experimental conditions and provide a control group or groups against which to test the impact of the manipulations. Finally, the quasi-experimental designs vary between randomization and control group assignments and include what some call “time-series” designs in which the participants are observed over a number of times. Of the three designs, the true experiment is the only method that allows researchers to state that a change in one variable *causes* a change in another variable with great certainty.

The true experiment would take a group of people and randomly select them to either the experimental (manipulated) or the control (no manipulation) conditions. The classic true experimental design looks like this:

1. R O_1 ——— X —————> O_2
2. R O_3 —————> O_4

R represents random assignment to the groups O , which represent pretest and posttest measures, X represents that the people in group O_1 were exposed to the independent variable after an individual measure and then measured again at O_2 , and participants in the control group (no X or manipulation) were measured at the same time as the experimental group. If O_2 is different from O_1 , then we know that X caused the change, but could something else have had an impact—that “third” variable? A comparison between O_1 and O_3 and O_4 would let us know if history, maturation, instrumentation, regression, mortality, or testing could have affected the results. Selection is controlled for by random assignment to either experimental or control conditions.

The experiment is one of the most elegant research methods available to the public relations researcher. It is not often found in the public relations literature at the academic level and because

of time constraints is rarely used in day-to-day practice; however, the advent of the computer has provided some experimental simulation to test potential theories.

Don W. Stacks

See also Measuring/Measures; Quantitative Research; Statistical Analysis; Theory-Based Practice

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EXTENDED PARALLEL PROCESS MODEL OF RISK COMMUNICATION

Kim Witte’s extended parallel process model (EPPM) of risk communication focuses on the effectiveness of fear appeals in persuasive communication efforts by suggesting that communicators must provide receivers with efficacy or the feeling they are able to achieve the desired results. Otherwise the fear aroused by the situation can lead to denial or avoidance instead of more constructive responses to lower or avoid the risk. The health risk message model posits that messages should instill a sense of threat that will motivate but not overwhelm the receiver’s perception of efficacy. Overwhelming one’s sense of efficacy could force receivers to shut out messages as they focus on addressing their emotions as opposed to the desired behavior modification or change.

Fear appeal messages, the basis for EPPM, are created with the intent of arousing fear by promising negative consequences for a specific behavior. For years, scholars have debated the use of fear appeals, primarily in risk and health care campaigns, with most of their discussions focusing on the effects of varying intensities of fear appeals and how they affect audience response to the messages that accompany them.

Pioneering fear appeal studies focused on the motivational aspects of fear appeals. For example, in 1953, Carl Hovland, Irving Janis, and Harold Kelley proposed that fear is a learned drive and that protective recommendations will be accepted if they reduce the fear. Researchers determined that emotional tension must be apparent in an individual before fear appeals will successfully persuade. On the other hand, it was suggested that strong fear appeals might create defensive avoidance reactions, meaning individuals need to rid themselves of the fear that certain messages leave behind. This means that, in an attempt to dispel fear, a receiver would either adopt the suggested behavior or reject the message all together.

As a result, researchers concluded that too much fear would result in one actually avoiding and resisting the message. However, in 1971, Howard Leventhal suggested that message rejection could be avoided since the "protective adaptive behavior" stems from the receiver trying to control danger or threat and is not an attempt to control fear. Attitude, intention, and behavior changes are "danger control" processes, and denial is simply a form of "fear control." As a result, researchers claimed that fear may be reduced to denial unless the suggested action is completely effective in eliminating the danger.

Building on these ideas, Leventhal's drive paradigm suggested that while variables, such as portions of fear appeal messages, may turn fear off and on, they do not have important effects on the actual persuasion. As a result, the parallel response paradigm was proposed and focused on the cognitive processes associated with fear appeals. It argued that emotional responses such as fear, and adaptive responses like belief and behavior change, are arranged in a parallel relationship, therefore concluding that a stimulus is a source of information that is interpreted and then leads to a response.

In addition to looking at the suggested action in a fear appeal message, theorists reasoned that a fear appeal must be constructed in a way that makes it difficult for the receivers to see themselves as invulnerable to the threat. To advance this idea, researchers focused on the reassurance variable. Fear appeal messages were found to be more effective when the message recipients felt that they were at risk of experiencing the negative consequences portrayed in the message. This meant that people's attitude and behavior changes are motivated by the reassurance variable as opposed to fear.

Building on Leventhal's danger control and fear control research, EPPM suggests that fear is associated with fear control responses and is not directly related to danger control responses. This differs from past studies as it addresses both the cognitive and emotional factors associated with processing fear appeal messages. These processes are then tied to the success or failure of the fear appeal. Past studies usually focused on danger control processes and had, for the most part, ignored fear control processes and persuasive failure.

According to EPPM, there are two appraisals of a fear appeal message. First, the threat of the hazard is appraised. Having two parts, threat is composed of both severity and susceptibility. Severity is related to how bad or serious the audience perceives the threat's outcome will be, while susceptibility refers to whether or not receivers think they will be affected. The greater the perceived threat, or perceived severity and susceptibility, the more motivation an individual has to begin the second appraisal or the evaluation of the efficacy. Efficacy also has two components: response and self. Response efficacy is how effective the suggested action is perceived to be, while self-efficacy affects audiences' perceived ability to perform the actions. For a message to be effective, both response and self-efficacy should be established with an audience. The relationship between threat and efficacy is multiplicative. For example, high threat-high efficacy conditions have been found to foster positive changes in attitudes, intentions, and behaviors (danger control processes and outcomes), whereas high threat-low efficacy conditions initiate defensive avoidance or reactance (fear control processes and outcomes).

According to EPPM, an individual's perceived threat determines the degree of reaction to fear

appeals, while perceived efficacy determines the nature of the reaction. This means fear appeals and risk messages that leave the receiver with a clear understanding of the negative behavior's consequences, a feeling of vulnerability, and a reasonable suggested action to avoid the presented threat are good first steps in creating the desire for attitude and behavior change.

Emma K. Wertz

See also Persuasion Theory; Risk Communication; Risk Perception

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EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL RHETORIC

Rhetoric offers practical advice as to how to establish credibility, how to construct logical arguments, and how to emotionally connect with an audience. Rhetoric also presents an epistemology that steers away from naïve realism to show how knowledge is generated and socially constructed through communication. This allows the public relations practitioner to understand the complexities at hand when building relationships with an organization's stakeholders, whereas the critical scholar can use rhetoric to understand how organizations attempt to achieve specific political or economic goals. In the words of Robert L. Heath, while scholars of internal organizational rhetoric want to improve the workplace, scholars of

external organizational rhetoric often seek to make society a good place to live. This entry gives a brief overview of the contributions public relations scholars have made to the study of external organizational rhetoric and also points out some of the challenges that remain.

Contributions

Rhetoric helps organizations focus on the different interpretations and zones of meaning that stakeholders have and assists in codefining and cocreating meaning. Rhetoric is simply the essence of an organization's relationship with its stakeholders and something that strengthens public opinion processes by orchestrating a clash of viewpoints. It has thus been argued that external organizational rhetoric is a legitimate activity and positive force. Rhetoric can also be used in manipulative ways, however, something rhetorical criticism attempts to address. Michael J. Palenchar and K. R. Fitzpatrick, for instance, point out that front groups violate the ethical and rhetorical tradition with regards to listening and striving for shared meaning.

External organizational rhetoric has been analyzed using the ancient work of Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian, as well as more modern rhetoricians such as Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, Stephen Toulmin, and Lloyd Bitzer. Many published studies have an intrinsic character, but there is also a slate of publications that focus on rhetorical concepts such as enthymematic argumentation, ethos, paradoxes, apologia, stasis, metaphors, model and antimodel arguments, ideographs, as well as the notion of rhetorical situations and outlaw discourse.

One example of ethos analysis was pointed out by Øyvind Ihlen (2009), who analyzed corporate strategies applied to create the impression of corporations as credible environmental actors. Corporations proffer, for example, that they have cleaned up their own house by expanding recycling operations or moving to curb emissions. This rhetoric has been criticized for not engaging with fundamental problems such as the use of fossil fuels.

The best-developed line of research on external organizational rhetoric continues to be that which deals with crisis communication, including the notions of self-defense, or apologia, and dissociation

like those explored by Keith M. Hearit. Typical strategies include separations between opinion and knowledge, individual and group, and act and essence, all of which signify attempts to absolve the organization from guilt. When an organization actually does apologize for an act of wrongdoing, Hearit stated in 2006, it humiliates itself in a form of “secular remediation ritual” (p. 205). This eventually functions as a memorial that can restore faith in the social hierarchy by praising the social values that have been broken.

Challenges

George Cheney and Lars Thøger Christensen have criticized the ontological assumption concerning the positive view of a marketplace of ideas where the material has no place. It becomes questionable as to whether the ethics of external organizational rhetoric can be grounded in this idea as long as there is no guarantee that all arguments will be heard, or that better arguments will prevail over self-interested arguments.

The issue of materiality—concerning resources and technology, for instance—and how this affects dialogic ideals is also echoed in a special issue of *Management Communication Quarterly* (2011, 25[3]). The contributors point to challenges current scholarship into external organizational rhetoric faces relating to the discrepancy between theoretical ideals and rhetoric in practice. Public relations is most experienced at helping organizations achieve their own interests—at the expense of others, if necessary. A basic problem relates to the self-interest of organizations, particularly profit-driven corporations. Should self-interest be embraced and corporations be encouraged to openly communicate this motive—or is society better off with a rhetoric spurred by the tensions that exist between the ideal and real? It could be argued that recognition of economic rationality does not necessarily have to be celebrated, due to the tendency to externalize costs at the expense of others. Ideals can still be posed and encouraged.

Technology—and social media, more specifically—also plays a role in providing opportunities, as well as in imposing constraints on external organizational rhetoric in its intended application, the addressing of stakeholder concerns. One possibility is that social media encourages more dialogic

rhetoric, but little research has been conducted on this topic.

Øyvind Ihlen

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Rhetorical Arena (Crisis Theory); Rhetorical Theory

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EXTERNAL PUBLICATIONS

External publications are internally produced media used to connect a company or organization to its publics. Once limited to print-only publications, organizations now can use the digital environment

to publish news of interest to external publics. Newsletters and magazines, both in print and digital form, are distributed to different external constituents to inform them of relevant news, innovations, and activities within the organization. Blogs, websites, e-newsletters, and other digital publications offer a low-cost, efficient way to update information more frequently and, with mobile technology's significant reach, many organizations are moving away from expensive print publications to affordable digital communications.

External publications vary in size, purpose, and audience depending on the organization that produces them and the objectives for the publications. External publications are seen as more credible and consistent than advertising and contain articles and information written in a professional manner. Some organizations, however, do use external publications to complement advertising or marketing goals. There are many types of external publications that organizations use to keep in contact with relevant audiences. A large entity may produce several external publications for customers and potential customers, distributors and salespeople, and shareholders and investors. The budget allotted for an external print publication dictates the publication form, from a simple newsletter to a glossy, four-color magazine. Glossy magazines translate well to mobile tablets.

The customer publication is targeted at current and potential customers of a business and serves to entertain, inform, and maintain consistent contact. External publications are more thoroughly read than ads, and while advertising budgets can fluctuate, a monthly or annual newsletter can provide customers with continuity. A quality external publication can create loyalty, reinforce the company's name, objectives, products and services, and can let customers become more acquainted with the business via profiles of employees or letters from high-ranking management. Success stories from satisfied customers, or information about promotions, achievements, and innovations, can create and maintain interest from the customer base. An external publication is also a good way to exhibit a company's activities separate from normal business, such as corporate social responsibility programs.

The sales publication is a useful tool for keeping distributors and salespeople connected and

informed about new procedures, policies, technology, and competitors. An external publication to distributors can build morale while reminding distributors of the company's business objectives. By spotlighting different distributors, they can encourage and reward salespeople, keeping them motivated to contribute to marketing goals. Solving hypothetical sales problems, demonstrating sales techniques, and including tip sheets can improve business and maintain a confident, trained sales force. By keeping distributors and salespeople up-to-date about competitors' actions, salespeople will be better prepared to field questions from customers about competitors' products and services.

The audiences most concerned with the activities of a public company are the investors and shareholders, and a publication targeting them can fortify the relationship between a company and those with a direct stake in it. Budgets are generally higher for these publications, which are usually printed as a magazine, with longer articles and more detailed descriptions of company changes, policies, and developments. It is common for these publications to have biographies of executives, and they may often contain quarterly or annual financial documents. One such publication is the annual report. It is crucial for a company to maintain a healthy relationship with its shareholders and investors, and producing a well-written publication can create a favorable image. Increasingly, companies are moving away from expensive printed annual reports, opting for digital distribution.

Once it is determined that a company wishes to produce an external publication, there are several options, depending on its size and budget. A small company may choose to produce the publication in house by using desktop publishing software. It might get its target audience from current customers or may be willing to purchase a distribution list. A larger company might have an in-house employee with journalistic experience to work exclusively on all its external publications. Hiring a public relations or advertising firm will incur greater costs but is likely to ensure a quality publication.

An external publication should reflect the values and image of the organization it represents. The longevity of the publication is key in determining the types of articles and information it contains.

If it is published on a weekly or monthly basis, the articles can be more specific, timely, and detailed. If it is an annual or biannual publication, the articles are usually more generic and used as an overview of an organization and its activities. Either way, the publication should have a design or format that incorporates the image and mission of the company (Altshul, 1986).

In-flight magazines are some of the most widely read external publications. Delta's *Sky Magazine* and Southwest Airlines' *Spirit Magazine* contain articles about business, sports, entertainment, and leisure travel destinations that the airlines service.

Not all successful external publications have to come from large organizations. A local hospital could publish a newsletter about health and fitness, or a university could keep interest in its activities with an alumni magazine.

External publications can be as varied in size and scope as the organizations that produce them. But a well-written, informative, and entertaining external publication can be more credible and

more thoroughly read than advertising and can give a company direct exposure to a key public.

Brenda J. Wrigley

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Brochure; Campaign; Community Reports; Fact Sheet; Flier; Promotion; Publicity

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F

FACT SHEET

A fact sheet is what its name implies: a compilation of facts about a certain topic. Fact sheets are typically used as supplements to news releases, to fill information requests, or as one of several pieces in a press kit. Many organizations keep them on file for standard topics (corporate history, general business facts) so that they can respond quickly to requests for information.

Fact sheets should be written with clarity and for ease of use. First, each one should be focused on one topic. The topic can be as broad as general facts about a company or as limited as facts about a specific community service program. Limiting the topic to a single subject allows for focus in the writing and precision in responding to information requests.

Next, the fact sheet should be written in as direct a manner as possible. Many fact sheets are produced as bulleted lists, with subheads to direct the reader to specific areas of interest. Such a format enables users to quickly find specific points they are looking for. This format is particularly appropriate for media users, who turn to fact sheets for additional information beyond a news release when writing a story. Full sentence style is also used, since not all material lends itself to bullet points, and some material can be presented more clearly in full sentences. As with a news release, journalistic writing style should be followed, although headings are often used. A third

possibility is a combination of the two styles: a heading, followed by a brief explanatory paragraph, followed by bullet points. Whatever writing style is chosen, the determining factor should be how to most clearly present the information for easy use.

Finally, the format of a fact sheet should mirror that of a news release. Appropriate contact information is a must, since the piece may not always be used to supplement a news release or as part of a press kit. Even in those uses, it could become separated from the other materials. The date of the most recent update of the information should also be included. This date assures the reader that the information is current and gives the public relations practitioner a quick reference point for knowing when information should be reviewed.

Increasingly, organizations are making fact sheets available on their websites. For example, General Electric has fact sheets on topics such as company history and company values accessible through the News Room on its home page (www.ge.com). Useful graphics and pictures are easily included through this medium. As both the media and members of the public come to rely more on the Web as a source of information, making company information available in this manner will become more of an expectation than an option.

Maribeth S. Metzler

See also Press Kit

FAQs

Prepared by public relations practitioners and included in media kits and on websites, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and their corresponding answers help explain new or technical products, services, mergers, and special events or issues to journalists and other target audiences. Prepared in a question-and-answer format, FAQs are a variation of the traditional fact sheet, and they often accompany news releases, photographs, and related materials to provide additional information that journalists may need to produce stories or that other audiences may need to better understand some product, stance, organization, service, or issue. FAQs can also supplement fact sheets or technical specification sheets.

In the early days of the World Wide Web, a simple FAQ page was placed online to answer questions about companies, products, and services, but today's Web-based FAQs often incorporate embedded links to guide audiences to more specific information about a particular question and answer or to graphics, animation, charts, or video or audio files. Although standby statements and media advisories also incorporate a question-and-answer format, FAQs serve different purposes than those communication tools.

When developing FAQs, public relations practitioners should place themselves in the minds of the target audiences to identify the questions a typical journalist, consumer, employee, or other stakeholder would pose. If possible, questions can be further identified and honed by using focus groups; inquiring informally with members of the target audience; pretesting the information by distributing it and following up with the target audience to see how well the information was understood or if there are additional questions or areas of confusion; and drawing upon previous audience queries for related products, services, or stances to identify likely questions or areas of confusion and to develop the corresponding answers.

Diana Knott

See also Online Public Relations; Website

FEATURE

A feature story, also referred to simply as a feature, differs from a news article in tone and organizational structure. Whereas news articles are written in objective journalistic style, feature stories employ a more creative style intended to capture the interest of readers through the use of details and descriptions.

News articles are written in inverted pyramid style, with most important information first (who, what, when, where); in contrast, feature stories are written with an interest-catching beginning, a body or middle that provides background or context, and an end that makes a final point or gives perspective to the topic. In features, sometimes the most important information is saved until the end. Features are usually longer than news articles, and they are not written to "cut from the bottom" to fit the available space. Whereas news articles offer the bare facts, presented briefly, features offer more detail.

Advantages of features for public relations practitioners include their "shelf life." Features may be written far in advance of publication and used when the topic becomes particularly timely. Feature writing can capture emotions and imaginations more effectively than can news writing. On the minus side, feature writing can be more time-consuming and creatively challenging, and sometimes finding the mass media market for features is difficult. For organizational publications, feature stories are an important communication tool.

Public relations practitioners can write features about people, organizations, programs, or services within organizations, products, and issues. Organizational leaders, employees, and volunteers offer obvious subjects for feature stories. Organizational anniversaries provide a focus for feature-length organizational histories. How-to articles are another feature approach. Topics of current public interest may provide another angle for the public relations writer to address.

Bonnie Parnell Riechert

See also Media Relations; News Story; News/Newsworthy

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FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is a five-person, independent government agency that has as its primary goal the protection of consumers from unfair or deceptive business practices. The FTC originally was created in 1914 to prohibit unfair competition, but Congress later expanded the commission's powers to include regulation of false and deceptive advertising. The commission's basic authority stems from Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (FTC Act), which states that "unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce are hereby declared unlawful" (5 U.S.C. §45 [a] [1]).

Historically, the FTC was known for timidity and delay; with the consumer movement of the 1960s and 1970s, however, Congress enlarged both the agency's budget and its powers. As a result, the FTC aggressively went after some of the nation's most prominent advertisers and by the late 1970s was viewed by many as the most powerful U.S. regulatory agency. In the 1980s, however, the FTC's influence declined after the Reagan administration significantly reduced the agency's funding. The FTC again increased its enforcement efforts in the 1990s, targeting the tobacco industry for the "Joe Camel" campaign and other advertising designed to appeal to children, as well as a number of national advertisers for false advertising in the form of program-length infomercials. Since 1996, the agency has cracked down on Internet fraud and emphasized through enforcement actions, working papers, and law enforcement initiatives that the FTC's consumer protection mandate extends to Internet, as well as traditional retailers.

Through its Bureau of Consumer Protection, the FTC works to shield consumers against false, unfair, misleading, or deceptive advertising. The FTC defines advertising broadly, exercising jurisdiction over much more than just standard, paid-for product publicity advertisements. Public relations practitioners must be aware that the FTC considers all activities or communications meant to draw public attention to a product, service, person, or organization for purposes of trade as *advertisements* and therefore subject to regulation. This definition therefore includes press and video releases, sales brochures, direct mail, product labels, and promotional contests, as well as standard media advertisements.

Since 1983, the FTC has defined deceptive advertising as "a material representation, omission, or practice that is likely to mislead a consumer acting reasonably under the circumstances." Three elements should be noted about this definition. First, a literally true statement may qualify as deceptive if by omitting a fact it thereby creates a misleading implication. Second, an advertisement will be considered deceptive if it is likely to mislead a reasonable consumer with the characteristics of the target market, even if the ad does not in fact deceive anyone. Finally, even an advertisement that is likely to mislead the public is nevertheless not deceptive unless the misleading claim qualifies as "material." According to the FTC, material claims are those that are likely to affect a consumer's decision to purchase a product or service. Ambiguities contained in advertisements are generally interpreted against the advertiser. Whereas false statements contained in advertisements are almost always deceptive, opinion statements that are incapable of being proved true or false and that reasonable consumers would not believe to be true fall into the realm of "puffery" and are acceptable.

Since the 1970s, the FTC has also required that advertisers provide reasonable evidence to back up verifiable product claims before those claims appear in an advertisement. Claims made without this required substantiation are considered deceptive, even if later they prove to be true. If an advertiser states that test results prove something about a product, the test must have actually been conducted in a scientifically accurate manner and the results must not be presented deceptively. Furthermore, FTC guidelines require that people, including

celebrities, who make endorsements implying that they use the endorsed products must actually use those items they endorse.

In 2009, the FTC revised its endorsements and testimonials guidelines to apply to product promotions made over the Internet, including via blogs and social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Under those guidelines, online product reviewers must disclose any material connection they have to the seller, including payment or exchange of in-kind services those reviewers receive in return for their reviews. In 2010, a public relations firm hired by a video game developer settled FTC charges that the firm had its interns pose as ordinary consumers to post laudatory game reviews on an online vendor's website.

An FTC investigation of an advertiser's methods can result from either consumer complaints or the commission's own initiative. Most often, investigations begun by the FTC end by the issuance of a consent order, whereby the advertiser agrees to stop running the objectionable advertisement but does not admit to any violation of the law. The FTC can also bring a formal administrative complaint against the advertiser, which requires a hearing before an administrative law judge. The judge's ruling in the case can be appealed to the full commission and eventually to the U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal. If an advertising claim is ruled to be deceptive, the FTC has three possible remedies: (1) It can issue a cease and desist order, which forbids the advertiser from making further deceptive claims; (2) it can issue an affirmative disclosure order, which requires the advertiser to provide consumers with additional information to ensure that future advertisements are not deceptive; or (3) it can order the advertiser to run corrective advertising that specifically corrects past false claims.

The FTC also has the power to issue Trade Regulation Rules that define and prohibit illegal advertising practices on an industry-wide basis.

Nicole B. Cáñez

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FEMINIZATION THEORY

The feminization of public relations began in the 1980s when women became the majority of public relations practitioners. Corporations attracted women into public relations departments to satisfy government requirements of affirmative action to hire women and minorities. Recent figures from several studies suggest that women comprise 73% to 85% of the public relations workforce.

Despite advances, women are not wholly represented in the top ranks of public relations at those percentages. Several U.S. and international studies from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), and the U.S. Census demonstrate gender disparities because women represent slightly more than half of all managers. A number of factors contribute to why the number of women moving from specialist work to managerial work drops. Factors such as family obligations, stereotyping of feminine characteristics, and stigmas against technical work contribute to women's lowered representation in managerial ranks.

Feminization theory in public relations explains and predicts the relationship between gender and workplace outcomes. Individual women experience negative outcomes because of feminization, such as pay gap, slower advancement, and less professional development opportunities compared to men. The industry experiences negative outcomes because of feminization. Specifically, the reputation of public relations is devalued as a "soft" field rather than a savvy, evidence-driven

practice, and public relations personnel fight a long-term battle getting a position within executive management.

The “Velvet Ghetto” and the “Feminine Fallacy”

The term *Velvet Ghetto* originated in a *Business Week* article in 1978, “PR: ‘The velvet ghetto’ of affirmative action.” The article accurately predicted that in 20 years, more than half of the public relations workforce would be women because these positions were available, nonthreatening, and noncompetitive for managerial positions. In response, the IABC Foundation commissioned a series of Velvet Ghetto investigations to determine the effects of the increasing number of women in the field. As lead investigator, Elizabeth L. Toth summarized the findings of the research in 1988: Women are more likely to see themselves as technicians than managers; women receive lower salaries than men; and all professions that shift from male to female dominance undergo a decrease in status and salary. This problem is known as the “feminine fallacy.” Public relations appears to be an open field to women, but women consistently experience gender-based discrimination in myriad ways.

Glass Ceiling Studies

Throughout the 1990s, the PRSA Foundation commissioned a team of researchers to explore practitioner salaries as well as their perceptions of job satisfaction, sexual harassment, and roles. Through a series of “Glass Ceiling” studies spanning nearly a decade, researchers concluded that women practitioners experience a glass ceiling in public relations. Women try to “do it all” by performing managerial activities *and* technical tasks for lower pay than men.

Liberal and Radical Feminist Strategies

In 2001, Larissa A. Grunig, Toth, and Linda Childers Hon compiled a comprehensive literature review on this issue in *Women in Public Relations: How Gender Influences Practice*. The essence of this review led to liberal feminist strategies that women should employ to change themselves—including learning to negotiate more, monitoring

their behavior, seeking out mentors, returning to school for advanced degrees, getting accredited, and attending after-hours functions to “get ahead.”

Conversely, radical strategies promote that organizational and social structures should be changed to enable women to balance career and family. Most importantly, organizations should pay women and men equally according to experience, education, and merit. Organizations should also adopt family-friendly policies; enact more objective hiring practices; and target women for advancement opportunities by providing mentorship, role models, and professional development. Large-scale policies should make unequal pay practices illegal and allow both women and men more family leave time and benefits.

Recent Trends in Feminization Research

Since the first edition of *Encyclopedia of Public Relations*, scholars and associations have forged new directions of research and practice to counter negative effects of the feminization of the field. Recent trends in research include topics of life-work balance, structural and discursive power, and diversity and identity.

Life-Work Balance

Most recent research extending feminization theory has honed in on life-work balance conflicts and strategies. In 2007, David Dozier, Bey-Ling Sha, and Masako Okura found that women pay a toll when they disrupt their careers to have children. Barriers women face include difficulty getting back into the field, returning to lower status positions or organizations, and limited opportunities for career advancement as a result of increased family responsibilities. Research by Linda Aldoory, Hua Jiang, Toth, and Sha also highlights the persistence of the stereotype that life-work balance is a “woman’s issue.” Practitioners perceived that public relations is not an industry that enables good work-life balance, and they employ some unfavorable personal strategies like sleeping less and leaving desirable jobs that don’t allow for balance.

Despite the consistent findings of inequality, this body of work gives voice to practitioners as they experience marginalization through institutional

and societal restrictions. In 2011, Natalie T. J. Tindall, Sha, and Dozier suggested organizational reforms like employing flexible work practices and individual efforts like focusing on work–life effectiveness and career path flexibility. Furthermore, PRSA now also sponsors a National Committee on Work, Life, and Gender to suggest evidence-based reforms for reducing life–work conflicts.

Structural and Discursive Power

Power as conceptualized in the words, messages, and structures of public relations has recently been interrogated by scholars like Aldoory, Bryan Reber, Bruce Berger, and Toth (2008). For example, scholars and associations are reconsidering fundamental histories and theories of public relations. Only until recently have women leaders in public relations in history been highlighted. Second, as evidence of their absence, James E. Grunig's traditional four models of public relations are based on men's approaches to communication (P. T. Barnum, Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays). As women are largely absent in public relations' history, Brigitta Brunner found in a 2006 study that women are also underrepresented as writers of and players in public relations textbooks. Such arguments work to expand Pam Creedon's (1991) suggestion that roles theory is gendered and scholars need to "re-vision the value of work in public relations" and "deconstruct the 'trash compactor' model we have used to condense a multiplicity of experiences into two hierarchical roles" (p. 80).

Diversity and Identity

Since the *Encyclopedia of Public Relations*, first edition, feminist scholars have introduced new approaches to studying gender disparities and have examined how gender relates to other marginalizations according to race and national culture. For example, in 2007, Sha and Rochelle Ford interrogated the extent to which requisite variety can be considered as a possible response to racial inequality among practitioners. Scholars like Donnalyn Pompper (2007) and Tindall (2009) have also linked gender and racioethnic identities as they co-exist and reproduce one another to produce a "double jeopardy" effect for some. Finally, non-U.S. researchers are finding evidence of feminization and

new empowerment strategies in Germany, Indonesia, Taiwan, Ghana, and Russia, among others.

Overall, feminization theory has illuminated the complexity of women's experiences in public relations. It demonstrates that women's work continues to be undervalued, which has industry-wide consequences. Although researchers and associations alike promote a range of empowerment strategies, the future of women's status in the field will largely depend on organizational and policy initiatives toward increased diversity and equality.

Jennifer Vardeman-Winter

See also Discrimination in Public Relations; Diversity: Public Relations Profession; Gender and Public Relations

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FIELD THEORY

Field theory is an approach to analyzing social relations that was developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002). He conceived of fields as hierarchical social structures in which people try to either preserve or acquire dominance. Fields determine the way people perceive and relate to one another in areas such as politics, business, art, science, philosophy, journalism, and entertainment. Across these areas, fields often overlap with and nest within one another. Within any given field, people's relations and conflicts play out according to specific rules, rewards, and sanctions that are recognized as legitimate by the field's members. Field theory is useful for studying public relations because it can specify how the profession's characteristic activities affect the balance of power throughout society.

Examples of fields include the overall “field of power” in a society, the economic field of capitalist competition, fields of politics at different levels, and various types of what Bourdieu called “fields of cultural production,” for example, academia, the art world, the literary world, popular and classical music, journalism, and other parts of the entertainment professions and communications media.

Fields have a hierarchical structure because their members perceive one another to occupy

relatively high or low positions depending on how much of the limited resource of power or “capital” they possess. Capital comes in various forms, and Bourdieu's work usually focuses on three: economic capital, which tends to dominate in the general field of power in capitalist societies; cultural capital, which artists, writers, scholars, and scientists tend to value, and which is under constant threat of being corrupted by economic capital; and a broader type of symbolic capital, which comes in forms such as honor, status, legitimacy, and gender domination. Less frequently, Bourdieu's work also analyzes the workings of social capital, academic capital, and political capital.

Field theory provides a method for studying the interconnections of different parts of society in which different forms of capital are valued. Bourdieu differentiates between fields that are relatively autonomous and those that are relatively heteronomous. A field tends toward autonomy when its members value one well-defined form of capital, such as the economic profit that corporations value or the expressive skills that artists and entertainers value. A field tends toward heteronomy when its members value different types of capital in differing ways. For example, the political field in a democracy becomes heteronomous when its members begin to view fundraising (economic capital) as more important than the ability to unite and mobilize different groups (social capital) or to gain publics' respect (symbolic capital); the field of professional journalism becomes heteronomous when news organizations value profits and advertising revenue (economic capital) more than they value reporting skills (cultural capital) and professional ideals of public service (symbolic capital).

These concepts of fields and capital have been found relevant to public relations in several contexts. One is the context of how practitioners can help organizations attain dominance within their relevant arenas of competition by acquiring relevant forms of capital. In every field, some people, groups, or institutions will have relatively high amounts of capital (the “dominant”), and others will have relatively low amounts (the “dominated”).

Even though dominant field members often strive for monopolistic control, fields tend to be internally dynamic because their members continue to engage in competitive struggle. This internal dynamism is driven by people's efforts to either

conserve or subvert the field's valued form of capital. Members of a field who possess more of this capital tend to follow "conservation strategies," such as preventing new participants from entering the field, endorsing prevailing worldviews and values, and maintaining the status quo of dominant and dominated. By contrast, members of a field who are relatively less endowed with its valued form of capital are more inclined toward "subversion strategies," for example siding with underdogs and outsiders, challenging and disrupting the status quo, and questioning established worldviews and values.

In sum, Bourdieu's notion of field struggles consists of the following component parts: (a) human agents, who possess (b) dispositions (which he calls *habitus*, singular and plural) that determine their behavior and who occupy (c) positions within a field and rely on (d) strategies of conservation or subversion in order to acquire or transform (e) capital that will enable them to occupy (f) a preserved or changed position in the field.

Field theory raises several questions that are relevant to the social impact and significance of public relations. What types of capital do different types of public relations tactics and strategies help practitioners and clients secure and accumulate? Can public relations transform a field by affecting the types of capital its members value? If so, how?

To answer such questions, field theory has been recommended as a way to make practitioners more sensitive to the different ways power works in different parts of society. If practitioners know which forms of capital their target publics value, they are likely to make well-informed choices about how to influence or manage relationships with them. For example, to win over public opinion in certain fields, sometimes what is necessary is the cultural capital of being able to make a convincing argument; at other times, it is the symbolic capital of being perceived as a charismatic, empathetic, or trustworthy person or organization; and at other times, it is the economic capital of funds that can buy media space and set the public agenda through advertising or other forms of publicity.

Field theory offers an alternative perspective on public relations ethics. Rather than evaluating practices according to moral-philosophical standards of rightness, a field analysis could more neutrally point out how certain practices either conserve or

subvert certain types of capital, and whether those practices benefit dominant or dominated members of a field.

Thomas Hove

See also Bourdieu, Pierre, and Public Relations; European Social Theory and Public Relations; Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, Symbolic; Social Capital; Zones of Meaning

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FLACK

Flack is a derogatory term for a publicist or press agent in the entertainment industry. This slang term, primarily used in the United States, has had its use extended with the passage of time to include all public relations practitioners and activities. The origin of the term is unknown, but many attribute the coining of the term to *Variety* magazine, which some sources say began using the term as a tribute to motion picture industry publicist Gene Flack in acknowledgment of his skills in promoting movies in the 1940s.

Wes Pederson, director of communications and public relations, Public Affairs Council, in a letter to the Public Relations Society of America's *The Strategist*, attributed the first explanation of the term in common usage to Peter Martin in a *Saturday Evening Post* article in the April 1, 1950, issue. Martin's lead in that article, titled "Hollywood Says: 'Please Stay Away!'" reads, "My friend, the movie-studio flack, came back from hoofing it around the jungle of soundstages and buildings, all

fronts and no backs, that was his beat.” In the very next sentence, Martin explains that “flack is Hollywood slang for publicity worker or press agent.”

However, the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists the first reference to the use of *flack* as slang to Stewart Sterling. In his 1946 Fire Marshal Pedley detective story, *Where There's Smoke*, one of the characters announces, “That publicity flack is here.”

The first reference book to include the term, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, was Al Berkman's 1961 *Singers' Glossary of Show Business Jargon*. The term was defined in that reference source as “a member of the Publicity Department (usually of a motion picture studio); press agent.”

The *Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins*, published in 1962, notes that

flack is a slang term common in the theatrical and popular-music fields, meaning “press agent.” We have been familiar with it in this sense for years and suspect it antedates the World War II meaning of “flak” . . . ; that of antiaircraft fire.

The *Morris Dictionary* goes on to observe that “it has never enjoyed the wide popular acceptance given, for example, the term ‘disc jockey,’ which became current in entertainment circles at about the same time.”

Almost every reference to flack includes another reference to flak, a 1938 term for an antiaircraft gun, borrowed from the German *flak*, an acronym formed from *Fl(ieger)a(bwehr)k(anone)*, literally airplane defense cannon. One surmises that if, in fact, there is an association between these two terms, it is meant to imply that a Hollywood press agent or publicist is a cannon of empty rhetoric.

More likely is the association with one of the now obsolete definitions at the root of the word flack. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word derives from the Middle English formation of the Middle Dutch *vlacken* and the Icelandic *flaka* meaning “to flap.” The transitive form of the word meant “to move or shake intermittently.” In agricultural usage, flack meant “to beat with a flail.”

Taken together, it seems more probable that the original slang had more to do with someone being a “mover or shaker” or actively pushing a story or client with such vigor that journalists felt they were being “beaten with a flail,” than anything to do with an air defense cannon or the type of shell it fires.

However, many an Allied bomber pilot in World War II reported that the German flak was “thick enough to walk on” and interfered with their mission, so one could make a case that the slang derives from the intensity of the publicist's effort or the journalists' impression that the never-ending stream of press releases “interferes” with their self-appointed mission to inform the public.

Fortunately, the term *flack* seems to have entered a period of remission in most mainstream publications. Dennis L. Wilcox and Glen T. Cameron (2003) noted that “in recent years most publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, have refrained from using the ‘F’ word in print.” However, they also point out that “trade publications such as *Editor & Publisher* still use it on a regular basis” (p. 11).

Although the term has found its way overseas, as many slang terms often do, it is not as prevalent there as it was in America in the 1950s and 1960s. One hopes that the increasing professionalism of public relations will reduce the perceived need on the part of journalists and others throughout the world to apply such a derogatory term to the practice of relationship building.

Robert S. Pritchard

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FLAME

For more than a decade, *flame* has been used to describe hostile or insulting online messages, and it

has become an accepted word. Flaming has important image management implications for individuals and organizations.

"Sending abusive messages to one with whom one disagrees" is considered "an aggressive use of email, bulletin boards, or chat rooms" (Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant, & Kelly, 2003, p. 386) and often involves personal attacks. *The New Hacker's Dictionary* includes related terms: *flamage* (content), *flame bait* (message designed to solicit flames or provoke flame war), *flame on* (to begin or continue flaming), *flame war* (caustic altercation), and *flamer* (flame prone). Flaming also has been used to refer to speaking overzealously or unceasingly. Recent use dates back to 1969, and flame may have arisen from Chaucer's work. Flame on is a pun based on the Human Torch from Marvel Comics.

Flaming is the most famous and publicized online misconduct. Further, it is one of the most enduring problems for users of computer communication. Flaming is a breach of *netiquette*, Internet etiquette (accepted conventions for behavior online). Larry Scheuermann and Gary Taylor compiled netiquette suggestions: "don't flame," use the Golden Rule, respond as if in person, recognize that flames detract from topics, and avoid taking offense. Other recommendations include avoiding quick responses to hostile messages, considering alternative interpretations and responses, stressing areas of agreement, softening language used to disagree, and recognizing tone and word choice. Many responses, especially if from a "rapid-fire reply key," convey sentiments avoided in carefully crafted memos. Breaches in netiquette, such as flaming, may not result in retaliation. However, they often create negative images of the perpetrator and, if work related, of that individual's employer. Certainly, understanding group conventions and social politeness norms gives one an advantage.

Factors influencing flaming include the degree of anonymity and the likelihood of continued interaction (e.g., whether participants frequent a list or chat room, or otherwise know each other). Further, sometimes inhibition is evidenced in flames (e.g., dots inserted in curse words and variation by context), suggesting that group norms develop.

Joy L. Hart

See also Communication Technologies; Image; Impressions

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FLEISCHMAN, DORIS ELSA

Doris Elsa Fleischman Bernays was born in New York on July 18, 1891, and died July 10, 1980, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Along with her husband, Edward L. Bernays, she was an important contributor to the founding of public relations in the early 20th century and a prominent feminist.

Doris Fleischman was born to Samuel Fleischman and Harriet Rosenthal. Her father was an attorney and, much to her benefit, believed that women should be educated and useful. She was educated at Barnard College and graduated in 1913, having studied English, philosophy, psychology, and music. After completing her bachelor's degree, she began work at the *New York Tribune* as a reporter and editor for the women's pages and the Sunday edition. She gained notoriety at the *Tribune* as the

first newspaperwoman to report a prizefight. An active feminist throughout her life, Fleischman was a member of the Lucy Stone League, the Woman Pays Club, and Women in Communications, and she “participated in the first Women’s Peace Parade in New York in 1917” (Mayeux, 1999, p. 691). In 1919, she joined Edward Bernays in the practice of what Bernays had called “public relations counsel.” Three years later, in 1922, the couple wed.

Fleischman kept her maiden name and caused quite a media spectacle when she and Bernays convinced the desk clerk at the Waldorf-Astoria to allow her to sign the guest register as “Doris Fleischman” instead of Mrs. Edward Bernays. The couple were well-known members of the Lucy Stone League, an organization committed to preserving women’s right to keep their birth name after marriage. Bernays and Fleischman achieved more notoriety when Fleischman became the first married woman in the United States to hold a passport in her own name. Fleischman made the headlines again in 1929 when she and Bernays convinced the New York Department of Health to allow her to put her name, Doris E. Fleischman, on the birth certificate of their daughter. Fleischman and Bernays would eventually have two daughters, Doris and Anne.

After their marriage, Doris and Eddie (as only Doris called Edward) became equal partners in his business and signed legal documents to that effect. Bernays worked for years to be labeled the “Father of Public Relations.” Whether he is the originator of the profession is a point of contention; however, Bernays is the originator of the term *public relations* and was the first to use the word *publics* to describe those who have an interest in an issue. Though Bernays garnered almost all of the glory and fame from public relations, Fleischman was instrumental to the foundation of public relations. Her counsel with Bernays and her work behind the scenes helped *public relations* become a well-known word and won legitimacy for their firm. Fleischman and Bernays depended on one another professionally, personally, and intellectually. Fleischman most often was a mitigating influence on Bernays’s grand schemes, and Bernays was Fleischman’s public voice. Larry Tye believed that Fleischman’s “most valuable contribution to the practice was in the brilliant way she compensated for Eddie’s shortcomings” (1998, p. 125).

In her 1955 novel, *A Wife Is Many Women*, Fleischman refers to her and Bernays’s relationship as a “double partnership” (p. 163). During the 1920s this partnership was a modern idea. Fleischman wrote, “In the early days of public relations I was an exception in a masculine world. Silk and luggage manufacturers, radium miners, science institutes accepted me with polite surprise” (p. 171). The amount of work and ideas that Fleischman contributed to the partnership cannot be underestimated. While Bernays had an office at ground level where he often met with clients, Fleischman’s office was upstairs out of the public eye, and there she went daily to strategize, draft press releases and speeches, and plan campaigns. Bernays usually consulted with Fleischman after hours, and often her only contact with clients was when she hosted them at her and Eddie’s lavish parties at their home. The one shining example of Fleischman’s work with clients was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) convention in 1920; she traveled to Georgia to consult with the governor about the convention, which was hailed as a great success and received evenhanded treatment in both the northern and southern press. It is doubtful that Bernays himself could have handled the convention with such aplomb. Usually, however, Fleischman was planning and writing in the background, with Bernays up front with all of his charisma and self-confidence. Susan Henry argued, “They were an excellent team; they complemented and respected each other, and were able to do things together that neither person—probably no single person—could have done individually” (1997, p. 54).

Fleischman’s most significant contribution to the field of public relations was her work on strategy and planning, which are considered management-level functions. She was not only an excellent technician, writing speeches and releases, but she was also a conscientious planner and innovator in public relations campaigns, such as the Lithuanian National Council’s effort to be recognized as a state, and the Lucky Strike cigarettes Green Ball. For Bernays’s part, he happily encouraged his wife to keep her name, join feminist organizations, work in the background (as was her wish), write for the business, and even explore creative writing. In *Biography of an Idea*,

P. E. Mayeux (1999) cites Bernays, who wrote of Fleischman in 1965,

Over the years [Doris] has been my most valuable asset. She has contributed heavily to the policy and strategy we have advised our clients to carry out. Her balanced judgment carries overriding weight with me. And she has unique compassion and understanding. (p. 672)

In 1961, Fleischman and Bernays moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, claiming that they were retiring. In truth, they were merely scaling back and slowing down. Bernays wanted to finish his memoirs and open a small agency where they could give advice on, but not plan, public relations. According to Susan Henry, Fleischman had “left behind a circle of strong, close women friends with whom she had much in common, and she found in Cambridge few professional women with whom to associate” (1997, p. 6). The move brought her closer to their daughters and their families living in Cambridge, but far away from the life and the friends she had in New York. Fleischman eventually found companionship through mentoring younger women by joining groups such as Theta Sigma Phi, and by writing for and running several contests sponsored by the Edward L. Bernays Foundation.

It is interesting to note that Fleischman published only a smattering of her work. In the beginning, she wrote short stories in grade school and college that she claimed only Bernays had read. Early in her partnership and marriage to Bernays she began publishing *Contact*, which became the house organ for the firm of Edward L. Bernays, Counsel on Public Relations. *Contact* was published for 10 years and was circulated to over 15,000 people four times a year. It was able to get the word out about public relations in a conservative and informative fashion. She edited and published a book titled *An Outline of Careers for Women: A Practical Guide to Achievement* in 1928, and she published articles in magazines such as *Ladies' Home Journal*, *American Mercury*, *McCall's*, and *Independent Woman* that discussed topics such as working women, public relations, and feminism. Fleischman also contributed book chapters to books that Bernays wrote or edited concerning public relations. Her semiautobiographical novel, *A Wife Is Many Women*, was published in 1955 under the name Doris Fleischman

Bernays. She had decided to use the name Bernays, but throughout the rest of her life she was known equally well by both names. *A Wife Is Many Women* caused some controversy because daughters Anne Bernays and Doris Bernays stated that many of the events detailed in the book never occurred. Fleischman described herself in the book as an average woman, but it is obvious that she was far from average. Significant awards that she achieved included Theta Sigma Phi's (later Women in Communication) Headliner Award and an Honorary Doctor of Law degree from Babson College (Henry, 1998). Late in her life Fleischman wrote book reviews for the *Worcester Sunday Telegram*, and she and Bernays self-published *Progression*, a book of her poems. Her most important written contributions to the field of public relations were *Contact*, numerous speeches, and campaign plans that helped to put public relations on the map. Although she was a pioneer in the public relations field, she gained little renown during her life for her work. On July 10, 1980, Fleischman died after experiencing a stroke.

Emilee V. Fontenot

See also Bernays, Edward; Counseling

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FLIER

A flier, also called a handout, is a one-sheet, printed form of collateral material. Like other communication tactics or tools used in public relations, a flier must be developed to appeal to a particular target

audience, contain a key message, and attempt to achieve a specific objective. Some objectives might include increasing awareness about a service, educating a target audience about a program, or encouraging a key public to attend an event. Often $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ in size, a flier must be succinct, have few words, and include type or a graphic that appears in broad strokes. Since space is limited on a flier, uncomplicated graphics and clean typefaces are preferable. They are printed on one side of a sheet, have a short shelf life, and are not folded. Fliers, along with brochures, newsletters, and posters, are considered a form of direct media rather than mass media. As a form of direct media, fliers are generally posted on bulletin boards, placed in information racks, distributed through email, displayed on a website, and handed out interpersonally. Oftentimes, they are used as mini posters, which means that the message should carry at a distance of 10 feet. If they are placed on counters or inserted into the fold of a newsletter, the information does not need to carry over a distance. As a tool of persuasion, fliers should adhere to publication principles. They should attract attention, stimulate interest, create a desire to act, and contain claims that are supported by facts.

Relatively inexpensive to produce, fliers are timely and disposable. Many have a single purpose, which is to announce an event or inform a specific target audience about something of interest. No matter the method of distribution, fliers must be able to get noticed in a cluttered environment and should adhere to the principles of layout and design. An effective design should include a layout with proper balance, the balancing of elements either symmetrically or asymmetrically along an implied axis; dominance, an attention-getting element that stands out by its size, tone, or shape; unity, a sense that the message is an integrated and cohesive whole; proportion, the spatial relationship of elements similar in nature; and flow, which promotes eye movement and direction in a layout.

Since many public relations practitioners adhere to the writing style of the Associated Press, it is important to clarify terms. According to *The Associated Press Stylebook*, a flier is the preferred name for a handbill. On the other hand, the word *flyer* refers to the name associated with certain trains and buses.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Brochure; Collateral

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FLOGGING

Flogging, short for *fake blog*, is a term describing a practice in which an organization or an individual adopts a fake persona on a blog or online discussion board. A common type of flogging occurs when a public relations practitioner pretends to be a customer in order to post positive reviews of products on shopping websites or specially created blogs.

The term gained prominence in the United States in 2006 following three high-profile controversies involving corporations and public relations firms. The first controversy involved Sony and a viral promotions firm called Zipatoni. To promote the PlayStation video game system, the companies created a blog titled "AllIwantforxmsisapsp.com." The blog was designed to look like it was created by teenage video game enthusiasts and did not contain any disclaimer that it was produced by Sony or Zipatoni. Several readers, suspicious of the blog's promotional tone, examined it carefully and discovered that Zipatoni created it. After an outcry from consumer advocates, the blog was deactivated.

A second controversy involved McDonald's and the public relations firm JSH&A. To promote a contest, the companies created two blogs, one by a past contest winner and another by a person called Stanley Smith who described himself on the blog as an ordinary guy, a security guard in suburban Chicago. On the blog, Smith posted videos showing the significant effort he was taking to win the contest. Observant readers questioned the truthfulness of the blog; it was pulled down following an admission from JSH&A that Smith was a fake person.

A third controversy involved Walmart and the public relations firm Edelman. It began with the launch of a blog titled "Wal-Marting Across America" that featured a vacationing couple driving a recreational vehicle (RV) across the United

States. On the blog, the couple showcased employees who said positive things about Walmart. Journalists investigated the blog and found that the couple were not ordinary people but paid professionals. After these revelations, the blog was deactivated and Edelman apologized.

These three cases as well as other widely popularized cases prompted the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to crack down on flogging and other online misconduct. In 2009, the agency announced strengthened rules that require those posting on blogs or review sites to refrain from fake content, to disclose compensation being received, and to reveal conflicts of interests. Fines for those caught flogging can be up to \$11,000.

Owen Kulemeka

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Federal Trade Commission

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FOCUS GROUP

A focus group is a group of people that provides some structure to a research setting. Most focus groups consist of 5 to 15 members, a moderator, and often a moderator's assistant. Focus group sessions are almost always tape-recorded or videotaped for

later analysis. Analyses can range from a simple review of what the moderator understood, to what the members discussed or concluded, to complex content analyses of transcripts from the recorded groups, which may include psychological interpretations of the members' nonverbal behaviors.

The focus group provides public relations researchers with information from a variety of people focusing on a single person, product, event, or organization. Focus groups have some similarity to in-depth interviews in that a focus group facilitator asks predetermined questions to focus group participants; they differ in that group members can add on to ("tag") another member's answers or comments, and often are encouraged to do so.

The focus group is found in public relations primarily because it can be conducted quickly and fairly inexpensively. Focus groups are also used to pretest a promotion, product, or message, to prepare for larger surveys, or to provide more in-depth analysis of a survey in order to better understand the survey's results. A focus group, then, provides information from a variety of individuals about some issue or concern under some form of moderator control.

As noted, a major advantage of a focus group is its ability to gather "rich" data from the individuals assembled to discuss the research object. The disadvantages of focus groups are the cost of moderators and the inability to generalize to larger populations and to demographic group members. Because a focus group's results are heavily dependent on the skills of the moderator, obtaining a trained moderator is essential to conducting a good focus group. Although focus groups are typically regarded as a cheap way to gather information, the primary cost associated with them is the moderator. A good moderator can cost more than half a focus group's cost. The trained moderator, however, can overcome some of the problems associated with members, such as over- and undertalkative members who either try to monopolize the discussion or avoid discussion altogether.

Most focus group members are volunteers, and volunteers often participate because they are interested in the topic. Volunteers do not represent the larger population; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to that population. In most focus group situations, at least two and often three

different focus groups are conducted to ensure that what one group says is similar to what a second group says. The third group will be used if the first two groups differ. When the research question does not consider demographic or psychographic differences, three groups per demographic or psychographic are required.

Depending on the research question under investigation and whether it requires organizational members to participate, some of whom may be subordinate to others, focus groups may differ in how they are conducted. Most focus groups meet in an arranged room, typically around a table or chairs placed in a U-shape when the research is gauging reaction to some promotion or product. Some rooms are equipped with two-way mirrors and hidden microphones so that observers can evaluate and rate the interaction; other rooms simply have a table and chairs and a tape recorder or video recorder and cameras out in the open. In a typical focus group, moderators sit at the end of the table, or in the table's 12 o'clock position, from which they can control who speaks through both verbal questions to specific members and eye contact or head nods to encourage or discourage member participation. The typical focus group lasts between one and three hours, including planned refreshment and bathroom breaks. The moderator operates from a scripted schedule of opening statements and "key" questions; sometimes the moderator will have written probe questions to further look into member responses. To get all members to talk, a typical opening will reinforce that all conversations—even recorded ones—will be edited so that no one will know who said what, that members' comments are confidential, and that their anonymity will be maintained. This is usually reinforced as well at the end of the focus group.

In organizations where the group members may feel what they say could cause them problems later, a different kind of focus group is used: a *known group*. In the known group people are drawn from the organization's hierarchy. The technique requires that two different meetings take place. In the first, members write their responses to the moderator's questions, and in the second they meet to discuss those responses. In some instances the questions are sent to members prior to the focus group's

meeting; in others, they are gathered at the first meeting. Regardless of when the responses are gathered, the real discussion takes place once the now anonymous responses have been reproduced on large sheets of paper, usually taped to the room where the group meets. Discussion is then focused on the written responses, whether they may have come from a CEO, a CFO, or a clerk. Thus, no attribution of source gets in the way of ideas being discussed. The known group method takes longer to conduct and requires additional assistance and supplies. However, it works well in situations where superiors must interact with subordinates.

Focus groups are analyzed both informally and formally. Informal analysis occurs when the researcher debriefs the moderator, moderator's assistant, or both. This is an immediate debriefing after the discussion in which the moderator's feelings and intuition are put down on tape or paper for later analysis. The formal analysis is made from transcripts created from the audio- or videotaped discussions (all names or references to members are removed in the transcripts), and a content analysis is made of the group's discussion.

The focus group provides public relations researchers with a rich, in-depth analysis of perceptions toward some research object. The group's discussions are kept on track by a trained moderator and are typically recorded and submitted to message analysis. While focus groups are common in public relations and can be conducted quite quickly, they are not cheap when conducted correctly. A single focus group's discussion is neither reliable nor valid unless it has been compared against another group's discussion.

Don W. Stacks

See also Content Analysis; Interview as a Research Tool; Measuring/Measures; Qualitative Research

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FOLLOWER/MEMBER NEWSLETTER

Utilized by most nonprofit organizations, including charitable nonprofits, trade associations, and political interest groups, the follower/member newsletter is an extremely popular public relations tool for fulfilling the information needs of a specific audience. This type of newsletter reaches out to members, alumni, volunteers, consumers, clients, boards of trustees, staff, and allied organizations of a particular organization in which audience members have a valid interest or formal membership.

Follower/member newsletters serve as the “voice” of the organization. Their audiences are made up of internal and external publics. Members, who pay dues, generally are defined as internal publics because they can be viewed as having an investment in the organization, similar to that of a stockholder. Followers often are viewed as external because their expected outcome deals more with information seeking—finding out about issue positions rather than using the organization as an extension of one’s own voice in public policy discussions. Usually, they do not have as strong an investment in an organization as members do, nor do they receive the special benefits that are accorded to members.

These newsletters, like other directed newsletters, strategically execute the public relations and marketing plans of an organization. The goals of follower/member newsletters can vary, but generally they are used to communicate newsworthy information about the sponsoring organization. In addition, newsletters are a valuable tool for fundraising: motivating existing donors, increasing gifts, recognizing the service contributions of volunteers, and demonstrating that the organization is a good steward of funds—an important responsibility for nonprofits. Some organizations also use these newsletters to market their services. Supplementing these common goals, follower/member newsletters seek to remind readers about the purpose of the organization, as well as to

justify the existence of the organization in the community at large.

The follower/member newsletter is valuable to constituents who care about the mission of an organization. For instance, Health Plus, a New York City–based nonprofit whose mission includes improving access to health care for uninsured and underserved families, publishes a member newsletter that is available online. The newsletter is designed to provide Health Plus members with information about various health topics and health care providers. Professional associations, such as the National Futures Association, rely heavily on newsletters to keep their dues-paying members informed. Advocacy groups dedicated to particular issues provide a good example of organizations that use follower newsletters to their advantage. Citizens interested in certain social, economic, and political issues—for example, civil rights, abortion rights, economic reforms, or a particular piece of legislation—can subscribe to many of the available nonpartisan newsletters, which will allow them to follow the latest developments relating to the issue or legislation without actually being a member of the group.

The form and content of these newsletters vary from organization to organization. Some newsletters consist of one or two stories with little or no regard for design, whereas others are elaborate showpieces of color and flair. Depending on their content, they represent all four models of public relations practice. Newsletters from many human services charities, for example, are based on the press agency model. Their pages are filled with propaganda and stories designed to stir readers’ emotions. On the other hand, nonprofits categorized as business leagues, such as chambers of commerce, usually produce newsletters representative of the public information model.

The organization and development of a follower/member newsletter are very similar to those of other types of newsletters. Decisions on the audience (members or followers), the articles to be featured, the budget, the format, the frequency of distribution, and the approval process should all be taken into consideration before beginning the newsletter. Because members will expect to receive the newsletter regularly, care should be taken to ensure that issues will be published in a timely manner. Also, because the newsletter is targeted to a very precise audience with very precise information needs, special attention must be given to see that its content

addresses readers' needs. Providing information that is useless will alienate the targeted audience. Moreover, the newsletter needs to convey to readers that the organization is carrying out its mission effectively and efficiently. Finally, it is important to realize that a follower/member newsletter is not the end objective of the organization but merely a tool for communicating with strategic publics.

The biggest change in follower/member newsletters in the past decade is that they increasingly are being published and distributed electronically. A variety of ways are used. The simplest, adopted by many of the smaller, less affluent organizations, is sending the newsletter via email in text format. This allows the information to be transmitted through an email program without the inconvenience of linking to webpages. Email links are another option. Links are embedded in an email message, allowing members or followers to access the organization's newsletter on its website. Web newsletters can be graphically enhanced because the bulk of the information is not directly sent to the reader. Organizations with sensitive or private material are able to utilize sophisticated log-in programs that provide regulated access to members only. In addition to security, such programs give members a sense of uniqueness and make them feel they are a legitimate part of the organization.

Growing use of the Internet is blurring the lines between the traditional newsletter and organizational news in general. In the past, members and followers had to wait for information on a set time basis—monthly, quarterly, semiannually, and so on. Today, organizations are able to provide strategic publics with continuous, up-to-date information. Although traditional follower/member newsletters still will be needed in the foreseeable future, the Internet will continue to revolutionize the way organizations communicate with their members and followers.

Kathleen S. Kelly and Danny Shipka

See also Newsletter; Parent/Student Newsletter; Press Agency; Propaganda

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FONT

Font refers to a complete set of characters or type with similar shape, style, and proportions; fonts are used in printing, graphic design, and viewing on computer monitors. For example, *The New York Times* is printed using a widely recognized font created especially for *The New York Times* in 1931, called "Times." The font selected can have a dramatic impact on the feeling of professionalism, playfulness, or excitement engendered by a document.

Fonts are grouped into categories such as Modern (Times Roman), Old Style (Bookman Old Style), Decorative (**JUNIPER**), Script (*Swing*), and text letters (Old English). Fonts are also grouped into serif fonts, or those with "serifs" (curls or flourishes on the ends of characters), and sans serif fonts, or those without "serifs" or curls or flourishes. Arial is a sans serif font, and Times Roman is a serif font.

Fonts that share the same basic shape, style, and proportion but vary in weight, width, or size are called font families. An example of a font family is Helvetica, which includes Helvetica regular, *Helvetica italic*, **Helvetica bold**, **Helvetica black**, Helvetica narrow, **Helvetica compressed**, and others.

One of the rules of effective typography is to use only a few fonts (or a single font family) per document. By using a font family like Helvetica, an individual has the ability to create headings (using Helvetica black, for example), or to change the aesthetic feel of a document by using a narrow typeface or reducing the character weight.

Fonts are measured in points. There are 72 points per inch. Here is Times New Roman in six different type sizes:

6 point: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

9 point: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

12 point: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

15 point: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

18 point:ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

24 point: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

A 12-point font will typically yield six lines per inch of text at single spacing. We say “typically” because, as Michael Bruno explains, “Corresponding letters in the same size type may vary in height. We say that the face is either small on body . . . or large on body” (2000, p. 37). For example, the following are all 24-point lowercase A’s:

a **a** **a** **a** **a** *a*

il **a** *a* **a**

The space between lines of type is called “leading” (pronounced *ledding*). Although most personal computer users are accustomed to selecting “single,” “space-and-a-half” or “double” spacing from the menu bar of their word processing programs, in professional practice leading is measured in points. Twelve points of leading applied to a 12-point font (called “solid” or single spacing) will yield six lines per inch of text. Using 24 points of leading with a 12-point font will result in double-spaced lines of text, or three lines per inch of text.

Adjusting the space between characters is called *kerning* and is also measured in points. Kerning can be increased or decreased to achieve specific typographic effects.

Michael L. Kent

See also Editing; Layout

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FORMATIVE RESEARCH

All public relations activities begin with formative research, an effort to understand the current situation. A public relations activity is like a journey. The better prepared a person is for a journey, the more pleasant it will be. For practitioners, the better prepared they are for a public relations activity, the more productive it will be for the organization or client. A public relations effort is driven by the needs of the situation. Practitioners try to overcome problems, or things that threaten the organization, or develop opportunities, or things that could benefit the organization. Often called other names such as situational analysis or background research, formative research helps the public relations practitioner understand the problems or opportunity at hand. Formative research is the raw material for developing strategy. Two critical pieces of information for strategy development are stakeholders and the exact nature of the problem or opportunity.

Practitioners should know the stakeholders involved with the situation. They need to identify

which stakeholders might be allies and support their efforts and which stakeholders might oppose their efforts, and they need to collect detailed information on who their target audiences might be. Detailed information about the target is critical when selecting communication channels and developing messages. Practitioners must know the target so that they can select media that will reach and messages that will appeal to the target. Practitioners also need to understand what makes a situation a problem or opportunity. They need to know the cause of a problem if they hope to solve it. Effective public relations solutions begin with a detailed understanding of the problem. Similarly, practitioners should understand why a situation is an opportunity if they are to effectively utilize it. In short, it is important for public relations practitioners to determine what harms or benefits a situation presents to an organization or client. An extended example will help clarify the role of formative research.

MacCorp is located in a moderate-size Midwestern town of about 50,000 people. Each year the local paper does an assessment of community needs and prints the top 10 issues that are important to the local community. Number 5 on this year's list was a lack of park and recreation facilities. MacCorp has some unused land that would be perfect for a park: a wooded area and a level section ideal for soccer fields. The paper's survey presents MacCorp with an opportunity to improve community relations by addressing one of the community's top needs. The public relations department's first step is identifying the key players involved in the park and recreation issue. This would include all relevant local government officials, any community groups interested in parks, local sporting groups who might use the park, local neighborhoods near the proposed site, and any state or federal agencies that might have a say in the park construction, such as the Environmental Protection Agency. Next, the public relations department seeks out more information about each stakeholder, such as how strongly each is committed to the issue, what each would like to see in a new park, and whether or not some groups might oppose the company's efforts.

The public relations department then needs to specify the opportunity. It must clarify what a

"need for parks and recreation" means. The focus would be on user needs—what people want from a park. Obviously understanding the key players will go a long way toward understanding the opportunity. Still, the public relations department needs to focus its efforts and make sure it understands what the opportunity really is. One starting point would be for someone from the public relations department to talk to a number of community leaders about the potential park. Let us say the leaders keep mentioning the lack of soccer fields and tennis courts in the community. The public relations department then constructs a survey that has people rate the value of 10 different park amenities, including tennis courts and soccer fields. It mails the survey to community members and tallies the results. If the survey says that tennis courts and soccer fields are the two most valued amenities, the public relations department can be confident that building those two amenities will please the community.

The formative research helps MacCorp's public relations department develop its strategies. By researching the stakeholders involved in the situation, the public relations people know who might help or hinder their park community relations initiative. MacCorp also knows whom they will need to target with their messages. By researching the opportunity, the public relations people can be confident that their community relations initiative will be received positively. They will know that their planned park meets the needs of the community. The next step is to convert this information into a strategy by setting objectives, specifying target audiences, designing messages, and selecting tactics.

The amount of formative research a public relations practitioner conducts depends on how much or how little the practitioner already knows about the situation. The less practitioners know about the situation, the more research they will need to conduct before they can begin the public relations activity. For seasoned public relations practitioners, many situations will be fairly routine and require very little additional research. Instead of actively searching other sources, they can draw upon past experiences and databases stored in their computer files to guide their response. The search is internal and quick. Consider

the example of a manager receiving an award. The award is an opportunity to generate positive publicity for the organization. Deciding to send out a pitch letter and news release is fairly routine when someone has been doing public relations for years. Furthermore, a practitioner would have all the requisite media contact information in a database on a computer. The practitioner knows the key stakeholders (the media outlets), what types of stories they prefer, and what this opportunity means. If the situation is completely new to the practitioner, a lot of formative research is necessary before the strategic aspects of the public relations efforts can be developed.

Formative research provides the raw material needed to construct a public relations effort. Strategy becomes the map for a public relations effort. But how does a practitioner build a map? In public relations, formative research provides the information needed to construct the map. The speed at which a practitioner collects the requisite information depends on how much relevant information the practitioner already possesses and how much he or she needs to discover. Formative research is the first step in the development of a public relations activity. If a practitioner begins by going in the wrong direction, the results of the public relations effort will probably be negative for the organization. Careful, systematic formative research points a public relations practitioner in the right direction and increases the likelihood of an effective public relations activity.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Evaluative Research; Gantt Chart; PERT Chart; Public Relations Research

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FORUM, ONLINE

From its beginnings the Internet has generated the infrastructure for online fora, spaces for sharing information in structured environments. Early manifestations were presented as message boards, employing basic graphical interfaces, often requiring membership, and quickly developing protocols and self-policing cultures. Presentation was largely based around threaded conversations, leading to (loosely) structured narratives. The forum model, exemplified by the popular Usenet associations that emerged in 1979 and CompuServe led to walled garden (subscription) approaches, including America Online (AOL).

Around 1999, Web 2.0 (the "writeable web") offered broader accessibility and a more attractive user experience, opening the way for highly developed commercial iterations such as MySpace, Bebo, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, which can be seen as vast consortia of online fora, endlessly stratified, interlinked, and segmented. Although the interfaces are generally more sophisticated, many online groupings retain general principles that have clear roots in the earliest online fora. Enthusiast, hobbyist, and fan sites can present the most active, engaged, and knowledgeable discussion on specialized topics. Likewise, gaming communities can be underpinned by message board-style fora, including MUDs (multiple-user dimensions) and MOOs (MUDs, object-oriented). Craigslist, the online version of the newspaper classified adverts, and the eBay auction network are prominent examples of a further iteration.

Message boards and fan-based fora can become semi-official resources for commercial operations, for instance in generating or curating FAQ (frequently asked questions) or Q & A (question and answer) pages linked to technology, hardware, and software.

TripAdvisor, founded in 2000, is an example of an online forum with high reputational impact that retains vestigial roots from message boards. Sites that develop content from reviews invite issues of transparency, authenticity, and legitimacy, not least when the use of nicknames, avatars, or (partial) anonymity is widespread and encouraged.

For those who accept publics as core to public relations activity, identifying the locus of conversation and critical discussion on a topic represents an essential element of practitioner activity. Discrete interaction in the online environments is often characterized by porosity, with conversations typically spanning multiple platforms and channels. The duplication and remediation inherent in the processes encourages both potentially undesirable leakage as well as constructive cross-fertilization and repurposing. Such change is ongoing and perpetual.

Online fora are often concerned with collaborative discourse, ranging from the Linux community and, say, Wikipedia, launched in 2001, which refine code or text toward shared purposes, to the visual communities of Pinterest and Instagram. Less obviously, Amazon can be seen as an ecosystem of peer-recommendation fora, based on reviews, and underpinned by less visible networks created by social bookmarking and tagging. Wikipedia comprises negotiated entries subject to rolling revision. These processes are made visible through edit histories and discussion page threads that act as expressions of aggregated reputation.

It is tempting to suggest online fora must have architecture, a visual shape determined by code, but it would be wrong not to recognize the loose communities of interest created by, say, Twitter hashtags (often linked to second screen activity such as sporting occasions or reality TV and game shows).

Although all online interaction is in some way collaborative, it is perhaps most helpful to limit the term *forum* to those areas in which the collaboration is explicitly intended. Many fora are closed, secret, and in some cases well hidden; hackers, activists, and even criminals create and benefit from fora.

Phillip Michael Young

See also Aggregator News Search; FAQs; Publics; Tagline

FOUCAULT, MICHEL, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

French philosopher Michel Foucault's (1926–1984) work has offered valuable insights for

public relations scholars and practitioners who seek to understand, interrogate, or critique the role of public relations in society. In specific, Foucault was interested in the institutional systems of thought that frame or influence human understanding and experience (Rabinow, 1997). Application of Foucault's philosophical insights to the practice of public relations supports the development of theory and advances understanding of public relations as a discourse practice with power effects and ethical obligations.

Public relations scholarship may be informed by both the research methods Foucault deployed and the philosophical themes he explored. Foucault adopted a technique he referred to as *problematization* to examine how certain systems of thought and practices come to be conceived in a particular way and to question “the conditions in which human beings ‘problematize’ what they are, what they do, and the world in which they live” (Foucault, 1984, p. 10). In order to effect a problematization, Foucault deployed two historically oriented research methods to investigate shifts or transformations in institutional practices. The first approach he referred to as *archaeology*—an approach that identifies discontinuities in systems of thought and tracks differences in political, economic, institutional, and societal practices. For public relations, application of this technique would facilitate research that seeks to understand the role of public relations in driving political, organizational, or sociocultural change through a focus on disruptions or breaks within the status quo and the communication practices associated with those disruptions.

The second research method, Foucault termed *genealogy*, or “writing a history of the present” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 119). Genealogy involves tracing current situations and practices back to their historical roots and undertaking a historically oriented interpretation. Genealogical approaches assist scholars to explore the historical origins of particular public relations practices and add to the growing interest in the history and evolution of public relations.

Although both approaches are historical in nature, they marked a shift in Foucault's research interests. Archaeology focuses on discourse and language-related issues whereas genealogy focuses

on subjectivity or the relationship between individuals and how they are constituted as subjects of, or subject to, institutional practices. Foucauldian research approaches examine the role of public relations in the production of meanings, the strategies of power, and the propagation of knowledge and highlight how certain systems, discourses, power regimes, and practices are legitimated and normalized.

The philosophical themes in Foucault's work may be broadly categorized as focusing on the study of discourse, power, and the subject. Within his work on discourse, Foucault was concerned with how discourses are formed and transformed. He suggested that shifts in discourse occur through deliberate attempts to modify the boundaries that determine what is included—and excluded—within a discourse, the identities and roles for discourse actors, the language that shapes and determines meanings, and the modes of circulating a discourse (Foucault, 1991b). As a result, how we understand the world and the associated sets of statements, rules, and meanings that form the objects, concepts, subjects, and strategies within a discourse are transformed. In 1972, Foucault wrote that the challenge for those who seek to transform discourse is “separating out from among all the statements which are possible those that will be acceptable” (p. 197). For example, a public relations practitioner may attempt to undermine or transform societal discourses about climate change by promoting alternative scientific findings, introducing an economic discourse, or positioning opponents as “greenie” radicals.

Issues of strategy, relations, and power effects underpin Foucault's work on power in *Power/Knowledge* (1980), *Discipline and Punish* (1977), and his essay on “Governmentality” (1991). Key questions in these works problematized power by asking “What took place here?”; “Can one speak of interests here?” (Foucault, 1980, p. 204); and “What does struggle mean here?” (p. 209). In this way, attention is directed to the exercise of power within moments of change. Public relations practitioners exercise a form of discursive power when they seek to shape ideas, relationships, and identities that are valued and privileged within a discourse by regulating who may speak, what may be spoken, the positions within a discourse, and which meanings achieve status as the legitimated truth (Foucault, 1978). The themes of biopolitics

and governmentality within Foucault's work integrated discourse and power concerns—or what Foucault in 1980 termed *power/knowledge*. Public relations efforts regularly seek to establish and popularize particular discourses or power/knowledge regimes through the exercise of discursive power. Those efforts do not always succeed; Foucault's work offers not only the means to examine and critique public relations efforts but also to understand or mobilize resistance.

Foucault (1980) conceived of power as a positive and productive force: “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (p. 119). It is here, perhaps, that Foucault's work has the potential to affect the greatest influence on public relations. Application of a Foucauldian approach to power may lead us to rethink the nature, role, and influence of public relations practice by including work that is designed to establish positive sociocultural change such as cause-related nutrition campaigns or environmental awareness and protection efforts. Similarly, Foucault's notion of power as a relational force that circulates through networks has implications for research that examines the role of public relations in social media ecologies.

Foucault's study of what he termed *subjectivity*—the technologies through which individuals have constituted and transformed themselves as subjects—has implications for public relations. In 1988, Foucault identified four discourse “technologies” that allowed people to understand and transform themselves: technologies of production, sign systems, power, and the self. He was particularly interested in how individuals constituted themselves as ethical subjects in relation to a moral code and how to undertake a stylization of the self. His work on subjectivity has implications for critical researchers seeking to investigate how public relations power impacts on individual identities and for public relations practitioners engaged in the production of corporate identities and personal brands.

Foucault, in 1984, challenged us to “know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known” (p. 9). This challenge has been taken up by a number of public relations scholars who integrate

Foucauldian techniques, themes, and critiques within their work (see Motion & Leitch, 2009). Applications of Foucault's work to the study of contemporary issues offers insights into how public relations works and why it works and leads us to not only focus on meanings and power but to also problematize what is meaningful, truthful, and moral.

Judy Motion and Shirley Leitch

See also Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Discursive; Power, Symbolic

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FOUR-MINUTE MEN

During World War I, the Four-Minute Men were a division of the Committee on Public Information (CPI) that helped persuade Americans to support the war effort; they did this by giving speeches, usually in movie theaters during intermissions. Theaters were particularly effective because 10 million to 13 million people attended them daily. These speeches helped mobilize support for the war and provide for the essentials of war. The Four-Minute Men overcame the primary weaknesses inherent in other communication channels so that they could present their message to the entire nation since broadcasting was not yet available.

Donald Ryerson originated the idea for the Four-Minute Men and was the first head of the division. The division was organized in a state-by-state network and eventually included all states in the union and eight territories. Each state or territory had a chairman who was responsible for coordinating activities and for picking the local chairmen, who, in turn, were responsible for the selection and training of the speakers. Despite receiving no pay or reimbursement for expenses, speakers were never hard to find.

The Four-Minute Men division of the CPI maintained control over the network of speakers, including the selection of address topics and the preparation of associated materials. Speakers were trained through a series of bulletins published by the division. From May 1917 to the end of 1918, 46 bulletins were published. Ten dealt with the organization itself. Of the remaining 36, 6 messages concerned raising money and 5 discussed conserving or acquiring food. These messages were essential for the nation to create the materials necessary for war.

Although each speech topic fulfilled a specific function, the bulletins usually provided speakers with some essential elements: an opening letter of encouragement from the division head; points to be covered in every speech and suggested optional points; sample speeches; and sometimes even answers for crowd objections. The speeches presented by the Four-Minute Men were normally delivered in theaters during the intermissions and were limited to four minutes. The organization had a series of auxiliary organizations, including groups with female speakers and Junior Four-Minute Men groups in schools.

George Creel wrote in 1920, "When the armistice brought activities to a conclusion the Four Minute Men numbered 75,000 speakers, more than 755,190 speeches had been made and a fair estimate of audiences makes it certain that a total of 134,454,514 people had been addressed" (p. 85). Creel noted that if allowances are made for those communities that made no reports, a final estimate would place the figures at 1 million speeches heard by 400 million individuals for the 18 months the organization was in operation. He also noted that for the total government expenditures of \$100,000 for the Four-Minute Men division, the organization accrued over \$9 million in financial benefits.

Charles Lubbers

See also Propaganda; Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations in Public Relations; Warfare and Public Relations

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FRAME

A *frame* is a heuristic device that encapsulates and connects information objects about a subject of interest into a graphic image or a coherent story. The term draws metaphorical value from the cropping frame, limiting and focusing a viewer's gaze, while at once bestowing relevance upon subjects within the position or scope of its borders and irrelevance upon those without. Frames illuminate matters of personal or public importance, whether strategically produced or emerging out of ongoing communication. One important evolution in the understanding of frames is the media frame, which concerns itself with the materialization of frames in public discourse. Frames can also occur within or between individuals, groups, or societies without their materialization in media.

In each of these areas, frames can be examined at three levels of analysis. At their production level, frames sustain graphic images and a common vision of worldviews or ideologies, which tend toward their own transmission or perpetuation. Nations such as the United States frame their symbols in a worldview that is ostensibly widely shared by citizens. At this level, the most powerful frames hold sway by virtue of their institutionalization and fixed position above societal structures. That is, the adoption and adherence to a set of values or guiding philosophy to which a group of people adhere produce a frame of understanding that is shared by its group members. These members use the frame to organize and predictably qualify routine information. In one sense, the frame of *student as customer* can be thought of as a dominant frame that has expanded into the spheres of education, where it has become influential in valuation at a broader cultural level. By this cultural valuation, students are no longer thought of merely as persons who come to learn and earn a degree. They have become customers who expect treatment beyond that traditionally associated with a college education experience. If they don't like the product or service, they are allowed—even expected—to complain and seek *customer satisfaction*. At the content level, frames import a fixed meaning to key words, ideas, or entailments and bring coherence to words and phrases within or between communications. In education, discussions

of *customer service* direct dialogue, thereby implicating the frame of *student as customer*. Finally, at the effects level, frames become interpretive schemes used to process information, make judgments, and draw inferences, and can reveal the link between mass ideologies and policies. For example, in education, the customer service frame can govern procedures that assimilate business practices such as student evaluations.

An awareness of the value of frames helps public relations professionals better understand general trends in society. A thorough understanding of how frames work also aids public relations staff members in knowing their role and abilities as professionals:

1. A general awareness of the power of frames can assist public relations professionals in managing information so that they can clarify thinking, articulate alternative points of view, or more readily perceive alternative viewpoints less evident.

2. Public relations professionals can use frames in their research and evaluation efforts to track changes, monitor events, and identify new threats and opportunities in a given environment.

3. Public relations professionals may more readily express their needs and objectives with frames preferred by top management in order to accomplish organizational or public objectives. For example, public relations professionals commonly encase their agendas or activities in frames already accessible to management, such as those concerning the importance of *relationships*, or considerations of *return on investment*, *efficiency*, or *corporate reputation*.

4. Public relations professionals can work with management groups to identify and avoid fixed perspectives preserved by lasting frames. Indeed, prior research has shown that top levels of management often become trapped in their own preferred frames and do not easily entertain alternative points of view. Working with management through the concept of frames provides a way for public relations to serve as the organization's conscience by directing attention to the neglect of certain trends, issues, or publics.

5. Policy advocates can enhance their success by shaping information into coherent packages with standardized prevailing values, stories, and myths. Prevailing values and the like may include *efficiency*,

capitalism, or *rationalism*, all of which have gained considerable currency in this era as institutionalized frames. Public relations professionals can use framing concepts to adapt organizational interests to the established media frame of *newsworthiness* that news workers use in deciding what counts as news. That is, when public relations professionals are able to pitch stories or write press releases that emphasize themes favored by journalists (e.g., those characterized by proximity, human interest, or timeliness), such stories or press releases are more readily printed.

We are all privy and susceptible to frames, yet their effects are by no means equal. A frame's force at the production level determines the power of its effects. That is, individuals, organizations, or institutions whose frames are more widely circulated, such as through public deliberation or the mass media, prevail over others. Hence, those deliberating at the policy level, such as for business or government, acquire resources by successfully funneling their interests through existing, generally accepted frames. This is especially so for those working with frames that have become tacit over time or taken for granted. Conversely, challenging successfully promoted positions involves adopting their frames of understanding, or otherwise introducing similarly compelling values and beliefs in support of the challenge.

The use of the term *frame* as a theoretical model has origins in the work of psychologist Gregory Bateson and of sociologist Erving Goffman. From these two can be traced stages in the evolution of the term from the conventional analogy of the picture frame into academic theory and research methods. Media sociologists Herbert Gan, Gaye Tuchman, and Todd Gitlin later disseminated their works more broadly into other disciplines.

Craig E. Carroll

See also Framing Theory

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FRAMING THEORY

Framing, a rhetorical device that has received attention from scholars from various disciplines over the past three decades, is a conceptual framework for understanding the construction of arguments and the differential interpretation of public relations messages by audiences.

Framing is actually a metaphor that compares message construction to drawing a border around a painting or picture. The frame helps define the meaning of the message (a) by focusing attention on particular elements and (b) by excluding competing, distracting, or contradictory elements.

Framing draws upon the notions that message producers are involved in the construction of social reality and that message meanings are negotiated, not absolute; thus, framing theory falls within rhetorical and relativist (postpositivist) perspectives. This approach suggests that practitioners are prone to frame situations or problems in ways that are favorable to clients.

How Framing Works

Framing is central to the establishment and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships because it helps organizations and key publics to develop common frames of reference. A frame essentially limits or defines a message's meaning. Both message creators and receivers are involved in the process. Frames reflect judgments made by message creators, who put information in either positive or negative frames, use particular semantic

phrases, and tell stories using particular syntactical, thematic, or rhetorical devices.

Framing biases the audience's cognitive processing of a message. Framed messages inevitably contain contextual cues that are intended to trigger associations with ideas stored in audience members' memory. These memory traces can be either positive or negative or can conjure up particular recalled images that facilitate processing.

Framing primes audiences to think about a topic in a particular way. For example, the abortion controversy might be framed as an issue involving (a) a medical procedure, (b) a religious or moral act, or (c) freedom to make personal choices. In fact, all three are involved, but depending on which frame is operant, audiences are prompted to interpret a message using different sets of memory traces or cognitive schemas. Framing affects cognitive processing by selectively influencing which sets of experiences the message draws upon and how audiences think about or define a particular topic. Most psychologists agree that people use processes of association and expectation to schematically make inferences and impute meaning that might not be manifested in the message itself. Importantly, audiences might or might not be conscious of these message-framing effects.

Types of Framing

The robustness of framing theory is evident in the many different ways in which the framing concept is used. At least seven different models of framing have been identified that have potential applications to public relations.

Situations

Researchers from anthropology and sociology were the first to examine the communication process using a framing paradigm. In anthropology, Gregory Bateson (2000) defined a psychological frame as "a spatial and temporary bounding of a set of interactive messages" (p. 191). In sociology, Erving Goffman used framing as the basis for studying human interaction and developed an elaborate system for analyzing human interactions. This tradition has been carried forward in studies analyzing discourse, language, and literary storytelling.

Framing of situations is routinely used by organizations to explain its actions. Framing is a critical component of bargaining and negotiation.

Attributes

Advertisers and other marketing communicators routinely use framing devices to promote particular characteristics of objects, events, and people. This process can be evidenced in practices as simple as writing captions under photographs that call attention to particular aspects of an illustrated product. Marketers regularly choose particular attributes or characteristics that they wish to promote (such as convenience) while ignoring others (such as higher price). Advertisers often want to conjure up images based on prior experience so customers can relive their experience. Product positioning similarly uses framing to differentiate a particular brand from all other competitors in a category. Both product attributes and positioning provide the basis for the product claims contained in advertising. Some researchers have identified framing as a form of second-order agenda setting whereby media are able to influence not only what topics people think about but also how they think about them. A particularly important aspect of framing involves the best way to describe attributes. For example, the fat content in meat might be described as 80% lean or 20% fat. Research suggests that positive framing consistently leads to more favorable evaluations than negative framing of the same fact.

Risky Choices

The framing of choices, one of the most extensively researched areas of framing, is based on the classical work of psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. In 1979, these psychologists defined a frame as a decision maker's perception of "the acts, outcomes and contingencies associated with a particular choice" (p. 263). They argued that human decision making is inherently irrational because the prospect of loss has a far greater impact on decisions than does the prospect of an equivalent gain.

Their prospect theory suggests that people avoid risks when a choice is stated in terms of gains but will take greater risks when choices are stated in

terms of losses. This element has particular relevance for health communicators concerned with how people will deal with health threats, as well as for risk communicators who must encourage or discourage risk taking. However, framing of choices is also relevant to decision making in organizations, to negotiation strategies, and to other communications in which audiences are challenged to make choices. Although findings are generally consistent with prospect theory, the effect can vary based on the type and context of the risky decisions involved.

Actions

The framing of actions involves the question of how to achieve audience compliance when no risky choice is involved but when a decision might have positive or negative consequences. Take, for example, a membership organization that wants to charge different rates for attending an event based on whether registrants sign up before or after a specified date. Early sign-ups could be promoted as a discount (gain), and late sign-ups could be explained as a penalty (loss). Which is the better way to promote participation when the options are the same?

Valence framing and *goal framing* are terms used to differentiate between propositions stated in positive terms that focus on taking a particular action or in negative terms that focus on what will result by taking no action. Health communicators interested in getting people to quit smoking can make a strategic creative decision to either stress the benefits of a smokeless life or the deleterious effects of cigarettes on health.

The findings here are generally the same as for the framing of risky choices: framing of actions in terms of negative consequences appears to have greater persuasive impact than framing that emphasizes positive consequences. However, various factors can moderate results, including the audiences' level of involvement and their sense of self-efficacy (their perception of their own ability to deal effectively with a situation).

Issues

Framing plays a pivotal role in defining social problems (such as abortion) and the moral actions

attendant on dealing with them. Social researchers who adopt a constructionist approach argue that social problems are best understood as issues constructed by claims makers, who use framing as a tool in agenda building to create public interest in and concern about issues.

Many people today are chagrined by the absence of a robust public sphere of dialogue in which people can use philosophical and rational arguments to persuade audiences to adopt a particular position. Framing, some argue, confounds the deliberation process because people don't even agree on the definition of a problem—a necessary condition for coming to an agreement.

Frames define problems and thus delimit possible solutions. Researchers concerned with social movements have theorized extensively about the importance of framing, including the *frame enterprise* and *frame sponsorship*, the active effort of activists to position or frame a problem as being of a particular kind and source. Thus, advocates engage in a *framing competition*. Building coalitions can involve a variety of framing-related activities, including *frame alignment*, *bridging*, *alignment*, *crystallization*, *extension*, and *transformation*.

Responsibility

Framing an issue often implies both its cause and its solution. Yet another valuable rhetorical use of framing involves the framing of responsibility, or the attribution of causes to a particular actor, to the object or entity acted upon, or the environment or circumstances in which an event occurs.

Attribution theory deals with how people come to understand the causes of events or actions. Researchers have shown that attribution processes are easily biased by inattention, the salience of particular explanations, prior knowledge and extant schemas, and personal needs and motivations. Fundamental attribution error, for example, refers to the tendency to attribute people's behaviors to stable personality factors or dispositions rather than to situations or external causes. Actor-observer bias involves people attributing their own successes to themselves, while failures are explained as caused by situations.

In crises or disasters, people tend to watch to find the root cause and assign blame rather than accept such occurrences as acts of fate. Much

investigative reporting, for example, focuses on ferreting out the cause of a problem. Along this same vein, news tends to use episodic framing in which events or problems are explained as the result of people's actions, rather than thematic framing, in which causes are attributed to systemic problems in society.

News

Framing has become a focus of researchers interested in news reporting and in how dominant social themes or ideas are used to shape the way news is presented by the media. A *news frame* is a central organizing idea for explaining events that uses various symbolic and framing devices that support the main idea.

William A. Gamson, for example, suggested that media routinely use metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions, and visual images that culturally resonate with audiences. These framing devices represent conventions for communicating information and help media workers arrange seemingly disjointed events into a meaningful, organized interpretive package. Meanwhile, familiar frames provide mental maps to help audiences make sense of daily events.

Extensive research has examined how a wide range of topics has been presented by the press. These include how deviance from social norms, as represented in the coverage of disputes and protests, can be used as a tool of power to define whose view of the world will dominate. Concerns about biased media framing have usurped concerns about merely balancing coverage.

Implications for Public Relations

The central idea behind framing is contextualization: Framing puts information in a situational or cultural context that delineates how people evaluate information, comprehend meanings, and take action.

Public relations messages must be imbued with sufficient clues so that people can make sense of a message and be influenced by it. In developing programs, professional strategists strive to frame situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, and responsibility in ways that achieve favorable outcomes for their clients. When conducting publicity,

it is equally important to use effective news framing to present a client's story in the press.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Advertising; Agenda-Setting Theory; Attribution Theory; Efficacy/Self-Efficacy; Involvement; Issues Management; Media Relations; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Narrative Theory; Paradox of the Positive/Negative; Psychological Processing; Publicity; Risk Communication

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FREE MARKET SYSTEM

A *free market* is an economic system where economic decisions are left up to individuals and voluntary associations of individuals such as corporations. This is in contrast to economic systems where decisions are made by government agencies. In a free market, nearly all organizations engage in public relations, including private corporations and nonprofit organizations. In particular, organizations will use public relations when the actions they have taken on the free market are viewed

skeptically by the public at large, even if their customers view their actions favorably.

A free market system is best thought of as an ideal type, which no country has ever perfectly adhered to, but which all countries have in some degree. Today, all countries have a mix of economic decisions made by individuals and governments, though the mix varies widely. Additionally, governments place a variety of restrictions and regulations on activities in a free market. The primary role that government can play in a free market is the protection of persons and property from violence and fraud. Government intervention beyond this limited role is considered a deviation from the free market ideal.

Free Markets in Theory: Prices, Profit, and Loss

A free market system is controlled almost entirely by the laws of supply and demand. Prices and quantities emerge in such a system based on current consumer demand for any specific good and the conditions governing the supply of that good (including resource availability, competing demands for those resources, and production costs). Prices in a free market can be thought of as signals transmitting information to both buyers and sellers of goods. The prices also provide a strong incentive for individuals to act on that information. Since all individuals and organizations have limited resources and face budget constraints, higher prices are an incentive to use less of relatively costly goods.

In a classic discussion of the price system, F. A. Hayek (1945) uses the example of a rise in the price of tin. The price increase could result from two different scenarios, a new economic use of tin or a temporary reduction in the physical supply of tin. Existing users of tin will see the price increase and voluntarily cut back on their use of tin by producing less of their product or switching to a substitute. The existing users do not need to know why the price increased (and Hayek emphasizes that this fact is crucial), because they have the information that tin is now more economically scarce and they have an incentive to use less tin since their costs have increased.

A second characteristic of the free market follows from the existence of prices: the profit and loss

system. Individuals making decisions in a free market must monitor both the price of the inputs they purchase (their costs) and the price of the outputs they sell (their revenues). In simple accounting terms, if revenues exceed costs, the individual will receive a profit. If the reverse is true, the individual will suffer a loss. This simple accounting formula has important implications for a free market system. Profits provide a signal that an individual has created value: the market value of the resources created is greater than the resources destroyed. Profit provides a signal for the individual to continue in this line of work and to continue to control the labor and capital as before (the opposite is true for losses).

Two important ideas for understanding the free market system are voluntary exchange and the invisible hand. *Voluntary exchange* is the act of sellers and buyers in a market willingly engaging in transactions with one another. Not only are they free from coercion, but they are also acting in a mutually beneficial way. It is rare for a buyer or seller to be in a worse situation after a transaction than before, because individuals are generally good at assessing how much they value particular goods. All transactions take place at the will of the buyer and seller, and never (legally) will a transaction be forced upon either.

An early explanation of the *invisible hand* was made by Adam Smith (1776). The term describes how the actions of individuals in a free market system are guided by an “invisible hand” as opposed to being guided by conscious direction from government or any other organization. Individuals are guided to help others by, somewhat paradoxically, pursuing their own interest rather than directly trying to assist others. The existence of prices and potential profits are the crucial mechanisms that allow for the beneficial operation of the invisible hand. More literally put, the invisible hand means a free market system is in many ways self-regulating. And most importantly, when individuals are pursuing their private interest, they are guided by the invisible hand to serve the public interest.

Not only is a free market system important to individual countries, but it also plays a vital role in the ever-growing pattern of globalization across the world. More and more, prices no longer convey information just to the producers and consumers within a specific country but also individuals participating in different economies all over the

world. With each passing day the economies of almost all countries become more interdependent and with this they are more subject to the actions of others. It is important to maintain strong economic incentives and keep the flow of information unrestricted in order to complement this ongoing globalization.

Free Markets in Practice

As stated above, no country has ever used a completely free market system. But which countries adhere most closely to this ideal? Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites around 1990, the world could be neatly divided into free market and planned economies (though there was still much variation within these two categories). Today, with a few notable exceptions (North Korea and Cuba), all countries embrace the free market, at least in their rhetoric. But some countries embrace the free market both in speech and in action more strongly.

Recently, several quantitative indexes have been developed to measure the degree to which countries adhere to the free market. The most widely used are the Economic Freedom of the World Index (developed by the Fraser Institute in Canada) and the Index of Economic Freedom (developed by the Heritage Foundation). These indexes aggregate various measures of economic freedom developed by third party sources, such as the World Bank and World Economic Forum.

The Fraser Institute’s Index uses 42 sources of data to create 5 broader categories of economic freedom: size of government; legal structure and property rights; sound money; free international trade; and regulation of credit, labor, and business. Using this data, they give countries a score on a 10-point scale and rank the countries. Of the 141 countries for which they had data in 2009, the Fraser Institute ranks Hong Kong, Singapore, and New Zealand as the closest to a free market system (with scores of 8 or 9 out of 10). At the bottom of the list are countries such as Zimbabwe, Myanmar, and Venezuela (with scores around 4).

In both economic freedom indexes, the United States is in 10th place, a very strong score but definitely not the freest in the world. This is a divergence from the rhetoric of U.S. politicians, the perception of U.S. citizens, and the rest of the world. Countries

such as Australia, Switzerland, and Canada also rank above the United States. The United States' score and ranking have exhibited two distinct trends in the past few decades: a steady increase in economic freedom from 1980 to 2000 and steady decrease from 2000 to 2009. This trend will likely continue through the next few years as data are finalized.

The extent to which a country uses the free market as its economic system is a strong predictor of how prosperous and well-off that country's citizens are. The most obvious correlation between free markets and prosperity is the average income of a country. The Fraser Institute divides the countries of the world into four groups from most to least economically free. The freest quarter of countries have an average income of about \$31,500, more than double the next group of countries (about \$15,000) and about seven times greater than the least free countries (about \$4,500).

Free markets do not just help the average person in a country, but the least well-off as well: the poorest 10% of the population in the most free-market group of countries have incomes that are more than double the next quarter of countries and over eight times more than the least free countries. Free markets do not just produce more wealth but also more health: in the freest quarter of countries life expectancy is about 19 years longer than the least free. These correlations hold for almost every measure of well-being that economists are able to quantify.

It is unlikely that the entire world will fully embrace the free market any time soon. However, the evidence shows that movement in the direction of a free market system leads to better living standards for citizens living in those countries.

Jeremy Horpedahl and Justus Harris

See also Integrated Marketing Communication; Marketing; Promotion; Public Relations; Publicity

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FREE SPEECH

In a monograph on public relations law, Frank Walsh (1988) wrote,

Democracy is fundamental to the potential of public relations. In the United States, the democratic process rests on the Constitution. Public relations without constitutionally protected free press and free speech is a misnomer. Without exception, every area of public relations practice involves legal rights and restrictions. (p. 1)

The basis of the protection is the First Amendment to the Constitution, which reads, in part, “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.” In addition to the federal constitution, freedom of speech is also protected by state constitutions, statutes, and the common law.

Although the First Amendment is phrased in absolute terms, it has never been applied as an absolute principle. For example, national security issues, fighting words, and legally obscene materials have been viewed as outside First Amendment protection. Areas that impact public relations, such as defamation, copyright protection, and privacy issues, set up conflicts between free speech rights and other protected values.

A number of commentators and textbooks have adopted the justifications for the choice enunciated by Thomas Emerson. According to Emerson (1970), there are four justifications for guaranteeing free speech. First, “freedom of expression is essential as a means of assuring individual self-fulfillment.” Second, “freedom of expression is an essential process for advancing knowledge and discovering truth.” Third, “freedom of expression is essential to provide for participation in decision making by all members of society.” Fourth, “freedom of expression is a method of achieving a more adaptable and

hence a more stable community” (pp. 6–9). Thus free speech is justified both as an individual good and as a good for society—both as an ends and a means. All four justifications find expression in various Supreme Court decisions.

Although Emerson focused his analysis primarily on the American experience and Supreme Court decisions, the justification of freedom of expression has a long philosophical history, dating back at least to the arguments in John Milton’s *Areopagitica* (1644) and advanced in John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* (1859). Although both Milton and Mill make a number of detailed arguments against censorship in favor of free speech, they can be reduced to two main arguments. The first is that the way to combat speech that is harmful is not to censor it but to counter with more speech. Censorship is never effective, leads to loss of mental toughness, and promotes conformity. More speech leads to public discussion, a greater possibility of resolving issues, and a greater chance that truth will emerge. The second argument is based on the idea of individual competence and responsibility. The basis of the arguments is that individuals are the best judges of what is in their best interest and that they are responsible enough, if persuaded or outvoted, to set that individual interest aside in favor of the common good.

But what does a guarantee of free speech mean? One of the first cases dealing with the issue was *Near v. Minnesota*, 283 U.S. 697 (1931). Chief Justice Hughes (1931), writing for the majority, referenced William Blackstone’s (the 18th-century English judicial scholar) statement:

Liberty of the press . . . consists in laying no previous restraints upon publications, and not in freedom from censure for criminal matter when published. Every freeman has an undoubted right to lay what sentiments he pleases before the public; to forbid this, is to destroy the freedom of the press. (pp. 713–714)

Although this statement was criticized from both directions—that some limited areas could be subjected to prior restraints and that liberty of the press that was not guaranteed in nonharmless statements could be subjected to criminal prosecution—the statement became the basis for the idea that freedom of speech consisted in no prior restraints on communication.

As a corollary, freedom of speech entails the means to gather information from willing participants and from governmental sources via sunshine laws and freedom of information statutes. Another corollary necessary to freedom of speech is the right to distribute the message. This right has been sustained by the courts in various contexts, including public forums, mail, door-to-door situations, and the media. Some distribution methods have come under scrutiny, including computer spam, telemarketing, and unsolicited faxes.

Although there is a strong presumption against prior restraints on expression, a distinction is often drawn between expression and action. Expression is strongly protected, but action is not protected at the same level of scrutiny. The key is how to draw a distinction between the two. Courts have wrestled with drawing this distinction in such areas as mass picketing and various forms of symbolic speech. A distinction is also drawn between anti-speech and nonspeech regulations. For example, a tax on the media may impact expression, but if the media are treated as any other business, the tax is considered a nonspeech regulation and upheld. Restrictions regarding the time, manner, and place of expression are also routinely upheld as long as they are content neutral, there is little discretionary power in the hands of the administrators, they are reasonable, and they advance a legitimate governmental interest. Captive audiences are generally given greater protection by the courts than are other types of audiences.

On balance, Western democracies have chosen to place minimal legal restrictions on communication, preferring to rely instead on a sense of responsibility and relevant ethical standards and codes of conduct. That choice seems to have had positive results for the field of public relations.

Roy V. Leeper

See also Codes of Ethics; Commercial Speech; Defamation (Libel and Slander)

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FREELANCE WRITERS

A freelance writer earns a living by writing or editing, taking photographs, or preparing graphics for broadcast stations, magazines, websites, newspapers, corporations, individuals, nonprofit organizations, and anyone else who needs help collecting, packaging, and disseminating information.

Public relations agencies and departments typically use freelance writers to work on special projects that the existing staff does not have the time or the expertise to handle. A freelance writer might be hired to prepare or edit an employee handbook or to develop interesting and enlightening graphics for an annual report.

The main advantage of hiring freelance writers is monetary: It costs less to hire someone on a one-time basis to complete a single project than it does to retain someone on staff to handle that job. A corporation or nonprofit organization typically does not have to worry about providing to freelance writers health insurance or retirement benefits since they are not employees.

Another advantage is that an organization can keep abreast of some of the latest developments in a field. A CEO who wants to add streaming video to the organization's website might have no idea how to do that—and might have no employee who can do that. Enter a freelance writer to show how it's done.

A disadvantage of using freelance writers lies in the lack of continuity. They seldom know the organization well, and they might not care too much about its overall health. The commitment is not there to learn the organization's history, values, culture, or policies. This lack of knowledge can lead to embarrassment or to a product or service that is less useful, impressive, or compelling than it might be.

A related disadvantage is the potential lack of control over a freelance writer's work. Robin Gregg sold the *New York Post* a story (about Walmart stores dropping Kathie Lee Gifford's clothing line) that looked a good deal like a story in the *National Enquirer*. Gregg will never write for the *Post* again, according to the *Post*'s management, but the damage was done. This was not a public relations firm, but the same thing can happen in almost any media context.

Freelance writing can be viewed from an entirely different perspective: A public relations writer can be seen as a kind of freelance writer when he or she contributes material to a medium. The obvious example is the news release. Practitioners are not paid for the releases they send, but the process is the same. The practitioner, in effect, works for the television station, for example, supplying material that might be aired. It's important for the practitioner to thoroughly understand the medium and its audience, the prevailing writing style of that medium, and the length and tenor of stories accepted. The practitioner who does these things will be a successful "freelance writer."

Michael Ryan

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FRONT GROUPS

Third party groups, coalitions, special interest groups, and trade associations formed and structured to advocate an explicit policy interest have become part of the U.S. political and economic landscape. Such groups derive their power from their size (individuals or groups represented) and the credibility attached to those numbers and the ethical standing of those who comprise the coalition. Their power depends on their ability to pressure policy makers and affect discourse and behavioral outcomes related to public policy decisions.

A 20th-century outgrowth of these organizations is the controversial tool called *front groups*. These groups involve deliberate financial, source, membership, and informational misrepresentations designed to persuade in a purportedly open communication context where interests are at stake for the advantage of undisclosed special interest or commercial purpose. They may be transient, reflecting their often single-issue focus. According to Kathy Fitzpatrick and Michael J. Palenchar (2006), front groups are a controversial public relations techniques used by organizations

to influence public opinion and public policy on behalf of undisclosed special interests. The groups are created to pursue public policy objectives for organizations that disguise their connection (e.g., financial support) with the effort while attempting to appear independent. The typical objective of front groups is to convince public policy makers that citizen support skews in a particular direction or to influence outcomes in local, state, and national elections. (p. 203)

Many front groups operate out of public relations agencies whose employees act as directors and managers and even the membership of the group. Front groups usually are given high-values laden, noble-sounding names such as "Citizens for [Something Good]." Other tactics include use of scientific sounding names such as the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology or names that suggest a concern for the public interest such as the National Wetlands Coalition. Michael Pfau, Michel M. Haigh, Jeanetta Sims and Shelley Wigley (2007) used the term *front-group stealth campaigns* to describe this public relations endeavor.

Modern history of front groups suggests that use of deceptive third-party techniques was initiated by Edward Bernays and advanced by Carl Byoir. For example, Byoir's firm created a front group called the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors that helped lead to the veto of some trucking legislations (Cutlip, 1994). Although corporations are the most frequent targets of criticism, religious and other nonprofit organizations also use front groups.

Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) code addresses the use of front groups under a provision that outlines what members shall do: "reveal the sponsors for causes and interests represented" and "avoid deceptive practices" (2000). In August 2004, PRSA issued Professional Standards Advisory PS-3 entitled *Front Groups*: "Members should recognize that assisting front groups that represent undisclosed sponsorships and/or deceptive or misleading descriptions of goals, causes, tactics, sponsors or participants constitutes improper conduct under the PRSA Member Code of Ethics and should be avoided" (p. 2).

Michael J. Palenchar

See also Bernays, Edward; *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010); Ethics of Public Relations; Public Interest; Public Relations Society of America; Trade Associations

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FULLY FUNCTIONING SOCIETY THEORY

Fully functioning society theory (FFST) of public relations reasons that for organizations to be successful they need to contribute to society, its dialogue quality, its sense of community, the quality of its structures and functions for collaborative decision making, the cocreation of meaning, and the alignment of interests. Fully functioning society theory reasons that public relations theory is best when it challenges and helps organizations be effective not only by what they do for themselves but also with the communities where they operate and on whose resources they depend.

As well as featuring the quality of processes needed for public relations success on behalf of organizations and community, public relations theory must realize that ideas and meaning count as communities solve problems and make collective decisions. Consequently, the theory features the role of infrastructures (process-based systems, structures, functions, and institutions) and meaning, which results from as well as shapes the nature and quality of discourse: deliberative democracy and stakeholder participation.

The tradition of public relations research and theory, as well as best practices, has at various times developed with the narrow purpose of helping organizations to be effective and able to achieve their missions and visions. This is an agentic approach to organizational management, especially through theories such as institutional theory. Taking a broader view, FFST presumes, fundamentally, that no organization can long be successful if it places its interests above those of the community(ies) where it operates. As such, this theory emphasizes the inherent connection of management, operations, discursive communication, critical ethical choices, and community. It rests on timeless assumptions about the rhetorical heritage and more modern concerns about discourse quality. It features the importance of aligning interests through deliberative democracy and stakeholder participation.

Resting upon several premises, the theory was developed in response to many pressures, one of which was the challenge offered by Bruce K. Berger (2005):

There is little doubt that public relations has effectively served capitalism and powerful economic producers for many years, but whether it has served or can serve stakeholders and society as well from inside or outside the dominant coalition is a contested issue. (p. 6)

By issuing that challenge, Berger focused on the problematics of public relations research and practice narrowly devoted to the agency of organizations, perhaps at the expense of or with indifference toward the larger community that in various ways enfranchises organizations to operate—as servants of society.

To dig into ways for public relations to help make society more fully functioning, Robert L. Heath (2006) offered several premises to guide public relations research and practice. The first premise challenged managements to demonstrate the ability to be reflective in ways that foster their legitimacy, being collaborative, proactive and responsive to others' views, interests, and needs. The challenge was to be a genuinely good corporate citizen as the first step toward being effective both through operations and communication with others.

The second premise featured the need for organizations to be willing and able to understand and

achieve standards of corporate responsibility that make them legitimate brokers of community resources. The assumption of this principle is that ethical standards of operation reflect norms of society that are collaboratively shaped, not manufactured by organizations to justify their management plans.

The third premise focuses on the paradoxes of power, which have implications for the right and ability to influence outcomes, including processes, operations, and perhaps more importantly, the ideology that justifies or denies power resource management. One of the paradoxes of power resource management is the normative nature of western management philosophy, which traditionally seeks to bend society to the interest of organizations and organizational leaderships. In that effort, discourse can either feature narrowly the interests of the organization or those of the community. This premise asks whether power is an individual, organizational agency or the collaborative property of the community.

Rather than denying the role of interests, or asking organizations and individuals to set them aside, the theory offers the fourth premise, which features the community as conflicting and conjoined interests and expectations. Self-interests motivate, but they also collide. The challenge is to align and meld them into a coherent whole that can add value to all interests that are legitimate to the integrity of the community. As such, the theory poses the idea that societies organize for the collective management of risks. Those who do the best to collectively manage risks in collective interest do better than those who shift risk bearing disproportionately on some to the advantage of others. Thus, the theory postulates the virtue of collectively advancing interests through effective risk management as a key public relations role and responsibility.

That line of reasoning sets the foundation for the fifth premise, which pits corporatas against *communitas*. Are relationships and other conditions for a fully functioning society bent to the benefits of some at the dysfunction and marginalization of others? Or is the collective incentive to foster mutual benefit? In that latter condition, stakes are exchanged for the good of the whole community. Both in management and communication, *communitas* rests on the rationale of openness, trustworthiness, cooperation, aligned interests, compatible

views/opinions/norms, and commitment inspired through cocreated meaning.

Robert L. Heath's 2006 article in the *Journal of Public Relations Research* states that the sixth premise builds on the previous five:

Society is a complex of collectivities engaged in variously constructive dialogue and power resource distribution through meeting socially constructed and shared norm-based expectation whereby individuals seek to make enlightened choices in the face of risk, uncertainty, and reward/cost ambiguity. (p. 108)

This premise lays the foundation for the seventh premise, which emphasizes the importance of responsible advocacy, and the eighth premise, the virtue of narratives and other rhetorical forms used to coconstruct enlightened choice.

The rhetorical heritage with all of the advantages and disadvantages of discourse is presumed to be capable, but not without constant monitoring, of being a means by which people collectively achieve enlightened choices and shared commitment. That is the outcome and by implications the challenge of responsible advocacy, which presumes that in the marketplace wrangle of ideas better ideas drive away bad ones.

As matters often do, FFST features some prepositions, namely *between* and *with* rather than *for*. *Between* presumes the virtue and pragmatism of emphasizing collectivity over individuality, cooperation rather than victory or defeat. An elitist (paternalistic) ideal presumes that corporate managements have better problem-solving skills than do individuals. Therefore, the elitist role (corporatas) of public relations can be conceptualized as showing stakeholders the dysfunctions of their decision making. That view of public relations contrasts with one that presumes a less western managerial approach, one more dependent on the quality of the rapport and engagement potentialities of working together for common ground.

Such a view of public relations, however, should not discount the need for and role of corporate citizenship, which presumes that large organizations often need to help create and improve infrastructures that empower stakeholder discussions. Infrastructures can, and often do, privilege some interests. Lobbying is an excellent

example. It can be used in ways that benefit some interests against others. Fully functioning society theory challenges senior practitioners to help design and empower forums in which productive discussions can transpire to produce collaboration. Thus, both the rhetorical heritage and critical discourse advocates know that the quality of ideas generated is never greater than the quality of the arena in which they are forged. Systems, structures, and functions count; they are the process and place of discourse. Access to and influence over the process is an individual and collective power resource.

For many years, discourse analysis and the rhetorical heritage have sought to critique and guide the quality of discourse. Meaning matters. That is not only a key to community productivity, agency, but it also sees public relations as much more than mere wordsmithing. Public relations continues to be a language function, one where expertise is devoted to crafting effective messages that shape individual and collective decision making. Beyond a tool, language, meaning, and the quality of community decision making are discursive challenges. Language is not narrowly a tool of clarity. It is a tool of power, preference, and privilege.

How meaning is shaped and the meaning that is shaped have implications for cognitive processes of mind as ideation, self/identity, and society/relational. Each of these molar concepts presumes an important dimension where the power of vocabulary shapes how people think, what they think about, the conclusions they draw, the sense they have of themselves and others, and the conceptions of relationships and society. As such, meaning is a primary power resource.

Fully functioning society theory adopts themes of stakeholder participation and deliberative democracy as hallmarks of robust discussion about the nature and rationale for the public relations practice as either harming or helping collective interests.

Robert L. Heath

See also Collaborative Decision Making; Communitarianism; Communitas/Corporatas; Community and Community Building; Critical Theory; Deliberative Democracy; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Reflective Management; Rhetorical Theory

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FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

During the 20th century, public relations steadily evolved into a structured professional practice based on the development and refinement of specializations. Today, we think of these specialties as functions. A *function* is a unique service, program, department, or job title; conceptualized through the logic of social science, a function is an independent variable that can produce specific outcomes (dependent variable) in contexts. As such, one such function, lobbying, is applied in the context of government relations, which itself is a specialty function, either of organizations or agencies.

Each function has its unique set of objectives; broadly, these are used to build, maintain, and repair relationships with specific markets, audiences, or publics. Typical functions include media relations, corporate communication, investor relations, issues management, community relations, employee relations, donor relations, strategic philanthropy, and government relations. How these are named, used, and organized depends on the management of each organization.

An organization may place public relations functions under the marketing function, such as publicity, promotion, integrated communication, integrated marketing communication, and marketing communication. Each function has the sense of being a specialty under the broad umbrella of departments with titles such as *public relations* or *public affairs*, or the functions may be positioned to support some other department such as marketing.

As a specialty activity, each function is developed because of the dynamics and challenges unique to each organization and its mission, vision, and culture. In contrast to organizations that have their own public relations functions, each agency is likely to position itself as specializing in key functions, or it may present itself as a full-service agency. By implication, a full-service agency can provide and support all functions. Agencies often find it makes sound business sense to specialize in one or a narrow cluster of functions that give it the opportunity to maximize its client service. The challenge of the professional personnel who work in support of each function is to provide their own unique strategic and tactical service—whether to their employer or as an agency bringing their resources to bear on clients' needs.

As organized into a company (or other organization) or agency, each function may have specialty personnel and a dedicated budget. For instance, a large corporation may decide to have a strategic philanthropy function that is dedicated to issuing invitations for proposals for funding out of the corporate philanthropy pot of money—the money senior management dedicates to building community goodwill by funding nonprofit organizations. This function is likely to review the applicants to determine which are worthy and to also search for and investigate worthy groups that should be given funding as part of the company's strategic philanthropy.

The specific functions an organization employs or the specialties that are offered by each agency are positioned in response to unique dynamics of the environment where they operate. Some functions are a direct result of external requirements. Perhaps the most obvious of these is investor relations. Publicly traded companies are required by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to communicate with current or potential shareholders in a timely, public fashion so that investors can obtain the information they might want to make decisions to buy, sell, or hold shares of the company's stock. This function is generically called "investor relations." Some agencies specialize in investor relations, because it requires unique knowledge of SEC regulations and must meet highly regulated challenges. This function requires careful coordination with legal and financial expertise relevant to the securities marketplace. Some

agencies make no pretense of offering investor relations services because of the special requirements of that function.

Thinking about investor relations, for instance, brings up another point relevant to the discussion of functions. Some of the traditional functions are located within public relations or public affairs departments, whereas others bridge several departments. In many companies, for instance, corporate or employee communications is likely to bridge between and call on specialists from public relations/public affairs and human resources. In some instances, a function typical of public relations may be located in another department. Over the years, for instance, many investor relations functions have left the shelter of public relations departments to become subsumed under the corporate general counsel or the chief financial officer (CFO).

The function called government relations might also bridge two or more departments. For instance, it might have its primary location in public relations/public affairs. Because of the unique nature of the company, it might link to the company's general counsel (bearing on the legal concerns and expertise of the organization) as well as link to operations under the chief operating officer. Depending on the challenges unique to the company, government relations might need to be matrixed with human resources, engineering, production, and marketing. In this configuration, the service of public relations to the marketing effort is not to sell products or services but to link that department with the legislative and regulatory arena. Government relations, for instance, might need to gear up to monitor legislative and regulatory issues that could influence how the organization markets its products and services. The government relations function might need to support, mitigate, or oppose legislation or regulation that can affect how the organization markets its products or services.

How each company selects, organizes, charges, and budgets its functions depends on its culture, its mission or vision, and its location in the marketplace or public policy arena. For instance, companies that are largely devoted to selling consumer products are likely to have a marketing bias in their culture, planning, and operations. They are so devoted to marketing that advertising and public relations tend to be located under the marketing department or may even report to a chief marketing officer or a senior

vice president of marketing. In such companies, advertising and public relations work together to sell products or services. There public relations may be limited to a publicity and promotion function. In such situations, it is not surprising to find investor relations and government relations functions located in departments totally separate from public relations. The same may be true of strategic philanthropy and employee relations. In such an organization, the community relations function may very well be devoted to events that publicize and promote products rather than address other concerns relevant to the locales where the company operates.

One reason that public affairs developed as a title for the primary public relations program in large companies was the desire and need by such companies to deal with publics that were not markets or audiences. For this reason, those companies developed a sense of public relations functions that focused more on stakeholder relations than on marketing. Thus, an industrial manufacturing company—such as one dedicated to the steel industry, the chemical manufacturing industry, or the timber industry—might have a public affairs department. It might have a public relations (promotion and publicity) function under public affairs; in this configuration the work assigned to public relations is likely to be limited to marketing support. Or public relations (promotion and publicity) might be located beneath the chief marketing officer, whereas public affairs might have its own chief, for instance, a chief communication officer (CCO)—or the parallel might be the vice president of public affairs on the same organizational line as the vice president of marketing. In one more variation of this theme, the company may have marketing, advertising, and public relations all located beneath the CCO or vice president of public affairs. Large manufacturing organizations that are vertically and horizontally integrated may have public relations or public affairs located in each major operating division. Some divisions may use public relations in support of marketing, whereas other divisions of the company may use public relations primarily for governmental relations, community relations, and strategic philanthropy.

The theme that runs through the definition and design of functions, then, is that the functional location and the specific functions under public

relations are selected and budgeted to be relevant to the challenges that drive the organization's mission or vision, strategic business planning, management, and stakeholder relations. Agencies also position themselves competitively. To do so, they determine what functions to offer as part of the kinds of business they want. Positioning through functions is necessary for agencies to generate revenue in a highly competitive market. For instance, some agencies are closely associated with advertising agencies, or they may be owned as departments in advertising agencies—or marketing agencies. Some agencies are marketing communication specialists that even have advertising, graphics services, and events planning and execution.

In contrast, other agencies feature specialties less directly related to marketing. They all will have a media relations function. In addition, they might specialize or offer a specialty in community relations, government relations, risk communication, issues management, strategic philanthropy, investor relations, or crisis communication.

Functions are not unique to businesses or agencies. Nonprofit organizations will have various functions given their mission. For instance, a museum is likely to have a development, marketing, and publicity function—or separate functions depending on size and budget. A museum might have an educational outreach function, linking it to schools. That might be a part of its community relations function. Educational outreach is often seen as a part of its marketing and development function.

Universities and colleges have marketing, public relations/public affairs, and alumni relations departments. They will have functions: government relations, alumni relations, development, publicity, faculty relations, employee relations, student relations, parent relations, and such. The logic for each college or university may differ because of its mission and vision, but each will have functional divisions and specialties.

Agencies become complementary mirrors of the organizations they strive to serve by adding value to functions in the client organization or by offering functions the client does not have. Sometimes, the role of the agency is to provide a function that a client cannot afford. For instance, if an organization does one major event per year, it might be cost-effective to outsource that function rather

than to have people devoted to events or to assume that people doing other public relations functions can also do events. Shipping companies may periodically need a crisis response, but they may find it is more cost-effective to have a specialty agency on retainer than to have an in-house crisis response function. Having said that, however, practitioners in nonprofit organizations are more likely to be Jacks-and-Jills-of-all-trades simply because they have fewer resources to spread across their functional needs.

One of the functions of public relations, counseling, is the most controversial and demanding. Some agencies—often limited in size, but not expertise—specialize as counselors. They may draw on years of experience and conduct various kinds of research to help the organization solve a problem relevant to its positioning—relevant to various functions. In this sense, counseling might relate to refining the mission and position and even address strategic business planning to better increase revenue and reduce the costs incurred through collisions with activists and other critics. Counseling can also be one of the internal functions that either senior members of the public relations department or specialized members of the department can provide to others in the senior management team. Departments with an issues management culture have counseling built in. They traditionally assess, for instance, organizational ethics and standards of corporate responsibility.

New media, especially social media, offer new and challenging functional opportunities for organizations and agencies. Companies with high marketing and customer satisfaction expectations may hire specialists to monitor and respond to customer comments. Agencies offer specialized services, including monitoring and tracking comments relevant to a company, service, product, and such. At the moment, this is a very fluid function as practitioners learn the new media terrain.

Robert L. Heath

See also Advertising; Community Relations; Corporate Social Responsibility; Counseling; Government Relations; Investor Relations; Issues Management; Marketing; Matrixing/Matrix Management; Media Relations; Philanthropy; Promotion; Publicity; Social Media

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FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is one of public relations' highest paid specializations and one of the least understood. Practitioners manage relationships between one special type of organization and one special stakeholder group: charitable organizations and their donor publics. Contrary to popular belief, the purpose of fundraising is not to raise money, but to help organizations and donors fulfill mutual philanthropic interests.

A good analogy for understanding fundraising, which also is known as *development* and can be termed *donor relations*, is investor relations. Practitioners specializing in investor relations are high paid. They manage relationships between publicly owned corporations (one special type of organization) and investors, or current and potential stockholders (one special stakeholder group). Investor relations specialists do not sell stock in the corporation to generate revenue; rather, their job is to help the corporation retain and attract owners, who invest in the stock market to advance their financial interests. The two parties are interdependent; each needs the other to achieve its goals. Investors are both organizations and individuals, some of whom make major financial commitments and, by virtue of the large percentage of shares they own, hold a great deal of power in the organization–public relationship. Other investors buy only a few shares of stock and have little power individually, although their collective power is substantial. Investor relations specialists use a variety of communication tactics—from interpersonal to controlled media to mass media communication—to build and maintain these relationships.

Just as participation in the stock market is a characteristic of our capitalistic economy, America's tradition of philanthropy pervades our society. Quite simply, donors give money to charitable organizations not because fundraisers persuade them to give, but because giving is a customary, expected, admired, and even legally required behavior in the United States. The job of fundraisers is to retain and attract donors, who traditionally give away money to advance causes that they believe will improve society. Indeed, philanthropy and its facilitation by fundraisers are essential to what is referred to as *social capital*, which is the bedrock of civil society.

Historical and Organizational Context

Fundraising traces its beginning to the founding of the colonies that became the United States. Discussions of its history usually start with the first solicitation for Harvard College in 1641, which produced the colonies' first public relations brochure. Fundraising was conducted haphazardly by volunteers and untrained managers until the early 1900s, when specialists began to emerge. Institutionalization of the function dates back to just 60 years ago. Although fundraising has spread to almost all countries, its roots are in American democracy, which promotes a nonprofit sector and fosters philanthropy through a favorable tax system.

Fundraisers work for charitable organizations, a special type of nonprofit organization. They should not be confused with people who carry out fundraising activities for other types of nonprofit organizations, such as political parties or electoral campaign committees. The term *fundraising* generally is reserved for bringing about *philanthropic* exchanges, meaning that the transfer of money is not based on quid pro quo (as it is in a marketing exchange) and that the money given meets the criteria of a charitable contribution, as defined by the Internal Revenue Code.

The nonprofit sector consists of tax-exempt organizations that are neither businesses nor government agencies. There are approximately 1.6 million U.S. nonprofit organizations, of which more than 1 million, or 68%, are charitable nonprofit organizations, meaning that gifts to them are deductible from donors' taxable income. Charitable nonprofit

organizations come in all shapes and sizes, from local day-care centers and neighborhood churches to major research universities and metropolitan hospitals. Their missions, or the purpose for which they were granted tax exemption, are diverse and represent all aspects of society, including the arts, education, the environment, health, human services, and religion.

The majority of charitable organizations have annual revenues of less than \$100,000 and depend on volunteers, such as trustees, to raise philanthropic gifts. Charitable organizations with higher revenues—often millions or even billions of dollars per year—employ fundraisers, either as external consultants or as internal staff. Although no official count exists, projections based on earlier estimates place the number of full-time fundraisers at approximately 150,000.

Donor Publics

As with investors, donors consist of both organizations and individuals. Similarly, some donors make major gifts and hold a great deal of power in the organization–public relationship, whereas others make small annual gifts and hold little power unless they act collectively. The relationship is based on interdependency between the donor, who provides financial resources to carry out the charitable organization's mission, and the charitable organization, which provides the means to carry out the donor's philanthropic wishes.

There basically are three donor publics: individuals, foundations, and corporations. Individuals traditionally give more than 80% of all gift dollars every year. The amount of dollars given by all donors to all charitable organizations in the United States is quite impressive. It also is the envy of all other industrialized countries. For example, in 2011, Americans gave a total of \$298 billion, of which 81% came from individuals, 14% came from foundations, and 5% came from corporations, according to Giving USA (2012).

Philanthropy by all types of donor publics, according to philanthropy and nonprofit management scholars, is best explained by the mixed-motive model of giving, which holds that philanthropy reflects neither pure altruism nor pure egoism; it involves mixed motives: to fulfill the donor's interests in self and in a common

good, as represented by the mission of the charitable organization receiving the gift.

Furthermore, the American tradition of philanthropy creates an expectation that all individuals should make charitable contributions, according to their means. Wealthy individuals are held to a philanthropic standard that is unusual in the modern world: They are expected to give away most of their wealth before or at the time of their death. The standard was outlined in the late 1880s by legendary philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who proclaimed, "He who dies rich dies disgraced" (1983, p. 108).

Corporations that give away pretax dollars are admired. Philanthropy is a critical element in demonstrating corporate social responsibility. The theory of corporate contributions as social currency holds that U.S. companies make gifts because senior managers are expected by their peers to contribute corporate dollars. Studies have shown that giving is the norm in many business subcultures, and managers who want to remain in the inner circles have to conform by making appropriate contributions. Finally, foundations, unlike the other donor publics, are required by law to give away each year an amount equal to 5% of their financial assets. Their very purpose is to provide support to charitable organizations through grants. The number of U.S. foundations has increased rapidly during the last two decades and now totals more than 76,600.

Programs

Fundraisers organize their activities into four traditional programs: annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, and capital campaigns. The first two are primary programs; the second two actually are strategies to raise major gifts.

Focusing on the primary programs, annual giving raises lower-level gifts, whereas the major gifts program raises major gifts. Dollar amounts defining the two gift types differ among organizations. For example, universities and hospitals typically define a major gift as a gift of \$100,000 or more, but most churches and human services organizations (such as chapters of the American Red Cross) use \$10,000 as the dividing point. Contributions and grants from corporations and foundations, respectively, usually are major gifts. Gifts from

individuals run the gamut—from pennies placed in collection plates to multimillion-dollar pledges. Most Americans make at least one annual gift each year, but because wealth is not distributed equally in the U.S. capitalistic economy, a minority of individuals—those with the most income and assets—account for most major gifts.

Annual giving often is described as the bread-and-butter program of fundraising because it generates annual income that helps pay the charitable organization's operational expenses. Annual gifts, which typically are less than \$100, almost always are unrestricted in purpose, meaning they can be used where most needed as determined by the organization's managers after receipt. In contrast, major gifts almost always are restricted and must be used for the specific purposes for which they were given, determined in advance of receipt. Annual gifts usually are made from donors' income, whereas outright major gifts are made from donors' income and assets, and planned major gifts typically come only from donors' assets. As operational expenses are reoccurring, the annual giving program is repeated each year, unlike the major gifts program and planned giving, which are ongoing, and capital campaigns, which are sporadic.

For most charitable organizations, the major gifts program accounts for the vast majority of dollars raised, and only a relatively few gifts account for most of that money. Approximately 80% of all dollars raised will come from 20% of all gifts—what fundraisers refer to as the *principle of proportionate giving*. The major gifts program, therefore, is targeted at wealthy individuals, as well as corporations and foundations—but only those that have an expressed interest in the organization and its mission. Virtually every major donor has a long-standing, carefully nurtured relationship with the recipient organization and the people who represent it. In almost all cases, major donors have made previous gifts to the organization. Because they provide most of the dollars raised, major donors have considerable power in affecting the organization's operations—similar to the power held by large institutional investors in publicly owned corporations. Fundraisers seek a balance between protecting organizational autonomy and being accountable to major donors. To help them

achieve balance in their boundary role, fundraisers must be skilled negotiators because major gifts usually are restricted—often with multiple conditions—for purposes that may or may not coincide with the organization's self-directed plans.

Colleges, universities, and hospitals attract the largest gifts, followed by arts, culture, and humanities organizations. In 2011, for example, organizations with education and health missions raised \$39 billion and \$25 billion, respectively, according to Giving USA (2012). Not surprisingly, colleges, universities, and hospitals employ the largest number of fundraisers.

To raise annual gifts, fundraisers primarily use controlled media tactics, specifically, direct mail and special events, to solicit lower-level gifts from a large numbers of individuals. In contrast, fundraisers primarily use interpersonal communication tactics such as face-to-face conversations and personal letters to solicit major gifts from a much smaller number of individuals, corporations, and foundations. Fundraisers increasingly are using Internet channels such as websites and social media to cultivate donors and solicit gifts. Building and maintaining relationships with donors is key to both primary programs, which requires fundraisers to devote a great deal of their time to sharing information and encouraging involvement. The emphasis of their work is on research, cultivation, and stewardship—not solicitation.

ROPES Process

The ROPES process model, drawn from public relations theory, was conceptualized to describe how fundraising is conducted and was tested in field research by Kathleen S. Kelly. Kelly then applied the resulting model to overall public relations practice, which affirmed the common theoretical basis of fundraising and public relations.

ROPES consists of five consecutive steps: research, objectives, programming, evaluation, and stewardship. Fundraising begins with research in three progressive areas: (a) the charitable organization for which practitioners work; (b) the opportunity, or problem, faced by the organization; and (c) the donor publics related to both the organization and the opportunity. The second step is setting specific, measurable objectives that are

derived from organizational goals and supported by research. Objectives are not limited to dollar totals. Programming consists of planning and implementing activities designed to bring about the outcomes stated in the objectives. These activities are categorized by the two purposes of cultivation and solicitation. Evaluation monitors programming and later determines if the set objectives were met. Stewardship completes the process and provides an essential loop back to the beginning of fundraising. Four sequential elements are basic to stewardship: reciprocity, responsibility (including responsible gift use), reporting, and relationship nurturing.

Research is deemed the most important step in fundraising, followed by stewardship. The

prioritization is logical in that scholarly and practitioner analyses show that donors decide which causes are important to them and that the best prospects for future gifts are current donors. Whether raising annual, major, planned, or campaign gifts, the ROPES theory holds that fundraisers should spend 20% of their time on research, 15% on objectives, 30% on programming (equally divided between planning and implementing), 15% on evaluation, and 20% on stewardship (see Figure 1). Results of field research show that fundraisers generally follow the ROPES process, although they devote less time to research than advocated by the theory.

Fundraising lags about four decades behind public relations in establishing itself as a profession.

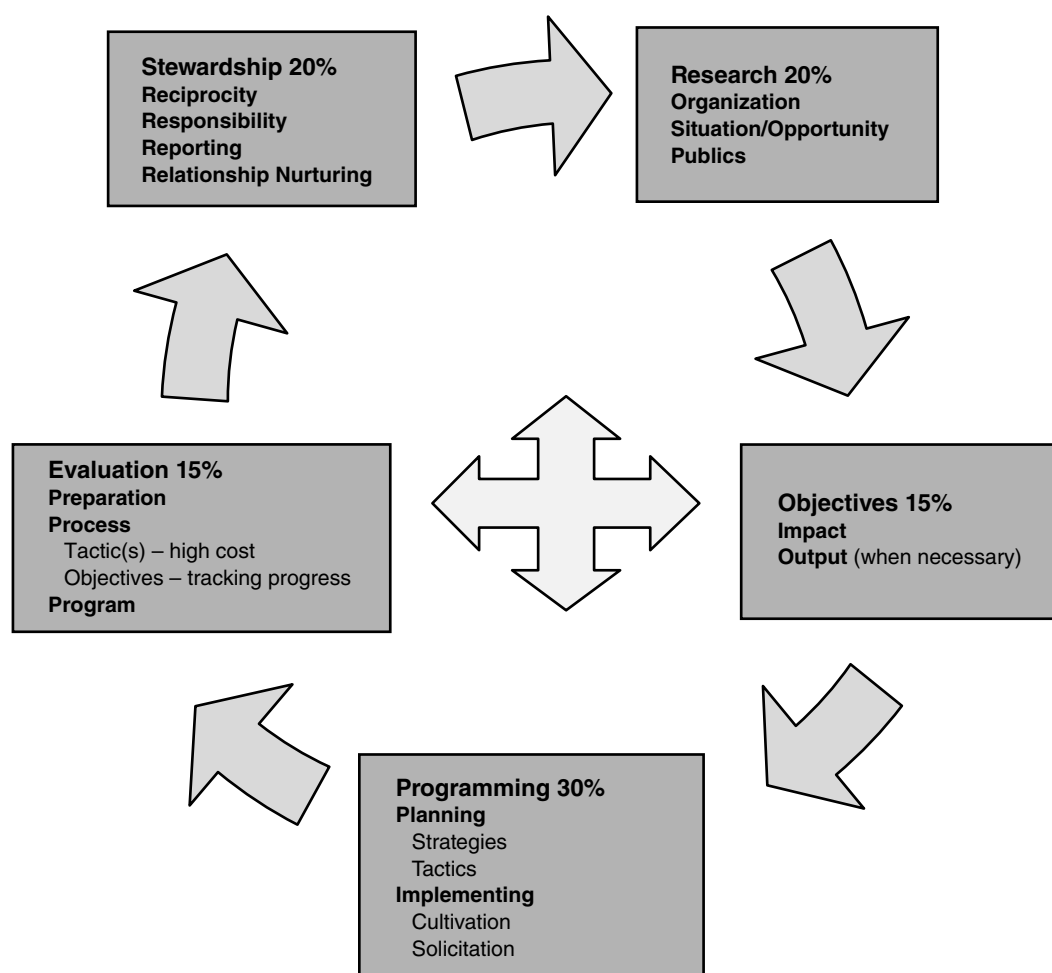


Figure 1 Kelly's ROPES Process Model

Source: © K. S. Kelly (2012).

Yet because of high demand and a shortage of trained practitioners, fundraisers command salaries approximately 50% higher than those paid to general public relations practitioners. Scholars and practitioners increasingly are drawing from public relations to build a body of knowledge that informs fundraising practice and education. The effort is commendable given the important role that fundraising plays in the U.S. democratic society.

Kathleen S. Kelly

See also Investor Relations; Nonprofit Organizations; Philanthropy; Public Relations; Stewardship of Large Organizations

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FUTURISM AND TREND ANALYSIS

Futurism in public relations refers to attempts to project trends through analysis of current or historical data for the purpose of strategic communication planning. Futures research focuses on developing methodologies for identifying and analyzing future trends for long-range forecasting and planning. While calls for practitioners to look toward the future began in the mid-20th century, as a response to the perceived narrow focus of public relations practice on past experience and immediate circumstances, interest in futurism grew dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s, fueled by technological advances in communication and information systems. In recent years, the push to incorporate trend analysis into public relations has paralleled the growth of the Internet and social media and the accompanying unprecedented access to social data.

As a movement, futurism in the social sciences became prevalent beginning in the late 1960s, spearheaded by futurologists such as Olaf Helmer (a researcher at the Rand Corporation), and continued into the 1970s through the writings of futurist scholars Joseph Martino, Victor Ferkiss, and others. Given its roots in computer science, the early field reflected a mid-20th-century fascination with the potential to use computer database technology and burgeoning communication systems as aids for decision making and prediction, a push to apply the same scientific principles to social contexts as the natural world. The conviction that science and technology held the keys to the future was a recurring theme in the age of space exploration and early computer technology.

Futurism has been associated with the growing connection between public relations and public policy. As the field moved into the 1980s, futurist authors emphasized the potential for public relations practitioners to use their skills and positions within organizations to influence policy decisions. Futurism was seen as a means of using forecasting methods to identify long-term trends in policy-making environments and determine appropriate interventions. Futurism thus became closely linked to issues management, although it is important to note that these are distinct practices. Futures research can support issues management, but not replace it.

Arguments made in support of a futurist orientation in public relations have included improved ethics, more accurate and effective strategic planning, and more timely development of targeted crisis avoidance strategies. For example, in one of the earliest writings on the subject, J. Carroll Bateman urged public relations professionals to emphasize “the future factor,” as a stimulus to behave more ethically by taking a long-term approach to communication. Thirty years later, Judy VanSlyke Turk proposed a “sequential futures model” based on a combination of environmental scanning; trend extrapolation based on historic events; Delphi studies tapping the judgments of decision makers, staff, and experts; and hypothetical scenario building. She argued that incorporating these futures techniques into regular professional practice would make it possible for an organization not only to predict but also take a proactive role in constructing its own operational context.

The term *futurism* is rarely found in the current public relations literature, but the spirit of technology-driven trend analysis and forecasting is alive and well in the social sciences and still present in some strands of public relations research. Today futurist techniques have largely been folded into the growing influence of “big data” research in the social sciences, thanks to a media and communication environment that allows for relatively easy access to previously unthinkable amounts of data, often in close to real time. Data scraping and mining procedures borrowed from computer science and statistical market research provide massive datasets that can be analyzed for patterns on which to base strategic decisions, while social media make it feasible for organizations to develop tailored communication programs targeting increasingly fine-grained segments of stakeholders.

One significant difference between early futurism and more recent research in this vein is the incorporation of nonlinear causality. Early futurism was strongly influenced by research in economics, which presumed humans to be rational actors whose behaviors could be traced to isolated variables with clear directions of cause and effect. The advent of chaos and complexity theories, which emphasize uncertainty and complex interdependencies, have led current researchers to accept

that accurate long-term forecasts are likely impossible given the vast number of variables involved in any social context, all of which may significantly alter the course of future events. Similarly, advancements in network science have been increasingly influential in applied communication research, leading scholars to focus on developing new methods for understanding patterns of influence within densely connected systems of organizations, individuals, institutions, and messages.

One example of a study in this current line of trend research in public relations is a 2010 analysis by Priscilla Murphy of news releases and media coverage of homemaking celebrity executive Martha Stewart over the first 25 years of her career, sampled around 18 critical events, including her conviction and imprisonment for obstruction of justice and lying to government officials investigating insider trading and her subsequent career trajectory. The study used a form of computerized textual analysis known as semantic network analysis to identify patterns of influence within the news releases and media stories, finding that this method made it possible to identify the formation of potentially damaging reputational patterns, in some cases long before these culminated in negative outcomes for Stewart. One conclusion of this study is therefore that adoption of current trend analysis methods and the use of appropriately large data samples can allow public relations practitioners to identify future trends in time to attempt corrective strategic measures. At the same time, the study suggested that media campaigns have limited effect on entrenched media representations of reputation. Futures research should therefore not be approached as a panacea but as one of many tools that can be used within a comprehensive public relations program.

Thanks to the availability of new kinds of data as well as advanced research technologies, trend analysis has thus recently undergone a renewed level of interest among public relations scholars and practitioners, particularly those interested in questions of reputation, issue, and crisis management, for which predictive information is most obviously and immediately useful. Futurism has been criticized for being narrowly focused on linear outcomes and overestimating the potential effectiveness of intervention efforts. More nuanced approaches shaped by newer analytical methods

and theoretical frameworks may help address those criticisms and fulfill the early promise of futurism as a valuable diagnostic tool for organizations.

Dawn R. Gilpin

See also Chaos and Complexity Theory; Crisis and Crisis Management; Issues Management; Network Theory; Reputation Management Further Readings

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G

GAME THEORY

Game theory, introduced to the public relations literature in the 1980s, underpins a conflict-to-cooperation continuum used to classify communicators' motives. Game theory inspired the reconceptualization of public relations' normative two-way symmetrical practice model. Overall, game theory approaches may enhance decision-making and relationship-maintenance skills among various constituents, enabling practitioners to navigate complex systems and to make public relations more ethical and professional.

Game theory has a rich history and long has been embraced among the social sciences of psychology, management science, and political science. *Games* is a metaphor applied to a wide range of human interactions that depend on how two or more persons (and other entities) directly and strategically relate with one another. This approach to modeling human behavior was developed in 1944 by mathematician John von Neumann and mathematical economist Oskar Morgenstern. Rational choice theory provides game theory's underpinnings, and it has been invoked in debates on complex policy issues such as market competition, arms races, and environmental pollution. Game theory resonates with public relations theorists *and* applied practitioners because understanding the balance of influence between an organization and its constituents is central to doing public relations well and ethically.

Specifically, game theory enabled public relations researchers to expand the range of communication behaviors by redefining *symmetric* communication (games of pure cooperation)—which rarely happens in actual public relations practice even though many theorists agree that it is preferable to *asymmetric* communication (zero-sum games). To illustrate, whereas a three-legged race might be classified as a game of pure cooperation (or non-zero-sum game), a tug of war is a zero-sum game because there exists a direct correlation between participants' performance; the better one player does, the other performs incrementally worse. Since game theory was added to the public relations literature, two-way symmetric communication has been redefined as a "mixed-motive" behavior. Such a framework maintains that while organizations may have asymmetrical self-interest concerns at the core of all behaviors, each is motivated toward cooperation in order to resolve or to reduce some aspects of conflict associated with relationship building and maintenance.

Game theory inspired crisis communication researchers to consider multiple perspectives and to avoid binary dualisms that limit the full range of possible communication behaviors (Murphy, 1989, 1991); that perspective expanded to account for organizations' permeable boundaries and complex systems (Gilpin & Murphy, 2008). Many have argued that public relations practice should not be forced to fit into one of four models (press agency, information, asymmetry, and symmetry) because it is a profession and an arena of academic inquiry that involve many variables that

interact in complex and vibrant ways. For example, it may be prudent to maintain some degree of tension (as compared to pure cooperation or total accommodation) among competing interests that are at ideological odds in order to foster continuing dialogue needed to achieve a desired outcome that may never have a final conclusion.

Game theory thinking advances ethical decision making, accommodates strategic planning, and promotes professionalism. Game structures are used to analyze crisis communication issues and to navigate seven principles of complex systems that affect crisis management: interacting agents, adaptability, self-organization, instability, influence of history, permeable boundaries, and irreducibility. Such analyses of organization–constituent relationships in times of crisis may be used to determine what went wrong and to explain why. Also applying game theory to strategic planning enables practitioners to confidently examine what-ifs and best-/worst-case scenarios, as well as to develop strategic alliances and build coalitions. The game becomes a negotiation involving commodities, strategic trades, and concessions, wherein, optimally, there are no clear-cut winners or losers. Since game models involve determining all possible consequences and a full range of potential behaviors, public relations practitioners may more clearly examine the ethical implications of their counsel.

Games also play a role in journalist–public relations exchanges during crises. For example, while a public relations practitioner hopes that reputation-damaging news coverage is minimal, a journalist is rewarded for scooping competitors and for producing stories that tap into enduring news values of conflict and disorder. This struggle has been compared to a classic duel where the organization scores a “hit” if it delays communication long enough to allow the crisis to abate (resulting in no media coverage) or if it *steals thunder* by breaking the news of a crisis (that is likely to be discovered anyway). On the other hand, a media outlet scores a hit if it is the first to break the news about an organization’s crisis.

Therefore, game theory + public relations theory = ethical and analytical frameworks for maintaining and developing relationships between complex organizations and constituents.

Donnalyn Pompper

See also Chaos and Complexity Theory; Codes of Ethics; Conflict Resolution; Convergence and Public Relations; Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Dialogue; Futurism and Trend Analysis

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GAMING/PLAYSPACE/ SOCIAL GAMING

Video games are interactive, rule-based entertainment playable on electronic devices such as video game consoles, personal computers, or other

devices. These platforms create a playspace in which players interact with the game to achieve desired outcomes such as higher scores, prizes, or narrative advancement. Often, these games contain social elements that encourage interaction between players, as well as systems of feedback and positive reinforcement that make them useful for conveying persuasive messaging.

Video games have become a part of global culture and a popular social activity. Players play video games offline as well as online through services like Xbox Live, Steam, and Playstation Network. Many games are also available on handheld platforms such as the Nintendo 3DS and smartphones like the iPhone. The latter is a growing market due to its relatively open nature and lower development costs; mobile titles like *Angry Birds* and *Cut the Rope* are among today's most popular games.

Social games, which are built around social networking websites, are another growing area. Games such as *Farmville*, *Mafia Wars*, and *Avengers Alliance* are among the most popular social games. Most social games are asynchronous (meaning that players do not play at the same time), and encourage players to return every day to accomplish specific goals. Social games are generally aimed at casual players; many offer an opportunity to spend real money to buy in-game credits and rewards. Facebook is probably the most popular platform for such games and has implemented proprietary currency that players can purchase and use in the games of their choice. Large-scale online games such as *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life* also have their own in-game economies where items and currency can be equated to real-world dollars.

Recent research has suggested the potential for persuasion and message delivery in games. As game design scholars like Jane McGonigal and Ian Bogost suggest, games can be used to advertise products, inform players about current events, and encourage healthy habits because they provide systems of rewards and feedback (like higher scores and progress tracking) that encourage players to more deeply engage with the material. For example, games like *Debt Ski* (an action game aimed at teaching young adults about responsible financial management) and *World Without Oil* (a collaborative simulation in which players prepare for a world without petroleum) offer entertainment and

the ability to test ideas in a consequence-free space, while the *Wii Fit* series tracks calories burned during exercise activities and offers tips and goals to encourage players to stick to a healthy regimen. Regardless of form, games can be used to convey messages to interested publics.

Bryan Carr

See also Advertising; Interactivity (Audience); Mobile Technology and Public Relations; Multimedia; Social Networking

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GANTT CHART

For public relations projects, practitioners need a system for keeping track of the tasks that need to be done and those that have been completed. Henry Gantt invented the Gantt Chart as a way to track tasks for a project. The Gantt Chart is used in a wide variety of fields that involve project management. To build a Gantt Chart, the practitioner must identify all the tasks to be completed, the time each task will take to complete, and the sequencing to the tasks. The first step involves brainstorming and listing all possible tasks for the project. For instance, a simple news release could require researching the topic, drafting the release, selecting appropriate media targets, approving the news release's content, choosing proper contact names and addresses for the media targets, and distributing the news release. Next, the practitioner determines how much time each task will take. Assigning time demands that the practitioner understands the factors that affect the time it takes to complete a task.

Finally, the practitioner develops the sequence of the tasks. Sequencing requires that the practitioner separates contingent and concurrent tasks. Contingent tasks are those that are dependent on another task: Task A must be completed before

Task B. For instance, research must be completed before a new release is written. All contingent tasks are arranged in the proper sequence. Sequences from the earlier example would be (a) research-draft-approval and (b) media selection-contact information. Both sequences are needed to arrive at the final task, distribution. Concurrent tasks are tasks that can be done simultaneously because they are not contingent on one another. The practitioner can select media and locate contact information while waiting for approval of the news release.

A Gantt Chart takes tasks, time, and sequence and displays them graphically. The horizontal axis on the chart is the time and the vertical axis represents tasks. Bars on the chart mark time. The unit of time depends on the nature of the project. The time units could be hours, days, weeks, or months. The longer the bar, the more time the task takes to complete. Lines drawn between the bars are used to connect the sequential tasks. Bars that overlap in time represent the concurrent tasks. A Gantt Chart makes it easy to “see” the sequential and concurrent tasks: what has been completed, what still needs to be done, when each of those tasks must be finished, and whether the project is on or off the schedule. A Gantt Chart is both a planning document and a means to monitor the progress of a project, and it works best for smaller projects. For large, highly complex projects, a practitioner is better off using the PERT Chart (Program [or Project] Evaluation and Review Technique) to organize, illustrate, and track the project. Microsoft Project is one of a number of software programs that provide templates for constructing Gantt Charts.

Gantt Charts are valuable planning aids to practitioners but are only as good as the work that goes into creating them. If a task is left off the Gantt Chart or times are miscalculated, the value of the Gantt Chart is reduced or completely lost. Therefore, careful preparation is necessary to develop a chart that truly reflects the demands of the project.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also PERT Chart; Process Research

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GATEKEEPERS

Gatekeepers are communication professionals who are involved in the traditional news selection process. They sort through a number of messages, shaping chosen messages before delivering them to viewers, readers, or listeners. Gatekeeping involves selecting, shaping, displaying, and withholding messages. In news organizations, reporters, copywriters, photographers, editors, or even media owners function as gatekeepers by choosing and shaping newsworthy messages. In a more social context, public relations professionals, government officials, and other social actors play a role in gatekeeping by deciding on what messages are disseminated to news organizations and by controlling the channel of news information.

The term *gatekeeper* was originally coined by sociologist Kurt Lewin in his study of the primary role of housewives in the family's changing food habits. Lewin proposed that housewives directed the flow of food items and therefore functioned as “gates” or gatekeepers; later the term was applied to the news selection processes. David Manning White's 1950 study of a small-city daily newspaper editor found that the news selection process depends on the editors' news values or on what they consider newsworthy. The gatekeeping phenomenon is linked to the channel concept in the conceptual models of communication given by Bruce H. Westley and Malcolm S. MacLean and Wilbur Shramm.

Gatekeeping is a broad function that occurs to affect the flow of information in the channels between senders and receivers of messages. Gatekeepers determine what messages are selected or rejected. Messages travel through certain communication channels and certain points within the channels function as gates, which are managed mostly by gatekeepers. Originally gatekeepers were viewed as individuals, such as journalists working for the traditional media of television, radio, and wire services.

However, decisions on what messages will make the news information are also influenced by a number of other factors. Pamela J. Shoemaker (1991) suggested the complexity of gatekeeping by a number of gatekeepers at various levels: by communication routines and by organizational,

social, and institutional (extra-media) systems. Thus journalists are influenced by their news values or practices, budgetary or time restrictions, competition with other media, advertisers, social ideology, and other factors that also function as gatekeepers in the gatekeeping process.

The gatekeeper concept has recently changed. Journalists traditionally functioned as gatekeepers, but they now use information subsidies provided by public relations professionals for reducing the costs of information gathering. Such subsidies occur because public relations practitioners supply newsworthy information to reporters. This professional service reduces the costs of news organizations. They can use the information provided by practitioners in various forms, such as press releases, backgrounders, and fact sheets. They have interviews handed to them. Many news reports are little more than edited releases supplied by public relations professionals. And with the advent of the Web, information can be available to reporters in a commodified form 24/7.

The advance of online media has also changed the gatekeeper role of journalists. More organizations, companies, and authorities directly reach their publics through online media without journalists' gatekeeping. Public information officials, governmental or corporate spokespersons, and other public relations professionals have increasingly assumed the gatekeeper role by judging what information can be shared with key publics or how communication with those publics can be managed as practitioners serve as boundary spanners. As organizations become primary sources of information, journalists are sometimes less influential in the gatekeeping process because people can obtain information from the organization without the help of journalists.

Jae-Hwa Shin

See also Commodifying Information; News/Newsworthy

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GENDER AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The definition of gender is a subject of debate within the social science literature. In public relations study and practice, it is important to appreciate the different understandings of gender that are informed by different assumptions and perspectives specific to gender, gender roles, gendered performance, and gender identity as they apply to public relations.

Gender

In popular use, the terms *sex* and *gender* tend to be used interchangeably. Indeed it has been noted that *gender* has become a polite euphemism for *sex* in everyday use. However, there is a distinction between the two terms. While *sex* refers to the biological categories of male and female, *gender* refers to the idea that what we understand as masculine and feminine is socially and culturally determined.

In other words, gender constitutes particular values and expectations of behavior in different social and cultural contexts. Theorists note that early gender research that took place in the 1970s was focused on sex-based differences or what is known as “binary” categories that place the male above the female—for example, the difference between women’s and men’s speech in interpersonal communication. From this type of study, women could learn

how to use more assertive language. Since the 1970s, social theory has developed to conceptualize gender as fluid, socially constructed and as an aspect of a person's identity during social interactions (see examples below under Gender Identity).

Gender Roles

Gender (or "sex") roles are those that are ascribed to women and men in public relations according to employers' assumptions about the kind of tasks that female and male public relations practitioners should undertake. (These assumptions are also known as "gender ideology.")

The debate concerning gender roles is important in public relations because in many countries where the profession is highly developed, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia, there is a female majority in public relations comprising approximately 70% women and 30% men. Typically in these countries, women tend to occupy the junior and intermediate "technician" roles in public relations such as crafting press releases and organizing events; whereas men tend to occupy the "communication manager" role that involves strategic planning and offering advice to top management.

This division of labor between men and women is known as vertical or hierarchical "gender segregation" of the workforce. A concern for feminist scholars is that "gender discrepancies" or differences in recruitment practices, salary, and promotion in public relations leads to gender inequalities in spite of a female majority in the profession. In 2002, Linda Aldoory and Elizabeth Toth found that gender discrepancies were attributed (by practitioners) to differences in the socialization of women and men; sex discrimination and sexism; unrealistic expectations of women who balance family and work; biological determinism (e.g., being a man or a woman influences a practitioner's ability to be decisive); skills differentials; favoritism toward men due to their low numbers; type of organization influences access to promotions; and a belief that gender discrepancies in promotions do not exist.

Gender as Performance

Gender as performance is widely attributed to the work of social theorist Judith Butler who, in 1990,

conceptualized gender as an aspect of identity that is repeatedly performed and embodied; gender is what people *do*, not *have*. Gender, according to this performative concept, is dependent upon social interaction; it is collaboratively or socially accomplished.

Performative theory, which is advocated by those who write about "doing gender" has a central role in contemporary research on gender and communication. Here, the role of discourse takes center stage, framing performances of gender as either masculine or feminine rather than assigning these performances to the biological categories of women and men. In organizational discourse, in particular, the masculine is placed above the feminine so that a patriarchal way of speaking becomes the accepted norm. Practitioners, and women practitioners in particular, may be compelled to adopt a gender-neutral or a masculine stance in their language, behavior, and dress in order to adapt to organizational contexts where expectations are oriented toward a masculine model. Other organizational contexts may demand performances of both women and men that may be categorized as feminine. An awareness of the importance of performance in different social and cultural contexts may in turn help practitioners understand why gender segregation exists—in other words why women are generally assigned technical support roles and men management roles, and that specific gendered performances may help or hinder career progression, even when an organization professes to be nondiscriminatory.

Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to the identity that people ascribe to themselves as men or women. Gender identity may be played out, or performed, in different ways in response to a number of social influences, including socialization, organizational culture, professional codes, the social context external to the workplace, and how a person wants to be perceived within those contexts.

Some of these identity "performances" may be reflexive and conscious and some of these performances may be un-self-conscious so that while in a work context, a person may consciously present himself or herself as "tough" so that he or she will be perceived as tough (i.e., masculine); in another,

perhaps a personal context, the person will not attend to such a conscious performance. Researchers examining women's identity in public relations have noted that some women, conscious of the sociocultural context of public relations, tend to adopt a "gender-neutral" identity within the workplace to avoid being stereotyped as feminine. Men working in public relations, however, may confront different challenges to their identity. They may have to emphasize their masculinity during social interactions both within the workplace and outside it by redefining the professional role as masculine and by distancing their practice from the popular stereotype of public relations as a "soft" or "fluffy" profession.

Liz Yeomans

See also Feminization Theory; Impression Management Theory; Social Construction of Reality Theory; Socialization Theory; Socioculture and Public Relations

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GEODEMOGRAPHICS

Public relations professionals use geodemographic data to learn about stakeholders and publics. *Geodemographics* is the process of combining demographic and psychographic information with geographic or location-based information. Typically, a geodemographic system combines three types of data: (1) enormous electronic databases of public and private, individual and group, characteristics and information; (2) a geographic information system; and (3) a factor, cluster, or

network analysis of beliefs, values, and ideological behaviors.

Public information and persuasion campaigns are often aimed at unfamiliar publics—especially in the case of an agency—and serve the needs of diverse publics. Thus, public relations professionals see geodemographic data as a precursor to more useful and accurate data about stakeholders and publics derived after long-term relationship have been built.

For many public relations professionals, geodemographic data are useful for background research (the R in the RACE/ROPE acronym—research, analysis, communication, evaluation), and understanding what stakeholders and residents are like in neighborhoods or regions. Although useful in public relations, geodemographics has been criticized by some public relations professionals as a tool of marketing.

The field of geodemographics goes back to English sociologists and demographers of the 1950s. Jonathan Robbin is credited with developing the first computer-based geodemographic systems in the early 1960s and 1970s. Thus, the field is quite mature.

Geodemographic data are most often used by marketers and advertisers to target specific types of consumers. PRIZM (Potential Rating Index for ZIP Markets), for example, the nation's first geodemographic system, used census and survey data to develop 40 lifestyle profiles for consumers in 36,000 U.S. ZIP codes.

Given the depth of information mined, and the constantly changing location-based data, individual communicators cannot simply gather geographic, demographic, and psychographic information and be able to target key publics with precise messages. Many professional communication agencies develop comprehensive profiles of their target publics and stakeholders using geodemographic data as one part of the profile. Enacting geodemographics requires vast amounts of data and skilled demographers, researchers, and statisticians. Additionally, only modest marketing gains of 2% to 3% are often realized by geodemographic data, but because of the scale of marketing efforts, such small gains can mean a lot of new customers and sales.

Although originally developed in the United Kingdom for use in urban public policy, and by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD) in the United States, the field of geodemographics has evolved primarily into a marketing and sales tool. Geodemographics links together diverse data sets and detailed profiles of potential publics, enabling complex decisions to be made. For example, geodemographic data have been used in television ratings for programming decisions, credit score calculations to make lending decisions, and consumer product development decisions.

Geodemographic data are gathered via websites, point of purchase sales (cash registers), telephones (call centers and sales), and aggregated data purchased by organizations, and through marketing and advertising organizations. Geodemographic data must be regularly updated and refined to maintain their usefulness and accuracy. Neighborhoods, cities, and regions do not change overnight, but they do change quickly as a result of layoffs, immigration, economic trends, or employment opportunities. Geodemographic data offer a starting point for more refined and useful organizational information.

New Technology and Geodemographics

Decades ago, scholars like Nicholas Negroponte (1995) predicted that our everyday technologies would be used to track the whereabouts of individuals and enable businesses and marketers to exploit personal and collective geodemographic data. Within a few years, Negroponte's predictions may be a complete reality, as technology plays an even greater role in citizens' lives

Social media and other new technology have proved a boon for marketers and advertisers, with the ability to gather geodemographic data as part of so many new technologies. Software and social media applications like Facebook and Google Earth use geographic data to track user whereabouts, just as hardware in computers, automobiles, smartphones, and other devices also secretly records data about purchases, travel and vacation patterns, commuting, preferred businesses, restaurants, and a host of other data.

Many companies sift through millions of social media records, photographs, blog postings, and user profiles in order to cull useful marketing and advertising data. The ability to link raw demographic and psychographic data to geographic

data, and information from other sources has been simplified through the widespread use of location-based data and services (LBS) among smartphone users and users of hand-held devices.

Ethics of Geodemographics

As communication professionals, not marketers or advertisers, public relations professionals need to take a stance regarding the gathering of personal data on stakeholders and publics. Since early in the last century with Ivy Ledbetter Lee's "Declaration of Principles," public relations has been a profession where accountability to stakeholders and publics, and relationships with key stakeholders, ultimately define the nature of the organization-public relationship.

Professionals, corporations, and agencies regularly make decisions about whom to target with messages, and what to say in persuasive appeals based on the nature of consumer or stakeholder relationships. Geodemographic data might be effective in quickly learning about potential publics, or they might be used just as another way to exploit people. The use of geodemographics should be thoroughly considered before implementation.

Michael L. Kent

See also Audience Monitoring; Demographics; Infographics; Lee, Ivy; Psychographics; Situational Theory of Publics

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GERMANY, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Germany, the largest country in Europe with 82 million inhabitants, enjoys a strong and global economy; it has seen a broad evolvement and professionalization of public relations since the 1990s. Within a few decades, the profession as well as the research and education system have developed to a fully established field.

At the same time, the term *public relations* (and the traditional German synonym *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*) is diminishing and mostly replaced by concepts like “corporate communications” and “communications” in practice or “communication management,” “strategic communication,” and “organizational communication” in academia. This taxonomy does not necessarily correspond with different conceptual perspectives. The change in terminologies mainly resembles a move from the traditional concept of public relations featuring media relations and other tasks aimed at gaining publicity and influencing public opinion (i.e., staging events, publishing corporate media) to an understanding of communication as a holistic function that organizations utilize to define missions and identities, handle stakeholder relationships, pursue their interests in markets or society, and legitimize their strategies within the public sphere.

Professional Field

In absence of formal accreditation systems and census data, the total number of people working in public relations is unknown. Approximately 7,500 practitioners are organized in the major associations *Deutsche Public Relations Gesellschaft* (DPRG) and *Bundesverband Deutscher Pressesprecher* (BdP). Databases by service providers list more than 30,000 full-time professionals in the field. According to several large-scale studies by Günter Bentele and colleagues, more than 90% of the professionals have an academic education, usually on the master's level. Most of them have a background in communication and media studies or journalism (22%), other fields of social sciences or humanities (39%), or business (15%). The most common self-perception is being a mediator

between organizations and publics (82%). Almost every second professional perceives himself or herself being a consultant to top management, spokesperson, or lobbyist.

Within organizations, the communication function usually reports directly to the CEO or management board, with responsibilities for external and internal communications. Financial communications is mostly a separate, smaller function on the same level. Marketing communications and advertising are traditionally separated and located within business units; they often enjoy less management influence but larger budgets.

The market of consultancies, agencies, and service providers in Germany is quite diverse. Leading public relations agencies serving all kinds of clients including many multinationals based in Germany are mostly privately owned with up to 300 employees. International networks have a much smaller market share than in most other countries. A number of high-end consultancies have specialized in fields like mergers and acquisitions, change communication, and auditing and controlling. Local agencies and consultants serve the large number of small- and medium-size companies as well as public institutions.

The large German-speaking market, which also includes Austria and parts of Switzerland, has generated a number of service providers for media analysis, distribution, measurement, online benchmarking, training, and headhunting, for example, who constantly develop new methods and services but seldom offer them abroad.

Research and Theories

Germany has a relatively short, but rich tradition of theory building in public relations and communication management. Due to a lack of institutionalization in universities, the debate until the 1990s was mainly shaped by concepts developed by practitioners (Albert Oeckl and Carl Hundhausen) who defined public relations based on mainstream practice and early U.S. theories.

Management-focused models from the United States as well as normative concepts based on models of dialogue became popular in the 1990s. Since then, neither the excellence theory nor rhetorical and critical approaches nor organizational communication have been widely accepted as basic

paradigms within theory building to the same extent as in other regions. Instead, German scholars have developed a broad range of macro-, meso-, and microlevel theories based on concepts from sociology (Niklas Luhmann, Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens), communication and media studies, and management research.

Key topics include trust and credibility, interaction between media relations and journalism, ethics, measurement and evaluation, reputation and issues management, institutionalization, and strategic planning. Public relations is, on the one hand, analyzed from an organizational perspective and at the same time conceptualized as a specific system, sphere, or function within society. This links the German discussion to the European debate on reflective communication, which tries to bridge the gap between functional and critical approaches by focusing the nexus between action and structure, organization and society, self-interest and common welfare.

Academic research in the German-speaking countries is largely housed within communication science, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods. The growth of the field has led to a rising interest in critical, discursive, and hermeneutical approaches. Some niches are discussed by scholars from media science and linguistics, while business scholars neglect the field almost completely.

More than 150 scholars are organized within the PR and Organizational Communication division of the German Association for Communication Science (DGPK). The group, active since 1991, has contributed to the development of the body of knowledge by organizing annual academic conferences and publishing a number of edited books. The large national community and the German academic tradition of publishing key concepts in books instead of journal articles also mean that the majority of research is not available in English.

Since the first professorships for public relations were established in Berlin and Leipzig in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the infrastructure for research has quickly expanded. Nowadays, most communication schools have a full professorship and several research associates or PhD researchers working in the field. In 2010, the institutionalization of research has been advanced through the establishment of the Academic Society for Corporate Management and Communication. Within this

network, four leading universities and 20 global corporations collaborate to identify research issues, finance and conduct studies, and transfer knowledge between academia and professional practice.

Education

Many public relations professionals working in the field have learned their profession on the job and received additional training in traineeships and internships or courses offered by branch associations and private training providers. Research universities and universities of applied sciences (polytechnics) started to offer seminars and courses in the 1990s as part of degree programs in communication. The first full-time programs were established at the beginning of the 21st century. Since then, several master programs combining a focus on research and professional education have been established (Leipzig, Stuttgart-Hohenheim, Mainz, Münster, Greifswald). Public as well as private universities of applied sciences offer a number of full-time and part-time bachelor and master programs with a professional focus. Due to the public funding of universities and the attractiveness of the job market, capacities are much lower than the demand from prospective students. This means that the future will see a diverse workforce, while the highly qualified group of graduates educated on the master's and PhD level has started to enter leadership positions in the field.

Ansgar Zerfass

See also Habermas, Jürgen, on Public Relations; Public Relations Research, Public Sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*)

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GHOSTWRITING

Ghostwriting is the process whereby one person, usually a professional writer, writes a document or a speech that another person then delivers and represents as largely that person's own work. The professional writer or "ghost" lends skills in message preparation to the speaker, and the speaker takes advantage of these skills. The writer is described as a ghost—being invisible when the speech is actually delivered. Ghostwriting is a well-entrenched part of many communication professions including public relations and political communication.

Senior political figures regularly employ professional speechwriters. Many business executives similarly employ professional ghostwriters to help craft speeches, letters, and other documents. Speechwriting in most organizations is a specialized aspect of the larger public relations function. Ghostwriting is also practiced in some publishing circles. Among the most celebrated modern ghostwriters was Peggy Noonan, President Ronald Reagan's speechwriter. Noonan described the speechwriting process as one of balancing competing interests and managing successive reviews and revisions. The principal issues surrounding ghostwriting are effectiveness and ethical concerns of masked authorship and the possibility of deception. Deception occurs when those "pearls of wisdom" voiced by one person are actually the work of someone else. The person who delivered the message does not have the time or talent to craft the message but receives credit for it. The ideology expressed in the message may come from the author more than from the person who delivers it.

Ghostwriters are generally believed to be able to produce more effective messages than would the average executive or politician working alone because the ghost has specific communication and writing skills. Moreover, ghosts can spend much

more time preparing a speech, researching the audience and issues, and developing arguments than can a busy politician or executive. Ghostwriting is often justified on the grounds that it saves valuable executive time.

One of the key features of effectiveness is the ability of the ghost to successfully write for a particular speaker. Speechwriters must be very knowledgeable about their client's specific interests, positions on various issues, and speaking style. The relationship between speaker and writer is most effective when it is characterized by openness and trust. Writer and speaker should work closely as a team to construct a speech that each is comfortable with. Mike Morrison, former speechwriter for Lee Iacocca, noted that "when a speaker comes to trust the writer to capture his voice and to articulate his position in that voice, the process can be very smooth." Ghostwriters are also most effective when their participation goes unnoticed. An unwritten rule of ghostwriting is that the ghostwriter remains anonymous. In general, ghostwriters should not be publicly identified with a particular speaker or speech.

The ethical questions surrounding ghostwriting cluster around issues of honesty and deception. Specifically, some critics charge that using a ghostwriter is a kind of deception: a fraud or plagiarism whereby the speaker implicitly claims that the speech is his or her own. Because credibility, according to traditional models of ethos, is created by the speaker "speaking well," the speaker must be the author of the speech. Ancient writers on rhetoric, such as Aristotle, Cato, and Quintilian, all embraced the view that credibility arises during the speech as the speaker demonstrates personal reasoning, moral character, and skill. Ghostwriting short-circuits this credibility-building process by allowing the speakers to substitute the words of a professional writer for their own. Some have suggested that this deception is not an issue in modern political or corporate contexts because the use of ghostwriters is essentially an open secret. Audiences have come to expect that those in leadership positions will employ professional speechwriters to assist in the preparation of their messages. Other critics have noted that in cases where a ghost is employed, the speaker is usually fulfilling a larger representative leadership role. The speech, therefore, is best viewed as a corporate or organizational

product much like an advertisement or brochure. In these cases, credibility is generated for the organization rather than for the specific speaker.

Ghostwriting, although a specialized niche in the public relations profession, is often viewed as an access point to strategic organizational and management functions. Because the ghostwriter is in a position to influence what senior executives are saying, the ghost may also influence strategy. Ghostwriting services are provided by most internal public relations departments, public relations and advertising agencies, political consultants, and specialized freelance writers.

*Matthew W. Seeger, Timothy Sellnow,
and Robert R. Ulmer*

See also Speechwriting

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GIVING, DONATIONS, AND GLOBALISM

Globalism is the condition that has arisen from the processes of globalization over the last couple of decades. Driven by advances in communication and financial technologies and the global restructuring of capital, globalism is characterized by complex connectivity between economic, political, and cultural spheres across the globe. Within these conditions, large multinational corporations and global financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund have become powerful players. They have

been increasingly challenged by antiglobalization activists who have become well organized transnationally. Furthermore, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have risen in numbers to address the social problems and concerns of globalization that are ignored by business and government. Overall, various stakeholders expect that powerful global entities will engage in sustainable development and share their power by giving back to the communities and regions where they do business and from which they profit.

Public relations is in an ideal position to mediate between global corporations and organizations and their various stakeholders to build goodwill and steer powerful corporations toward becoming responsible global citizens. This is because public relations (a) is expected to and in a position to engage stakeholders and (b) is ideally expected to be the corporate conscience and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between the corporation or organization, its communities, and stakeholders.

Key ways to achieve responsible global citizenship include corporate giving, community involvement, donations to and partnerships with NGOs and nonprofit organizations, and engagement in sustainable development projects. Such engagements, according to Margarete Hall (2006), enable corporations to build communal rather than just exchange-based relationships with key stakeholders. It is the practitioner's responsibility to convince senior management of the moral significance of such engagements and publicize the good citizenship of the corporation. In fact, current research shows that philanthropy and related projects that collectively fall under the label of corporate social responsibility (CSR) are increasingly on the agenda of many global corporations. Most of these corporations report their CSR activities through their websites and other venues. However, according to Daejoong Kim, Yoonjae Nam, and Sinuk Kang (2010), they are deficient in including dialogic components in their reporting, and their CSR communication remains mostly one way.

Corporate giving, donations, and CSR take on a more holistic and complex form at the global level since a balance between global and local issues needs to be achieved. Indices such as the United Nations Global Compact and the Global Reporting Initiative are available to guide the CSR programs of global corporations. According to Sora

Kim and Yoon-Joo Lee (2012), companies need to remember that publics are not hoodwinked by self-serving CSR activities that are simply reactive to crises or driven purely by financial gain. Furthermore, argued David McKie and Debashish Munshi (2007), since most global corporations are based in the West, the postcolonial argument that the West continues to colonize the third world economically and culturally needs to be better understood, respected, and addressed through global giving, donations, and dialogic CSR engagement.

Nilanjana Bardhan

See also Empire, Public Relations and; Engagement (Stakeholders); Globalization and Public Relations; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations

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GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

The Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (Global Alliance) is a confederation of the world's major public relations and communication management associations and institutions, representing 160,000 practitioners and academics. This nonprofit organization is registered in Switzerland with administrative headquarters at the Università della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano. It serves approximately 70 industry organizations

from Africa, North and South America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Oceania.

Membership includes professional associations such as the Public Relations Society of America and the Shanghai Public Relations Association; international bodies such as the International Association of Business Communicators and educational organizations such as the European Public Relations Education and Research Association and various leading academic institutions. A prerequisite of joining the Global Alliance is that members agree to its international code of ethics, incorporating its principles into their own codes.

As society, organizations, and issues become increasingly globalized, connected, and complex and as stakeholder communities proliferate and extend across the world, the requirement for public relations to be practiced and studied on a global basis has become apparent. Hence in 2000, a group of professional associations recognized the need for a global body to represent and support the public relations and communication management community; the Global Alliance was founded as a collaborative effort to serve the professional global community. Local, expert knowledge could be pooled and international initiatives instigated to support the profession.

The working practice of the alliance is to harness the cooperative efforts and knowledge of communication professionals, both practitioners and academics, to tackle common problems from a global perspective. It aims to enhance the influence of the profession among its constituents around the world by partnering with regional, national, and international bodies. It seeks to blend and develop research and best practice to foster professionalism. A four-part mission guides its work:

- unify the public relations profession,
- raise professional standards all over the world,
- share knowledge for the benefit of its members, and
- be the global voice for public relations in the public interest.

In furtherance of this mission the alliance undertakes a number of activities and research-based projects. Some of its principal activities follow.

World Public Relations Forum

This forum is currently a biannual event hosted by professional associations in different countries. The 2012 conference was held in Melbourne, Australia; previous host venues have included Italy, Brazil, South Africa, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. These events not only cover topics specifically related to the public relations profession but also seek to contextualize it within world and current affairs. Key speakers have included Klaus Schwab, chair of the World Economic Forum; Judge Mervyn King, author of the King Report on Corporate Governance; Paul Druckman, CEO of the International Integrated Reporting Council; and Foreign Minister Carl Bildt of Sweden, along with luminaries from the world of the media, public relations, and communications like Wadah Khanfar, former director general of Al-Jazeera network, Brian Solis, and Richard Edelman.

Each forum produces a major study that seeks to advance the profession. For example, the 2010 forum in Sweden announced the Stockholm Accords, which laid out global principles demonstrating how public relations contributes to corporate success. The 2012 Melbourne Mandate focused on how communication is changing and how the profession must change as a result.

Research Projects

The Global Alliance supports research in two ways. First, by undertaking its own research, for example, it has compiled 24 detailed “Landscapes” profiling the profession in each country. These papers examine political, economic, and cultural dimensions that affect the practice of public relations. The global curriculum project examined 218 public relations or communication management courses in 39 countries and produced guidelines for developing courses to equip practitioners to operate in a globalized world. The credentials project produced a set of seven core competencies that will be recognized by leading professional bodies as essential for practitioners to acquire if they are to attain membership.

The alliance partners with other organizations, offering access to its community of 160,000 practitioners for projects that further its mission. For

example, with Massey University in New Zealand, and building on the Credentials Project, it is studying the competencies required of the contemporary practitioner. The University of St. Gallen in Switzerland is working with Global Alliance on how to communicate complex issues with clarity in channels such as social media and on topics like communicating strategy.

The Global Alliance website hosts a range of research and practitioner reports such as that of the Spanish association, DIRCOM, on corporate social responsibility, and the German association *Deutsche Public Relations Gesellschaft* (DPRG) work on evaluation.

Partnerships and Events

Working with universities to promote standards, offering leading speakers from within its membership and working with associations to further their objectives is also part of the alliance’s work. For example, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations in the United Kingdom has hosted two Brazil Days with ABERJE, the Brazilian corporate communication association, to promote corporate understanding of working in Brazil and of the public relations profession there.

The Global Alliance’s vision is to both lead and serve the public relations and communication management profession at the international level by identifying the issues, challenges, and opportunities that unite professional associations and their members, while embracing and celebrating the diversity that enriches practice in different parts of the global community. While acknowledging generic principles and specific applications, it promotes a nonethnocentric approach to public relations and communication management, recognizing that global communication will level the playing field over time with new models of practice emerging and assuming importance as the dominance of western and northern hemisphere countries dissipates.

Anne Gregory

See also European Public Relations Education and Research Association; Globalization and Public Relations; Globalize; International Association of Business Communicators; Public Relations Society of America

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GLOBALIZATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Globalization and public relations involves three dimensions: the impact of globalization on public relations, the impact of public relations on globalization, and the impact of public relations in the global setting on individuals and societies. This entry focuses more on the first dimension, the subject of most research on global and intercultural public relations.

Although the term *globalization* was not widely recognized until it was coined by Theodore Levitt in 1983, globalization is not a new phenomenon nor is it precisely defined by western countries according to Krishnamurthy Sriramesh and Dejan Verčič (2009). Definitions of globalization center on the increasing global interconnectedness that results from constant interchange of important factors across national borders such as economy, culture, technology, finance, and people. The consequences of globalization are widespread: Events and issues in one part of the world influence another part, if not instantly, certainly eventually. Such trends can significantly affect public relations.

Impact of Globalization on Public Relations

Two major perspectives challenge the examination of globalization on public relations: *cross-cultural comparison*, which focuses on comparing and contrasting public relations practices in different parts of the world, and *intercultural interaction*, which focuses on the actual process of communication between practitioners and publics in intercultural settings.

Cross-Cultural Comparison

In examining different public relations practices and their influencing factors, two main schools of thoughts are present: international and global, also called polycentric and ethnocentric, emic and etic, and culture-specific and culture-free. The international approach emphasizes differences in practices in different parts of the world and argues that no universal rules or principles, mostly developed in the western countries and thus likely to be ethnocentric, should apply. The global approach, however, suggests the existence of universal principles that should be applied with modifications in different areas.

Adopting a middle ground, James E. Grunig and his colleagues developed a global public relations theory of generic principles derived from the excellence study (e.g., L. A. Grunig, J. E. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) and specific applications of these principles. Reflecting the idea of glocalization, this global theory has been expanded and refined through studies in different parts of the world.

The current generic principles of excellence feature four themes: management processes, two-way symmetrical processes, diversity, and ethics coupled to social responsibility. Several specific variables that can influence public relations practices are currently categorized as follows: *infrastructure* (political system, level of economic development, level of activism, and legal system); *culture* (societal and corporate); and *media environment* (media control, media outreach, and media access). Of particular note is the role of culture, with numerous studies examining cultural values or dimensions, especially those by Geert Hofstede (2001). Scholars such as Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) examined these specific variables through contextualized regional and country descriptions of public relations practices.

Intercultural Interaction

Research in intercultural public relations has focused on exploring the processes of communication between two important players, publics and practitioners, as they cope with globalization in intercultural settings.

More individuals are interacting with people from outside of their home countries, voluntarily or not. How organizations manage relationships

with important *publics* has become an important topic for research. T. Kenn Gaither and Patricia Curtin (2008), Lan Ni (2009), and Lan Ni and Qi Wang (2011) examined relationship management with customers, local employees in multinational companies (MNCs), and international students, respectively.

On the other hand, the intercultural competencies of *practitioners* become critical as they enter new cultural environments and build relationships with diverse publics. Practitioners should not only have knowledge about the contextualized environments but also possess trait, perceptual, behavioral, and culture-specific levels of competencies as identified by Lustig and Koester (2009). According to Wang, Ni, and De la Flor (in press), these competencies have been critical when practitioners manage relationships with local community members of MNCs.

Impact of Public Relations on Globalization

Little research exists on the impact of public relations on globalization. Some researchers have examined how certain aspects or special forms of public relations such as image cultivation efforts by governments may influence relationships at an international level. Sriramesh and Verčič (2012) explored additional aspects of culture as public relations goes global, that is, how public relations practices can have consequences on culture, which is a critical part of globalization.

Impact of Global Public Relations on Individuals and Societies

Research has also begun to examine the impact of global public relations on individuals and societies. Maureen Taylor and Marya Doerfel (2003) argued that public relations can play a vital role in nation building efforts for a civil society. So delicate is this role that critical and postmodern scholars such as Mohan Dutta (2005) caution against public relations efforts that can be used for imperialist invasions of Third World nations in the name of helping tear down the authoritarian governments and rebuild new and democratic ones.

Given the complexity and dynamism of globalization, public relations research and practice

will be challenged to make slow and steady progress to determine the appropriate role of public relations.

Lan Ni

See also Critical Discourse Analysis; Excellence Theory; Globalize; Intercultural Communication Theory

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GLOBALIZE

Globalize refers to processes that extend worldwide in scope or application. The word particularly evokes all those processes connected with contemporary “globalization.”

Examples of globalizing processes include efforts by international agencies to globalize immunization against disease or efforts to raise awareness for the rights of vulnerable groups. Likewise, governments and supranationals (such as the World Bank) have globalized the tenets of neoliberalism, a political ideology associated with free trade and minimal government intervention in business. Large media houses globalize news stories and entertainment, heavily influencing which events gain highest visibility internationally.

As consumers, our tastes for products, services, and brands have also become more globalized. Around the world, more people seek out global brands, buy fast-moving consumer goods, and consume fast food. These globalizing processes have been driven by the growing reach of multinational corporations. The proliferation of these corporations is further associated with globalized labor practices, in which people “move” to jobs through migration while jobs are “moved” to people through outsourcing.

Public relations has played a significant role in globalizing many of the processes described above. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) argued in their book, *Empire*, communication helps express and organize globalization’s movement and progress. It can therefore be argued that public relations is a factor in contemporary globalization’s equation, with the growth and spread of the modern public relations industry coinciding with globalization’s movement and progress.

Globalize is a problematic term as it provides a facade for power imbalance. Few processes described as “global” truly are. Labor is not truly globalized when many workers are denied visas to enter those countries offering greatest labor opportunities or highest paying jobs. Access to many products and services is not truly global either. Many smartphone providers, for example, claim to have a global presence even though there is still no level playing field for smartphones: Some geographical regions offer little or no access

to high-speed broadband, while some countries restrict citizens’ access to the Internet. Smartphone providers themselves do not offer equal access to sales and servicing in all countries. Where public relations supports such processes, it can be argued that public relations also helps perpetuate global inequality. Even global public relations firms are not truly global since they only operate in certain countries.

Although globalizing processes attract controversy, it should be noted that public relations is also employed by activist groups and networks that contest efforts to globalize. These groups may not have substantial resources, but some have successfully used public relations to raise awareness of issues seen as by-products of globalization such as man-made climate change or questionable global financial practices.

Clea Bourne

See also Activism; Globalization and Public Relations; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations; Socioculture and Public Relations

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GOALS

Effective public relations should have a purpose. Each public relations action should be designed and intended to achieve something for the organization or person developing it. It is the pursuit of a purpose that makes public relations strategic. Goals can be called directional statements because they provide the overall direction for the public relations actions.

Goals are an essential part of developing public relations strategy and evolve from formative or background research. A goal is a general statement

of what practitioners want to achieve with their public relations action(s). A goal emerges from formative research where practitioners analyze problems and opportunities that confront them and the organizations they serve. Goals cannot be set until a practitioner understands the public relations situation. The goal is framed as the rationale to solve the public relations problem or to exploit an opportunity.

A few examples will help clarify the discussion of goals. Consider two goals: (1) "to increase awareness of the Chevrolet Volt" and (2) "to improve community perceptions of Merck." The Volt is a newer electric automobile model for Chevrolet. The problem is that people may not know about it and, therefore, may not consider it as an option when buying a new car. The general solution (direction) is to create awareness of the Volt. There is an opportunity to use public relations to help increase awareness and sales of the Volt. Merck personnel may have found that local communities where they operate do not believe it is a good corporate citizen. The problem is a negative view of Merck's corporate citizenship. The general solution (direction) is to improve community perceptions of Merck. The goals are vague; we do not have a clear idea of the exact outcome that is desired. Objectives provide the specific outcomes for the public relations action.

Objectives are specific and measurable, whereas a goal is vague and probably not measurable. To translate the two goals used in the example above into objectives requires much more detail. Here are two potential objectives that could be drawn from our original goals: (1) "to make 75% of potential compact car buyers aware of Volt as a purchasing option" and (2) "to increase perceptions of Merck as a strong corporate citizen from 20% to 40% in communities where Merck has facilities." In each case, the objective provides more details. The Volt objective specifies the target percentage of awareness (75%) and the specific target public (potential compact car buyers). The Merck objective seeks a specific increase in perceptions of "strong corporate citizen" (from 20% to 40%) among a specific target public (people in communities where Merck has facilities).

Goals are dangerous when they become confused with objectives. If a goal is used instead of an objective, proper evaluative research is impossible.

A goal is too vague and offers no true measure of success or failure. The public relations practitioners will be unable to clearly determine if their strategies were successful. Let us return to the simple goal "to improve community perceptions of Merck." What is the measure of success or failure? Do efforts succeed if just one member of the community expresses a more positive perception of Merck? Practitioners cannot determine the most effective way to assess their efforts if they only have goals.

Evaluation is central to learning, and that will only occur with objectives, not with goals. Goals are general guidelines for action. The vagueness of goals makes them difficult to measure effectively. Goals are precursors to objectives and should not be used in place of objectives. Such substitution will make evaluation problematic. Without evaluation, a public relations practitioner cannot learn what works and should be repeated and what does not work and should not be repeated.

One reason for the confusion between goals and objectives is goal-setting theory, a widely known motivation theory from organizational psychology. If practitioners receive management-related training, they will probably know about goal-setting theory, which states that workers will improve their performance when they have clear, specific, and challenging goals, when they participate in setting the goals, and when they are provided with frequent feedback on progress toward the goals. Notice that in goal setting a goal is clear and specific. In other words, goal-setting theory uses the term *goal* in much the same way as public relations uses the term *objective*. Hence, practitioners versed in goal-setting theory may confuse goals and objectives. However, if a practitioner creates a true objective and calls it a goal, there is no evaluation problem because the necessary specificity is there. The real problem is when vague goals are used instead of objectives. In these cases, effective evaluation will be difficult if not impossible.

The distinction between true goals and objectives is often blurred in public relations. Each year the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) sponsors the Silver Anvil Awards to recognize outstanding public relations work in a variety of categories, including community relations, internal communications, and investor relations. Silver Anvil Award winners should serve as exemplars of

how to perform public relations planning and action. They are the best of the best. On its website, PRSA archives the summaries of past winners. These summaries provide information about the four basic steps in a public relations effort: research, planning, execution, and evaluation. The planning section, according to PRSA, should include the identification of the specific, measurable objectives of the public relations effort. However, even a cursory review of the summaries will reveal the use of goals (vague statements) instead of objectives (specific statements).

Granted, the full Silver Anvil entry contains additional information about the public relations effort that may include specific objectives. However, if the summary has only goals, this suggests either that there are no objectives in the public relations effort or that the summary was poorly constructed. Either way, a general problem may exist with mixing goals and objectives. The value of formative research, planning, and execution is lost when a public relations effort cannot be evaluated. Goals are an important foundation for strategic public relations, but strategy becomes weak when practitioners fail to move from goals to objectives.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Benchmarking; Formative Research; Objectives; Qualitative Research; Quantitative Research

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GOODWILL

The standards of socially responsible behavior continue to evolve with societal trends and expectations. In order to maintain public goodwill, companies must conduct themselves in a responsible and ethical manner while providing transparency

in their business dealings, accountability to their stakeholders, and sustainability to society and the environment. “Public relations bears directly upon the area of values associated with goodwill. Its task is not one of communications only, as some have supposed. Its roots reach to the very heart of corporate policy” (Hill, 1958, p. ix). These extensions of goodwill help demonstrate commitment toward a company’s stakeholders.

The most formally understood practice of goodwill is corporate social responsibility (CSR). This practice has commonly been perceived in the United States as a largely European phenomenon, since CSR is a high priority for European companies. The European Commission, in establishing social goodwill as one of the pillars of its approach to business and economic competitiveness, has set in motion a Multi-Stakeholder Forum that recommends to the European Commission how social responsibilities should be reflected in government policy and business practices. In addition, European Union countries swiftly began adopting ambitious new requirements for corporate reporting, called “sustainability reporting,” that go beyond financial results to cover the *triple bottom line*—one that shows the economic, environmental, and social performance of an organization.

However, this responsibility has not been confined to Europe, because more U.S. companies are taking goodwill practices more seriously. The growth of technology has made all types of information more accessible, leading to greater scrutiny of corporate practices around the world. “In a nation such as the United States, where public opinion is both judge and jury, any segment of the public is free to question management’s wisdom, integrity, and good human intent in handling responsibilities that amount to a public trust” (Hill, 1958, p. ix). Corporations are buffing up their social responsibilities and reputation since the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the emphasis on corporate governance that emerged in the wake of Enron, WorldCom, and other major corporate accounting problems. This transparency also goes beyond financials into more global operations like labor practices. On a local level, more and more government agencies are expanding their standards for government contracts and requiring recipients to provide their employees with a predetermined living wage. Globally, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the

media, and other groups are increasingly scrutinizing human rights and labor issues and demanding internal and external monitoring.

“The corporation exists to serve the common good and must constantly justify its performance on that basis before the bar of public opinion” (Hill, 1958, p. 146). Beyond the necessary reporting requests, companies are wisely working to have an influence in setting the standards by which they will be measured. According to Hill & Knowlton’s 2002 Corporate Reputation Watch survey, two thirds of CEOs feel that corporate social responsibility initiatives contribute at least a moderate amount to their company’s corporate reputation, including the way they are perceived by groups such as customers, shareholders, and the media. In fact, participating in goodwill practices, which boost a corporation’s reputation, increases the length of time that a firm spends earning above-average financial returns and decreases the length of time that a firm spends earning below-average financial returns.

John Hill, founder of Hill & Knowlton in 1927, outlined the basic tenets of social responsibility in 1958:

Here are some of the precepts of sound policy as evolved over the years through the experience of successful corporations. Under these precepts management seeks:

To maintain or improve the financial and economic strength and welfare of the company in all ways consistent with the community and public interest. The company must prosper if it is to live and grow.

To build an efficient and loyal labor force through the best possible working conditions and wages.

To conduct the affairs of the company in a way that will reflect credit upon it and upon the system of competitive enterprise under which it lives.

To remember always that the esteem of people has no substitute and that the good will of customers, employees, the community, and the investing groups is essential to success.

To take the long view in defining goals, and, by communicating information, to fortify the company against adverse movements and misunderstandings which may arise along the way. (p. 53)

More specifically, there are many ways in which corporate social responsibility contributes to

reputation and business results, most commonly recognized by the tangible benefits it provides employees, customers, and investors.

The common benefits employees receive are improved employee recruitment, retention, and motivation. Companies perceived to have strong commitments to goodwill practices often find it easier to recruit and retain employees, and thus have less turnover and associated recruitment and training costs. Even in difficult labor markets, potential employees evaluate a company’s performance on acts of goodwill to determine whether it is the right “fit.” In fact, more than half of MBA students would accept a lower salary to work for a socially responsible company.

Beyond employees, it is necessary to understand the role of customers, who serve as the foundation for a corporation’s existence in the first place. A number of studies have suggested a large and growing market for the products and services of companies perceived to be socially responsible. While businesses must satisfy customers’ key buying criteria, such as price, quality, availability, safety, and convenience, studies also show a growing desire to buy, or not buy, because of other values-based criteria, such as being “sweatshop-free” and “child-labor-free,” having lower environmental impact, and not having genetically modified materials or ingredients.

Corporate social responsibility is also useful in attracting investors, partly because of a perceived lower level of risk attaching to companies that make socially favorable decisions. Not only do socially responsible companies actually have better financial results, they also appear to have an advantage when it comes to attracting investor capital. However, a corporation must consider how to conduct corporate social responsibility correctly by evaluating where it stands on CSR, where it eventually hopes to be, how it can get there, and how it can show results. To answer these questions, the corporation will need to consider a number of factors, including the regulatory framework the company is facing and the broad public policy issues that are driving the framework. After a company has a clear overall goodwill vision and mandate, it becomes possible to set specific targets and prioritize business activities.

When a company decides how to achieve the desired results, it must identify new ways to reach stakeholders that may have been overlooked in the

past, using new partnerships, diversity marketing programs, or other approaches. In some cases, it may be necessary to create full-fledged educational, cause-related, and social-issues marketing campaigns. Dialogue, whether establishing it, building it, or enhancing it, is the common denominator in all these potential approaches. To generate the most impact from these initiated programs, a company must consider creating reports and disseminating information to stakeholders and key media and opinion leaders, who can help develop clear-cut internal and external communications plans.

There are many reasons why goodwill practices are necessary in today's business world. Not least of them is the fact that if practiced right, corporate social responsibility is substantially beneficial to business. "The steady building of good will matched by good deeds creates a substructure of strength that becomes valuable in times of crisis" (Hill, 1958, p. 57). By evaluating its current standing and strategies, a company can help maintain an appropriate standard of practice that adheres to acceptable measures of goodwill.

Steve Aiello and Jim Sloan

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Public Interest

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GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS

In government, public relations professionals communicate the activities of the various agencies, commissions, bureaus, and executive and legislative branches, and build relationships with constituents. The Public Affairs and Government section of the Public Relations Society of America describes these professionals as being "responsible for communicating with various audiences on public policy or public safety issues." According to James Garnett,

in *Communicating for Results in Government* (1992), "because government decisions and actions often affect more people and with greater consequences, communicating in government tends to be more important and often more difficult than communicating in business" (pp. 14–15).

Since the 1913 passage of the Gillette Amendment, which prohibits government spending on "publicity or propaganda purposes designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress" (mistakenly equating publicity with the larger functions of public relations), practitioners in local, state, and federal governments have used titles such as public affairs, public information, communications, constituent relations, and liaison. In government, then, public relations professionals function under James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt's (1984) public information model, since the primary function of public affairs officers is to inform their constituents. These professionals facilitate the free flow of information between the government and the people so that citizens are able to make informed decisions about public policy matters that affect them. Public relations practitioners in government work to achieve active support for and cooperation in policies and programs, advocate for the public to government administration, manage information internally, facilitate media relations, and promote community and nation building.

In the United States, the president holds the most clout in terms of attention to a communicator's message by the public and by the media. The president's press secretary and communications office are charged with the responsibility for conveying the president's policy, media relations (e.g., press conferences and media availability), speechwriting, building and maintaining legislative support, and handling issues and crises as they emerge, 24/7. Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama have been considered the most masterful presidential communicators in recent history. Their effectiveness has been credited to their engaging speaking style, excellent speechwriters, and savvy media handling. The press secretary is the chief public relations spokesperson for the administration and has the difficult task of interpreting the president's positions, decisions, and activities to the ubiquitous media. Reagan and his advisors followed seven principles in their media relations: plan ahead, stay on the offensive, control the flow of information, limit reporters' access to the president, talk about

the issues the president wants to focus on, speak in one voice, and repeat the same message.

The most influential public relations voices in the U.S. federal government charged with informing constituents, other than the president, have been in the Department of State and Department of Defense. In 1999, the United States changed its process for managing information flow overseas when the United States Information Agency (USIA) came under the State Department. It was believed that the agency, which functions to explain and support U.S. foreign policy and national interests through overseas information programs and cultural and educational activities, would improve and expand the State Department's activities with its strategic approach to diplomacy, ties with non-governmental organizations, open communication, and facility in digital media. Since the war on terrorism, the USIA's functions have been modified to meet the challenges of supporting democracy globally, supporting the war on drugs in producer and consumer nations, developing worldwide programs to address environmental challenges, and supporting free, truthful expression in all societies. The Department of Defense public affairs activity is aimed at boosting personnel and public opinion about the armed forces, procuring financial support for its programs, and maintaining public understanding and support. Each service has its own mission and staff, and the American Forces Information Services (AFIS) promotes cooperation among the branches and maintains the radio and television operations.

Not only does the public affairs function exist in a democratic system to report government action to citizens but it also ensures active cooperation with programs and encourages citizen participation and support. To the extent that a nation's media enjoy freedom from government control, elected and appointed officials are able to stay in touch with societal needs, and public affairs professionals are able to do their jobs responsibly and in response to these needs. Public affairs practice also promotes community and national development and regional and global interdependence. For example, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services public affairs officers worked cross-culturally and with multiple agencies in resettling thousands of Hmong refugees from camps in Southeast Asia. Internationally, government public affairs and

public diplomacy are critical to effectively manage 21st-century challenges such as environmental threats, health dangers, war and peacekeeping, and political tensions.

The efforts of public affairs practitioners who work to build and maintain government and citizen relationships are hampered by questions concerning the credibility and ethics of practitioners and those whom they represent. Questions of ethics and other factors such as citizen frustration and a sense of a lack of power to influence government also lead to public apathy, another hindrance to achieving public affairs goals. Finally, the hostility of legislators toward the public affairs function and information activities prevents the accurate accounting of costs and corporate value and achieving maximum effectiveness.

Denise P. Ferguson

See also Activism; Catalytic Model of Issues

Management; Chase, W. Howard; Corporate Speech; Government Relations; Issues Management; Military Public Relations; Presidential Press Secretaries

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Government relations is a public relations function organizations—both for-profit and nonprofit—use to strategically influence the public policy aspects

of their environments. Corporate participation in shaping public policy can be traced to the business barons of the early 1900s. Since that time, business organizations have struggled with appropriate ethical and strategic responses to unprecedented changes, constraints, and challenges in their environment brought on by government policy decisions. Large and small organizations can build relationships with government officials.

Scholars from such fields as political science, futurism, business management, public policy, communication, public relations, strategic planning, management information systems, and business ethics have advanced the field's understanding of government relations. Communication efforts by government officials have a historical place in the public relations literature, including undergraduate texts that narrate public relations' history. Such descriptions recognize the value of the relationships between organizations and governments, which began more than 50 years ago. Historian J. A. R. Pimlott first linked public relations, government relations, and democracy, a case Ron Pearson used in 1990 to examine the relationship between democracy and public relations.

Why are the offices of government an important public for organizations? Richard E. Crable and Steven L. Vibbert (1985) argued that organizations do not have authority in public policy. Rather, organizations have the ability to *influence* public policy. That is, organizations, whether profit seeking or not for profit, need to participate in the multiple state and federal arenas where "public policy is being decided" (Ewing, 1990, p. 24).

The importance of government as an organizational public has been addressed in the management literature. In 1983, Henry Mintzberg viewed government as one of the most important external publics with which an organization must engage because government officials "represent the ultimate legislative authority of the society . . . [and] establish the rules—the laws and regulations—within which every organization must function" (p. 44). The management literature identifies government as a public to be researched, monitored, and regularly engaged through communication.

Barry Jones and W. Howard Chase (1979) are credited with innovating the systematic approach to explain how organizations can legitimize and validate organizational positions on relevant public

policy issues. Government officials were considered one of the three major targets (business, citizens, government) of communication for strategic management. The authors encouraged organizations to "increase efforts to anticipate social change and respond to reasonable public expectations" rather than wait for others to set the public agenda (p. 11).

In Jones and Chase's initial conceptualization of issues management, issues precede government policies and organizations should "react" to events and be ready to proactively guide issues in the direction of favorable outcomes. Crable and Vibbert acknowledged that business, citizens, and government are not coequal publics for organizations; rather, "public policy rests where it has for more than two hundred years—in the halls of government" (1985, p. 4). Indeed, the authors concede that even in the lower levels of state and local government, the need for government support for organizational decisions is clear. Robert L. Heath and Kenneth R. Cousino acknowledged in 1990 that organizations must communicate with government officials as key stakeholders to influence and benefit from favorable public policy decisions. Their advice for issue managers is clear—organizations need to know the relevant "persons who create law or ordinance that prescribes which actions are rewardable or punishable" (p. 28).

Organizations can enact certain steps that will ensure that they have the information necessary to conduct government relations. The first step is for organizational leaders to know the legislative agenda in the different arenas of government. Local, state, and national bodies all have individual, although sometimes overlapping, agendas that may affect an organization. Organizations should conduct environmental scanning to identify which policy issues will be salient in each government arena. Legislation normally progresses through various stages to become the law of the land. One is the prelegislative stage of deliberation, during which the prevailing forces attempt to craft bills that may sustain themselves in legislative debate. Hearings are a crucial element in this phase. Legislation progresses to become bills, which are signed into effect by executive authorities. Regulation is created to implement legislation. All of this may end up being litigated before finally becoming the enacted law. Government relations is relevant at each step.

Once an organization knows the legislative agenda for a body of government, the second step is to explore how the acceptance or rejection of a policy may affect the short-term and long-term functioning of its organization. Government decisions influence such diverse organizational practices as competition, mergers and acquisitions, employment, licensing, access to scarce resources, retirement procedures, and financial investments. The public relations department should speak with other organizational units to see how these potential policies will affect the different subsections of the organization.

A third way that organizations can enact government relations is by gathering, organizing, and disseminating background information that shows the organization's position on the policy. White papers and position papers can be created to provide background to government officials detailing how proposed policy decisions may influence constituents. Often the public relations department will not need to collect new information; rather, it will need to be able to summarize large amounts of intraorganizational information into easy-to-understand, jargon-free background that can be used by government officials as they deliberate.

Information is only one part of the relationship-building process with government officials. Fourth, organizational members will need to establish an interpersonal connection with elected officials. It is recommended that organizational leaders set up appointments and meetings to develop face-to-face relationships with officials at various levels of government. Organizations have several tactics by which to foster this type of rich communication with their elected officials. They can invite political leaders to their organizations, have key organizational members attend political fundraisers, or have organizational members participate in advisory bodies that report to elected officials. Building relationships with government officials takes time and energy, and access to high-level government officials may require multiple attempts before anyone from the organization actually sits down to talk with a government official.

Another way to increase the visibility of the organization is to combine government relations efforts with lobbying and issues management efforts. This convergence of mission and message will create a comprehensive and synergistic strategic communication program. Open communication is needed

within an organization to ensure that the lobbying efforts are in sync with other strategic efforts.

Finally, organizations should join their respective trade or industry group to maximize their influence. Most governmental policies will not merely affect just one organization, but instead will affect whole industries. Industry groups allow competitors to cooperate with each other to ensure the future of their group. Industry groups often have resources to conduct comprehensive government relations efforts that benefit all members. At times, organizations may also want to partner with activist groups or organizations outside of their trade group to better communicate broader objectives and needs to government officials.

It is important to note that government relations are also very important in international public relations. Successful public relations efforts aimed at governmental publics require more than merely targeting particular officials. Effective public relations must also consider the unique social, economic, and political conditions of a nation. As the economic and social status of nations throughout the world changes, the offices of government may become the target of international public relations efforts. The developing world is rapidly moving toward privatization, as the impetus for economic development shifts from national governments to private sector corporations or to some hybrid ownership. During this time of transition, government offices are emerging as especially powerful publics to the corporations that want to participate in and benefit from the economic opportunities. One task for international public relations practitioners is to successfully build, maintain, and change relationships with key foreign government officials.

Maureen Taylor

See also Backgrounder; Functions of Public Relations; Industrial Barons (of the 1870s–1920s); Issues Management; Lobbying; Public Affairs; Public Policy Planning; Publics; Stakeholder Theory; Trade Associations

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GRAPHICS

Graphics are visual elements used to create images for print publications, videos, and websites. The term is often used in a generic sense and can encompass a variety of visual elements, such as photographs, illustrations, drawings, clip art, line rules, typefaces, and tint boxes associated with the design and creation of printed or electronic materials.

Graphics are a powerful way to communicate in today's visually oriented society. Most printed publications and electronic layouts need strong, dominant visual elements to make them more interesting to the reader. Graphics can accompany copy to help attract attention, unify a look, convey special meaning, and add impact. They can also clarify, educate, and improve readability. Graphics are pieces of art used to express ideas, create a mood or image, and enhance the attractiveness of a piece.

Public relations practitioners use graphics to create identity systems for an organization. An identity system includes the implementation of the organizational name and logo throughout the materials produced by the organization, such as letterhead, business forms, brochures, invitations, and advertisements. Practitioners also use graphics to produce just about any communication tool, including newsletters, signs, posters, press kits, and websites.

Graphic design is the artistic and skillful application of type, color, and images to paper or another medium, such as a website, to create a clear and appealing whole. Many specialists work

with the creation and production of graphic images, including art directors, graphic artists, and graphic designers, and they comprise an entire industry of professionals involved in the design and printing of messages. Graphic designers, for instance, are professionals who design and may even coordinate the production of a printed piece, including selecting typography, art, paper, and ink. They work with public relations practitioners to ensure that the communication tool, whether a website or a printed publication, is visually appealing. A graphic artist is an individual who produces art through graphic methods, such as painting, etching, drawing, and the use of specialized software programs. Public relations practitioners work with these specialists to create materials with graphics, such as brochures, corporate identity systems, websites, and advertisements. Public relations practitioners who work in this capacity serve as print brokers because they hire illustrators, graphic designers, artists, and printers to help produce their work.

As any type of pictorial matter in a publication or other medium, graphics can include original illustrations and clip art; photographs; logos and symbols; graphs, charts, and maps; numbers; and visual elements such as bullets, line rules, borders, screens and tint boxes, typographic ornaments, geometric shapes (bars, stars, diamonds, hexagon), and enlarged letters. Clip art includes images in many different forms, such as photographs, illustrations, and typefaces that are generated by professionals. Clip art can be purchased online or is available free on some websites. Typically not created for any specific use, the art is generally copyright free. Public relations practitioners need to be aware of the U.S. Copyright Revision Act of 1976, which states that those who use copyrighted work must have the permission of the copyright holder. Even though some work graphics may be in the public domain, other images may be protected by copyright even if a copyright does not appear with the graphic.

When public relations practitioners need graphics that are more tailored to their needs, they may use the services of stock image providers or photo banks. Much less expensive and time consuming than hiring a photographer and orchestrating a photo shoot, photo banks offer a wide variety of subjects, themes, and styles, which can be accessed online and delivered digitally. Royalty-free images

are purchased for unlimited usage at a flat fee, but they can be accessed by other users, including competitors. Rights-protected images can be used for a particular use and period of time.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Layout; Logo

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GROSS IMPRESSIONS

Gross impressions are widely used in program evaluation to indicate the number of people potentially exposed to a media message. These numbers are based on circulation figures for print media and ratings figures for broadcast media. Gross impressions are calculated by multiplying the number of messages that appear by the appropriate circulation or rating. The gross impressions number can become very large, very quickly; however, it must be used with care. The main caveat that should always be stressed is that these are potential exposures, not actual numbers of people who read, viewed, or heard the message. The classic example is Super Bowl commercials. Air time during the game sells for very high sums based on the potential audience exposure. But people are known to do many things during commercial time aside from watch the commercials (for example, go to the refrigerator or restroom). Thus, actual exposures are typically lower (and sometimes greatly so) than gross impressions for TV messages. The opposite might actually be true of print media. One newspaper in a library or periodical in a doctor's office will likely have far more than one reader. And with the current proliferation of cafés in bookstores, countless newspapers and periodicals

are read but not purchased. Thus, circulation figures can actually underestimate the number of people exposed to a print message.

Another problem with the gross impressions number is that although it may provide some idea of the number of people exposed to a message, it says nothing about whether those exposed were part of the actual target audience. This issue is partly addressed by choosing appropriate media placements, but few media sources, especially major outlets, provide the precise targeting public relations often desires. One way to ameliorate this problem somewhat is to develop an overall promotion and publicity effort that generates a "buzz" about a topic. For example, movie promotion is very involved these days. Trailers and product tie-ins create awareness and anticipation. Then a star hits the talk show circuit to talk about what she's doing in her life and just happens to mention her latest movie that opens in a few days and has a clip or two from it. People who like the star and are thus likely to go to the movie see the interview on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno*. They will talk to friends at work the next day, and those people may well be more inclined to watch the star on the *Late Show With David Letterman* the next night. The overall promotion effort thus enhances the impressions generated among the most desirable audience members.

Finally, simple exposure says nothing at all about the impact or effect of a message. Use of the gross impressions figure alone is very misleading as a measure of the effectiveness of public relations activities. Meaningful program evaluation must always measure impact, not simply potential.

Maribeth S. Metzler

See also Impression Management Theory; Integrated Marketing Communication; Marketing; Promotion; Publicity

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GUERRILLA MARKETING

Guerilla marketing was introduced in 1984 by Jay Conrad Levinson as a marketing strategy for “achieving conventional goals . . . using unconventional methods” (n.d., p. 1). An alternative to mass advertising via television, radio, and other mass media outlets, Levinson says it usually involves an in-person or on-location marketing stunt or tactic to raise product or organizational awareness. Guerilla marketing is also marked by inexpensive alternatives to mass marketing for specified reach and efficiency.

Levinson originally touted it as an inexpensive alternative for small businesses with limited resources. Guerilla marketing is designed to attract attention and create memorability among target markets while saving marketing dollars. As such, guerilla marketing is a precise activity, in which marketing expenditures are calculated and dedicated to activities that will earn the best low-cost reach.

Levinson (2007) stated that the foundation of guerilla marketing is that marketers “do not rely on the brute force of a marketing budget . . . [but] the brute force of a vivid imagination” (p. 5). Emphasis on creativity challenges traditional marketing efforts to seek creative yet cost-effective solutions to marketing problems.

Guerilla marketing features a small business rather than big business solution to marketing problems, dialogue over marketing monologue, priority on profitable relationships over sales, placing the focal point on the customer’s involvement and takeaway in the marketing effort, the integrated marketing effort over a single advertising campaign, consensual and permission-based marketing over mass distribution, and a focus on the individual over the mass.

Tenets of Guerilla Marketing

Levinson considers guerilla marketing a mindset that includes cultivating an entrepreneurial vision, prioritizing marketing as a critical organizational function, focusing on customer needs, and valuing the integration of all possible marketing tools. It is often considered an Internet marketing phenomenon. Levinson (2007) advised that online marketing provides the “golden opportunity” for guerilla marketers because “interactivity is blended with action, connectivity, targetability, community, and economy” (p. 60). The Internet allows marketers to use on-location events as fodder for potential viral videos to be distributed via social media users, enhancing the guerilla values of efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and reach.

Warfare and Ethics

The term *guerilla marketing* continues the marketing tendency to embrace warfare terms (e.g., marketing campaign, marketing blitz, stealth marketing, ambush marketing, target audiences). Levinson and Al Lautenslager (2009) wrote that it may be described as a direct attack on a competitor’s market share by knowing the market, customer, and competitor “inside and out” and exploiting a competitor’s weaknesses by selecting “the most lethal marketing methods” that capture attention in areas where the competitor may not be currently engaged (p. 61).

Use of guerilla marketing efforts has raised questions of ethics and marketing boundaries. For example, Cartoon Network and Turner Broadcasting used guerilla marketing to promote the release of its movie *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* by bombarding Boston with unidentified, unmarked packages that contained a movie image. Because of the suspicious nature of the unexpected packages, the effort raised alarms from local authorities, who mistook the packages for potential terrorist activities.

The concept is used synonymously with other alternative marketing methods like stealth marketing, peer-to-peer marketing, viral marketing, street marketing, and buzz marketing. In fact, some complain that the broad nature of guerilla

marketing's terrain makes it difficult to define or limit conceptually.

Brian G. Smith

See also Viral Marketing; Word of Mouth Marketing

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H

HABERMAS, JÜRGEN, ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

Writing about “Habermas on public relations” seems ironic, because for Habermas advertising and public relations are strategic action and in his theory strategic action is nothing that fosters the good of society. However, his theory of communicative action provides public relations scholars and practitioners with useful insights into the normative rationality of public discourse.

Jürgen Habermas (born 1929 in Düsseldorf) is a prominent German philosopher and sociologist trained in the critical Frankfurt School. In his *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984/1987), Habermas provides a sociological theory of society and communication. The main topic in the book that relates to public relations is the distinction between two forms of rationality: participative communicative reason on the one hand and strategic (instrumental) communicative reason on the other. This distinction is in opposition to other sociologists, such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Talcott Parsons, who locate rationality in abstract social structures. Habermas assumes that rationality can only be found in the process of interpersonal communication (speech acts).

Although associated with the critical Frankfurt School and its rather pessimistic analysis of social structures, Habermas believed that through rational communicative action a society can be built that integrates different identities and different worldviews. Drawing on George Herbert Mead

and Émile Durkheim, Habermas developed his idea of communicative action: Through communicative action (as a process of mutual understanding), cultural knowledge is transmitted and renewed and through this process, social integration occurs and solidarity among the members of a society is built.

Public Relations as Strategic Action (Manipulation)

To highlight the concept of communicative action, Habermas examined its counterpart: strategic action. In his view, strategic action is characterized by a high degree of rationality and coordination through points of interest. The most important characteristic of strategic action is its commitment to success—with the help of strategic action an actor tries to augment the efficacy of influencing the decisions of a rational opponent.

Developing his theory, Habermas differentiated two types of strategic action. The first is open strategic action. Applied to the field of advertising and public relations, classic advertising can be counted as open strategic action: The sender wants to persuade the recipient to buy a product or a service. It is the senders’ egoistic interest to influence the buying behavior of the recipient. However, the recipient is aware of the senders’ intents. The second type is called concealed strategic action. Here, at least one of the actors involved behaves success-oriented but makes others believe that he or she acts communicatively. Habermas called this conscious deception or manipulation. Concealed

strategic communication can be associated with the image public relations developed, especially in the eyes of many investigative journalists. This version of communication can be viewed as “hidden persuasion” or “stealth public relations” that penetrates audience’s thoughts without their conscious consideration. In his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas (1989) argued that advertising and publicity as well as mass media have invaded and corrupted the public sphere.

Public Relations as Communicative Action (Rational Discourse)

In spite of his own characterization of public relations as strategic action, the pragmatic and linguistic foundation of his theory of communicative action and its idea of the “ideal speech situation” offer insights for public relations. Habermas confronted strategic action with communicative action, which has the goal of reaching understanding. Here, participants are not primarily driven by their will to enforce their interests but by harmonizing their plans of action in a process of finding a common definition of the situation. Habermas believed in the existence of human rationality that gets obvious in the procedural structure of human communication and language. Rationality is represented in understanding and consensus.

According to Habermas, rational discourse takes place in three worlds: the objective world, the subjective world, and the social world (Habermas, 1984, p. 69f). The idea of an objective world relates to the external nature (“existing state of affairs”) on which statements can be made. The subjective world is the internal world of the individuals that consists of individual experiences and cognitive processes. The social world consists of the social life that is regulated by values and norms. Habermas described the three worlds as a commonly supposed system of coordinates. Within all three dimensions, participants in the discourse are able to agree on what they may treat as a fact (objective world), as a norm (social world), or as a specific subjective experience.

Based on this concept of the three worlds, it is easy to recognize that Habermas’s idea of rational discourse focuses on interpretations; speakers (and receivers) can no longer readily assume that their

interpretations perfectly match the objective, social, or subjective world, but have to take into account the reality that their interpretations are contested by others. Based on this central understanding, rational discourse starts with one claim a speaker makes related to one of the three worlds. This claim is an interpretation, but is objective in the sense that everyone else can agree or claim a different interpretation. Thus, objectivity is transformed into a process of intersubjective transparency, a proof of claims in the three worlds.

This proof of claims is done in a process of four steps. First, discourse participants agree about the truth, the facts concerning the objective world. Second, they agree on the subjective truthfulness of each participant (honesty about the subjective thoughts and intentions). If both dimensions are settled, the participants agree on the normative rightfulness or the legitimacy of the speech acts (acting in accordance with mutually accepted moral standards). The fourth step or dimension is the intelligibility: each participant is able to use language and grammar correctly and assumes that the other participants are as well. To get a rational consensus on a definition of a situation and the coordinative action based on it, each discourse participant makes validity claims in all four dimensions. The moment a definition of the situation is established, all participants incorporate this definition into their lifeworld.

Communicative Action: An Ideal and a Desideratum in Public Relations

Habermas was fully aware that the ideal speech situation is an abstract construction of how discourse should occur—actual discourse is usually different. As basic rules of communication are often violated, discourse is used to repair the communication and the relationships between participants. In relation to the three worlds and the four dimensions of validity claims, Habermas distinguished between different types of argumentation, such as theoretical, practical, and explicative discourse. Within theoretical discourse and its cognitive-instrumental expressions, the truth of propositions is discussed. The practical discourse with its moral-practical expressions tries to clarify the legitimacy of action and the explicative discourse questions the intelligibility of statements. The validity claims

relating to trustworthiness cannot be clarified in discourse as the speakers cannot prove the truthfulness by arguments, but only by action.

The theory of communicative action is rarely used in academic public relations although the idea of communication symmetry and mutual understanding is widely accepted as a central goal of public relations. According to prominent conceptualizations of public relations history, mutual understanding and communication symmetry are the most recent stages of the (ethical) public relations developments. Works of Edward L. Bernays, James E. Grunig, Scott Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen M. Broom place mutual understanding at the core of public relations. However, critical scholars like Jacquie L'Etang, Magda Pieczka, and Juliet Roper argue that these conceptualizations are not based on the idea of participative communicative action but on the idea of selfish strategic communication that only acts as if it were communicative action. With Roland Burkart's consensus-oriented public relations, at least one model exists that tries to apply Habermas's concept for the purpose of planning and evaluation. Burkart suggests that particularly in conflict situations, organizational validity claims are doubted and a structured communication process is necessary to find a common situation definition. This common definition of a situation can also be linked to rhetoric and symbolic approaches of public relations like Robert L. Heath's zones of shared meaning.

Stefan Wehmeier

See also Critical Theory; Interpersonal Communication Theory; Modernity and Late Modernity; Public Sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*); Society; Symmetry; Zones of Meaning

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HAMMOND, GEORGE

George Hammond (1907–2003) led a remarkable life in the practice of public relations. He earned the reputation as the man who could make things happen.

The golden age of public relations began to shine during the darkest days of U.S. economic history, the Great Depression. At the Carl Byoir Company, a pioneer in the public relations field, the gold turned to 24 carat under the leadership of Hammond, who joined the firm in 1932 and retired as chairman of the board in 1981. The style and methods of the company, America's most successful public relations firm for 50 years, were never duplicated.

Hammond was a problem solver who worked directly with company CEOs to analyze the problems and the goals of their companies and then directed those challenges to his hundreds of employees across this nation and around the world. Those clients—more than 100 *Fortune* 500 companies—included BF Goodrich, Honeywell, Bendix, A&P, Hallmark, Johnson's Wax, and countless others. The accomplishments of those companies are legendary.

With every client of the Byoir organization, the contact was with the CEO, a far different method than exists today. Under Hammond's direction, it was the job of the Byoir executive to continuously inform the CEO of anything happening in his company, the nation, or the world that could affect his company and its clients. This access and close contact with the CEO of the client company prevented a host of problems that exist today.

This was not a spin company. This was not a company that made millions of dollars in profits or whose employees were the best paid in the industry. This was a company whose employees remained with the firm solely because Hammond created an atmosphere in which they could do their best work. He was a strategic thinker; a visionary who thought through the problems, devised the plan, chose the best man or woman for the job, and allowed them the freedom to do their best work.

He made things happen.

His parents, both well-known but not wealthy musicians from Brooklyn, provided love and support and instilled confidence, which carried Hammond to the heights of his profession, lauded by associates, clients, and peers worldwide.

His exposure from birth to the beauty of classical music and the visual arts continued throughout his life and produced a creative thinker. He continually expressed concern that the country's education formula did not acknowledge the need for more literature, art, and music.

In 1924, it took Hammond several trips from Brooklyn into New York City and eight tests in one day, but he persisted in pursuing a scholarship to Columbia. His persistence paid off with a full Pulitzer scholarship and \$250 annually in spending money.

Persistence became a way of life for Hammond. Throughout high school and college, he wrote sports copy for the *New York Sun*. After graduating from Columbia in 1928, he continued his sports career. He ghosted the Grantland Rice column, covered golf, and worked for a hotel chain in Cuba, where he met Carl Byoir. In 1932, he was hired by Byoir to manage a sports program at the Miami Biltmore Hotel to attract visitors to the empty hotel. Through his creative efforts, he filled the hotel in the depths of the Depression. He did the same for several other hotels on both coasts of Florida.

The company's tourism business grew through Hammond's expertise in sports; he utilized the press corps to publicize various cities, including Orlando, Coral Gables, and Sarasota, bringing attention to those areas as vacation meccas even in the darkest days of the Depression.

Ultimately, he was called to New York and given the responsibility of his first client, the BF

Goodrich Tire and Rubber Company. He remained associated with Byoir for nearly 50 years.

In 1978, he received a letter from Bert Johnson, an executive in Orlando who credited Hammond with putting Orlando on the map. He wrote,

What you did for Orlando in 1935 can never be questioned. You gave us new spirit, confidence and vision. You not only put our town's name in the newspapers around the country, but you showed us there was still hope. You came here among us and you turned on the light. (Johnson, personal communication, 1978)

As the years progressed, Hammond turned on the lights of many corporations. He turned on the lights of the Long Island Railroad when his genius as a strategic thinker, who did his homework, brought the company out of bankruptcy and saved 60,000 commuters from being stranded on Long Island with no way to get into the city. He did it without sending a word to any news media. He did his homework. He learned that the railroad, with no history of accidents for 100 years, had two in 1954 in which 80 people were killed. He studied the engineering reports. He learned that the railroad needed several million dollars to upgrade its equipment and the tracks.

He used a large easel bearing the headline "The Long Island Railroad is the worst railroad in the nation." On succeeding pages of the large easel he outlined the problems, how to solve them, and how much it would cost.

The easel made the rounds of Long Island and Pennsylvania Railroad executives and soon landed on Governor Thomas Dewey's desk. The governor called a special session of the legislature, and the needed money was provided by the State of New York.

In 1952, Hammond turned on the lights for more than 200 passengers of the streamliner train, "City of San Francisco." Trapped in Donner Pass in the High Sierras for three days, the streamliner had run out of food and heat, and both the U.S. Marines and the railroad had failed in rescue attempts. But Hammond applied his usual problem-solving skills and paid a skier to get a message to his New York office. Then things began to happen. The skier led the other passengers to the

warmth and safety of a nearby bar and grill. A letter of congratulations and thanks from the vice president of the railroad did not compare to the appreciation of the grateful passengers, who survived with little to eat and minimal heat over the 24 hours of the ordeal.

He turned on the lights at BF Goodrich when he convinced a board member to vote in favor of a financing plan approved by Goldman Sachs that would save the company from bankruptcy. The company had tried three times unsuccessfully to get the plan approved by the stockholders. Hammond was 29 at the time and had just arrived in New York from Florida. While others in the office—probably 10 at the time—looked for ingenious ways to solve the problem, Hammond looked for the largest stockholder and went to the source. The man refused to see him. He returned to the building when it was time for the stockholder's car to pick him up. He slid in beside him and in that 15-minute ride, Hammond convinced him that the financing plan was the best way to solve the problem.

The lights continued to shine as he worked with the new BF Goodrich president, John Collyer, who knew from his long experience in Europe that Germany was producing synthetic rubber. Collyer and Hammond convinced the government that the United States could lose the war without synthetic rubber and that this country must immediately start making tires from synthetic rubber. The government complied. When the war was over, Collyer, with Hammond at his side, went to Washington and persuaded the government to get out of the synthetic rubber business and sell the plants to private enterprise. To the surprise of everyone, the government complied. This is but one of the accomplishments directed by George Hammond that changed the way America lives today.

Hammond was a take-charge man who could and did solve problems when others had exhausted every plausible tactic. He was an adviser, a problem solver who directed a worldwide company of well-trained employees who utilized his problem-solving methods. A career that started modestly became a career filled with business accomplishments that changed the way this nation thinks. Hammond was on his way to becoming chairman of the board of Carl Byoir and Associates.

His firm was the only public relations firm that was departmentalized, with experts heading every department. Editor John Stahr edited and approved every piece of copy that was sent to news media, regardless of where the account executive was assigned at the time. This resulted in enormous respect from all the media, including *The New York Times*. A release from CBA needed no editing and was known to be accurate and well written.

The company never used a lobbyist during its entire existence and had no set formula for solving problems. Hammond thought that each problem was unique. He met with the CEO, determined the problem and the course he would take, then assigned the work to the best people for the job.

Although he was distressed with the business scandals of the early 21st century, he acknowledged that there were 17,000 public companies that were honestly run and said that their efforts would keep the country going.

The merry band of professionals who worked for Hammond at the Byoir Company were dedicated, happy people. They loved their work, and they admired the leadership of Hammond. They did not move from company to company. There was very little turnover.

Muriel Fox, executive vice president of radio and television for the company, said,

We thought there wasn't anything we couldn't do. George Hammond knew everything that was going in the company. He cared about race relations and predicted in the 50's that we must solve these problems or this country would have major problems in the cities. He was very focused in regard to human relations and brought in people to teach the executives about the wider world. He covered a broad span intellectually. (personal communication, 2003)

Fox realized the rareness of Hammond's character by his actions toward her career: "He promoted me to executive vice president of radio and television. He was the first in New York to place a woman in such a position" (personal communication, 2003).

Dick Truitt, another executive vice president, said, "After he retired and I had a difficult problem, I would go to a quiet place and say to myself, 'What would Hammond do?'" (personal communication, 2003).

His executive secretary of 30 years, Mary Apelian, said, "He was a lofty thinker who always presented me with a challenge. There is a lot that the exterior does not show of the interior" (personal communication, 2003). After he retired, he retained her as his secretary until his death. She worked for him for 50 years.

At 93 years old, when Hammond started coauthoring an autobiography, he said,

As I sit here on my 93rd birthday watching the birds fly south over the Mystic River, I contemplate a remarkable life that a kid from Brooklyn was fortunate enough to enjoy.

A short time ago, as I assessed this life, I realized the worth of many of the things I have learned and practiced during a 50 year career in the public relations business. As I think of the problems which face this nation today, I am firmly convinced that many of them could be solved if we could reach the people one on one, not by spin, but by thorough explanation.

For 50 years our job was to listen, to solve problems and to explain. We did that and we did it very well for such companies as BF Goodrich, Honeywell, Bendix, Hallmark, A&P, The Long Island Railroad, Johnson's Wax, various U.S. Cities and the United States government.

Everything we did and the way we did it was different from the method our colleagues used. We did not measure our success by the number of press clippings we could generate or the size of the bill we could present to the client. Our success was determined by this standard: did we solve the problem?

I have lots of time to read, think and evaluate. I believe there are three crises in this country today:

1. The attack on business
2. Ineffective treatment of our rising generation's education formula
3. The lack of participation in one of the greatest freedoms in this country: voting. We are not exercising the hard fought freedom of voting as less than 50 percent of the eligible population goes to the polls. (Orsborn, 2003, n.p.)

Hammond believed that an effective person-to-person program throughout the nation, such as the method used to make the nation aware of the

Children's Television Workshop, could be used to motivate the American public to appreciate that great freedom that our founding fathers envisioned for us.

Joan Cooney did not launch her idea for a television program for preschool youngsters until she had the guarantee of \$7 million in underwriting. Her budget for something that did not exist included an ice-breaking program that cost \$250,000 the first year. She retained Hammond's company to do the job. Hammond directed his executives to innovate. They remembered old ways and invented new ways to communicate and persuade. It took personal calls, handbills, sound trucks, and the enlisted support of hundreds of community organizations all over the country because some of those areas did not yet have television. Today, *Sesame Street* is still one of the most popular and watched children's television shows in the nation.

This is the quality of work George Hammond created and supervised. Hammond died December 4, 2003, 5 days after his 96th birthday.

Nicki Orsborn

See also Counseling; Publicity; Spin; Strategies

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HARLOW, REX

Rex Harlow (1892–1993), founder of the first national public relations association and the first national public relations research journal, conducted public relations short courses nationwide and was the first full-time professor at a major university to teach public relations classes. He also pioneered the application of social science research to the practice. He was born in Missouri, began his career in Oklahoma, worked nationwide from his base in California, and lived to within two months of the age of 101. He wrote more than 50 books, edited the Harper series of public relations

books (1939–1965), and recorded his story in the unpublished autobiography he typed between 1981 and 1984.

The youngest of 10 siblings, he moved to Oklahoma City at age 19 to work for brother Ernest at Merry Optical, where he got the idea of establishing better relations with optometrists. When another brother, Victor, founded *Harlow's Weekly*, Rex served as business manager and conducted opinion surveys. He used research findings to advise business executives and political candidates. The literary and political digest published from 1912 to 1940 was the basis for the development of Harlow Publishing in 1915.

Congress declared war on Germany in April 1917, and Harlow was appointed to the Aircraft Production Board. Following a successful campaign to “sell” the value of air power, he resigned to complete officer training. His book, *The Trail of the 61st*, was published in 1920, the same year he married Ruby Wilson. They had two sons and one daughter.

Harlow completed a B.S. at what is now the University of Central Oklahoma in 1934. A year later, while completing his master's degree at the University of Texas, he became a trailblazer in the emerging field of university relations. His book, *The University of Texas As I See It*, led to a doubling in legislative appropriations for the university.

When he headed back north of the Red River to work on a social sciences doctorate at the University of Oklahoma, the president of Stanford contacted him seeking the kind of help he had provided for the University of Texas. In March 1935, Harlow headed to Palo Alto where he completed his doctorate. His dissertation study included trips to 14 universities where he found deficiencies in university relations with businesses, professions, and government. The next year, Harlow began his eight-year tenure teaching courses in higher education administration and public relations at Stanford, and he preserved his bound lecture notes from those first public relations classes.

Harlow wrote that public relations needed some common basis for understanding what it is, what it can do, and what constitutes acceptable work in the field. In 1939, he organized the Stanford Institute of Public Relations for short

courses and conferences. With corporate sponsors and university connections in multiple states, this became the American Council on Public Relations. Within a decade, 150 lecturers presented 23 short courses to 3,400 participants. The Council also studied opinions and issues related to World War II and sent weekly reports to President Franklin Roosevelt and 125 other government officials. His book, *Public Relations in War and Peace*, was published in 1942.

Harlow resigned from Stanford in 1944 because the new university president opposed training in professional and technical subjects. He announced plans to launch a periodical, but he backed away from the idea when Glenn and Denny Griswold told him they were planning a reporting service on current trends and developments. In 1944, the Griswolds introduced a weekly newsletter, *Public Relations News*, and Harlow began publishing research in the *Public Relations Journal* a year later.

In April 1945, Harlow flew to the East Coast to meet with Pendleton Dudley, president of the National Association of Public Relations Counsel (NAPRC, New York) and George Meredith, president of the American Public Relations Association (APRA, Washington, D.C.) to discuss the possibility of merging. Harlow's council had 630 members. With 313 NAPRC members and 225 APRA members, that was a total strength of 1,168. More than two years later, in August 1947, at the Lake Shore Club in Chicago, Harlow and five other men worked four hot days and nights to bring the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) into being with a proposed constitution, bylaws, and steps for incorporation. PRSA became operational in January 1948. The council's short courses and *Journal* continued as PRSA operations, and Harlow was the first chair of the PRSA Education Committee.

Convinced that social science research was the foundation on which public relations and its development rest, Harlow chaired the PRSA Commission on the Social Sciences in 1951 with \$10,000 grants from each of two of Harlow's clients. In 1952, Harlow launched the *Social Science Reporter*, a semimonthly newsletter, and he began coordinating annual social science seminars that convened in California for two decades. He preserved a complete set of the *Reporter* that was published for 20 years.

Harlow was active in Harlow Publishing until his move to California in the 1930s. Brother Victor and nephew Bryce remained at the helm of the company through the 1950s. Bryce was a congressional staff member, World War II aid to General George Marshall, and special assistant to President Dwight Eisenhower. In 1961, Bryce established the first Washington, D.C., office of Procter & Gamble. In 1981, when Bryce received the Medal of Freedom from President Ronald Reagan, he was known for developing corporate representation in Washington. In 1982, the Bryce Harlow Foundation was established to advance business-government relations.

Among many awards bestowed on Rex Harlow was the PRSA Gold Anvil for lifetime achievement in public relations. Writing about the future of public relations at the conclusion of his autobiography in 1984, he called for an increase in education, professionalism, and the philosophical base of ethics, morals, and ideals. "The future success of public relations will depend a great deal on its acceptance by the public," Harlow wrote, "on its professional identity and the credibility of its professionals."

Susan Gonders

See also College and University Public Relations; Public Relations Education, History of; Public Relations Research; Public Relations Society of America

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HEARING

A public hearing is a forum held by decision makers, usually elected officials, to listen to various stakeholder positions on a piece of legislation. The public hearing is at the heart of the democratic process because any interested party can speak on behalf of the legislation. Citizens, not-for-profit organizations, and corporations have the opportunity to participate in public hearings. In most public hearings, some speakers

support a particular piece of legislation and other speakers voice their concerns. Public hearings ensure transparency in the decision-making process.

Different types of bodies hold public hearings. At the local level, town councils, city councils, and boards of commissioners meet to deliberate issues, such as zoning, new laws, and taxes. At the state level, elected legislators also hold public hearings about issues, such as education reform and the budget, that affect the entire state. The U.S. Congress, both House of Representatives and Senate, holds public hearings to solicit public comment on upcoming legislation of national and international topics.

Interested parties conduct research before participating in a public hearing. Data from reliable sources are needed to ensure that the arguments made in the public hearing are accurate and credible. Sources for data can include the U.S. Census, statistics from other communities/states, public documents, and information gathered through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Another type of research involves gathering personal narratives about the people's lives that will be affected, either positively or negatively, by the proposed legislation. This research is as important as the statistics because it puts a human face on the bill or regulation. Both types of research help to create a persuasive argument. Finally, interested parties often research the positions of each member of the committee prior to attending the public hearing. Citizens and organizations can contact the offices of each member of the committee and ask for each elected official's position on the legislation.

There is a predictable process to most public hearings. Generally, decision-making bodies announce the times and dates for public comment on a particular piece of legislation. The announcement of the date and time of the public hearing is usually published on the decision-making body's website or in the local media. Interested organizations then can contact the appropriate governmental office and ask to be placed on the list of speakers. Individual citizens and organizations must provide the name and contact information of the intended speaker. Interested parties are given a date and time to appear in front of the committee. They are also given a time limit for their speeches.

Because speakers have limited time, in addition to writing a speech, each speaker prepares a written document. This document, in the form of a position paper or white paper, provides additional information about the speaker's position. Speakers submit a copy of this written document to the committee prior to speaking. Many speakers bring extra copies to hand out to media representatives and other interested parties. These written documents typically contain background, contact information, and the same statistics and narratives as the speech. Readers and media quickly scan the materials so it is important that the authors place the most important information at the beginning of the document, use bullets, and make the position paper easy to read.

In public hearings each speaker is called to testify before the deliberative committee. Speakers introduce themselves (name, home town, organizational membership) to the committee, thank the committee for their time, and read their formal statement. The committee members may ask the speaker questions; however, it is unusual for the audience to be allowed to ask the speakers questions. Committee members are usually addressed by their formal titles and are treated with respect during the speech.

It is important for all speakers to stay within their allotted time limit. At any public hearing, there could be dozens of interested parties seeking to speak about their position. Speakers who extend beyond their allotted time may be asked to stop and will be unable to complete their statement. Many speakers practice their presentations (often many times) and anticipate difficult questions from the committee members. If there are several interested parties sharing the same position on the legislation, they may want to coordinate in advance which person will make which argument. Although repetition can be persuasive, bringing a wide variety of arguments into the speeches supports the main points.

During public hearings, a level of decorum is expected from the audience. Members of the audience are expected to sit politely as speakers present their arguments. Clapping for like-minded speakers is considered inappropriate, as is making noise when a speaker presents opposing arguments.

Representatives from the media often attend public hearings. Speakers should be prepared to give statements to the media and answer any questions about their position. Interested parties can invite the media to attend and offer to speak privately to them about their position. The media representatives may ask speakers for additional information and this is an opportunity to further communicate the position.

When all interested parties had the opportunity to speak and after all of the committee members' questions have been answered, the committee adjourns for private deliberations. These meetings often are not open to the public. It is at this point that the public part of the public hearing is over. Interested parties can continue to communicate privately with their elected officials and provide additional written materials. Interested parties can also contact local media representatives to further explain their position. However, once the committee ends the public hearing phase of its deliberative process, there is no more space for public testimony.

The public hearing is one way that interested citizens and organizations have direct contact with their elected officials. The Internet provides new opportunities and challenges for contact. For instance, some cities are exploring using online citizen participation in the hearings. In other cities, they encourage speakers to sign up to speak at the meeting through an online registration form. Yet, online participation presents challenges as cities try to balance offline and online citizen participation.

Each community has a slightly different process for holding public hearings, but the general process is as explained. It is the right of individuals and organizations to speak out on issues that affect their community. The public hearing provides the opportunity for elected officials to solicit public comment as they make legislative decisions. An interested party can be successful if he or she is well prepared, anticipates difficult questions, and provides meaningful written support materials to decision makers.

Maureen Taylor

See also Advocacy; Citizens Advisory Committees/Panels; Collaborative Decision Making; Political Speech; Risk Communication

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HILL, JOHN WILEY

John Wiley Hill (1890–1977) was the principal founder of Hill & Knowlton of New York, the largest and most successful public relations firm in history. For about 30 years after World War II, Hill & Knowlton led the industry in billings, and journalists and other public relations practitioners routinely rated it the best in the business. It was the first public relations agency to expand successfully into Europe and other international markets, while at home, by 1959 the combined sales of its clients amounted to 10% of the gross national product. Moreover, Hill's influence and that of his top executives was greater than most other public relations counselors of the time. Hill & Knowlton officers routinely attended board meetings and served as part of the management team of the agency's clients, which included the steel, tobacco, and aviation industry trade associations. Hill & Knowlton was the agency others wanted to emulate from the 1950s to the 1980s.

Birth and Education

John Hill was born on November 26, 1890, on a farm near Shelbyville, Indiana, the third of four sons born to Theophilus Wiley and Katherine (Jameson) Hill. Growing up on a failing farm, Hill graduated from the public high school in 1909. He worked for local newspapers before joining the staff of the *Akron (Ohio) Press*. After about two years there, Hill left to study journalism and English at Indiana University. After two brief stints in school, he quit and returned to Akron, this time to work for the *Beacon-Journal*. In 1913, he and a friend founded the short-lived *Chicago Daily Digest*; a few months after it folded, he and another friend began publishing a paper in Shelbyville. It, too, collapsed, and he moved to

Cleveland to report again for the *Press* and then the *Plain Dealer*. Hill married Hildegard Beck on June 19, 1916, in Cleveland; she was the daughter of the first conductor of that city's symphony. Hill's formal education apparently ended for lack of funds, but his entrepreneurial spirit continued to serve him well.

Early Public Relations Career

In 1920, Hill made a tentative step toward a career in public relations. He created a newsletter for local executives for the Union Trust Company in Cleveland, while also serving as financial editor for the *Daily Metal Trade*. This dual role led him to two important realizations: first, that many journalists were inept in reporting on financial news, and secondly, that most executives had no desire to deal with the press. In short, Hill identified a need for a "corporate publicity office," which he opened in Cleveland in April 1927. In 1933, he invited Don Knowlton to join him, thus creating Hill & Knowlton.

People who knew Hill believed that Hill & Knowlton's Cleveland accounts, including Union Trust, Otis Steel, Standard Oil of Ohio, and Republic Steel, had a tremendous impact on Hill's way of thinking and his approach to public relations. In his later years, Hill often reminded people of a banker or a statesman, and his quiet, conservative approach seems to have developed from his association with financiers and steel magnates, many of whom hated big government and organized labor.

Tom Girdler, Republic Steel's fanatically anti-union president, drew Hill & Knowlton into a wider world and into one of the biggest industrial controversies of the Depression. On Girdler's recommendation, the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) retained Hill & Knowlton in 1933, forming an association that lasted well into the 1970s. (Eventually this became the largest single public relations account in the world.) The agency developed institutional advertisements opposing union organization of the steel industry, defended Republic and other companies when the 1937 Little Steel strike resulted in violence, and represented the AISI during the Senate hearings that investigated the companies' actions during the strike. A Senate subcommittee of the Education

and Labor Committee, popularly known as the La Follette committee (its chair was Robert M. La Follette, Jr., of Wisconsin), even investigated Hill & Knowlton, because of a mysterious special fund that the agency kept on behalf of the steel companies. None of the companies that contributed to the fund received anything beyond a newsletter that all Hill & Knowlton clients received, and La Follette suspected the agency was involved with the antiunion “citizens committees” that had sprung up in strike towns, but the senator was unable to connect the money or Hill & Knowlton to anything illegal.

Although he often failed to see or understand the problems of the consumer or the worker, Hill had a strong appreciation for the power of public opinion. Because rational people ruled in a democracy, Hill asserted, “Public opinion is entitled to the facts in matters of public concern” (Hill, 1958, p. 63). Therefore, he explained, a good public relations program must be based on integrity, sound policies, and the release of information that the public could understand and believe. He was greatly influenced by Ivy Lee, whose 1925 book, *Publicity: Some of the Things It Is and Is Not*, Hill read and whose ideas he often repeated, particularly regarding the need for publicists to counsel their clients rather than simply taking orders.

Within a few years after its founding, Hill & Knowlton began to expand. Hill opened a New York office in 1938, moving there while separating from and later divorcing his wife. In 1944, he opened a Washington, D.C., branch to handle government relations for the New York and Cleveland offices. By November of 1945, the New York branch’s billings were double those of Cleveland, and Hill recognized that his future was in Manhattan. In 1947, he turned over all but 5% of his interest in the Cleveland office to Knowlton and established a separate agency, Hill & Knowlton, Inc. (Knowlton owned a small share in exchange for the use of his name.) Hill married for a second time, on December 2, 1949, to Elena Karam, and he adopted two children.

Hill & Knowlton of New York

Some of Hill’s Cleveland accounts—Standard Oil of Ohio, Warner and Swasey, and the Austin

Company—transferred to New York with him. The AISI and several other clients he recruited through the Manhattan office, most notably Avco Manufacturing and the Aircraft Industries Association, gave the new firm a presence in both the field of public relations and in big business. Although he had several corporate accounts, large trade association clients were Hill & Knowlton’s bread and butter.

The aviation industry campaign after World War II was typical of Hill & Knowlton’s trade association work. The Aviation Industry Association (AIA) sought a steady diet of military appropriations for its member companies, and it promoted air safety, travel, and other aspects of civil aviation. After the war ended, military contracts took a nosedive, so the agency focused on convincing the federal government to audit the nation’s air policies and its readiness for another war. When both Congress and President Harry S. Truman set up commissions to review air policy, Hill & Knowlton helped industry officials prepare their testimony and publicized the boards’ findings. Joining with the American Legion, the AIA sponsored a campaign, “Air Power Is Peace Power,” beginning in 1947. Working through the Aviation Writers Association, which had its headquarters at the AIA offices, Hill & Knowlton promoted the aircraft industry with journalists who specialized in aviation. Interest in flying was high, and in a three-month period in 1947, local media devoted almost 5,000 column inches to just one portion of the air power campaign. The AIA also mailed publications about aviation to opinion leaders, such as college professors, state legislators, ministers, and business leaders, and sent speakers to civic club meetings across the nation. Thus, Hill & Knowlton coordinated the efforts of the media and political and public interest groups to promote its client’s interests.

During the next two decades and because of the stature of its clients, Hill & Knowlton regularly took part in important public debates. It represented the steel industry, for example, in 1952, when President Truman seized the mills to prevent a strike during the Korean War, producing booklets, speeches, advertisements, and more than 100 news releases in just a few months, both opposing the workers and disputing Truman’s right to take the mills. In December 1953, the agency acquired

a new account, a group of tobacco executives responding to a series of medical studies that linked smoking to lung cancer and other diseases. Hill & Knowlton created the Tobacco Industry Research Committee, funded by tobacco farmers and cigarette manufacturers, to distribute grants for research on smoking and health and to promote the idea that the link between smoking and disease was not proven. The agency successfully convinced reporters to include its statements alongside those of doctors who condemned the industry's products in a growing body of evidence indicting cigarettes. (In 1969, Hill & Knowlton quietly resigned the account as its influence on industry policy dwindled.) Finally, the natural gas controversy of 1956 represented a major defeat for Hill & Knowlton, despite its best efforts. The agency mobilized corporations and individuals to fight federal regulation of the industry. It appeared to be headed for success after a favorable vote in the U.S. House of Representatives when a U.S. senator announced that two gas industry lawyers (not affiliated with Hill & Knowlton) had tried to bribe him. The bill still passed the Senate, but President Dwight D. Eisenhower refused to sign it because of the scandal. Hill & Knowlton also represented the pharmaceutical industry during the Kefauver hearings of the early 1960s, which were followed closely by many citizens as well as business leaders.

International Public Relations

Several factors contributed to Hill & Knowlton's move into international public relations. First, John Hill toured Europe for the first time in 1952, when he was 62 years old. He detected extraordinary potential for the field of public relations there. Additionally, several of the agency's corporate accounts, including Procter and Gamble and Texaco, were multinationals with interests all over the world, and Hill needed a new challenge. Hill & Knowlton was the largest firm of its kind and was already buying up smaller agencies and absorbing their client lists. (In the 1980s this trend accelerated among all the large agencies.) By July 1954, Hill & Knowlton developed a network of affiliated agencies in Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, and opened its own office in Sydney, Australia. In December of that year, Hill & Knowlton

sent an officer to Paris to establish its international headquarters. Hill traveled to Europe three times in three years, flush with optimism about his new venture, but not until 1958 did the international office gain its first big account: promotion of the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels. Although Hill & Knowlton International failed to turn a profit for almost a decade, Hill & Knowlton established a firm toehold in international public relations and further enhanced its reputation as the leading public relations agency in the world.

Innovation and Growth

Hill & Knowlton was a public relations innovator in many other ways. In the late 1940s, the agency hired Price Waterhouse to apply cost accounting and modern budget management practices to public relations, setting up a system of standard fees and staff-time charges. (Most agencies rather haphazardly set different rates for different clients.) The agency also established stock purchase and profit sharing plans for employees, effectively minimizing turnover. It created educational programs for public schools and developed extensive community relations programs for companies and industries. In 1966, it established an Environmental Health Unit to work with corporate clients on pollution and other environmental issues. Other specialized departments included women's interests, press relations, radio and television, graphics, and technical writing. Hill & Knowlton also experimented with new kinds of public relations research and with the use of computers during the 1960s.

In 1966, the agency listed 42 domestic clients and 15 international accounts, many of which were prominent in national and world affairs. In addition to the steel industry, trade associations included the American Petroleum Institute, Lead Industries Association, Licensed Beverage Industries, and the Tobacco Institute (a successor organization to the Tobacco Industry Research Committee). Corporations included Allied Chemical, Ernst and Ernst, Gillette, Marathon Oil, Procter and Gamble, and the Union Pacific Railroad. It even represented the American League of Major League Baseball. Internationally, such groups as Alcoa, the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce, Hughes Aircraft, and World Airways retained Hill & Knowlton.

Hill & Knowlton's staff also made an impressive testament to the agency's leadership and reputation in the field. A 1963 survey of its talented employees showed that the average staff member had 15 years experience in public relations and at least three out of four of the employees had worked in journalism. They had written 44 books and had published articles in more than 100 publications. Hill himself wrote two books, made dozens of speeches, and wrote numerous articles for the trade press. Among his staff, three held doctorates; several were attorneys; one had won a Pulitzer Prize. Of those employed in the United States, their language skills were impressive: 33 could read or write French, 19 fluent in German, 18 fluent in Spanish, and others spoke Russian, Italian, Arabic, Greek, and Dutch. At Hill's death, Hill & Knowlton boasted 560 employees scattered among 18 offices overseas and 36 in the United States.

John Hill consciously set up an agency that would outlast him, designating a line of succession. Beginning in 1960, he gradually withdrew from day-to-day participation in account management and reduced his personal holdings in the agency. He retired as chairman and CEO in 1962, although he retained his corner office until his death. Hill & Knowlton's reputation for integrity and professionalism, however, was based largely on Hill's personal reputation among business leaders and other public relations executives. After he died in New York City on March 17, 1977, executives found it increasingly difficult to balance growth with ethical performance. Still, with its combination of size and endurance, Hill & Knowlton represented a new kind of public relations consultancy.

Karen Miller Russell

See also Lee, Ivy; Trade Associations

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HISTORIES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Scholarship in public relations history has made great strides in recent years, broadening and enriching its areas of focus. Building on the contributions of oft-cited scholars, such as Scott Cutlip, Stuart Ewen, N. S. B. Gras, Ray Hiebert, Roland Marchand, Ron Pearson, J. A. R. Pimlott, Alan Raucher, and Richard Tedlow among others, the body of knowledge includes studies of people, events, and organizations of significance to the field as well as theoretical and historiographical analyses. The literature also reflects an expansion beyond corporate and periodization orientations into more inclusive and culturally contextual perspectives from around the globe.

Corporate

Karen S. Miller (2000), in finding that the public relations history body of knowledge includes a number of studies grounded in business history, pointed to a growing body of work that is more inclusive of marginalized others, adds to theory, and contradicts some of the conclusions made in those corporate histories (e.g., public relations is not just a top-down tool of the elite, but also of the grassroots, bottom up). Scholars now routinely examine activist groups, nonprofit organizations, government, education, religion, politics, and professional associations, among others, outside the world of business.

Periodization

As early as 1941, Edward L. Bernays offered a version of periodization to describe and explain

the development of public relations. Others have followed with elaborations or alternatives, but most of them mark the work of P. T. Barnum as a significant catalyst for the field that then evolves from bad to good over time, culminating in a state of ethical and professional practice in the 20th century.

Scholars argue, however, that the effect of periodization has been to hinder the growth of the body of knowledge. For example, Oliver Raaz and Stefan Wehmeier (2011, p. 266) found that many of the models are not globally applicable but are “trapped in the paradox of the modern concept and the ancient beginnings.” R. E. Brown (2003) also identified this paradox and concludes that it challenges the idea of a progressively more ethical practice. Additionally, Margot Opdycke Lamme and Karen Miller Russell (2010) pointed out that periodization models are not able to account for considerations within historical time and place, such as terms employed by historical actors, activities that integrate persuasive tools, or broader historical contexts. Instead, they suggested that a theory of public relations history should be based on motivations (an explanation of the reasons that public relations functions are employed), after finding out that before 1900, the common drivers behind such efforts emerged as profit, legitimacy, recruitment, agitation, and advocacy. David McKie and Debashish Munshi (2007, p. 130) called for a departure from empirical influences and suggested venturing into other fields, such as international relations, as well as into other historiographic “pattern[s],” such as class, women, and postcolonialism, to enrich public relations history and to ensure more inclusion. Günter Bentele (1997, 2010) proposed five functional-integrative strata to explain how the field developed within broader social and cultural contexts: interpersonal, public, and organizational communication, and public relations as an occupational field, and then as a social subsystem.

Global

In addition to expanding beyond the corporate and periodization traditions, scholarship has moved beyond the idea that public relations is a distinctly American phenomenon. For example, in her study of 20th century public relations in

Britain, Jacquie L’Etang (2004) traced the field back to 1906 and to the national trade union for local government public relations officers. Her work demonstrates the value of departing from a corporate framework and the importance of integrating cultural, political, and socioeconomic contexts into historical analyses.

A significant effect of these and other approaches to expanding the public relations body of knowledge is an embrace of topic areas previously left unexamined or outright rejected, such as the relationships between and among public relations, propaganda, power, democracy, and religion as well as an embrace of methods that complement or replace traditional archival work, such as critical and qualitative approaches.

Another effect of this expansion is an increase in public relations historians, many of whom have an insider perspective and use this expertise to enrich the historical analysis of the field. Finally, public relations history is now in better alignment with professional practice. That is, scholars are not confining public relations to a mass-mediated function, but extending it to include a range of interpersonal, public, controlled, and uncontrolled communication strategies that are employed alone or in concert and that unfold in broader contexts within and outside of communication disciplines. Scholars are moved to consider global sensibilities, culture-specific contexts, inclusion, historiographical alternatives, and interpretation that goes beyond the descriptive to the explanatory.

Margot Opdycke Lamme

See also Antecedents of Modern Public Relations;
Nineteenth-Century Trends in Public Relations;
Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations in Public Relations

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HOLD AND HOLD FOR RELEASE

Press releases are among the most used public relations tools. They are an efficient means of disseminating information to the media and are relied on heavily. Generally, the information contained within press releases may be used by media outlets

on receipt. To make editors aware of this situation, the term “For Immediate Release” is found near the top of the release, usually in the upper right- or left-hand corner of the piece.

However, this is not always the case. In cases of sensitive information or to coordinate events and efforts, practitioners may send releases before they should be used to media. In these situations, the information is embargoed, meaning that a specific date and time are given for when the information can be used; editors are asked to hold it for release until then. To signify this, the term “Hold for Release” and specific release information, such as time and date, appear in either the upper right- or left-hand corner of the piece.

Most editors respect these requests and do not publish the information until appropriate, but public relations practitioners have no guarantee of this and have no recourse if an editor chooses to run the information before the embargo ends. Therefore, it is imperative for practitioners to be careful in releasing information that should be held for release. There are advantages to this practice as well. By sending the releases before the publication time, public relations practitioners attempt to pique the interest of editors and reporters. With the advance notice, the media can develop more complex and in-depth articles about the subject without the pressure of deadlines. With the advent of instantaneous transmission of news in today's society, it is thought that hold for release documents and embargoed items will soon be relics of the past.

Brigitta Brunner

See also Media Release

HOME PAGE

A webpage is a computer file that is stored on a computer server in such a way as to make the file available to other computer users via the Internet. Webpages can contain a variety of formats and types of information, including text, pictures, audio, and video.

Webpages are usually written in HyperText Markup Language (HTML), or eXtensible HyperText Markup Language (XHTML), and are uniquely

identified by a Uniform Resource Locator (URL). An example of a URL is <http://loc.gov>.

Not all URLs contain *www*, which leads to a minor, but important distinction. The terms *Internet* and *World Wide Web* are used interchangeably, when in fact one is a subset of the other. All URLs starting with *http://www* are part of the World Wide Web, which is a subset of all URLs making up the Internet. The inclusion of *www* does not make a webpage any more (or less) accessible. All URLs start with *http://* (the *http* stands for HyperText Transfer Protocol, the protocol needed to make full use of HTML/XHTML files across a network).

A home page is simply the top level or *gateway* page for a website. A website is simply a collection of webpages that are linked together. Creating webpages in HTML allows a person to program the links into individual pages as they are created. Any content in a webpage can be linked to any other content in any other webpage. Or if a page is particularly long, links can help a user to navigate the page more quickly.

Webpage creators typically use three different ways to let users know when something on the page is linked: (1) A different color can be used for the linked text, (2) the text can be underlined, or (3) both methods can be used. In all cases (meaning all data types, including text), when the mouse cursor is passed over the linked material, the shape of the cursor changes, typically into a pointing hand.

The presenting and organizing of information in a webpage format has both advantages and disadvantages. An advantage is that webpages allow a content provider to structure and organize information in a nonlinear arrangement, consisting of text, pictures (moving and still), and video. Because no two people process and consume information in the same way, a webpage allows users some degree of control over the order and method to receive the message.

This is also a disadvantage. Webpage creators have to be familiar not only with ergonomic issues (where to put what information so it is easy to scroll to and access on a page) but also with communication theory, logic, and information flow, so information is not “lost” simply because it was not put where a webpage user expects.

Another disadvantage is inherent in the technology. The creation of the HTML and associated

technologies was created with the idea of making the flow of information as unrestricted as possible. The technology is now exploited by hackers, who embed destructive code in a webpage and wait for an unsuspecting visitor to the webpage to click on (and activate) the malicious code.

Despite the disadvantages, organizations seeking to engage in public relations are wise to have a presence on the Internet. A home page serves as a communication channel that is available 24/7 and allows interested parties the opportunity to follow and communicate with the organization from anywhere in the world with Internet access.

Organizations can create and use a website to serve as a repository of information: annual reports of various kinds, collections of past and current media releases, and the history of the organization as well as its mission and vision. Financial information—for businesses as well as nonprofit organizations—can be listed and updated. Websites can offer pictures and audio statements that make the people of the organization seem less distant. Such sites usually include a location for FAQs (frequently asked questions).

There are also marketing advantages. Customers can acquire product and service information and possibly make purchases. A home page can allow open- and closed-end customer feedback and allow customers to ask questions about how to use a product or service. Webpages are replacing 1-800 customer service hotlines as the most useful means to make product inquiries.

Also, webpages offer reporters access to media releases, which are sometimes embedded with a password prompt that allows them to seek additional information about a story. Discussion areas (chat rooms) can be created, as a forum to discuss and debate relevant issues.

Michael Nagy

See also Community Reports; FAQs; Hotline; Media Release; Mission and Vision Statements; Website

HOTLINE

Hotlines provide customers and concerned citizens easy access to seek information or express opinions to businesses, government agencies, and

nonprofit organizations. Hotlines originated as 1-800 numbers to replace personal letters from customers who wrote to obtain information or express concerns. Savvy businesses realized that customers might wish additional information about products or services. So hotlines were established to make it easy for a customer to call an expert to seek advice on the use of a product or to solve a problem relevant to a product or a service (e.g., insurance policies). Government organizations and nonprofit organizations soon recognized the virtue of this kind of constituent contact.

This public relations tool started with the telephone and migrated to online status. For instance, today a customer is likely to find useful information on a home page, in a chat room, or through a “contact us” link.

Hotlines play a vital role in people’s lives. Imagine a young couple who is obligated to prepare a holiday meal for family members or friends—or both. Early on the morning of the event, for instance, the couple comes to grips with the reality that they have a very large, frozen turkey that is far from being easily and readily prepared for that delicious meal they imagined—based on their recollection of “Mom’s” holiday table. Now, the couple might call Mom. That would admit the truth that the couple is poorly prepared to deal with the realities of life at the holiday season. So why not call the company that harvested and sold the turkey? Or perhaps, it is wise to go online for advice. Should the package wrapping that plump turkey have a 1-800 number printed on it so that young cooks can talk to an expert regarding how to prepare that magical meal that appears so easy when Mom fixes it? Should there be a Web address printed there to expedite customer contact?

The reality of this type of public relations tool is that companies (and other organizations) are wise to make an easy and useful communication link with customers. Network theory advises that the easier information is to acquire, the more likely people are to obtain and use it to reduce uncertainty and feel a sense of accomplishment—self-efficacy. They feel empowered. More than merely customers, they are valued customers. Customer satisfaction is more than a buzzword; it is a commitment.

This public relations tactic can be used to ease communication with members, donors, activists,

media, employees, students—all stakeholders. Not only does the link allow for information to be sought but also for information to be provided and opinions to be expressed by the outsider. Concerned citizens need a number to call if they are worried about their health or safety because of a company’s operations. Government agencies can use the channel to provide as-needed information to citizens. At tax preparation time, for instance, the Internal Revenue Service can use this type of link to assist taxpayers. This is also a valuable tool for activist groups and other nonprofit organizations, by opening a channel for people to seek information and to voice concerns, and also can serve as a recruitment tool for new members.

If organizations aspire to be open, they need to facilitate that openness through useful communication channels. Organizations espouse the virtue of two-way communication but may fail to create a counterpart system to one-way flows. Another benefit is that channels of this nature give the organization an opportunity to conduct environmental scanning, looking for product- or service-related problems or community concerns.

Whereas the 1-800 number began the tradition of opening an organization to outsiders, computer technologies offer a 24/7 option. One such option is the frequently asked question (FAQ) feature at home page websites. Another is the chat room, where concerned citizens can voice concerns, see the concerns voiced by other citizens, and read the organization’s response. Customers can even find online instructions and video instructions to assist their use of and satisfaction with a product or service.

Online and telephone communication can be frustrating, as well as empowering. Hotlines can be frustrating when customers have to wait, encounter voices that are hard to understand, and be met with indifference. Online instructions can be vague and confusing. Some companies even ask other customers to answer questions in chat areas. So, the terrain of hotlines is not without landmines; cost-cutting approaches can be a liability rather than a benefit.

Whereas letters once were the sole link, this extremely impersonal and time-consuming process has given way to more modern and effective means for opening organizations to their constituents. Hotlines can help companies satisfy the promise to

be the first and best sources of information on all matters relevant to them.

Robert L. Heath

See also Chat; Environmental Scanning; FAQs; Home Page; Network Theory; Openness

HUMAN INTEREST

Human interest is a vital ingredient in making some event or situation newsworthy. Among the compelling questions journalists want to answer is “Who did something?” or “To whom did something happen?” The element of human interest enlivens a news story. A story becomes more appealing when it is about real people. It centers on their feelings and emotions. And, the same logic works for the human interest as reflected in other stories, such as the well-being of animals and the environment.

The human interest value of a story is captured in the news programming axiom: If it bleeds, it leads. If a story has human drama, pathos, it is going to satisfy audiences’ desire to see the human element of the news. News doesn’t just happen. It happens to real people—and animals. The ability of anyone with a cell phone to become a “journalist” only adds new challenges to this human interest element, including the possibility that events are staged or rights are compromised.

Meeting the human interest challenge separates the inadequate, adequate, good, excellent, and great journalists and public relations practitioners. Every practitioner is challenged to create media relations. Part of that challenge is to release to reporters the news and news tips that attract their interest because it is newsworthy. Newsworthiness is a strategic decision about the reader’s response, listener’s response, or the viewer appeal of the content and presentation of the news stories.

For instance, human interest is created when there is a news report that a child is missing from home. That story is made more interesting by noting the age of the child. A younger child likely generates more news value and human interest impact than an older child. The story has even

more human interest if the disappearance occurred under suspicious circumstances, if the child were blind, if the days are cold, or the child were lightly clothed—too lightly for safety given the lowering temperatures. If a storm were brewing, all those elements can add to the human interest narrative.

Thus, the details that enrich the drama of a news event add human interest. If a practitioner is trying to attract attention to some event, they are more likely to do so if it has human interest. Let’s reflect on a real-life situation. What if a practitioner working to gain attention for the grand opening of a department store or mall is confronted with a nuance, for example the mall or store catching fire near the opening date? The news releases are attempting to attract customers’ attention to the opening to increase traffic. But the fire diverts the grand opening. Announcing that the store or mall is about to open after the appropriate repairs have been made might be anticlimactic. What if the merchants pool resources and buy a Dalmatian puppy to give to the fire station that responded to the fire alarm? What if the merchants contribute money to a charity that is sponsored by the fire personnel and announced the gift? Would the new grand opening have more news value, more human interest, if associated with this tribute to the fire personnel who had risked their lives to extinguish the fire?

In the best sense, human interest is a vital part of each news story. One of the reasons people pay attention to the news is to learn about the impact of news events on people’s lives. For this reason, charities tend to build on the human interest, such as stories of needy families at Christmas, to increase the likelihood that reporters present the news and audiences receive the news. Used ethically with the best of intentions, human interest is a beneficial aspect of news and the media relations efforts of practitioners.

When used contrary to the above intent, human interest can exploit human feelings for no particular news value. It may appeal only to the darker side of the public’s interest in seeing something bad happen to people. This can be especially true of people who just want to pry into other people’s lives. For that reason, news reporting can focus on someone’s “dirty laundry” rather than on the positive aspects of a story. For this reason, celebrities

are subject to extraordinarily unfair reporting standards. What might be a family tragedy, such as drug addiction, becomes even more newsworthy if it is associated with the rich and famous. The lurid details and horrifying pictures can even be blatantly displayed in the tabloids at grocery store checkout lines.

Human interest is an important dimension of news reporting. Because of its connection with news reporting, public relations has a responsibility to understand and comply with the strategic and ethical dimensions of human interest as news value. Practitioners are guilty of unethical hype if they play up the human interest aspect of a story beyond what good judgment, responsibility, and taste dictate. Such self-serving displays of human interest can erode the news value of stories, harm media relationships, and turn off the public's sensibilities to fair and honest reporting.

On the opposite side of the coin, however, practitioners who represent certain clients must acknowledge that human feelings are a vital part of their stories. In some instances, such as a sensational kidnapping, a practitioner might try to protect the family from the prying eyes of reporters and audiences who want lurid details and raw displays of feelings that carry no real news value. By the same token, however, practitioners in service of the rich and famous must know that the public and reporters are likely to demand more details, however raw, of those clients who seem to climb the highest and fall the farthest.

Human interest is a two-edged sword of a news and public relations practice. It focuses attention on the human drama that is explained by narrative theory. Nevertheless, some elements of decorum must bring perspective to the personal aspects of

stories and the people who make them. The axiom that not everything is the news or newsworthy has substantial implications for those interested in human interest.

Robert L. Heath

See also Media Relations; Narrative Theory; News/ Newsworthy; Spin

HYPE

Derived and shortened from the original word *hypodermic*, the term *hype* has varying definitions; however, most of them are negative. When referencing its formal denotative term in various online dictionaries, noun-based descriptions like “blatant or sensational promotion,” “a deception or racket,” and “an intensive or exaggerated publicity or sales promotion” are the type of analogous definitions located. Other verb-based descriptions included “to put on, deceive”; “to market or promote (a product) using exaggerated or intensive publicity”; “to publicize extravagantly” and “to falsify or rig (something).”

This term has long been used pejoratively to emphasize the discrepancy between statement and fact. Public relations practitioners' inclinations to overstate their cases lead to such denigration, an aspect of their reputation that motivates leaders to call for more precise and accurate statements.

Lisa T. Fall

See also Flack; Paradox of the Positive/Negative; Propaganda; Publicity; Puffery; Sandbagging; Spin

IDENTIFICATION

In an age when people frequently communicate with a variety of organizations in their daily lives, the theory of identification offers public relations practitioners a strategy that companies and other organizations employ to influence audiences and build relationships with them.

Organizations engage in identification when they demonstrate how they share identities, values, and norms with audiences and publics. As so many organizations try to capture and keep the audience's attention, this strategic process of creating and communicating common ground is crucial. First articulated by Kenneth Burke, identification is a rhetorical concept that has become increasingly important in public relations as more organizations compete to garner the audience support needed for survival. Identifying with an audience consists of persuading them how an organization and they are similar. As Burke described it, "A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is identified with B" (1969, p. 20). Less overt than some persuasive strategies, without the ability to convince audiences of shared interests an organization's message is likely to fail. On the other hand, if people believe their views and beliefs overlap with an organization's, it is much easier to persuade them to approve an organizational message as that is akin to self-approval.

Identification is an ongoing process; indeed, public relations must help organizations continually show internal and external audiences their similarities

and shared interests. Companies that cannot maintain identification with audiences are in danger of failing. For example, without the specific connection created by identification the fur industry in the United States is struggling. It is having difficulty convincing people who value animals for more than their aesthetics that fur clothing is desirable. For some audiences today, then, creating identification on the basis of the values of status and prestige is no longer persuasive. The fur industry faces the danger that "if people find that old identifications are unacceptable, they can be persuaded, and even persuade themselves, to abandon them and adopt new ones" (Heath, 2001, p. 377). Savvy public relations practitioners must therefore monitor changing societal values, trends, and norms.

Understanding societal preferences is necessary, inasmuch as Burke saw identification as "compensatory to division" (1969, p. 22). That is, creating rapport between organizations and audiences necessarily involves showing the audiences how they are like the organization in question but different from other companies also seeking to establish common identity. Identification thus requires differentiation, where organizations must distinguish themselves from comparable organizations, arguing that their particular attributes and qualities are unique. Rachael Bright and Alison Henderson (2008) studied the identification strategy in the product and brand identity of a New Zealand-based vodka called 42 Below and noted that its use of "Kiwi" rule-breaking, humorous, and story-telling identifications helped it differentiate its upmarket vodka from its competitors (Absolut, Grey Goose, and

Sky). 42 Below's choice of identification/differentiation strategies were central in persuading consumers its product was distinct and desirable.

There are a number of ways public relations can attempt to induce identification. George Cheney (1983) devised three prominent strategies that flow from Burke's (1969) original formulation of identification theory. These strategies include (1) the common ground technique, (2) identification through antithesis, and (3) the assumed or transcendent "we." Each works to persuade audience members that they share similar interests. In the common ground technique, an organization links itself to stakeholders in an overt manner. Audiences are told explicitly that they share organizational values—for example, when a company says it has a "commitment to fairness." Identification through antithesis works by demonstrating and uniting against a common enemy. This strategy functions by an "us versus them" mentality, where organizations point out the differences between themselves and a competitor. Finally, identification is created through use of the assumed or transcendent "we." The use of this pronoun and its derivatives calls audiences to see themselves as part of the organization or institution. When we are called to act as Americans, for example, we unite on the basis of this particular strategy's evocation of our national identity. Differing slightly from Burke, M. Cardador and Michael Pratt (2006) looked at identification in terms of bases rather than strategies, arguing that people identify on the basis of relationships, behaviors, or symbols. Their categorization is helpful in understanding how consumers use an organization's products as symbols of self and social identity.

As people identify with institutions when they see that they are alike in some fashion, it follows that these various identifications also work to provide portions of a person's identity. In this sense, identification can function beyond just persuading a person of a message; rather, areas of initial overlap can filter out and constitute portions of a person's self-image. Indeed, as Cheney (1983) noted, "our corporate (or organizational or institutional) identities are vital because they grant us personal meaning" (p. 145). When a person feels he or she belongs to a certain group or accepts a particular name or label for himself or herself, parts of his or her identity become constituted. For example, someone who describes himself or herself as a

Southern Baptist not only identifies with that organization's values but also views society through this lens. In other words, it is possible to become consubstantial with an organization, meaning that both the organization and audience act together. If one is consubstantial with a particular group, he or she shares common motives. In this example, the Southern Baptist perhaps possesses the willingness to act together on the church's mission and goals (see Cheney, 1983, pp. 145–146).

In this way, individual identities can broaden collectively and form groups and coalitions. As Robert L. Heath explained, "Through identification, people develop various collective identities with which they govern themselves and form human relations" (2001, p. 376). Environmental activists, for instance, support the idea of protecting and conserving the earth. Such groups appeal to these values to gain new members and use this belief to differentiate themselves from other societal groups in order to encourage action. Whatever the set of values or norms, if one shares substance, or is consubstantial, with a given group, then that individual is more likely to take action when those values are threatened. Once again, it is clear how closely identification is connected to societal division. People can feel the need to compensate for the stratification of our society and its attendant pressures by belonging to one group or another. Public relations can rely on the identification strategy to help audiences fulfill their need to belong while simultaneously garnering stakeholder commitment to organizational missions.

These audiences are not always external to organizations, however. It is important for organizations to continually induce identification on behalf of their members to ensure success. If a person feels like he or she is a part of a given company and supports its values, he or she is more likely to be a happy and productive employee. Companies work to instill this type of identification in a variety of ways. From corporate newsletters, to team-building outings, to employee recognition programs, public relations assists management to recognize the need to remind employees continually of common interests.

Burke's seemingly simple idea of demonstrating shared interests is quite complex and forms an important part of public relations practice. In a variety of arenas, public relations managers help

craft identifications that support organizational functioning. The concept moves beyond public relations' particular goals, however, and is part of Burke's larger rhetorical theory about the nature of communication. Identification is a central theme in Burke's discussion of rhetoric. In his formulation, identification is a more prominent term than persuasion, as it broadens the role of rhetoric from that of a speaker delivering a persuasive message to one that shows how language, delivered through public relations and other conduits, constructs and reconstructs our realities.

In this way, identification can be broadly understood as a way of viewing society as a whole. Burke saw identification as having a powerful impact on society. He theorized that if identification leads to division, division then leads to societal hierarchy, where certain audience members believe that they are superior to others. This feeling then leads to what he termed mystification, where the audience questions whether some people are truly better, which then leads to victimage. In the victimage part of the identification cycle, audiences symbolically purge the guilt felt that they may not be as good as others by blaming a scapegoat. This feeling is followed by redemption, or purifying through projecting guilt, leading once again to a state of similarity and consubstantiality (Burke, 1969). Since Burke believed that no form of communication is exempt from motivation, he wanted to reveal the ways in which communication or rhetoric influences motives. Burke believed that rhetoric must investigate the symbolic means of ideology that can both create cohesion within a community and maintain divisions between them. Identification is this symbolic means.

The public relations use of the identification strategy should be viewed with caution. While capable of producing such powerful associations and divisions in society, it is important to understand how encouraging identification around a given issue or person can have more than immediate or short-term impact and can shape society as we know it. When applied thoughtfully, however, identification becomes a powerful public relations strategy. The benefits of showing audiences how an organization has their best interests in mind are difficult to overstate.

Ashli Quesinberry Stokes

See also Dramatism and Dramatism Theory; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Organizational Identity and Persona; Rhetorical Theory

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IDENTITY THEORY

Identity is a topic of interest in public relations scholarship. It is derived from research streams that position identity as a social construction that emerges through social interaction and that only exists in relationship to binaries.

This understanding of identity is rooted in social construction, the belief that the dialectic between social systems and individuals creates the categories that individuals use to define themselves and the categories that society constructs to define them. Thus, we have fragmented avowed and ascribed social identities. Social identity is defined by Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael (1989) as the pieces of one's self-concept that have been assimilated into particular social groups; as Blake Ashforth, Spencer Harrison, and Kevin Corley (2008) noted, "Social identities are shared by members and distinguish between groups" (p. 327). The categories that people use as boundaries defining who is inside or outside of select groupings depend on the members' characteristics. Bey-Ling Sha (1995) pioneered the

research into the avowed and ascribed identities of publics. Avowed identities are “self-actuated and self-defined” (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 171); these identities are cultural or ethnic associations and affiliations declared by an individual. Ascribed identities are those identity markers that an individual uses to perceive other individuals and groups based on their appearance or character. The concepts of avowed and ascribed identities are helpful in understanding multiple identities and how those are enacted when communicating with publics or when public relations practitioners are in organizations.

Identity and Professionals

Bey-Ling Sha, Natalie T. J. Tindall, and Ting-Ling Sha (2012) argued that professional identity can be considered in two ways: the “extent to which practitioners may identify with the public relations profession” (p. 77) and a holistic examination of the identity attached to the field. Regarding the former, Katerina Tsetsura (2010) explored the application of social construction to public relations thought and practice, finding that “social construction can establish a theoretical basis for understanding public relations as an activity and as a field, and for understanding the identity of the working professionals, the institutions they represent, and the people affected by that construction process” (p. 163). Regarding the latter perspective, B.-L. Sha et al. (2012) used B.-L. Sha’s avowed and ascribed identities to define the identities of the practice of public relations. Public relations via academic and practical avowed definitions is defined as a professional practice that is both ethical and managerial, while the professional identities ascribed by news media and critics to public relations are negative.

Identity Theory and Situational Theory

Constraint recognition, level of involvement, and problem recognition—the three independent variables of the situational theory—traditionally are used to predict whether information seeking or information processing occurs with certain publics. These variables do not fully predict active communication behavior, according to Linda Aldoory and Bey-Ling Sha (2007). One forgotten—and understudied—variable in situational theory is referent criterion, which consists of identity,

previous experience with the situation, and cultural norms. Understanding the cultural axes and identity continua that various publics operate under is critical in the creation of useful messages. Recent scholarship reinvigorated the use of the situational theory of publics’ abandoned variable—the referent criterion—to understand how culture can affect the retention and reception of messages, integrating the idea of intersectionality as a way to better segment and create messages for audiences, and how practitioner’s avowed and ascribed identities transform organizational communication strategies.

Identity Theory and Intersectionality

Through the intersectional prism, identities are viewed as intertwined social locations that “interact and relate to each other to create meaning and relevance in the lived experience” of individuals (B.-L. Sha et al., 2012, p. 76). In summary, intersectionality is the conceptualization of the mutual and inherent relationships as well as power between and among various social groupings and social identities. Intersectionality in public relations research, as articulated by Jennifer Vardeman-Winter and Tindall (2010), matters in the construction and implementation of organizational roles, organizational practices, and publics: “Intersectionality operates on multiple individual levels within the field of public relations creating problems of systemic, consistent subjugation of certain groups for the privilege of other groups” (p. 232). Thus, Vardeman-Winter and Tindall proposed that intersectionality operates within and outside the field and must be analyzed at multiple levels, including intra-industrial, organization-publics relational, and the publics/community level as well as others.

Natalie T. J. Tindall

See also Circuit of Culture; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Symbolic; Situational Theory of Publics; Situational Theory of Problem Solving; Social Construction of Reality Theory; Socioculture and Public Relations

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mythic potential, making them a one-word (or few-word) summary or orientation toward the world. The power of ideographs is that they invoke compelling cultural and ideological ideals, capable of shutting down debate and dissension.

Democracy, for example, is an ideograph; when most people hear the word they assume that everyone agrees on their meaning of the term. Although democracies are forged through years of struggle and competing ideological conflicts (every democracy is different), “democracy the ideograph” is used powerfully because it encapsulates a universe of meaning.

Other familiar ideographs, such as family, freedom, justice, and communism evoke similar reactions, which can shut down debate. No one wants to be “anti-family” or “pro-communism,” so when a communicator makes such references, they typically shut down debate and disagreement.

Michael Calvin McGee identified the concept of the ideograph in 1980 as a way to explain how rhetoric and ideology were interrelated. But ideographs have meaning beyond ideology. They urge audiences to agree with argumentative premises because ideographic language is so thoroughly instilled in their worldviews. To disagree with an ideograph, or equivocate, is difficult. Ideographs often calm rather than incite an audience, bringing people to a place of shared, but often illusory, meaning.

Ideographs include ideological words and phrases (e.g., “cancer,” “family,” “freedom,” “liberty,” “privacy,” “property,” “religion,” “freedom of speech,” “rule of law,” and “support the troops”) that have ideological associations and, on the surface, often seem to imply only one thing. Ideographs like enthymemes (logical arguments that rely on an audience mentally filling in missing premises) are difficult to argue with because the listeners or readers of the argument help construct the meaning for the ideological language from their own experiences and beliefs about the world.

IDEOGRAPHS AND RHETORICAL THEORY

Ideographs are a particular type of symbolic form used in persuasive messages. Their power in communication results because they have ideological or

The Symbolic Nature of Rhetoric

The strength of rhetoric is that it enables communicators to draw on powerful, shared symbols. Language is symbolic, and words only have meaning in relation to social construction based on their past uses and generally understood meanings

(denotation and connotation). Ideographs are powerful rhetorical tools precisely because they draw on socially constructed meanings. For public relations professionals, language tools like ideographs, metaphors, syllogisms, and enthymemes allow communicators to more effectively inform and persuade. Just as symbols have powerful associations and meanings (the American flag, a serviceperson in uniform), so too does language.

According to McGee, the ideograph connects language and belief. On their face, ideographs are ordinary language terms that seem straightforward and concrete, such as “family,” or “freedom.” In reality, however, ideographs are high-order abstractions (cf. McGee, 1980, p. 15). Everyone may implicitly accept that “family” is a good thing, however, when family is unpacked—“single-parent families,” “abusive families,” “dysfunctional families,” “same-sex partner families”—we realize that family has many meanings and the details are very important. For example, for a U.S. Republican, family usually means “between a man and his wife” and often implicitly refers only to husband, wife, and children, but not extended family members. For a Democrat, family is often constructed more progressively, and assumed to mean two married people (even if of the same sex), and often assumes a more traditional extended family where grandparents and perhaps even aunts, uncles, and cousins live under the same roof.

Ideographs are effective because of their ambiguity. Everyone believes in freedom of speech and religious freedom, but many believe that their religion is the only true religion or that only people in democracies are “free.” By invoking an ideograph, a persuader avoids the subtleties that can emerge in a debate over common ground.

Ideographs have meaning because of individual and group’s lived, cultural, experiences. “Free speech,” for example, probably has more meaning to a journalist than a blogger; however, both journalist and blogger were probably raised on a similar cultural diet of concepts and principles.

The Power of the Ideograph in Public Relations

According to McGee, individuals and leaders who speak for the people invoke ideographic language because of their power to describe a situation and

because ideographs like symbols and enthymemes, are so hard to debate. How can someone argue against “liberty” or “privacy”? Who would argue against a goal that included “stopping piracy,” or “protecting intellectual property”? Ideographic language is used precisely because it closes off debate. Professional communicators use ideographs because they force opponents to accept their characterization of events.

Public relations professionals are in the business of creating and negotiating relationships between organizations and publics. As such, they speak for many people, and have an obligation to inform and persuade ethically and effectively. As professional communicators, they are storytellers, whose job it is to represent client and organizational interests to stakeholders and publics. The ideograph is a tool for sharing a potentially controversial message in a fashion that quells debate and disagreement. Ideographs are powerful communication tools.

Michael L. Kent

See also Framing Theory; Identification; Identity Theory; Narrative Theory; Persuasion Theory; Rhetorical Theory; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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IMAGE

The term *image* is one of the more controversial and confusing terms in the lexicon of public relations. Image is both heralded as essential to an organization and dismissed as irrelevant to an organization. Edward Bernays condemned the concept while others embraced it, and corporations spend millions of dollars a year to build images.

The problem is that image developed a negative connotation for stakeholders. Image has a variety of definitions in the public relations and marketing literature. Multiple definitions are not new in public

relations, but the definitions for image often refer to very different topics. For instance, is an image the messages sent by the organization or interpretations constituted by the stakeholders? For these reasons the terms *reputation* and *reputation management* in both research and practice replaced the term *image*.

Early skeptics discounted the basic idea of an image. Many in public relations felt the concept was irrelevant because it did not affect public relations. Since an image is not tangible, a person cannot touch it; it does not really matter. Efforts and money spent on building reputations were considered wasted. Kenneth Boulding's (1977) early work on image suggested the opposite. He believed that people treat images as if they are real, as if they refer to and interpret something quite real.

Later research conducted in business found an image has significant effects on organizations. Images were found to affect a stakeholder's behavior toward an organization on the assumption that "perception is reality." Early research found images related to stock prices and employee recruitment. Images do matter because they can shape stakeholder behaviors. The problem is not if image matters; it does. The problem is in the use of the term *image* by organizations.

Image has many meanings, but focusing on the negative version of meaning helps us understand how it came to be vilified and ultimately replaced in the public relations lexicon. Carl Botan (1993) noted that the most common definition of image was that of a manipulated representation of an organization that lacked substance or accuracy. This can be termed the shallow use of image representing style over substance. An image was something that an organization or even a nation tried to fabricate. The image was based on what the organization said about itself, not what the organization actually did. Zeta Corporation might promote its environmentally friendly image in advertisements and brochures but do little to help the environment. Jarol B. Manheim and Robert B. Albritton (1984) documented that many repressive nations with "bad images" hired U.S. public relations firms to help place positive stories about them in the U.S. news media without doing anything to change their repressive policies. The organizations or nations "talked the walk," but did not "walk the talk." For an image, actions became detached from

words. The image became a projection that may have no basis in reality. If an organization does not like its image, it can simply try to project (manufacture) a new and better one. An organization is perceived to be whatever it manufactures.

This shallow use of image takes a very simplistic and patronizing view of stakeholders. First, it assumes a one-way ("magic bullet") view of communication. Organizations send messages to stakeholders and assume they receive the image messages and construct the desired image. People have many filters that affect how they interpret messages. It is simply wrong to assume all stakeholders interpret a message in the desired fashion. Practitioners must solicit feedback to see if their messages are being received as desired. Two-way communication is recognized as a much more effective way of developing accurate message interpretations by stakeholders. Second, this shallow image assumes stakeholders are not critical consumers of messages.

In fact, stakeholders do not simply accept whatever an organization says. Stakeholders do evaluate statements made by an organization and form images based on those evaluations, not just through what an organization says.

The negative connotation generated by the shallow view of image is a detriment to public relations. In a field where the focus is on building mutually beneficial relationships, the shallow view of image is counterproductive. Images became associated with pseudorealities and deception. This is an accurate portrayal because words without action are manipulations and inaccuracies. In turn, public relations became associated with building "shallow" images and "spin." An image is not what an organization did, but what it claimed to do. In time, stakeholders come to see through the image and realize the deception, thus damaging the organization-stakeholder relationship. Stakeholders compare words to actions to evaluate an image. When the two do not match, stakeholders then form negative images of that organization. When stakeholders discover Zeta Corporation is not environmentally friendly, they then form negative images of Zeta. Practitioners should not divorce words from actions in the same way as the shallow use of image.

An organization can operate under the flawed assumptions that stakeholders do not discover

their deception—image without action. True, many stakeholders have neither the time nor motivation to investigate every claim made by an organization. However, many activist and public interest groups carefully monitor and report on the behavior of organizations. Through the Internet and news media coverage, those who do monitor organizational actions can spread the word regarding organizational violations between words and actions. For instance, millions of people buy Nike products. A small number of stakeholders investigated whether Nike is living up to its claims of not exploiting workers in Southeast Asia. Activists do monitor Nike's treatment of contract workers and publicize those findings widely in the news media and Internet. There was even a lawsuit filed against Nike for using messages saying it had stopped exploiting workers. The messages were circulated widely to Nike stakeholders, including customers and shareholders. The Internet, especially social media, helps foster an age of transparency for organizations. With easy-to-find information, stakeholders can see through an organization, learn that it is transparent, and discover its inconsistencies between words and actions.

In so many ways the shallow view of image is outdated and inappropriate for public relations. However, negative connotative meanings for words are difficult if not impossible to shake. The deeper views of image that look at it as a process and premise it on matching words to actions is tarnished by the legacy of the shallow view of image. Hence, practitioners and researchers moved to the term *reputation* to reflect the deeper view of image. Reputation management moves away from the flaws of image. Painstaking work has gone into developing measures of reputation so that an organization can monitor how stakeholders actually perceive it and efforts to change reputation are premised on behavioral changes by the organization, not just through presentation of a new message. The misapplication of image by shortsighted practitioners resulted in the death of image as a functional part of the public relations lexicon.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Bernays, Edward; Reinforcement Theory; Reputation; Reputation Management; Spin

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IMAGE REPAIR THEORY

Image repair theory (IRT) was crafted to understand the communication options available to organizations or persons who face threats to their reputation. It is comparable to crisis response. Image repair theory integrated and elaborated work on *apologia* by B. L. Ware and Wil A. Linkugel (1973); on accounts by Marvin H. Scott and Sanford M. Lyman (1968); and on guilt redemption by Kenneth Burke (1970).

Image or reputation is a perception shaped by four factors: what the person or organization has said and done and what others say about and how they behave toward that person or organization. Image is vital because accusations or suspicions of wrongdoing have adverse effects: Corporations can lose business, politicians can lose support and elections, people can lose friends and attract hostility; and at times legal or other sanctions can be applied. Because credibility is important to persuasion, threats to image can damage one's ability to communicate effectively. Because people possess different information about an image, it can vary from person to person.

Image repair messages are needed whenever an image is threatened. A person or organization must determine (1) what accusation(s) or suspicion(s) threaten the image, (2) who is or are the most important audience(s), (3) what arguments are likely to appeal to the audience, and (4) which media to use for disseminating the image repair message(s). One cannot hope to successfully counteract an accusation unless he or she knows the

nature of the accusation. If there are multiple accusations, the person must know them all to decide which must be addressed (and to avoid ignoring an allegation). The audience and their beliefs and values about the accusation are key to developing a response that is likely to be persuasive. The message must be created and disseminated in a medium or in media that reaches the intended audience(s).

Identifying the audience is important. Consider a company accused of pollution. Audiences include the accusers (environmentalists, reporters), people who live near the facility, customers, stockholders, employees, and government regulators. The company must decide which audience matters most (perhaps prioritizing multiple audiences). First, some groups have more power over the company. It should be obvious that shareholders cannot be ignored. Depending on the nature of the alleged pollution and relevant laws, government regulators may be another group that cannot be ignored. Second, these groups have different interests (values). Stockholders are surely concerned about profitability; government regulators are interested in the level of pollution. Environmental groups and local residents might want the company to reduce pollution to zero; however, the law is probably not that extreme and completely eliminating pollution may be prohibitively expensive (bad for stockholders). The company must decide which audiences are most important to persuade.

Once the primary audience is selected, then the company must determine what the selected audiences know. For example, if the company considers government regulators as important, the key question is whether *regulators* consider the alleged problem serious enough to warrant action. If regulators believe pollution is at acceptable levels, image repair messages may not be needed for that audience. On the other hand, if regulators think that there is a serious violation of the law, the company needs to deal forcefully with that concern. Understanding a target audience's beliefs (knowledge) and values helps craft persuasive image repair messages.

Anita Pomerantz (1978) explained that accusations have two key components: (1) an offensive act must have occurred, and (2) the accused must be considered to blame for that act. If nothing happened, or what happened was not bad, there is no threat to image. Similarly, if a person is not to

blame for the offensive act, then there should be no threat to image. Of course, the perceptions of the audience are what matter most. If they *believe* the person performed a wrongful deed, their image suffers, even if the person knows the act did not happen, was not really bad, or that they did not do it. Of course, if any of these things are true, that information can be used in a message to repair the person's image. It is also important to realize that blame can come in many forms: if the person committed the wrongful act, or encouraged it, or permitted it to occur, or perhaps did not prevent the act (inaction). The key point is that a threat to image has two key components: an *offensive act* for which a person or organization is *blamed*.

These elements are important because they help understand the image repair options available. Options for repairing an image threatened by accusation or suspicion are organized into five general image repair choices. The first two, denial and evasion of responsibility, concern blame; the third one, reducing offensiveness, concerns unpleasantness. The fourth, corrective action, can address offensiveness (by repairing damage) or blame (by taking action to prevent the offensive act in the future); and the final option, mortification, accepts responsibility for the offensive act, but asks forgiveness (apologizes). Table 1 illustrates these options (some of which have several forms).

Effective image repair suggests that those who are at fault should admit it immediately and take appropriate corrective action. People want others to take responsibility for their actions, and they want offenders to clean up their messes (and/or prevent future problems). It is wrong to lie, and if (or when) the truth emerges, the offender can be vilified, not only for the original wrongdoing, but also for lying about it. Of course, lawyers argue against admissions that can be used against a company or organization in court. Image repair theory is concerned about how to repair an image; however, people and organizations must consider other goals (i.e., consequences for on-going or future litigation). Of course, those who are innocent of wrongdoing should use that in their defense. Notice that even the innocent can use corrective action. For example, in the early 1980s, Tylenol capsules on store shelves were poisoned, resulting in several deaths; the company introduced tamper-resistant packaging and then switched from capsules to

Table 1 Image Repair Strategies

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Key Characteristic</i>	<i>Example</i>
Denial		
Simple denial	Did not perform act	Tylenol: Did not poison capsule
Shift the blame	Another person/corporation performed act	Tylenol: A “madman” poisoned capsules
Evasion of Responsibility		
Provocation	Responded to act of another	Firm moved because of new taxes
Defeasibility	Lack of information or ability	Executive not told meeting changed
Accident	Mishap	Tree fell on tracks, caused train wreck
Good intentions	Meant well	Sears wanted to provide good auto repair service
Reducing Offensiveness of Event		
Bolstering	Stress good traits	Exxon’s “swift and competent” clean-up of oil spill
Minimization	Act not serious	Exxon: Few animals killed in oil spill
Differentiation	Act less offensive than similar acts	Sears: Unneeded repairs were preventive maintenance, not fraud
Transcendence	More important values	Helping humans justifies testing animals
Attack accuser	Reduce credibility of accuser	Coke: Pepsi owns restaurants, competes directly with you for customers
Compensation	Reimburse victim	Disabled moviegoers given free passes after being denied admission to movie
Corrective action	Plan to solve/prevent	AT&T long-distance upgrades; promised to spend billions more to improve service
Mortification	Apologize	AT&T apologized for service interruption

caplets even though it was not responsible for the poisoning.

Shifting the blame works best when the target is plausible and when the blame actually shifts away from the accused (e.g., President Richard Nixon blamed the Watergate cover-up on his hand-picked subordinates, which meant he was ultimately responsible). Image repair strategies are not equally effective (e.g., in most cases minimization and provocation are less effective than other options) and more strategies are not necessarily better than fewer ones: The idea is to use the evidence-based strategies that appeal to the audience’s beliefs and values. Some strategies work well together (e.g., good intentions and accident), but

others do not fit together (e.g., “I did not do it” [denial] and “You made me do it” [provocation]).

Any strategy can be used persuasively as well as unsuccessfully. For example, one can offer a heartfelt apology or a perfunctory/insincere apology. The former is far more likely to succeed than the latter. Furthermore, there are limits on the power of persuasive messages. Some acts are so reprehensible that no image repair message can earn forgiveness (although usually over time people tend to forget). It is easiest to repair the image of those who are innocent; it is (and should be) more difficult to salvage images of those who are guilty.

William L. Benoit

See also Corporate Branding; Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Image; Persuasion Theory; Rhetorical Arena (Crisis Theory)

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IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT THEORY

Impression management theory takes a humanistic approach to the ways in which people organize their symbolic experience. The theory descends from the symbolic interactionism perspective of sociology and the social cognitive tradition of psychology; its terminology is dramaturgical in nature, revealing its connections with 20th-century dramatism and dramaturgical theory. This theory is fundamental to the study of public relations because it explains why individuals and organizations try to control how others perceive them; it also describes strategies such actors use to achieve this goal.

Although once considered as somewhat aberrant behavior or an unwanted variable created by social psychological research in a laboratory context, impression management theory has gained adherents in many disciplines, including communication studies, cultural studies, health care, linguistics, management, marketing, philosophy,

political science, rhetoric, semiotics, and sociology. In public relations research, the theory was initially considered under *organizational politics* and later as *organizational impression management*. It is now particularly important to public relations in its relationship to the concepts of *corporate impression management*, *image*, and *ingratiation*. Recently, researchers studied impression management through observational studies, experimental studies, field work, case or scenario studies, measures of individual difference, and meta-analysis of existing studies. Such research is guided by the following theoretical foundations.

Symbolic Interactionism

The theoretical foundations of impression management theory extend to George Herbert Mead's sociological works on symbolic interactionism, which declared that both individual and group identity is socially constructed; that shared symbols form the basis for communication; and that human interaction is by nature dramatic, relying on the creation and adoption of social roles in particular situations. This theoretical perspective establishes within the individual a dichotomous relationship between a *real*, underlying self (the *I*) and a reflective self (the *me*), which constructs a self-perception from observing how others respond to the individual's behavior. The influence of this perspective remains evident in the characterization of communicators as actors who construct personae that may or may not display the actors' actual thoughts or emotions.

Social Cognition

Daniel T. Gilbert explained how the social cognitive tradition of psychology further developed impression management theory, elaborating its connections with *attribution theory* and *implicit personality theory*. Attribution theory posits that people infer unknown personality traits and dispositions about others based on behaviors they observe. From extensive experience with the organization of human personalities, observers construct an implicit personality for the other and evaluate the other's behavior accordingly. Impression management is the complement to attribution, claiming that the individual actor works consciously

and unconsciously to shape the behaviors that others see and, thus, the implicit personality that they construct.

Dramatism and Dramaturgical Theory

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman (1959) introduced the metaphor of staged performance, which has remained a dominant metaphor for the theory: Individuals are actors who attempt to control both the situation or scene and the content of the interactions in which they participate. Observers, including interlocutors, are considered members of an audience. The actor is responsible for two kinds of signaling in interaction: that which is *given*, and that which is *given off*. First, the actor actively (though not always consciously) constructs a *front*, or persona, using verbal and nonverbal cues to project either the image of reality that he or she wants the audience to accept, or the image of reality that the audience expects to see. Second, the actor *gives off* expressions that are read and attributed to personality characteristics. Goffman proposed that individuals rely heavily on their own expectations and the expectations of those with whom they communicate to determine what behaviors are appropriate to a given scene. Such performances ceremonially confirm socially accredited values in ways similar to sociologist Émile Durkheim's descriptions of ceremony. Furthermore, to maintain tact and to respect how others present themselves, actors and audiences must be aware of cultural differences.

The scene of a performance, termed *region* by Goffman, refers to the physical, relational, temporal, and situational elements that shape an interaction and, to some extent, determine the acceptability of specific fronts and behaviors. The *front region* refers to the activity that is considered on stage, or visible to a particular audience; for example, Goffman discusses the activity of making work, or of merely looking busy at work in case one is being watched by one's supervisor. In the *back region* or backstage, facts and behaviors of a person that are carefully controlled in the front region are released. For instance, instructors may put on their sunny "instructor faces" for the duration of the class they teach; when they return to their offices and close the door, they are in their

back regions, where they can safely mutter about their students' deficiencies. A location can function as front region for one type of interaction and as back region for another; of course, lapses, errors, and other actors often disrupt the drama.

One of the most interesting problems occurs when the actor cannot protect a desired impression from being exposed to more than one audience at once. At such times, the actor is faced with the challenge of protecting what Kenneth Burke (1969) and Émile Durkheim (1965) describe as the *mystery* of the front—the preservation of an actor's control over the front region. The performer must actively manage the collision of conflicting impressions by employing defensive or protective impression management strategies, one of two categories of strategic impression management. Protective strategies identified by Goffman include shifting to a team performance in which the actor and the onetime audience become a new front region for the benefit of an intruder; a second strategy is to invite intruders into the existing performance as if they belonged there. Neither technique is very effective; acquisitive impression management strategies, or attempts to establish initially favorable impressions, often present a better alternative.

The dramaturgical metaphor of impression management applies to group interaction as well as one-on-one communication. The team, which may consist of a married couple, a social group, a company, or a public relations group, is an entity in and of itself, although many individual performers may comprise it. Teams are defined by two kinds of reciprocal bonds: that of dependence, where all members must actively contribute to a social performance, and that of familiarity, or the recognition of in-group/out-group boundaries. Beyond these boundaries, certain behaviors may jeopardize the performance, the group identity, or the scene itself. Acting together, the team members establish a group identity that becomes one mask, one representation of self, one public (and private) identity.

Increasingly, scholars are investigating the relationship between impression management and self-deception. Researchers are also investigating impression management strategies in both verbal and visual online environments, especially blogs and social networking sites. Of particular interest is the relationship between impression management and online privacy.

Critiques of Impression Management Theory

Like Goffman, who takes a somewhat skeptical perspective of the practices actors employ to safeguard the fronts they build, some scholars have taken a *restrictive view* of the process of impression management, describing it as the intentional deception or manipulation of others by hiding or pretending to be something one is not. However, other scholars take the *expansive view* of impression management, arguing that the mystery in the drama is a necessary element of both personality and relationship. The theory of impression management introduced in Goffman's 1959 *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* is based on the very human desire to avoid embarrassment when the impression a performer offers is challenged. However, the dramaturgical metaphor employed in this theory translates semi-unconscious action into explicit intention. While the metaphor serves as a helpful frame for conceptualizing how people control their self-exposure, it implies that individual actors, as well as actors in a team, are fully cognizant of what they do to shape how others see them, as well as why they do so. If taken literally, the intent and awareness implied by the dramaturgical framework is seriously overstated.

Rachel Martin Harlow

See also Attribution Theory; Corporate Branding; Identification; Image; Organizational Identity and Persona; Symbolic Interactionism Theory

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IMPRESSIONS

Impressions are a measure of how many potential readers, viewers, or listeners were reached by a placement in media. It is usually equivalent to the circulation number in the case of print (i.e., newspaper, magazine), estimated viewership or listeners for broadcast outlets (i.e., television, radio) or page views and unique visitors for Web content (i.e., online publications, blogs). With broadcast, audience numbers vary depending on the time of the newscast. With print, pass-along rates are often extrapolated and taken into account in addition to merely relying on circulation numbers. Most good media databases (i.e., Vocus, Cision) and monitoring services (i.e., TV Eyes, Critical Mention) provide these numbers. As no service is completely comprehensive, directing inquiries directly to the media outlets is sometimes still necessary. Media buyers also are a good source for these numbers.

The exact number of people reached can never really be determined, but impressions are the closest estimates available, keeping in mind they do not gauge an actual “impression” that individual audience members retain of the media clip and its message. Therefore, while impressions are a good tally of potential audience reach, they cannot definitively predict the actual imprint left by the coverage. Sometimes tone of the piece helps to determine the likelihood of the latter.

Impressions usually come into play as a tool used in the evaluation stage of a public relations campaign or initiative when trying to determine reach. While impressions are considered a good measure by many communicators, other professionals in the field do not consider it to be a valid account of reach due to its decidedly quantitative

nature. A more qualitative approach comes through measuring the actual effect of a news clip, such as inquiries received as a direct result, or measuring a marked improvement in sales, business, or traffic. However, from a statistical standpoint impressions are a useful evaluation tool as potential audience numbers can give practitioners an idea of reach, with higher numbers increasing the odds of message dissemination.

Lisa K. Merkl

See also Clip (News Clip) and Clipping Services; Evaluative Research; Gross Impressions; Impression Management Theory; Public Relations Research; Reputation Management

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INDIA, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

No adequate discussion of public relations in India can occur without reference to the country's rich cultural mosaic. India is a prime example of "unity in diversity"—a vast and varied land with a rich history of over 5,000 years. The Indus Valley civilization (ca. 3300–1300 BC), considered one of the world's oldest urban civilizations, flourished in the Indian subcontinent (today's northwestern India and Pakistan). Although noted for Hinduism, India is also the birthplace of Buddhism, Jainism, and

Sikhism. After Indonesia and Pakistan, it has the third largest population of Muslims. In addition, India is home to several hundred languages—13 of which are used by more than 1% of the country's 1.2 billion population and 29 languages are spoken by at least 1 million people. Therefore, practicing public relations in a country that is as large and as culturally diverse as India is a challenge of great proportions. Several phases of public relations are discernible in India.

Pre-Independence India

No complete description of public relations in India is complete without recognizing the evidence of similar public relations activities in the land during pre-biblical times. The Indus valley civilization provides archaeological evidence of terra-cotta and stone seals that the rulers used as tools of communication. Religion provided an opportunity for the use of communication as seen in the founders of Jainism and Buddhism. In fact, an ardent Buddhist—Emperor Asoka—used rock and pillar edicts during his reign (304–232 BC) to propagate Buddhism and publicize social and moral precepts, including social and animal welfare programs. *The Bhagavad Gita*, a guide that offers 18 chapters on how individuals should behave in society, is said to have been given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna between the 5th and 2nd century BC. Further along in history, Adi Shankaracharya used oratory and debates (Ashtavadhana) to propagate his Advaita philosophy between AD 788 and 820.

However, much of India's modern public relations activity occurred in the 20th century. The struggle for independence was a powerful social movement that used many of the principles of public relations and some of the most sophisticated means of communication and persuasion, including the use of vernacular press, effective oratory, and nonviolent protests. The British colonialists established the Central Bureau of Public Information in 1923, which after independence became the precursor to the Press Information Bureau. Publicity was the principal focus of this bureau. A few years prior to independence, corporations like the Tatas, Dunlop, Unilever (Hindustan Lever), and Philips engaged in outreach initiatives using public relations.

Post-Independence India

Independence from British imperial rule in 1947 led to the contentious breakup of the Indian subcontinent into India, West Pakistan, and East Pakistan (East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971). After independence, India adopted a more socialistic model for development, instituting Soviet-style five-year plans. The emphasis was on establishing a large public sector whose primary purpose was national development. In turn, this led to what can be called public sector public relations, reflecting the political and economic philosophies of the prosocialist leaders of the day. The central and state governments set up large departments of “information and publicity” that were recognized as the public relations arms of government. The work of these departments often blurred the boundaries between public relations for national development and publicity aimed at maintaining the status quo by engaging almost exclusively on personalities rather than policies of political leaders of the party in power.

As a result, for the first 30 years of independent India the Congress Party remained in power until 1977, when there was a national backlash against the party’s authoritarian rule. The changing of the guard at the center did not herald significant changes in the economic or communication policies, as the new party did not remain in power for the full 5-year term. Through successive governments, public sector public relations continued to dominate the practice. The public relations person was perceived as a “fixer” or one who was in charge of *bandobast* (making arrangements), both within organizations and by the society. Seeking publicity predominantly through media relations was the significant, almost singular, activity of public relations officers (PROs). Not surprisingly, many early PROs were former journalists. The personal influence model continues as before and is widely used in public relations in India. Therefore, the connections that a former journalist brings to the profession are treasured by organizations since research-based, strategically planned, public relations activities are rare.

Post-1991 Public Relations

In 1991, India was forced to liberalize its economy, partly because of weakness in the economy and partly due to pressure from the International

Monetary Fund in return for financial assistance. These policies attracted more foreign investment and spurred privatization, including disinvestment of several public sector enterprises. India’s entry to the World Trade Organization in 1995 resulted in a further spurt in private industry and increased global investments, leading to significant economic growth. Economic development brought changes to the public relations industry, including an influx of some leading international public relations agencies assuming a presence in India. Many leading practitioners and educators agreed that public relations was finally coming of age in this vast country.

Public Relations Today and the Future

Looking to the future, the public relations industry faces many challenges if it is to break the past mold of merely serving a publicity function for organizations and elevate itself as a practice that is deemed useful to the diverse Indian society. India has been, and despite some Westernization in urban areas, continues to be a mosaic of cultures and languages and a diverse environment for the public relations practitioner. If communication is to be effective, this diversity demands specific strategies and techniques tailored to the culture. Well-trained public relations practitioners are needed in order to fill the communication gap that many organizations in India currently experience. In exclusive interviews conducted for this entry, a senior practitioner opined that public relations in India continues to be “mired in tactical media relations and event management.” Another senior practitioner echoed similar sentiments stating that about 60% to 70% of current public relations activity in India are “all about execution and little thinking,” about 20% to 30% are slightly better, and only about 10% of today’s practitioners offer “strategy driven” public relations that is “akin to more developed markets.” This practitioner also identified that public relations specific to the social media was the only specialty area of public relations that had appreciable growth in the new millennium. The array of media available in India, including 24-hour cable channels and social media (with 121 million Internet users and counting), justifies focus on media relations to some extent, even though the current preeminence given to media relations is open to serious critique. The level of literacy in the country rose from 12%

at independence to 74% at the last conducted census in 2011. Along with economic development, this helped expand the Indian middle class to approximately half a billion consumers.

Whereas such a big market might be attractive, especially to investors and corporations, one cautionary fact is that the Indian consumer is more discerning now than ever before. As a result, an increase in activism puts pressure on organizations of all types to be responsive to society and to communicate with various publics. Consumer advocacy groups and consumer forums are established in many urban centers and the federal government was forced by these groups to institute the Right to Information Act in 2005. As noted in the elite interviews by another senior practitioner, all of these elements necessitate that organizations practice more sophisticated forms of public relations: “[T]he industry has to spend more time and money in re-skilling their staff. . . . [T]his is a great opportunity for a top class program in India.” This quote typifies the feeling of many about the lack of good public relations education available on a wide scale in the country, even though it is estimated to be a \$10 billion industry employing over 100,000 practitioners. With at least two competing public relations associations in the country—Public Relations Society of India (PRSI) and Public Relations Council of India (PRCI)—and a popular sense that public sector practitioners have time for such association activities, the industry needs to coalesce around the common cause of developing a well-trained, robust industry that can face the challenges of operating in a diverse internal environment and the context of globalization. The words of one senior practitioner interviewed for this entry sums up the sentiment of most observers that public relations in India “is in serious need of a communications revamp!”

Krishnamurthy Sriramesh

See also Circuit of Culture; Culture; Postcolonialism
Theory and Public Relations; Power/Knowledge and
Public Relations; Socioculture and Public Relations

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INDUSTRIAL BARONS (OF THE 1870s–1920s)

“The public be damned,” a quote attributed to—albeit denied by—railroad magnate William Henry Vanderbilt in 1882, epitomizes the atmosphere of the United States during its industrial growth from the 1870s through the 1920s. The masses saw evidence to support such sentiments about industrialists who often believed that the less the public knew about their dealings, the better. Thus, grew a restless distrust of the “robber barons,” whose power and wealth were gained and secured for generations during this era, often through the exploitation of labor and natural resources.

The change from an agrarian society to an industrialized one was inevitable. As Scott M. Cutlip noted in *Public Relations History* (1995), in just 25 years—1875 to 1900—the nation’s population doubled; immigration and urban living swelled; mass production processes were introduced; natural resources continued to be discovered and developed; railroads and telegraph wires crossed the country; and the mass media of newspapers and magazines proliferated. These profound changes set the stage for the rise of corporate *public relations*, which according to Cutlip and others was a term first used by the Association of American

Railroads in an 1897 company listing. However, by this time, the railroads' use of public relations tactics was nothing new.

On the contrary, said Cutlip, it was this industry that helped pioneer the profession. The railroads owned by Vanderbilt and others continually used articles, murals, pamphlets, and other means to convince Americans to take the rails westward. In turn, these settlements expanded the business territory of the railroads. However, in order for that expansion to occur, investors had to be secured and transportation by rail had to be shown as safe to a doubtful public. Public relations tactics helped to do just that. By 1860, railroads were no longer seen as experimental, and by the 1870s railroads were enticing people to head farther west. Cutlip detailed how the Burlington Railroad fashioned a campaign that included the use of news releases, philanthropy and community relations, third-person testimonials, letters, and pamphlets to accomplish its business objectives.

In its early years, the railroad industry also understood the power of public opinion and, thus, the power of the press. Cutlip reported that the industry provided free passes to reporters and established a trade journal and Bureau of Information, which served to educate the “press, legislators and the public, as to the true relations of the railway interest to the public welfare” (1995, p. 143). Long before the *two-step flow* theory was posited, the industry used opinion leaders to help win public favor for such issues as route selection, freight and passenger business, and investors. Railroads also made use of speeches, letters of endorsement, and staff-written articles for popular periodicals.

However, railroad industrialists of this era also faced public relations challenges. Indeed, it was the public perception of *us* versus *them*—exemplified by the publicity surrounding examples of the arrogance and greed that were pursued instead of the ideals of humanity and public good—that fostered recognition by giants of industry that the public could not be ignored. For example, the passage of the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 was the direct result of the pressure exerted (by a group called the National Grange) after the fallout from Vanderbilt's alleged “public be damned” quote regarding express railroad operations' existence due to competition, not private need. Cutlip said

that this act, meant to stem industrial age excesses, resulted in the implementation of public relations programs by utilities and common carriers, because they were among the first industries to experience a public's wrath.

By the turn of the century, tensions between industry elites and workers were further heightened, and Theodore Roosevelt and his Square Deal populism was firmly ensconced in Washington, D.C. By this time, industrialists like financial giant J. Pierpont Morgan saw that courting the president's administration and legislators' favor was not enough. Public opinion also had to be considered.

Indeed, the power of the public to influence business interests was growing, and muckrakers like Lincoln Steffens, Upton Sinclair, and Ida May Tarbell exposed gross injustices forcing executives' awareness of the importance of public opinion and goodwill.

John D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil Trust were seen as the ultimate example of greed run amok at the expense of the nation. During the 1880s, the Rockefeller trust was the largest and richest manufacturing organization in the world. Rockefeller, who took pride in his positive relationships with fellow Standard Oil executives, believed himself misunderstood by the public and was largely silent to his critics. According to Cutlip, although Standard Oil also employed public relations strategies to influence newspapers and legislators and to plead its case to the public, these endorsements were often provided in exchange for monetary compensation. Following investigative journalist Ida Tarbell's critical work on the history of Standard Oil in 1904, which accused the company of strategically buying public goodwill and favors through charitable gifts, the Standard Oil Trust monopoly was eventually broken by a federal antitrust lawsuit.

The violent labor lockout in Homestead, Pennsylvania, in 1892 also served to underscore the seemingly unfettered power of industry. It was then that former railroad and oil man turned steel magnate Andrew Carnegie and his business partner Henry Clay Frick hired Pinkerton Agency guards and enlisted the Pennsylvania State Militia to help break the world's strongest craft union, the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers. The strike at Carnegie-Frick Steel Company ended with 35 dead and hundreds wounded from both

sides. Frick directed the assault on the workers, while Carnegie, once proud of his reputation as a friend to working men, remained quietly distant in his Scottish castle, allowing Frick to take whatever actions he deemed necessary. According to Carnegie biographer Harold C. Livesay, Carnegie never recovered his public reputation.

Although J. P. Morgan is alleged to have said, “I don’t owe the public anything,” it was Morgan who in 1902 called on early public relations practitioner Theodore Newton Vail to help save the American Telephone & Telegraph Company. Vail, who had also worked in the railroad industry and later served as general manager of the nearly new Bell Telephone Company in 1878, was named AT&T president 5 years later. During this time, Vail “made public relations and business history” (Cutlip, 1995, p. 198), as he was the first to formally ask questions about company relationships with the public and customer conflicts or difficulties. Vail subsequently initiated a formalized method for dealing with customer complaints.

Also blessed with visionary public relations instincts was George Westinghouse, founder of Westinghouse Electric Company. In 1886, he developed alternating electric current (AC), which would compete with Thomas Edison’s direct current (DC) systems that were already being sold. Edison and his public relations counsel, Samuel Insull, fought Westinghouse’s invention largely through a smear campaign intended to scare potential AC consumers. As detailed by Cutlip, Westinghouse was slow to respond to his competitor’s campaign, believing in the superiority of his product, but soon realized he must tell his story to the public. As a result, he hired newspaper reporter Ernest H. Heinrichs to work for him and to produce and distribute accurate information about the Westinghouse product to the press. The superior product did win over consumers, but not before communication about the product became a part of the company’s strategy. Three years later, in 1889, Westinghouse and Heinrichs essentially established the first corporate publicity department.

Although Edison’s product lost the consumer war, his public relations man, Insull, later became a pioneer in utility public relations, creating an in-house advertising department in his Chicago Edison Company. Insull used films, initiated bill stuffers, and developed an external community

publication “to gain understanding and good will” (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000, p. 119).

Indeed, the public relations industry grew along with the rise of the industrialists. Prior to the turn of the century, publicity and press agency reigned, although there were glimpses of modern public relations practice. In 2000, Cutlip, Center, and Broom denoted the years between 1900 and 1917 as the profession’s “seedbed era,” when publicity was used by companies to try to counter muckraking journalism, and it was the beginning of strategic presidential and federal agency press relations programs. It was during these years that industrialist Henry Ford probably implemented the public relations principles of positioning oneself or one’s company as *first* at something, and of making oneself accessible to the press. Ford’s mass production processes afforded him great competitive advantage, but he also recognized the importance of an early marketing strategy that involved seeking publicity, while many business owners still shied away from it.

It was also during this seedbed era that Ivy League-educated Ivy Ledbetter Lee traded business reporting for the publicity business. Dennis Wilcox, Philip Ault, Warren Agee, and Glen Cameron (2001) credited Lee’s “Declaration of Principles” as the point that ended the “public be damned” attitude of the industrialists and started the “public be informed” era. Lee’s principles extolled the value of providing accurate and timely information and access to the press.

Lee was also directly tied to the industrialists. Hired by railroad executives to help them win a rate increase after several prior failures by the industry to do so, Lee used a strategy of taking the executives’ reasons for the increase to the public to gain its support; it succeeded, and the increase was approved by Congress in 1914. This was the “genesis of the coupling of public relations with legislative relations to attain governmental favors or stay the hand of government” (Cutlip, 1994, p. 8).

That same year, the railroad rate increase was approved, the heartbreaking coal mine massacre occurred in Ludlow, Colorado, and Lee was hired by John D. Rockefeller’s son, John D. Jr., to help address the public fallout. Attributable to an attempt to break a strike, the massacre resulted when government troops opened fire with machine guns on the tents of the striking miners and their

families, after they were evicted from the company's housing. Led and supported by the United Mine Workers against the Colorado Fuel & Iron Co., the 1913–1914 strike followed an attempt nine years earlier to strike for better working conditions and compensation, which also had been harshly suppressed. The barrage of gunfire at the Ludlow tent colony killed 21 people, including women and children. John Jr. later testified that he hadn't known of the mine operators' intended actions, but public outrage was nonetheless directed at the Rockefellers, the owners of the company. Lee insisted that Rockefeller himself visit with the miners and their families and that the press be invited to attend as well. Lee provided the press with a fact sheet outlining management's view of the strike, and the visits ultimately resulted in new policies and better employee compensation.

Following this positive outcome, and because John Sr.'s negative monopolistic Standard Oil image was still embedded in the public psyche, the junior Rockefeller hired Lee to help instill a positive image of the Rockefeller family. Lee responded by making the Rockefeller family's philanthropy public and by keeping images of the senior Rockefeller—often giving away money—in the press. By the time of his death, the elder Rockefeller was a much-loved public citizen.

The seedbed years of public relations were followed by the World War I period, 1917 to 1919, which demonstrated the power of strategic publicity to enlist support and cull patriotism; this was then followed by the “booming twenties era” of 1919 to 1929. These periods also served to intertwine industry and public relations, for it was in the 1920s that communication strategies developed during the war years were applied to consumer products.

Arthur W. Page, one of the most prestigious public relations practitioners, emerged during this intertwining era, and in his time with the American Telephone & Telegraph Company, he helped define modern corporate public relations. AT&T's first vice president for public relations, Page believed that it was performance that drives positive public relations, not publicity. He also espoused the belief that businesses exist only via public support and that it was important for public relations to be part of a company's management team. These modern principles evolved from

the lessons of the industrialists who came before him, lessons that included responsiveness to the public, narrating the company story, accessibility, and operating in the public good.

Diana Knott

See also Battle of the Currents; Colorado Coal Strike; Lee, Ivy; Narrative Theory; Page, Arthur W.; Two-Step Flow Theory

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INFOGRAPHICS

Infographics (information graphics) are visual representations of information or data. Infographics draw readers into stories by making the presentation of information more visually appealing and complex information easier to comprehend. Another use for infographics is to reinforce important points and enhance recall. Large amounts of information can be presented in simple, even entertaining ways through infographics. Their vast popularity in social media and other online platforms led to the rapid growth in the use of infographics.

Infographics enable public relations practitioners to convey vast amounts of information, no matter how complex, in simpler ways that appeals to an array of audiences. Practitioners use infographics to package information in creative ways to avoid reader fatigue often resulting from text-heavy messages. Online tools such as Creately and Visual.ly allow users to create infographics with relative ease through the use of diagrams, graphics, and charts.

With the recognition that massive amounts of available data necessitated presenting that information effectively, practitioners across all organizational contexts use infographics to reach their publics and to meet increasing audience expectations for information presented in engaging ways. Infographics can enhance press releases and hold great appeal to journalists. Some journalists even argue that infographics can and should replace the traditional press release. Video infographics, information graphics in video format, are another way to present data and information.

A “good” infographic can be shared and may receive broad online visibility and search engine optimization; however, with so many visual representations available to information consumers, practitioners must find ways to make their infographics stand out in an increasingly crowded market. Experts recommend that before creating an infographic, consider if it adds value to the story, if it complicates or simplifies the issue, if it is complete, and if the information is documented well. A good infographic condenses and simplifies information and not complicates or overwhelms. Well-designed infographics convey the overall, big picture to the reader in addition to smaller supporting details with further analysis.

The largest independent news source dedicated to covering digital culture, social media, and technology is Mashable (n.d.). It identifies three major components of an infographic. First, the visual refers to design elements like color, graphics, and icons. Next, content can include text, statistics, time frames, and references. Finally, the knowledge conveyed includes the facts and conclusions that relay the overall message of the story.

Numerous examples of infographics can be found on the online organizational pinboard Pinterest on its Social Media Infographics board. A well-known, pioneering infographic is Brian Solis’s

Conversation Prism, which visualizes the social media landscape. David Macaulay’s (1988) book *The Way Things Work* reveals how everyday machines work almost exclusively through the use of infographics.

Although social media and other online platforms are broadly credited with the contemporary popularity of infographics, information graphics were used for centuries in tables and charts. Cave paintings and later maps are considered the earliest information graphics.

Elizabeth Johnson Avery

See also Graphics; Information; Social Media; Social Media Press Release; Social Networking

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INFOMERCIAL

An infomercial is a program-length television commercial designed to get around some problems inherent in the regular television advertising model. Among these problems is a viewer’s understanding that an ad is just that. As such, viewers can resist and even reject ad content if it is seen as shallow, lacking substance, and merely a self-serving message glibly or cleverly delivered to influence, but not inform. Countering such resistance, infomercials subvert the traditional advertising model in several ways. Infomercials tend to mimic the production values (sets, lighting, and style of delivery used by the talent) of television news shows. Sometimes, an infomercial has name talent (such as Billy Dee Williams and Debbie Boone, for various Time Life music collection infomercials). Infomercials also use an increased runtime (length of the advertisement), typically 30 or 60 minutes. Some of the talent is associated with the product, a technique

typical of the myriad fitness and health infomercials found on television and the Web. Some may even argue that programming on the Food Network is nothing but infomercials.

In 1984, the Federal Communications Commission removed restrictions on the number of advertising minutes per hour allowed on broadcast television, which paved the way for the birth of the infomercial. Deregulation of cable television gave the infomercial additional room to grow rapidly. According to *Response* magazine, long-form media billing for 2011 was just over \$1 billion. On average, media billing represents 40% of generated sales, putting the generated sales figure for 2011 over \$2.2 billion.

In addition to their longer format, infomercials, which are also referred to as direct response television (DRTV), offer the opportunity for a soft-sell approach. Combined with a long runtime and usage of a news program format, infomercials allow a more immersive experience. This reduces channel switching, and less reliance on additional viewings for message reinforcement.

Infomercials work well with mature (older) audiences that are often less tolerant with a high-pressure pitch. Because of their format, infomercials permit a more indirect approach, which can include numerous demonstrations of the product and its benefits.

The Federal Trade Commission recognized the power of infomercials. They have disclaimer requirements, along with specifications on the use of celebrities to endorse products.

In contrast to regular commercials, infomercials use production elements and a more subtle production technique. Background (environmental) information can become more useful. What the actors are saying is important, but what the actors are surrounded by is equally important. Music is often used extensively to set mood or serve as repeated punctuation for other audiovisual information. Set decor is more extensive and integral to the message.

Stations that run infomercials benefit in two ways. Stations that don't generate their own content have to buy it; and infomercials are a handy way for stations to fill broadcast time between 1:00 and 6:00 in the morning, when viewership (and advertising rates) are low. Infomercials allow stations to both save money by not having

to purchase content and make money by selling a time slot for the infomercial to run.

Michael Nagy

See also Advertising; Marketing; Promotion; Propaganda; Publicity

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INFORMATION

Broadly, information is the message conveyed through the use of symbols, signs, events, and any other communicative elements that create it. Throughout much of the past 60 years, this term was the most used and fundamental to the communication discipline; adopted from information sciences and theory, it was defined as a counterpart to uncertainty.

The process of informing in public relations involves the release of information and how that message is then interpreted and used by publics. Source, receiver, and situational characteristics affect the information exchange at every stage of the process. The goal of most information dissemination is to create, reinforce, or change an attitude or behavior, and the complete process of informing involves intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, and mass communication level considerations.

Public relations practitioners inform increasingly broad and diverse publics; thus, assuming a "message sent is the message received" posture can cause informational exchanges to fail. New technologies heightened audiences' expectations for information that is succinct, engaging, and culturally tailored. Further, information must break through the clutter to resonate with publics who often suffer from information overload. Understanding the audience and the context in which it receives a particular message is central to effective, persuasive information exchange.

Receivers filter information through unique frames of reference and evaluate not only the message sent, but also who sent it and how, when, and where it was received. Different affective states and cognitive schema factor into this processing. A central goal of information is to reduce uncertainty. Uncertainty affects both information seeking and processing in the audience. Uncertainty generally motivates information seeking to enable a clearer understanding of the situation and thus reduce the state of uncertainty. Too much uncertainty, however, may be debilitating and lead to resignation from information seeking.

How publics interpret and act on information they consume is of central importance in the process of informing, especially in public relations. For example, amidst a disease outbreak, public health practitioners may order publics to stay inside and avoid public places. High uncertainty levels may result in people leaving their homes to visit doctors' offices or to consult with friends and family. Those with low uncertainty may be more likely to follow protocol. Source and situational characteristics also factor in; the more credible the source, the more likely publics may be to follow directives. Even simple information, such as "avoid public places," can be interpreted differently by different receivers; to some, "public places" is the grocery store or school while for others it may be interpreted as any contact with other people.

Different audiences, messages, and situations dictate the types of appeals that best lead to the desired persuasive routes. Artistic proofs, or means of persuasion, include ethos (ethics/credibility), pathos (emotions), and logos (logic) and are used based on their appropriateness in the overall informational context.

Elizabeth Johnson Avery

See also Culture; Dialogue; Persuasion Theory; Rhetorical Theory; Uncertainty; Zones of Meaning

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INFORMATION INTEGRATION THEORY

Communication scholars and practitioners in public relations, marketing, consumer behavior, and public policy debates are interested in understanding attitude formation and change. To that end, information integration theory explains how information affects attitudes. "Information is the essence of the persuasion process," noted Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (1981, p. 339). Because of this reasoning, it has long been used to explain how people make decisions and therefore how such decisions can be influenced. It assumes that people are rational human beings and, based on their reasoning, are capable of making deliberate decisions about the information that is available to help make choices. Choices entail preferences and predispositions.

Beliefs are the building blocks of attitudes; combined they are the rationale for decision making, the essential theme of information integration theory. Beliefs about an object can be positive or negative, can be associated with varying levels of perceived credibility, and, once combined (the sum of positive and negative evaluations), determine attitude.

Theorists reason that in their attitude management all humans perform this kind of mental mathematics every day, all the time, if often unconsciously. One strength of this theory is that it can

be expressed mathematically to understand and explain how attitudes serve to help humans make decisions.

Information integration explains how attitudes are made up of multiple components that can variously be in agreement or conflict. It argues that behavior results from a collinear interaction between an attitude that a specific action is good or bad and awareness of social pressures or norms favoring or disfavoring it (Heath & Bryant, 2000).

Information integration theory “suggests that people form attitudes that result from a blending of positives and negatives,” or mental calculations involving a complex of beliefs and evaluations (Heath & Bryant, 1992, p. 15). An individual holds beliefs about an object, with varying levels of perceived credibility that can lead to decisions that are positive (support an alternative) or negative (oppose or reject an alternative).

Information may form or change a person’s attitude depending on the variables of valence (direction positive/negative) and weight (strong or weak). Valence relates to how information influences beliefs; information has positive valence if it supports an individual’s beliefs or negative valence if it contradicts an individual’s beliefs. Weight relates to how much information influences beliefs; information is assigned a higher weight if it is considered credible, likely to be true. This theoretic approach suggests that to change someone’s attitude toward something, additional information from a source or sources with the most possible credibility must be provided. Norman H. Anderson (1968, 1974) described this process as “cognitive algebra.”

For example, suppose you are considering joining a professional organization. An acquaintance tells you that membership is expensive and time-consuming. Other colleagues tell you that the benefits of active involvement in the organization include professional development, networking, and opportunities for leadership and career recognition. You explore the organization’s website and find that helpful publications and databases are available to members. Your supervisor encourages you to participate. You gained information about this topic from many sources, and all this information leads to your multiple beliefs about membership in the organization. The beliefs hold varying weights, and depending on your perception of

credibility of each source of the information, the beliefs come together (the average of all of the component beliefs) to form your attitude. That attitude, because positive beliefs outweigh negative ones, predisposes you to join the organization.

Such predisposing attitudes include affective or evaluative components, referring to likes and dislikes, as well as cognitive components that involve degrees of certainty, or the extent to which people consider something as likely to be true. For that reason, information integration theory argues that attitudes “provide consistency for judgment and behavior because they reflect patterns of preferences that each individual has established” (Heath & Bryant, 2000, p. 202). This approach argues that attitudes “are not singular or undifferentiated evaluative cognitions. Rather, each attitude is the product of several affective (evaluative) qualities that are combined into a single expression of opinion” (Heath & Bryant, 2000, p. 202).

Information integration builds on expectancy-value theory, which reasons that humans seek to maximize positive outcomes and avoid negative ones in their decision making. For that reason, attitudes are evaluative and predictive. Expressed mathematically, the individual’s attitude toward something is equal to the sum of each belief about it, multiplied by the evaluation of the belief. The theory allows for change in attitude to occur as a result of shift in weight of specific beliefs, or shift in valence (positive or negative) of a belief, or the addition of new beliefs.

In their discussion of persuasion theory, Heath and Bryant (2000) adopted the classic view of Fishbein and Ajzen that beliefs are “the building blocks of the cognitive structure, the information base that supports evaluative systems as well as intentions and behaviors” (p. 203). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) viewed attitude as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object” (p. 6). The theory recognizes that individuals’ attitude toward a behavior is affected by the subjective norm, or beliefs about what others think is a preferred choice. Thus behavioral intention is the result of attitude toward an action in relationship to belief about normative choices, the social expectation of others who approve or disapprove of the action and the willingness to comply or not with those expectations.

The theory of reasoned action also can be expressed mathematically—a person's behavioral intention is equal to the sum of a belief that the behavior gives a positive result, multiplied by how strongly the person believes, plus the person's perception of social expectation, multiplied by how important social acceptance is to the person. In other words, behavioral intent is equal to the attitude toward the behavior times the weight of the attitude plus the subjective norm (expectation of others) times the weight of subjective norm. The theory focuses on intent to behave rather than actual behavior and posits that behavioral intention can be influenced either by attitude or expectation of others.

As information integration theory teaches, attitudes are joined by social forces to shape human's behavioral predispositions. As public relations practitioners seek to inform and persuade others, the theories of information integration and of reasoned action can be useful.

Bonnie Parnell Riechert

See also Persuasion Theory; Psychological Processing; Theory of Reasoned Action

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INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

An information retrieval (IR) system is (increasingly) a computer-based research tool. The purpose of IR systems is to provide references to pieces of information related to the particular inquiry. Traditional equivalents to IR systems include card catalogs and printed volumes of abstracts or annotated bibliographies. According to F. W. Lancaster, as quoted in the introduction to C. J. van Rijsbergen's *Information Retrieval*, "An information retrieval system does not inform (i.e., change the knowledge of) the user on the subject of his inquiry. It merely informs on the existence (or non-existence) and whereabouts of documents relating to his request" (van Rijsbergen, 1979, n.p.).

Information retrieval is a term with a long history and a changing meaning. In the past, an IR system was understood to be a closed information system that offered in-depth information on a very specific topic or area. The system usually included

a mixture of complete documents, abstracts, and bibliographic references. The closest current example of that type of system in existence today is an information kiosk with no Internet access. With the arrival of the Internet, there are fewer closed systems, and increasingly documents are created using computer-based systems, so more documents are available online.

A conversational understanding of what is defined as information further compounds distinctions. Information retrieval scholars like van Rijsbergen make a distinction between data retrieval (DR) and IR. In the introduction to *Information Retrieval*, van Rijsbergen addressed the attributes that make the distinction relevant. Attributes particular to DR include exact matches, an artificial language used in queries, and sensitivity in error response. The attributes for IR, as expected, are the opposite. IR involves partial or best matches, natural language use in queries, and a lack of sensitivity in error responses.

A Web browser is an interesting example of a piece of software that is capable of handling both DR and IR queries. An example of data retrieval involves typing in a specific universal resource locator (URL), with the result that the specific page of information associated with that URL appears on screen. An artificial language is being used (the URL), which if not entered correctly, results in either the wrong information or no information at all (matching and error sensitivity). Still using the Web browser, information retrieval is represented by the use of a search engine (e.g., Google). Queries can be structured in natural language (What is the temperature of the sun?), with (at the time of this writing) 68,400,000 results. The order of the results, barring financial and other external considerations, is based on Google's proprietary software, ranking the results by partial and best matches based on content.

Michael Nagy

See also Aggregator News Search; Analytics; Search Engine; Search Engine Optimization; Web Traffic

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INFRASTRUCTURAL RISK COMMUNICATION

Decades of risk management and risk communication research argue for an infrastructural risk communication orientation. While a more thorough explication of risk communication developed from numerous perspectives is provided in the *Risk Communication* entry in this encyclopedia, an infrastructural approach to risk reasons that individual, expert, and community efficacy are focal points for determining whether a community is properly organized to plan and communicate about various risks.

The infrastructural risk communication perspective features building and sustaining relationships that foster discourse leading to shared perceptions; communication and decision/action structures can and must produce shared meanings across varied and multiple constituencies, issues, and levels of understanding. Risk assessors and communicators realize that each key public makes an idiosyncratic response to each risk based on its unique decision heuristic. A fully functioning society is aware of risk or at least does its best to be aware of, assess, discuss, and develop plans tailored to particular risk-bearing communities and their individual and group unique risk decision heuristics.

Fundamental questions offered by numerous scholars about functionalism and public relations pertain directly to infrastructural risk communication. Is the management function of public relations and risk communication based on a model that sees system imperatives as best managed when publics (risk bearers) are safeguarded from the complexities of policy, management, and operational decisions? Or can public relations and

risk communication be a rhetorical process that facilitates genuine discussion and critique of policy, management, and operational questions?

Numerous studies have shown that simply providing information is not very effective in allaying public concern over a risk, with an over-reliance on the power of information while failing to recognize power inequities and compliance. Risk democracy is a central theme within infrastructural risk communication, and in association with various experts, individual voices of risk bearers ideally must be brought together to create systems and shared perspectives that appropriately assess, mitigate, and respond to risks that may be unevenly borne throughout any community or larger society. This move reflects the general trend of risk communication from the power of information within education to one of consensus building through dialogue based on access to the decision-making systems within the infrastructure of risk management.

The infrastructural risk communication approach builds on key psychometric variables, such as trust, control, and uncertainty, combined with a community construction of the meaning and the communication and management of risk through the lens of rhetorical heritage. Uncertainty governs the risk communication process. In turbulent times, uncertainty and distrust soar. Highly involved people struggle to control sources of risks that affect their self-interests. Information and knowledge become less relevant to the need to exert control because they are only loosely related to risk tolerance.

For example, the U.S. government became deeply involved in chemical-related risk assessment and communication processes in response to the 1984 Bhopal (India) chemical spill, which motivated elected representatives and citizens to question whether similar risks loomed near their homes or at their work locations. Addressing such concerns, federal legislators created the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986, Title 3 of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA). Legislators believed these acts would create a communication apparatus and strategic business planning process to empower people regarding estimated risks and risk perceptions.

Codifying environmental risk communication, EPCRA and other federal policies require companies to inform citizens regarding the kinds and quantities of chemicals that are manufactured, stored, transported, and emitted in each community. EPCRA's underpinning assumption is that as companies report the toxicity about the materials they produce, transport, and store, people become more informed of the level of risk in their neighborhood and become active in response to those risks. It is also likely that some of the motive for the legislation was to pressure the industry to adopt and implement even higher standards of community and employee safety.

Part of this legislation recognized the need to build community infrastructures for risk communication dialogue and decision making, involving all stakeholders, including risk bearers, in organized community dialogues. The act provided the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to mandate the formation of local emergency planning committees (LEPCs) across the nation. Later in the 1980s, the American Chemistry Council (previously the Chemical Manufacturers Association) advised its members to form community advisory panels (CAPs) or committees (CACs) as part of its Responsible Care Program. CAPs or CACs are intended to serve as public forums for dialogue about risk identification, assessment, and mitigation. Research, however, shows that these groups have been slow to affect attitudinal change toward the industry or create forums for real and effective public dialogue.

Numerous researchers demonstrated the need for multiple voices in risk discussions in the high-risk community studies: emergency management experts need to understand potential risks and crises, plan appropriate response protocols to mitigate damages, exert appropriate control measures, and communicate in ways that provide expert advice (mental modes approach to risk communication) that is sensitive to cultural concerns. Done properly, recommendations are more likely to be sustained rather than contradicted or dismissed by various publics.

Michael J. Palenchar

See also Crisis Communication; Issues Management; Risk Communication

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INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Established in 1989 by a group of senior public relations practitioners, the Institute for Public Relations (IPR) is the only independent foundation in the field of public relations focusing on research and education. IPR has distinguished itself by sponsoring pioneering research, textbooks, fora, lectures, awards, and other activities to enhance the professional practice of public relations.

Mission

IPR strives to improve the effectiveness of communications of organizations by advancing the professional knowledge and practice of public relations through research and education.

In accomplishing its mission, IPR helps

- top managements understand how to use public relations more effectively to achieve success with employees, shareholders, and customers;
- researchers focus on the most important issues affecting public relations and the outcomes in dealing with them;
- educators in developing the skills needed for future practitioners;
- the general public to appreciate the value of public relations as a management function and communications tool for use in creating better understanding of business, government, and nonprofit enterprises

IPR serves as a catalyst for creating and disseminating research that is usable by public relations senior management, agencies, clients, educators, and everyday practitioners.

To keep pace with ever-changing public relations challenges, IPR seeks to be the leading sponsor and provider of innovative, timely, and informative communication-related research.

Services

IPR sponsors practical research studies on cutting-edge topics. In addition to public relations research, IPR offers symposia, grants, awards, and scholarships to outstanding scholars. Recent studies focused on subjects, such as finding ways to quantify the value of public relations, and identifying current research in other academic fields (psychology, sociology, and anthropology), which offer significant new concepts for public relations.

Research

IPR sponsored more than 300 separate research projects covering everything from what public relations students should study to an analysis of how new technologies are affecting the profession around the world.

All IPR publications, awards, competition, and research are made available for use by students, educators, and practitioners, regardless of their organizational affiliations. This nonproprietary research contributed to breakthroughs in improving the teaching and the understanding of public relations. Other publications helped to strengthen the effectiveness of public relations in profit-making and nonprofit organizations. IPR's distinguished awards and competitions serve as incentives for students and scholars to build a body of knowledge in the field.

Public Relations Executive Forum

A major initiative of IPR is the Public Relations Executive Forum, a limited-enrollment professional development seminar designed especially for high-potential, mid-level corporate communications and public relations executives who report to senior corporate communications officers. Many alumni of this annual forum now occupy top chairs in agencies and corporations.

Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation

IPR also sponsors the Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation, a volunteer group of leading experts in the field. The commission exists to establish standards and methods for public relations research and measurement and to issue authoritative best practices white papers. This series of studies, called the “Measurement Tree,” are available without cost, as are nearly all IPR publications, on IPR’s website: www.instituteforpr.com.

Objectives for the commission include the following:

- To be the leading provider of information about and advocate for public relations measurement and related communication research and evaluation
- To instigate research and to be the primary source for public relations professionals when they want definitive answers on effective public relations measurement and evaluation methods and standards
- To represent the four pillars of the profession in the evaluation of public relations: the client sector, the counseling sector, research firms, and academicians

Sponsorships

“International Index of Bribery for News Coverage” is a study in cooperation with the International Public Relations Association to expose the unethical payment of the media for press coverage, which is the practice in some countries.

IPR is a cosponsor of a case-writing competition for students of business, communications, and journalism that encourages students to conduct research that demonstrates the critical role public

relations plays in helping to solve management problems.

IPR is the major sponsor of the annual International Interdisciplinary Public Relations Research Conference. Here, leading academic researchers and top practitioners discuss research areas of mutual interest to the entire profession. IPR is also underwriting a book of international case studies for use in teaching public relations in developing countries.

Textbooks

From time to time IPR sponsors the creation of new textbooks on special subject areas needed in the field. The latest example is *The Primer of Public Relations Research*, authored by Dr. Don W. Stacks, which won the “best textbook of the year” Pride Award from the National Communications Association in 2002. This practical how-to book, now translated into other languages, is the preferred research text at colleges and universities.

Awards and Scholarships

Each year at its Awards and Lecture Dinner, IPR presents awards for excellence in public relations:

- The Alexander Hamilton medal for years of distinguished service
- The Pathfinder Award for the best academic research
- The Master’s Thesis Award for the best student thesis
- The Ketchum-Lindenmann Scholarship for the best graduate research

Officers and Trustees

The officers and board of trustees of IPR are thought leaders in the industry drawn from leading international corporations, universities, and consultancies. Donors and supporters of IPR’s work are likewise broadly representative of the profession and welcomed from around the world.

Support

Research and education are so critical to the future of public relations that IPR attempts to

assist and serve everyone in the field with better programs and activities to improve the knowledge and professional practice of public relations. IPR is funded by donations from corporations, agencies, and individuals—all tax deductible. Some donors remember IPR when they wish to honor a friend or mentor, establish a special scholarship, need a custom research study, or are reviewing estate planning.

Institute for Public Relations

INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

See Neo-Institutional Theory

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Integrated marketing communication (IMC), also known as integrated communication, involves the synergistic use of the full range of marketing communications tools (including public relations) to promote products, services, organizations, personalities, or causes.

Origins

Marketers traditionally have relied on a “promotion mix” that includes advertising, sales promotion, direct response, personal selling, and product publicity. Although client organizations de facto have engaged in integrated communication for decades, marketers and advertising professionals in the 1990s recognized the importance of using these tools in combination more effectively.

Advertising agencies, in particular, were alarmed by the declining effectiveness of long-term brand equity-building strategies grounded in print and broadcast advertising. Meanwhile, clients began shifting dollars to tools that generated more immediate and demonstrable results: trade and consumer promotions, direct response, and cause-related marketing and events. Agencies resolved to coordinate all these elements for clients,

thus better serving clients while preserving revenues. Global advertising agency holding companies and larger independent firms quickly formed, acquired, or allied with smaller firms offering these specialized services—including public relations agencies.

Integration and Public Relations

In reviewing nearly two decades of IMC research as it pertains to public relations, Brian G. Smith (2012) observed that IMC can be examined from either an organizational perspective or a communications (mechanical) perspective.

Organizational Integration

The organizational framework focuses on structures, philosophies, and cultures that enable marketing and public relations to work cooperatively—in a “spirit” of integration. Various structural models were proposed for how these functions should be organized. Marketers generally expressed little concern about the matter because they view product publicity and marketing public relations as part of their charge. However, distrustful and threatened public relations practitioners (and researchers) considered any encroachment on their turf as “marketing imperialism.” Authorities advocate keeping the two functions distinct. Others reject the superiority of any particular structure—as long as the needs and concerns of various publics are addressed and not drowned out by marketing imperatives.

Marketers are typically adept at dealing with customers, members of supply chains and distribution channels, and consumers. Public relations helps establish and forge mutually beneficial relationships with these and other groups, such as employees, the community, and special interest groups. Public relations also helps marketing organizations address stakeholder concerns and engage opinion leaders to contribute to the success of marketing initiatives. Such influentials can be found in a variety of fields: industry and professional groups, finance, education, social services, government, nonprofit causes, advocacy groups, and media.

Importantly, IMC introduces complexity to communications planning and requires a high level of collaboration between units within client organizations and/or within agency organizations.

Communications professionals bring different skills, training, and ways of thinking to the process, and integration is often difficult to achieve because of very real organizational (political turf) and economic concerns and creative and tactical differences.

Communications Integration

The mechanical or operational framework addresses the process of integrating communications messages. Early IMC theorizing called for an audience-centered (versus activity-centered or product-centered) focus that was neutral in terms of the communications tools or techniques employed. Thus, Tom Duncan (2002, p. 8) defined IMC as the “cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven purposeful dialogue with them.”

Public relations practitioners typically are responsible for a wide range of tools that can be used in an IMC campaign. These activities include product publicity and media relations; speeches and presentations; events (celebrations, tours, meetings, conferences); sales and staff recognition programs; and promotions delivered through school, club, and similar programs. However, the assignment of other duties between marketing and public relations is murky and contextual. For example, tasks often assigned to public relations people might be assigned to sales promotion or direct response specialists. Examples include publications (“collateral”), displays, exhibitions, multimedia, direct mail, email and text messaging campaigns, websites/mobile apps, and social media. Meanwhile, advertising planners embraced tie-ins with not-for-profit causes as the foundation for large consumer ad campaigns. (Such image-enhancing efforts were once the province of public relations.) In the end, clients and everyone concerned should only care whether required tasks are executed effectively and efficiently.

Integration of Campaign Components

Communications or mechanical integration can be best understood in the context of a communications

campaign—an organized initiative to accomplish specified goals and objectives. Campaigns are common to both marketing and public relations. A full integrated campaign involves coordinating (integrating) three critical elements: (1) the tools and media required to achieve identified tasks or needs, (2) the timing of campaign elements, and (3) message consistency or continuity.

Integration of Tools With Tasks

An integrated marketing campaign involves various activities over its lifespan. Table 1 summarizes about a dozen tasks typically found in a marketing campaign (plus some special situations that might apply) and the principal tools commonly deployed for each task. Some are clearly grounded in marketing, while others are primarily public relations tools.

Table 1 suggests that an integrated campaign involves a wide variety of activities that involve marketing tools (advertising, sales promotion, direct response, sales training and incentives, and sales/customer support) as well as public relations (publicity, employee communications, events, issues and crisis communications, government relations, etc.). A key in deploying these tools is matching the right tool to the required task. For example, publicity and advertising are best suited to generating broad awareness, while tools like direct response and personal selling are critical when customers approach the action stage (purchasing the product or service).

Table 1 also suggests where public relations can play its most important roles in IMC: preannouncing plans, publicity, and events related to the actual launch, exploiting special opportunities, shoring up support in key markets or with special audiences, and enlisting support/endorsements from influentials (possibly including peer-to-peer recommendations via social media). Ongoing product publicity also helps sustain a product’s market share and to reposition or relaunch a product if required. Public relations is uniquely prepared to help marketers respond to issues and regulatory concerns and to cope with crises (including product recalls, tamperings, misuse or public misconduct related to a product).

Table I Critical Tasks and Communications Tools in an Integrated Marketing Campaign

<i>Task</i>	<i>Primary Communications Tools</i>
Alerting markets in advance (pre-announcements)	Publicity, employee communications
Training and orientation/motivation of staffs	Sales/customer service training, employee communications
Arranging distribution, briefing/motivating/training distributors, retailers, servicers	Personal selling, publicity, sales promotion
Announcing product availability (campaign launch)	Publicity, events
Building broad public awareness (following launch)	Advertising
Creating desire, interest, engagement	Sales promotion, events, demonstrations/sampling, interactive/social media
Sustaining long-term public awareness and interest	Advertising
Facilitating routine purchasing	Sales promotion (point-of-sale), direct response, e-commerce websites, and mobile apps
Facilitating non-routine purchases (overcoming objections, negotiating terms, customization, etc.)	Personal selling, sales/technical support
Seizing unanticipated promotional opportunities (based on current events, trends/fads, awards received, endorsements, etc.)	Publicity, events, interactive/social media, spot advertising
Providing heavy-up support in special or underperforming markets	Publicity, sales promotion, direct response, spot advertising
Enlisting support of influentials, endorsers	Direct solicitations, interactive/social media
Incentivizing/rewarding/recognizing outstanding performances by sales/support staffs, distributors, retailers, others	Sales incentive programs, recognition programs/awards, publicity, employee communications
After-sales customer/technical support	Consumer affairs/customer care programs, online and call centers
Maintain awareness, interest as product matures	Advertising, sales promotion, publicity
<i>Possible Special Situations:</i>	
Introducing brand extensions, add-ons	Publicity, advertising, sales promotion, direct response
Repositioning, rebranding, relaunching product	Publicity, advertising, sales promotion, direct response
Addressing public issues, regulatory concerns	Issues management, government relations
Responding to crises, adverse events	Crisis communications
Withdrawal from market (demarketing)	Publicity, direct response, sales force

Integration of Timing

Integration involves the propitious timing of messages so that campaign components roll out in ideal order and operate in concert. For example, it is critical that preparations for a launch begin and conclude in time to fully prepare key participants. At a launch, the custom is to lead with product

publicity to take full advantage of the announcement's inherent newsworthiness and media interest. Only then should advertising begin. Although publicity and advertising usually carry the burden for generating broad public awareness and interest, sales promotion tools and personal selling capabilities need to be in place and prepared to

exploit customer interest when people are ready to purchase. Direct response often follows publicity and advertising to stimulate direct ordering.

Integration of Message Content

Marketers seeking maximum effectiveness must ensure that messages carry common elements that enable audiences to make vital linkages to other campaign messages. These include consistent brand identification, spokespersons, and message themes or copy points (product promises, benefits, descriptions, and key facts). To the extent possible, executional features of campaign messages (such as logos, signatures, slogans, and graphics) should provide cues that attract attention, trigger recall, and facilitate learning and memory by the audience. The critical issue in message integration is consistency—speaking with a “single voice.”

Importantly, exact duplication or repetition is not always essential and might even be detrimental. For example, audiences often have expectations about the language and tone they might find in publicity versus advertising. The former is expected to be neutral and impartial, the latter is decidedly promotional: People think news tells, while advertising sells.

Although they can carry some of the same talking points and graphical elements, it is important that publicity does not read or sound like advertising. This same need for authenticity and verisimilitude applies to blog, social networking, and user-generated email or text message posts. Research suggests that moderate levels of inconsistency might actually increase attention to messages because audiences are prompted to resolve differences between a message’s content and their knowledge stored in memory. Varying messages within or across media categories are shown to enhance interest and avoid the problem of message “wear-out,” where people become bored and disengage from message processing.

In publicity and other forms of promotion where marketers have control of message content, varying the source, phrasing, and valence of messages can contribute to message credibility and acceptance because the message appears to be from a source other than the marketer. Thus, the challenge for integrated campaign communicators is to imbue messages with sufficient cues

so audiences can make connections between messages—but not overdo it.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Advertising; Communication Management; Crisis Communication; Involvement; Issues Management; Psychological Processing

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INTERACTIVITY (AUDIENCE)

Interactivity occurs when a receiver responds to a sender. Depending on the medium used, the level of interaction can take place in several contexts: one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many. Audience interactivity is commonly associated with new media technologies but not necessarily limited to that (e.g. an audience attending a public speech interacts with the speaker in many ways). Currently, however, the concept of interactivity is one of the fundamental attributes of new communication technologies that enable parties to exchange messages and otherwise engage one another.

Generally, interactivity occurs in two technological areas: human–computer interactivity (HCI) and computer-mediated interactivity. Human–computer interactivity is the interaction a user has with technology, such as a website. In public relations, human–computer interactivity is often concerned with a visitor’s ability to navigate through an organization’s website or mobile application, called the “user experience” or user interactivity (UI). Computer-mediated interactivity, is the interaction individuals have with other human beings through computer-mediated channels.

Social media is an example of computer-mediated communications in public relations where organizational representatives interact with individuals and publics through blogs, social networking sites, instant messaging systems, and so forth. Thus, computer-mediated interactivity involves the content of messages that individuals and organizations share when exchanging information about individuals, organizations, or activist groups on websites and social media platforms.

Initial conceptualizations of interactivity were based on the new communication technologies of the 1990s. The understanding of interactivity first focused on the technical features that allowed users to communicate through networked computers

beyond spatial temporal boundaries. Like other concepts related to technology, the evolution of interactivity transformed in tandem with new media tools.

Since then, two conceptions of interaction have emerged (Sundar, Kalyanaraman, & Brown, 2003). First, the functional view focuses on technical features that facilitate sender and receiver interaction. Examples of technical interactive features include hyperlinks and comment sections that allow users to send feedback to a site’s host. The comment sections on websites are *functionally interactive* for visitors (receivers) and provide feedback to the sender (the website host). In the second conception, the message-centered approach, *contingent interactivity* considers whether a message is the center of the interaction. In a contingent interaction, the sender and the receiver exchange roles. The sender becomes the receiver and vice versa. Twitter, for example, which is functionally interactive, becomes contingently interactive when the sender of a tweet receives a reply to the original tweet. The interaction is contingent on the original tweet (message) and the tweets (messages) that follow.

Interactivity plays a significant and often unrecognized role in public relations. Theoretically, interactivity provided organizations and publics with the same technical base. Through interactive features, publics are capable of interacting directly with organizations and with other individuals and publics. Consider, for instance, the current phenomenon of organizations engaging with stakeholders on Facebook and Twitter. Organizations respond to individuals’ messages posted on social media sites. These messages are not always directed at an organization but are identified through the organization’s social media monitoring based on its scanning for key terms. While organizations and publics or stakeholder groups have equivalent functional tools to interact, organizations are typically privileged with more resources to engage stakeholders on social media sites. Publics and stakeholder groups with fewer resources to monitor and develop an engagement strategy are forced to interact in a predetermined fashion. In the case of smaller organizations, interactivity through social media is reified differently than corporations. Interactivity with smaller organizations becomes linked with interpersonal interactions and bridges online and offline relationships.

Thus, interactivity comes with limitations. Often publics are dependent on organizations to respond to messages. While the technical features are available, publics and organizations do not typically have equal resources to develop or utilize these features. Additionally, even with the improvements in technologies to provide equivalent face-to-face interactive features, new media technologies lack the important nonverbal and interpersonal subtleties.

New media emphasize the importance of interactivity in online communications. Public relations often considered interactivity as an intrinsic characteristic of dialogue and two-way communication in the online context. However, interactivity is not dialogic, just two-way. Current enactments of interactivity do not consider the rhetorical aspects of communication inherent in relationships and real-time interaction. Unlike two-way communication, interactivity currently only encompasses the technical and the message aspects of communication discourse.

Adam J. Saffer

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Dialogue; Social Media

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION THEORY

Intercultural communication occurs whenever a message that is produced in one culture is interpreted in another culture. To understand the dynamics of intercultural communication, one must first understand the concepts of *culture* and *communication*. The concept of culture has many

different definitions. Each definition offers different views of how individuals interact with and understand others (Bardhan & Weaver, 2011).

Culture is understood within different paradigms; most traditional research follows an empirical paradigm. New considerations of culture and intercultural communication in public relations call for interpretive and critical perspectives. Regardless of the paradigmatic perspective of public relations researchers or practitioners, most definitions accept that culture is a learned collective or group process that is tied to communication. Communication is a meaning-making process. Intercultural communication, then, is all about making meaning of the messages from a different culture.

The 21st century is witnessing rapid changes in technology, trade, and communication. Both large and small organizations operate in intercultural environments. For instance, U.S. companies now have subsidiaries all over the world. Likewise, companies from other parts of the world have business relationships with the United States. Public relations practitioners must understand the fundamentals of intercultural communication. Practitioners, both in the United States and abroad, should become familiar with how public relations is explained and improved on by a consideration of intercultural communication theories. The ways in which organizations effectively communicate with international publics depend on a variety of cultural and societal forces that affect relationships between the organizations and the publics in the host nations.

Extensive research shows similarities and differences between cultures. The theory of *context* is foundational for understanding the various cultural differences that influence interpersonal communication. Context is most easily understood as the situation or environment that encompasses a communicative interaction. By understanding the context of the situation, the parties gain the meaning and cues that guide people in how to act and react in an interpersonal encounter.

Edward Hall (1984) identified two types of context. High-context cultures, such as those in Asia and Latin America, are characterized by communication that is driven by the cues of both the situation and the relationship between the parties. In a high context, the parties evaluate the environment and understand the meaning of the situation without

requiring many words. Personal and professional relationships in these high-context societies have very little room for negotiation. These roles (superior, subordinate, partner, member) dictate the tone and content of the communication; when people do not know each other very well, they rely on very polite and formal communication. In low-context cultures, such as the United States and Germany, the tone and content of the communication is literally what is being spoken or written. People from low-context cultures generally seek certainty in their understanding of the situation by relying on spoken words, written documents, and formal agreements. In low-context cultures, the meanings that guide people's understandings of the situation are in the words, not the situation.

The theory of context offers several applications for public relations practitioners. In the higher context cultures, individuals act out a particular role—manager, technician, or client—and little or no clarification is needed regarding tasks. In low-context cultures, public relations practitioners may need to ask more questions and seek verbal or written agreements.

A second set of theories for understanding the dynamics of intercultural communication is *cultural variation*. As one of the innovators of culture research and analysis, Geert Hofstede (1984) created five dimensions of culture, including (a) power distance, (b) uncertainty avoidance, (c) individualism-collectivism, (d) masculinity/femininity, and (e) Confucian dynamism. Using this list of variables as a starting point, public relations researchers applied many of these dimensions, with some fine-tuning, in qualitative and quantitative studies of international public relations. *Power distance* refers to the openness of upward communication across societies. In high-power distance cultures, such as nations in Asia, public relations practitioners may hesitate to express their opinions to their supervisors. The second dimension, *uncertainty avoidance*, refers to organizational members' tolerance of ambiguity. Uncertainty avoidance measures the ability of humans to cope with uncertainty. There tend to be more written rules, regulations, and stress in high-uncertainty avoidance cultures. Another dimension, *masculinity/femininity*, explains how work tasks are distributed across a culture and identifies whether or not these tasks are equally distributed to both men and women.

For instance, in a highly feminine culture like Sweden, both men and women work as pre-school teachers, secretaries, and nurses. A highly masculine culture is characteristic of any nation where women perform certain jobs and men do other tasks. The fourth dimension, *individualism-collectivism*, characterizes how people value themselves in relation to the larger group or community. Individualism-collectivism explores the relationships between the individual and the group or collective. Cultures with high individualistic values, such as the United States and Australia, tend to care about self-actualization and career progression in the organization. Cultures with collectivist values tend to value the benefits to the organization more than the interests and rights of the individual. The newest dimension, *Confucian dynamism*, describes cultures based on the ideas of thrift, perseverance, and the desire for orderly relationships with others. Denise Fernandez, Dawn Carlson, Lee Stepina, and Joel Nicholson (1997) conducted follow-up research in 14 nations to update the dimensions of culture. Their article includes scores for China and Russia that were both excluded from Hofstede's original data set.

According to Hofstede (1984), these five variables are present in all cultures, and the degree of their presence influences the internal and external communication of any organization. Cultural variation affects the practice of international public relations at two levels. First, it can influence communication relationships *within* an organization. For instance, the power distance dimension can tell us about the experiences of public relations practitioners with their supervisors or managers. In a study of Indian organizations, Krishnamurthy Sriramesh (1992) found that power distance can have a strong influence on the public relations activities. Later research by Sriramesh, Yungwook Kim, and Miyoko Takasaki (1999) identified the cultural dimension of collectivism as a major influence on Japanese public relations; the concept of *wa*, meaning "harmony," and *amae*, meaning "other's goodness," results in public relations efforts that create a "mutual solidarity" in the organization.

Second, cultural variation can affect the development of the practice of international public relations at the *societal level*. Nations that have high uncertainty avoidance are not tolerant of risk or threat of crisis. Organizations that operate in high-uncertainty

avoidance nations must recognize that situations that may appear to be low risk may actually be perceived as crises by members of another culture. Poor communication during times of perceived risk negatively affects public acceptance of organizational messages. Just as cultural variation is important for understanding international public relations, so too are societal factors. Different societies react differently to public relations messages.

A related intercultural theory with clear implications for public relations is William Gudykunst's (1995) theory of anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM). AUM theory provides a framework for understanding interpersonal, organizational, and society levels of risk tolerance.

Theories of intercultural communication are also informed by nonverbal communication. Hall's (1984) intercultural theory of time shows that different cultures organize and experience time in different ways. *Polychronic* cultures are those that believe that time is flexible and can involve doing many things at one time. In polychronic cultures, involvement in and completion of a task are more important than adhering to a prearranged schedule. On the other hand, *monochronic* cultures believe that scheduled events and timelines must be met. People in these cultures work on one thing at a time and stop working on a task if another appointment or meeting is scheduled. Time orientation can affect business, communication, and relationships. Effective public relations practitioners need to identify the assumptions of their own time orientation and be open to understanding and accommodating the orientation of others.

The trend of globalization creates opportunities for those with an intercultural communication understanding of the public relations function. Opportunities include the potential for public relations practitioners to lead their organizations during times of overseas expansions. The public relations function creates, changes, and maintains relationships with publics. Because of this role, practitioners can help their organizations to reflect on and incorporate the theories of intercultural communication in their communication with international publics.

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See also Culture; Diversity; Audiences

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INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication is public relations directed to and among employees in an organization. James E. Grunig and Yi-Hui Huang (2000) referred to critical attributes of intraorganizational relationships, such as reciprocity, trust, credibility, mutual legitimacy, and mutual understanding. For example, employee relations may be negative if there is a loss of credibility with organizational leaders. Similarly, they indicate that trust is the characteristic that allows organizations to exist, including trust by stockholders, employees, communities, and consumers.

Individual perceptions of coworkers and supervisors are critical as these employee relationships emerge and develop. The diversity of communication relationships and the perceptions may lead to greater organizational efficiency or problematic relational dynamics. These dynamics also deserve consideration along with how organizations construct employee public relations material. The objective is not to just share information but also build understanding and resolve conflicts so that

positive results (financial, productivity, relational) occur. Internal publics are groups of people inside the organization: supervisors, administrative assistants, clerks, and other staff members. Employee perceptions of internal public relations messages can be understood through comprehension of the various relationships that exist within the organization. Organizations and their employees can see their values as necessarily intertwined (i.e., “living the mission statement”) through various messages. When the positions taken by the organization (i.e., “white papers”) are supported by internal publics and the agreement is reflected in favorable views of the organization, the relationships among organizational members (especially among managers and subordinates) are enhanced. Internal public relations material is often directed to employees, a communicative extension of management thoughts. However, media like employee newsletters can provide a voice for employees on a weekly or monthly basis.

Theories of employee voice emphasize that such input increases both organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction. Participation and other supportive management practices improve information flows, decentralize power, and increase communication within and among employee groups. Simultaneously, enhancement of employee voice provides feelings of perceived autonomy and positive perceptions of organizational fairness. Many American corporations emphasize consultative participation. With this strategy, employees make suggestions (possibly through an online newsletter link), but management chooses which ideas to implement. Even though management retains control in these circumstances, this type of computer-mediated communication can eventually permit employees to communicate in ways that reduce spatial and temporal barriers. Communication occurs more quickly and minimizes the role of hierarchy, creating a more horizontal rather than a vertical organization. Groups are created by management, or committees emerge spontaneously within the company to address issues. Computer-mediated communication, in terms of employee relations, enhances organizational efficiency.

Employee relations messages are distributed through, as stated earlier, online mechanisms (i.e., company intranet) and employee newsletters. Additionally, short promotional announcements

are conveyed through memos and electronic mail (also online) or live broadcasts of events on corporate video (if the organization has this medium). Many organizations strive to share critical news with employees using other communication tactics and media. Deborah Hauss (1993) provided some examples:

1. Special editions of company newspapers, with lengthy explanations of events
2. Videotaped appearances by the company's chief executive officer addressing employee concerns, such as financial stability and job security
3. Monthly staff meetings, which can be held weekly, daily, or even hourly in crisis situations, to keep everyone abreast of the latest developments
4. Town meetings, allowing open-forum discussions among employees
5. A series of mental and physical health workshops to help employees deal with job-related stress and/or the balance of work with their personal/ family lives

Efficient communication systems allow for rapid processing and dissemination of information. As Libby Bishop and David Levine (1999) argued, individuals may feel that an equal opportunity to participate in organizational affairs exists through employee relations technology.

With the range of perceptions and attitudes along with enhanced employee performance due to participation, the relationships among internal publics can be quite complex. For example, credibility issues and unethical behavior are prevalent in many organizations, and these interconnected problems can affect the aforementioned factors. Employee relations are also affected by organizational decisions that are publicized before employees have a chance to provide input on such decisions. Consequently, these media leaks can irreparably harm the credibility that organizational leaders have with their employees. Potentially, employees are portrayed as victims of a brutal and uncaring organization. The relationships are even more complex when globalization and diversity concerns affect organizations. For example, multinational corporations are confronted with a similar dilemma, whether to have a standardized global

campaign or adapt the campaign to the local cultures. Employees who are assigned to such tasks need to be trained as culturally sensitive boundary spanners, and this training is another mechanism for internal public relations. These training sessions are similar in style (teaching) to the aforementioned workshops but more relevant to the employee's role in the organization. Even though many training sessions are sponsored by the human resources department or the employee's work group, they are an integral public relations tool. Employee relations are likely to suffer when job-related training is limited or nonexistent.

Diversity training initiatives are also helpful. Speakers address employees on topics like career development and the "glass ceiling." Managers and executives are also invited to attend these sessions, and every diversity promotion (traditionally affecting underprivileged groups, such as African Americans and women) is well publicized throughout the entire organization, potentially enhancing employee relationships.

Focus groups are also helpful for internal public relations. These groups can include people from different company departments or, as M. J. Major (1993) suggested, different ethnic and gender groups. These groups have a direct influence on the image of a company as it is projected to external publics. The influence can extend from corporate advertising campaigns to conversations at the local grocery store between a focus group employee and a potential customer of the organization. Major recommended another direction for employees and public relations in the form of community outreach programs. The focus groups plan, sponsor, and host various events, or they get involved in high school and college internship programs. For the organization and its employees, the objective is not only to give back to the community, but also to make employees feel good about their company. The focus group members, as well as other employees, see that the organization is (1) a good corporate citizen and, most important, (2) a company that strives to have beneficial relationships among all employees.

Employee relations is also enhanced through company mission statements and communication of a vision. (These two items are often interrelated because organizations frequently communicate a vision through their mission statements.) Leaders

and employees advocate for the mission statement by consistently executing its principles.

These enactments create and sustain a sense of community among diverse people in an organization (job role, ethnicity, etc.). Thus, employee relations is enhanced with company mission statements. However, these enhancements are maximized when employees are truly interested in principle execution: They are "walking the walk."

The mission statement is only temporarily successful as a leader-driven employee relations mechanism; employees must have input into its development and execution.

An optimal organizational situation is when the vision, as articulated in the mission statement, is internalized by employees and projected to other relationships (internal and external) on a daily basis.

Internal public relations is also strengthened through organizational storytelling. Stories are a means for capturing employees' experiences and expressing them so that they represent an organization's traditions, values, beliefs, and priorities. Stories foster understanding among employees, comprehension of the subcultures and political realities of daily organizational life. Additionally, stories help managers with their leadership tasks.

Leaders can communicate how they viewed or handled a certain issue. Ideally, the stories offer practical advice and solutions for employees. These experiences are stored for future reference so that the next generation of leaders learns from them.

The most valuable stories that are expressed in organizations are those that teach, inspire, motivate, and add value through shared meaning. Of course, there are variations in meaning among different employees, but if there is a common frame of reference within the story, it is a way to strengthen employee relations through identification. Organizational tales are created from past experiences, from current ideas and questions, and from a personal vision about the future (through stories and, possibly, mission statements).

These stories are relayed through staff meetings (as mentioned previously, a common employee relations tool). For example, a sales team reports monthly figures in a meeting. A sales manager asks them to review some of their best and worst experiences of the month through a story. These stories provide the team with important lessons, make the

report numbers more meaningful, and build relationships among individuals. Stories are also conveyed in more informal settings, such as a local restaurant after working hours. The team decides to meet at this specific location, and even though the setting is informal and casual, team members and leaders are using the get-together as a means for strengthening employee relationships.

Additionally, organizational storytelling is also revealing in terms of employee turnover; why is the person leaving, and what can be learned from their departure?

T. H. Feeley (2000) suggested that such attrition is reduced by socializing employees using their peers or supervisors. Storytelling provides a rich set of information that assists with socialization.

In terms of employee relations, partnerships must be built with internal stakeholders. Contextual issues (i.e., environmental scanning) must be evaluated to gain an objective understanding of organizational life. By recognizing that employees are critical stakeholders, managers and team members can identify (through storytelling and other means of communication) which external and internal forces are of primary concern to the organization. Open feedback is essential. The open-door policy espoused by many organizations must be continuously practiced. Current and future employees must be aware of organizational processes and their roles within the organization.

Continuous feedback may stimulate such awareness. Employees need to be made aware of their responsibility in identifying development opportunities that broaden and expand their skills and knowledge. Managers can also be helpful with identification of these opportunities. Thus, employees not only learn critical professional skills, but they also internalize that their organization is committed to forging positive relationships among employees. A final recommendation for successful employee relations is the institution and execution of employee mentoring programs. Positive relationships are further enhanced through one-on-one identification and interaction.

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See also Dialogue; Employee Communication; Identification

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) is a professional association headquartered in San Francisco, California, with about 15,000 members in more than 100 chapters with representation in 80 countries. IABC's mandate is to support members in their work to create strategic, interactive, integrated, and international organizational communication.

Members are linked through many vehicles: local chapter activities; local, national/regional, and international professional development initiatives that are delivered online, via telephone, and in person; a world conference; a print magazine, *Communication World*; *CW Bulletin*, an online newsletter; and a website. A volunteer international executive board of directors composed of 14 communication professionals provides the strategic vision for the organization, which is informed by regional and local volunteer leaders, as well as committee chairs. A salaried executive director and staff at its San Francisco-based world headquarters handle day-to-day management of the association.

The organization has a research arm, the IABC Research Foundation. The foundation commissions and supports original research that aims to advance the practice, perception, and effectiveness of communication.

IABC's accreditation credential offers professional communicators a path to work toward their Accredited Business Communicator (ABC) designation. In addition to various recognition awards at the regional and national levels, the association sponsors the Gold Quill Awards Program, which is an annual international competition for excellence in communication.

Historical Overview

The International Association of Business Communicators is nearly 50 years old. From its beginnings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1970, the organization supported and acted as an advocate for professional communicators and their organizations.

In the era of a booming post–World War II marketplace, the number of local International Council of Industrial Editors (ICIE) chapters (IABC's predecessor) grew to the point where its leaders decided to create the first American professional communication association. Although the headquarter concept did not work for ICIE, the organization continued its print publications through local chapters. In addition, the association developed a peer and management evaluation and awards program. A similar predecessor organization, the American Association of Industrial Editors (AAIE), later established the Gold Quill awards to honor professional excellence.

These predecessor associations began tracking membership and the function of communication in organizations during the 1950s. Using quantitative measures, the volunteer members analyzed data from nearly 2,000 American editors of nearly 10,000 internal and external organizational publications. Those findings are interesting to communication history students in that they demonstrate the gender, age, and income of the early professional communicators. (In 1955, for example, one-third of the respondents were women, nearly one-half were more than 40 years old, and the average salary for those 40 years and older was \$12,000.) The figures also trace the evolving functions of internal communicators.

The mid-1950s saw a shift in a communicator's responsibilities. Editors were increasingly moving from external communication departments to those of internal relations. However, many business publications had no identified link to their organization's objectives. The volunteer members identified this incongruity as an opportunity to communicate the value of their work to their organizational leaders.

During the 1950s, associations with the American Management Association, Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, and Oklahoma A & M led to professional development and strategic initiatives for local members. During this decade, ICIE volunteers developed measurement techniques that helped members communicate the value of their work to industry leaders. The main goal of the volunteers was to demonstrate through case histories with tangible results that managed communication programs tied to business objectives can lead to better understanding of company policies, lower turnover rates, and increased sales.

ICIE continued supporting its membership through print publications and professional development seminars throughout the 1960s. Reporting detailed the activities of the association, and the newsletter *Contact* was meant to assist communicators in demonstrating to their management that they could convey integral economic and policy information to employees. A nationwide tour of seminars did the same in face-to-face settings. Regular mailings of successful case studies and research findings later become the core of IABC's library and information resources (considered one of the major member benefits today).

In June 1970, members of ICIE and AAIE amalgamated to form a 2,280-member IABC, and in 1974 Corporate Communicators Canada joined the association. Today, IABC consists of eight districts or regions around the globe, including the Asia/Pacific Region, the Europe/Middle East Region, and the Africa Region. In 2012, the association's newest chapters included IABC/Japan. IABC has evolved in correlation with the way people and their organizations communicate. In particular, technology now supplements print communication, and IABC communicates with members through social media, its website, email messages, and the *CW Bulletin*.

Changing the way that people communicate changes the nature of relationships, which is not

particular to any one situation or institution. As part of an ongoing process, public relations practitioners constantly analyze which communication channels work in their organizations and in society and which do not. The association's vision, as developed and led by the volunteer executive board, is the preferred community and resource for communication professionals working in diverse industries and disciplines around the world.

Learning Opportunities for Members

Professional development opportunities, such as a yearly world conference, summits, and specialized small conferences, provide the professional development and knowledge resources for association members. Local chapters and regions also offer customized programming relevant to the needs of their specific members. Ranging from workshops, seminars, and presentations on topics like social media trends in emerging markets, to managing employee communication during a crisis, to a community relations campaign to promote a disaster-struck area, IABC members experience timely and relevant content delivery that assists them in achieving high professional standards and innovation in organizational communication.

Although the majority of members work in the United States and Canada, IABC leaders attempt to capture global diversity by bringing best-practice examples to North America from outside the continent and vice versa through research initiatives, articles in its publications, the showcase of award winners, and the content of learning sessions. Professional development offerings are delivered to members via teleseminar, webinar, and tweetchats and in face-to-face settings. Those who present the learning opportunities are often top communicators from various parts of the world. These organizational leaders share experience and expertise on topics like global branding, media coaching, and reputation risk management.

IABC membership reflects the changing demographics of the communicator. In 2012, 40% of members worked for corporations, 14% for consulting firms, and 12% for not-for-profit/nongovernmental organizations. Top areas of responsibility include corporate communications, employee communications, and marketing communication.

In addition to working for professionals, IABC's efforts also include student and educator relations. The organization does not have a student-specific association under its umbrella; rather, individual local chapters choose to establish and support university and college student chapters. However, not all student chapters are supported by a local chapter—they can and do exist independently of a practitioner chapter. In an effort to actively establish relationships with future practitioners, to bring educators, students, and professional members together, and to encourage a wider diversity in organizational communication, IABC established guidelines for local chapters interested in developing and nurturing these relationships.

Ethical and Effective Communication Practices

International Association of Business Communicators members are asked to abide by the Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators. The code assumes three worldwide principles:

just societies are governed by a profound respect for human rights and the rule of law; that ethics, the criteria for determining what is right and wrong, can be agreed upon by members of an organization; and, that understanding matters of taste requires sensitivity to cultural norms.

According to the code, members agree to

- engage in communication that is not only legal, but also ethical and sensitive to cultural values and beliefs;
- engage in truthful, accurate and fair communication that facilitates respect and mutual understanding;
- adhere to the following articles of the IABC Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators.

These articles might not be referenced on a daily basis, but the topics within the code are addressed in publication articles, seminar themes, classrooms, and member discussions. The code also plays a large part in a member achieving the Accredited Business Communicator (ABC) designation.

Similar to other professions, such as bar exams for lawyers and competency exams for general

accountants, IABC members can earn accreditation. The program is managed by an accreditation committee and represents both an evaluation of a communicator's expertise and a learning process for the applicant. Earning the ABC credential through IABC is a challenging process where a communicator has to prove the ability to ethically and successfully manage and respond to organizational communication needs. The process is peer evaluated, and each section of the accreditation process is marked or graded by at least two experienced and accredited IABC members. The process was adapted for different cultures and languages to reflect the global diversity of IABC membership.

Members with a minimum of five years' professional communication experience and a bachelor's degree, or a total of nine years of combined experience and education, are eligible to go through the process. After an application has been approved, the communicator submits a portfolio of work samples demonstrating the range of communication projects managed. The portfolio is meant to demonstrate to the evaluators how well the communicator understands communication planning. The final phase of the accreditation process consists of four hours of written and 30 minutes of oral testing. The entire process pays particular attention to ethical communication and is meant to reflect work situations and theoretical underpinnings of the profession. If a candidate does not successfully pass a section of the process, or exam, he or she may resubmit or retest specific sections of the evaluative process.

International Association of Business Communicators members who commit to the accreditation program are supported on local, national, and international levels. Through virtual and face-to-face mentors, members learn from their peers and experience opportunities to articulate skills and knowledge. In addition, applicants can partake in virtual or face-to-face classes. Accredited members often boast an increase in credibility within their organizations and in the industry. Accredited members also report having higher salaries than their nonaccredited peers. Although these are assets of the program, accredited members articulate that the learning process involved with accreditation is the most beneficial aspect.

The association affords other opportunities for members to demonstrate skills and knowledge and

to be honored for them. The most prominent of these is the Gold Quill Award, a program that offers professional communicators an opportunity to have their work evaluated by expert judges. All Gold Quill finalist entries are considered for the IABC Research Foundation's Jake Wittmer award for outstanding research in organizational communication and for publication in IABC's knowledge resource materials. Although the association receives thousands of submissions each year, only a select few are chosen for excellence in business communication.

The International Association of Business Communicators recognizes its volunteers through various awards. The Fellow Designation acknowledges remarkable leadership, as well as contribution to the profession and service to the association, and is considered the highest and most prestigious honor for a member. Each year, the Chairman's Award recognizes an IABC volunteer who has demonstrated initiative, leadership, and a willingness to contribute to the association at an international level, and to the communication profession in general. Chapter Management Awards are presented to local chapters judged to have excelled in innovation, creativity, and best practices. Overall chapter management excellence is celebrated through the IABC Chapter of the Year award.

The association also recognizes individuals outside the organization who have proven to be extraordinary leaders in fostering excellent communication. The Excellence in Communication Leadership Award is usually given to member-nominated CEOs, managing directors, or presidents who consistently demonstrate vision and leadership in their commitment to effective business communication. In addition, the IABC Research Foundation facilitates a Lifetime Friend Award, which recognizes individuals who have been ardent supporters of research initiatives and who have donated their time and expertise to the Research Foundation's work.

Groundbreaking Research

With its own distinct board of directors, IABC's Research Foundation aims to advance the practice, perception, and effectiveness of organizational communication by funding and publishing

scholarly and professional research. The research results inform the association's educational programs by identifying the issues that are important to the members.

The International Association of Business Communicators is unique in North America in that the organization supports international primary research through the Research Foundation. Classic projects include the 1986 Velvet Ghetto Summary Report and the Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management study. More contemporary studies include analysis of online communities, employee engagement, and information overload. The studies are made available to members and nonmembers through IABC.

People Networks

International Association of Business Communicators membership reflects the many forms of organizational communication. Members can range from investor relations professionals, to photographers, to CEOs of public relations firms.

The community that forms around the membership manifests on different levels. For example, members use the membership directory, or the online "eXchange" feature and "MemberSpeak" to form a peer community, hire professionals, seek clients, or look for a job in areas where they may not have contacts. A member might also use the online IABC "Job" page to post a job vacancy or search for one. Perhaps the biggest benefit of IABC membership is the opportunity to volunteer and become involved in a community, where professional relationships and friendships are created at local, national, and international events. Because the organization is large and the membership diverse, people often call on one another for knowledge sharing, professional advice and supplier recommendations, or problem-solving assistance. Members work together on collaborative projects, either for the association or for their own organizations. International Association of Business Communicators leadership articulated a goal that the association facilitate the personal and/or professional connection that assists communicators to exchange knowledge about how to do their jobs.

DeNel Rehberg Sedo and Jennifer Wah

See also Codes of Ethics; Codes of Public Relations Practice; Investor Relations; Professional and Professionalism; Professionalism in Public Relations

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INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) is the world's only truly international public relations professional organization, with 1,000 professional members in 87 countries and with 89 countries identified as members of the global professional organization. Student memberships were also recently made available, and more than 200 students were identified with the organization in the 2003–2004 membership year directory as individuals interested in international public relations practitioner performance. A collegiate membership is also available for educators.

Fifteen world congresses have been hosted every three years since 1958 by the global association in major cities on six continents. In addition, the IPRA Council, which currently has global representation from 58 countries in its 77 elected members, has met annually since 1955 in 49 different cities of the world on seven continents. Council meetings are normally held in conjunction with jointly sponsored IPRA public relations conferences hosted by a country's national public relations association or with a country's annual national convention. IPRA has also hosted a number of international educator congresses, usually in association with its own congresses. The outreach of the association, therefore, has truly been

worldwide in educational impact for both professionals and educators.

In addition to providing networking and the sharing of information through conferences and meetings, IPRA has become significant to the global profession by providing global awards, the identification of universal ethical standards, recognition to groups that have advanced world understanding, publications on key professional and societal issues, and a consultancy role with the United Nations. An explanation of each of these programs follows.

Golden World Awards for Excellence

In 1990, IPRA initiated a program to recognize excellence in public relations practice with the creation of the annual IPRA Golden World Awards for Excellence. The awards program has increased in prestige annually, and today international public relations firms, corporations, associations, health organizations, chambers of commerce and other business groups, and governmental agencies are increasingly vying for recognition in this competition.

Global Standards for Ethical Performance

The pioneers within IPRA adopted the first code of conduct for global practitioners in Venice in 1961. The elements of the code were patterned after the code identified by the Public Relations Society of America for its members in 1950. In 1965, Lucien Matrat of France authored an international code of ethics that was adopted in Athens, Greece, by the IPRA General Assembly; it tied requirements for member practitioner professional and personal behaviors to the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights. In particular, the code requires that members shall refrain from (a) subordinating truth to other requirements, (b) circulating information that is not based on established and ascertainable facts, (c) taking part in professional activities damaging to human dignity or integrity, and (d) the use of subconscious approaches designed to manipulate the public without its awareness.

Concerns about environmental communication in 1991 resulted in a declaration that was approved in Nairobi under the IPRA chairmanship of Charles van der Straten Waillet of Belgium. This

code addresses practitioner responsibility to ensure that the information and counsel they provide protects the environment, binding participants to environmental codes of practice adopted by the United Nations and the International Chamber of Commerce.

In 2002, specific member expectations were added to the IPRA charter on media transparency. The code identifies the expected relationship of IPRA members with members of the journalism profession within countries. The policy prohibits payment for editorial coverage and requires that when payment of any kind is received for editorial content, it is clearly identified as advertising or paid promotion. Gifts and the solicitation of coverage by journalists were also addressed, with members required to prepare policy statements agreed to by journalists and public relations practitioners that were made available to the public for inspection.

Although enforcement of the codes presents difficulties, their significance is related to the standard the codes identify for acceptable global public relations performance and the identification of practitioner behavior with the protection of fundamental human rights. Some indication of the positive impact is the fact that the Code of Athens has been translated into 20 languages and copies have been presented to numerous heads of state and the pope. Other codes are carried in membership materials, emphasized at international meetings, and communicated through what is now a globally accessible website.

IPRA President's Award

The IPRA President's Award was established in 1977 to recognize individuals or institutions outside of the public relations profession for "outstanding contributions that have led to better world understanding." Designed as a way of bringing recognition to individuals or institutions that have promoted principles of peace, social justice, cultural understanding, or the role and importance of the public relations function in global society, the prize has been awarded to the Nobel Foundation, International Red Cross, Band Aid, the World Wide Fund for Nature, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. While bringing recognition to IPRA, the award reflects credit on public relations as a profession globally.

United Nations

IPRA received recognition by the United Nations in 1964 as an international nongovernmental organization and has been granted consultative status by the UN Economic and Social Council and UNESCO.

Gold Papers

Position papers, printed with metallic gold covers and termed gold papers, were introduced under the leadership of Tim Traverse-Healy. The papers defined the standards and ethics of public relations performance and education. Fourteen gold papers have been published. They examined globalization; research and evaluation; public relations education; communication challenges, including environmental concerns, quality control, and accountability; and ethical and social responsibility issues. These papers continue to be available and can be acquired by contacting the IPRA Secretariat at www.ipra.org.

Among the gold papers with the greatest impact on global developments are those on public relations education.

History

IPRA has its origins in founders who were members of the Dutch Public Relations Club and the Institute for Public Relations in Britain, organizations in countries where international trade had long been the economic foundation. Two Dutch public relations practitioners—Hans Hermans and Jo Brongers—and four British practitioners—R. S. Forman, Roger Wimbush, Tom Fife Clark, and Norman Rogers—all officers of their respective public relations organizations, met informally in London, where they identified a group of public relations executives in Britain, the Netherlands, France, Norway, and the United States of America whom they would invite to meet at the Royal Netherlands International Trade Fair in Holland for discussion of the needs and challenges entailed in the international practice of public relations. The meeting, which was also held under the auspices of the Public Relations Society of Holland, created the framework for initiating the development of what in 1955 would become IPRA. The

formal establishment occurred with the adoption of a constitution and the appointment of the first IPRA council.

Founding council members included the following people:

Tom Fife Clark, president (Great Britain)

Tim Traverse-Healy, honorary secretary (Great Britain)

Roger Wimbush (Great Britain)

Alan Hess (Great Britain)

Etienne Bloch (France)

Jean Choppin de Janvry (France)

Rene Tavernier (France)

Rein J. Vogels (Netherlands)

M. Weisglas (Netherlands)

Erling Christopherson (Norway)

Per Johansen (Norway)

Odd Medboe (Norway)

Richard B. Hall (United States)

Edward L. Lipscomb (United States)

The mission of the organization was originally conceived as providing for the exchange of information and cooperation among international practitioners. However, following the adoption of an international code of ethics, the mission evolved into that of supporting the development of the highest possible standards of public relations ethics, practice, and performance.

By the 1990s, the mission had broadened to that of helping members keep in touch with national, regional, and international trends and issues via informal contact and official functions and explaining to opinion formers the role of the public relations function.

By the turn of the 21st century, the vision and mission were defined in more strategic terms. The vision is now as the world's most relevant, resourceful, and influential professional associations for senior international public relations executives. The focus of the mission also changed to providing professional development and member services that enable practitioners to be more effective in international counseling relationships.

Leadership

The United Kingdom and the United States have led in the numbers of professionals who have served as president. However, presidents from 19 countries have headed the organization since 1955. In that same year, Dr. Don Wright, a leading American educator, was the first educator elected to serve as president. A number of distinguished professionals have also served as influential secretary-generals of IPRA. Among these were Tim Traverse-Healy, who guided the organization in its formative years, and Sam Black, who through world travel substantially increased awareness of the global association. Currently, council members elected from 58 different countries guide the policies of the organization. At least one council member served as national chair within their countries.

Awards and Recognition

At the present, only one recognition has been established to acknowledge outstanding contribution to IPRA and to the global profession. This is the granting of Membership Emeritus Status in IPRA. The following lists those members, by country, identified as making a distinguished contribution to IPRA and to the global advancement of the public relations profession:

Belgium: Charles van der Straten Waillet

Egypt: Mahmoud El Gohary

France: Claude Chapeau, Jacques Coup de Frejac,
Lucien Matrat

Germany: Albert Oeckl

Greece: Manos B. Pavlidis, Marcel Yoel

India: Anand Akerkar

Israel: Michael Barzilay

Japan: Roy Sanada

Netherlands: Anne van der Meiden, Rein J. Vogels

Netherlands Antilles: Arturo Jesuran

Norway: Odd H. Medboe

Sweden: Goran Sjoberg

Switzerland: Alain Modoux, Jean-Jacques Wyler

Turkey: Betul Mardin

United Kingdom: Sam Black, Dennis Buckle, Tom Fife Clark, Tim Traverse-Healy

United States: Edward L. Bernays, Robert L. Bliss,
John W. Felton, Denny Griswold, Roy
J. Leffingwell, Gene G. McCoy, John E. Sattler

Melvin L. Sharpe

See also Globalization and Public Relations; Professional and Professionalism; Professionalism in Public Relations; Public Relations Research

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International Public Relations Association (IPRA): <http://www.ipra.org>

INTERNET CONTAGION THEORY

As defined by W. Timothy Coombs and Sherry J. Holladay, Internet contagion theory (ICT) combines stakeholder theory and network theory to provide structure for understanding and evaluating how Internet-based communication influences the organization–stakeholder dynamic and seeks to explain how activist stakeholders use cyberspace to influence organizations. Additionally, ICT helps practitioners plot and identify how the Internet and socially networked communication affects the stakeholder–organization relationship. Internet contagion theory was first proposed by Coombs and Holladay in 2007 and then adapted in 2012 to incorporate the role social media plays in the spread of Internet contagions.

The relationship between an organization and its stakeholders is deeply complex. When stakeholders believe an organization has infringed on their interests, they may choose to confront the organization. Stakeholders often use a method similar to traditional viral marketing strategy to challenge an organization by sending messages through various new media channels (e.g., blogs/microblogs and other social media sites, websites, emails) with the intention that others will then redistribute this message, thereby centralizing it and potentially increasing the message's power.

Stakeholders use various new media communication channels to increase their radiality, which is the degree their network reaches out into the larger organizational network. Thus, messages developed by activist stakeholders can become contagions when they are passed rapidly throughout cyberspace.

For an organization, the power of Internet contagion is challenging because the message is impossible to control. As the original message goes through various channels from online rhetoric to word-of-mouth, it can transform, evolve, and grow, with the end result possibly being a state of crisis for the organization affected. The legitimacy or perceived legitimacy of stakeholders' messages is critical to impacting an organization's behavior; as such it is important for activist stakeholders to frame an issue as relevant, salient, justifiable, and timely. Coombs and Holladay outlined two steps for analyzing stakeholder actions in regards to ICT: (1) assess legitimacy, to identify whether an activist stakeholder's claims will be perceived as legitimate, and (2) assess power, to evaluate the strategies used by activist stakeholders and recognize that those who use Web-as-hub systems are often more powerful than those who use more basic systems.

The impact of an Internet contagion is dependent not only on the breadth and depth of its reach but also the reaction of the organization. Organizations can use ICT to measure possible shifts in network and stakeholder salience and to assess the power of their activist stakeholders. Within ICT and other public relations research, social media is becoming an imperative element of environmental scanning for many possible issues, risks, and crises. However, when these issues and risks emerge, online organizations often confuse them with crises, but many of these events and discussions are a paracrisis, a term developed by Coombs and Holladay to demonstrate that such dialogue or events look like and often act like a crisis, yet do not require action from the organization; a paracrisis does not warrant convening the crisis team and operating in a crisis mode.

Katelyn E. Brownlee

See also Crisis Communication; Issues Management; Paracrisis; Risk Communication; Social Media

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INTERNSHIP

As perhaps the most widely recognized and frequently practiced form of experiential education, internships are regular curricular offerings in most college and university public relations programs. An internship is work experience, typically approved for academic credit and offered by a business or nonprofit organization, designed to accomplish specific learning goals. Student interns are monitored by an on-site supervisor and a faculty member, each of whom ideally serves as a mentor. Internships extend the traditional classroom, allowing students to apply knowledge gained in their coursework to specific, practical tasks. Many public relations practitioners, faculty members, and professional associations consider internships an essential part of career preparation.

Based on the work of John Dewey (1938) and borrowing the label *intern* from medical schools, educational programs in many disciplines offer hands-on field experiences in which students connect abstract classroom concepts with work-based problems and, by extension, increase their marketability after graduation. As Richard Katula and Elizabeth Threnhauser (1999) discussed, internships have two main goals: acquainting

students with professional working environments and providing opportunities for professional development.

Fred Beard and Linda Morton (1999) found six predictors of successful internships: (1) academic preparation, (2) student initiative, (3) positive outlook, (4) quality of supervision, (5) task appropriateness, and (6) compensation. Compensation traditionally has taken many forms, ranging from academic credit to tuition reimbursement to payment for service. Discussion continues regarding the most appropriate compensation, and some research indicates that paid internships are taken more seriously by both students and field supervisors. Also important is that tasks assigned to interns be both structured and rich enough to promote skill development.

Beard and Morton (1999) also pointed to five internship outcomes: (1) development of job-related skills, (2) accrual of career benefits (e.g., job prospects, mentors), (3) increased career focus (e.g., understanding requisite skills and work environments), (4) enhanced professionalism (e.g., refined interpersonal skills), and (5) tangible outcomes (e.g., portfolio materials). Both the academic and field supervisors play critical roles. Structured internship programs better enable students to connect their experiences with public relations coursework. Field supervisors who provide specific directions and feedback assist in maximizing the experience—both for the intern and the organization. Internships should be designed as much more than work for academic credit; they should be learning experiences where students are mentored while having opportunities to contribute productively to host organizations.

Most student interns, faculty supervisors, and field mentors evaluate participation positively; and professional associations, such as PRSA, recommend internship experience as important in career preparation. Based on a survey of practitioners, Gayle Pohl and Dee Vandeventer (2000) concluded that persons entering the profession must possess specific skills; thus, job-related experience, such as that attained through internships, is essential. Further, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (2002–2003) predicted fierce competition for entry-level public relations positions

and noted that internships are vital to securing employment.

Joy L. Hart

See also Mentoring; Practice/Practitioner; Public Relations Society of America

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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION THEORY

Historically, public relations has been closely associated with mass communication in part because until the 1980s, most public relations practitioners were educated and worked as journalists for traditional news media (daily or weekly newspapers, network-operated television, and radio) before entering public relations. Also, public relations frequently targets such news media as a popular channel to carry its messages to various publics, placing emphasis on noteworthy activities for publicity and media relations. However, public relations commonly employs interpersonal communication in carrying out its research and planning functions and executing strategies, tactics, and evaluation processes. Practitioners might well study interpersonal communication theory and master interpersonal communication techniques to enhance their best practices.

Traditional news media—as well as newer forms of Internet-based mass media—provide

glimpses of socially constructed reality, projecting “pictures in our heads” synthesized from the real world as expressed in Walter Lippmann’s terms from his seminal book, *Public Opinion*. The news media acts as the public’s window on the world, according to Gaye Tuchman (1978). Mass communication influences the way people relate to one another interpersonally and vice versa. This assessment is appropriately applied to public relations: in many instances, public relations influences the way people relate to one another interpersonally. Since about 2005, when practitioners began in earnest to use interactive, Web-based online strategies and tactics, such as social media, to engage in dialogic relationships with target publics on behalf of their organizations, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of interpersonal communication in public relations.

As early as 1955, interpersonal communication was described as an intervening variable between mass communication and behavior change, when Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld introduced the two-step model of mass media effects. This model depicts interpersonal interactions as channels of mass media information in which individuals engage in interpersonal communication about mass media content, exchanging information and influencing each other’s opinions. Public relations campaigns frequently work to facilitate the two-step model, which depends on word-of-mouth amplifications of public relations’ mass media publicity placements in traditional news media and now online via websites, posts on web-blogs, and social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and dozens of other emerging digital platforms.

Theories dealing with individuals in relationships or the relationships themselves, especially—but not limited to—dyads, described, explained, and predicted interpersonal communication contexts. Public relations theory and practice might well serve as a bridge between interpersonal and mass communications, since public relations contexts often include communication between dyads as well as broader societal interactions.

Weighing similarities as well as differences between interpersonal communication and mass communication, Jennings Bryant and R. L. Street, Jr. (1988) suggested that interpersonal and mass communication differ in (a) theoretical focus, with

mass communication being preoccupied with receiver-oriented and interpersonal, both receiver- and source-oriented, with an emphasis on the latter; (b) nature of the communication process, with mass and interpersonal communication each having varying active, recursive (involving feedback), interactive, and transactional patterns, depending on respective theoretical perspectives; and (c) outcomes of message perception in relation to receiver cognitions and attitudes: interpersonal research assumes cognitions and attitudes to be comparatively stable; mass communication assumes they are dynamic and subject to influence by the mediated message. Bryant and Street concluded that studying each other’s models and sharing findings can enrich both interpersonal and mass communication domains. The same assumption applies to interpersonal communication and public relations at least as well. Elizabeth Toth, Timothy Coombs, and others argued for “pluralistic” studies and applications in public relations, involving rhetorical, relational, and systems perspectives from interpersonal communication theory.

Applying Interpersonal Communication Theory to Public Relations

Relationships—interorganizational and interpersonal—have been considered fertile ground for theory development in public relations since Mary Ann Ferguson’s groundbreaking 1984 paper. In general, practitioners engage in interpersonal communication in three different categories of relationships: (1) client/organization practitioner relations, in which practitioners interpret the external environment to the organization; (2) journalist/media gatekeeper practitioner relations, in which practitioners facilitate publicity about the organization; and (3) members of target publics practitioner relations, in which practitioners interpret the organization’s intents and actions to the public.

Interpersonal communication theory has been applied to public relations practice to good effect. For example, Marcia Prior-Miller (1989) examined four theoretical perspectives rooted in what she characterized as “sociological-organizational traditions,” including (a) symbolic interactionism, (b) exchange theory, (c) conflict theory, and

(d) structural-functional theory. She found that each helps explain various public relations communication phenomena under varying conditions. In the same year, studying internal public relations in a hospital, Gary Kreps discovered that information theory/uncertainty reduction is important to the organization as a system, where information becomes a prerequisite to the development and implementation of relevant innovations to accomplish system-wide organizational development.

Classically, rhetorical post-hoc evaluations of speaker's intent, oration, environment, and effect date back at least to the Greeks but are central to many different types of public relations campaigns conducted today. Although research on compliance-gaining message strategies has been conducted, mainly in interpersonal settings, public relations messages that have compliance-gaining as a goal or component are commonplace. Effective persuasive campaigns often rely on multiple messages. In public relations, multiple messages may involve use of different channels, calling on different theoretical traditions, including interpersonal communication theory.

Considering public relations campaigns invites further consideration of communication theory, which serves to inform campaigns about effective audience segmentation and message design, while campaigns provide data for further theoretical development. James VanLeuven (1989) suggested that five theoretical frameworks—(1) persuasion/learning effects, (2) social learning, (3) low involvement, (4) cognitive consistency, and (5) value change—were useful for understanding campaigns and their effects. Silver Anvil award-winning campaign case histories recognized for campaign excellence by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) have been analyzed by Lynne Sallot (1994) for expressed and implied application of interpersonal theoretical perspectives. Among seven interpersonal theoretical perspectives, information theory was found the most applicable overall and, along with social exchange theory, did not vary over time. Systems theory was found to be the least applicable overall, but did vary over time, along with constructivism, social influence, developmental approaches, and symbolic interactionism. Because interpersonal communication strategies are integral to the effectiveness of public relations campaigns, public relations can be used as a “laboratory” to develop and test interpersonal theories.

Many similarities between interpersonal and organization–public relationships have been drawn by public relations scholars. Increasingly, various aspects of these relationships are being studied in the context of the types of online communications used in public relations, such as need for interactions by Tom Kelleher (2009) and transparency by Kaye Sweetser (2010), for example. Michael Kent (2010) suggested that as marketers become more dedicated to building relationships as a means of building brand loyalty among consumers, new Internet-based, digital platforms broaden opportunities for interpersonal communication across publics. By using theory-based models to drive strategy selection and implementation, probabilities of effectiveness may be enhanced.

Lynne M. Sallot

See also Best Practices; Client–Agency Relationships; Dialogue; Media Relations; Public Relations Society of America; Publicity; Relationship Management Theory; Social Amplification of Risk; Social Exchange Theory; Symbolic Interactionism Theory; Theory-Based Practice; Transparency; Two-Step Flow Theory; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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INTERVIEW AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL

Public relations professionals make use of media interviews to get the organization's message across and enhance its image. Such interviews can result because a spokesperson is invited to appear on a talk program or asked to respond to key questions in an interview format. A second way they occur is

for practitioners to pitch the interview to producers who are looking for interesting personalities to put on talk programs.

Television (national and local cable networks), radio, print, and the Internet provide opportunities for interviews. Public relations practitioners arrange for members of their organization to be interviewed by the media by maintaining an active media relations program. Media relations can be defined as “working with mass media in seeking publicity or responding to their interests in the organization” (Wilcox, Cameron, Ault, & Agee, 2003, p. 8). A practitioner must have an updated media list and keep in touch to know the shows/columns, the type of audience targeted, the time constraints, format used for interviewing, and so forth.

With a well-cultivated relationship, it is easier for public relations professionals to successfully pitch (present and sell) interview ideas for their clients. Public relations practitioners need to focus their pitch to media by highlighting benefits to the audience rather than assuming a self-serving role on behalf of the organization.

Television shows today are replete with celebrities, making it difficult for public relations professionals to sell their nonglamorous, corporate clients. However, the practitioner can look to local TV stations and radio to get their message across. With thousands of radio stations in the United States, it is relatively easy to reach targeted audiences.

The public relations practitioner's job does not end with getting the placement. They then approach the required media professionals to give them basic information so that the interview appears “spontaneous, conversational and natural” (Anderson, 1991, p. 19). The next step is coaching the interviewee for the interview (also called media training). This ensures that the interviewee is comfortable with good grasp of their proposed subject. Public relations practitioners may want to conduct mock interviews beforehand. It also helps to decide in advance key messages that the organization wants to convey through the interview. The interviewee can then try to incorporate these messages into their answers. It is essential to consider the target audience while framing these answers. An interviewee's appearance plays a dominant role in the success of the interview, especially in the case of a broadcast interview. Body language, tone, and attire speak a lot louder than words. It is also advisable to decide in advance how to deal with awkward questions.

On the day of the interview, public relations practitioners can be present to smooth over any glitch during the interview. Some practitioners also prefer to audiotape the interview to clear up subsequent misunderstandings. The interviewer should be informed that the client is also taping the interview.

Finally, practitioners need to ensure that the interview was aired/printed appropriately and should use evaluation research to gauge its effect on the public.

Brenda J. Wrigley

See also Media Relations; Pitch Letter

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INTERVIEW AS A RESEARCH TOOL

Interviewing is an age-old technique, for people have long asked questions to find out information. As Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey noted in 1994, population censuses in ancient

Egypt, followed more recently by clinical analyses and by World War I psychological evaluations, employed interviewing techniques. Opinion polls have long relied on interview responses, and today interviewing is a common research tool in public relations, marketing, therapy, and academic inquiry. Further, although interviewing is used in quantitative research (e.g., survey interviews), it is more common as a qualitative technique.

According to Thomas R. Lindlof (1995),

In qualitative research, one interviews people to understand their perspectives on a scene, to retrieve experiences from the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain descriptions of events or scenes that are normally unavailable for observation, to foster trust, to understand a sensitive or intimate relationship, or to analyze certain kinds of discourse. (p. 5)

Interviews may take place in dyads or groups and can be conducted in person, over the telephone, or more recently, on the Internet. Most often, interviews are conducted in face-to-face, individual sessions. They can be very brief or quite lengthy, sometimes including multiple meetings. Typically, interviews are conducted based on an interview schedule or guide—a list of planned questions.

Various types of interviews are used in research. Three of these are structured, semistructured, and unstructured. In structured interviews, the interviewer adheres to the interview guide, typically asking the same questions in the same order of all interviewees. These interviews may have predetermined response categories into which the answers are recorded; however, practices vary. In semistructured formats, the interviewer has specific questions to ask but is free to vary the order and use probes to elicit more information. In unstructured (sometimes labeled *depth* or *in-depth*) interviews, broad, open-ended questions are employed to understand the interviewee's views and behaviors; there are no predetermined response categories, and questions and probes can take various directions.

Interviewing has both strengths and weaknesses as a research tool. The strengths include

comprehensive questions, probing for additional information, flexibility in dealing with interviewees, rich data, and unanticipated information. The weaknesses include time required (in collecting, transcribing, and analyzing data), potential interviewer influence on responses, answers containing unimportant information, and low anonymity. Although interviews may reduce error because interviewees can speak in their own words and not select answers from predetermined categories, the potential for bias still exists (e.g., interpreting responses). Thus, trained interviewers and careful analysis are required.

If interviewing is partly conversation, then the interviewer must be a skilled conversationalist. . . . If interviewing is partly the “digging tool” of social science, then the interviewer must be an effective, nonthreatening interrogator. If interviewing is partly a learning situation, then the interviewee must be a willing student. (Lindlof, 1995, p. 175)

Joy L. Hart

See also Focus Group; Public Relations Research; Qualitative Research; Research Goals; Research Objectives

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INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Investigative journalism grew out of the muckraking tradition established by Lincoln Steffens, Upton Sinclair, Samuel Hopkins Adams, Ida Tarbell, and others in the early 20th century. The muckrakers essentially created a new journalistic form, one that exposed social ills and government, personal, or corporate misbehavior.

Muckraking is known today by several names, including investigative journalism, depth reporting, precision journalism, and computer-assisted reporting. Most techniques used in investigative journalism are not very different from those used in other forms of journalism. Investigative writers rely on interviews, records and documents, narrative leads, and vignettes.

The difference lies primarily in the purpose of investigative journalism (to expose misbehavior or problems) and the amount of space or time devoted to such reports. A newspaper might devote six complete pages and a broadcast outlet, 30 minutes over a week to compelling, important investigative reports. Social science methods also are used in many investigative reports; beat reporters rarely engage in the kinds of computations, analyses, and interpretations that investigative journalists routinely use.

One of hundreds of examples of investigative journalism is the 2002 *Chicago Tribune's* analysis of the relationship between patient deaths and hospital cleanliness. The *Tribune* pointed out that approximately 100,000 patients die each year because of dirty hands, instruments, and facilities. Moreover, the *Tribune* showed that hospitals have reduced by 25% their cleaning staffs since 1995. The *Tribune* studied health data from 75 federal and state agencies, court and hospital records, health organizations, and patient databases. The methods essentially were those used by epidemiologists.

Public relations practitioners work for advocacy organizations and foundations, which sometimes use the techniques of investigative journalism to shine light on a pressing problem or issue.

The Center for Responsive Politics, the National Institute on Money in State Politics, and the Center for Public Integrity, for example, completed a massive study of the states' campaign spending practices during the 2000 elections. Among other things, they found, that unregulated soft money was sometimes transferred to state party committees from federal party committees. This confirms “a commonly held perception that state parties are used to launder soft money and influence presidential and congressional elections in ways never envisioned nor intended by federal election laws” (Dunbar, Sylwester, & Moore, 2002, n.p.).

Data from all 50 states were analyzed, hundreds of election officials were interviewed, Federal Election Commission data were analyzed, and hundreds of written records were collated and analyzed.

This and similar work is not done by a newspaper or broadcast station, but it is investigative journalism. Public relations practitioners occasionally find themselves involved in such projects, if only to help write and disseminate the results.

Investigative journalism, of course, frightens practitioners who work in secretive, morally challenged organizations because they know an investigative writer might uncover an organization's dirty secrets. Practitioners in many hospitals, for example, probably were distraught to read the *Tribune's* series about dirty hospitals. This type of publicity seldom makes an organization look good.

Michael Ryan

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INVESTOR RELATIONS

Investor relations is “a strategic management responsibility that integrates finance, communication, marketing and securities law compliance to enable the most effective two-way communication between a company, the financial community, and other constituencies, which ultimately contributes to a company's securities achieving fair valuation.” This definition was adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Investor Relations Institute, the leading professional association of investor

relations practitioners, in March 2003 and is still widely used in professional and academic publications. The key part of the definition is its focus on the fair valuation. This means the goal of investor relations is to ensure that current and prospective investors of the company know what the company is really worth and also understand its prospects for future value growth or decline. The goal is not to increase the price of the stock as high as possible, but to ensure that the price reflects the true potential of the company: no more and no less. Alexander V. Laskin's research suggests that this focus on understanding means that the main job of investor relations professionals is to educate. Investor relations professionals, often referred to as investor relations officers (IROs), educate the company's investors about corporate structure, products made and sold, research and development efforts, financial results achieved, new management hires, merger and acquisition plans, and so on, trying to enable shareholders to see the big picture of the company's value.

This requires two-way communication. So, IROs listen to investors, answer their questions, and often take their concerns to the top management of the company. Indeed, some investors are highly educated financial professionals whose advice to the company's management can be quite valuable. Investor relations officers listen to the investment community by trying to anticipate problems before they can hurt the company, and they look to identify opportunities for the company. These job responsibilities require IROs to have a variety of skills: communication skills, understanding of finance, knowledge of legal aspects of corporate disclosure, expertise in public relations, ability to market the company, proficiency in research, and naturally a propensity to management. For this reason, investor relations professionals often have senior titles, such as vice presidents or directors, work as part of top management teams, and are responsible for developing strategic goals of the company's investor relations efforts.

Historical Context

In his 2010 book, Laskin described in detail the development of investor relations in the United States. The first public company is believed to be

the Boston Manufacturing Company, founded in 1814. When the owner of this company needed to expand the business, he sold stock in the company to his associates. The earliest mention of the corporate investor relations function is traced to the middle of the twentieth century: Ralph Cordiner, a chairman of General Electric, in 1953 created a department in charge of all shareholder communications. At the same time, investor relations departments started appearing at other large corporations as well; the first consulting agencies began offering investor relations services.

These developments did not happen in a vacuum but, rather, were a response to the changing economic and sociopolitical environments. The economic boom of the 1950s generated wealth for private Americans and at the same time encouraged business growth to satisfy the growing needs and desires of consumers. The corporations needed money to grow and develop; people needed a way to invest surplus income. In this situation, the meeting of the two worlds was inevitable. This was the beginning of the “stock” era: In 1952, 4.5 million Americans owned stock; in 1965, the number was over 20 million. Since then, the number has grown exponentially to more than 160 million. Today, 54% of Americans have stock market investments.

However, shareholder’s capital is a finite pool, and companies have to compete for this resource. Thus, the investor relations function was charged with the task of grabbing investors’ attention and selling them on the company in a fierce competition with other corporations. In the early years of investor relations, this competition sometimes led to exaggerations, lies, and dog-and-pony shows. Individual investors needed help in making educated decisions about what companies to invest in and what companies to avoid.

Thus, in the 1970s the stock market began the process of institutionalization. Millions of individual shareholders consolidated their funds with investment professionals. This was a very significant change for the investor relations professionals. Instead of a rowdy crowd of individuals who were better kept at bay through mass media, IROs were faced with well-educated and highly professional financial experts. These experts wanted to talk with

the senior management, asked complex questions, and demanded the information that many IROs could not understand themselves. This led to a shift in investor relations from communication to finance: instead of public relations practitioners, companies started hiring financial analysts or accountants to perform the investor relations jobs. This led to an almost exclusive focus on financial results often ignoring the actual business of a company—manipulating the numbers became more important than actually producing them.

At the start of the 21st century, the investor relations profession is again changing. The shocking corporate failures, including the collapse of dot-coms and accounting scandals at the largest companies, put the whole model of corporate America to the test. The collapse of Enron was the wake-up call for the investor relations practice, which now assumes more responsibilities than ever before. Suddenly, the unprecedented growth in the stock market was replaced by recession. Money started flowing away from stocks. The competition for capital became more intense. Investor relations became one of the key activities that could make or break a corporation. Once again, public relations and communication expertise becomes essential in investor relations with a growing focus on building and maintaining relationships with internal and external publics.

Accounting scandals led to stiffer regulations from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Congress, aimed at improving corporate governance and making managers and boards of directors more accountable. The scope of required disclosures expanded and the disclosure procedures demanded faster disclosure.

Legal Context

Investor relations is a highly regulated activity. The primary agency responsible for oversight of the stock market is the SEC. The SEC’s mission is “to protect investors, maintain fair, orderly, and efficient markets, and facilitate capital formation.” To achieve these goals, it oversees federal securities laws, maintains the disclosure of financial information by publicly traded companies, and brings enforcement actions against violators of the securities law.

The SEC maintains EDGAR: Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval system. All publicly traded companies are required to submit their financial information to EDGAR and that information becomes available to anybody who has a computer with an Internet connection. Among the key documents companies file with the SEC is the 10-K, a company's annual report. The 10-K gives a detailed account of the company's business, organizational structure, key executives and their compensation, as well as the most recent financial statements. Companies also file a 10-Q, similar to the 10-K, but submitted every quarter. In addition to these periodic forms, companies are expected to file form 8-K as soon as possible to inform shareholders about unexpected important events that can affect the company's stock price and thus are important to current and prospective shareholders.

The key regulations that govern the practice of investor relations are the Securities Acts of 1933, Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Regulation FD, Sarbanes-Oxley Act, and Dodd-Frank Act.

Key Publics

Investor relations professionals work with a variety of publics on a daily basis. It is incorrect to assume that investor relations focuses on investors only—although investors are among the most important publics for investor relations professionals, many other publics also demand IROs attention.

Investors

The term *investors* usually refers to institutional investors—professional financial organizations. These organizations pool together money and other assets from individuals or other organizations with the purpose of investing in the market and managing these investments. The most common types of institutional investors are *pension funds*, *mutual funds*, *hedge funds*, *insurance companies*, and *banks*. Many Americans have savings in their 401(k) accounts accumulated in various pension funds, for example, CalPERS, California Public Employees' Retirement System. Similar to pension funds, mutual funds also pull together funds from many individuals and organizations, to help them manage their investments collectively.

Sometimes the purpose of investment is also retirement, such as supplemental retirement income, but others can save for college, new house, vacation, or simply for future unexpected events. Some of the largest mutual funds in the United States are Vanguard, Fidelity, American Funds, Black Rock, PIMCO, and Franklin Templeton. Since these organizations accumulate billions of dollars, they are very important for investor relations professionals. Institutional investors keep very close ties with the IROs of the companies they invest in and want to know as much as they can about the company and its value.

Shareholders

The term *shareholders* refers to private individual owners of a company's stock. Instead of investing in the stock through a mutual fund, individuals can purchase shares of any publicly traded company directly, making their own independent decisions on what shares to buy, hold, or sell. A retail shareholder who owns just one share of the company has the same rights to information as a professional mutual fund owning millions of shares. This creates certain tensions for investor relations professionals: on the one hand, the company may have 10 large investors with ownership of 1 million shares each and, on the other hand, the company may have 1 million retail shareholders with only 10 shares each. Although, legally all shareholders must be treated equally, IROs and management teams pay more attention to demands of professional investors. It is difficult, if not impossible, for retail shareholders to meet with top managers of the company, get on a phone with the financial director to discuss financial results, or have access to special investment events like industry conferences or company's roadshows. Some large companies even create separate departments, called shareholder relations departments, to handle these individuals and to allow investor relations professionals to focus exclusively on the professional institutional investors.

Financial Analysts

A financial analyst, also called *equity analyst*, *stock analyst*, *investment analyst*, or *industry analyst*, is a person responsible for making an educated

evaluation of the company. Financial analysts can be employed in pension funds, mutual funds, and other institutional investment organizations—then, they are called *buy-side* financial analysts. They work for these investment organizations helping make decisions on what to buy and what to sell. Needless to say, IROs know well the financial analysts responsible for evaluating their company and try to maintain a good relationship with them. Some analysts, however, can be employed by *sell-side* organizations that do not own any stock in the company but can aid others in buying or selling the stock. Many brokerage organizations employ financial analysts and, based on the research reports produced, make recommendations to their clients on what shares to buy and what shares to sell. Sell-side financial analysts can sell their research and make recommendations to individual retail shareholders as well as to professional institutional investors. For many smaller companies, getting regular coverage by a sell-side financial analyst is an important goal of investor relations programs: for media relations professionals inclusion in a report by a large sell-side analyst firm, such as Merrill Lynch, can be similar to having the company featured on a front-page of *The New York Times*.

Board of Directors

The company's Board of Directors is the highest corporate authority elected by all owners of the company's voting stock. The Board of Directors is responsible for overall corporate strategy and appointment of top managers, including the CEO—who, in turn, is responsible for day-to-day implementation of this strategy. It is the job of IROs to provide full and complete reports to the Board on how the investment community perceives the success or failure in implementation of the Board's strategy. IROs conduct extensive research on behalf of the Board and report on changes in share price and liquidity, key changes in the ownership structure, financial analysts' research reports and recommendations, and other feedback from investors and shareholders, and help the Board with evaluating future decisions' impact on the investment community and, if necessary, with modifications of corporate strategy.

This reporting responsibility to the Board of Directors places IROs in a difficult position—on one hand, as a member of the executive team, the IRO reports to the CEO, but on the other hand, the IRO has to report directly to the Board going over the CEO's head and also has to evaluate performance of the CEO as well as other members of the executive team in front of the Board.

Other important publics for investor relations professionals include the SEC, stock exchanges, financial media, and executive management team of the company.

Key Activities

Investor relations professionals employ many different tactics in educating the investment community about the company's value. One of the most common activities of IROs is one-on-one meetings. For large companies, almost daily there is a demand from current or prospective investors to meet with the management team to discuss current or future company's performance. This separates investor relations from many other public relations functions—the focus of investor relations is on interpersonal or small group communications rather than on mass mediated communications. Depending on the importance of an investor, one-on-one meetings can be run by the IRO, the CFO, or even the CEO of the company.

Another important tactic is obligatory disclosure. IROs produce earnings releases at least on a quarterly basis to inform investors about the financial results of the company. These earnings releases are also filed with the SEC EDGAR database as part of 10-Q and 10-K, for the annual results. Earnings releases are usually followed by the earnings calls. These calls allow the management team to present its own explanation of the financial results as well as give investors a chance to ask questions or voice concerns. In the past there was a problem with providing equal access to these calls to all institutional investors and retail shareholders—today, most of these calls are also webcasted and archived on the company's website for easy access.

Investor relations officers also organize special events, such as roadshows, investment conferences, and annual shareholder meetings. Roadshows and

investment conferences are generally events accessible only to large institutional investors. For example, a company located in Iowa may send its management team to New York for three days to meet with as many current and prospective institutional investors as possible; the team may then travel to several other financial centers, such as Boston, London, and Hong Kong, before returning to headquarters in Iowa. Sometimes IROs organize these roadshows themselves, sometimes sell-side investors help in the hope of making commissions on investors buying shares of the company after the event, and sometimes sell-side organizes an investment conference, where managements from several companies meet with many institutional investors.

Annual shareholder meetings, in contrast, must be equally accessible to institutional investors and retail shareholders. At the annual meeting, the Board of Directors is elected and the general direction of the company's development is established. Some of the key corporate decisions, such as mergers and acquisitions, often require shareholder approval—then, these matters are put to a vote at the annual shareholder meeting.

Alexander V. Laskin

See also Annual Reports; EDGAR Online; Executive Management; National Investor Relations Institute; Securities and Exchange Commission

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INVOLVEMENT

Involvement is a psychological concept used to explain people's motivation to attend to and process messages.

This construct traces its roots to the late 1940s in psychology; it flourished in the 1960s as a way to explain a variety of communication phenomena. These included people's selectivity in message processing, differences in the processing of television versus print messages, and resistance to attitude change attempts.

Today, involvement thrives as an umbrella construct that subsumes a variety of closely related concepts. In general, involvement influences the processing of public relations messages two ways: (1) as an *antecedent* that moderates people's willingness to focus on a message and (2) as the *heightened processing* of messages themselves.

Involvement as an Antecedent to Message Processing

Involvement is most often defined as the degree to which an individual perceives a message as being relevant because the subject matter (an idea or topic, product or service, cause, etc.) has consequences in their life. In public relations, James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) defined involvement as a degree of connectedness between an individual and a message. Robert L. Heath and William Douglas (1990, p. 179) explained that involvement "can be used to predict a person's willingness to process a message as well as the likelihood that existing message content will be used to assess each new message."

Involvement moderates message processing because people are inundated with messages (informational overload) and have limited cognitive capacity to process information. People have been described as "cognitive misers" who are selective in what messages they pay attention to and devote only the effort necessary to make correct judgments. People are more motivated to process messages deemed relevant (high involvement) and less willing to exert the cognitive effort required if

messages appear to be of little or no importance (low involvement).

Reviews of the involvement construct demonstrate the varying ways in which antecedent involvement is used. Blair T. Johnson and Alice H. Eagly (1989) suggested that antecedent involvement can be classified as *outcome-*, *value-*, or *impression-relevant* involvement. Separately, Charles T. Salmon (1986) suggested a continuum in which involvement can be described as (a) an enduring overall personality trait, (b) a psychological state triggered by a message's connection to a person's enduring values, (c) a psychological state that results from the salience of a subject matter and a person's short-term interest in it (not necessarily linked to long-term values), and (d) as an inherent characteristic of a subject that prompts varying levels of interest among different populations. Michael D. Slater (1997) suggested that involvement is a goal-directed concept that pertains to a person's interest in processing messages based on six processing goals in which people engage.

Common types of involvement important to public relations message strategists include the following:

1. *Political or civic involvement*, an example of involvement as a personality trait, is the degree to which people are generally aware of and interested in news, civic affairs, or politics at the societal or organizational level. Certain individuals want to know about what's happening in the world around them without regard to particular issues. These individuals are sometimes referred to as *all-issues publics*.

2. *Ego involvement* or *value-relevant involvement* is the degree to which a subject or idea is of *enduring* importance to people because it links to their personal values or convictions. People become connected to many activities and causes that reflect important values or foster their self-identity. People can be motivated by their desire to either affirm or protect personal values.

3. *Topic or issue involvement*, also known as *outcome relevant involvement*, is one of the most studied forms of involvement and is defined as the degree to which a person is concerned about a *situation* (such as the impending actions by others)

that could have an impact on the person's life. Topic or issue involvement can center on issues that have relatively little personal meaning for a person but could have a positive or negative consequence nonetheless. Examples include proposed changes in tax, utility, or tuition rates, which prompt short-term concerns.

4. *Task involvement* is the degree to which a person focuses attention on a message in order to make a correct judgment or to take action. People who know they must perform a task (such as making an unfamiliar or complex purchase, or passing a proficiency test) are usually motivated to learn information in order to attain a desired outcome. Their motivation often is based on their perceptions about the social consequences of their performance.

5. *Impression-relevant involvement* (IRI) is rooted in the desire to receive praise and avoid ridicule or criticism—in other words, the social rewards and consequences of communicating about one's beliefs, attitudes, or behavior. IRI is conceived as one's perceptions of others' attitudes toward acceptance of a particular action.

6. *Product involvement* is the degree to which certain products or services are perceived as inherently more interesting to people than other products. High-involvement products can be described variously as entertaining (movies), stimulating (books), complex (computers), costly (homes), status conferring (cars), fashionable (clothes), or risky (exotic travel). By contrast, low-involvement products exhibit many of the opposite characteristics—uninteresting, simple, inexpensive, ordinary, and safe. Examples include many items purchased for everyday use—laundry detergent, snack foods, personal toiletries, furnace filters, and so forth. People's interest in particular categories of high-involvement products is readily evident in the media's coverage of topics, such as sports, travel and leisure, entertainment, travel, books, fashion, and interesting foods.

Implications of Antecedent Involvement

Involvement's importance to public relations is readily evident in examining psychological approaches to learning and persuasion.

Traditional learning theory assumes a hierarchy of effects in which people follow a series of steps from learning to attitude formation to action. Although this model clearly applies to high-involvement situations, researchers have found it does not necessarily apply in all cases. In low-involvement situations, for example, people can form strong opinions or attitudes first and develop comparatively little in-depth knowledge before they take action.

Meanwhile, developers of *social judgment theory* demonstrated that attitude change was closely related to personal values critical to a person's identity and ego. Highly involved individuals were posited to accept persuasive arguments within a relatively narrow range (latitude of acceptance or rejection). Meanwhile, individuals with low levels of involvement in a topic were not as discriminating and were open to a broader array of ideas and opinions.

The importance of topic or issue involvement is readily evident by looking at the two principal dual-process models of persuasion that have predominated persuasion research since 1980: the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM).

Both models posit that motivation to process persuasive messages is predicated on involvement. Individuals with high motivation (involvement) are able and willing to examine the quality or strength of arguments presented and process arguments effortlessly (ELM) or systematically (HSM). This is labeled *central route* (ELM) or *systematic processing* (HSM).

By contrast, less motivated individuals (low involvement) look for cognitive shortcuts. These are referred to as *peripheral cues* (ELM) or *heuristic cues* (HSM) contained in messages. Examples of cues include the credibility of the source (including expertise or familiarity), graphics (photos, charts, etc.), and the simple number of arguments made. These low-involvement individuals thus use *peripheral route* (ELM) or *heuristic processing* (HSM).

The two models vary somewhat in terms of their explanations for how persuasion occurs and originally suggested that these processes operate independently (ELM) or concurrently (HSM). Both agree, however, that central or systematic processing is a more enduring form of persuasion.

Applications of Antecedent Involvement in Public Relations

Researchers have recognized the importance of involvement in theories for segmenting public relations audiences by identifying the probability that people become active on issues and in models.

J. E. Grunig and Hunt (1984) incorporated involvement in their situational theory of publics to explain why people become active on particular issues, specifically their engagement in communications behaviors: active information seeking and passive information processing. Situational theory posits that people with high issue involvement, high recognition of a situation as problematic, and low recognition of the constraints that might inhibit a remedy are most likely to become active on an issue. Indeed, involvement served as a better predictor of activism than various other socioeconomic variables. Involvement similarly is incorporated in Jeong-Nam Kim and J. E. Grunig's (2011) situational theory of problem solving.

J. E. Grunig (2000) used involvement to distinguish between *active* and *passive* publics and suggested that public relations practitioners should focus efforts on active or highly involved publics. However, Heath and Douglas (1990, 1991) pointed out that people can be highly involved in an issue because they either oppose or support it. These authors suggested a three-part typology that specifies (a) *involved-opposed*, (b) *involved-supportive*, and (c) *passive* audiences.

Kirk Hallahan in the early 2000s argued that involvement should be distinguished from knowledge about an issue. Hallahan suggested that level of involvement and knowledge about a topic can form the basis for segmenting publics using a 2×2 -category matrix. He defined an *active* public as a group with high involvement and high knowledge of a topic, versus an *inactive* public, where both involvement and knowledge are low. By contrast, an *aware* public can be knowledgeable but not be involved because they perceive a situation as having little consequence for them. Meanwhile an *aroused* public is one with high involvement but low knowledge.

Beyond situational theory and typologies of publics, public relations message researchers examined the impact of involvement in only a few studies. On the other hand, advertisers developed

an extensive body of knowledge about the impact of topic, task, and product involvement in a variety of persuasive contexts. One noteworthy public relations study by Hallahan (1999) used the dual processing models to test the comparative effectiveness of news versus advertising. Content class—whether information appeared as news or advertising—served as a peripheral or heuristic cue. The study manipulated both task and product involvement and reflected some support for the HSM and only modest support for the claim about the superiority of news versus advertising.

Involvement as Heightened Message Processing

Whereas antecedent involvement focuses on characteristics the audience brings to the message processing experience (including personality, concerns, perceptions, etc.), involvement also has been addressed as increased motivation that stems from and explains message processing itself. Glen T. Cameron (1993), for example, argued that involvement entails making relational judgments and can only be examined as a condition or experience within an individual in response to a stimulus. Importantly, message processing involvement must be clearly distinguished from antecedent involvement.

Increased involvement in message processing has been defined and measured by C. Whan Park and Banwari Mittal (1985) as heightened arousal and attention to the message. Others have explained heightened processing involvement as including four stages or increasingly deeper levels of message processing, namely pre-attention, focal attention, comprehension, and elaboration. Others proposed that involvement can be explained as increased cognitive activation of memory nodes: The more cognitive stimulation and the more associations made, the higher the level of involvement.

Implications of Message Processing Involvement for Public Relations

Public relations strategists must recognize that not all audiences share the same level of interest in an issue or topic. The objectives of persuasive public relations messages must be to capture people's attention and to promote greater

message exposure, perception, comprehension, and retention.

All effective messages must underscore the relevance of subject to the audience. This task is particularly critical for audiences with low levels of antecedent involvement. In this instance, it is critical to present messages rich in peripheral or heuristic cues and to avoid complex arguments that might result in suspended processing. But even for individuals with comparatively high levels of antecedent involvement, it is important to maintain (and heighten) involvement in the message itself.

Applications of Message Processing Involvement in Public Relations

Recent research in information campaigns suggested that one technique is to match the type of argument to the *type* (not merely level) of involvement. Michael D. Slater and Donna Rouner (1996) showed that statistics (versus anecdotes) led to greater persuasiveness and believability among individuals engaged in processing messages that bolstered personal values (value-affirmative processing), whereas anecdotes (versus statistics) were more persuasive and believable among individuals when messages challenged their values (value-protective processing).

Drawing on research in the advertising arena, Hallahan (2001) suggested that practitioners must enhance an audience's motivation, ability, and opportunity (M-A-O) to process public relations messages (see Figure 1). He identified commonly accepted techniques ("tricks of the trade") that serve that purpose and are grounded in persuasion theory. Beyond motivation, however, he stressed it is important to make messages *easy* to understand and to give audiences *more chances* to be exposed to a message. This is especially important for low-involvement audiences, who will not otherwise seek information in the same way as highly involved individuals.

Among activists, agenda building involves increasing people's involvement, or getting people to recognize that a problem or issue has personal relevance to them. Claims makers use a variety of techniques—including statistics and large numbers, celebrity endorsers, symbols (icons, stories, typification, and synecdoche), framing, and media publicity—to capture public attention and broaden

Figure 1 Motivation-Ability-Opportunity Model for Enhancing Message Processing

<i>Enhance Motivation</i>	<i>Enhance Ability</i>	<i>Enhance Opportunity</i>
Attract and encourage audiences to commence, continue processing	Make it easier to process the message by tapping cognitive resources	Structure messages to optimize processing
Create attractive, likable messages (create affect) Appeal to hedonistic needs (sex, appetite, safety) Use novel stimuli ☐ Photos ☐ Typography ☐ Oversized formats ☐ Large number of scenes, elements ☐ Changes in voice, silence, movement Make the most of formal features ☐ Format size ☐ Music ☐ Color ☐ Include key points in headlines Use moderately complex messages Use sources who are credible, attractive, or similar to audience Involve celebrities Enhance relevance to audience—ask them to think about a question Use stories, anecdotes, or drama to draw into action Stimulate curiosity: Use humor, metaphors, questions Vary language, format, source Use multiple, ostensibly independent sources	Include background, definitions, explanations Be simple, clear Use advance organizers (e.g., headlines) Include synopses Combine graphics, text, and narration (dual coding of memory traces) Use congruent memory cues (same format as original) Label graphics (helps identify which attributes to focus on) Use specific, concrete (versus abstract) words and images Include exemplars, models Make comparison with analogies Show actions, train audience skills through demonstrations Include marks (logos, logotypes, trade marks), slogans, and symbols as continuity devices Appeal to self-schemas (roles, what's important to audience's identity) Enhance perceptions of self-efficacy to perform tasks Place messages in conducive environment (priming effects) Frame stories using culturally resonating themes, catch phrases	Expend sufficient effort to provide information Repeat messages frequently Repeat key points within text—in headlines, text, captions, illustrations, etc. Use longer messages Include multiple arguments Feature “interactive” illustrations, photos Avoid distractions ☐ Annoying music ☐ Excessively attractive spokespersons ☐ Complex arguments ☐ Disorganized layouts Allow audiences to control pace of processing Provide sufficient time Keep pace lively and avoid audience boredom

Source: Reprinted from *Public Relations Review*, 26(4), by Kirk Hallahan, *Enhancing audience motivation, ability and opportunity to process public relations messages*, pp. 463–480, ©2000, with permission from Elsevier.

interest. Activists rely on heightened message involvement (increased arousal and attention, more elaborative cognitive processing, and the activation of cognitive traces related to seemingly disparate areas of interest) to make the connections required.

Antecedent involvement and message involvement clearly work in tandem. Previous exposure to persuasive messages helps define one's antecedent

involvement level. Then, heightened involvement in processing a subsequent message helps tap a person's predisposition toward a message and can make the subject matter even more relevant.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Framing Theory; Persuasion Theory; Publics; Situational Theory of Publics; Situational Theory of Problem Solving; Third-Party Endorsement

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ISRAEL, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Contemporary Israeli public relations is rooted in the endeavors of Zionist institutions and the governments of Israel to enlist support, to gather resources, and to educate a new nation. From the late 19th century, the Zionist movement used public relations tools to persuade internal and external constituents to engage in the campaign for a Jewish state in the ancient homeland of the Jewish people. When the State of Israel was declared in 1948, the government employed professional communicators, including film makers, journalists, and writers, to mobilize people to participate and sacrifice individual goals, to enlist to pioneering missions and service in the army, to promote its ideology and reputation, and to create a new Israeli identity and culture. The campaign focused on the revival of the Hebrew language as a unifying force. The profession's evolution in the specific environment of Israel sheds light on the role of public relations in nation building as well as demonstrating how specific national circumstances stimulate and inhibit professional development.

In Israel, the term *Hasbara* (a Hebrew noun from the verb *le'hasbir* meaning “to explain”) is significant. *Hasbara* is often described as a persuasive communication effort to justify policies, or military operations, and to promote social integration, unity, and consensus. Often a synonym for both *propaganda* and *public relations*, *Hasbara*

reflects a paternalistic attitude toward a population of new immigrants from 70 countries who were assumed to require explanations to be able to understand the meaning of news items and how they matched with official narratives. Hasbara presumes that the constant threat to the state obliges the individual to always trust the state's power and the moral justification of its actions. The Hasbara concept indicates Israel's formal rather than liberal democracy and the enlisted nature of its institutions, including the media.

As a result of the government's centralized control over Israel's society, media, and markets in the first three decades of the state, its leaders usually expected their spokespeople to produce work closer to propaganda than public relations. The media mainly cooperated with the government and were more committed to Zionist goals than to professional values and independence. In the resulting absence of investigative and critical journalism, organizations did not need to employ public relations practitioners to deal with the media. Accordingly, the function of media relations did not develop until the mid-1970s, when journalists started to confront the leadership and became interested in consumer affairs and civil rights.

Unlike media relations, fundraising was an early and distinctive feature of Israeli public relations with deep roots reaching to the first century dispersion of the Jewish people among other nations. Since the Roman destruction of the Judea kingdom in 73 BCE, emissaries were sent to Jewish communities overseas to collect money for the small Jewish community continuing to live in the old land, now called Palestine. The emissaries used news stories, emulates, pictures, and emotional messages from Rabbis to successfully solicit donations and were highly respected. Pioneering professional public relations departments appeared in the pre-state era in nonprofit organizations that depended on donations from Diaspora Jews and communicated effectively with donors. Public relations practitioners in major hospitals, universities, and museums benefited from the traditional fundraising expertise of these emissaries.

Modern Israeli public relations emerged by divorcing itself from advertising and only later from journalism. In the 1960s, public relations

agencies were featured only as offspring of, and competitors to, advertising firms. Israel's isolation from the global market because of the Arab boycott, a government-controlled economy, a lack of competition, and a low standard of living all combined to limit their need for public relations. The first agencies focused on the entertainment sector until the cultural, economic, and political changes of the 1980s and 1990s opened up the Israeli market. The increase in imported consumer goods into the newly competitive environment enabled the growth of product promotion practitioners.

Changes in media and politics—especially the move from party nomination committees to primaries—stimulated the development of political consultancies and lobbying experts. The economic stabilization reform of 1985, and the 1993 Oslo peace agreement with the Palestinians, promoted high economic growth. The dramatic success of the high-tech industry in global markets and activities in the stock exchange stimulated the rise of firms specializing in high-tech and investor relations. That sudden growth of the industry resulted in increased numbers and many practitioners joining the field without appropriate training or ethics knowledge. The 2012 president of the Israeli Public Relations Association (ISPRA) estimated that 4,000 Israelis make their living in the industry, but only 400 are members of ISPRA. In 2011, Israel ranked 36 out of 183 nations on the Transparency International list of corruption perceptions and there was a concern around falling standards in organizational ethics. Founded in 1961, ISPRA only adopted a code of ethics in 1987 and reports detailing unethical conduct are frequent.

In a broad generalization, it can be claimed that early practitioners and their Zionist forerunners, who both practiced one-way communication in the service of their ideology, were replaced by professionals who practiced one-way communication in the service of businesses. Contemporary public relations needs an environment respectful of freedoms and individual citizen rights. Recent changes toward a more closed and less democratic state under the 2009 right wing and religious-influenced government posed new challenges for human rights and freedoms. Accordingly, these restrictions on democracy and

media also pose risks for the public relations profession.

Margalit Toledano

See also Deliberative Democracy; Nation Building; Propaganda

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ISSUE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The Issue Management Council (IMC) is the professional membership organization for people whose work is managing issues and who wish to advance the discipline. The council focuses on management processes rather than advocacy on specific issues. IMC was formed in 1988 for professionals who did not “fit the mold” of existing membership organizations. These men and women spanned the existing—but artificial—barriers between public relations (image), government/legal affairs (influence), and strategic planning (operations). Many people collaborated in the formation of the council, but its organizing leader was W. Howard Chase.

Members

Members come from diverse industries, countries, cultures, and sectors. Yet, all are alike in their intent to exercise corporate leadership on issues rather than waiting until issues reach a crisis stage

or are narrowly interpreted by special interests. The majority of members (approximately 75%) represent management of large corporations. Consultants to these companies compose the second largest membership segment (approximately 15%). Approximately 7% of IMC members are issue management practitioners in the public sector. Academic participation is the smallest membership segment, at approximately 3%.

Governance

An international board of directors governs the IMC, representing a diverse combination of industries, countries, cultures, sectors, and expertise. The chair is elected from the board of directors and serves a 2-year term. Officers—the chair, president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary—serve as the executive committee. Projects are completed through task forces led by board members that in 2003 developed programs in membership value, issue management advocacy, awards, and membership development. Board members are nominated and elected from the membership and can serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. All board members serve in a volunteer capacity. A small staff provides administrative support at IMC headquarters near Washington, D.C.

Mission Statement

As steward of the issue management discipline, the Issue Management Council is the advocate for effective and principled global application of issue management and the source for practitioners seeking education, collaboration, recognition, and inspiration.

Areas of Emphasis

1. Membership development and advocacy work to create global awareness of the field of issue management and the resulting desire to become a member of the council.
2. Operations and governance center attention on leadership and management of a robust, growing, and practitioner-based professional organization.

3. Stewardship exercises the responsibility to exert IMC's leadership to advance the discipline.
4. Products and services continue to refine educational, communication, and consultation offerings to support practitioner needs and field advancement.

Products and Services

IMC offers the following services to the global body of issue management practitioners, as well as to any member of the general public who is interested in learning more about issue management.

Practitioner Exchange

Member dialogue takes place along formal and informal channels. Many IMC members simply contact each other on an as-needed basis. Sometimes the IMC staff helps facilitate small-group conversations based on member interests and inquiries. Each month an emerging issues teleconference takes place, involving selected members according to their issue expertise. For the first year of membership, individuals are assigned an IMC new-member mentor. These relationships provide the camaraderie of like-minded colleagues who are helping their organizations reach a breakthrough in management philosophy and practice.

Access to the Members Only section of the IMC website offers the capability to search for fellow members by name, company, region, and issue expertise. Other online resources include the Issue Management Bibliography and the Compendium of Issue Management Speeches, as well as occasional papers and presentations of interest.

Issue Management Training

Beginners find the 1-day overview titled Introduction to Issue Management very useful as an outline of key concepts, methodologies, terminology, and structure. This workshop is usually held in conjunction with the IMC Annual Conference and is also available on an in-house basis for member companies.

For those interested in identifying emerging issues, the IMC hosts an Emerging Issue Workshop featuring presentations from leading issue advocates and advanced methodologies for issue identification.

The Issue Management in Practice workshop offers case studies and practical applications of issue management in the field. When sponsored by an IMC member company, this gathering is held as a member forum, and registration fees are waived for IMC members.

The IMC Annual Conference is an examination of the current state of the art in issue management on a worldwide basis and features elements of the aforementioned themes, along with the presentation of the Chase Award for Excellence in Issue Management. At this conference, practitioners explore the most recent developments in issue management, including new applications of leadership and process, opportunities for deeper integration with existing business functions, and innovative approaches to anticipating and resolving issues.

Issue Management Literature

Through an affiliated publishing company, IMC members receive a subscription to *Corporate Public Issues and Their Management*, a monthly exhibit of issue management in practice at leading corporations. Members also receive a subscription to *The Issue Barometer*, a monthly examination of emerging issues, as surfaced by IMC member teleconferences and supplemented by original editorial research. Members also receive a succinct quarterly email update of IMC activities.

Opportunity for Recognition

Each year, one deserving organization earns the W. Howard Chase Award for Excellence in Issue Management. Winning this prestigious competition represents the highest achievement in the field of issue management. Awards are also granted for individual achievement in issue management and for extraordinary service to the IMC.

Every IMC member also receives a certificate of membership that is suitable for framing.

Categories of Membership

The most customary membership option is on an individual basis. Organizational memberships are also available. The third category of member is for vendors who wish to use the council as a means to display their services.

Vision

It is easy for the IMC Board to envision what it wants the IMC to become. The IMC will be

- the most sought-after, effective, and trusted advocate for the advancement and utilization of issue management principles worldwide; we will be known as the “keeper of the flame”;
- populated with the best practitioners from around the world (our conferences will need interpreters of many tongues!) who are known for their vibrant, engaging, and innovative practices;
- the first stop and only stop needed by our stakeholders for the best issue management resources—all others will benchmark to us;
- firmly entrenched in our stakeholders’ top-of-mind position;
- recognized globally as best in class;
- known as the rising tide that lifts all the ships.

Our vision is huge, but so is our passion for issue management.

Teresa Yancey Crane

See also Chase, W. Howard; Chase Model of Issue Management; Issues Management

ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Issues management is a management philosophy and multidisciplinary set of strategic functions used to reduce friction and increase harmony between organizations and their stakeholders. Although the primary focus of strategic issues management (SIM) is the public policy arena, marketplace issues, including brand equity and consumer satisfaction, also are prone to become issues.

Through nearly 4 decades of analysis, SIM has come to be conceptualized around four core functions: (1) engaging in smart business and public policy planning that is sensitive to opportunities and threats of public policy trends, (2) playing tough defense and smart offense through issue communication, (3) getting the house in order by meeting or exceeding stakeholder expectations, and (4) scouting the terrain to gain early warning about troublesome issues.

Applied properly, it gives organizations the opportunity to reduce the harm of threats and to take advantage of opportunities created as public policy changes occur.

First, to be an intimate part of strategic business planning, issue managers help their senior executive colleagues look for and avoid threats while working to take advantage of issues-driven opportunities created by emerging issue trends. Second, issues managers need to cooperate systematically with other issues specialists whose insights and foresights can scan for issues, identify issues, analyze issues, and monitor their trajectory and implications for the strategic business plan of the organization. Third, issues management can help organizations to understand and work to achieve the standards of corporate responsibility in order to reduce legitimacy gaps between them and their stakeholders. Fourth, issues management entails issue communication; the voice of large organizations needs to be heard on policy issues but cannot drown the voices of critics. For the formation of societally responsible public policy, the best minds and voices need to blend to create the needed platforms of fact, value, policy, and identification.

The term *issues management* was coined in the 1970s in response to 1960s activism. Angry critics fought to impose their values on business and government policies and practices. Growing in number, size, and power, activist groups challenged media reporters and government officials to change business activities and policies.

This pressure to redefine the marketplace and public policy agenda caught industry off guard at a time when it thought it had reason to feel good about itself. The Great Depression had ended and the industrial might of the United States had played a major role in the victories that ended World War II. Industrial leadership went into the 1960s with high marks for ethics and honesty. Once activist scrutiny put the ethics and honesty of business leadership under the microscope, senior management’s high ratings have never been the same since. Part of this slide resulted from an often quite reactive response to criticism.

In 1977, W. Howard Chase coined the term *issue management*, which he designated as a new science. To recommend a new kind of

corporate planning and communication response to critics of business activities, Chase drew on his long-term corporate public relations experience, especially his tenure at American Can Company and his collegial association with other senior practitioners.

Two themes emerged but soon were eclipsed by a more solid approach to issues management. One was the assumption that advocacy advertising, or advertising by any similar name, could solve the collision between industry values and those of its critics. The second was that if issues could be spotted as they were emerging, industry could head them off with skillfully designed messages. Over time, both of these seemingly plausible and fatally flawed assumptions have given way to the realization that issues management is never, or at least rarely, a quick fix that can be achieved only by skillful messaging. SIM experts now engage for the long haul.

As early as the mid-1970s, issue experts advised companies to rely less on providing information and to become more willing to advocate their case in public policy debates. Standard public relations practices, based heavily on a journalistic tradition, assumed that continual positive reporting of business progress solved all problems of public trust. Proponents of the new strategy were convinced that companies, especially large ones, had expertise that needed to be considered in the raging debates that swirled around the integrity of free enterprise. By 1976, terms like *issue advertising* and *advocacy advertising* were being used in business publication discussions of the aggressive op-ed campaign made famous by the vice president of public relations of Mobil Oil Corporation, Herbert Schmertz. The International Association of Advertising (IAA), in its global study of issues communication, urged adoption of the less contentious term, *controversy advertising*. Advocates of a communication approach to issues management assured their employers and clients that “ideas could be sold like soap” (Dinsmore, 1978, p. 16) if their presentation was complete and truthful.

Slowly, however, savvy practitioners and business executives realized that communication was a vital aspect of issues controversies but simply did not cover all bases. Practitioners and senior managers recognized that their organizations were targets in bitter confrontations over business

practices and policies. Criticism came from not only activists, such as nongovernmental organizations, but also from within industries, by voices in other industries, and from detailed analysis of business best practices. This realization opened new opportunities and challenges to practitioners who understood that management and public relations must work in full partnership. Public relations would fail to assist clients and employers in these battles if they were charged only with providing positive news reputational statements and attempting to do the bidding of management when their experience advised collaborative approaches to conflict resolution.

For some, issues management was, and still is, a subdiscipline of public relations. Its purpose was to debate the positions advocated by corporate critics and build positive reputations and relationships. The assumption was that the voice of industry could be strong and accurate enough to silence critics.

Issues management would have been a much different and, arguably, a much less important corporate response, if other disciplines and persons with other expertise had not engaged in the design and development of issues management. As an early advocate for thorough investigation and innovation, founder of the Issue Management Council W. Howard Chase offered a widely quoted definition:

Issues management is the capacity to understand, mobilize, coordinate, and direct all strategic and policy planning functions, and all public affairs/public relations skills, toward achievement of one objective: meaningful participation in creation of public policy that affects personal and institutional destiny. (1982, p. 1)

Chase stressed the proactive aspect of issues management, which “rejects the hypothesis that any institution must be the pawn of the public policy determined solely by others” (1982, p. 2). He and other leaders in the development of issues management realized that merely putting new paint on a barn does not change its age. Thus, to reduce the legitimacy gap, industry had to adopt new philosophies, practices, and policies.

Maturing in his thinking, Chase defined this new science as being a systematic and proactive

approach to change that requires key steps: issue identification, analysis, change strategy options, action programming, and evaluation of results. "An issue change strategy option is a choice among carefully selected methods and plans for achieving long-term corporate goals in the face of public policy issues, a choice based on the expected effect of each method of employment, cost, sales, and profits" (1984, p. 56). Action programming entails the systematic use of resources to gain the strategy option selected.

William Renfro (1993), a pioneer in the theory and practice of issues management, focused his analytical attention on the factors that predict how issues emerge and become worthy of management response. He stressed the need to identify and monitor issues as preliminary to strategic business planning. "The field of issues management emerged as public relations or public affairs officers included more and more forecasting and futures research in their planning and analysis of policy" (p. 23). In this sense, "issues management is an intelligence function that does not get involved in the 'operations side' unless specifically directed to do so" (Renfro, 1993, p. 89). Despite its need to support business activities, this function "is not closely connected to immediate operations and the bottom line," and therefore "it is difficult to determine the effectiveness and value of an issues management capability" (p. 89).

Early on, realists came to understand that organizations are required to reduce what management professor S. P. Sethi (1977) called the legitimacy gap by changing their policies and procedures as well as by using communication. A legitimacy gap is that chasm between what an organization believes and does and what its key publics think it should believe.

Sponsored by the Conference Board's Public Affairs Research Council, James K. Brown (1979) developed one of the early comprehensive approaches to issues management. He reasoned that

if management should accustom itself routinely to ask the full range of questions that ought to be asked about vital corporate decisions, taking into account all the relevant external environments as well as the internal environment, this business of issues would become, properly, a non-issue. (p. 74)

His view in the late 1970s was too optimistic, but it helped direct thinking in the right direction. No single issues management function can accomplish that goal. Many functions are required, some of which require the expertise of public relations practitioners, and by that presence and performance strengthen the rationale for including public relations expertise in corporate planning.

One innovator of the practice and conceptualization of issues management, Raymond Ewing, featured its functions as giving "public policy foresight and planning for an organization" (1987, p. 1). Advocates of such vigilance postulated that scanning, identification, and analysis processes could systematically alert organizations to issues as they emerged. These systems could monitor the origins and trajectories of issues in the hopes that strategic responses to influence such trajectory benefitted the organization.

The management team came to embrace the impact public policy trends and forces have on strategic business planning. Early discussions often did not want to consider the possibility that management philosophy and policies had to change to achieve legitimacy; others realized that if critics rightly and effectively brought troubling philosophies and policies to public attention, then savvy executives had to make smart and honest responses. Some management teams did not like to entertain that option because it meant giving in to critics. Recalcitrant managements were reluctant to acknowledge that activist and governmental critics, even other members of their industry or other industries, did indeed want to manage the business from the outside. The tools for this "external" management were legislation, regulation, and litigation.

Such realization led former Allstate Insurance public affairs manager Ewing to conclude, "issues management is about power" (1987, p. 1). Organizations, as the collective expression of individual interests, engage in reward/loss analysis regarding the expediency of opposing or yielding to power pressures from stakeholders. The equation works like this: Assuming accuracy of understanding between the parties in contention with one another—but suffering an unchangeable difference in evaluation—companies, regulators, or activist groups have the option of exerting and opposing

influence. As such, issues management serves organizations when it assists executives to foster the bottom line by enhancing organizational legitimacy by increasing agreement, improving the quality of the relationship with stakeholders in a power arena. It can also be a means for fostering identification with the organization as well as protecting and promoting brand equity.

Such lessons have been learned and put to good use since the 1970s. Even though issues management was named in that decade, its origin as a concept and strategy extends back to the 19th-century Industrial Revolution. That era witnessed a steady move toward the foundations of a mass production/mass consumption society. To accomplish that end, business leaders were carving out a new view of industrial might. Slowly fading from the commercial landscape was the small company. In its place, the massive giants we know today needed to convince key publics that big was good. They needed legislation, regulation, and litigation that supported and protected this concept. They even fought among themselves over industrial standards, such as the Battle of the Currents, which pitted George Westinghouse and Thomas Edison against one another to determine whether alternating current or direct current would be the industry standard.

In a time when free capitalism was on the lips of these industrial giants, many were trying, and often succeeding, to limit competition through monopolistic practices. The issues management question of that day was, when is big too big? When does competition fail to serve the interest of customers? Related to that was the issues management challenge of the telephone companies to convince the public that regulated monopolies were best. Tangles of phone lines and incompatible systems nearly convinced the public that the telephone was a nuisance rather than a necessity. AT&T convinced government and the public that regulated monopolies are good. So did the electric industry and the natural gas industry, for instance.

Thus, issues management is more than an aggressive and open contest of issues. It is the management function that helps a variety of organizations serve stewardship roles to create better businesses and better business systems. It is a vital part of activism, issue-relevant nonprofit organizations, and governmental agencies. It has even become

quite popular with organizations that are devoted to protecting their brand equity against unfair and inaccurate criticism, as well as unforeseen public policy shifts.

As time allows for increasing insight, it is apparent that issues, risks (management and communication), crisis management, and communication are interconnected. Activists leveraged substantial power because they are at times the only segment that the general public has to look to for advocates of their interests. Government officials find themselves strained to balance these tangled interests. Such is the challenge and playing field of issues management, one strategic option to reestablish the age of deference.

Robert L. Heath

See also Age of Deference, End of the; Battle of the Currents; Brand Equity and Branding; Chase, W. Howard; Issue Management Council; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap

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K

KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS

A knowledge network is a network used by knowledge-sharing entities, such as individuals, organizations, and nonhuman agents (e.g., websites, content, and referral databases). Peter R. Monge and Noshir Contractor (2003) described such networks as distributed repositories of knowledge elements or units that form a larger knowledge domain. The concept of knowledge networks applies the social network perspective to understand how knowledge is obtained, learned, and transferred in organizational structures and by networked individuals. The process through which knowledge circulates within knowledge networks reflects and affects how knowledge is created, distributed, and applied.

Knowledge networks take numerous forms. For example, the Web can be used for knowledge acquisition, sharing, and application. So too, social media constitute individual and organizational knowledge networks. These networks allow members of organizations to create, share, and use strategic knowledge to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Such networks are especially valuable for high-tech companies and institutions that rely heavily on knowledge for survival and development (e.g., universities, research institutions). Effective knowledge networks help keep an optimal rate of knowledge creation and sharing and therefore facilitate information exchanges.

Knowledge networks exist at organizational, regional, and global levels. At the organizational

level, an effective knowledge network offers organizations benefits, such as greater customer intimacy, improved strategic planning, flexible adaptation to market changes, improved decision-making processes, and rapid and flexible supply chain management. These can have regional and even global impact.

Effective knowledge networks can be created by a combination of new organizational designs and the adoption of new technologies (e.g., data mining and intelligent agents). Public relations practitioners should play active roles in the building and maintenance of these networks, especially by providing knowledge that can be stored, shared, and retrieved through them.

At the regional and global level, knowledge networks incorporate professional associations, academic institutions, development agencies, foundations, think tanks, consultancy firms, individual experts, and scientific communities that organize around special subjects or issues. A network amplifies and disseminates ideas, research, and information to an extent that could hardly be achieved by particular individuals or institutions. Moreover, a network confers legitimacy and pools authority and respectability. Especially for nongovernmental organizations and activist groups, knowledge networks help to draw media attention and provide information to followers.

In the knowledge economy, knowledge has become an important resource for organizations and individuals. Public relations practitioners should be aware of the importance of such networks and

help their organizations build and maintain them effectively.

Aimei Yang

See also Commodifying Information; Network Theory; Social Networks/Niche Networks; Systems Theory

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KOREA, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

In Korea, public relations is called *Hong Bo*. Its contemporary in Korea coincides with the Japanese defeat in World War II (e.g., Kim, 2003; Rhee, 2002). As Japan retreated from Korea, the U.S. Army implemented its temporary governance over the southern half of Korea (South Korea) under the United Nations trusteeship in 1945. During this administrative transition, the term *public relations* was used and practiced for the first time in Korea. The practice at that time concentrated on controlling the press (e.g., censorship) to enhance the administration's positions on policies and ideas. Thus, Korean public relations practices began with an American style of media relations.

During the 1960s, public relations came to be widely practiced in Korean businesses, and increased significantly in the 1970s as the economy expanded rapidly. In particular, *Chaebols* (large, often family-owned and controlled, business conglomerates) needed to interact with various publics, which

required public relations. Chaebols were connected closely with the government and enjoyed special privileges, such as preferential financing arrangements and contracts in exchange for political funds and other support that were often perceived as illegal by the general public. Hence, Chaebols established in-house public relations units to manage these perceptions. The primary task of public relations was to evade public criticism about Chaebols' wrongdoings. Toward this end, public relations departments in Chaebols focused largely on publicity to avoid negative news reports on their collusive transactions with the government and monopolies in certain markets (Kim & Hon, 1998). Media relations is still the most frequent assignment, requiring about 95% of the public relations personnel (Korea Public Relations Association, 2003).

During the 1980s, Korean society underwent relentless democratization movements and business internationalization. Many multinational corporations and big local companies needed more advanced public relations practices to keep up with changing political, cultural, and business environments. In particular, the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic Games acted as a catalyst to the development and change of the public relations industry. For the first time in Korea, "full-service" public relations firms were established, including Communications Korea (Hill & Knowlton affiliate), Merit Communications (Burson-Masteller affiliate), and KPR & Associates. Before the 1980s, there was no independent public relations firm, only in-house departments in large Chaebol companies. In 1989, Korean public relations practitioners established their first professional association, the Korea Public Relations Association (KPRA).

In the early 1990s, the Korean public relations industry expanded steadily. The public relations industry grew at about 30% to 40% annually (Park, 2001). However, in the late 1990s, the economic crisis in Korea slowed the growth of the public relations industry. During this "IMF crisis" (i.e., IMF imposed harsh austerity measures for the financial bailout during 1997–1998) corporate activities, including public relations, became somewhat stagnant (Rhee, 2002). Nonetheless, a strong economic recovery suggests the need and opportunity for public relations in Korea. As of 2009, the *Korean Public Relations Yearbook* (2010) listed 30 major public relations firms, 58 public relations

agencies, and 31 large in-house public relations departments in major Korean Chaebols.

Practice Models

In line with an ordinate emphasis on media relations, public relations practitioners in Korea tended to enact technical public relations (press agency and public information) more frequently than managerial models (Kim & Hon, 1998). On the other hand, these same practitioners desire to mature toward performance of managerial models. On the whole, while Korean public relations has enhanced its sophistication in its practices over time, it is still very much in the formative stage (relative to the U.S. public relations) (e.g., Kim & Hon, 1998; Park, 2003).

Further, Korean practice of press agency (and for that matter most of public relations activities) is primarily enacted through the “personal influence model,” where public relations practitioners mobilize various interpersonal relationships with key individuals in government, media, political entities, and activist groups in order to affect their organizational interests (e.g., Kim & Hon, 1998; Park, 2003). More specifically, Jae-Hwa Shin and Glen Cameron (2003) found that informal relations enacted through unofficial calls, private meetings, regional/alumni/blood ties, press tours, bargaining advertising, perks, including golf/climbing, and others, affected news coverage (e.g., what and how news is presented) at least moderately.

Samsup Jo and Yungwook Kim (2004) examined the personal influence model by identifying three specific subdimensions: seeking informal relationships (easy access to or personal connection with journalists), providing monetary gifts (tactics, such as gift offering, social gathering, and offering monetary benefits to maintain favorable relationships with journalists), and formal responsibility of public relations (e.g., developing and disseminating valuable news items and doing follow-up services for further inquiries). Such tactics are consistent with Korean cultural norms and values. Confucianism, in particular, encourages close, personal social ties and harmony among concerned parties (e.g., public relations practitioners and journalists) (Kim & Bae, 2006). When faced with nonroutine crisis or conflict situations, Korean public relations practitioners place high

value on “enactment competency” (i.e., balancing multiple interests, protecting valuable resources, balancing pragmatism and idealism, and maintaining flexibility) (Shin, Heath, & Lee, 2011).

Recently, Yunna Rhee (2002) found that the “excellence” model is being widely practiced by Korean public relations practitioners and is highly amenable to Korean culture. Korean cultural characteristics, such as collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and Confucian dynamism, correlated with characteristics of “excellence.”

Looking to the future, Dan Berkowitz and Jonghyuk Lee (2004) predicted that a governmental declaration of the policy of the “tense regard,” or more socially distanced relations, with the press during the Roh Moo-Hyeon’s government (2003–2008) may help Korean public relations grow beyond media relations and move closer to the ideals of Western media relations practices. Also, Korean public relations practitioners may be uniquely poised to take advantage of social networking websites, including Twitter, corporate blogging, Facebook, and Flickr (e.g., Hwang, 2012).

Public Relations Education

The first independent academic department of public relations in Korea was established at Chung Ang University in 1974. Since then, educational endeavors have expanded substantially. As of 2010, a total of 82 universities offer an undergraduate curriculum that includes public relations courses. Thirty-six universities offer undergraduate and graduate curriculums where public relations is a subdiscipline (*Korea Public Relations Year Book*, 2010). Twenty-eight universities have an undergraduate program that includes “public relations” as part of the department name (e.g., department of advertising and public relations), and there are five graduate schools with public relations in their program name (Korea Press Foundation, 2012).

Many professional and academic associations of public relations are very active. The major public relations affiliates include Korea Public Relations Association, Korean Academic Society for Public Relations, Korean Association for Advertising and Public Relations, Korea Public Relations Consultancy Association, Korea Universities PR

Association, Korea Business Communicators Association, and Korean Hospital Public Relations Association.

Jaesub Lee

See also Culture; Excellence Theory; Leadership and Public Relations; Media Relations; Online Public Relations; Press Agency; Propaganda; Relationship Management Theory; Social Media; Social Networking; Social Networks/Niche Networks

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LABOR UNION PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations is vital to labor unions' existence and sociopolitical roles. They represent the institutionalization of organized labor. Public relations philosophy, strategies, and tactics have long been part of organized labor and its goals, in response to efforts opposing organized labor, as well as in cooperative achievements between nonunion and union representatives. Public relations has had a role in long-dominant "us versus them" ways of thinking and positioning between employers and workers. This is the lens through which relationships between big business and labor have been traditionally approached. There are some instances, however, in which the parties involved have overcome the divisive approach and worked cooperatively.

In 1995, Scott M. Cutlip was among the first to suggest that "much of public relations history—constructive and destructive—is woven into [the] unending struggle between employer and employee that today is fought with publicists, not Pinkertons" (pp. 204–205). In fact, many labor unions have a history of the skilled use of public relations. A former UPS vice president for corporate relations advocated that it is not good to underestimate the public relations power of unions such as the Teamsters. Doing so may make an opposing organization lose the battle for a desired public image. The current socioeconomic U.S. culture in existence drives the need for a favorable image;

image often determines an organization's successful goal attainment.

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) defines a *union* on its official website as a group of workers that comes together to "gain strength in numbers so they can have a voice at work about what they care about" and "speak out for fairness for all working people in their communities and create better standards and a strong middle class across the country." As a major representative body for U.S. organized labor, the AFL-CIO engages in public relations strategies and tactics to give organized labor a voice and pursue its goals. Individual unions at the national and local levels also use public relations strategies and tactics.

The Industrial Revolution brought with it the beginnings of organized labor. Unions were formed. Leadership was often provided by those formerly trained in the ways of communism. Formation of unions was in direct response to the worker treatment meted out by industrialists. The era was riddled with violent factory life, strikes, and strike-breaking activities. Union leaders used public relations strategies and tactics to rally workers to organize, gain community support, and communicate prolabor messages to factory owners and representatives of the U.S. government. At the same time, public relations strategies and tactics were used by industrialists to rally support, within communities and among representatives of the government, against organized labor and its goals. Public relations led the way as industrialists

learned to communicate with the press and union representatives, and union representatives learned to communicate with the press, the industrialists, among themselves, and with their memberships. Organized labor used the power of public relations to lead the way to such accomplishments as the abolishment of child labor practices in the United States and to secure a standard 40-hour work week, overtime legislation, medical provisions, and the like.

Today, the AFL-CIO and labor unions continue to use all available public relations strategies and tactics. Websites, social media, speeches and rallies, town hall meetings, interpersonal communication, direct and indirect lobbying, press releases and press conferences, satellite conferencing and satellite broadcasts, appearances on news and talk shows, philanthropic efforts and social responsibility activities, fundraising tactics and membership recruitment, and campaigning are engaged in on a daily basis. Investigative reporter Phil Dine's (2007) book, *State of the Unions*, chronicled much of this. It depicted the historical value of unions against current media representation. Long-time *Saint Louis Dispatch* reporter Roy Malone (2007) referenced Dine's book in his commentary "Labor's Voice Needs to be Heard." He argued public relations as key to the need.

Tricia L. Hansen-Horn

See also Dialogue; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Functions of Public Relations; Issues Management; Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations in Public Relations

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LATIN AMERICA, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Latin America will be among the fastest growing markets for public relations in the world during the next decade as a consequence of improvements in education, an emergent civil society, and increased access for the people to a middle-class lifestyle. In Mexico, for example, the sector was valued at more than 3 billion pesos in 2011, a reported growth of 22% on the previous year. Furthermore, Brazil is considered a mature public relations and communications environment and one of the largest consumer markets in the world. Digital media usage in Brazil is comparable to that of the United States and Europe, and its economy has, so far, proven resilient to recent global recession. Industry is growing in size and sophistication but remains served by only a handful of consultancies. There is a wealth of public relations opportunity in Latin America.

History of Public Relations in Latin America

The key to effectively practicing public relations in Latin America is an understanding of both the unique cultures and history of the region; the most obvious is Brazil's Portuguese heritage, which sets it apart from other areas of Spanish-speaking Latin America.

The history of public relations in Latin America can be traced back to the colonial period when missionaries and soldiers acted as spokespeople for the Spanish crown in the newly discovered lands, seeking to facilitate a smooth process of assimilation by converting native populations to Catholicism. Public relations-type tools were used for political negotiation between Spain, Portugal, France, and the Americas.

Following the collapse of these empires, Latin American countries opened themselves up to trade opportunities throughout the continent and further afield. Economic development (industrial

revolution, commerce, and trade expansion) created opportunities for public relations practice within the private sector. By the first half of the 20th century, public relations was being used in an increasingly commercialized environment as a way to link companies with influential journalists and opinion leaders. The promotional sector in Latin America expanded and matured in the middle of the 20th century, driven by the influence of powerful external agents—namely multinational corporations from the United States, but also Spain, whose communication practices were subsequently adopted by government-owned companies. The continued movements toward privatization in the region from the 1980s onward, together with the political transitions taking place in several Latin American countries, made way for new democratically elected governments; this furthered the expansion of consumer society and with it development of the promotional sector.

The transition to democracy in the region is ongoing and is far from a straightforward process. Despite free-market forces being the primary drivers of public relations activity in Latin America, as in many parts of the world, the social and economic imbalances within the region meant that public relations took on a more social orientation than was visible elsewhere. The 1978 Mexican Accord of Inter-American Federation of Public Relations, for example, stated that the professional practice should operate to elevate the level of understanding, solidarity, and collaboration between a public or private organization and the social groups linked to it. The discourse of public relations in Latin America, therefore, has focused on the interests of the community. In adapting to rapidly changing economic, political, and social environments, flexibility and creativity are required on the part of practitioners.

Culture and Public Relations

Latin American cultures place significance on interpersonal relationships and networks. Three cultural characteristics that shape the peculiarities of public relations in the region are *simpatía*, *confianza*, and *palanca*. *Simpatía* refers to an openness, empathy, and helpfulness toward others and is underpinned by the strong moral obligation to take care of family and friends (or

in-groups). For example, the concept of *family* lies at the heart of the social structure and features strongly in political and commercial rhetoric. Linked to *simpatía* is the concept of *confianza*—the feeling of trust, closeness and future commitment to a shared cause, which comes from developing strong bonds (or interpersonal networks) with those with similar views and experiences. To be effective, practitioners need to build trust (*confianza*) with those they are seeking to influence. For example, once an interpersonal relationship has been developed with a journalist, an invisible trust and commitment will have been built that will last indefinitely. *Confianza* is typically achieved through face-to-face contact—via media breakfasts, sponsored events or product launches, for example, which place emphasis on socializing first and business talk second. Given the influence of in-groups, in-country promotion, and community events are important ways for organizations to establish relationships with target audiences over time and resources should be invested in word-of-mouth communications as people will tell friends, family, and work colleagues about a good or bad experience with a product or organization. The predominance of family over community interests also influences the nature of public relations and the messages produced. An orientation toward interpersonal connections and networks does not imply a wholly collectivist orientation toward looking after the community. *Palanca*, or the power derived from connections, results in societies with almost impenetrable social structures, and here it has been more of a challenge to shake off the negative image associated with corruption and pay-offs to journalists. The concept of *palanca* is traditionally linked to cultural heritage. The more closely descended to Spain, Portugal, or other European countries a person is, the higher they are in the social order. This is reflected in the public relations profession, which is largely dominated by practitioners of White, European ancestry.

Media in Latin America

Media relations remains the most commonly practiced form of public relations in Latin America. The region has a long tradition of print media, which remains important today. Television and

radio, however, are the most pervasive and frequently consumed media, with the majority of Internet users—more than three fourths—being concentrated in Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina. Spanish and Portuguese are the two languages that dominate, but practitioners need to also be aware of the prevalence of indigenous languages in particular countries and utilize media produced in these languages where appropriate. Despite the growth and development in media outlets across Latin America, freedom of the press remains a serious concern as ties between newspapers, broadcasting companies, and government or big business have been and remain strong.

Latin American Public Relations in the 21st Century

Practitioners in Latin America today regard their role as one of promoting transparency, access to information, and a sense of trust in political and contemporary capitalist institutions. The practice is becoming more sophisticated and visible, yet those who practice continue to identify with varied professional titles such as social communicator, political marketer, events coordinator, or journalist, making it difficult to quantify the precise number of people working in the industry. The areas of expertise most in demand are corporate public relations (including image and reputation management and internal communication); social responsibility (including corporate social responsibility, sustainability, green marketing, and public health education); media relations; issues and crisis management; integrated marketing communications (including branding, word-of-mouth, and promotion); events; public affairs and lobbying (including the work of the government and third sectors), and PR 2.0 (Web services and digital public relations). Given the prevalence of multinational companies in the region, particularly U.S. businesses, it is not surprising that public relations practice in Latin America has been heavily influenced by the ways of working of these international clients. Some studies have identified public relations practice more particular to the region, however. For example, the work of Roberto Simões identified six main approaches to Latin American public relations:

1. The communication approach, including publicity and internal communication
2. The marketing approach, emphasizing product and organizational promotions
3. The organizational legitimacy approach, focusing on transparency and ethical actions
4. The motivational approach, carried out in collaboration with human resources with a focus on internal communication
5. The interpersonal approach, concentrating on networking
6. The event organization approach, coordinating social and cultural activities as ends in themselves, for example

To this list can be added,

7. The social responsibility approach, emphasizing the responsibility of organizations to contribute to the well-being of the environments in which they operate; involving both proactive strategies to enhance long-term social and economic development and reactive strategies in response to economic, social, and ecological crises.

Social responsibility is at the heart of the “Latin American School” of public relations.

Latin American School of Thought

First conceptualized by Juan Carlos Molleda, the Latin American School of Thought emphasizes the responsibility of organizations in the region to contribute to the well-being of the human, urban, and social environment and the need for public relations professionals to contribute to their organizations’ philosophy of social responsibility. The social orientation has been given greater importance in Latin America due, in part, to the European colonial legacy anchored in community concerns to serve society, but also as a result of continued frustrations with successive governments who have yet to effectively address the social crises facing their countries. According to the code of ethics and declaration of principles of the *Confederación Interamericana de Relaciones Públicas* (Interamerican Confederation of Public Relations (CON-FIARP), public relations must be embedded in the idea of freedom, justice, harmony, equality, and respect for human dignity.

Public Relations Education in Latin America

An increasing number of Latin Americans are attending university, and communications is a popular major. The discipline has traditionally been concerned with journalism and social communication theory but with the development of the promotional sector and new media technologies, public relations education is growing in popularity. One of the first courses in the region was offered at the Pontifical Catholic University's Journalism School in Lima, Peru. In 1949, the University of São Paulo's Institute of Administration offered the first public relations course in Brazil, leading to the passing of the first law anywhere in the world regulating the profession in 1967. Research and teaching resources in public relations remain underdeveloped across much of Latin America with Brazil being the only exception, publishing more books than any other country in the region. As the practice and education in Latin America has matured, various national and panregional professional associations have been formed. The most visible is the Interamerican Federation of Public Relations Associations (IFARP), founded in 1960 and renamed the *Confederación Interamericana de Relaciones Públicas* (CONFIARP) in 1985. One of the largest national associations is the Professional Council of Public Relations of the Republic of Argentina (CPRPA), which brings together over 500 professionals, 30 consultants, and 17 universities.

Future for Public Relations in Latin America

The profession is undergoing significant transformation in Latin America and the main challenges are to generate qualitative value for companies, brands, and institutions; strengthen its reputation as a credible profession and subject of academic study; and make available and utilize new media tools to reach diverse audiences.

Caroline E. M. Hodges and Jorge Hidalgo Toledo

See also Brazil, Public Relations in; Codes of Ethics; Corporate Social Responsibility; Empire, Public Relations and; Media Relations; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations; Sustainability as a Global Challenge

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LAYOUT

A *layout* is the spatial arrangement of graphic elements for a printed publication. Graphic elements include photographs, illustrations, tint blocks, backgrounds, line rules, display type such as headlines and subheads, initial caps, body copy, and other graphic devices. Layouts show the arrangement of type and white space and indicate the size and position of elements. The layout

containing these elements serves as a prototype or blueprint for production. Layouts are used to create a number of communication tools used in public relations practice, such as brochures, newsletters, advertisements, fliers, posters, invitations, programs, proposals, and websites.

Layouts are often used by public relations practitioners as a development tool to perfect the flow and look of a printed piece, test the presentation of a printed piece with members of the target audience, and obtain employer or client approval of a printed piece before it is published. Public relations practitioners, along with graphic designers hired by practitioners to develop materials, often create various stages of layouts before producing a printed piece. The first stage is the development of *thumbnails*, miniature rough sketches of the printed piece. These small sketches show various possibilities for layouts. They are quick pencil renderings—smaller, but in proportion to the actual size of the piece. Thumbnails allow risk taking and experimentation. Typically, they are not executed on a computer but are fast, free-wheeling sketches used for brainstorming. In the second stage, a *rough layout* is produced from one of the thumbnails. This informal layout is the actual size of the printed piece and shows a more detailed arrangement of the design elements. Often, a rough layout is used as the guide to final print production. In some instances, however, practitioners may develop a *comprehensive layout*, which is a refined version of the layout and a close approximation of the finished work. A comprehensive layout is useful for the pitch to a prospective client or for gaining advance approval for a costly publication or campaign. Since they are full-size simulations of the finished product, comprehensives, or comps, are generally expensive and time-consuming to produce.

Layout principles are extremely important in the development of layouts. Layout principles include

- *balance*, the organization of elements either symmetrically or asymmetrically along an implied axis;
- *dominance*, the placement of an attention-getting element that stands out because of its size, tone, or shape;
- *unity*, the sense that the message is an integrated and cohesive whole;
- *proportion*, the spatial relationship of elements similar in nature; and
- *flow*, which promotes eye movement and direction in a layout.

The term *dummies* is often used synonymously with *layouts*, particularly in the production of multipaged documents such as newsletters and brochures. A dummy is a rendering of a page or pages in the planning stage, often unbound and with type and graphics crudely indicated, to show a printer the positions of the various elements. *Storyboards* are layouts used in broadcast work such as for a public service announcement or television commercial. The storyboard is a series of rough sketches of the scenes accompanied by each scene's description and dialogue.

Layouts can be produced by hand or by using a desktop publishing program such as PageMaker, QuarkXpress, or Microsoft Publisher. If practitioners work directly with a printer to produce a printed piece, they will identify the colors, size and kind of typefaces, percentages of screens, and other specifications directly on the layout to provide the printer with direction on the desired outcome.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Advertising; Graphics

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LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Leaders are vital to organizations because they make important decisions, affect individuals' attitudes and behaviors, shape organizational culture, and often represent the faces and voices of organizations. Although general leadership research has proliferated in the past century, few of these studies have focused on leadership in public

relations. However, new research is beginning to clarify leadership issues in the field, highlight key dimensions of leadership practice, and improve our understanding of how public relations leaders might be better prepared for a dynamic and uncertain future. Effective leadership in public relations can increase the value of communication management and help organizations make good decisions and achieve their goals.

Peter Northouse's 2007 review of leadership research reveals a diverse set of perspectives about what leadership is and does. His simple definition of leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3) emphasizes the importance of interactions among leaders and followers, goal achievement, and use of influence, all of which intersect diverse research perspectives. In the past century, research has focused on the individual traits and characteristics of leaders (1920s); leadership styles and behaviors (1940s); leadership as a set of technical, human, and conceptual skills (1950s); the relationships among leaders and work teams (1960s); the influence of external contingencies and the environment on leaders (1970s); and transformational, servant, and authentic styles of leadership more recently.

Transformational leadership is popular today given rapid changes in the workplace and global market. More traditional leadership theories emphasize rational processes, but transformational leadership focuses on affective dimensions of leading such as emotions, values, and personal vision. Transformational leaders are more attentive to followers' needs and may be better able to inspire, motivate, and engage followers in achieving the organization's mission. Such leaders also serve as powerful role models who help create an environment of trust and commitment among employees in turbulent and change-filled times.

Until recently, few public relations studies have directly explored leadership in the field, though the roles and characteristics of leaders are implicit in several theoretical perspectives. For example, the IABC Excellence Study led by James E. and Larissa A. Grunig outlined some general values and characteristics associated with excellent public relations units and practice. Applied to leadership, these characteristics suggest that public relations leaders should (1) be involved in

strategic decision-making processes in organizations, (2) possess a managerial worldview and vision for communication, (3) possess professional knowledge and experience, and (4) use and model two-way communication.

The contingency perspective suggests that public relations leaders must be able to assess external threats and opportunities and then advocate effectively with organizational leaders to make the appropriate decision. Power perspectives view leadership as political so that public relations leaders must be politically astute and possess political will power. Other research has found that professionals generally prefer transformational and inclusive leadership styles. In addition, women in the field have experienced more limited leadership development options and fewer opportunities for leadership positions in public relations, though this appears to be changing.

Knowledge of leadership in communication management began to advance more rapidly with formation in 2005 of The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations at the University of Alabama. The center seeks to recognize and help develop outstanding leaders and role models in practice and education and to build a research-based foundation of knowledge about leadership. The center has supported more than 20 studies, which have highlighted the influence of role models and mentors on employees and how they learn about leadership, the impact of culture and structure on leadership practices and efficacy, and the relatively similar views among women and men in organizations of all types and sizes regarding what constitutes excellence in public relations leadership.

Juan Meng, Bruce K. Berger, Karla K. Gower, and William C. Heyman (2012) developed an integrated model of leadership in public relations that reflects a complex mix of individual skills and traits, values, and behaviors. The model includes seven interrelated dimensions of excellent leadership: self-dynamics, including vision and self-awareness; team collaboration capabilities; ethical orientation; relationship-building skills; strategic decision-making capabilities; communication knowledge and expertise; and the influences of organizational culture and structure on leaders. The nature of the relationships among the dimensions is unknown, but the model has been tested

and validated in three studies and is now being examined in a large study in more than 20 countries.

Although most agree that excellent leadership is crucial to public relations practice, the profession, and its future, rapid changes and growth in the field suggest that more needs to be done to better develop future leaders. Many educators now deal with this issue by modeling good leadership practices in teaching, creating greater awareness of ethical issues and decision-making processes, and bringing students and professionals together in class presentations, internships, and campaign projects. However, there seems to be little consistency or momentum in already crowded education programs.

Professional leadership development programs also are somewhat disconnected. Some companies like General Electric have their own development programs. Others use the services of specialist providers like the Center for Creative Leadership. Professional associations also offer a variety of management development programs. However, these approaches are inconsistent and lack measures of their short- or long-term effects. As a result, it is difficult to assess systemic improvement of leadership in the field. More research will help, but an integrated national effort may be required to systematically enrich leadership development programs and education.

Bruce K. Berger

See also Excellence Theory; Professional and Professionalism; Professionalism in Public Relations; Social Learning Theory

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LEARNING THEORY

Learning theory is based on the principle that people learn attitudes through direct experiences and messages that are relevant to life's challenges and that they use arguments and reasons presented in messages to develop the opinions that guide their behavior. Learning theory provided the rationale for one of the largest and most important research projects ever conducted to explore the nature of persuasion in social influence. During the 1950s, massive funding was allocated to Yale University researchers to better understand the intricacies of persuasion. Because of its popularity, learning theory was adopted as the centerpiece of the project. This project spawned two decades of researchers and thousands of major studies and laid the foundation for many modern theories of persuasion.

A major contribution of learning theory is that it can account for human behavior, decision making, and influence without relying on *drive* theory. During the middle years of the 20th century, drive theory posited that human behavior results from genetic drives rather than being learned and subject to voluntary choice. Learning theory maintained that what people learn, especially their attitudes, leads them to be able to make choices between rewarding and negative outcomes and consequences. This theoretical approach provided insights for subjective utilities theory and also contradicted many claims from propaganda theory about how people could be easily persuaded, even by unethical means.

Central to this learning is sorting between outcomes that are rewarding and those that are punishing. How people react to messages is important according to this theory. Messages can hold content that points to positive or negative outcomes. For instance, one does not need to look at much television advertising to realize that those messages often show customers how much better their life will be if they use the sponsor's product or service. "Use my product and anticipate X" is a common persuasive incentive. Evaluation, however, can work against the persuader's message. People can think about whether the product, for instance, really will bring those benefits.

Messages must capture people's attention and be understandable as prerequisites for influencing

judgment. Attention, comprehension, and anticipation are learning factors, whereas evaluation is an acceptance factor. Evaluation was an important element in the Yale research project because it kept people from being mindless puppets dancing to the persuader's tune. Refining this line of analysis, researchers in the project recognized that two factors were essential to persuasion: reception, or noting and thinking about a message; and yielding, or allowing it to influence one's attitudes.

Learning theory was being applied to persuasion research at a time when other researchers were exploring a variety of communication models. Inspired by these models, persuasion researchers theorized that several elements could account for persuasive influence. Researchers explored how persuasion could occur because of *source*, *message*, *channel*, and *receiver* variables.

Interest in source as a factor in the Yale study sparked two decades of analysis that renewed classical rhetorical theory's interest in ethos or the credibility of the source of a message. Researchers knew that some people were more influential, more persuasive, than others. Factors related to the source's credibility might account for this difference in influence.

Message was another focal variable. The study explored factors such as the order of topics presented in a message. Researchers interested in order effects wanted to know whether it is best to place strong topics first (primacy effects) or later (recency effects) in a single message or a series of messages presented during a campaign. Researchers wanted to understand whether it was more persuasive to present one side (pro or con) instead of both. They focused attention on the emotionality conveyed in the words chosen to present the topics in a message. Dozens of other message elements went under the social science researchers' microscopes in their efforts to understand the nature of persuasive influence.

Channels were a hot topic. Just a decade before, other researchers had found that individual opinion leaders might be more important than mediated messages during political campaigns. Print, television, and radio were other alternative channels. Some people prefer print because of the depth and "permanency" of the content in the message compared with radio or television. Radio and television devote less depth to messages, but they

add the personality or credibility of the reporter. Seeing a reporter on TV might be more or less influential than just hearing one on the radio.

Researchers isolated a legion of factors that might account for why individuals receive and yield to messages differently. Some of these factors were demographic. Were young people more persuadable than older persons? Do men and women receive and yield to messages differently? Does the topic influence these outcomes? Does the perception of the relevance of a topic or the seriousness of a decision influence how people are persuaded?

Questions and conclusions came from this line of study in abundance. Perhaps one of the more alluring contributions relevant to advertising and public relations was the 12-step model proposed in 1981 by William McGuire. He postulated that the formation and use of attitudes progressed through stages:

1. Being exposed to the message
2. Attending to it
3. Liking it and becoming interested in it
4. Comprehending it
5. Learning how to process and use it
6. Yielding to it
7. Memorizing it
8. Retrieving it as required
9. Using it to make decisions
10. Behaving in accord with the decision
11. Reinforcing the actions
12. Consolidating the decision based on the success of the action

Persuasive influence is possible at each stage. Anyone designing a promotional campaign might focus attention on where the targeted audience is in the sequence of cognitive steps. Publicity, for instance, might be used to expose people to a message and get them to attend to it. A promotional campaign might get them to use the message in making a decision as a foundation for influence in the latter steps of the model.

Because of its models and assumptions, learning theory has been criticized as offering "tricks" to

manipulators and being highly mechanistic. In reality, the researchers who worked on this theoretical explanation of persuasion were convinced that social influence is never as easy as it appears. These seminal researchers recognized the limitations of their explanations even as they helped spawn subsequent generations of researchers devoted to exploring the mysteries of persuasion.

Robert L. Heath

See also Propaganda; Rhetorical Theory; Subjective Expected Utilities Theory

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LEE, IVY

Ivy Ledbetter Lee has often been called the “father of modern public relations.” He shares that distinction with Edward Bernays, but Lee and Bernays had two quite different interpretations of the profession they supposedly cofounded. Lee, who had been a journalist for the *New York Journal*, the *World*, and the *Times*, thought his new profession’s purpose was to inform the public on behalf of his clients and advise them how to win public approval. Bernays, who as the nephew of Sigmund Freud came from a family steeped in social psychology, was more interested in understanding and using social forces to manage the public on behalf of his clients.

Lee was born on July 16, 1877, in Cedartown, Georgia, the son of a prominent Methodist minister.

After graduating from Princeton, he went to New York in 1899 to work as a journalist, starting as a general assignment reporter. He soon specialized in financial affairs, covering Wall Street and the stock market during the heyday of the anti-big-business muckraking crusades.

In 1904, Lee left journalism to work as a freelance writer and publicist and then joined forces with another reporter, George Parker, to open an office they called Parker & Lee. They proposed to help business clients who were having difficulty with a critical press. During a strike by coal miners in 1906, the new firm was hired by the coal mine owners to handle press relations. That assignment resulted in the now-famous “Declaration of Principles,” a statement sent to city editors by Parker & Lee.

The declaration stated,

This is not a secret press bureau. All our work is done in the open. We aim to supply news. This is not an advertising agency; if you think any of our matter ought properly to go to your business office, do not use it. Our matter is accurate. Further details on any subject treated will be supplied promptly, and any editor will be assisted most cheerfully in verifying directly any statement of fact. (Morse, 1906, p. 458)

By 1908, *Editor & Publisher* wrote that Parker & Lee had “established itself firmly in the estimation of editors and publishers,” that they have “never made any attempt at deception,” and that they were “never sensational, never libelous, always trustworthy, always readable” (p. 2).

That same year, Lee withdrew from the Parker partnership to work exclusively with one of his clients, Pennsylvania Railroad. One of his first and most famous actions at the railroad was to change its policies regarding accidents. The Pennsylvania, feeling that any accident publicity was bad, had always refused to allow reporters at the scene of an accident and had declined to give out any information about the situation. As a consequence, the railroad suffered from rumors as well as reporters’ ill will. Lee changed the policy, taking reporters directly to the scene of any accident at the railroad’s expense and giving them complete access to all the facts of the case. As a result, the Pennsylvania got

better press and eventually achieved more public understanding regarding its problems.

Lee soon realized that his work went far beyond producing press releases. His main function was advising his clients on what they should do to get good press. He realized that if an organization were to open channels of communication and tell the truth about itself, it needed to have a good truth to tell. So he began to advise the Pennsylvania to install more safety equipment, to beautify its stations, to raise employee salaries and benefits, and even to start a profit-sharing plan.

His work for the Pennsylvania brought him to the attention of the entire railroad industry, and other companies eventually signed him on, including the New York Central, the Baltimore and Ohio, and all the Harriman lines. He later helped establish the Association of Railroad Executives to continue public relations for the whole industry. Many credited his efforts with preventing the nationalization of American railroads in the first half of the twentieth century.

Some of America's most prominent early-20th-century corporations and individuals signed on for Ivy Lee's advice, including Standard Oil, Bethlehem Steel, Chrysler, American Tobacco, Armour and Company, General Mills, and United States Rubber. He served public utilities, banks, investment companies, shipping interests, copper manufacturers, sugar cartels, and even foreign countries. But perhaps his most famous clients were the Rockefellers: John D. Sr. and John D. Jr.

His first big job for the Rockefellers was handling their press relations during a 1914 strike in the Colorado coal mines of which the Rockefellers were majority owners. When the strike got out of hand, the National Guard was called in and innocent miners and their families were gunned down in what became known as the Ludlow massacre, the blame for which was laid at the feet of cold-hearted absentee owners. The press vilified the Rockefellers as never before.

Lee urged the shy and sensitive John D. Jr. to become involved by going to Colorado and meeting personally with the miners and their families, inspecting their homes and factory towns, listening to their grievances, and even attending social events, where he danced with the striking miners' wives. Such actions were unheard of and won

glowing notices in the press, paving the way for resolution of the conflict as well as the humanization of the Rockefellers.

Unlike advertising agencies or press agents, Lee was not simply interested in promoting his clients by selling their products, personalities, or ideas; rather, he was concerned with achieving public understanding of them. If one's policies could not be made acceptable to the public, they must be changed. The work of public relations, as Lee developed his ideas, was twofold: to relate his clients to their publics through effective channels of communication and to adjust those relationships by advising different plans of action when misunderstanding or conflict arose.

He pioneered the use of employee newspapers, management newsletters, stockholder reports, and press releases to explain his clients to their various publics. But he felt that effective communication came through many channels, from "Gothic cathedrals to brass bands," a phrase Lee himself used in some of his unpublished writing about his work. He urged the Rockefellers to give more public expression to the good works they were doing, such as their charities and foundations, which they had been reticent about revealing. He urged the building of Rockefeller Center and the founding of the Riverside Memorial Church in New York City and the reconstruction of Williamsburg, Virginia, as means of explaining the ideas and ideals of the Rockefellers. These were not his projects or ideas, but he saw each as a medium carrying a powerful and positive message.

By the time Lee died, the world had witnessed a complete change in the Rockefeller reputation, from cold-blooded and avaricious robber barons to benign benefactors of the public good. In 1935, John D. Jr. wrote to Ivy Lee's widow:

From the earliest days of my contact with your husband it became clear to me that his point of view was the same as ours, that complete sincerity, honesty and integrity were fundamental principles which regulated his daily life and upon which his every action was based. What he did for us in the Colorado situation and in the general relations of our family and business interest to the public thereafter was of greatest value.

Throughout his professional life, Lee devoted his public relations work to many charitable activities. During World War I, he took a leave from his business clients to become the publicity director of the American Red Cross. He saw the Red Cross as a kind of Rockefeller Foundation for America and saw his role as helping to explain to the rest of the world America's character, its generosity, its goodwill, and its desire to help humanity and win the peace. He continued to serve the Red Cross until his death, and his firm carried on with the charitable work for many years thereafter. He worked on a voluntary basis on the public relations problems of universities (including Harvard and Princeton), the YMCA, and the Henry Street Settlement, among many others.

Lee believed that public conflict, such as existed between labor and management, could be resolved peacefully through public relations; communication would lead to understanding and compromise on both sides. He felt the same techniques could be used to gain international peace and understanding, and in the 1920s he devoted himself increasingly to international public relations. Among his clients were France, Poland, and Romania, to which he gave advice on publicizing postwar reconstruction loans.

Around this time, he found himself involved in a public controversy over the Soviet Union. His interest in Russia had begun in 1905, when he visited there as a freelance writer and publicist. After the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, he studied the new policies of the Soviets and their experiments in closing all channels of communication with the outside world. Lee felt that only a free flow of information between East and West would bring the two camps into peaceful understanding of each other, and this alone could lead to change in the communist world. He began in the 1920s to urge diplomatic recognition of Red Russia, at a time when such an idea was vehemently opposed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Congress. He reasoned that America could never influence the Soviets if it did not engage in a dialogue with them. As a result, Lee was attacked as a press agent and propagandist for the Soviet Union, but both the State Department and a Senate investigating committee eventually cleared him of any such charges.

In the early 1930s, his firm also served such foreign businesses as the Solvay Chemical Corporation of Belgium and the German Dye Trust, the latter involving Lee in another controversial role during the early years of the Nazi regime. He was investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee for being a Nazi propagandist but was again cleared of any wrongdoing. The investigation showed that his public relations advice had been sound and honest. He had told the Dye Trust that Hitler's policies would never be acceptable to the American people.

However, the German and Russian controversies damaged his reputation. Throughout his professional life, his ideas were treated simplistically by the press and his work routinely misconstrued and distorted by his detractors. Leftists painted him as a masterful manipulator on behalf of capitalism. Rightists regarded him as a misguided bleeding heart. Novelist Upton Sinclair called him "Poison Ivy," an epithet that lived on in the press.

In 1933, Lee made one of his senior associates his partner, and the firm became Ivy Lee and T. J. Ross. Ross continued the firm under that name until 1960, when it was changed to T. J. Ross and Associates. Lee himself died an untimely death in 1934 at the age of 57, leaving much work unfinished. He was deeply in debt, no doubt because he was much more interested in the success of his ideas and his clients than his own business and its profits.

During his professional life, he obviously thought long and hard about the activities he had pioneered. But much of his writing about public relations remained unfinished, which allowed Bernays to define the field more publicly. Lee published dozens of magazine pieces, many on behalf of his clients. He produced half a dozen books and several dozen pamphlets and booklets, but again most were probably subsidized by clients. Only one book appears to have been published by a legitimate publisher for its own sake: *Present-Day Russia* (1928). Two of his pamphlets fall into that category, *Publicity: Some of the Things It Is and Is Not* (1925) and *Public Opinion and International Relations* (1927).

A rich treasure of Lee's work resides, carefully catalogued, in the Princeton University Library. For the public relations profession, this is perhaps Lee's most interesting legacy, for it clearly shows

him struggling to define himself, his work, and the new profession he had helped launch. Among the unpublished manuscripts are *Constructive Publicity* (4 chapters, undated); *An Intelligent Citizen's Guide to Propaganda* (7 chapters, undated); *Mr. Lee's Publicity Book* (21 chapters, undated); *The Meaning of Publicity* (lectures given at the Harvard School of Business Administration, 6 chapters, 1924); *Problems of Propaganda: A Challenge to Democracy* (10 chapters and various notes, undated); *The Public Eye* (various versions and titles, 5 to 7 chapters, undated); and *Publicity: The Profession of Persuading the Public* (9 chapters, undated).

Only one full-length biography has been published, Ray Eldon Hiebert's *Courtier to the Crowd: The Story of Ivy Lee and the Development of Public Relations* (1966). Shorter treatments of his life and work abound in many books and articles.

In his brief lifetime of 57 years, the America in which Lee lived underwent revolutionary changes. From a largely agrarian, laissez-faire, individualistic, and isolated community, it had become an industrialized mass society and world power. In other parts of the world, similar changes produced violent results—the overthrow of capitalism, kings, and emperors in bloody conflicts; the rise of dictatorships; and the loss of individual rights as states assumed supreme authority under Fascist or Communist regimes. It can be argued that in the United States, capitalism and democracy survived the turmoil of industrialization and the rise of mass society because of the kind of public relations espoused by Lee. His methods provided a peaceful mechanism for conflict resolution.

Lee reasoned that a free press required transparency, and transparency required social responsibility. His public relations espoused two-way communication, a dialogue with one's public that would help shape policies and messages that could win public approval. The analysis of Lee's notion of two-way communication was first made in 1948 by Princeton University professor Eric F. Goldman. Furthermore, practice of the techniques he pioneered could level the playing field by giving all parties the same methods for reaching and influencing the public.

Much of Lee's philosophy can be found in public relations policies and programs adopted in

the mid- to late 20th century. Post-World War II and Cold War government programs such as the U.S. Information Agency, the Agency for International Development, and the Peace Corps would have been hailed by Lee as perfect examples of the way to influence the world. Edward Barrett, assistant secretary of state for public affairs in the early 1950s, summarized Lee's philosophy precisely and succinctly in the title of his book about the new USIA, *Truth Is Our Weapon*. (Barrett had been a newspaper publisher in Alabama and an executive for Hill & Knowlton. After his State Department appointment he became dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.) And when the U.S. military adopted the policy of embedding journalists in military units in the war in Iraq in 2003, it was following the same script that Lee developed for handling press coverage of accidents on the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1908.

Unfortunately, public relations practitioners today do not always follow the Ivy Lee model. The decline of an investigative press and the rise of deregulation have allowed unchallenged power centers to develop, such as a military-industrial complex and global media empires. These powerful new forces frequently act as if transparency, social responsibility, and public dialogue are no longer necessary for their success. Power centers with extensive resources can overwhelm the channels of communication with slick messages, freezing out competing ideas and propositions, denying the role of critical publicity in the public sphere. But both Lee and Bernays felt that publicity is essential to democracy. As Canadian communication scholar Stanley B. Cunningham put it, "For both Lee and Bernays—and their followers in advertising and public relations—propaganda was essentially a social good: good for business, good for democracy, good for society" (2002, p. 129).

Ivy Lee practiced "a very austere morality of public relations," wrote social scientist Randal Marlin in 1994 (p. 242). Lee reasoned that propaganda was evil only when its source was not disclosed. The public, he felt, was reasonable and would judge all information for its own sake if it was clear where the information came from. For example, Marlin wrote when "public utilities buy newspapers and don't let the public know that they bought them, they are obviously making a wrong use of propaganda" (1994, p. 242).

Bernays (1928), on the other hand, thought propaganda of any kind was essential in modern society because the public was largely irrational and impressionable, and “new propagandists” were needed to be the “invisible governors” of the public’s thoughts and opinions.

Jürgen Habermas, communication philosopher and ethicist, also held that publicity was essential to democracy, but he posed two versions: one oriented toward critique and the other toward consumption. By critical publicity, he meant that everything in the public sphere should be open to public investigation. Consumer-oriented publicity, on the other hand, was engineered through advertising or public relations, distorting the normative force of publicity. Habermas regarded public relations as a place for power and engagement rather than critical rational judgment. He acknowledged that “public relations may effect desirable outcomes,” but he argued that it comes “at the cost of transparency. Once the image and event-making strategies of public relations start to establish the terms of public discussion, we start questioning the motives and worrying about the styles used in critical debate” (Dean, 2002, pp. 36–37).

This is essentially the tragedy of Ivy Lee. Because he regarded the public as rational, he was willing to open the channels of communication to transparency and dialogue, and as a former journalist he was often more concerned than Bernays with what Habermas would call critical publicity. As a result, his work often effected positive change in his clients and their publics. But his motives were usually questioned to such an extent that his impact ultimately was muffled. Lee’s rival, Bernays, had no qualms about his work or attacks on his motives. He promoted himself and his ideas vigorously, and ended up having a bigger impact on public relations and the world. Lee, a thoughtful man, struggled for much of his professional life to defend himself from criticism and articulate his philosophy, and he died without fully succeeding in either task.

Ray Eldon Hiebert

See also Bernays, Edward; Colorado Coal Strike; Critical Theory; Deliberative Democracy; Propaganda

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LEGITIMACY AND LEGITIMACY GAP

Organizational legitimacy and *legitimacy gap* are terms that explain how organizations lose, meet, and regain societal approval to operate. Pioneering legitimacy scholars John Dowling and Jeffrey Pfeffer pointed out in 1975 that organizations must seek to establish congruence between social values, norms, and expectations and their activities. Legitimacy is a concept important to public relations as organizations rely on the industry to help them account for their actions in a manner that satisfies the public. Whether an organization’s legitimacy has been threatened or just needs maintenance, public relations is often necessary.

The concept of legitimacy gap was featured in 1977 with the claim by S. Prakesh Sethi that organizations suffer such a gap when their policies and operations violate expectations held by their key publics. During the period of political unrest in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, the right of organizations to operate as they preferred had been sharply challenged on an increasing number of fronts. Sethi’s explanation of the effect of such challenges began an ever more insightful exploration of how organizations may lose key public support for their legitimate right to operate

as they wish. The scholarship about legitimacy is deep, but in 2000, Josh Boyd summarized how legitimation is socially constructed, controlled by publics, and is conferred by a significant portion of interested stakeholders.

Public accusations of wrongdoing can thrust organizations into legitimacy crises, forming one area of public relations study. These challenges to corporate existence occur when the public perceives a gap between social values and a company's actions and can cause an organization to lose its ability to function successfully. To retain their legitimacy, organizations must show that they operate by society's value systems. Public relations students may be familiar with such events as the emergency at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, the environmental crisis caused by the explosion of BP's Deepwater Horizon, or Toyota's handling of its cars' sticking accelerators. In all of these situations, these organizations faced public charges of wrongdoing because their actions suggested they did not meet society's standards of safety, honesty, justice, and fairness.

To continue to operate, companies must repair these legitimacy gaps between society's expectations and their behavior. For example, when a commercial airliner crashes, the public looks to that company as well as to federal investigators for an explanation of why the event occurred and reassurance that a similar tragedy will not occur. All sectors of our society, including institutions of government, education, religion, and private enterprise, are called to account for their actions at some point when they appear to violate public expectations. The public seeks answers and explanations for issues of corporate behavior that resonate in society's collective mind. They seek responses from companies whose actions have aroused public concern. Until corporations adequately address public anxiety, these concerns will continue to hold public attention. Shari Veil, Min Liu, Sheri Erickson, and Timothy Sellnow (2005) argued that organizations must be perceived to have both character and competence in addressing concerns, demonstrating corporate effectiveness or the willingness to do what is perceived to be right. Companies that fail to produce acceptable explanations face threats to their legitimacy and their freedom to operate in society.

Societal expectations shape how a company's behavior is received in three concrete ways.

According to Dowling and Pfeffer in 1975, "organizational legitimacy is determined by its method of operation and output, as well as by the goals or domain of activity of the organization" (p. 126). Nike faces challenges to its legitimacy, for example, because of charges that its practice of using overseas factories for production is an unacceptable method of operation. Similarly, some fast-food companies have had their legitimacy challenged as a result of their output. Fast-food companies who produce high-fat and high-calorie items find themselves accused by some segments of society of not meeting America's health values. Finally, if a company is associated with an unacceptable goal or domain of activity, that company's legitimacy will be threatened. Our society finds it unacceptable, therefore, for a company to have a goal of providing alcohol or tobacco to minors.

As companies can face challenges to their legitimacy in these three ways, they must rely on one or more of three options to respond to these threats. Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) provided three "prescriptions" an organization must follow to become or remain legitimate. They posit that an organization must practice at least one, but possibly all, of the following behaviors: (1) "adapt its output, goals and methods of operation to conform to prevailing definitions of legitimacy"; (2) "attempt, through communication, to alter the definition of social legitimacy so that it conforms to the organization's present practices, output and values"; and (3) "attempt, again through communication, to become identified with symbols, values or institutions which have a strong social base of legitimacy" (p. 127). Thus, when an organization is charged with wrongdoing, its options for remaining legitimate in the eyes of the public rest on its ability to employ public relations.

Public relations helps companies fulfill the prescriptions for organizational legitimacy. If a company attempts to alter its output—as in the case of a chemical company's decision to no longer produce toxic products—it must rely on public relations to notify stakeholders that it has conformed its methods of operation to the prevailing definitions of legitimacy. If an organization chooses the second, often more difficult, option, it attempts to convince the public to change its value system slightly so that the organization meets expectations. A tobacco company that tries to make the

issue of smoking about the right to smoke, rather than responding to smoking's potential health problems, is attempting to adopt this second tactic of securing legitimacy. Many companies follow the third option for their legitimacy needs. Because Americans value freedom, for example, organizations attempt to show how their practices or products reflect this value. Sport utility vehicle manufacturers facing more stringent emissions regulations might argue against these regulations by appealing to the freedom of Americans to drive whatever type of car they wish.

Whichever tactic an organization chooses to secure legitimacy, communication, and public relations is necessary. As J. McMillan (1987) pointed out, "When the organization's public record proves to be a liability rather than an asset, the organization invariably taps its vast symbolic store for messages with which to defend itself" (p. 33). For these defenses to be successful, companies should employ messages that encourage publics to identify with them. Publics who identify with or relate to a company's symbolic choices will offer it less resistance and grant it the right to continue to operate.

Underlying organizational legitimacy, then, is the notion that companies must adjust to changing societal values and norms through communication; however, organizations can also have a role in shaping these norms. Organizations rely on issues management to shape public reaction to their activities. Often, public relations tries to reduce a widening legitimacy gap through this process. Robert L. Heath (1997) has suggested that by surveying potential problem areas such as pricing practices, corporate social responsibility, publicity choices, and customer and community responsiveness, companies try to make their policies acceptable to the society in which they operate before crises arise.

Indeed, in 2001, Maribeth Metzler noted that if industries work to shape policies so that they demonstrate concern for the public, they may head off deepening gaps of public disapproval. This legitimacy work is tricky; BP's decision, for example, to focus on image building instead of issues management in the years before the Deepwater Horizon oil spill left it scrambling to respond effectively to the largest environmental disaster in U.S. history. In 2012, Ashli Quesinberry Stokes pointed out that when organizations lack savvy issues management planning, they can find

themselves facing the legitimacy challenges BP now does: limitations on offshore drilling in the Gulf, increased governmental scrutiny, and arguments about the company's legal liability for the spill. This tradition of connecting legitimacy to issues and crisis management is prevalent in public relations. Boyd (2000), for example, argues that corporations need to undertake actional legitimation, where they demonstrate the legitimacy of specific policies or actions, to head off crises. Perhaps if BP had done so, it would not have needed to engage in institutional legitimacy, defending its entire enterprise, in the aftermath of the spill.

Clearly, the concept of legitimacy is one important part of organizational behavior. It functions interrelatedly with two other elements of organizational behavior: economic transactions and legality. These elements must work together for a company to receive societal acceptance. It is important to note, however, that the other elements do not guarantee legitimacy. As Dowling and Pfeffer pointed out in 1975, "economic exchange is not identical with legitimacy" (p. 124). A company can face economic challenges—as, for example, when a nonprofit struggles to raise funds for a cause—and still be legitimate. The nonprofit's organizational mission helps it meet societal norms and values. Similarly, illegitimate organizations, such as drug cartels, can exchange economic resources but do not meet the organizational behavior standards of legitimacy and legality. Drug cartels, since they participate in activities that do not meet societal values, remain illegitimate. Yet an organization may demonstrate that it operates legally and is economically sound and still face legitimacy problems. When news organizations invade privacy or illegally film subjects in order to gain a story, for example, they often suffer reductions in societal approval.

Legitimacy, then, is a complex blend of a number of organizational behaviors. Companies must rely on public relations to show the public that their actions meet societal standards, or attempt to change these expectations. As Metzler noted in 2000, these activities that work to boost legitimacy are at the core of public relations activity. If a company fails to ensure that the public sees that it has their best interests in mind, it will eventually face a crisis of legitimacy and lose its right to exist.

Ashli Quesinberry Stokes

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Identification; Issues Management

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LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER PRACTITIONERS/ PUBLICS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

LGBT is the common umbrella acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Research on LGBT public relations practitioners and publics is scant.

Practitioners

No published research articles have documented the experiences, trajectories, or perceptions of LGBT public relations practitioners. In fact, Larissa A. Grunig, Elizabeth Toth, and Linda Hon (2001) commented on the limited knowledge public relations scholars have regarding practitioners' and publics' sexual orientation: "By comparison with literature that deals with sexual orientation and management, it [the literature on racial and ethnic diversity in public relations] seems extensive" (p. 125). In the 12 years since that clarion call for research was written, few have heeded it.

In 2012, Natalie Tindall and Richard Waters explored the experiences of gay men in public relations through the prism of queer theory. Similar to other minority groups, gay men performed the role of cultural interpreters, and the gay male practitioners interviewed were barometers of what is cool, trendy, and hip in the workplace. Practitioners were isolated in their workplaces, unable to freely engage in the free-flowing conversations about family, friends, and extracurricular activities because they felt "colleagues shy away from casual conversations when they started talking about homonormative experiences."

Tindall (in press) interviewed public relations practitioners who self-identified as lesbian and bisexual to understand their career paths and experiences and to see how their personal and professional identities influenced how they navigated organizational networks. For these women, they did not see representations of themselves and their experience in the practice and felt invisible as they did not see nor could connect with other lesbians in the field. Not only did the practitioners face the glass ceiling and other barriers that face women practitioners, their sexual orientation added another set of barriers—a lavender ceiling—of heterosexism and homophobia. These practitioners also recognized need for diversity-friendly practices as an acknowledgment of their organizational acceptance.

The paucity of material on LGBT public relations practitioners is challenging to scholars who wish to study this area. Lucinda Austin (2010) found that limited research on several diverse groups, including LGBT, could be found in professional publications. As Tindall and Waters noted in

2012, “no published research on transgender practitioners exists, and only one academic conference paper has focused on the experiences of lesbian and bisexual women in the profession.” The population of LGBT practitioners is unknown. Not knowing their experiences, burdens, barriers, and opportunities in organizational life limits the field and hinders the development of theory because sexual orientation is a dimension of nonobservable diversity.

Publics

Advertising scholars have studied LGBT advertising and audiences, examining the representations of this group, the ideologies that shape these representations (Tsai, 2010), and the effect of “gay-friendly” policies on consumer behaviors and perceptions (Gudelunas, 2010). Little research on understanding publics from the public relations perspective exists. Laurie M. Phillips in 2010 examined the integrated corporate communication strategies of Subaru, a car company that has had a “14-year unwavering, authentic relationship with the gay and lesbian communities during which sales have doubled” (p. 1). Phillips further outlined several key steps in reaching the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) audience:

- Understand the diversity within the LGBTQ label.
- Recognize that one label does not fit all.
- Know where to get LGBTQ-related information.
- Be familiar with LGBTQ-specific and LGBTQ-friendly media.
- Reach out to communication professionals who have worked on LGBTQ campaigns.

Natalie T. J. Tindall

See also Identification; Identity Theory; Organizational Identity and Persona

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LOBBYING

Lobbying is the process of supporting issues and mobilizing individuals to effect public policy change. The goal of most lobbying is the legislative institutionalization of change. Any attempt to influence specific legislation counts as lobbying. Although some may perceive any reference to lobbying as pejorative, to many it represents the fundamental right of free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Lobbying is classified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at one of two levels: direct lobbying or indirect lobbying. The IRS distinguishes between direct and indirect lobbying based on one main criterion—whether or not there is a call to action.

Direct lobbying involves a call to action linked to specific legislation. It often involves paid individuals engaging in a direct, formal communicative process with key officials and legislators. The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, interpreted by Jack Maskell in 2007 in a Congressional Research

Service (CRS) Report for Congress, recognizes two kinds of direct lobbyists: “(1) ‘in house’ lobbyists of an organization or business—employees of that organization or business who are compensated, at least in part, to lobby on its behalf; and (2) ‘outside’ lobbyists—members of a lobbying firm, partnership, or sole proprietorship that engage in lobbying for ‘outside’ clients” (p. 5). The 2007 Honest Leadership and Open Government Act amended the Lobbying Disclosure Act “to provide, among other changes to federal law and House and Senate, additional and more frequent disclosure of lobbying contacts and activities” (Straus, 2011, p. 1).

Any employed individual whose direct lobbying responsibilities constitute 20% or more of his or her time over a six-month period is considered a lobbyist for that organization. A business or organization assigning lobbying duties to an employee, thus making that individual a “paid” lobbyist, must register and identify that individual with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House. An outside lobbyist must be registered and identified by the lobbyist firm for each client firm, “identifying such things as the lobbyist, the client and the issues” (Maskell, 2007, p. 5). Exceptions to registration rules are made only on the amount of expenditure.

Individuals working as lobbyists must register within 45 days from employment or from making requisite contacts, whichever is earlier. On another level, if an individual lobbies for or on behalf of a foreign government, a foreign political party, or any other foreign entity, the Foreign Agents Registration Act must be followed as amended by the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995. In selecting paid lobbyists, it is important to note the restrictions placed on previous employees of the federal government. In what is known as the “revolving door” conflict of interest, the Act places a “cooling off” period on many former employees extending for one year after they leave their positions. This means these individuals cannot accept employment to lobby any part of the federal government, including members of Congress, for one year after leaving their governmental positions.

Indirect lobbying does not involve a call to action and is sometimes known as grassroots lobbying or grassroots activism. Indirect lobbying does not require registration with the Secretary of

the Senate and the Clerk of the House, as it generally involves nonpaid laypersons coming together and engaging in public relations activities in an effort to politicize an issue or promote an agenda. The mode of contact between grassroots activists and key officials and legislators is almost always mediated. The mediation occurs in various forms: social media campaigns; pseudoevents staged for the purpose of generating the attention of television, radio, or print outlets; letter writing, either through the United States Postal Service or over electronic mail; town hall meetings and rallies; and telephone calling, petition signing, and the like. It is important to note that indirect lobbying may be facilitated by laypersons themselves or sponsoring organizations. It is also important to note that under the IRS guidelines even what may be considered initially as indirect lobbying may truly be direct lobbying if a call to action is included.

Philanthropic organizations can lobby along with non-tax-exempt organizations, but they must follow strict guidelines for lobbying expenditure amounts if they want to maintain tax-exempt status. The 501(h) election allows nonprofits some allowance for lobbying activities. Under this election, they may attempt to influence legislation within five categories of activity: self-defense; technical advice; nonpartisan analysis or research; examinations and discussions of broad social, economic, and similar problems; and regulatory and administrative issues. Any nonprofit organization engaging in lobbying activities may, for example, spend 20% of the exempt purpose expenditures for lobbying if its exempt purpose expenditure is $\leq$ \$500,000. Further IRS guidelines apply to nonprofits with expenditures more than that.

Public relations strategists engage in both direct and indirect lobbying activities to accomplish public relations goals. Public relations ethics call for practitioners to maintain strict adherence to the rules of lobbying and the avoidance of front groups. Front groups exist when grassroots campaigns and activities are implemented on behalf of undisclosed interest groups.

Tricia L. Hansen-Horn

See also Issues Management; Public Affairs; Public Policy Planning

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LOCALIZE

When a media release or feature is written so that it highlights information of interest to a specific locality or population, it is called localizing. Most media will quickly point out that if the information they receive is not local in terms of their coverage area and demographics, it is not news to them. In fact, the lack of a “local angle” is the primary reason media releases are rejected. Consequently, localizing a media release will greatly increase the chance it will be used. To localize a piece, public relations writers must narrow their focus and lead with the information that will best create interest among the media being targeted and the population it serves. Although this takes extra time, it ultimately will result in increased media coverage.

Localizing a media release often consists of simply rewriting the news lead to highlight a local angle and including additional information significant to that local population. One of the most common ways of localizing a media release is by geographic location. For example, to publicize the expansion of a retail chain into the Northeast, individual releases can be written for each of the cities where a new store will be located.

Localizing a piece is not limited to geographic locations however. Media releases can also be localized to target specialized media. Using the above example, a release could be sent to a business

publication highlighting how the expansion will create jobs, while the piece could be rewritten for a fashion publication highlighting the new clothing lines the stores will carry as a result of the expansion.

The Hometown Release

One popular format of localizing is the “hometown release,” which is often used by organizations to announce appointments, promotions, or other achievements of personnel. In addition to distributing a general release to the media that covers the area where the organization is located, the public relations writer can send a localized release to the person’s hometown. Other versions might include the community in which the person currently resides or the person’s alma mater. Slightly different versions highlighting the information most appropriate for a particular audience would be written for the media covering each of these areas.

For example, suppose an organization located in Buffalo, New York, is announcing that one of its employees, Michael Owen, has just received a national award. A general media release outlining Owen’s achievement has been prepared for media in the Buffalo area: “Michael Owen, an employee at . . .” However, the media coverage the announcement receives outside of Buffalo could be expanded by making small changes to the lead. A second release could be sent to the community in which Owen lives: “Hamburg resident Michael Owen. . .” A third release could be targeted to Owen’s hometown: “Michael Owen, formerly of South Bend, Indiana. . .” A fourth release could be sent to Owen’s alma mater: “Michael Owen, an alumnus of the University of Notre Dame. . .” Personal information appropriate to each version might also be included. For example, the alma mater version might include the year Owen graduated and the degree he earned. These minor changes immediately tell the targeted media that the information is of interest to their audience.

Ann R. Carden

See also Media Release; Pyramid Style; Social Media Press Release; Video News Release

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Logo

A *logo* is a graphic element that symbolizes an organization, product, or service, and a *logotype* is a typeface rendering of the name of the organization, product, or service. A logo must be representative of the organization, reflecting its desired image and positioning strategy. A logo is created to help convey a unified image by taking a complex communication challenge and condensing it into its simplest and most effective form. An effective logo should be understandable, memorable, pleasing to the eye, positive in its depiction, and timeless. It should be versatile so that it can be implemented in a variety of sizes and color schemes. For instance, it should be effective if executed in black and white, one color, or a combination of colors, and it should reproduce well in large and small formats. The Apple Computer logo, which is an illustration of an apple with a single bite out of it, is one example of a simple design that exemplifies the characteristics of an effective logo.

In public relations, advertising, and marketing, logos are implemented as part of a visual communication system or corporate identity system, which includes a logo, an organizational name, and a slogan or tagline. These elements work together to convey a particular image or key message. Many consumers are familiar with the Nike swish logo and its accompanying tagline, "Just Do It."

Logos can be created using type, line rules, tint boxes, illustrations, or any other graphic device. As part of a visual communication system, logos are placed on an organization's stationery, business forms, and labels, as well as on collateral materials

such as brochures and advertisements. Many organizations develop and distribute manuals on the proper execution of their corporate identity systems. Such manuals include instructions on size, placement, and the use of color and type in various executions, ranging from outdoor boards to newsletters. The American Cancer Society and the American Red Cross distribute a variety of manuals and booklets to their divisions, units, and volunteers in an attempt to ensure a consistent portrayal of their logos.

Research is key when developing a logo. A thorough understanding of the organization's mission, goals, desired image, positioning strategy, unique characteristics, and stakeholders is necessary. Brainstorming sessions can be a helpful way to generate logo ideas, and ideas should be mocked up in various applications, such as letterhead and business cards, for purposes of testing and feedback.

Logos can also take the form of trademarks, service marks, collective marks, and certification marks. A trademark is used by a manufacturer to represent its product or products and distinguish it from other products. A service mark is used by an organization offering a service. A seal, emblem, or insignia is used by nonprofit organizations. Collective marks are used by trade associations to promote a product provided by an industry rather than a particular manufacturer. Certification marks, indicating a seal of approval, are used by a testing company to demonstrate that a brand is of a particular quality. On the other hand, a trade name is the name of a brand or organization, which may be in the form of a trademark.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Graphics; Tagline

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LUCKY STRIKE GREEN CAMPAIGN

In the 1920s and 1930s, Edward Bernays and George Washington Hill, the president of American Tobacco, teamed up to promote cigarette smoking among women, an endeavor that was to haunt Bernays when the dangers of cigarettes were revealed later.

The flagship brand for American Tobacco was Lucky Strike, and Hill had spent years and millions of dollars promoting the signature green Lucky Strike packaging. This green color was problematic because survey research found that women did not buy Lucky Strikes because the green packaging clashed with their wardrobes. Hill called upon Bernays to remedy the situation but stated that changing the color of the packaging was not an option. Bernays responded, "If you won't change the color of the package, change the color of fashion—to green." Thus, the promotion of green was born. Bernays was to develop a campaign to get women to wear green in order to prevent Lucky Strikes from clashing with their outfits.

The promotion of green was a 6-month effort driven by the formative research that revealed why women were not buying Lucky Strikes. The problem was that women were not wearing green. Bernays did additional research on the color green itself. He found in the book *Language of Color* that green was associated with hope, victory, and plenty and was a positive psychological color. The goal was to make green a fashionable color for women. The next task was to identify the targets for the green message. To reach women on the basic fashion issue, Bernays relied on New York City debutantes, the same group he used in 1929 to promote the acceptability of women smoking in public with his "Torches of Freedom" campaign. The debutantes were opinion leaders for women's fashion. If they wore green, other women would wear green. Fashion editors were a second target. Favorable stories about green would facilitate women's wearing the color.

The basic message was simple: Green is the "in" color. The challenge was to develop the tactics that would make green a desirable color. The Green Ball, a formal dance held at the Waldorf Astoria in 1934, was the most visible tactic in the promotion of green. The color green was to be the theme, and

all the attendees were required to wear green gowns, as the purpose of the ball was to show debutantes wearing green and to generate favorable accounts of the color in the fashion magazines. A successful ball would help to establish green as an acceptable color for women to wear.

Bernays felt the key to the Green Ball was the right hostess. With the right woman at the helm, the Green Ball would attract the leading debutantes and have the maximum impact. Bernays selected Mrs. Frank A. Vanderlip, the wife of the former National City Bank chairman. She was well known and well connected in New York City society. But how would Bernays convince her to play hostess? Mrs. Vanderlip was also the chairwoman of the Women's Infirmary of New York. Bernays developed an early form of social marketing to entice Mrs. Vanderlip to play hostess. The proceeds from the Green Ball would go to the Women's Infirmary to help with various projects, such as clothing for patients and milk for undernourished children. A nameless sponsor would help to defray costs with a \$25,000 donation, and Bernays would "donate" his services. Mrs. Vanderlip recruited the elite of New York society to help her. Women such as Mrs. James Roosevelt, Mrs. Walter Chrysler, and Mrs. Irving Berlin populated the invitation committee. The Green Ball was assured of being attended by prominent guests.

But the Green Ball was but one part of a larger effort. Bernays wanted to go beyond dresses to accessories and even home design. Green should be an accepted and used color throughout a woman's life. The promotion of green was a finely crafted public relations campaign, one that depended on well crafted and skillfully executed events. The fashion and accessories industries and department stores were targets as well. Someone needed to make the dresses and accessories (e.g., gloves, scarves, shoes) and to sell them if women were to wear them. Interior designers and home furnishing buyers rounded out the target audience. These were the people who could bring green into the home and weave it into the fabric of a woman's life. Bernays recruited the Onondaga Silk Company to help reach the fashion editors, department stores, and interior designers. Philip Vogelmann was the president of Onondaga at the time and was swayed by Bernays's argument that green could become an "in" color and that

Onondaga would have a sales advantage by being on the leading edge of the trend.

Bernays and Onondaga created the Color Fashion Bureau to bring green to the home. Women were seen as less likely to buy clothing that would clash with their home decor. The Color Fashion Bureau sent out letters, on green paper, that promoted green as the color of the future. These letters were sent to department stores, home furnishing buyers, and interior designers. More than 6,500 letters and kits were sent that presented the coming green trend. The Color Fashion Bureau quickly became a source for fashion information. In a period of a few months, the Color Fashion Bureau received requests for information from 77 newspapers, 95 magazines, 83 furniture and home decoration manufacturers, 301 department stores, 175 radio stations, and 64 interior designers. The requests indicate that the word was spreading about the color green and that the Color Fashion Bureau was an effective tactic for disseminating the information. Department stores began to use green clothing in their window displays, and the Reinhardt Galleries held the "Green Exhibition" of paintings. Green was spreading throughout New York City.

Vogelman collected fashion editors for a Green Fashions Fall Luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria, future site of the Green Ball. The menu featured only green food, including green beans, olivette potatoes, and asparagus-tip salad. The message delivered at the luncheon was the positive nature of the color green. Fashion editors heard a psychologist explain the wonderful qualities of the color green, and an art professor from Hunter College gave a lecture on "Green in the World of Great Artists." Newspapers provided immediate stories about green being a color to look for in that year's fashions. Later, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* would feature the Green Ball on their covers. The luncheon tactic was designed to generate positive coverage of the color in the fashion press, and it seemed to be a success.

The Green Ball was a success because it generated large amounts of positive media coverage for the color green. Green was recognized as an important color on the fashion pages of leading newspapers and magazines. Independent historians generally agree that green did become the "in" color of 1934. However, it is not known if the

promotion of green actually led to women buying more Lucky Strikes; there is no direct evidence for that. We do know that the number-one reason women did not buy Lucky Strikes had been addressed.

On the Internet, many people cite the promotion of green as guerilla marketing and extreme publicity. The focus is on the Green Ball and the publicity generated by it. Critics have attacked the promotion of green on two counts. First, the Green Ball was a pseudoevent or publicity stunt, an event created simply to generate publicity. That charge is true: There would have been no Green Ball had Bernays not wanted to generate positive media coverage of the color green. But the news media cover a wide range of publicity events each day, from a news conference to the president riding in an airplane that lands on an aircraft carrier. They know events are staged for publicity, and they have the freedom to choose whether or not to cover them. Publicity is a part of the journalist and public relations landscape. As long as it is done truthfully and tastefully, publicity has a place in both. Second, the Green Ball has been criticized as part of the effort to promote smoking for women. This charge is true. Bernays was a major figure in expanding cigarette smoking to women. In hindsight, this is an unfortunate development as tobacco companies continue to exploit and to expand the female smoking population, placing millions of women at risk for smoking-related diseases. Actions often have unintended consequences, and the promotion of green did contribute to the spread of smoking-related diseases to the female population. Although unfortunate, this should not be justified by saying no one knew of the health risks. People must accept responsibility for their actions even if they did not fully realize what those actions might do. Bernays spent his later years supporting antismoking efforts. However, his work for American Tobacco make him the villain in many writings that condemn public relations, such as John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton's (2002) *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You*.

As a field, public relations must reflect on its impact on society, both the good and the bad. Had the promotion of green been used to sell more broccoli, it would be hailed today as a great case study in the strategic use of publicity. We can still learn important ethical and tactical lessons from

the promotion of green. Bernays provides a model for an early strategic approach to public relations and reveals the dangers that success can breed when a product later harms its consumers.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Bernays, Edward; Ethics of Public Relations; Event Management; Propaganda; Public Relations Research; Publicity; Spin

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M

MANAGEMENT THEORY

Management theory refers to the range of theories that help explain the concept, purpose, and process of management in organizations. There are, of course, many definitions of management, with management as a concept and process arguably being traceable back to antiquity. However, the systematic development of management thinking is generally accepted to date from the late 19th century, when the emergence of large industrial corporations created the need for more effective management structures and processes. Of course, the growing demand for management skills at that time and since has not been confined only to large private-sector businesses but has also been manifest within government, public, and voluntary sector organizations, including schools, hospitals, and the like. As with management in general, the history of public relations as conceived of today was spawned in unison with management theory. As public relations has matured as a profession, arguably it has become more firmly rooted in assumptions and processes relevant to management theory. Indeed for many practitioners, a key goal and measure of their success is the achievement of comparable (managerial) status to that of other functional managers within their organization.

Perhaps one of the best-known definitions of *management* is that advanced by the early management scholar Henri Fayol in 1949, who maintained that management involves “to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to co-ordinate and

to control” (p. 40). This so-called classical view of management implies that managers generally operate as essentially rational, analytical planners and decision makers directing the work of subordinates in such a way as to achieve pre-stated organizational goals. Of course, it is important to recognize that Fayol’s essentially command-and-control perspective of management was formulated against a background of the 19th-century coal industry where the challenge was to manage large numbers of unskilled and often poorly educated workers. Here the emphasis was clearly on organizing and coordinating work activities to achieve the most efficient outputs.

In modern developed economies, the role of management in many of today’s knowledge-based organizations is often seen as focusing on recruiting, retaining, developing, and empowering a highly skilled and educated workforce. But not all modern organizations are necessarily knowledge-based, nor are all workforces highly skilled and educated, and hence, management may have to operate along a continuum between at one extreme the classical command-and-control mode, and a more supportive, facilitating, and empowering mode as circumstances dictate.

Here it is also important to distinguish between *operations management*, which focuses on those decisions and actions concerned with day-to-day activities and problems, and the other extreme, *strategic management* decisions that will launch the firm on a trajectory that is expected to continue for a number of years; the long-term character of these decisions is what makes them strategic.

The classical view of management has come under sustained criticism during the latter half of the 20th century as empirical studies have revealed a quite different picture of what management involves and what managers do. Scholars such as Henry Mintzberg, John P. Kotter, Andrew Pettigrew, and Rosemary Stewart have pointed out that, in reality, management is often a very frenetic, unstructured, and largely reactive activity in which managers are forced to engage in a constant process of negotiation, bargaining, and compromise to get things done. Indeed, in 1994, critical management scholar Tony J. Watson has suggested, "Managing is essentially a process of strategic exchange because it shapes the overall activities of the organization and how it functions in its environment through the continual and continuous exchanging of information, favours, material and symbolic resources" (p. 37). This challenge to traditional conceptions of management have been taken further by the emergence of a critical management studies (CMS) and postmodern perspectives of organizations and management (see the work of scholars such as Mats Alvesson and Hugh Willmott; Martin Parker, and Tony Watson), which have emphasized how managerial values embedded in language systems, social practices, and decision routines have affected the traditional view of management as a rational objective practice focused on control and direction of resources. The CMS and postmodern perspectives focus the constructed nature of people and organizational reality, in which language systems and dialogue play a central part in creating and recreating organizational reality, and hence in shaping managerial roles and practices.

Notwithstanding the emergence of critical perspectives of management, there is a broad consensus among management scholars of the need to remain focused on the fundamental purpose of management, namely that of providing direction and ensuring the operational effectiveness of organizations in the face of what nowadays are often increasingly dynamic and turbulent environmental conditions. Here traditional management studies have tended to focus on identifying the generic elements or activities associated with the performance of management roles in organizations. However, as Colin P. Hales in 1986 emphasized, management work is contingent upon, *inter alia*,

function, level, organizational type, structure, size, and environment. Moreover, managerial work may comprise both *formal* and *informal* elements, although the distinction between formal and informal may not always be easy to sustain since managerial work is itself highly fluid. It is also important to recognize that the scope of management theory extends beyond the distinction between operational and strategic management and embraces elements of a number of other sub-disciplinary areas, ranging from human resource management and marketing management, to more narrowly defined fields such as leadership and knowledge management.

The distinction between operational and strategic management has important implications for how the role of public relations in organizations is understood. A recurring theme within public relations literature has been a call for public relations to have a seat at the top management table and to have a voice in strategic decision making within organizations. Yet, as Jon White and David M. Dozier (1992) acknowledged, it appears more the exception than the rule to find public relations represented at the most senior management level and participating in strategic decision making.

One of the principal reasons cited for such exclusion from the work of the top management team is the perceived lack of management skills and competencies among many practitioners. Indeed, a recent large-scale study of the U.K. public relations industry conducted on behalf of the Institute of Public Relations and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) found that only around 20% of practitioners claimed to have public relations representation at board level. Equally, the study found that in less than a third (31%) of cases was public relations strategy a regular item discussed at board level, and in 56% of cases, public relations strategy would be discussed at board level only if a major issue was involved. Perhaps more significantly, nearly half of respondents (47%) rated their public relations strategy-making ability as relatively weak, which may point to significant gaps in the management training and development provision for practitioners. Although these findings relate only to the U.K. public relations industry, it would not be unreasonable to infer that they may well reflect

the situation found more widely in public relations worldwide.

Thus, for public relations practitioners to achieve greater board-level recognition in what has become an increasingly professional and demanding corporate world, it may need practitioners to develop a stronger managerial orientation, broadening their knowledge and skills base beyond the traditional communication emphasis. Indeed, the manager's role in public relations has tended to be defined primarily in communication terms, often following Glen M. Broom and George D. Smith's 1979 conceptualization of a composite manager role comprising the three elements of expert prescription, communication facilitation, and problem-solving process facilitation, juxtaposing this manager role with that of the public relations technician role. Criticisms of this early definition of the public relations manager role have focused on such issues as failure to see management as a dynamic process, to account for differences in levels of managerial responsibility, and perhaps more significantly, to include any of more generic tasks, responsibilities and competencies normally associated with managerial work such as leadership, people management, and day-to-day administration and troubleshooting (see DeSanto & Moss, 2004; Moss, Warnaby, & Newman, 2000).

Indeed, as Greg Leichty and Jeff Springston (1996) criticized, the original conceptualization appeared to define the manager's role as comprising anything other than technical work. Of course, these criticisms may well apply more to the way the public relations manager's role has been treated in the literature than how it has been enacted in practice. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the expansion of public relations education, combined with the growing demand of employers and client businesses for more effectively managed programs and greater accountability has brought greater emphasis on broader managerial skills and capabilities from practitioners alongside the traditional requirement for communications competence and skills.

Daniel A. Moss

See also Management Theory; Managing the Corporate Public Relations Department; Strategic Business Planning; Strategies

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MANAGERIAL BIAS IN CRISIS COMMUNICATION

The managerial bias in crisis communication highlights how public relations and management literatures are largely void of perspectives and voices other than of the organization that is experiencing and likely framing the crisis situation. In crisis communication, the managerial bias manifests itself as a preemptive communication management strategy that focuses on crisis preparedness, including strategy and tactics designed to evade and minimize crises at all cost or to resolve such threats as quickly as possible, in part, to protect organizations from further reputational damage, legal actions, and loss of profits that often result from a crisis. These efforts exhibit a managerial bias when scholars, practitioners, and media reports focus on a focal organization experiencing a crisis while ignoring or marginalizing other entities that are also experiencing crisis because of the event.

Minimizing financial, image, reputational, and other organization damages are not unethical corporate goals; however, this bias is often the primary and even sole function of crisis communication planning and research. It often leaves out of such discussion how other interests have lost just as much if not more than the organization featured in discussions of the crisis. The fact remains that many crises arise when key stakeholders are harmed by organizations' actions or inactions—as in the case of an oil spill, chemical explosion, or inept response to a natural disaster. Yet, rarely do news coverage of crisis responses or scholarly literatures that address them feature voices of affected publics, whose interests are part or most of the reason why the subject organization is judged to be experiencing a crisis.

Crisis communication literature comprises normative theories that provide how-to strategies of crisis communication. It is dominated by a functionalist orientation that takes a hierarchal approach where messages flow from top management and positions of power down to the less powerful members, groups, or publics. In this context, corporations are empowered to shape the communicative agenda; they can determine which publics are on the receiving end of crisis communication efforts and which ones are not. Crisis response strategies can

instrumentalize publics; thus, they are viewed as assessment data points where vital information about them, their interests, motivations, and triggers are gathered (under the pretense of relationship management) as measures of satisfactory crisis response.

The managerial bias in crisis communication discounts and even silences marginalized publics and their perspectives and interests. Neglecting to integrate these voices into crisis communication planning and research (as well as media commentary) limits the scope of the field by repetitively generating how-to manuals on crisis communication that are devoid of cultural, social, and political context. In contrast, by being attuned to such voices that emerge during a crisis, crisis managers can strengthen the quality of emergency response planning and response protocols as well as enhance their crisis response and reduce indifference to either the marginalized publics or their suffering.

Damion Waymer

See also Crisis Communication; Discourse of Renewal Theory; Image Repair Theory; Situational Crisis Communication Theory

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MANAGING THE CORPORATE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

To manage or lead a corporate public relations department, a senior communicator must be able to build what amounts to a business-to-business relationship between the function and management throughout the organization. The manager of this department must guide, coordinate, and serve not only the professionals who work in it, but also peers and the key business unit heads. To that end, the theme of managing public relations is to help executives and managers to consider and plan for the public relations consequences of and needs for

strategic operations. Organizations today follow some variation on the theme of applying effective public relations practices in an increasingly global and digital universe.

At the most fundamental level, the public relations manager must use communications and management skills to deliver measurable value to the business. Concurrently, the person must guide, coach, motivate, and foster the professionals in the department. Managing the department puts this individual into counseling and influencing roles—even a marketing role—with others in senior management. Not only does this person have to at times educate and reeducate others in management regarding what public relations is but must also demonstrate how public relations can add value to the bottom line by helping to achieve organizational goals. The person in this role is expected to foresee potential “image” or reputation problems, identify trends and help manage issues, as well as offer ethical advice for positioning the company to build, repair, or maintain relationships and align interests. This requires both communication and business savvy.

As long ago as the 1880s, major companies in the United States began to form, budget, and staff public relations departments. These were often called publicity departments, a name that implies that their original objective was merely to publicize and promote the company and its business activities. Public relations activities were limited to telling the company’s story.

More than a century of experience, testing best practices, and considering research has laid a strong foundation to position and organize public relations to bring value to the organization. No organization is stronger than the quality of the goodwill and aligned interests it needs to obtain the resources of its success.

In the effort to craft the “ideal” department, one of the key management purposes is to identify the mission and vision of public relations as it aligns with the mission and vision of the total organization. It must become a vital part of and support the organization’s culture.

Another key decision is the size of the department and the specialization that is in house rather than acquired elsewhere. Because one size or template does not fit all, several issues surround the ways in which the public relations department is

positioned, structured, and managed within an organization.

Management entails budgeting to achieve definable outcomes; that is, measurable results. It requires the application of best practices to develop public relations functions and to implement them through strategies and tactics. In the broadest of terms, public relations is a professional practice that is part of the management cadre to the extent that it contributes to the net value of the enterprise. To do so, it can both help increase income and cut costs. The management of public relations is expected to earn the discipline’s keep by how it is positioned, budgeted, and staffed to achieve results that are in the interest of the business and the community, including being the caretaker of the organization’s image and reputation.

The name of the department often indicates its position in the company as well as its influence on other members of management, and on the other businesses. Ideally, it should be a separate department with its leader reporting to and being a member of senior management. Thus, the title of the senior person over this function should be at the officer level, such as Vice President of Public Relations, Vice President of Public Affairs, or Vice President of Communications. In many large companies, the scope of the function goes well beyond traditional public relations and into the disciplines of government relations, corporate philanthropy, stakeholder relations, and others. Regardless of its name, the function must be about establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with valued stakeholders.

Additional organizational options exist. Public relations may be part of an integrated marketing structure, and it may be subservient to advertising. This configuration is typical of any company with a heavy emphasis on consumer marketing. In other companies—for instance, heavy manufacturing—the lead department might be public affairs, with public relations, marketing, and advertising as subparts. An option is to join public affairs and human resources under one very senior corporate officer from either the public affairs or human resources sides of the house. Given the increasing interaction and synergies between the two functions in areas such as employee communication and diversity awareness, more public affairs and

human resources departments are consolidating or at least matrixing functions and strategies.

In a corporate-level public relations department, companies may also have public relations specialists working at key locations where the company operates. For example, a large diversified manufacturing company may have a corporate public relations department. In addition, each of its significant manufacturing facilities or regional cluster of sites might have a team of public relations professionals who specialize in building partnerships both with employees and within the community. Such has become the case as companies have become increasingly global.

Also, in this diffused model, senior personnel in locations distant from corporate headquarters may have at least minimal public relations training, particularly in dealing with the media. This strategy assumes that senior members in scattered business locations “do” public relations even though they don’t have that role specified in their title. These business or functional managers like human resources, may be responsible for understanding the public relations culture of the organization and its efforts to align interests with each community where it operates. Even limited knowledge of public relations can help them contract for the services of a local agency.

Thus, public relations can be positioned in various configurations within the company. It can be highly concentrated, featured prominently or placed in subordinate roles and diffused throughout the organization. How senior management defines and respects the contribution of public relations will determine how the practice is positioned and deployed to bring professional public relations services to bear on definable management objectives and the corporate mission.

One aspect of the structure of the department is the definition and allocation of public relations specialties. People are often organized by function and tactic. A large corporate public relations department might have many functions staffed by one or more persons. These functions could involve crisis response, corporate communications, investor relations, media relations, social media, government relations, stakeholder relations, internal communications, strategic philanthropy, and other disciplines.

The corporate public relations department also may be structured by tactic. Some of the

professional talent in the department may be pool writers who work on many varied projects as needed. Large departments are likely to matrix individuals so they work on their specialties as well as serve collectively on many kinds of projects. Matrixing can help to integrate talent by bringing different perspectives and specialties to bear on problems that require varied experience, skills, and knowledge. People may be assigned to various projects on a temporary or permanent basis. For instance, one or more professionals might manage the corporate website. One or more might write and publish employee communications. In similar fashion, an individual or team might craft community relations pieces, provide information for the company intranet site and monitor and engage in social media.

The senior person in charge of the public relations department needs a blend of management and public relations principles to guide management style. Some senior practitioners adhere to the principle that communication may not be the most important aspect of public relations. Exploring this theme, in 1995, John Budd, Jr., observed that “communication is the last act in the process of public relations—a process that should appropriately begin with policy and decision-making” (p. 178). In the effort to build lasting, mutually beneficial relationships, appropriate policies and actions must precede communication. Using counseling to advise the development of sound management policy is vital to making the organization good, prior to expecting it to speak well. To this end, public relations professionals should advise as well as help implement the business’s strategic plan.

Dozens of studies and professional papers have addressed how the public relations department can best satisfy the expectations of CEOs. Practitioners know that CEOs may misunderstand and even overestimate what public relations is and what it can do for the company. Alison Davis in 2012 wrote in *Communication World* that for a public relations practitioner to convince a CEO to invest time in communication, there must be evidence—quantitative and qualitative—to provide context, establish a need, and support a public relations program:

Without such evidence, we communicators find ourselves in a discussion where effective

communication seems subjective—that is, my viewpoint versus the perspective of someone who has a higher title and more authority than I do. Evidence, on the other hand, levels the playing field. (pp. 27–28)

In 1995, while examining the ways to please CEOs through sound public relations practice, Robert L. Woodrum stressed six qualifications for success that are still relevant today. The manager needs to have *personality*. This person must be personable, confident, intelligent, energetic, and cooperative. He or she needs to be *driven*; the department head is more likely to succeed by going to work each day committed to specific outcomes and being someone on whom others can depend. The successful manager must be *results oriented*. Can this person set goals and achieve them through the application of subordinates' skills and knowledge? The manager must be a *team player*. In addition, Woodrum noted that this person must possess *solid communication skills*. Even though the person may do less and less writing while maturing into management, the person has to be articulate and able to get the point across—both to others in management as well as to subordinates. To be a successful manager, the person needs to be able to listen to and appreciate the points others are making. The person in this position will fail if not *analytical*, capable of identifying and dissecting issues. Moreover, this person must understand the *business* of being in business, which is, delivering value to business customers, to the company's shareholders, and to other key stakeholders.

Three additional challenges of managing the corporate public relations department are worth noting. One challenge arises because of the disciplinary experience and training of the person who holds this position. Studies and experience have indicated that the dominant culture of the business may unduly—and unfortunately—influence who is selected to head the public relations department. If the organization has engineering, finance, legal, or other culture, only people with related degrees and experience may find their way into senior management. Such persons may not adequately understand what public relations is, what it can do, and what its limits are.

A second challenge is positioning the department to receive adequate budget to accomplish its objectives. Two fundamental models prevail over

how the department is budgeted. One assumes that the department is given a budget based on what it needs to do and can do to serve the interests of the business. A second model is to treat the department as a profit center—an agency-in-residence—instead of a cost center. As an agency-in-residence, the department has to compete for business by promoting and selling its professional services to others in the company. The challenge is to earn a budget as an external agency might by adding value to internal “clients” or “customers.”

The third challenge is to know when to hire professionals as members of the company or to outsource services to agencies. Having a full-time employee employed by the company increases the likelihood that the person will understand and work for the culture of the organization. This person knows the company and its business. The person is often quite loyal, beyond merely generating billable hours for an agency. However, the wise manager knows that some talents or specialties are not needed every day, 2,080 hours per year. Thus, the services of some individuals might be outsourced since it is unwise to employ those talents on a full-time basis. These talents can be employed as needed.

Management is a two-edged sword. It requires knowing what can be done through public relations. It demands understanding the difference between a “public relations problem” and a management or operations problem, as well as distinguishing between a “problem” and an “opportunity.” Public relations, for instance, cannot use communication to solve a problem that is not a communication problem. Counseling management requires trust, credibility, honesty, and experience to help executives understand that having effective public relations may require that changes be made in how the business operates, not just how it communicates.

Robert L. Heath and David B. McKinney

See also Advertising; Community Relations; Counseling; Government Relations; Investor Relations; Marketing; Public Affairs; Public Relations Agency

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MARKET SHARE

Market share is the proportion of any market that is achieved by a specific product or service of a company in the mix of competitors. Of all automobiles sold in the United States, for instance, how many were manufactured under the General Motors name? Even more specifically, market share can be determined for each individual model in an array of products. Thus, the market share can be calculated for Chevrolet and GMC (General Motors Company) pickups among all pickups sold in the United States. Even more specific market share calculations could be made by state or by demographic. Thus, market share in the most specific sense is a sheer accounting record of the portions of a market as it is divided among competitors.

Public relations is one of several business functions that provides strategies and tools that can be used to affect the market share enjoyed by any competitor in a specific market for goods or services. Differentiating between marketing and public relations was simpler when Edward L. Bernays was practicing, teaching, and writing about public relations. To quote Bernays (1955), “Marketing is properly concerned with the distribution of products, public relations concerns itself with the distribution of ideas which may or may not include products” (pp. 63–64).

The goal of marketing is “to attract and satisfy customers (or clients) on a long-term basis in order to achieve an organization’s economic objectives,” according to Dennis L. Wilcox and Glen T. Cameron in 2011 (p. 15). In other words, the goal of marketing is to maintain or increase the market share of a product or service, the proportion of consumers of a product category who consume the product of the

client. Thus, integrated marketing communication—primarily a strategic blend of advertising and public relations—is used by each competitor in a market to try to increase its market share. Increasing market share leads to increased profits resulting from economies of scale in production and promotion. Since market share is always a proportional calculation, the increase of market share by one competitor is achieved by the loss of market share of one or more competitors.

How public relations serves this marketing function is a matter of debate. At one extreme, any communication effort—even the use of events created purely for marketing purposes—can be employed. Customer relations, often a purview of public relations, can help keep or expand market share. Practiced in what many believe to be the most ethical way, the goal of public relations is to achieve mutual understanding and cooperation between the client and the array of publics—customers in this sense—who affect and are affected by the client. Convergence—the merging of public relations, product advertising, and strategic communication functions—is thought to be one of the ways to maximize the contributions of several related professions.

One of the strategic objectives of organizations working to increase their brand share is to first increase the mindshare consumers have regarding their product in contrast to those of their competitors. Mindshare was coined to represent one brand’s standing compared with other brands. Mindshare predicts market share. Because product ideas are not the only types of ideas competing for share of mind, Bernays expanded the notion of mindshare to mean the share of peoples’ minds relative to competing attitudes or ideas.

The role of mindshare, or brand awareness, in consumer choice is on shifting sands in the Internet economy because it depends on the assumption that consumers select a minimal number of options from a finite array of options. But in the Internet economy, with access to increasing variety of products, consumers simply consume more, at least in some industries, according to Chris Anderson’s theory of “the long tail,” the tail being the long flat trailing end of the demand curve. The tail of the demand curve is long and lucrative and can be supplied inexpensively, with the potential to turn the 80–20 rule on its head. Under the 80–20 rule, 20% of products

make up 80% of sales. According to Anderson's research, in some industries consumers sample upwards of 90% of available products (2008).

Many authors and managers cast public relations in the supporting role of developing mindshare to be turned into market share. Jordan Goldman located public relations within the marketing tools directly related to increasing market share. Philip Kotler described public relations as the fifth P in the four P's of marketing—product, price, package, promotion (Kotler & Keller, 2011). In that way, authors with a marketing bias usually take a linear view of public relations' role in the development of market share, functioning to raise awareness, to inform and educate, to gain understanding, to build trust, to give people reasons to buy, and, finally, to create a climate of consumer acceptance. But in the Internet economy people discover rather than seek products, substituting online reviews for brand preferences, with public relations practitioners in the dubious role of planting positive reviews and countering negative ones.

Wilcox and Cameron (2011) listed ways that public relations practitioners use traditional media to contribute to the development of market share, which include the following: generating sales leads through articles in the trade press about new products and services; stretching ad and promo dollars through use of publicity about the company and its products; providing inexpensive sales literature because articles about the company and its products can be reprinted as informative pieces for prospective customers; and establishing the corporation as an authoritative source of information on a given product. Web 2.0 tools of public relations emphasize connections with publics. Tools extend from online reviews to emails to viral video hopefuls to tweets. Alex Goldfayn observes that engaging in the conversation overpowers audience analysis and message development. But CEOs believe that social media efforts contribute to brand awareness, brand loyalty, and sales.

Scion, Evins Communications, Ltd., and IT Management Global Corp. provided examples of an approach that blurs the boundaries of public relations and marketing. These companies use public relations to generate brand or product awareness and then parlay that awareness into mindshare, which translates into market share. Retailers like Walmart also engage in efforts to

capture mindshare as a precursor to market share. To enhance its fashion image, Walmart is tracking and releasing fashion forecasts. In one of the more unusual Web 2.0 efforts, Scion purchased product placement in Whyville, an online virtual world for 8- to 15-year-olds in an effort to reach consumers before they have preconceived notions about the brand.

Although Web 2.0 heralded a new era of two-way communication, the marketing function is traditionally a one-way function with clearly delimited channels of communication. As James E. Grunig (1992) pointed out, "The marketing function should communicate with the markets for an organization's goods and services. . . . The major purpose of marketing is to make money for the organization by increasing the slope of the demand curve" (p. 20).

When integrated marketing communication casts public relations in a supporting role to marketing in the development of mindshare to translate into market share, it steps back from the two-way symmetrical model of public relations toward an asymmetric practice of public relations. It steps back from the emphasis on developing mutually beneficial relationships that serve the public interest, serving instead the purpose of maximizing profit by maximizing market share. In consulting on public relations for two nursing homes, this purpose was shown to be superfluous. Nursing homes and extended-care facilities often have waiting lists. However, employee turnover, family perceptions, and government relations were significant influences on the nursing homes' abilities to survive and prosper.

Although the Public Relations Society of America's definition of public relations does not preclude the practice of public relations in support of efforts to build market share, it affirms the two-way symmetrical model of public relations and encompasses the public affairs and public information functions where there is no market share to be built and where expansion of market share is not an issue.

Ann Preston

See also Advertising; Bernays, Edward; Brand Equity and Branding; Event Management; Integrated Marketing Communication; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Public Relations Society of America; Social Media; Symmetry

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MARKETING

When starting to write this chapter, a Google search of the word *marketing* generated more than 565,000,000 hits. No wonder many think marketing is complicated, confusing, and challenging. This entry is designed to help readers understand the nature of marketing in turbulent economic times. It is written on the belief (1) that marketers have overly complicated the marketing process; (2) that marketing constantly evolves to meet changing needs, wants, and expectations of people and organizations; (3) that marketing is the change agent for any organization; and (4) that the

reasoning behind the American Marketing Association's (AMA's) definition is right on target: "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (AMA, n.d.). As Nancy Costopulos, chief marketing officer of the AMA said, "Marketing is presented as a broader activity. . . . Marketing is no longer a function—it is an educational process" (Maddox, 2008).

Marketing is known by many definitions, but basically, it is the driver for innovation and change in an organization. Conceptually, managers plan, organize staff, motivate, and control. They also compete. At its core, marketing is a competitive process designed to result in consumers selecting one brand over countless other competitive brands available to them. Therefore, the marketing goal of every organization should be to create top-of-mind awareness (TOMA)—that is, where its brand is positioned on a ladder in the minds of consumers. This conceptualization came from Al Ries and Jack Trout, in their classic 1981 book, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*. Because we live in an over-communicated society, the cluttered mind has to organize information so that it makes sense and can readily be retrieved. Consumers form mental categorical ladders with all possibilities neatly organized on their respective rungs. To manage the explosion of brands, products, and services, people mentally categorize and rank each possibility. Each ladder represents a different product category: places to get your hair cut; retailer to find that new golf club; where the kids want to go to eat; a store where you can buy that latest electronic gadget; a family vacation destination. Each rung represents a brand name or possibility where consumers can go to fulfill that particular need or want.

Some mental ladders have several rungs. Others have few. Still others have one. The maximum number of rungs on a mind's ladder is generally thought to be seven; three is considered to be typical. Marketing expert Eloy Trevino, however, uses a "rule of two" (personal interview, 2012). He believes that, in any category, there is #1 and #2, then there is everyone else. Think of soft drinks where there is Coca-Cola and Pepsi, then everyone else. In discount stores, there is Walmart and Target, then everyone else. In ketchup, it is Heinz and

Hunt's and everyone else. For the new golf club ladder, however, a consumer could go to the club's pro shop, Pro Golf Discount, The Golf Warehouse, Dick's Sporting Goods, and even the Internet. The question is, which alternative is on the top rung of the ladder? Which has TOMA? Where does each brand rank? Marketing is all about getting to the top rung.

Marketing expert Jack Trout defined *positioning* as not what the marketer does to the product or service, but what that marketer does to the consumer's mind. Over the years, it has come to mean the *total process* by which marketers try to create a desirable image in the minds of their target markets and influence their buying behaviors. This process includes everything from the look of the front door to pricing, to brochures, to the design of the website, to the service quality they receive from employees. Said another way, the process includes every single touch point between brand and consumer. And here is where the notion of *focus* enters the marketing picture.

Think of focus like a magnet. In magnets, all the magnetic domains (molecules) point in the same direction. These microscopic magnetic fields combine to create one large magnetic field so the magnet works; it attracts. The more the domains point in the same direction, the stronger the overall field. If, on the other hand, the domains are not aligned—that is, they all don't point in the same direction—the material will not produce a magnetic field. It will not work; it will not attract; it just sits there. It is the same way with marketing. All the brand's "domains" must point toward one clear positioning strategy in order to create its magnetic marketing field.

To illustrate, the following is an example about how a brand image can be undermined by having one marketing element out of focus:

There was a new restaurant named *America's Cup*. It was a casual, mid-price, young adult-orientated spot where one could get a good sandwich, tasty sides, and a cold drink. As one would expect, it had a nautical theme in decor, menu items, and promotions. The marketing thrust was red, white, and blue. One day, when a customer walked in for a quick lunch meeting, something was out of sync. The servers were all dressed in brown pants and orange shirts. Brown and orange? In a nautical

themed restaurant? It just didn't fit. And it surely didn't support the brand image. When the customer asked the manager "why the brown and orange," his answer was that he had them left over from another of his restaurants and he wanted to save money by reusing them.

More than 50 years ago, Theodore Levitt said that the purpose of business is to make and keep customers. His admonition is common sense, not some cutting-edge revelation. Yet, growing competitiveness in all industries has led firms to believe that the purpose of business is making money. The focus on profits, return on investment, growth in sales and number of units, mergers, buyouts, stock prices, and sophisticated business school jargon diverts attention from the real purpose of business: to make and keep customers. No one is suggesting that profit is not important. It is critical. Without profit—and cash flow—a business cannot and will not succeed.

Given Levitt's perspective, the fundamental marketing definition becomes, "marketing is a process by which we make and keep guests at a profit." This view confirms the marketing philosophy begun by the General Electric Company that became known as "the Marketing Concept." The Marketing Concept views the consumer as the focal point of all marketing activities. In his classic 1960 article "Marketing Myopia," Levitt reinforced this belief. Before this reorientation was introduced, marketing focused on what the company could produce, promote, and sell, and it was called "the Selling Concept." Folklore of the day maintained that Henry Ford reflected this philosophy with his claim that the customer could have any color of Ford, as long as it was black. This basic evolution in how marketing was viewed reshaped the field of marketing to focus on the "customer is king" philosophy. From this reorientation came such tools as the practice of segmentation, target or niche marketing, competitive advantage, product differentiation, positioning or brand building, and consumer research.

Although many people may be influenced to try a brand for the first time through the media or recommendations of family and friends, loyal customers are made one at a time. This appears to be a mind-boggling task. Think about a hotel that checks in 800 guests a day, a brokerage firm that

serves 2,000 people daily, or the hundreds of thousands who walk through the gates at Disney World every day. The managers of these operations, and thousands more like them, must have knowledge, understanding, and managerial skills to establish a standard operating performance—notice this didn't say procedure—for customer satisfaction. The consumer who first walks through the door can be turned into a loyal customer only through well-selected, well-trained, and highly motivated employees. Thus, in reality, it is impossible to separate marketing from operations and line management. They are two sides of the same coin. Every employee is both a salesperson and a goodwill ambassador for the business. As the marketing director of a large luxury hotel once said, "Every night I go home and leave my million dollar marketing plan in the hands of my bellman." To customers, every employee *is* the business. Therefore, businesses fundamentally have to view marketing as a dynamic process with three major functions:

1. *Identifying* opportunities to increase revenues or customer counts.
2. *Influencing* consumer choices through innovative brand building, promotion, public relations, and social media.
3. *Servicing* customers to develop loyalty, gain repeat business, and generate word-of-mouth advertising.

Each of these three functions involves a variety of marketing tasks: research, positioning, packaging, differentiating, pricing, promotion, calendars, budgeting, and analysis—all of which serve the ultimate goal of increasing customer count and revenues—that is, making and keeping customers at a profit.

Bonnie J. Knutson

See also Brand Equity and Branding; Differentiation; Integrated Marketing Communication; Opportunity and Threat; Promotion; Publicity; Strategic Business Planning; Viral Marketing; Word of Mouth Marketing

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MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

John Milton's 1644 *Areopagitica*, in which he advocated a free and open discussion of ideas where "truth and falsehood grapple" so that truth could freely rise, has led to the "marketplace of ideas" metaphor as a measure of analysis for questions regarding U.S. First Amendment law. This core idea of free speech was supported again in the 1973 Supreme Court case *Gertz v. Robert Welch Inc.*, 418 U.S. 323 (1974). In that ruling, Justice Lewis Powell wrote that under the First Amendment, there was no such thing as a false idea. He noted that no matter how destructive an opinion may be, we depend on competing ideas—not judges or juries—to correct it. That sort of wrangle in the marketplace of ideas, as Kenneth Burke observed, is the essence of the human condition (Heath, 2009).

Indeed, open, public discussion and robust debate are critical components of a healthy democracy, and public relations professionals help populate the information stream. In his work *Rhetoric*, written in 350 BC, Aristotle wrote that to a certain extent, all men endeavor to discuss ideas, defend themselves, and attack others. In their documentation of public relations activities prior to 1900, Margot Opdycke Lamme and Karen Miller Russell presented evidence of advocacy throughout history, which they grouped into key areas of politics and government; religion; education, nonprofit and reform; and business. Today, public relations practitioners continue to tell their clients' and organizations' stories in these areas and to communicate to and with their

publics, whether they are media representatives, employees, consumers, community members, government officials, volunteers, donors, investors, voters, or any number of other stakeholders. Just as practitioners advocate on behalf of their respective organizations, others such as the Center for Media and Democracy, serve as critical watchdogs of practitioners' work and influence, thereby adding their perspectives and voice to the marketplace as well.

Yet there are public relations exceptions to the free marketplace analogy. Commercial speech—traditionally meaning advertising—is not legally protected in the United States. For example, consumer health and protection supersede a company's right to say whatever it wishes. The 2003 *Nike, Inc. v. Kasky* case (539 U.S. 654 [2003]), further blurred the legal definition of commercial speech, extending it to promotional activities, such as news releases, in the state of California. When the California ruling was appealed, the U.S. Supreme Court voted to dismiss the case rather than render a decision, leaving the California decision intact.

To protect professional credibility and help further public good, members of such organizations as the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators agree to abide by ethical principles, including protecting the free flow of accurate and truthful information and revealing sponsors of and spokespersons for represented interests. Their stands against front groups or *astroturfing* (meaning contrived grassroots organizations developed specifically to achieve public relations ends) and against undisclosed payments for coverage or endorsements help protect the public from persuasive misrepresentations. Indeed, modern public relations practitioners often go beyond mere communications, additionally striving to bring about mutual understanding in their roles as communication facilitators and liaisons, or "boundary spanners," across audiences. Such two-way communication and dialogic processes, in which an organization communicates cooperatively with its publics, both giving and receiving information, stands in stark contrast to mere publicity, or one-way communication through owned, controlled, or earned media.

Digital, social, and mobile media have expanded today's marketplace of ideas to global proportions, bringing myriad new views to light and providing conversation outlets for both entities and individuals who may seek to expose real or perceived wrongdoing; monitor opinions and feedback; perpetuate social change; and create dialogue and communities around issues, topics, causes, or brands. Collaborative websites called wikis, and Wikipedia, the free, online, multilingual encyclopedia, reflect this new liberated marketplace, as information may be continually altered, deleted, or updated, even anonymously, and is collectively "crowd sourced," or checked publicly by a multitude of individuals, for accuracy.

Today's more egalitarian communication sphere has also spawned greater expectations from stakeholders for organizational transparency and responsiveness and increased professional responsibility for issues management. Disgruntled stakeholders, consumers, or advocates can establish rogue websites; write inflammatory blog posts; upload unflattering videos; write negative online customer reviews; create unflattering social media pages; and tweet discontent, vitriol, or falsehoods. Others might use these same or other tactics to praise or endorse a brand, product, organization, or group. Regardless, public relations practitioners have greater accountability and access to communication outlets than ever before, and they can use it to advocate, correct inaccuracies, and better understand and respond to their stakeholders' wants, needs, concerns, and expectations.

However, with the explosion of media and media devices, today's marketplace of ideas is more crowded than ever, with seemingly concurrent shrinking audience attention spans. With the cacophony of information in today's 24/7 world, and the tendency of many people to multitask, gaining audiences' attention and providing memorable messages that are retained and acted upon become increasingly challenging.

Diana Knott Martinelli

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Astroturfing; Dialogue; Ethics of Public Relations; Free Speech; Front Groups; International Association of Business Communicators; Issues Management; Online Public Relations; Public Relations Society of America

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MATERIAL INFORMATION

Material information is any detail about a publicly traded company's plans, operations, or business conditions that would help a prudent investor decide whether to buy, sell, or hold shares of stock in the company. Investors desire information that will help them (is material) to decide whether to buy, hold, or sell the stock of any publicly traded company.

Material is a key term in investor relations. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) requires publicly traded companies to disclose all material information. Various investor relations tools are used to accomplish this task, especially since the SEC also requires that such notice be made in a public manner so that all interested investors have the same opportunity to obtain and use the information. Thus, disclosure of material information must be open, broad, and timely.

In reference to *timely*, the SEC offers two broad standards. One is that some investors should not have the opportunity to get the information before it is made available to all investors. Also, the information must be shared so that it is most relevant to stock transactions because it is not out of date.

Companies get into trouble when their sense of what information is material or relevant to stock transactions differs from that of investors. Companies that make that error can incur the wrath of the SEC and investors if material information is not available when it is most relevant to those persons wanting to make stock transactions.

Material information comes in many forms. One type is the likelihood that the corporation will produce a profit or suffer a loss. A major change in senior personnel or the health of a senior executive could be material. It is often believed that key executives have a major influence on the business. Thus, the condition of these personnel is material.

If a company is suffering a substantial lawsuit, a dramatic change in the market, the arrival or loss of a major competitor, or implementation of a new process, that information is likely to be material. If an agriculture company has operations that are likely to be affected by the weather (drought or excessive rain, for instance), that is material.

The SEC uses rules and regulations to define what is material. Investigations are launched and audits are performed to increase the likelihood that material information is properly revealed in a timely fashion. For this reason, an ostensibly independent auditing firm to ensure objective compliance with SEC expectations audits the books of each publicly traded company.

Regulations, statutory law, and case law constitute a huge body of expert guidelines that are to be applied by executive management in conjunction with legal counsel and auditing firms to ensure that prudent stock traders get information they need and deserve.

Robert L. Heath

See also Investor Relations; Securities and Exchange Commission

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MATRIXING/MATRIX MANAGEMENT

Starting in the mid-1990s, Hill & Knowlton's management addressed how to restore excitement, growth, and profitability to one of the oldest and best-known brands in the public relations industry. Ultimately the answer to that challenge was to embrace matrix management, which replaces a silo approach to account management with a management philosophy and organizational strategy that builds teams relevant to each account based on the most relevant expertise.

One of the steps in meeting this challenge was to ask, "How we can bring value to clients?" This question could not be answered without recognizing that it might require an end to the silo approach. A silo approach to managing client accounts assumes that one account manager with his or her team is the only resource made available to the client.

The silo approach had lots of problems. Clients were denied the broad talent, intellect, and experience of the firm—which should be one of the fundamental reasons they would hire Hill & Knowlton versus a local boutique. Clients were not getting full access to global resources and specialist skills. Growth was artificially restrained by the talent and experience of the local office. And staff didn't have the professional opportunity to interact with other offices and skills to encourage their own growth and development.

The matrix management style has some clear strengths. It provides clear fiscal accountability. It facilitates a hands-on training and mentoring environment for public relations people. It delivers local accountability for clients and accounting clarity for billing.

The challenge was preserving the historic strengths of geographic management while unlocking the potential for clients, agency people, and the firm. The solution was matrix management.

Matrix management, as introduced at Hill & Knowlton in the United States in 1996, was designed to deliver greater value for clients, staff, and the firm. It was a management tool to compensate for the weaknesses of local profit and loss (P&L) management by unlocking our potential.

Matrix Management Delivers Value

There is no doubt that matrix management has delivered results.

- U.S. growth dramatically improved for Hill & Knowlton in the late 1990s and into the early 2000s.
- Profitability recovered quickly.
- Offerings of specialist client services exploded. Clients could be offered more specialist skills more easily than ever before.
- New business was won that would have been lost under the old local-only approach.
- The firm attracted better talent than ever. People were excited by the openness and devotion to clients that a matrix system provides.

The success of matrix management at Hill & Knowlton is clear. It added a lot of value for the firm and its clients. As a result of the initial success, each of the company's regions—Europe, Asia, Canada, and Latin America—now employs a version of matrix management to improve client service and the performance of staffs around the world. Matrix management is now the standard—any Hill & Knowlton client anywhere in the world can benefit from the best-teams and best-talent approach.

Implementing the Changes

Moving from a purely local management system to a matrix management system is a huge undertaking. Never underestimate the amount of planning, work, and follow-up that it takes. It is enormous. Hill & Knowlton had to retrain its entire U.S. workforce; develop a new orientation for recruiting and training that got people off to the right start; plan and implement systems to support matrix management; and change the culture at the company to support this new work environment. Even clients had to understand what the "new" Hill & Knowlton was all about.

There were six key steps in successfully implementing the transformation to matrix management.

First, we needed to better understand our clients. We talked with lots of clients. We looked at their business challenges. We looked at their needs today and how those needs might grow in the future. We did a candid appraisal of our own

alignment to be able to provide for those needs. Any additional service we might provide for a client deepened the relationship, both financially and functionally. Any service that we failed to provide simply left the door open for a competitor to come in and dazzle the client. We were also candid about how happy clients were with our service, and the answer was clear: not happy enough. In our business, a marginally happy client is one that we are about to lose.

Second, we had to assess our own skills and offerings. Were we staffed to provide what clients really needed, both today and in the near future? In many cases, we were disappointed. Although we had bright, talented generalists in our offices, we lacked the specialist talent that our clients needed. To illustrate the challenge with a comparison, a specialist heart surgeon that opens 150 chests a week will develop tremendous professional skills that a once-a-week general-practice surgeon in a small town could never master. Although we still needed some small-town practitioners who were close to clients, we also needed the big-city talent of specialist leaders who could help organize our efforts to deliver more for clients.

One crucial step was to recruit a number of practice leaders in key areas who could be our leaders and organize our specialist skills for the firm. We identified several key practices that our clients would need: corporate, financial, consumer, health care, media, public affairs, and technology. These practices covered our most critical areas for client services in the United States. Each practitioner would be an intellectual and motivational leader who could win client assignments, train our staff as specialists, and deliver greater client service. Their challenge was to create a brand within a brand, building a strong and determined point of view about our approach to client needs in each key practice area.

Third, we began rolling out our new leadership system, which included both practice heads to deliver the specialist skills and talent that our clients need and strong local-office general managers who knew the local marketplace and provided the strength in key local markets in the United States. The next key step was to review the local staff in each office and organize them into specialist practice areas to match our national practice approach to client service.

This effort required a massive human resource effort in creating new job descriptions for local general managers and practice leaders—and the rules of engagement on how they would work together. Absolute authority ended, and we moved into a system of collaborative decision making.

Fourth, we had to focus again on clients. The motivation for matrix management was really the clients—to bring more value to them. We had to work to align this new system with our clients and their needs.

As we mobilized and developed practice approaches, we had to go out with road shows and meetings to help clients understand how we might provide even more help and better solutions and results for them. We used these meetings to better understand their priorities and what they needed from us. Practice leaders helped us to diagnose client problems and opportunities and worked with local managers to develop the talent that we needed to respond to those opportunities.

The matrix system also opened the door for multiple-office and even global solutions. We focused on where we could find the best talent within Hill & Knowlton for what they needed, regardless of where they were based. We were freed from the shackles of looking for local-only solutions to any problems. Multi-office, best-teams, best-talent approaches to solving client problems were what we preached and practiced.

One of the key ways to ensure that this approach would work was to build an incentive system that supported it. That was the important fifth step in our transition. Key practice leaders and local managers had management objectives and bonus incentives that were built around the combination of personal goals and collaboration. Teamwork was rewarded and incentivized, while “piggish” behavior resulted in a personal and financial cost to the individual. It was one of the critically important symbolic ways that we assured our people that we were really serious about this new direction for the company.

We had lots of bumps in the road, but people really pitched in and got excited about making it work. It was invigorating for our staff, who felt as if they were suddenly opened to new training and development opportunities beyond the locale of their home office.

Sixth, we knew that we had to track our performance. I named a head of client services for the U.S. company to develop a system of measuring, tracking, and reacting to service needs for all of our major clients. We built an annual tracking system with a client service review. That assessment of what we did well and what we did not was shared with practice leaders, general managers, and client service teams. We had transparency, completed by an independent reviewer and with candid client feedback about our strengths and weaknesses.

Each client service review was a goldmine of valuable client insight. We knew what was going well that we needed to protect. We knew where we fell short, and quickly moved to fix that. Fixing a problem can do wonders to improve a client relationship. It helps clients to understand that we're really in it for them and not just ourselves. What was really interesting, though, is that the most valuable part of the client service audit was the knowledge gained about other needs of the client. It told us exactly how and where to approach clients with new offerings from Hill & Knowlton that could expand the relationship and provide a value added for the client.

Looking Back

One of the lessons for us was the importance of occasionally standing back and viewing our business anew. While local P&Ls fit the business in the early days, it is no longer the best approach today. Although former Democratic House Speaker Tip O'Neill was right in saying that all politics is local, it's not the case for public relations. We had grown from a more modest cottage industry of hometown, locally focused companies to sprawling, diverse, complex megacorporations with complex global needs and challenges. Our management structure had to grow with our clients. While many major companies developed their own matrix management approaches, we had to realize that it was the best system for us, too, if we were to keep pace with their increasingly complex professional public relations needs. Matrix management allowed us to get more talent to the table for our clients while retaining the great strengths and fiscal controls of local P&Ls.

Thomas W. Hoog

See also Account Manager/Account Management; Client–Agency Relationships; Management Theory; Public Relations Agency

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MEAN AND MEDIAN

The *mean* is the arithmetic average of a group of numbers. Its relative ease of calculation—any spreadsheet program will compute a mean—and widely understood definition make it a common point of reference in many types of research. More important than its common use is its role in characterizing a data set. In a normally distributed data set, the mean represents the population parameter, or the typical response (found under “measures of central tendency” in statistics programs). Public relations researchers and practitioners often focus on the “average person’s opinion” when investigating attitudes or planning campaigns. For example, on a 5-point Likert item (1: strongly agree to 5: strongly disagree), one may report that the mean response was 2.2, which corresponds to agreement, but not strong agreement. The tendency to report that “68 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed” with a statement should be avoided, as it lacks the overall precision of the mean and can mask a large portion who disagree with the statement.

In addition, using the mean provides a precise benchmark from which to measure progress. In research or campaign planning, measuring opinion change from time 1 to time 2, for example, is important for improving our knowledge of the impact and effectiveness of public relations activities and for the accountability of programs. As a campaign objective, with the initial measure of 2.2, one can set a precise target of, say, 1.4 for improved agreement

with a statement after the communication campaign. Measurement with the same statement at both times allows direct comparison and evaluation of change.

The mean is also important as the basis for the calculation of numerous inferential statistics. *T*-tests and ANOVAs (analysis of variance), which measure differences between groups, both assume an accurate mean in the computations. Very often we need to know if, for example, gender (a *t*-test) or education level (an ANOVA) makes a difference in what people think about a topic or how they react to a message. Questions attempting to measure such opinions or attitudes should always be formulated in a manner that provides an accurate mean. Aside from their inability to measure a range of opinions, yes/no questions do not allow the calculation of a mean; only response percentages can be reported from these questions (yes/no questions can be used, however, as the grouping variable in a *t*-test).

The median is another measure of central tendency. When all responses to an item are placed in numeric order, the median is the number that is the midpoint of the list. If the list has an even number of entries, the median is calculated by averaging the two numbers that fall to either side of the midpoint. In a normally distributed data set, the median and mean will be approximately the same. However, the median is useful as a measure of central tendency when the mean is either inflated by large responses or deflated by small ones. For example, in examining the income figures within an organization of 50 people, very high salaries among 6 executives could inflate the mean income in such a way that makes it look like the company pays its employees better than it does.

Generally speaking, the fewer numbers there are in a data set, the more impact extreme values will have. Examining the distribution of the data points and the difference between the median and mean should indicate which number is the more accurate reflection of the typical response in a data set.

Maribeth S. Metzler

See also Public Relations Research; Quantitative Research; Statistical Analysis

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MEASURING/MEASURES

Respected and successful public relations scholars and practitioners alike acknowledge the important role measurement plays in communication effectiveness and management. Research is used to achieve insight and foresight and to shape strategic initiatives based on the needs of publics. Measuring organizational communication is often broadly categorized as informal, formal, and quasiformal or mixed. The two paradigms of research include quantitative and qualitative. No method is better than the other; rather, they are complementary to one another.

Contemporary discussions of public relations research are rooted in the late-19th-century debates about whether or not researchers could or should borrow investigative methods from the physical sciences to understand the human and social world. The foundation of the physical world, measurement was mastered intellectually and materially to a greater extent than the social world; positivist theorists, including Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and Emile Durkheim, worked in the empiricist tradition established by John Locke, Isaac Newton, and others. Conversely, constructivist or naturalistic theorists were loosely labeled as idealists. These scholars, including Wilhelm Dilthey, Heinrich Rickert, and Max Weber, found their philosophical origins in a Kantian tradition.

Within these broadly defined paradigms, communication research seeks to explain, describe or explore the phenomenon chosen for study. Composed of both theories and methods, paradigms help us understand phenomena by advancing assumptions, asserting how research should be conducted, and defining legitimate problems, solutions, and criteria of “proof.”

Measurement is generally the assigning of either words (qualitative) or numbers (quantitative) to a phenomenon. A qualitative study explores a specific program, event, situation, person or groups, and it usually applies only to the specific matter being studied. The results cannot be generalized. Those projects that seek to learn about regularities are usually deemed quantitative.

The different research paradigms hold different assumptions, which include ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological approaches. The ontological assumption asks:

What is reality? For the quantitative researcher, reality is objective, independent of the researcher, and can usually be measured objectively as well. Reality for the qualitative researcher can only be constructed by those involved in the research, whether it is the researcher, those people being investigated, or the reader(s) interpreting the study.

For a quantitative study, the epistemological supposition—or the relationship of the researcher to those or that being studied—is that the researcher maintains distance and is left independent of the research subject(s). This is why researchers will try to control for bias, try to select a systematic sample, and be as “objective” as possible when analyzing the data. This is much different in qualitative research where researchers will interact with those they study.

Researchers from both camps claim objectivity, but by that they mean different things. The quantitative approach assumes *objective* to mean that which is outside us or in the world of facts, independent of the knower—seeing the world free from one’s own personal place or situation. To the qualitative researcher, objectivity means that how one views the world is based on our knowledge and experiences of the world and our places in it. According to the norms of qualitative research, then, the researcher is not separate from the research process.

Verification is a process that occurs throughout data collection, analysis, and report writing in both qualitative and quantitative research. Standards that need to be applied to *all* research projects include the following: the research questions drive the data collection and analysis rather than the other way around; data collection and analysis techniques that are competently applied; researchers’ assumptions are made explicit; and the study’s overall warrant and value both in informing and improving practice. One might ask if validity is used by qualitative researchers. Some researchers use quantitative terminology such as *external validity*, *reliability*, and *objectivity* to facilitate the acceptance of qualitative research in an environment where quantitative research is the norm. Instead of using the term *validity*, one could use *credibility* or *verification* by constructing standards of structural corroboration (using multiple types of data to support or contradict the interpretation), consensual validation (seeking opinions of others), and referential adequacy (criticism).

The discussion of credibility in measuring has an impact on the axiological assumptions of the two paradigms. The researcher’s values are kept out of a quantitative study but become imperative to the value-laden nature of a qualitative study. Detaching oneself from the study is seen as failure to understand the subject by a qualitative researcher. That which is a limitation to a quantitative researcher is essential to a qualitative one.

As seen above, the language, or the rhetoric, is different between qualitative and quantitative research. Another aspect is that a quantitative researcher will use only impersonal and formal words, including words that have been formally accepted, such as *relationship*, *comparison*, and *within-group*. Some qualitative researchers have constructed a language different from the quantitative vernacular to reflect the nature of the research, including *understanding*, *discovering*, and *meaning*. This differentiation extends to the writing of qualitative reports.

Quantitative and qualitative research both follow specific procedures, which include the following: a statement or definition of the problem; a review of prior related research; a research design; data gathering and data analysis; and an interpretive phase that results in conclusions and recommendations. However, the process of study is different. Quantitative measuring uses a deductive logic by testing theories and hypotheses in a cause-and-effect order. The concepts, variables, and hypotheses are set before the study begins, and will remain throughout the study. Communication practitioners who use quantitative methods are usually looking to develop generalizations that might predict, explain or understand how publics respond to organizations and their communication efforts. The data is measured with numbers and analyzed with statistical procedures.

Qualitative research is an inductive process. The researcher might identify several lines of inquiry before beginning the study. Most often, however, categorical data emerge as the study progresses. The emerging data provide “rich” information about that which is being studied, such as people’s attitudes, opinions, and reactions. When studying people, qualitative researchers note verbal and nonverbal cues as data. The data are analyzed systematically and continuously throughout the research process.

A research situationalist is a communicator who understands that both research approaches have value. Certain methods are appropriate for specific situations. Quantitative surveys might provide representative information that can be elaborated through qualitative data collection in in-depth interviews or through narrative analysis of a social network site, for example. Similarly, survey research allows one to test hypotheses generated through a pretest and focus groups. Again, the approaches are complementary.

If time, money, and expertise are available, a communicator might employ what is called mixed- or multiple-method research. There are three different purposes for using multiple-method design. First, the goal may be triangulation, which seeks a convergence of findings. Second, one might look for bracketing, which pursues a range of estimates on the correct answer—or rather triangulation with a confidence interval. And, third, for complementarity, where different methods are used to assess different components or phenomena, to assess identified threats to validity, or to enhance the interpretability of different assessments of the same phenomenon.

Using different types of methods helps guard against, and correct for, inherent methodological biases. Used together, the different methods paint different pictures and allow for more confidence in the decisions one makes from the research process. For example, visiting sawmill workers in the field improves the realism of employee surveys by providing empirically grounded frameworks for survey research, and surveys may correspondingly improve on fieldwork's realism.

Combining measurement techniques might provide a fuller picture, but most likely will not give a more objective one. Different methods come from different theoretical traditions, so combining them adds range and depth but not necessarily accuracy. Combining theories and methods carefully and purposefully should be done to add breadth and depth to analysis but not to provide the objective truth.

Public relations research can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. Exploratory research is done when little is known about an issue, a public, or an event. Most often, a case study or field study, including observation, and focus group or individual interviewing are used to gather information. Research can be conducted in a face-to-face or

virtual environment. A descriptive study looks for specific descriptions of events, conditions, circumstances, processes, and relationships in order to be able to document and analyze them. Data collection techniques include, but are not limited to, observation; participant observation; in-depth interviewing; content, document, narrative, or visual analysis; and survey questionnaires. Explanatory or predictive research looks for explanations or causal relationships by using experiments and quasiexperiments (although uncommon, but successful when employed, in organizational settings), survey questionnaires and polls, content analysis, message indexes, and webpage counters.

Measurement in public relations should be both formative and evaluative. Formative research assists an effective communication manager plan designed to implement strategic communication programs by determining what the current situation “looks like.” Analysis and assessment of key publics’ opinions, the environment, and communication programs can assist in predicting their behavior. Used appropriately, formative research facilitates two-way, symmetrical communication efforts by allowing the communicator and the organization’s publics to communicate with one another.

Evaluative research is comprised of tools that can help determine the effectiveness of a communication plan, program, or initiative. The conclusions that emerge from evaluative research are often used to communicate within an organization’s management team. If conceived properly, a communication plan will include goals and objectives that reflect those of the organization. Evaluative research can determine the degree to which the communication program met those objectives, and will provide insight into where efforts might be focused in the future.

How does a communicator choose which research method to employ? First, one must ask the research assumptions, experience, and views of the communicator, the research consultant (if hiring one), and those who will use the research. Does the researcher have qualitative research expertise? Is there an in-house data analysis department? What will hosting focus groups communicate to the audience? Does the leader of the organization want to see bottom-line dollar figures? The amount of time and money available influence information

gathering and analysis techniques types. Research can be expensive. However, if research is not implemented at the conception stage of a communication program, and if it is not continued throughout the process as well as after, the cost of poor communication can be catastrophic.

As in any good strategic communication plan, a measurement program begins with identifying goals and objectives. These will reflect the goals and objectives of those who can use the research. At this stage of the measurement process, the researcher identifies the audiences, issues, or events that will be interrogated. When defining audiences, a communications professional is cognizant of both audience demographics and also their preferred communication methods. Designing an email survey for employees who spend most of their day on fishing boats, for example, is not as logical as planning to conduct face-to-face surveys through an independent third party. Linking the research to other organizational measurables—such as behavioral expectations, levels of satisfaction, sales, projections, and productivity—also occurs in the preliminary planning of the research project.

Ethical considerations are equally important when considering who will be the subject of measurement. Under most circumstances, people should remain anonymous and their responses confidential. If there is the possibility that this might not happen, it is the responsibility and obligation of the researcher to notify the participant. The researcher should also ensure that participation in the research project is voluntary. Even when someone's words or ideas are made public, through blogs for example, it is always better to seek research approval.

Conducting a secondary research review will contextualize the problem or opportunity, and may further determine the need for research. In applied public relations research, a review of the secondary research includes any of the organization's previous studies. It may also include projects that have been produced by government agencies and professional associations. Historical documents, databases, libraries, and the Internet also contain valuable information that can inform an organization's research plan. A communicator sometimes might find that someone else has already collected the information that is needed.

The goals and objectives of the research are the most important elements in deciding whether to

employ quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method measurement. If generalizations about a population are the goal or objective of a project, researchers employ quantitative methods using a random sample of the selected population. For example, if a media relations expert of XYZ nonprofit organization wants to better understand how many residents in the community of Smithton support the organization's efforts, quantitative measurement is most likely the best choice. Quantitative measures provide information about numbers. A large enough random sample must be drawn from all residents in order for the communicator to confidently assume that the residents of Smithton support or do not support the organization. If the communicator is interested in tracking how the traditional and new—such as citizen journalists and bloggers—media responds to the organization and believes this might be indicative of how the residents feel, the researcher might conduct a systematic content analysis. Because the surveys can give neither in-depth detail about the citizens' perceptions nor information that illuminates how the people interpret the activities of XYZ, focus groups or interviews might be necessary. Assume, for example, that XYZ is applying for government funding to produce a series of videos that will be distributed, in part, via YouTube. The organization needs to provide both broad and detailed information in its application. In this case, the communicator might choose to use both quantitative and qualitative methods. The research project could then be used as a benchmark study. In the future, XYZ might want to determine if perceptions of the organization have changed after local citizens view the video. Using similar questions, sampling techniques, and measures, XYZ can respond accordingly.

DeNel Rehberg Sedo

See also Focus Group; Goals; Objectives; Public Relations Research; Qualitative Research; Quantitative Research; Survey; Symbolic Interactionism Theory

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MEDIA CALLS

Media calls are telephone exchanges between reporters and sources. Telephone calls are basic media relations tools, along with correspondence, emails, faxes, and personal visits.

Receiving Calls

Public relations practitioners welcome telephone inquiries from reporters and editors and routinely include telephone numbers on news releases and in story queries. Despite the increased popularity of email exchanges and interviews, the telephone remains the most widely used reporting tool for most journalists seeking quick answers and direct access to news sources.

Reporters call public relations representatives to obtain background information, verify information, obtain quotes, and arrange to speak to organizational experts. These impromptu conversations provide important opportunities to obtain unsolicited coverage.

Knowledgeable personnel should be available to speak to reporters in the hours following the release of announcements, especially if release happens late in the day when writers are on deadline. Failure to respond in a timely manner can lead to errors or omission from coverage.

Being responsive to unsolicited calls is an important way to build media relationships. Reporters and editors tend to seek out helpful sources and recommend them to colleagues.

Placing Calls

Professional courtesy suggests that media calls always should be returned, but careful thought should be given to making unsolicited calls. Calls that alert reporters about significant breaking news stories, such as a pending announcement or industrial accident, are obviously welcomed. Introductory calls to reporters assigned to beats are also usually appropriate. However, follow-up calls inquiring whether a reporter or editor received a particular routine news story only annoy busy reporters and should be avoided.

Practitioners wishing to pitch stories to media sometimes make cold calls to assignment editors or reporters. Although this technique can work when a relationship already exists between the source and journalist, most editors and reporters will tell unknown callers to send them materials in advance, after which a follow-up call is appropriate. If used, cold pitches must be simple and compelling and should telegraph the idea in the first several sentences of the conversation.

Telephone calls are frequently employed to schedule guests on radio and television programs. Talent coordinators and producers almost always demand to see materials in advance but will then negotiate details by phone. Thereafter, arrangements should be confirmed in writing.

Media Call Etiquette

The following are commonsense rules for practitioners to follow:

- Always introduce yourself and the client you represent.
- Always return queries promptly.
- When arranging for others to respond, make sure they understand the journalist's deadline and call back within an agreed-upon time frame.

- Avoid placing unsolicited calls while a reporter is on deadline.
- If callers sound suspicious for any reason, ask for a number and call back. This technique can help screen imposters.
- Include special instructions to media callers on office and home voicemail messages.
- Call journalists on their personal cell phones or at home only when you have permission to do so.
- Leave all appropriate numbers (office, home, cell phone) when leaving telephone messages for media personnel.
- Never speculate. If you don't know the answer to a telephone query, offer to call the person back.
- Always speak on the record, especially with unknown reporters.
- Don't avoid returning telephone calls. In an effort to demonstrate balanced reporting, journalists often tell audiences that repeated telephone inquiries were not returned. Avoid appearing evasive.
- If you cannot respond to a particular question, say so. Declining comment for cause is better than saying "no comment."
- Be succinct and be quotable.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Media Relations

MEDIA CONFERENCES

Media, or news, conferences are held when an organization has important information to share that will affect the public. At the organization's request, the media gather at a designated date, time, and place to hear the information. Media conferences may be held to announce good or bad news, address complex issues, or respond to a crisis situation. Whatever the reason, they require careful contemplation and planning.

Criteria

The following questions should be considered before deciding to hold a media conference:

1. Is the information newsworthy?
2. Is the information too complex for a media release alone?

3. Is it necessary for reporters to receive the information at the same time?
4. Is there any visual value?
5. Will reporters be allowed to ask questions?

If the answer is yes to *all* of the above, a media conference may be in order. If the answer is no to *any* of the above, holding a media conference may be a mistake. Reporters will not appreciate attending an event that they will consider a waste of time.

Planning

Select a site for the media conference that will accommodate the media and their equipment and, if possible, reflect the topic. For example, a beach might be the setting for announcing an environmental cleanup project. Satellite news conferences are used to make announcements to a large number of media in different geographic locations.

Pick a date and time, being mindful of reporters' deadlines. Media conferences should start on time and be brief.

Based on the topic of the media conference, select the most appropriate speaker to make the announcement and answer questions.

Decide the format for the media conference. Generally this includes welcoming the media, introducing the speaker, making the announcement, and answering questions from the media.

Anticipate all questions that may be asked, not just those pertaining to the announcement, and prepare the speaker(s) with answers.

Prepare visual elements. Reporters will want more than talking heads as subjects for photos and video. In addition, the name and logo of the organization should be prominently displayed.

Send a media advisory to the media that contains only the necessary details for the conference: the topic; the date, time, and place; the speaker(s), if appropriate; and contact information. Providing too much information will decrease the chances the media will cover the event, because they will already have the story.

Prepare a media kit that will assist reporters in developing their stories. Given to reporters upon arrival, media kits typically consist of a media release based on the announcement and other helpful background information, such as speaker biographies, fact sheets, or graphics.

Following the media conference, follow up with reporters who could not attend and track media coverage.

Ann R. Carden

See also Communication Technologies; Fact Sheet; Media Relations; Media Release; News/Newsworthy; Press Kit; Promotion; Publicity

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MEDIA CULTURE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The concept of media culture reflects the idea that each media system has different characteristics depending on the culture of the region to which it belongs. For instance, journalism reflects each society in which it works. For various reasons, every part of the world has different media cultures and mixes of those media.

Public relations as social and cultural phenomena can be interpreted through media culture. Practitioners cannot do their jobs well without knowing and adapting to media cultures. Maintaining good relationships with media professionals and practices is essential. When working together in the same country, in the same culture, they learn each other's dos and don'ts for optimal results and a good relationship. In today's globalized world, such matters become more complex because practitioners then need to adapt to multiple cultures. Globalization has made it important to link mass media and public relations and recognize the differences in mass media cultures around the world.

Research has presented differences in the media environments in different regions of the world. For example, Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004) identified three different models of media

systems that would vary depending on variables such as political system or professionalization of journalists:

1. *Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model* (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain)—characterized by political parties exhibiting a strong role, commentary-oriented journalism, weak professionalization, or politics-over-broadcasting systems.
2. *North/Central Europe or Democratic Corporatist Model* (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland)—characterized by shift toward neutral commercial press, politics-in-broadcasting system with substantial autonomy or strong professionalization with institutionalized self-regulation.
3. *North Atlantic or Liberal Model* (Britain, United States, Canada, Ireland)—characterized by neutral commercial press, information-oriented journalism, strong professionalization with noninstitutionalized self-regulation.

These models are still exploratory, and more research is being done to expand on these characteristics and traits. Cultural traits and differences cannot always be mapped in a single universal table.

A practical application could be, for example, a situation where a U.S. company activating in Italy, has to deal with a crisis there. The local Italian media may not be as neutral as the U.S. press when framing the crisis as connected to the organization. In fact, the Italian press would be more likely to prefer a conflict or economic responsibility frame when connecting the organization to the crisis. It is important to know all this when preparing the frames that the organization wants to bring forward to the media. As another example, public relations practitioners working in Romania should know that Romanian media is a "catch-all type" and that the power center in the Romanian media are media managers, columnists, and "star" journalists, with their ability to separately negotiate with politicians, political parties, business people, and corporations their positive (or another's negative) coverage in the media.

Practitioners need to know how to approach journalists, how to create good relationships, and the taboos in those cultures. They must remember

that the public relations techniques and strategies that work in the U.S. culture may not work in other countries. Use of social media in countries where new media have not yet become part of the culture pose a unique set of problems. However, public relations scholarship and practice have yet to further explore and take advantage of these findings and identify media relations strategies that would be suitable to local media cultures.

Ioana A. Coman

See also Culture; Eastern Europe, Practice of Public Relations in; Europe, Practice of Public Relations in; Frame; Globalization and Public Relations

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MEDIA EFFECTS

Scholarly research on the effects of traditional mass media often reaches two conclusions: Many are active consumers of media, but this does not usually result in a dependency so complete as to make viewers automatically accept whatever messages they receive. To explain media effects, a rejected model is explained and more recent models are then analyzed.

Based on the work of Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver in 1949, one early model of communication was known as the “hypodermic” or “magic bullet” model. This model assumes a unidirectional flow of messages: One party sends a message, the next party receives it, and the process is then complete. If true, having viewed content would lead audience members to behave in a predictable manner. However, several problems are associated with this theory. First, the proliferation of media outlets and the option of turning the television off make focusing audience attention on a single message exceedingly difficult. Second, this theory does not account for the tendency of audience members to respond to messages based on existing beliefs and values. Third, contemporary models of communication provide for messages flowing in both directions.

Another model of media effects is explained by the agenda-setting theory of Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw. That theory is reviewed separately, although a brief summary is helpful here. Their original study was published in 1972 and noted that there was no conclusive evidence that media changed voter attitudes during a political campaign. However, the amount of emphasis media channels placed on a given issue did help drive what issues voters learned about. The common paraphrase of this model is that mass media sources could not tell people what to think, but those outlets were very good at telling people what to think about.

Media dependency theory may help explain why media can't unilaterally change opinions but can still help determine what issues are on the public agenda. Developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (1976), media dependency theory explains the growth of the media as well as the increased reliance many individuals have on various mass media forms. This theory holds that reliance on media is linked to the three factors of media, audience, and society. In this case, *media* refers to the number and type of information outlets that are available. Radio, television, print news sources, and social media are all viable ways in which people can receive information. This makes the task of selecting a medium more difficult, because audience members have many alternatives to which they might turn. At the same time, the sheer number of media options makes it more

likely that there is some media option that will appeal to an individual audience member.

Audience refers to the degree to which a person or group of people depend on various media forms for information. Some audiences have a greater need or perceived need for information, and each audience will have different preferences about the precise forum from which they prefer to receive information.

Finally, *society* refers to all of the social factors that surround a need for information. When a nation is at war, its citizens are likely to have a greater perceived need for information than when the leading news stories are about more limited issues. Additionally, a person's place within a social structure will affect the need to access information. Together, these three factors indicate that the more someone relies on a particular form of media, the more that media outlet will influence the person's thoughts, feelings, and actions. People will rely more on media when their existing social networks do not fulfill all of their needs.

In 1996, DeFleur and Everett Dennis updated this work with media information dependency theory. Their theory has five major propositions. First, people in all societies need information to make everyday decisions. Second, people in traditional societies tend to pursue similar ways of life and rely on interpersonal methods for transmitting information. Third, contemporary urban-industrial societies are composed of a wide diversity of people from different backgrounds and groups. Fourth, increased social differences in industrial society cause people to have fewer effective interpersonal communication channels from which to obtain information. Fifth, people in urban-industrial society rely on the media to gain information that is typically unavailable to them from the interpersonal networks prevalent in traditional societies. One reason that so many people rely on the media—and thus give the media relative power to influence—is that mass media outlets may be the best available instrument for gaining needed information.

The flaw in these approaches is that they were developed before the popularity of social media and other interactive information tools. More ways of gathering information may limit the impact of any given tool. While a number of

scholars have explored media effects in light of emerging technologies, these studies have not yet generated the level of support seen in earlier approaches. Many recent studies have examined the relationship between mass media, blogs, and other channels in setting the public agenda, although the results of these studies differ. Nonetheless, there are several broadly accepted conclusions in the field. There is no magic bullet effect where people simply absorb all media information presented to them. Rather, the effect of media correlates with how dependent people are on it. That dependency may partially depend on the number of information channels to which an individual has access.

William Forrest Harlow

See also Agenda-Setting Theory

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MEDIA FRAGMENTATION

Media fragmentation refers to the splintering of audiences and information outlets in the network society's choice-rich environment. While media outlets once had clear, often geographically defined audiences, they now compete for readers and viewers who are actively engaged in the selection of the information they receive. The increased

choice and competition result from the development and mass adoption of the Internet and digital mobile devices.

The network society's choice-rich media environment not only enables fragmentation, but it encourages specialization. The network dynamic forces audience members to be selective. Audience members and users choose from a core set of information sources. The Pew Research Center has found more than three quarters of online readers get their information from five or fewer news sites. When provided with a diversity of information-source choices, audiences tend to choose media that reinforce their preexisting beliefs and values. *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof called this selectivity dynamic "The Daily Me." Fragmentation creates homogeneous communities where members mainly communicate only with one another.

The choice-rich environment makes audiences less likely to change their attitudes in response to news information stimuli because fragmentation limits audience members' chances of hearing opposing viewpoints. Cass R. Sunstein (2007) argued that a civil society requires that people encounter ideas they do not prefer to consider. He wrote, "the implication is that groups of like-minded people, engaged in discussion with one another, will end up thinking the same thing that they thought before—but in a more extreme form" (p. 60).

Michael Kent and Maureen Taylor have found organizations, and public relations practitioners in specific, can reach and interact with their publics in new ways because of these changes. Political information, for example, does not have to pass through the gates of legacy media such as *The Washington Post* or *ABC News*. Instead, audiences can choose to get news from aggregators, such as Yahoo; political groups, such as MoveOn.org; or blogs, such as ThinkProgress or Hot Air. John Dimmick, Angela Powers, Sam Mwangi, and Elizabeth Stoycheff (2011) wrote that the limitless number of information channels on the Internet provide "news services that are narrowly targeted in ways not possible in the era of three TV networks and monopoly newspapers."

Jared Schroeder

See also Civil Society; Reinforcement Theory

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MEDIA MIX STRATEGIES

Public relations practitioners who manage media relations campaigns may subscribe to the convergence of traditional public relations and marketing roles, recognizing a changing media environment wherein the Internet provides for new and immediate means to connect with people. Synergistic media mix strategies involve overlapping combinations of new and traditional mass media channels to develop and maintain relationships with key audiences—making the task more art than science.

Designing messages and developing media mix strategies includes several important considerations and acceptance that there is no one-size-fits-all recipe for media mix strategies and that combinations and media overlap generally are best. Practitioners must regard their organization's overall objectives and resources, advantages and limitations of each medium—as well as stakeholder media use behaviors, and evolving technologies. Practitioners should review the communication objectives established for the organization and for key public relationships in terms of target audience traits and media habits, message definition, goals, and measurability. Traditional advertising approaches to reach effectiveness and cost per contact also may be relevant. Hence, while buying media generally is *not* a public relations practitioner's responsibility, it *is* an important context for media relations plans that stand up to disintermediation and audience fragmentation challenges.

Selecting and sequencing media to disseminate a message requires understanding the pros and cons of mass media vehicles. Media relations tactics include pitching and catching press releases and public service announcements or advocacy advertisements, staging press conferences, offering interviews, coordinating product placements for films and TV, and organizing special events. Availability of electronic devices that enable mobile 24/7 interactivity has evaporated lines among both selective and mass audiences of Internet, electronic, and print media. Increasingly important are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, mobile short message service (SMS), and websites—even though Donnalyn Pompper and David Crider (2012) found that many managers still fear relinquishing control over what is being said about their company, products, and services. Network and cable television, as well as radio, offer wide geographic selectivity. Among print media, newspapers and magazines tailor readers' demographic and psychographic needs and may lend prestige appeal. Direct mail is relatively easy to personalize and measure.

Finally, an important consideration when developing media mix strategies is understanding stakeholders' media use behaviors. For example, "surfing and scanning" interrupts message flow, sheer abundance of media content competes for attention, and traditional data often are inadequate when anticipating audiences' media habits.

Moreover, new technologies develop rapidly and media ownership issues affect change in media routines, personnel, and content. Indeed, a number of variables are involved in practitioners' construction of viable media mix strategies designed to grow and enhance relationships with key publics.

Donnalyn Pompper

See also Advertising; Practice/Practitioner; Press Kit; Marketing; Media Networks; Social Media

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MEDIA NETWORKS

One of the traditions of public relations is that it conducts much of its communication activity through "other people's media." While advertisers buy time and space on networks they do not own, public relations typically use "free time or space"—for example, placing news, stories, and comments through news reports and opinion or editorial pieces.

Media, as discussed in public relations, come in two sizes. One is the mass media, which consist of complex networks of newsgathering and

dissemination, as well as entertainment programming and editorial commentary. Magazines, newspapers, and television are the traditional channels through which news, commentary, and entertainment reaches readers, listeners, and viewers. Increasingly, traditional channels are both under competitive pressure from, and undergoing transformation because of, the increasing presence of the Internet. Public relations practitioners also use “their own media.” Pamphlets and reports are key examples of media tools that practitioners use to disseminate information and commentary. In this instance, media are print and electronic networks that can be used to reach mass audiences.

The second size of media network(s) are narrow-cast information systems, consisting of multiple-output devices fed and controlled by a centralized source. Message recipients have no way to engage in direct feedback. The output devices are usually some kind of video display. The centralized source is usually a computer-controlled audiovisual switching system, with source information either stored locally or sourced remotely (i.e., Internet, satellite, or microwave) and played back in either analog or digital format. Storage media typically encountered are 12cm, optical disc formats: compact disc (CD), digital versatile disc (DVD), and Blu-ray disc (BD). Computer hard drives, both fixed and removable, are also common.

Message content is dependent on venue or environment. For example, media networks are used in sports stadiums and arenas, office buildings, shopping malls, and individual retail spaces. Technological convergence is allowing the addition of electronic billboards to the media network landscape.

Messages do not have to be homogeneous. It is possible to run several different messages simultaneously. An example is advertising in an athletic shoe store. Usually, there are several clusters of video monitors, with each cluster narrowcasting a different advertisement (message) on each monitor in the cluster, repeated across clusters. A variation includes unique but related messages on each monitor in a cluster, with each cluster being a unique experience.

Media networks can also play a critical role in an office or business environment. It may be something as simple as a running stock ticker that

includes the company’s stock price along with the company’s competitors’. Above the ticker could be video packages of relevant business stories. An organization can go further with the media network and include messages from the CEO or minutes from meetings. Companies often use a media network to function as a message board, notifying employees of policy changes, upcoming events, or meetings. Many of the functions of a company newsletter can be moved onto a media network.

Media networks provide the public relations practitioner with a unique opportunity. Narrow-casting allows for a fairly high level of customization and refinement of the message. There are four principles to keep in mind when considering the use of a media network for message delivery.

First, understand the limitations of the storage, playback, and output devices. For example, hard drive space is cheap and plentiful, making it easy to store large, high-quality audio and images. However, if the venue is a sports arena, the speaker systems are typically not that good, the acoustics of the space are horrible, and the output quality of a Jumbotron (a type of very large video display) can be well below analog television quality.

Second, message delivery is reliant on an electromechanical system with limited human oversight. Media systems lend themselves to a “set it and forget it” mentality. If the message includes a lot of static (nonmoving) graphics that have long presentation times, those graphics will “burn in” to the display devices. Picture quality will degrade, and the effectiveness of the message will be diminished. Durability of the storage media is also a consideration. Optical discs can get scratched; hard drives can fail. When content is actually sourced from off-site, there is a unique set of potential problems and concerns, network integrity and reception quality being only two.

The third idea is double-edged. Many narrow-cast media networks are “always on,” meaning they are automated and run 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. That means that even though a message is narrowcast, potential exposure is maximized. That exposure is where the downside is found. Although the message may be a “hit” the first or second time it is encountered, what about the hundredth time? Or the thousandth?

If the media network is located in a retail space or shopping mall, the people who work there will

easily be exposed to the message dozens of times a day, several days a week. The result can be a backlash, involving everything from sabotage of the equipment (simply turning it off) to outright destruction of the storage media.

Whether damage is accidentally-on-purpose or simply the result of wear and tear, the rapidity with which worn-out media (and messages) can be replaced must be taken into consideration. If it will take several weeks to get replacements sent out, consider budgeting for extra copies to hold in reserve as needed.

The fourth idea is also double-edged. As the media channel of choice is increasingly the Internet, that choice comes with a feedback component that is indeed uncontrollable. For example, access to a website can be restricted, with responses tightly controlled (if allowed at all) and monitored (ranging from being ignored to targeted for reply or deletion).

Once information shows up on the monitor of an intended (or unintended) consumer, the message originators have lost control. The message can be easily copied and distributed ad infinitum. WikiLeaks immediately comes to mind. The barriers to obtaining a Web presence are low. Organizations or individuals dissatisfied with a particular message can counter with one of their own.

Michael Nagy

See also Narrowcasting/Broadcasting; Network Theory

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MEDIA RELATIONS

Sound media relations practices were critical to public relations campaigns long before most people even knew what a “public relations campaign” was. Mary “Mother” Jones used good media relations techniques when she traveled to Philadelphia

in the summer of 1903 to support the textile workers’ strike against the mill owners and to help focus attention on the tragedy of child labor. Mother Jones and the union organized a “March of the Mill Children” from Philadelphia to President Roosevelt’s summer home on Long Island to dramatize the problem.

The marchers held press conferences, made press tours (Mother Jones and the children visited journalists to tell their story), made speeches, granted interviews, pitched feature stories to journalists, and put writers in contact with sources.

Modern media relations experts—whether in agencies, groups, corporations, or nonprofit organizations—use these techniques, plus a few others:

- Distribute videos to websites and broadcast outlets.
- Ask journalists periodically about their information needs.
- Make sure journalists’ names are on listservs (messages sent by electronic mail to keep interested individuals informed about an organization’s activities).
- Prepare media packets (collections of leader profiles; information about the organization, group, service, or product; statistics; reports; news clippings; and similar materials).

Another modern activity—preparing managers to interact with journalists in interviews or news conferences—is a tad controversial, but it helps spokespersons to communicate more effectively. And it helps journalists because sources are prepared; they frequently bring along media packets to help journalists do their jobs.

Ethical practitioners are committed to keeping the media informed for a couple of reasons:

1. Practitioners can reach some of their publics only through the media. This is less true today, when professionals use the Internet in some instances to communicate directly with publics, than it was in 1903, when the newspaper was the only game in town. But still, some messages can be conveyed most effectively through the mass media.
2. Journalists are going to write about newsworthy groups, organizations, and individuals no matter

what. They want to talk to the principals involved in newsworthy activities, because principles of objective journalism demand that, but the stories are going to be written with or without input from those involved. Good practitioners understand that it is far better to have input than not.

Provide Sound Information

The overarching principle in effective media relations is that practitioners provide accurate, relevant, fair, timely, complete information. This means in part that practitioners cannot put their organizations' interests above the public's interest when those interests conflict and then lie about what they've done. The best practitioners try to ensure that their organizations' interests are consistent with the public's interest because they think that's the right thing to do, and failure to do so nearly always leads to unfortunate consequences.

Practitioners who are compelled to put organizational interests above the public interest can experience extreme dissonance when those interests conflict, and they are unlikely to have good relations with the news media. Ironically, a practitioner who seems to put the public interest first can run into difficulty within the organization, for some organization men and women might charge that the practitioner is more concerned about journalism's needs than about the organization's needs. The ethical practitioner tries to educate the doubters about the realities of the media world.

One reality is that an organization or group cannot establish effective media relations if it is not credible, and it's extraordinarily difficult to recover lost credibility. If an organization is caught misleading the public a single time and never does it again, it will be a long time before that organization is perceived as credible. Many Americans still will not believe the tobacco and asbestos industries. The media will ignore messages disseminated by low-credibility groups, organizations, or individuals, or they will subject the messages to intense scrutiny and, frequently, substantial revision.

The Pentagon ran into a firestorm of criticism when it considered a proposal to plant news, some false or misleading, in international news media. The goal was to *de-position* (discredit) unapproved governments and to promote the United States. The plan was to have credible third parties

who had no apparent connection to the U.S. government distribute "news" to friendly and unfriendly foreign media. The plan was attacked by numerous journalists, and the Pentagon's credibility was damaged severely—just for considering the plan. To their credit, many military public affairs officers opposed the proposal.

Contrast the Pentagon's boneheaded plan to the response of Odwalla Corp. when one of its products was contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria. Public health officials in Vancouver, British Columbia, and the states of Washington and California were struggling with several ill patients when a 16-month-old Denver girl died of complications from *E. coli* poisoning. Odwalla's apple juice turned out to be the common thread. Within 24 hours of notification of the problem, Odwalla recalled all the beverages and was cooperating with the media and public health agencies. Odwalla publicly acknowledged that juice from one of its plants tested positive for *E. coli*, created a website to respond to questions, announced procedures for ensuring plants were sanitary, and created an advisory council to discover ways to improve product safety. Odwalla should not have distributed the tainted juice in the first place, and it did pay a fine. However, in reacting to the crisis honestly and openly, it protected its credibility.

Public relations practitioners must be committed to ethical communication if they are to serve their clients well. Beyond that, they need to master several skills.

Write and Speak Carefully

Practitioners must be able to write and to speak well. It should go without saying—but it can't—that professionals must master language elements such as grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style. A practitioner simply cannot afford to write or speak a sentence like this one: The soldier picked up their rifle and moved on. The attempt to avoid sexist language is admirable, but the grammatical error is unforgivable. Nor should a practitioner write "412 West Elm Street" for a newspaper. That is a gross violation of virtually every newspaper's style. How can an editor who judges a news release have respect for a writer when the release contains errors? And how can the editor respect an organization that would employ such a writer?

Good writing must be reflected in everything, written and verbal, that a practitioner produces. Some writers seem to think good grammar, spelling, and punctuation are unimportant in electronic mail. They are wrong; a practitioner is judged harshly when sending messages that contain grammatical and spelling errors or that fail to capitalize words properly (the most common error). Writers even need to write grocery lists carefully if they are to avoid bad habits.

A practitioner who wants to establish good relations with the media also must understand what the media need. In “olden times”—before the mid-1980s or so—many practitioners were reformed journalists, and they knew exactly what an editor wanted in a release, news conference, or interview. Practitioners no longer are drawn primarily from the ranks of journalists, and they sometimes have trouble deciphering editors’ needs. Too often, a practitioner will distribute, by mail, fax, or electronic mail, releases that contain no news, or schedule news conferences that are of no interest to most audiences. This is poor practice because it damages credibility by making a practitioner seem unprofessional.

Effective practitioners produce copy that is similar to that published or aired by the target media. This means making sure their stories contain timely news that is of interest or importance to many people. It is helpful if the stories contain news values in addition to timeliness that editors use to evaluate information for stories. These include conflict (verbal or physical), prominence (well-known personalities, places, or issues), magnitude (large numbers of deaths or dollars), consequence (many lives affected), and proximity (local events, persons, or issues).

Practitioners who write news releases, arrange news conferences or media interviews with their bosses, or pitch feature ideas need to make sure the information they want to distribute contains at least some of these news values. And they need to understand that a message that would interest one medium’s editor and audience might not interest another’s. A release frequently is written multiple times to ensure that each medium gets a version tailored to its needs. Editors have a right to feel insulted when they get releases that are of no interest to their audiences.

The news also needs to be written in standard journalistic format. For print and online publications, that means writing in the inverted pyramid format, with the most interesting and important information at the top and the least interesting and important at the bottom. Writing for broadcast is a little different because one writes for the ear, rather than the eye, but the principles are the same. A broadcast journalist typically writes a label, which is comparable to a newspaper headline, that is read by an anchorperson. Then the writer produces a lead that is read on the air. Rather than end with the least important information, a broadcast journalist typically reiterates the news. The other important difference is that broadcast stories typically are much shorter than print or online stories. Practitioners must keep these differences in mind when writing for broadcast.

Writing a lead is one of the hardest tasks facing any writer. It is doubly hard for news writers—whether a journalists or public relations practitioners—because they must capture the heart of the story, package it in an interesting way, and produce a lead of 10 to 30 words. This is one of the great creative challenges, and most communication professionals must meet the challenge several times a day.

There obviously is too little space to address the fundamentals of writing the rest of a release, but a model that Michael Ryan uses at the University of Houston may be helpful. The model assumes two phrases in each paragraph and one sentence per paragraph:

- Paragraph 1: Heart of the news event or issue, followed by an attribution
- Paragraph 2: Background information needed for a reader or listener to understand the heart of the news in paragraph 1, followed by an attribution if needed
- Paragraph 3: A direct quotation that amplifies, but does not repeat, material in paragraph 1, followed by an attribution
- Paragraph 4—last: New information presented in each sentence, following by attributions or background material

This model requires that the most important and interesting information in each sentence be placed

at the beginning of the sentence. When background information is not required, paragraph 2 is dropped. Most broadcast writers would alter the model slightly so that sentences begin with attributions, and they typically would put a label above paragraph 1 as a lead-in.

Practitioners also need to work with those who supply visuals for media editors. They should not presume to tell photographers what to do, but practitioners certainly might make suggestions. A photographer who needs to take the picture of a CEO for a business publication's cover story might like to know about an interesting backdrop on a production line, for example. A practitioner supplying photographs or video must make sure the people in those pictures have signed releases and that there are no copyright restrictions.

Many practitioners are not numerate (they fear numbers), but they have to get over this problem, for they likely will deal with numbers constantly and they will pass those numbers on to journalists. A good practitioner will check all numbers and will try to package those numbers in attractive graphs and charts that editors can use without change. This will ensure the numbers are accurate and that they can be interpreted easily by an organization's publics.

Communication During Crisis

Even the best relationships with journalists are tested during times of crisis, when confusion and chaos are most pronounced. The difficulty is that journalists want information *now*, and practitioners often just don't have it. They certainly don't have time to get the usual approvals from all departments to release information. Here are a few things organizations should *not* do during a crisis: release unverified information, for the information might be inaccurate; intentionally mislead or withhold information; fail to express concern; and fail to prepare for the worst that could happen.

Organizations can respond best to crises if they have anticipated the crisis and developed a plan. If an organization manufactures fireworks, for example, the practitioner needs to develop a plan for keeping the media informed in the event of an explosion. The plan might outline contingencies if nobody is injured, if some are injured,

and if some are killed. Each person's job, from the CEO to the janitor, is specified under various conditions so that everyone knows what to do in the event of catastrophe. A list of the information (time of accident, number of injuries, cause, damage estimate) that must be disseminated is critical.

Rumors tend to complicate crisis communication, for they spread quickly among people who are under stress. Someone must be assigned to track rumors, to find out what people are saying about a catastrophe, and to seek the truth. When the truth is established, a spokesperson must pass the information along to the news media so the rumors can be squelched or confirmed quickly.

Talking Back

Most practitioners avoid "talking back" to the news media. If they don't like a story published in the local newspaper, they might wad up the story and slam it into the trash basket. Then they forget it. A practitioner must have cordial relations with local media representatives, and complaints about media coverage or lack of coverage are not conducive to good relations. Nobody wants to have his or her work criticized, and nobody wants to be in trouble with the boss.

However, some practitioners have become bolder in the last decade or so, partly because government regulations require that the printed record be accurate. Practitioners are extraordinarily careful about what they write because everything can end up in the record—and the record can get an organization into trouble. If a newspaper article is substantially incorrect, it can lead to many problems later on. It may be worth risking a damaged relationship just to correct the record.

Some practitioners talk back also because they believe they are just as responsible as journalists for protecting the public's right to know, and they don't want the public to know inaccurate information. Nor do they want important channels of communication polluted with inaccurate and distorted information. If they have the facts on their side, and they are not just expressing contrary opinions, they should correct substantive errors.

Michael Ryan

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MEDIA RELEASE

A media release, also known as a press release, is one of the most frequently used tactics or tools in public relations practice. A media release can be either a news release or feature release. News releases present hard news, and feature releases offer human interest stories. The most commonly distributed release is a news release. Although publicity is a strategy used by many public relations practitioners, those who specialize in working with the media are called publicists and media relations specialists.

Releases are sent to a media gatekeeper, such as a print journalist, a producer of a television program, or even a blogger, who determines the stories that appear in a print publication, on a broadcast, or on an online medium. The most common form of media release is the news release, which conveys information that is considered newsworthy and is written in an inverted pyramid format. The inverted pyramid format begins with a clothesline lead of information, including the elements of who, what, when, where, how, and why. Next, facts and details are developed in the body of the release, supporting

the lead sentence. The release generally concludes with related but less significant information on the topic. Some practitioners place a boilerplate at the end of the release, which is a paragraph that describes the organization disseminating the information.

Public relations practitioners write and distribute three types of news releases. An advance story announces something that will happen, such as a change in management or an upcoming event. A cover release reports something that actually happened, such as a sizable donation to a nonprofit organization, the outcome of a community clean-up event, or a major management decision. Follow-up releases report the news after an event, such as the quarterly sales of a new product, the results of a research study, or the effect of policy changes. Releases have many uses. They can announce something (hires, mergers, price changes, layoffs), offer spot news (road closings, strikes, school cancellations), give a reaction to something (charges against an organization, industry trends, new laws), and tell bad news (faulty products, recalls, apologies).

Factors that determine news include timeliness or currency, impact or something of far-reaching consequence, prominence of individuals or events, proximity and local tie-in, conflict, and novelty or uniqueness.

A feature release, on the other hand, presents a more attention-getting lead and develops a clear and logical story with a definite conclusion. A feature release is a human interest story. Unlike a news release, a feature release tells a story and begins with a catchy opening, called a hook, and offers a conclusion or ending to the story.

Feature releases are much more descriptive and colorful than news releases and usually require more in-depth research. Some common types of feature releases used in public relations include news features, profiles, and backgrounders. Unlike news leads, which are short and factual, feature leads are creatively written to attract a reader's interest. A feature release contains a clear beginning, middle, and conclusion of the story. Feature releases most often are included in the contents of a press kit and seldom disseminated solo.

Some media gatekeepers receive over a hundred releases in one day, and many go unseen and are thrown away. Therefore, a carefully crafted news

release is essential. Releases should have a strong newsworthy angle, be accurate, contain well-researched facts, present information that is truthful and balanced, and strive for objectivity. Most importantly, releases should be tailored to the media gatekeeper and editorial environment of the targeted publication, show, or online medium. Releases are often used as a trigger for publicity or media coverage. Some releases are accompanied by a pitch letter and may be part of a press kit of other media-related materials.

Public relations specialists adhere to specific formats when developing news or feature releases. Ideally, news releases should be no more than two double-spaced pages. However, feature releases may be longer in length. Most releases are labeled “for immediate release,” meaning that the media outlet is free to release the information upon receipt. Releases are printed on organizational letterhead, have a contact name and number at the top, and include a dateline. Although public relations practitioners should pay special attention to the style of the publication they are targeting, many use the writing style of the Associated Press and include page slugs and end marks in news releases. Releases may be emailed, faxed, mailed, or hand delivered, depending on the preferences of the media gatekeeper receiving the release. Some public relations practitioners distribute their releases via a media or press link on their websites and through public relations news bureaus such as Business Wire and PR Newswire.

Some media gatekeepers at weekly newspapers, regional publications, and specialty papers publish releases making few changes; however, journalists at larger publications, such as metropolitan newspapers, seldom use a release in its original form. Rather, they will use some of the information if deemed newsworthy enough by the media outlet. In such cases, public relations practitioners use the release as a catalyst in which to persuade a gatekeeper to cover a particular story. Editors of trade publications, for instance, will use product information releases in a product update column.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Clip (News Clip) and Clipping Services; Feature; Media Calls; News Story; Publicity; Pyramid Style

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MEMES

The term *meme* originated in 1976 from the work of Richard Dawkins who used it to define the spread of cultural phenomena such as fashion. Modern use of the term refers more specifically to *Internet memes*; that is, the spread of ideas materialized in images, videos, hashtags, hyperlinks, text, phrases, and so on via the Internet.

Social media allow for the instantaneous spread of ideas and thus, offer the potential for an idea to be viewed by numerous individuals through sharing on social networks, blogs, vlogs, microblogs, and so on.

Internet memes generally share the following features: (1) widespread; (2) viral; (3) amusing; and often (4) nonsensical to those who are not part of such Internet subculture.

Internet memes may be long- or short-lived. For example, LOLcats describe a meme that features images of cats with accompanying text termed *LOLspeak*; that is, a language structure used by participants (e.g., speaklolspeak.com). The cult-like following of LOLcats and the associated use of a special language demonstrates the existence of Internet memes as cultural phenomena, bearing resemblance to Dawkins’s original definition of memes. LOLspeak has since expanded into its own meme, being applied to contexts other than cats. Another popular example includes the text or hashtag *fail* or *epic-fail* as applied to a variety of online media featuring a failure to correctly do something (e.g., failblog.org).

Shorter lived Internet memes may include the hashtag *first-world-problems* that trended in 2011 as a humorous method of posting about inconveniences experienced by individuals in developed areas (as opposed to those issues faced by individuals in underdeveloped areas).

Internet memes may spread offline as in the case of *rickrolling*. Rickrolling on the Internet involves tricking others into following a disguised hyperlink to a music video of Rick Astley's (1987) song "Never Gonna Give You Up," which currently has more than 63 million views on YouTube. In 2008, the New York Mets offered a Web poll to determine which song would be played during their home opener. Organizers allowed a blank field for write-ins, and Astley's song received more than 5 million write-in votes.

Communication professionals have sought to embrace memes for the purposes of viral and guerrilla marketing efforts, sometimes termed *memetic marketing*. As with any viral campaign efforts, communicators may find the spread of brand memes difficult, as memes are generally considered part of an Internet subculture that does not generally welcome contributions by organizations. However, organizations such as Cadbury and BlendTec have found success in using humor for such an approach.

The technical creation of an Internet meme is easier than ever with the advancement of photo- and video-editing software and websites dedicated to the creation of memes (see, e.g., quickmeme.com). The preponderance of ideas as proposed memes has even led to the creation of websites such as knowyourmeme.com, which offers a searchable database of memes that detail origin, year, uses, and so on. The site also includes status, which either confirms or rejects the status of the idea as a meme.

Melissa D. Dodd

See also Guerilla Marketing

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MENTAL MODELS APPROACH TO RISK COMMUNICATION

Using contributions from various disciplines, Ann Bostrom, Cynthia J. Atman, Baruch Fischhoff, and M. Granger developed a mental models approach (MMA) to risk communication in 1994. It is viewed as an efficient technique to identify the informational needs of individuals making decisions regarding the risks they face in their daily lives. The approach has been applied to examine an extensive array of hazards that include nuclear waste, radon gas exposure, sexually transmitted diseases, illicit drug usage, computer security, global climate change, pathogens in drinking water, and wildland fires, among others. The applicability of the MMA to virtually any risk faced by some risk-bearer population makes it beneficial for developing effective risk communication messages.

The MMA was developed on the premise that risk communication messages disseminated to varying segments of the public are often based on specialized expert information and a lack of understanding of laypeople's needs and expectations. As a result, members of the general public may be disconnected from, misunderstand, or ignore vital risk messages. The MMA provides risk communicators with a systematic method of obtaining feedback that can be used to craft accurate, research-based messages that address informational gaps between risk experts and the general public. The desired outcome of MMA is the development of effective communications that enhance laypeople's ability to make well-informed decisions about their safety.

The notion of the mental model, which is derived from research in cognitive psychology, serves as a fundamental component in MMA. Mental models are cognitive structures that are

continually developed with personal life experiences and used by individuals to make logical or rational decisions about the outside world. Laurel C. Austin and Baruch Fischhoff (2012) argued that the interrelated knowledge and observations that make up an individual's mental model are modified with experience. Mental models are developed through the processes of objectification, an act of deciphering an abstract concept into something tangible and common, and anchoring, which involves categorizing a new object into a preexisting schema to make it familiar.

One obstacle faced by risk communicators is that laypeople's mental models can be comprised of or influenced by heuristics, misperceptions, incomplete or invalid information, myths, sensationalized media reports, or premises that vary substantially from expert models. Risk communicators seek to overcome this obstacle by designing risk communication that improves the mental models of laypeople by strengthening accurate beliefs, refuting inaccurate beliefs, and filling in informational voids where necessary, thereby making their mental models mirror those of the experts.

Stages of the Model

Morgan, Fischhoff, Bostrom, and Atman (2002) proposed the following five-step process for the practical implementation of the mental models approach:

1. Extract an expert model.
2. Develop a mental model that represents beliefs of the targeted population.
3. Design and administer a confirmatory questionnaire.
4. Create a preliminary draft of risk communication.
5. Evaluate the final draft of risk communication.

Practitioners using MMA can begin by conducting a thorough examination of literature to identify the relevant factors and variables related to a specific risk, all of which are used to generate a detailed influence diagram. The influence diagram, which is a directed graph that indicates relationships between various risk factors, is

developed, analyzed, and refined through expert discussion. The use of a diverse array of scientists and experts in the development of the influence diagram provides a compilation of comprehensive and accurate beliefs relevant for decisions about a specific risk.

Next, the researcher can use a mixed-methods approach to develop a summary representation of the collective beliefs of laypeople, preferably randomly sampled from a targeted population. Data obtained from interviews are analyzed by comparison with the expert model, using the expert model as the basis for an essentially open-ended coding scheme for content analysis. This qualitative analysis allows the researcher to identify areas in which risk communication may be needed to clarify risk-related concepts, correct misperceptions, or refine existing beliefs.

Once potential gaps or discrepancies between the target audience and the expert model have been identified, a structured questionnaire is developed to assess the generalizability of beliefs and observations revealed in the in-depth interviews among the targeted population. While in-depth interviews provide an opportunity for participants to characterize their personal beliefs regarding a specific risk, subsequently developed survey items, for example Likert-scale items, allow the researcher to confirm interview findings with quantitative data. Data obtained from this confirmatory analysis is used to create specific risk communication messages, to be evaluated using feedback from the targeted population.

Limitations

Researchers work to refine MMA. One of its limitations is that mental models research is based on data obtained from small samples that are unrepresentative of the targeted population. Data obtained from small samples may be used to create risk communication that fails to meet the diverse informational needs of various segments of the larger population. While the subsequent survey phase should survey a large sample, much mental models research has failed to include a large, random survey of the target audience.

Despite its arguable limitations, MMA is a reliable mixed-methods technique for designing

effective risk communication that takes advantage of the positive benefits of qualitative methods. Its use of qualitative methods allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of lay views of a particular risk, which can be used to design risk communication that redefines effectiveness according to the needs of the general public, rather than the opinions of experts.

John Brummette

See also Qualitative Research; Quantitative Research

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MENTORING

The term *mentor* has been used to describe relationships between apprentices and masters, and trade guilds, but most recently, to describe relationships between professionals and protégés.

Mentoring can benefit both mentor and mentee. Mentors who recruit less experienced talent have the advantage of contacting quality preprofessionals

early, and mentees get experience and begin to build a network. Mentors learn valuable training and leadership skills while enacting their role, and can experience greater job satisfaction.

Various studies have been conducted to learn more about the concept of mentoring. Tsedal Beyene, Marjorie Anglin, William Sanchez, and Mary Ballou (2002) studied the responses of mentees after their experience in a mentoring program. They found that both parties derive knowledge and skills as well as emotional support from the experience. Mentees look to their mentors to model professional behavior and learn the often unwritten rules of an organization. Most agreed that the mentor became a role model to them. Almost three fourths agreed that the relationship was a success. Mentees described an ideal mentor as “nurturing, knowledgeable, listening, a friend, trustworthy, open-minded, a role model, approachable, helpful, encouraging, initiating, loyal, patient, nonjudgmental, should share similar interests, and should have a positive attitude and a sense of humor” (p. 102).

Today, mentoring is one of the most important tools in equipping professionals for the future. These relationships help mentees reach the next level in their professional careers. Mentoring encompasses wisdom, loyalty, motivation, and trust. This is an ongoing process that lasts until the goal of the mentee has been accomplished. When applied properly, mentoring is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

The public relations profession knows mentoring is important. The profession has made many successful efforts to implement mentoring programs in the field. Because public relations plays a vital role in organizations, mentoring professionals and providing them with the right tools for success is essential. Because the public relations field is changing at a rapid rate, there is a great need to keep the employees up to date and committed to their organization and to the profession.

Some Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) chapters have set up internal mentoring programs. These programs give new practitioners a chance to be guided by older, more experienced professionals. This guidance prepares the mentee to take on the upper level positions of his or her superior in that organization or elsewhere. These

investments show that organizations value their employees and will do whatever it takes to see them succeed (PRSA, 2003).

A mentor has the opportunity to increase personal professionalism and the professionalism of others through counseling and hands-on experience. This gives mentors a chance to sharpen their managerial skills while playing a significant role in the growth and career path of another. PRSA chapters have set up mentoring programs to help members enhance their skills and knowledge regarding the field (PRSA, 2003).

Nationally, PRSA set in place the College of Fellows Mentoring Program. This program makes it possible for all levels of practitioners to share knowledge and business expertise. This program also counsels one along his or her career path and decision-making choices. Members of PRSA who are chosen to be mentors have over 20 years of experience. They are carefully elected by the College because they “demonstrate superior capability as a practitioner, exhibit personal and professional qualities that serve as a role model for other practitioners and have advanced the state of the profession” (PRSA, 2003).

Paul Schrod, Carol Stringer Cawyer, and Renee Sanders (2003) stated in their research that individuals with mentors receive more promotions, have higher incomes, and report more career satisfaction and mobility than those who do not participate in the mentor-mentee relationship. This, then, is one avenue for improving the quality of work life for organizational members.

Lynn Appelbaum (2000) stated that mentoring offers something longer lasting than the superficial payoffs such as free meals and gym memberships, which some organizations offer. Mentoring offers an environment that makes mentees feel accepted and supported on both personal and professional levels. This creates stronger corporate culture, teamwork, and better use of resources. It also connects employers to organizations outside of their own. Mentors set the foundation for career paths. These relationships are excellent avenues for expanding networks and giving timely advice about one's future.

Victoria Nevin Locke and M. Lee Williams (2000) conducted a study to determine the role of gender in mentoring relationships. The study found that more

mentoring occurred between female supervisors and male subordinates than in mentoring relationships where female supervisors mentored female subordinates. A 1995 study by Shuk Yin Tam, David M. Dozier, Martha M. Lauzen, and Michael R. Real noted male supervisors were more likely to have a greater impact on subordinates' career advancement than female mentors. More research is needed in the area of mentoring and gender.

Brenda J. Wrigley

See also Public Relations Society of America; Public Relations Student Society of America

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MILITARY PUBLIC RELATIONS

Military public relations, often referred to as public affairs, includes military organizations' efforts

to influence, inform, and build relationships with strategic publics in order to ensure successful military operations and objectives. Common functions and activities, challenges, and developments are discussed in this entry.

Military public relations functions include media relations, community relations, and internal communication. Key publics are civilian and military, domestic and international—including personnel, media, communities, allies, government leaders, and local populations in conflict areas. For example, the U.S. Army's public affairs mission is to keep the American people and the army informed and to help create conditions that inspire confidence in the army's ability to operate effectively at all times. The U.S. Coast Guard's public affairs manual identifies six primary objectives for its communication program that include keeping the public informed about ongoing operations and programs to foster understanding and support for coast guard missions; helping recruit and retain personnel; helping save lives by educating and informing the public about safety issues; deterring and dissuading illegal activity; and, informing elected and public officials of coast guard's important roles to ensure its continued support.

While each military organization is unique, public affairs officers or specialists develop working relationships with representatives from the media, community, and relevant government agencies. They keep local, national, and global internal and external publics informed about the issues that may affect them. Typical activities of military public relations practitioners include generating informational materials such as news releases, speeches, photographs, and video and audio formats suitable for the Internet, radio, and television. Practitioners also coordinate special events and activities. Many military installations and organizations produce internal publications such as newspapers and magazines that require broadcasters, photographers, videographers, and reporters. Due to military operational and personnel security concerns, practitioners often review materials such as speeches and news articles to ensure they comply with security policy.

Controversial History and Current Challenges

Military public relations is intertwined with the history of modern public relations. For example, public relations pioneers such as George Creel and Edward Bernays helped President Woodrow Wilson persuade the American public to support U.S. military participation in World War I. Using a propaganda campaign that included newspapers, posters, radio, movies, and special events, the Committee on Public Information played an influential role in winning public approval of war efforts. Those involved saw their work as fact-based education and information, distinguished from German propaganda that they considered corrupt and deceitful. Despite this biased distinction, the committee worked to present the positive aspects of the situation. As such, the fear lingered that military public relations was propaganda and spin meant to unfairly influence public opinion about war. Military information during the Vietnam War led to additional public doubt and distrust of the military and government communication. Congress also had a contentious relationship with military public affairs. Public and congressional distrust was fueled by Senator J. William Fulbright's 1970 book, *The Pentagon Propaganda Machine*, and the related 1971 Emmy-winning CBS documentary, *The Selling of the Pentagon*.

Military public relations practitioners today must contend with ongoing distrust of military messages and a devaluing of military public relations that has contributed to a lack of public relations personnel, resources, and training. Much of the communication research on military public relations has echoed an emphasis on military public relations as propaganda. For example, research has focused on framing and agenda-setting effects of military messaging and campaigns. Recent research has centered on the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and government efforts to win public approval for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Scholars argued that the government was effective at framing issues, story lines, images, and slogans. New strategies such as allowing journalists to embed with military units encourage media members to humanize military personnel, leading to more favorable coverage of their actions. While

these strategies may have been effective in the United States, they were largely seen to further deteriorate international audiences' trust and credibility in U.S. military messages.

In addition to the hardship of communicating and engaging with skeptical and hostile audiences, other challenges facing military public relations include an outdated mindset still largely built on information control and delivery, often through traditional, top-down media. Other challenges include an increasingly complicated mission set and communication context and a military hierarchy that leaves communication success to commanders. Making communication a command function means its effectiveness will vary depending on each commander's communication skills, attitudes, training, and experience.

Signs of a Shift in Thinking

While the military may maintain an outdated information control and delivery mindset, there are signs that military leaders are slowly recognizing the increasingly important and constructive view of public relations. Scholars and some military leaders have argued that public relations and the battle for public hearts and minds has become as important as the actual battles being fought in warfare.

The ease and reach of communication technologies have meant the military has lost its grip on controlled images released to the media. The change is increasing the need for public relations that emphasizes dialogue and engagement with publics versus one-way messaging to target audiences. These bottom-up messages shared via email, social networking sites, and even mobile phones make it difficult to predict what will go viral among mass audiences. A single flier or poster can be transmitted via cell phone and suddenly take on new meaning when posted on Facebook. The speed and mobility of information also make it difficult for practitioners to correct misinformation.

The rising use of *strategic communication* as both a concept and a communication function also signals change. While no single definition within the military exists for strategic communication, recurring aspects include synthesizing themes,

ideas, images, and actions and moving beyond one-way communication transmission models to focus on dialogue, relationships, cultural sensitivities, and audience-based messaging. While the military has not yet effectively integrated strategic communication and public relations, its addition to the military lexicon lends promise that it could lead to an integrated approach where audience-based, coordinated strategic communication and public relations become process, mindset, and product.

Abbey Levenshus

See also Government Public Relations; Government Relations; Propaganda; Public Affairs; Public Diplomacy; Public Sector

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MINORITIES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

In the social sciences, *minority* can be and has been used to categorize members that experience oppression, discrimination, or other acts of inequality as a result of social power inequalities. The term is best defined as a sociological category within a demographic—meaning that the term refers to a category that is differentiated and defined by the social majority; *majority* categorizes those who hold the majority of positions of social power in a society, while the term *minority* is used to refer to categories of persons who hold few positions of social power. As such, those who are identified as belonging to less powerful

ethnicities, racial groups, gender identities, wealth or social class statuses, or sexual orientations can all be considered minorities. Despite the many possibilities for the use of the term *minority* in reference to the many groups that can and do face discrimination, today *minority* is almost exclusively used to categorize persons of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. This use of the term has been enduring—for it is nearly a century old. The *Etymology Dictionary* states that the term *minority* first began to be used in a sociological context in 1919 to categorize groups of people that were separated from the rest of a community by race, religion, or language.

Although social scientists argue that the term *minority (group)* is used primarily as a sociological category within a demographic, there is much debate, criticism, and scrutiny surrounding the term *minority* (despite the nuanced clarification that “minority” has very little to do with numerical, statistical composition of a population). For example, according to Reid Oslin (2004), in 1979, two students from Boston College (Alfred Feliciano and Valerie Lewis) coined the term AHANA because they objected to the “Office of Minority Programs” name used by Boston College at the time; these students cited the definition of the word *minority* as “less than” and proposed using the term AHANA (an acronym that refers to persons of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American descent), which they felt celebrated social cultural differences. Others such as Luke Visconti (2006), CEO and founder of DiversityInc, which is a leading source of business information on diversity and inclusion management, have preferred to use the term *people of color* when referring to non-White individuals. Others have taken issue with *people of color* because they argue that this term contributes to the erasure of “White” as a color.

To be current and reflective, cultural sensitivity is exercised by demonstrating the contention over the use of the term *minority*, as well as by highlighting the at times invisible yet oppressive power of language. As such, this entry attempts to address the issues that persons from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups encounter in the field of public relations—whether they be called AHANA, ALANA (the *L* for Latino is substituted), people of color, or minorities. However, in an

ever-increasingly global society, even AHANA (as inclusive as it might be) does not capture other racial and ethnic minorities that might face discrimination (in the future) in the field of public relations (such as Arab and Arab Americans). Thus, this entry uses the term UREP (underrepresented racial and ethnic persons) to more broadly capture the spirit (not the letter) of the sociological use of the term *minority*.

Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Persons in Public Relations

Because of a lack of job opportunities, barriers that kept UREP practitioners out of the mainstream of public relations practice, as well as barriers that kept them from advancing once in the practice, UREP practitioners were virtually invisible in the field of public relations. Scholars began to notice this disparity. As such, in the 1980s, the effect of UREPs in the public relations industry became a topic of interest in public relations research. Back in the early 1980s, M. J. Layton (1980) wrote of one early critic of “minority issues” in public relations who called the field “the last of the lily-white professions” (p. 64). The racial and ethnic composition has changed since Layton’s scathing criticism. In 1987, 7.3% of public relations practitioners were “minorities” (Kern-Foxworth, 1989a). Fifteen years later, the BPRI Group’s *PR Coalition Diversity Tracking Survey 2005* showed that 17% of practitioners consider themselves UREP. Finally, the most recent U.S. Bureau of the Census data show that 14.1% of the 135,000 persons who are consider public relations specialists consider themselves Black, Asian, or Hispanic. Despite an increase in representation in the public relations field, UREP practitioners are still underrepresented in the field, experience limited career advancement, may be overlooked, and at times still get pigeonholed into doing minority-related campaigns and projects. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth (1989b), more than 2 decades ago, found three primary reasons why such direct and indirect discrimination occurs.

First, the underlying issues of racism and prejudice are barriers to advancement. According to Eyun-Jung Ki in 2005, practitioners feel that they are hindered by their race or ethnicity despite being satisfied with their positions, and as

Elizabeth Toth has found in 2009, some UREP practitioners report that they are still experiencing lingering discrimination in their job environment, as well as their career advancement and placement based on their race. More specifically, although acts of overt racism in the field of public relations are on the decline, a common form of discrimination that UREP practitioners encounter manifests itself in the form of microinequities. A term whose origins stem back to the 1970s, *microinequities*, according to Mary Rowe (2008), refers to ways, including gestures and different kinds of talk and tone of voice (patronizing children's talk, slower talk, etc.), in which individuals are overlooked, ignored, or discounted based on an unchangeable characteristic such as race. A primary example in the public relations literature is Ki and Hyoungkoo Khang's 2008 study where Asian American practitioners articulated that they struggled with their names being frequently mispronounced, and they felt that they were not being taken seriously in the workplace due to their physical appearance, "such as looking younger or shorter, as well as perceived characteristics of Asians, such as introverted personalities or not looking like they speak English" (p. 105). Second, prejudice in the field often leads to pigeonholing, and Kern-Foxworth (1989b) found that pigeonholing, as well as filling "minority quotas," is usually the only reasons firms hire UREP practitioners. Sadly, this sentiment still exists in some part today. Finally, students that identify as UREPs have fewer opportunities to become aware of the public relations profession, and that lack of understanding about the profession could hurt the initiative of increasing diversity.

In a similar vein, research conducted by Damion Waymer and Omari Dyson in 2011 has demonstrated that issues of race rarely get discussed in the public relations curriculum including classroom lectures, in textbooks, as well as other course content. Unfortunately, few public relations textbooks cover UREP's contributions in any great detail. Most offer only a few paragraphs.

A handful of minorities joined the public relations field in the late 1940s, but it wasn't until the civil rights era that significant numbers pursued public relations careers. Joseph Varney Baker became the first African American man to launch a public relations consulting firm, serve as a Public

Relations Society of America president, and earn accredited public relations (APR) status. Rev. Barbara Harris, the first African American woman in public relations, began her career at Baker's firm and became its president in 1958. Recorded historical mentions of Hispanic, Native American, Asian American, or other UREP practitioners are nearly nonexistent.

Beyond the public relations workplace, academic studies of UREPs in public relations are growing but still remain few. When using a leading academic database (EBSCO Host's Communication & Mass Media Complete) less than 30 academic papers including conference papers, trade publications, and refereed journal articles emerge when entering the terms *ethnicity* and *public relations* into the search cue. On the contrary, discussion centering on the business case for marketing to, targeting, and reaching racially and ethnically diverse publics abounds. Public relations researchers recognize that targeting diverse markets are "important," "desirable," and a means "to increase company revenue"; however, practitioners are cautioned to beware of market tendencies to commodify ethnicity, a move that "instrumentalizes" underrepresented publics and reinforces hegemony.

Indeed, although there has been an increase in the work done to examine the lives, lived experiences, challenges, and opportunities for UREP practitioners since the 1980s, much more work is yet to be done in examining the experiences of these practitioners in public relations and other societal organizations that might employ these persons.

Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, Asians, and other UREP group members are projected to become the majority (in terms of numerical value) by 2042, and more specifically, these groups will make up around 54% of the U.S. population by 2050 (CNN, 2008). Ironically, if the trends from the last 20 years of both the U.S. population growth as well as the UREP representation growth in the field of public relations continue, despite the fact that greater numbers of UREPs will be available for recruitment as public relations practitioners, a real possibility exists that the new and growing numerical majority (UREPs) could potentially still be the numerical minority in the field of public relations. If this did occur,

what would it say or imply about the field of public relations?

Damion Waymer

See also Critical Race Theory; Race and Public Relations

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MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Mission and vision statements delineate the goals, purposes, and values of an organization. Vision statements provide a broad guideline of organizational goals; mission statements define the scope of the organization, differentiate it from competitors, and summarize why the organization exists. A good mission statement communicates to internal and external publics the strategy of the organization, the framework that will be used in attempting to achieve goals, and the norms and values of the organization.

The terms *mission statement* and *vision statement* are closely related but can be distinguished from one another. The vision statement represents a desired future goal that identifies priorities for the organization. Mission statements communicate the strategy of the organization in a more practical sense with regard to goal attainment. A rule of

thumb is that the vision statement defines where an organization is going and a mission statement gives information about how it is going to get there.

Vision Statements

A shared vision is vital to organizational success. If all members of an organization share a well-defined goal, it can make more strategic and targeted management and operational decisions than it could without a clear vision.

Vision statements include elements of organizational culture such as values, philosophy, the role of the organization in relation to society and its publics, and other factors that provide guidance and direction. Although vision statements are sometimes critiqued as nebulous and vague, they need to be broad enough to set long-term organizational priorities that must be addressed in the mission of an organization. Vision statements are essential tools of organizational leadership, particularly in light of managing change. According to Nadler and Tushman, a leader creates the vision desired to “provide a way for people to develop commitment, a common goal around which people can rally, and a way . . . to feel successful” (1989, p. 105).

Although a vision statement is purposefully vague, it indicates to the employees what the organization will strive to attain, the values that it holds and advocates, and the areas of the business that will be most competitively focused on in the future. For instance, an organization whose vision focuses on providing the highest quality product would have different strategic emphases than one focusing on the most innovative new designs, or one with the most inexpensive merchandise. As that is important for a business, it is also essential for a governmental organization, a nonprofit organization, a nongovernmental organization, and even academic institutions.

A vision statement is usually created at the highest level of the organization by the CEO or a team in a leadership position. One potential danger is that simply creating a vision statement at the top of the organization and expecting others to follow it defeats the ownership and responsibility that are fostered when many participants work on the vision statement. Conducting research with internal publics—such as labor and management—and

creating a diverse group of representatives from internal stakeholders to create the vision statement is the preferred method for crafting an organizational vision. This method results in a shared vision of what employees aspire to and develops participatory commitment to that vision. Done well, a vision statement can create high levels of job satisfaction, productivity, and lower turnover, making for a more efficacious organization. A vision statement is a management tool to be used, not a reputational tool to assert the organization’s image.

Mission Statements

Mission statements are tools to convey goals, organizational structure and strategy, legitimacy, values, participation and ownership among employees, leadership, responsibility to the community, ethical priorities, and commitment to publics and stakeholders. Scholar Marianne Talbot (2000) noted that an effective mission statement does two things:

1. It helps everyone live up to the values of the organization.
2. It offers guidelines against which an organization should be judged.

Mission statements focus on organizational strengths. The focus fostered by a clear and authoritative mission statement can provide a competitive advantage for an organization by allowing its members to remain strategic, both intellectually and in resource allocation. Without a clearly defined mission statement, an organization can flounder and make decisions that are well intended but do not emphasize its competitive advantage.

Mission statements provide a strong, intentional consistency with regard to organizational behavior. They often outline the hierarchy of priorities in an organization, and can be used to direct management decision making. The consistency provided by a clear organizational mission allows the formation of long-term relationships with publics and stakeholders (Bowen, 2010). These groups know what to expect from such an organization and can trust and rely upon it as one dedicated to a consistent, clear mission, thereby enhancing its credibility.

Mission statements are more practical and short term than vision statements, noted Shannon

A. Bowen, Brad L. Rawlins, and Thomas M. Martin in 2010. The mission statement endorses a clear purpose for the organization and answers the question *Why are we here?* or *How are we different from our competitors?* Common elements of mission statements include key goals, management strategy, ethical values, relationships with publics and stakeholders, organizational structure, and so on. Many mission statements delineate an organization's competitive advantage and how it will be used to create a benefit, such as, "By being the most cost-efficient manufacturer of this product, we will pass on savings to the customer, and therefore gain a majority of new sales in this market."

Importantly, top-performing organizations subscribe to exemplary statements of vision and mission in their decision making. Although such statements vary considerably across industries and among organizations, a clear vision for the future and a thoroughly articulated mission statement are vital to the overall success of an organization.

Shannon A. Bowen

See also Contingency Theory; Ethics of Public Relations; Excellence Theory; Executive Management; Issues Management; Management Theory; Narrative Theory

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MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Contemporary society is evolving into a hyper-interconnected and mobile community. Mobile technology refers to any hardware and software combination that allows a person to access online content without being restricted to a particular location. The social mobile Web, accessed through the use of mobile technologies like smartphones and tablets, allows users to engage and interact with data, emotions, and connections across time and place. Mobile technologies have transformed how public relations is being practiced in both the physical and digital worlds, primarily by allowing people to personalize the way they receive, create, and curate information in multiple formats.

Users are able to broadcast their opinions, acknowledgements, praise, frustration, and fears or uncertainty to not only their immediate circle of friends and colleagues, but also to the rest of the global digital community (Applin & Fischer, 2012). Mobile technologies have extended access to digital content beyond that provided by the computer.

Jason Farman in 2012 noted, “The mobile internet has thus interceded into the global problem of the ‘digital divide’ by providing access to areas that do not have the infrastructure and wealth to support hardwired connections to the internet as used in the desktop model of computing” (p. 545).

Mobile technologies offer a number of pathways for effective communication. Traditional one-to-one verbal communication, which characterized the telephone, has been augmented with other variations. In one-to-many communication, a sender can broadcast information directly to a large segment of the population or to a large stakeholder group. In many-to-many communication, the mobile device connects groups of people using mobile applications for social networking sites like Facebook and Google+, microblogs like Twitter, photosharing sites like Instagram and Pinterest, and video sharing sites like YouTube and Vimeo. Information can be disseminated in various forms, including visual information (photos and videos) and textual information (SMSs and short press releases).

Advances in mobile technologies have stimulated development of mobile applications (apps), which are specific software on a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) designed for a particular purpose or function. Apps represent a variety of categories and functions, ranging from social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), photosharing and editing (e.g., Instagram), review sites (e.g., Yelp), geolocation-based applications (e.g., Foursquare), augmented reality applications (e.g., Layar), organization planners (e.g., iCal), e-commerce capabilities, mobile commerce, and many more.

In public relations, mobile technologies are used as part of a visual and contextual communication platform for businesses, professionals, and agencies to extend their reputation and brand name among relevant audiences. Mobile technologies offer both advantages such as being able to target specific audiences quickly, and challenges such as the potential for viral spread of harmful information. The evolution of mobile technologies has progressed at a rapid speed, and practitioners must stay current and integrate these emerging communication platforms into their research and practices.

Karen Freberg

See also App; Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Photosharing

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MODERNITY AND LATE MODERNITY

Modernity and late modernity are ways of describing highly developed societies, focusing in particular on the roles played by institutions, social structures, divisions of labor, and technological and information systems. Modernity tends to be used to describe the period of industrialization from the decline of feudalism until the mid-20th century. This was a time when societies put great hope in the benefits of industrialization; notions of progress were both linear and grounded in the continued evolution of industrial technologies. The world was a place that could be changed through human intervention and controlled through surveillance, and *progress* came to be defined by the continued introduction of new production processes, new industrial infrastructure, new products, and new forms of consumption. As long as societies continued to create these innovations and provide institutions that could manage the capitalist process, the assumption was that they, and the world, would somehow become “better.” Accompanying these developments were new divisions of

labor, task specialization, and clearly defined and gendered social and political roles. Modern societies also placed great importance on the role of government, institutions (including corporations) and, more generally, on greater or lesser degrees of control over the populace in the service of progress. Anthony Giddens noted (1991) that the huge scale and dynamism of modernity is one of its defining characteristics and that modern societies were characterized by three key elements: separation of time and space; disembedding of social relations from social contexts to be located anywhere in time and space; and ongoing reflexivity, or adaptation as new knowledge about the social world became available.

This material reality that gave rise to modern societies has resulted in modernity being inextricably linked to the capitalist system as it appeared prior to the mid-20th century. Reflecting the organizations of modern societies, a number of abstract concepts have come to characterize the modernist approach to the social world. These include notions of rigidity, predictability, linear notions of time, and the institutionalization and categorization of social processes. In general, modernity is also associated with the dominance of structure over individual agency. In the context of organizations, modernity is embodied in managerialist approaches to organizational structures and processes, where the emphasis is on the control and management of staff, processes, and procedures—the assumption being that if these are sufficiently controlled there will be a predictable, positive outcome.

One can see the appeal of modernity in its claim to provide a world that is both easily understood and easy to manage through human intervention. In public relations research, functional approaches to the profession that attempt to divide different aspects of public relations into neat categories, and present a process-driven, systems understanding of public relations, might be called modernist approaches. These would include, for example, the categorization of public relations work into clearly identifiable and separate managerial and technical roles, or the open systems approach to public relations, where the function is understood as one element with a world that will function effectively if a balance is maintained between its constituent parts; or the division of public relations campaigns into different, clearly identifiable stages, or the

model of situational crisis communication, where strategy is determined by different identifiable factors that shape communication strategy in a predictable way.

As modern societies continued to evolve in the second half of the 20th century, a number of developments began to shake popular confidence in modern social systems. The Wall Street Crash, leading to the Great Depression of the 1930s challenged notions of eternal progress that underpinned industrialization, and the global destruction created by two World Wars amply demonstrated the fact that not all technological innovation was positive. Manufacturing industries went into a gradual decline in the West and information and communications technologies became increasingly important as both social structures and as means of making social connections. Postmodernists began to reject the notion of social stability outright, arguing the case for the complete fragmentation of society, identity, and meaning. However, many theorists have disagreed with this extreme rejection of modernity and have instead argued that this very different period should be understood as a continuation of modernity, called late modernity.

Various understandings of late modernity have been proposed. All are driven by the gradual decline of recognizable pillars of modernity, including institutional systems, the size of government and its role as a regulator of social life, and the apparent predictability of the consequences of human intervention. Accompanying these changes is the recognition that the decline of traditional social structures means that individuals now must take responsibility for shaping their own identities, associations with other groups and individuals, and careers. The devolution of choice from institutions to individuals, and the need for each of us to make conscious decisions about the ways we live our lives, are therefore fundamental to understandings of structure and agency in late modernity.

A related concept is the notion of fluidity. Zygmunt Baumann argued in 2000 that this is a central characteristic of what he called “liquid modernity,” a world marked by movement between identities, geographies, employment, and social positions, and where power and status are fleeting rather than set in stone. In this version of late modernity, the ability to move fluidly across

different locations is a marker of success, but also raises the worrying specter of constant disconnection and disorientation. Arjun Appadurai (1996) reflected this emphasis on fluidity with an exploration of the ways in which finance, people, technology, ideologies, and media form “global flows” that shape society on a global scale. In contrast, Ulrich Beck (1992) argued that late modern societies can be characterized as “risk societies,” where the imperative for the individual is to manage risk in the absence of institutionally defined security, by making choices that allow us to establish our own biographical path. Other scholars have focused on the increasing importance of the production of meaning as the production of material artifacts loses its centrality. Scott Lash and John Urry demonstrated how the semiotic aspects of production lend themselves to the increasing need for individuals to construct their identity through their consumption habits. In their world, just as in that defined by other theorists, technology and the circulation of information and knowledge have become fundamental to the ways in which we live our lives, the ways we connect with each other and with organizations, and the social status we enjoy.

In public relations scholarship, late modern conceptualizations of society have not been explicitly drawn on very often. However, more and more scholars have started to recognize that the communications environment is unpredictable and cannot be controlled in the ways suggested by systemic understandings of public relations. Dawn Gilpin and Priscilla Murphy, for example, suggested in 2010 that complexity theory is a more productive way of understanding the communications environment and would prompt flexibility among practitioners, ultimately leading to better practice that engages more with the demands of audiences. Patricia Curtin and T. Kenn Gaither (2007) used the circuit of culture to elaborate on their understanding of public relations as an occupation that is engaged with the production, circulation, and consumption of meaning at a very fundamental level. David McKie and Debashish Munshi (2007) engaged with the multifaceted effects of public relations beyond the organization and reflected on the potential it has to change the way we engage with the environment and with each other. While not explicitly aligned with

specific late modern theories, all these perspectives recognize that the world is an extremely complicated place for public relations practitioners to operate in, and old certainties can no longer be relied on.

Lee Edwards

See also Chaos and Complexity Theory; Circuit of Culture; Enlightenment and Modernity; Postmodern Public Relations

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MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Moral development describes the strata through which human beings progress in their understanding and their reasoning of whether actions are right or wrong. As we age, our understanding of moral behavior and the reasons for acting morally increase in depth and complexity in a predictable manner. At some point in early to middle adulthood, that growth slows or stops for most individuals. Most people then operate on a primary level of moral development but might advance or regress to another level situationally. Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987) was an eminent American psychologist who studied moral development and explicated predictable levels of moral development. Kohlberg's levels are excellent classification devices, but are understood as theoretical models, or simplifications, of a complex interplay of many variables that describe moral conscience and deliberation. Kohlberg's work helps us comprehend ethics in both theory and practice, and its application to public relations.

Kohlberg's empirical studies on moral development spanned decades and examined the moral decision making of young children through older adults. His research incorporated factors such as socialization and cultural norms, but it concentrated on identifying the moral reasoning that accounted for individuals' choices. His research resulted in three major levels of moral development, each subdivided into two developmental stages. The first level of moral development is *preconventional*, the second level is *conventional*, and the third level is *postconventional* or *autonomous*.

Preconventional Level

In the preconventional level of moral development, Level I, Kohlberg addressed the learning of infants and children who are not yet moral. In the first stage of Level I, the infant or child reacts to punishment. The child does not have the reasoning ability to understand why not to do something, but reacts instead to avoid the punishment that comes along with undertaking an action. In this way, the child seeks only to avoid negative repercussions of behavior rather than to act morally.

In the second stage of Level I, this understanding is coupled with the desire to earn praise and receive rewards for behavior. The child undertakes an action in order to receive positive reinforcement (praise and rewards) rather than because of an understanding of the nature of the action itself as good. Through this process, children are socialized into learning the norms of behavior. However, they have not yet developed a sense of morality in understanding that certain actions are morally worthy and others are morally unacceptable. Nor have they developed the analytical reasoning ability required for a higher level moral analysis of behavior. In both stages of the preconventional level, children are simply pursuing self-interest through avoiding punishment or seeking reward.

Conventional Level

Level II is defined as the conventional level of moral development. In the conventional level, moral agents make decisions based on conformity to expected roles and norms of behavior. Most adults operate at the conventional level of moral development and generally accept its tenets without questioning their validity. The first stage of Level II was termed by Kohlberg "good boy/nice girl morality," in which the moral agent is motivated to act through role conformity. The socialization process allows us to understand how a "good boy or nice girl" is supposed to act. The pressure to conform to the role of a good girl or nice boy is strong and leads the decision maker to desire actions that are socially acceptable, meaning that others find those decisions morally permissible. For instance, a high school student might undertake the philanthropic activities of peer and referent groups in order to be perceived as "well-rounded." In the first stage of Level II, the person reacts to the expectations of peers and parents as primary agents of socialization.

The second stage of Level II is the "law and order" stage, in which moral agents learn what is expected of them as adults in society. In this stage, individuals want to conform to the role of a good citizen. The norms and laws that govern society act as indicators of moral worth of an action and are used by the person to decide how he or she should behave. For instance, if murder and stealing are illegal, then the individual concludes that these

actions must be morally wrong. The pressure toward the role conformity of a good citizen is enough to prevent most agents from engaging in the behaviors society has deemed illegal, and therefore—in this somewhat limited view—immoral. The role conformity brought about in the first stage of Level II is generally learned from peer groups; in the second stage it includes those norms but also incorporates the laws of one's society. Kohlberg found that most people live at the conventional level of moral development.

Postconventional Level: Autonomy

Kohlberg's final level of moral development is Level III, the postconventional, autonomous, or principled level. In this level, the person operates by self-accepted moral principles that can be justified through analysis and argument. These moral principles are accepted not because society says they are right, but because the individual has examined and understands the rational moral arguments in play.

Kohlberg divided Level III into two stages. The first stage is the "contract and individual rights" stage, in which the primary moral concern is the rights of the individual. As Richard De George (2009) wrote, "We speak of, and understand, morality based on the rights of individuals and the agreements made between consenting adults" (p. 23).

Most interestingly, the second stage of Level III is "rationality," the apex of moral development according to Kohlberg. In this stage, people do not simply accept the moral standards of society, but autonomously question "why" something is right, or how we know it to be wrong. One can articulate a rational justification against moral norms and principles. This final stage of moral development incorporates a universal view of actions, in that they are judged to be right or wrong by the agent regardless of specific cultural norms that might change over time or by location. Incorporating the Kantian concept of duty, Kohlberg argued that agents at this level of development act because they understand the moral principle involved and why it is binding on them. This duty to follow the moral law is self-imposed by each individual, rather than externally imposed by parents, peers, or lawmakers. At this level of moral development, the desire to take the morally

right action outweighs concerns of prudence, constraint, or even self-interest.

Calling this postconventional stage "autonomous," Kohlberg argued that agents are able to provide a rational defense of moral arguments. He evoked the argument for moral rationality espoused centuries earlier by Kant. Autonomy is the one true method of moral decision making, according to Kant, because "a moral agent is an agent who can act autonomously, that is, as a law unto himself or herself, on the basis of objective maxims of his or her reason alone" (Sullivan, 1989, p. 48). These objective maxims are the moral principles based on rational analysis and justification that cause this stage of moral development to differ from all others in significant ways. The rational, autonomous analysis of moral principles called for in this stage is a higher order cognitive ability than is seen in the other levels of development. When a dilemma is encountered, the individual responds not by seeking role conformity, or seeking the other-based guidance of rules and laws, but by conducting a logical assessment of the reasons why some actions are right and others are wrong. Once rational and principled reasons are determined, the agent can articulate and defend a moral decision based on the principles used to reach that conclusion. This autonomous reasoning is also said, at times, to require *moral courage* to defy prevailing social norms.

Other scholars have been deeply influenced by Kohlberg's seminal work on moral development. For instance, philosopher Henry David Aiken identified three stages of moral discourse that are remarkably similar to Kohlberg's levels of moral development: (1) a prerational, reactive, emotion-based state; (2) a conformity or rule obedience state; and (3) a level of ethical reflection. These states of discourse mirror the levels of moral development Kohlberg identified and serve to reinforce their validity and contribution to our understanding of moral growth. Carol Gilligan argued that Kohlberg's levels did not sufficiently take gender differences into account but that both males and females can reach the final stage of Level III, the highest level of moral development.

Scholars have used Kohlberg's levels of moral development to study the ethical choices of public relations practitioners as well as to argue the moral worth of public relations as a societal discourse.

Donald K. Wright's and Shannon A. Bowen's studies of public relations practitioners found the autonomous level of moral development commonly used among executives at high levels of responsibility in their careers. The complex decisions they faced in issues management and strategic planning required a powerful means of ethical analysis, allowing them to develop to the postconventional level of moral autonomy.

Shannon A. Bowen

See also Decision Theory; Deontology; Ethics of Public Relations; Moral Philosophy

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MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Moral philosophy intersects public relations in the areas of ethical decision making, issues management, and corporate responsibility. Businesses, especially corporations, are faced with a mandate to be good citizens: to behave in the public interest, in a socially responsible manner, as well as in their own interests. Employing moral philosophy contributes to organizational effectiveness by aligning the interests of the company with those of its publics.

Moral philosophy is the study of ethics. Philosophers study the composition of moral principles and expound on their justification using many methods of analyses. These methods of analyses can range from the weighing of consequences to the use of various tests, including concepts such as duty, fairness, justice, equality, and right. Philosophers concerned with defining moral principles ask such questions as “What principle is universally good?” and “What is the role of intention in determining the morality of an action?”

Logic and Principle

To varying extents within each philosophical school, moral philosophy attempts to base ethical decisions on rationality rather than on other decision-making bases such as faith. Philosophy attempts to separate nonrational factors such as faith, habit, belief, and bias from logical principles and analysis. In seeking to determine moral principles, moral philosophers attempt to look beyond the cultural and religious norms, customs, or habits that tell us to take certain actions. Rather, moral philosophy seeks truths that span time and location to identify principles that are moral regardless of situational specifics.

For example, a generally accepted moral principle is that lying is wrong. Philosophers can arrive at this principle through a multitude of moral tests. Through a utilitarian test, lying is wrong because it produces more harm than good. Through deontology, it is wrong because lying does not uphold the dignity and respect of others and because we would not want to be lied to ourselves, and the intent of lying is deception. Although these moral

tests simplify the actual philosophies they represent, they allow us to see the principle that lying is morally wrong. But what about lying to save the life of a potential murder victim? Moral philosophy takes on such difficult questions of moral obligation, intention, consequences, duty, fairness, responsibility, and justice in the search for consistent methods for solving such dilemmas. Moral philosophy is often the most useful when a dilemma appears to have several “right” answers.

Approaches to Moral Philosophy

Moral philosophy can take three broad purposes or types of conceptual approaches: *meta-ethics*, defining what constitutes ethics; *normative ethics*, determining what rules or principles should guide ethical decisions; and *applied ethics*, the application of normative rules to specific ethical dilemmas. Normative ethics is the most prominent type of moral philosophy. Normative moral principles are of interest to public relations because they can guide practitioner decision making in a multiplicity of situations.

Applied moral philosophy studies the *application* of moral principles to decision making. Ethics assumes that an objective morality does exist and attempts to discover the rules, values, and principles that govern—or should govern—behavior. Ethics provides logical decision-making methods based on moral principles of right and wrong, whereas moral philosophy deals with the more abstract questions about what actually constitutes moral character, norms, values, and beliefs across societies.

Consequentialist Versus Nonconsequentialist Approaches

Moral philosophy is split into two primary approaches to ethical decision making: consequentialism and nonconsequentialism. These types of ethical reasoning are diametrically opposed, as they hold differing values that dictate the parameters used to define what each considers an ethical decision.

Consequentialism instructs that the ethical decision is the one with the most favorable consequences. The morality of the decision is judged by the expected outcome of the decision (utility)

rather than the decision itself. The “utility” of a decision is what it produces in terms of the outcome of implementing the decision.

Utilitarianism

The most prominent school of consequentialist thought is utilitarianism. Utility can be measured in numerous ways, such as bringing the greatest amount of good, happiness, favorable consequences, or pleasure to the greatest number of people. Utilitarianism expects the decision maker to be able to predict the potential outcomes of numerous decision alternatives and then choose among those alternatives to produce the greatest positive consequence. This paradigm, similar to a cost-benefit analysis, looks not at a moral principle applied to the dilemma, but at the consequences of the decision to determine what act is ethical.

Utilitarianism dictates that the most ethical decision is the one that produces the greatest utility. Therefore, the moral aspects of the decision come into play after the decision is made or in weighing the consequences of different options. Although there are varying forms of utilitarianism (hedonistic, eudaemonistic, and ideal, further subdivided into act and rule utilitarianism), the moral decision in this paradigm is that which has an outcome of creating the greatest utility or good for the greatest number of people affected by the outcome of the decision and the least amount of negative consequences.

Deontology

The second broad approach to ethics is nonconsequentialism. This view asserts that the worth of a decision should be judged by the moral principle applied, not by the resulting consequences of the decision. This view holds that duty is the basic moral requirement and exists independently of consequences. Arguments about justice, responsibility, fairness, and duty are appealing to the moral norms and principles used in nonconsequentialist decision making. In this view, doing the morally right thing to uphold one’s duty is the primary decision-making factor, and the consequences of an ethical decision are a secondary concern. When an ethical decision is made based on sound moral principles (such as “lying is wrong”), the decision

is deemed ethical. Nonconsequentialist philosophers do take the consequences of decision alternatives into account, but they do not allow the outcome of various alternatives to *determine* the moral principle used to make the decision. Deontology, as developed by Immanuel Kant, and the Rawlsian theory of justice, are common forms of nonconsequentialist ethics.

In deontology, the decision maker must decide the ethical course of action by reason alone, basing the moral judgment on autonomous rationality, with the overall imperative of performing a moral duty. Kant's categorical imperative, a test of universal reversibility, is employed to ensure that the decision is based on a generalizable moral principle that is applicable across situations, times, and cultures. The categorical imperative asks the decision makers to place themselves on the receiving end of a decision as a test of its fairness and acceptability. Deontology requires a rigorous analysis of motives and intention to guard against bias or self-interest in favor of an objective vantage. Finally, deontology demands that people be treated as ends in themselves, with moral principles that maintain the dignity and respect of all involved supporting ethical decisions.

To allow consequences to dictate moral principle would violate deontology's guard against bias by allowing the outcome of a decision to affect the moral principle used to make the decision. In the words of one senior public relations practitioner, "If you do the right thing, the consequences take care of themselves" (Bowen, 2002, p. 280). Deontology argues that the consequentialist reasoning of "If I do X, then Y will happen" can be easily mutated to serve selfish interests or even to justify unethical behavior. By basing the decision entirely on moral reasoning according to categorical principle, deontology attempts to offer a method of analysis that rules out all considerations except the moral intention of doing the right thing.

Why use moral philosophy in public relations? Moral philosophy gives people standards, language, and tools for rational analysis with which to reduce the difficulty of articulating and defending moral judgments.

Chief communications officers (CCO) are increasingly called on to provide ethical guidance to the CEO in strategic planning and issues

management, as found in Shannon A. Bowen's (2009b) study. Public relations professionals must be ready to answer that call with ways to analytically and rigorously examine the decision options on the table, and choose a course of action with ethical responsibility and conviction.

The CCO or top public relations professional understanding what factors make one decision more ethical than another can provide intrinsic worth to his or her organization. An analysis arrived at by using moral philosophy is defensible to the media and the publics around the organization. Additionally, if moral standards are in conflict, whose standards should prevail? Only through the use of moral philosophy can CCOs provide a rational and objective analysis of such dilemmas. This analysis provides an excellent tool for the public relations practitioner to use when facing demands from the organization or client, the dominant coalition, publics, stakeholders, the media, and activists.

Shannon A. Bowen

See also Decision Theory; Deontology; Ethics of Public Relations; Moral Development; Utilitarianism

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MOTIVATION THEORY

Although the term *theory* is used in motivation theory, no single recognized theory of motivation exists. Rather, *motivation* is used as an umbrella term for a number of theories that describe factors, traits, or situations that result in people moving beyond awareness and attitudes into behaviors.

One of the earliest 20th-century psychologists to focus on motivation was Kurt Lewin, noted for his 3 decades of work at Stanford University, the University of Iowa, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Lewin established the Research Center for Group Dynamics and thought of motives as goal-directed forces. This was new thinking amid the psychological theories that behavior was due to blind impulses within individuals. His resulting field theory stated that actions were influenced by environmental factors as well as psychological traits.

Abraham Maslow's 1954 *Hierarchy of Needs* further refined this idea of internal and external influences by identifying five sequential categories of needs that must be met for individuals to feel fulfilled. First, physiological needs such as hunger and thirst must be satisfied; second, individuals must feel safe; third, people must feel like they belong to some social group; fourth, individuals must experience some type of self-esteem; and fifth, only then can individuals work toward reaching their own potential, what Maslow called self-actualization.

Lewin and Maslow's work established the two basic domains of motivation: internal and external. Researchers in the next two decades attempted to identify variables and factors that fit into these two perspectives in a variety of different environmental settings from the workplace to advertising.

A number of workplace theories cite motivation as a key element in employee workplace behavior. Frederick Herzberg's 1959 *hygiene theory* contends

that the external job environment, consisting of hygiene factors such as company policies, supervisor behavior, and salary, must be satisfactory before individuals will be motivated to pursue higher order, internal motivators such as achievement, recognition, and job advancement.

Perhaps the most famous workplace motivation scenario is the serendipitous finding known as the Hawthorne effect. Researcher George Mayo, conducting human relations research at General Electric's Hawthorne Works, found that individuals' group motivation and resulting productivity increased or decreased according to factory light levels. He concluded that the levels of attention being paid to them directly affected individuals' motivation—in fact, that security, belonging, and recognition were stronger factors than physical comfort.

Douglas McGregor's 1957 X and Y theories also contributed to the motivational theory umbrella. Often used in management situations, Theory X states that individuals have an inherent aversion to work and therefore must be externally motivated to do it. Theory Y provides the opposite view, that individuals naturally have a need to work and external forces have only to encourage and provide opportunities for this need to be satisfied. This suggests that understanding individuals' internal motivations is necessary to know what external motivators would be most effective in creating or reinforcing desired behaviors.

The media environment with its rich variety of technologies has its own set of motivational studies, most based on trying to identify the effects media have on human behavior. The 1930s Payne Fund Studies, a 13-study, 3-year effort directed by the Motion Picture Research Council, studied the influence of movies on children. The resulting 10 volumes, with their findings on topics from sleep disturbances being linked to scary movies to the influence on moral standards of on-screen actors, were not conclusive in proving effects, but were revolutionary in even attempting to tackle such a complex subject.

Radio figured prominently in early media and motivation studies, with the *War of the Worlds* broadcast fiasco and Herta Herzog's study of women listening to radio serials. Actor Orson Wells was so convincing in his 1938 radio rendition of *War of the Worlds* that people panicked,

some to the point of jumping out of windows. Herzog, under the direction of Paul Lazarsfeld and the Office of Radio Research, combined four studies of radio and women listeners to conclude that the women's personal characteristics motivated them to listen because of the satisfaction they received from listening. This developed into the *uses and gratifications perspective*, which has subsequently been studied in the context of television and Internet use.

When television entered mainstream American homes in the post–World War II era, researchers shifted attention to what people heard as well as what they saw. As with films, the research began with effects on children in the first major study of its kind, *Television in the Lives of Our Children*, published in 1961. Of most concern were the potential behavior effects, but as with most motivational research findings, no significant link between what children watched and what it motivated them to do was established. That did not stop the flood of television studies that ensued—the 1960s *Violence and the Media* study identified the two worlds individuals experience—television versus real-life experiences—and concluded that violent television content motivated individual violent behavior. This inspired George Gerbner's longitudinal study of violence in the media, resulting in his cultivation theory. This theory states that if individuals see enough violence repeatedly on television, some individuals become socialized to believe and accept that behavior as reality while others are motivated to emulate it. In 1977, the Ronnie Zamora murder trial provided the ultimate legal test for motivation and violent television when Zamora's attorney based his client's defense on behavior motivated by violent television. Though the defense was novel, Zamora lost.

Not all motivation theories are linked exclusively to media, however. Other researchers studied real-life social situations to determine what motivated individuals to behave in different ways. In the 1960s, Albert Bandura studied how people learn new behaviors. His famous experiment with the Bobo doll, where children watched a doll being punched and when left alone with the doll, punched it as they had seen others do, led to modeling theory and its premise of individuals being motivated to emulate the behaviors of others.

During the same period, Leon Festinger was exploring how individuals were motivated to solve situations in which they received conflicting information. His cognitive dissonance theory states that when discrepancies exist between beliefs or actions, people are compelled to resolve the conflict so they can return to a state of equilibrium. His conclusion was that the change in behavior motivated people to make a change in their thought patterns.

Applying these social, cognitive, and behavioral perspectives is an accepted part of marketing and advertising practice as well as being used in the more traditional realms of television and radio programming. One of the advertising industry's first introductions to motivational research came during the 1940s and 1950s via Ernest Dichter, head of the Institute for Motivational Research. Dichter conducted in-depth interviews that relied on a psychoanalytical, Freudian-based interpretation of consumers' responses to identify feelings and emotions such as tension and guilt and to use them to develop sales psychology. This led to further research on consumers' self-images, attitudes, and behaviors, along with their environments, as factors that influence consumers' decisions and motivate their buying behavior; this work was, in effect, seeking a direct link between psychology and purchasing behavior.

Not everyone accepted the early motivational researchers' premise that discovering these psychological desires would motivate individuals into behavior. One of the strongest criticisms of motivational research is that the data could not predict which thoughts individuals would act on. The heavy reliance on qualitative research techniques was also constantly questioned by traditional marketing and business scholars, with the result that by the end of the 1950s, the idea of psychology's direct influence on consumer behavior was losing credibility. Motivational research, however, was not dead; in fact, it is credited as being the forerunner of modern-day psychographic research models. These approaches focus on sophisticated systems combining consumers' demographics with lifestyle behaviors; one of the best known is the Stanford Research Institute's (SRI) Values, Attitudes, and Lifestyles System (VALS). Based on a complex, weighted combination of environmental, demographic, and lifestyle variables, the VALS system

and others like it attempt to create categories of consumers to whom targeted advertising and promotional messages can be sent to motivate purchasing behavior.

Although much study has been devoted to why people behave as they do, there is still no reliable, statistically significant research that can pinpoint specific, reliable factors in human behavior. Although specific internal or external factors can be studied in depth, putting all of these complex factors together to come up with one motivational theory has not been accomplished. The complexity of human beings with their internal differences and the myriad external factors affecting each individual make that a challenging task for future researchers.

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See also Psychographics; Uses and Gratifications Theory

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MUCKRAKERS (AND THE AGE OF PROGRESSIVISM)

Muckrakers were early investigative journalists who exposed corruption and abuse by the newly emerging giant corporations and local political machines. For public relations, the focus was on the negative exposure of the corporations headed by the legendary robber barons such as J. D. Rockefeller, William Vanderbilt, and J. P. Morgan. The corporate response to the muckrakers resulted in a growth spurt for public relations in the early 1900s. Muckrakers showed that the newly emerging mass media—newspapers and magazines—could turn public opinion and public policy against the seemingly all-powerful corporate giants. These corporate giants began hiring public relations

practitioners to present their side in the court of public opinion.

Today, television still dominates the news media landscape and provides many forums for investigative journalism. Many of these stories lead to problems and even crises for organizations. A few examples include when CBS exposed the danger of the drug Rezulin, when ABC battled the grocery chain Food Lion over food safety, and when NBC challenged GM on truck safety. While this is often called muckraking, there is a significant difference between investigative reporters of today and yesterday. Most of the muckrakers were part of a larger social movement to effect change during a very turbulent social time in United States history, the Progressive movement. It is instructive to begin any discussion of the muckrakers by presenting the social backdrop of progressivism.

The age of progressivism or the Progressive Era ran from 1895 to 1920 as a reaction to the changing social structure of the United States. This time period saw the rise of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. Before 1930, the majority of the U.S. population lived in rural areas. In fact the United States had very few cities with populations more than 100,000. By 1930, the majority of the American people lived in urban areas, and there were 93 cities with populations of 100,000 or more. Suddenly small-town living was replaced by city living—with its related problems of sanitation and crime. The United States was adapting to a new way of living: urban life.

The rise of cities was accompanied by the shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy. People no longer worked in small shops or farms. They worked in large factories. The work was hard, as people often worked more than 12 hours a day in extremely unsafe working conditions with low wages. The cities provided a large pool of labor, so it was easy to replace workers who were injured or agitating for better working conditions. Immigration was helping to further increase the number of people in the cities. However, immigration patterns were changing. Before 1890, most immigrants were from the United Kingdom, Germany, and Scandinavia—from northern Europe. After 1890, most of the immigrants were from southern and central Europe. These new immigrants were often exploited because they were different and lacked political power.

Cities such as Chicago became a breeding ground for discontent. Segments of the population lived and worked in terrible conditions while having little recourse to change it. There were fears in the United States that socialism would take roots among the discontented and result in revolution, perhaps violent, or wide-scale adoption of socialist principles. One sign was the effort to unionize the workers.

The Progressives wanted change as well but in an orderly fashion and done within the existing political structure. The Progressives wanted to avoid violent revolution and socialism. In fact, most of the Progressives were upper class and middle-class Americans who wanted to preserve much of the status quo. They wanted limited change that made life better for the discontented lower class but did not change the basic political, economic, and social structures that benefited the upper and middle classes. Of course, one segment of the Progressives wanted more sweeping reforms, but they were in the minority.

From this landscape emerged the muckrakers, journalists whose words often brought about social and political change. Many muckrakers were much more radical than the Progressives, many being socialists themselves. President Theodore Roosevelt provided the name *muckrakers*, but he did not mean it as a compliment. In the 17th-century religious allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*, there is a group of people who can only look down and rake the muck; they could not look up and see the celestial crowd. President Roosevelt created the nickname after David Graham Phillips wrote a piece critical of Roosevelt's political allies as part of an expose on the Senate. But ironically, the muckrakers helped make Theodore Roosevelt a crusading president by providing the public opinion needed to support many of "his" reforms. Lincoln Steffens, a leading voice among muckrakers, told Roosevelt after the muckraker speech, "Well, you have put an end to all these journalistic investigations that have made you."

Some muckrakers were activists who used fiction to dramatize their causes, and others were journalists interested primarily in revealing the wrongdoings of corporations. Upton Sinclair and Ida Tarbell represent the two variations of muckrakers.

Upton Sinclair was the prototypical muckraker. He was a reformer with a burning pen. Sinclair was appalled by the living and working conditions of the meat packers in Chicago. As a center of transportation that connected the Midwest to the East, its huge stockyards and processing plants made Chicago the meat packing capital of the United States at this time. Bubbling Creek was so named because it bubbled with blood from the slaughtered animals. Only poor workers lived near the dirty and smelly packing plants. Sinclair lived among the workers in the area known as Packingtown for seven weeks. There he learned about the abusive labor practices and unsanitary meat packing facilities. The end product was his book titled *The Jungle*. The meat packers such as Armour were exploiting the workers. They worked hard for low wages in dangerous conditions. During his stay, there was even a strike that was suppressed by management. The book also described the unsanitary conditions in the packing houses, which included grinding rats, refuse, and the body parts of workers in with the meat.

Sinclair struggled to find a publisher. Originally the book was presented in serial format in the socialist publication *Appeal to Reason*. Six publishers rejected the manuscript before Sinclair decided to publish it himself. After receiving more than 900 orders, Doubleday decided to publish the book and sold more than 150,000 copies. Eventually Americans read about the abuses in the meat packing industry. Sinclair hoped people would be enraged by the abuse of the workers and demand reforms to help them. The public reaction was much different. People were outraged, but it was over the meat they ate, not the exploited workers. Sinclair noted that he aimed for the heart but hit the stomach.

Public opinion did force the U.S. government to take some action. President Roosevelt read *The Jungle* and helped push for meat packing reforms but made it clear that he did not care for the socialist ideas promoted in the book. The federal government passed the Pure Food Bill and Beef Inspection Act. The meat packing lobby managed to water down the reforms. The laws had very little effect on meat packing, and reformers, including Sinclair, considered the measures to be failures. In the end the laws were largely symbolic—designed to reassure people that meat was safe. Such

changes were common in the Progressive Era as people wanted limited change, and you cannot get much more limited than a change that simply makes people feel better. The symbolic changes were designed to keep people quiet, not to make serious changes. The news media today are still doing stories on food safety, sanitation issues, and problems in meat packing.

The Progressive Era did see significant changes that improved the lives of workers. Child labor laws were developed, worker compensation programs were instituted, and measures were passed to hold employers liable for harm to workers. The environment also benefited as Niagara Falls was saved from corporate exploitation, and policies were developed for the conservation of natural resources.

Ida Tarbell was a journalist who decided to write about the abuses of corporations but not be an activist for reform. Tarbell was a well-known biographer at the time, having published books on Napoleon and Abraham Lincoln. *McClure's* magazine agreed to let her write a piece on the history of Standard Oil, the monopoly created by J. D. Rockefeller. Tarbell's father had been part of the Pennsylvania oil industry that had been ruined by Rockefeller's questionable business practices. Although *McClure's* was known as a muckraking magazine, Tarbell's style was careful historical research and documentation. Tarbell researched the project for over five years. Here documentation came from court records of lawsuits against Standard Oil. She supplemented this data through interviews with current and former Standard Oil executives, government regulators, competitors, academics, and antitrust lawyers. In the end, Tarbell crafted an objective story based on public documents. She created a paper trail to document her work. Other investigative journalists of the time would often use gossip that led to inaccuracies in their stories. Moreover, there was no call for action as was common in reform pieces of the day, and she allowed Standard Oil officials to respond to earlier drafts.

The history of Standard Oil included ruining competitors by signing agreements with railroads that caused rates to be higher for competitors and by operating in New Jersey because New Jersey state laws helped companies get around the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890, a measure designed

to prevent monopolies. The railroads were working with Rockefeller and his associates. The railroad would charge other oil producers more for shipping than they charged Rockefeller and his group, giving them a price advantage. Furthermore, the railroads would give part of this excess charge back to Rockefeller and his friends. This unfair advantage allowed Rockefeller to put others out of business. In Pennsylvania, the scheme was run under the name South Improvement Company (SIC). The practice was eventually found to be illegal, and SIC was ordered disbanded. However, the damage had been done, and many small oil producers had been put out of business. Later, Rockefeller used threats of such a practice to win control over the oil production in Cleveland, Ohio.

Tarbell's research was published in a 16-part series published between November 1902 and October 1904 titled *The History of Standard Oil*. It later became an 814-page book, and in 1999 was listed as number 5 on the list of the 100 most important journalistic works of the 20th century. Here is an excerpt from *The History of Standard Oil*:

Little by little as the public began to realize the compactness and harmony of the Standard organization, the ability of its members, the solidity of the qualities governing its operations, they began to forget its history—they began to accept the Standard's explanation that the critics were indeed "people with a private grievance," "moss-backs left behind in the march of progress." It looked more and more to the outsider as if henceforth Mr. Rockefeller was going to have things his own way, for who was there to interfere with him, to dispute his position? No one, save that back in Northwestern Pennsylvania, in scrubby little oil towns, around greasy derricks, in dingy shanties, by rusty deserted oil stills, men still talked of the iniquity of the railroad rebate, the injustice of restraint of trade, the dangers of monopoly; still rehearsed with tiresome persistency the evidence by which it had been proved that the Standard Oil Company was a revival of the South Improvement Company.

Tarbell's own father warned her against writing the piece because he feared Rockefeller would retaliate against her. Tarbell's characterization of

J. D. Rockefeller was scathing. She referred to him as money mad, hypocritical, and a living mummy. Standard Oil did fight back by launching a smear campaign against Ida Tarbell. The main messages were delivered in pamphlets that simply attacked Tarbell without addressing the issues her pieces had raised. This reaction by Standard Oil is public relations at its worst, a simple knee-jerk reaction designed to suppress discussion instead of airing the facts. President Theodore Roosevelt read *The History of the Standard Oil Company* and used many of the insights to build a case against monopolies. Clearly, Tarbell had an idea of the corruption she would find before writing the series. However, she did not have the activist bent of writers like Upton Sinclair or Lincoln Steffens. Her desire to expose Standard Oil was derived from personal experience with the dangers of J. D. Rockefeller's business practices. Tarbell actually pioneered today's style of investigative journalism that seeks careful documentation of corporate abuses.

The work of Sinclair and Tarbell illustrated two emerging forces that corporations would now have to face: the mass media and public opinion. The mass media was a new phenomenon driven in part by the growth of cities. Publications could reach hundreds of thousands of the new urban population. This would have been impossible prior to urbanization. It was now much easier for a large segment of the population to become aware of problems. When people become aware of problems, they can choose to press for change. Public opinion, opinions shared by a significant percent of the population, began to emerge as a force. When people read *The Jungle* and learned they could be eating spoiled meat, they complained to politicians and demanded action. Stories in the mass media could help shape public opinion, and public opinion could shape public policy—the agenda setting and agenda building effects. In turn, public policy could affect how a corporation operated and its level of profitability.

The robber barons could not afford to ignore the new mass media or to refrain from trying to influence public opinion. Corporations needed to speak to the new urban population. It is no coincidence that modern public relations was believed to

have developed in 1906, right in the middle of the Progressive Era. Corporate leaders such as J. D. Rockefeller, hired former journalists to help them work with the mass media and become a part of the struggle to shape public opinion. Silence by corporations was no longer golden; corporations had to respect the power of the mass media. For instance, the policy for train accidents changed from barring the mass media from the site to helping them tour the site. Corporations wanted to present their side of the story to the mass media. Some went too far by actually buying the support of editors and reporters, but the roots of modern-day media relations were beginning to emerge along with a concern for how stakeholders felt about the organization. Motivated more by profit than compassion, corporations were learning that the opinions of stakeholders did matter and should be taken into account.

Still, these early days of public relations did view stakeholders more as obstacles than as possible assets to an organization. During the Progressive Era, corporations were beginning to change and public relations was to be an integral part of that change. Public opinion mattered, so a corporation had to be sensitive to the opinions of stakeholders in its actions. Slowly a recognition was emerging that corporations must think beyond just making more money. Stakeholders such as the news media, workers, and activist groups were emerging as a force in public opinion that must be considered, not ignored, by corporations.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Publicity

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MULTIMEDIA

Multimedia is a combination of discrete technologies. In the simplest sense, *multimedia* means “many media working together as one.” Although the technologies are not necessarily communication based, the result of the combination is a communication approach or channel not previously available.

An easy, low-tech example is a “multimedia slide show,” which was considered cutting edge 30 or so years ago. Utilizing the earliest versions of multimedia, agencies—public relations and advertising—often showed clients work samples by using multiple, synchronized 35-mm slide shows with audio accompaniment. A bank of slide projectors would be used in conjunction with an audio player. The audio recording would have an extra, unheard track, consisting of trigger pulses to cue and advance the various slide projectors. A good example of this approach using music and still images can be found in the 1974 film *The Parallax View*, where the lead character is shown an absolutely harrowing recruiting film.

The mid-1970s marked the beginning of an unsuccessful attempt at interactive television via multimedia. Warner Cable used computer technology to deliver the QUBE system to subscribers in Columbus, Ohio. With the use of a special set-top box, viewers could participate in electronic town hall meetings and surveys, play along with game shows, call plays in sports broadcasts, and even participate in mock voting during the Academy Awards. The system was prohibitively expensive to maintain and was dismantled in the early 1980s. However, the QUBE system was an important failure. The use and integration of computer technology at the system level was an important step in the enhancement of the mass communication process.

It has been only in the last decade that technology (and its associated costs) has caught up to the vision. Communication channels have substantially less impact on the content delivered: The same full motion audio video content can be consumed via television, desktop, laptop or tablet computer, along with handheld devices like

personal digital assistants (PDAs) and cellular phones. This technological convergence is one signpost of a major change in society. Alvin Toffler introduces the idea of an information society in his 1980 book, *The Third Wave*. Toffler explained the transition under way as U.S. society is moving from an age of industry to an age of information. Television, as a technology, has moved from an Industrial Age invention to a conduit of the Information Age.

Multimedia and convergence provide the public relations practitioner with unprecedented degrees of latitude and flexibility in both the creation and delivery of messages. The positive effect of flexibility in message creation and delivery has a negative effect on message control. Message creators should realize that convergence allows for a message to easily move from one mass medium to another. For example, internal memos can show up on a website called www.internalmemos.com, allowing an audience to see a message that was never intended for them.

Michael Nagy

See also Podcasts/Audio Sharing; Social Media; Social Media Press Release; Social Networks/Niche Networks; Web 2.0

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MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP

A mutually beneficial relationship (MBR) occurs when the stakeholders of each organization believe that it and they benefit appropriately, fairly, and proportionately on some matter of mutual interest. For this reason, MBR is conceptualized as a highly

desirable, normative outcome of effective and ethical public relations.

Mutually beneficial relationship increasingly became a popular theme in public relations practice and academic literature as discussants reasoned that if the quality of relationships define successful public relations, there needs to be a rubric for determining how and why that is the case. One answer to that Gordian Knot was that the quality of each relationship depends on how well all parties benefit from the outcomes it produces. Such conceptualization can mask the darker intent and ability of the focal organization to persuasively promote the conclusion that each relationship is more mutually beneficial than it truly is.

Mutually beneficial relationship, a key theme in resource management theory, argues that organizations craft missions and visions that call for operations to gain resources they need to succeed. The logic of MBR reasons that when people believe that organizations operate with their interests in mind, those people support rather than oppose the organizations. Thus, they buy from businesses they believe give them full value for goods and services purchased. They support activist or other non-profit groups that share values and hold similar goal-oriented commitments like ending specific childhood diseases. They believe in and support governmental agencies that act in their interest, in what can be seen as the public interest, where they are the “public.”

Critics of this line of thinking doubt that businesses, for instance, ever hold stakeholder interests equal to their own. By this logic, executive managements create policies and engage in marketing that justifies their salaries and makes the business prosper, even though the relationship is tipped to favor the interest of the business and may even harm the health, safety, sense of fairness, or other aspects of well-being on the part of customers or other stakeholders. Thus the logic of MBR challenges public relations practitioners to truly understand and be in a management position to help the organization to know the expectations of its stakeholders that define their best interests.

Mutually beneficial relationships assume that stakeholders hold varying standards of how each organization should operate. These standards are

forged through societal dialogue voiced by many points of influence: industry, activist, government, media reporter, and such. Mutually beneficial relationship is a normative goal that cannot be totally satisfied for all parties in any relationship. Each organization, regardless of its type, has a wide array of stakeholders. Each is likely to hold different expectations for the quality of the relationship and whether it is satisfied by what the organization does and says.

Relational theory discusses process variables that can foster or impede the creation of MBRs, but it does not address the difficult question of shared interests or co-created meaning. Beyond the process, MBR is not meaningful if it is not a normative goal that challenges each organization to foster—through dialogue, collaborative decision making, strategic commitments, and corporate responsibility—a positive balance between its interests and those of its stakeholders. As it builds relationships with stakeholders, the organization advances the public interest and helps to elevate the quality community.

Although practitioners and academics in the late 1990s began to show enthusiasm for the concept of MBR, it was not a new or novel concept. Substantial discussion by various practitioners and academics earlier in the 20th century sought to determine how organizations could create relationships. Both the International Association of Business Communicators and the Public Relations Society of America have featured relationship building as a part of effective public relations and strategic business communication.

One of the leading advocates for the formation of public relations as a management discipline, John W. Hill, principal founder of the public relations firm Hill & Knowlton, featured the concept of relationship in his books published during the 1950s and 1960s. He credited Ivy Lee with an even earlier discussion of the term: “Public relationships, he [Lee] wrote, involved not simply ‘saying’ but ‘doing’—not just talk, but action” (1963, p. 16). Hill reasoned that organizations could not avoid considering and meeting the challenges of multiple relationships “because the corporation deals with employees, stockholders, customers, neighbors, government functionaries, and many others—with all of whom it has many relationships” (1958, p. 4). To build relationships,

organizations must not only talk but act in appropriate ways. Thus, public relations can never be limited to communication and is best when it is part of management decision making that allows the organization to position itself and operate in ways that strive to balance its interests with those of its stakeholders.

Hill sought high moral ground as the rationale for his profession; he offered this advice in 1963 to executive managements,

Business managements are concerned with the problems of conducting their corporate or industry affairs in ways that they may feel are contributive to public progress. They must arrive at effective policies that go far beyond their economic and operating functions into the complex realms of social, governmental, and political relationships. The large majority push forward into these policy areas as a matter of choice. But in terms of the long-range survival of corporate enterprise, there is little choice involved; it is a matter of essentiality. (p. 230)

Hill knew that organizations could not operate with autonomy as long as they merely operated in their own interest and expected others to tolerate that point of view.

Mutually beneficial relationship analysis is far from finished, but key factors are emerging: openness and transparency, trustworthiness, cooperativeness, aligned interests, compatible views and opinions, and commitment to fostering community by being involved in it, investing in it, and supporting it to earn its support. This reasoning is supported by other theories in addition to resource dependency theory. *Systems theory* gives the rationale that no part of a system can operate forever imbalanced against the other parts of a

system. A *rhetorical* perspective reasons that the effort to define interests assumes the dialogic co-creation of meaning. Many voices come together to define what constitutes a fully functioning society. *Social exchange theory* reasons that the quality of each relationship is based on give-and-take or cost and reward. *Dramatism theory* assumes that individuals engage in battles of merger and division seeking higher levels of identification through courtship.

The concept of relationship underpins a normative role of community. Building community can be a positive incentive to discover what is in the best interest of the organization and its stakeholders and to move toward, if not fully achieve, that balance.

Robert L. Heath

See also Community and Community Building; Dramatism and Dramatism Theory; Hill, John Wiley; International Association of Business Communicators; Lee, Ivy; Public Interest; Public Relations Society of America; Relationship Management Theory; Resource Dependency Theory; Rhetorical Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Stakeholder Theory; Stakes; Systems Theory

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NARRATIVE THEORY

Humans are by nature storytellers; all people tell stories and communication *is* narrative. This view of *homo narrans*—storytelling humans—fueled narrative theory, what Walter R. Fisher (1987) called the *narrative paradigm*. From this perspective, narration is a fundamental quality of humans. In other words, humans “experience and comprehend life as a series of ongoing narratives, as conflicts, characters, beginnings, middles, and ends” (p. 24).

Human communication follows story formats, with characters engaged in a plot sequence. Thus, we should regard all communication as story, regardless of its form, because we interpret and fit it into our life stories. From this vantage point, says Fisher, “there is no genre, including technical communication, that is not an episode in the story of life (a part of the ‘conversation’) and is not itself constituted by logos and mythos” (1985, p. 347).

Essentially, we make sense of our lives by weaving stories, making discrete experiences into functioning wholes. That is, knowledge is narratively configured—we interpret our experiences and describe them to others through stories. Much collaborative work with others takes place in creating stories; thus, many narratives are shared creations, reflecting both our own and others’ views. Further, the processes involved in narrative construction and meaning making are not static; rather, several types of information processing and attribution are at work.

Mirroring the way that individuals come to understand and describe themselves to others through stories, organizations create and re-create narrated identities. Organizations tell stories about who they are, what their work is, who their stakeholders are, and who their enemies are—all of these crafting a particular identity or identities. Blake E. Ashforth and Fred A. Mael (1996) suggested that an organization’s identity is crafted from “unfolding and stylized narratives about the ‘soul’ or essence of the organization” (p. 21).

Organizational members and public relations practitioners who understand an organization’s identity, its publics, key stakeholders, and the internal and external challenges it faces are in preferred positions to serve as leaders and spokespersons, weaving narrative explanations and responses. Recognition of these factors is useful in collaborating with others in the co-creation of meaning, maintaining organizational stability, and achieving desired organizational change.

Story Power and Quality

Fisher believed that stories are powerful and more persuasive than other forms of reasoning (e.g., statistics). This position is elaborated in his 1987 book, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action*, in part by comparing and contrasting the underpinnings of the narrative paradigm with those of the rational world paradigm. Despite their power, however, not all stories are equally commanding. People judge stories (and as storytelling

creatures, we all are qualified to do so), finding some more compelling than others.

To assess the relative quality of stories, Fisher (1987) featured narrative rationality, which involves two criteria: story coherence and story fidelity. Coherence assesses the degree to which the story makes sense (e.g., is internally consistent). Fidelity assesses the degree to which a story fits with our views and experiences. Weighing coherence and fidelity, E. James Baesler (1995) found both important but concluded that coherence plays a greater role in overall persuasiveness.

In life, we tell and are told numerous stories. Some of these we accept and integrate into our story, our understanding of the world. Others we cast aside. Through this process, we create and re-create our lives and our understanding of ourselves and the social world; thus, stories are central to human understanding and expression.

Narrative and Public Relations Practice

In *Human Communication as Narration*, Fisher applied narrative theory to specific rhetorical situations (e.g., Reagan's rhetoric) and showed the diverse application of the theory. Clearly, public relations theory and practice share an interest in the telling and interpretation of stories. For example, in 1995, Barry Brummett proposed that public relations involves "the practice of telling and managing stories that are told about people, institutions, and groups" (p. 24).

"Organizations can adopt or seek to influence the narratives of society by what they say and do" (Heath, 2000, p. 42). From narrative theory, organizations are seen as "providing 'plots' that are always in the process of recreation rather than existing as settled scripts" (Fisher, 1987, p. 18). Thus, organizations and public relations practitioners use existing public views and opinions as resources or seek to change them through new narratives. Practitioners work with internal and external stakeholders in co-creating meaning through stories told, stories adopted, and stories remembered.

For example, in times of organizational crisis or stress, practitioners work to develop a narrative that explains the situation and that previews resolution and a positive future. Clearly, an organization's past is critical in shaping how its stories of explanation will likely be seen (e.g., a history

littered with similar infractions vs. a clean slate and positive community relations). Also at these times, the consistency of messages delivered to the public is of key import—what Fisher called narrative coherence.

Many recent works have examined narrative and public relations. For example, attention has been devoted to analyzing post-9/11 (September 11, 2001) narratives and security, organizational narrative in news releases, branding through YouTube videos, and oil advertising and sustainability.

Criticisms of Fisher's Narrative Theory

Despite its numerous strengths (e.g., heuristic value, parsimony, highly democratic orientation with all humans serving as story producers and evaluators), several aspects of Fisher's narrative theory have been criticized.

One area of criticism concerns the completeness of the theory's description. For example, Robert Rowland (1989) asserted not all communication is narrative or strives to be. For example, Rowland cited particular types of science fiction and fantasy narratives as not conforming to earthlings' expectations or experiences.

Additionally, some types of communication may fall outside Fisher's discussion of the theory. For example, some scholars assert that Fisher failed to explain how narrative can result in unique outcomes and to account for its potential negative consequences such as encouraging hatred or violence. A second area of criticism counters the first by suggesting that the theory is overly broad—so expansive that it fails to describe or distinguish between differing forms or types of communication.

A third area of critique by William Kirkwood (1992) suggested that narrative theory may be seen as reinforcing the status quo. For example, it focuses on existing and accepted values (i.e., narrative fidelity) and ignores means by which stories can encourage change, denying a "rhetoric of possibility." In other words, the perspective could be taken as encouraging tellers to tailor their stories to what hearers already know, believe, and value, rather than to offer new visions. Essentially, the focus may restrict tellers to fit their stories to extant views, rather than leading people, through story, to new vistas or creating new worlds with

others by jointly constructing stories. Instead of countering Fisher's views, Kirkwood intended to supplement and extend them—examining how stories may create previously unimagined possibilities.

Joy L. Hart

See also Co-Creation of Meaning Theory; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Rhetorical Theory; Symbolic Interactionism Theory

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NARROWCASTING/BROADCASTING

Narrowcasting and broadcasting are two ways to disseminate mass-mediated messages. Narrowcasting indicates that some sort of strategic discretion is being used in the selection of a specific audience for a message (zip code of residence, household income, political or religious affiliation, etc.). Broadcasting is the opposite; here the primary consideration is how to reach as large an audience as possible. The strategic decision of whether to narrowcast or broadcast a message can happen at several levels, and across types of messages and different mass media.

One example is television. The traditional television broadcast era began in the 1950s with four networks, each represented as a unique channel. With the advent of cable television, narrowcasting became a possibility. The number of channels expanded from four to hundreds—and satellite systems push the channel options even further—with each channel representing new possibilities.

Although increasing the number of channels promotes audience fragmentation, it also promotes demographically better-defined audiences. Content providers can fine-tune (or target) their messages. Advertising and public relations firms are also to be considered. With audience demographics better defined now than ever before, advertisers and public relations firms reap the benefits of being able to further refine messages for a specific audience. Added to this is the existence of two strata in the commercial breaks that run between programs—local and national.

Television is not the only medium to consider. The term *narrowcasting* is increasingly associated with radio. Radio networks came into being during the 1920s, only to be replaced by television as the dominant electronic broadcast medium a few decades later. Long in decline, the Internet provides massive bandwidth, where Internet Radio stations represent the potential of tens of thousands of channels of content, each of them—creativity willing—unique.

Another medium to consider is the magazine. Computer technology and work force globalization has made it much less expensive to enter the print magazine business. Some magazines are in name only, existing solely on the Internet, where the cost of ink and paper is swapped for Web

server space. As the capabilities of the Internet grow, television is going through the same upheavals that radio and print have experienced.

Narrowcasting does have its problems. As an audience is further defined, it shrinks in size. That drives up the cost per mile (CPM) of the message (program, public service announcement, or advertisement) per message consumer. A balance will always have to be struck between the size of the audience to be reached and the cost of a message for that audience.

Michael Nagy

See also Gross Impressions; Media Networks; Multimedia

NATION BRANDING

Nation branding has become one of the most popular catchphrases of the new millennium: *The New York Times Magazine* even listed nation branding as one of the Big Ideas of the year 2005. Nation branding is a buzzword not only in marketing, its host discipline, but in other fields, such as international relations, diplomacy, political science, cultural studies, and recently public relations too.

Nation branding is the strategic self-presentation of a country with the aim of creating reputational capital through economic, political, and social interest promotion at home and abroad. Nation branding—together with public diplomacy—is a vital element of national reputation management. Countries, their governments, tourism, and investment agencies engage in nation branding in order to differentiate themselves from other countries with the aim of boosting tourism, promoting exports, and attracting investors and a skilled workforce. Country brands can serve as a sort of umbrella brand under which further sub-brands can be developed, such as a tourism brand, investment brand, or political brand. While the economic dimensions dominate nation branding, a political dimension is increasingly gaining importance. Governments engage in nation branding to join international organizations, such as the European Union or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to

increase international political influence, to gain recognition (Kosovo) or to change negative (China) or false stereotypes (Kazakhstan) about the country or its people. Protecting the reputation of a country during or after crises is another important role of nation branding. The concepts of nation branding are increasingly applied to supranational organizations such as the European Union, a group of countries, or regions too.

Nation branding is a particular specialization of place branding, which is about applying brand theory and branding techniques to cities, regions, and countries. City branding has its roots in urban planning, tourism, and vacation marketing while nation branding emerged from country-of-origin studies and destination branding on the one hand, and national identity literature on the other hand, including the political, cultural, sociological, and historical approaches to identity (Dinnie, 2008). Language, literature, music, food and drink, sports, and architecture are the key cultural dimensions of national identity upon which nation branding is based. Olympics, major sports, and cultural events (FIFA World Cup, European Capital of Culture, World Expo) often kick off nation branding initiatives. The role of the domestic population is vital: citizens must own the brand and line up behind it in order to achieve success and should be involved in brand development from an early stage.

The term *nation brand* was first coined by Simon Anholt in 1996. Two British branding gurus, Simon Anholt and Wally Olins have largely contributed to its evolution and practice. The most influential nation brand models are those of Anholt's who has reconceptualized it several times, which partly explains why nation branding is being used in a plethora of contexts. Since 2008, Anholt has campaigned against the term *nation branding* and advocates *Competitive Identity* as a less contaminated concept. Competitive Identity is the synthesis of brand management with foreign policy or governance, investment, tourism, culture, and people. Measuring how countries are perceived by foreign stakeholders and ranking them have become a lucrative business and several indices have been developed. The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index measures the power and quality of around 50 countries' brand image by combining the above-mentioned elements of Corporate Identity while the Country Brand Index by

FutureBrand consultancy focuses on the following dimensions: Value System, Quality of Life, Good for Business, Heritage and Culture, and Tourism. The Reputation Institute's Country RepTrack assesses the reputation of 50 countries among G8 citizens measuring the overall trust, esteem, admiration, and good feelings the public holds toward those countries.

The concept of nation branding is not without criticism. Some question the applicability of branding principles to an entire nation while others dismiss it due to the lack of any hard evidence for successful country branding. Nation branding has also been critiqued on ideological grounds as it promotes commercial nationalism and an easily "sellable" national identity. Many of these criticisms are based on advertising campaigns, which construct but a part of strategic nation branding. If ethically practiced, nation branding has a significant impact on both the domestic and the foreign societies it aims to influence.

The most important challenges of nation branding include securing sufficient funds for long-term campaigns, coordination among all the organizations involved, getting the domestic population behind the brand, not narrowing nation branding down to slogans and logos, and preventing the initiative from becoming the victim of domestic politics.

In the place branding literature, public relations is rarely mentioned and usually as an element of the marketing mix, in a subordinate position or even in a derogative context, which clearly demonstrates a lack of understanding of the role and function of public relations in place branding in general and nation branding in particular. In practice however, many governments turn to international public relations consultancies to develop nation branding strategies and campaigns to promote political or economic policy goals abroad.

A public relations approach to nation branding advocates relationship building as a central concept of nation brands. Nation brands can be contextualized as the manifestation of relationships that connect the communities from different countries who can mutually benefit from the relationship (whether in the form of profit, entertainments, touristic experience, increased well-being, quality of life, etc.). Public relations can

contextualize the nation branding initiative and create a favorable environment for the overall branding project. Public relations can also provide strategic coordination among the institutions and actors involved in nation branding as well as create an internal brand culture among them (Szondi, 2010).

Gyorgy Szondi

See also Brand Equity and Branding; International Public Relations Association; Marketing; Propaganda; Public Diplomacy

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NATION BUILDING

Nation building may be best understood as a sociopolitical communication process that focuses on the creation and maintenance of relationships at various levels of society. If nation building is viewed as a relationship-building function, then public relations theory and practice help explain and describe public-centered nation-building practices. Nation building describes "institution building," which necessitates interactions between citizens and between the state and other nations.

Leaders in almost every nation of the world are engaged in some form of nation building. In Asia and Africa, leaders of multiethnic nations use nation-building strategies to create national identities and build national unity. In Western Europe, nations employ nation-building strategies to create unified and cohesive national images for citizens and external publics.

Historical Roots of Nation Building

The term *nation building* appeared in the political science literature in the 1950s as many nations were emerging from colonialism. The term was generally associated with building political institutions in a newly formed (or transformed) state. Nation building creates institutions that mediate the infrastructure demands of citizens for roads, schools, fire protection, and personal safety, with the political capabilities of the government. The creation of institutions such as political parties, nonpartisan professional organizations, and non-governmental organizations supportive of effective government is essential for nation building.

Other less tangible conditions are necessary for a nation to grow and function. For instance, national identity and national unity are integral parts of the process. They are created through strategic communication, which fosters the creation of shared national symbols. A rhetorical national identity strategy can be defined as the conscious identification of a group of people with shared national goals. People often have many different identities—religious, ethnic, professional—that define who they are and what values they hold. Efforts to build national identity seek to create a loyalty to the nation that supersedes local or ethnic loyalties and helps a nation to maximize its development potential.

Communication campaigns create national identities that allow a nation's people to think and act together. Mediated communication channels act as relationship-building tools that bring citizens together and, in times of crisis or threats, can help to unify them. A national identity is a prerequisite to national unity and, therefore, must be part of the initial stages of nation building.

National unity refers to orientations about events and institutions that bring people together and enable them to cooperate to achieve national goals. National unity often appears when there is some kind of threat to a people who share common identifications. It creates a common ground that facilitates cooperative efforts for the benefit of the state. Creating and maintaining national unity is difficult in culturally diverse states where citizens do not already share a national vision or have common enemies and goals.

Examples of events in the United States that work to create shared identities and national unity

include the following: Thanksgiving celebrations; remembrance ceremonies and holidays for war veterans; and public events of mourning such as what occurred as a result of the attacks on September 11, 2001, in which terrorists hijacked four planes, crashing two into the World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon, and one into field in Pennsylvania. Every nation enacts ceremonies to celebrate religious, cultural, and social institutions as a means of building national unity.

Communication in Nation Building

National unity, national identity, and nation building are created, maintained, and nurtured through strategic communication efforts. Interpersonal communication, mass media campaigns, and government policies all contribute to these important national communication initiatives. In many nations, state-controlled or state-owned broadcast media (radio and television) are primary tools in nation-building programs. These outlets allow the government to tailor messages to the public. One-way communication, from a national government to the people, is the dominant means of nation building. Yet, the one-way nature of this mass communication has limited effectiveness. In this approach, the public is merely the recipient of nation-building messages. They are unlikely to influence the nation building.

Mediated communication channels such as print, radio, television, and now the Internet, create a collective consciousness that leads to national integration. However, mediated channels alone cannot, and never will, foster national unity and nation building. Interpersonal communication is also needed. Given public relations' focus on relationship building, mediated communication, and organizational adaptation, nation building should fall within a relationship-building framework.

Public relations' contributions to nation building can occur in different ways. Organizations can use strategies and tactics for building local and national relationships. At the strategic level, campaigns can create a shared identity through comprehensive communication efforts. For instance, independence day celebrations campaign coverage often occurs for weeks before the actual date of independence. Messages about the strength of the army, success of public schools, agricultural

achievements, or cultural themes build pride. At the tactical level, governments can hold events, memorials, and honor past and current leaders.

Many organizations participate in the nation-building process including, but not limited to, governmental agencies, activist and social cause organizations, cultural and religious groups, media, educational institutions, international humanitarian organizations, and corporations. In many countries, the business community performs a role in building a national pride, for instance, in South Korea, the large corporations (chaebol) have a role. Large corporations such as Samsung and LG link their products to South Korean national identity. When their products succeed, the South Korean people share in the success and feel national pride. When products fail or experience a crisis, the entire nation feels the pain. The 2012 Apple versus Samsung case is an excellent example. The South Korean people took great national pride in the success of the Samsung Galaxy phone. When Apple won court cases against Samsung, South Koreans felt shame for their national brand. The strong identification with the company affected how they felt about their country's reputation in the world.

Nation Building Is Not Propaganda

There is a distinct line between nation-building communication and propaganda. True, constructive nation building is a collaborative process based on strong and enduring relationships among people. Propaganda can build national identity and national unity but does so by disseminating false information that actually misleads people. For example, Adolf Hitler helped to build the German nation after the Nazis dismantled the Weimer Republic. The nation-building efforts sought to reinvigorate the German people's national unity and identity after the humiliating terms of surrender in World War I. Hitler rebuilt the German economy, and made the state bureaucracy a more efficient service provider. However, at the same time, Hitler used nation-building rhetoric that fostered German national identity at the expense of all other cultural and religious identities. Nazi propaganda defined who was German, identified an expansion of German territories, and created a false consciousness of German invincibility.

Some nation-building efforts are imposed on one nation by another. For instance, much of the development assistance to Afghanistan after the U.S. invasion in 2001 focused on nation building. Development assistance built roads, schools, clinics, and institutions. Communication campaigns sought to replace a tribal identity with a national one.

For nation building to be ethical, it requires strong relationships among people in the nation regardless of their cultural, religious, or regional background. Nation-building communication should celebrate all of the different groups living in a nation rather than divide them.

Maureen Taylor

See also Circuit of Culture; Culture; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations; Socioculture and Public Relations; Third Culture Public Relations Practitioner

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NATIONAL BLACK PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY

Almost 200 African American public relations specialists were on the membership roster when the Black Public Relations Society (BPRS, pronounced “beepers”) was founded in 1983. On the south side of Chicago, five women who worked at Morgan Communications Group—Sharon Morgan, Paula

Robinson, Linda Williams, Deana Balfour, and Trina Williams—shared a concern regarding the status of Black professionals in public relations. It was a historic moment because it was the first meeting of the Black Public Relations Society of Chicago. The organization would be a pivotal factor in the development of Black public relations practitioners for decades.

From that momentous day in 1983, presidents of the Chicago BPRS chapter made tremendous personal sacrifices to keep the organization on track. Those who led the charge included Sharon Morgan, Paula Robinson, Billy Davis, and Chelsey Burroughs. Wynona Redmond took the helm of the group in 1998, a year in which the organization was reorganized. Redmond subsequently passed the baton to Paul Davis, who was the group's leader in 2003. Others who played pivotal roles in the success of the chapter were Stephanie Banks, Morgan Carter, Jackie Marshall, Deana Balfour, Barbara Kensey, Robbie Smith, Lydia Brown-Muhammed, Rae Jones, Jennifer Shultz, and entrepreneurs such as Tom Burrell, Michelle Flowers, Eugene Morris, and Robert Dale. The chapter celebrated its 20th anniversary in grand style during fall 2003.

The formation of BPRS in Chicago laid the groundwork for the formation of other African American public relations groups. In Los Angeles, after an article in *Essence* magazine touted the success of the Chicago group, Californian Helen Goss envisioned a similar group and enlisted assistance from another well-known communicator, Pat Tobin. Thus, the second BPRS chapter was founded in Los Angeles, the Black Public Relations Society of California, Inc. The chapter was begun in 1983 by a group of public relations practitioners who recognized a need for an organization that would nurture and strengthen professional development, resource sharing, mutual support, and networking among African American professionals and students interested in the public relations profession. Major initiatives undertaken by the organization focused on career development, training, program enhancements, networking, and scholarships.

Within the first year of its inception, the California chapter of BPRS elected officers, obtained a nonprofit 501(c)(3) classification, hosted a networking breakfast meeting, and outlined plans for an annual student scholarship program. The

organization designates itself as the only organization on the West Coast with the primary goal of meeting the professional needs of African Americans in public relations. One of the most successful programs of the group is the annual Spring Development Professional Seminar. Attended by practitioners and students, the seminar features some of the industry's most well-known, seasoned, and influential business people working in public relations.

In June, the organization hosts an annual luncheon where outstanding African Americans working in public relations are honored. Additionally, during the luncheon, African American students majoring in public relations, journalism, or communications and attending accredited California universities and colleges are given scholarships. By 2001, the organization had awarded more than \$25,000 in scholarships.

The accomplishments of the California contingent of BPRS created a springboard that greatly assisted African American public relations professionals by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, job opportunities, and networking. Future plans for the organization include the identification of untapped areas where African American public relations specialists might seek employment, utilization of technology to strengthen networking and communication activities among members, the development of a speaker's bureau, and the creation of new jobs.

Following the creation of the Chicago and Los Angeles chapters, other chapters were formed in Atlanta, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, D.C.

Philadelphia attempted to form its own BPRS chapter for Black practitioners in 1987. Pat Tobin, who had been instrumental in the formation of the Los Angeles BPRS chapter, was in attendance in Philadelphia to offer her advice when the Black professionals met. Others in attendance included Arlethia Perry, Pennsylvania State University; Mattie Humphrey, WDAS Radio; Delsia Scott Afantehao, OIC of America; A. Bruce Crawley, First Pennsylvania Bank; Sam Presley, Lincoln University; and David Brown, Public Private Ventures. The effort did not materialize at that time, but the Philadelphia chapter of BPRS was finally created in 2000. In celebration of its third anniversary, the Philadelphia Chapter of BPRS (PBPRS) held an aggressive membership drive during May

2003. The organization's mantra is to provide communication resources and professional support to its members. The group offers scholarships to assist students of color who are interested in pursuing careers in the communications industry.

To increase the active participation and employment of Blacks in the various communications disciplines, especially public relations, the Black Public Relations Society of Atlanta (BPRS/Atlanta) was formed in 1987. The chapter was founded with 32 members. The first president of the chapter was Charlotte Johnson Roy, vice president of A. Brown-Olmstead Associates. The impetus for the formation of the chapter came from Peggy Seats, an independent marketing and public relations consultant who had moved to Atlanta from Chicago, where BPRS was chartered in 1983.

As a benefit to its members, the Atlanta chapter of BPRS and the Georgia chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) assembled a blue-ribbon panel to discuss the merits of advanced communications degrees, certifications, and accreditations in May 2003. Participants were provided with frank dialogue and critical analysis regarding continuing education and development. More specifically, discussions focused on the necessity of certification, accreditation, and licensing and whether or not such designations were essential in advancing careers and providing job security. During prior meetings the organization showcased executives from Fortune 100 companies and Atlanta-based agencies and organizations who discussed their experiences in the areas of business-to-consumer, nonprofit, real estate, entertainment, and corporate public relations.

Additionally, the organization has provided programming to its members pertinent to professional development techniques and career enhancement. Other seminars organized by the group gave communications experts an opportunity to share their expertise on topics such as networking, demonstrating the value of public relations to clients, maintaining working relationships with media outlets, and training BPRS members to hone and market their unique skills.

To assist its membership during economic downturns, a seminar titled "Preparing for the Future: An Economic Reality" was planned and panelists discussed strategies and tactics for maintaining economic health during bull and

bear economies. More specifically, the participants addressed financial investments, career opportunities, tips for starting a small business, financing education, and technology.

In 1993, the Black Public Relations Society of Washington, D.C., issued a letter to several entertainment institutions that outlined complaints about area hotels and restaurants that seldom used the services of black-owned public relations firms.

The Washington, D.C., branch of BPRS took its complaints a little further when it considered filing a class-action suit against several businesses that they claimed regularly discriminated against multicultural public relations professionals. The organization asserted that the discriminatory practices had circumvented entry into business and kept ALANA (African, Latino, Asian, and Native American) public relations agencies from securing mainstream accounts. Ofield Dukes, one of the organizers of the Washington, D.C., chapter, succinctly summarized the situation: "For the past two decades, minority PR professionals in Washington have been invisible. We have been overlooked by mainstream businesses."

The Black Public Relations Society of Greater New York has provided a platform for public relations and communications practitioners for several years. To assist its members with their career aspirations the society hosted "An Evening With PR Recruiters and Human Resources Experts: Tips on How to Get and Keep Your Public Relations Position in Today's Marketplace" in summer 1993. Additionally, to keep its members apprised of the latest information and strategies for handling crisis communications, the chapter invited crisis communications specialist and political consultant Judy Smith to share her insights in February 2003. Smith's public relations and law background gave her entry to many of the nation's most high-profile cases. These cases included the confirmation hearing of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, the scandal over President Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, the 1991 Gulf War, and the Chandra Levy investigation.

An attempt to form a national BPRS organization was made in Atlanta in 1994. The impetus to achieve national status for public relations practitioners of color was spurred by an organization and conference that merged the four primary national journalism organizations composed of

journalists of color in 1994. Unity '94, an organization composed of the National Association for Black Journalists, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Asian American Journalists Association, and the Native American Journalists Association, decided to join forces to form an organization that would host a national conference every 5 years. A national meeting of public relations professionals of color was held simultaneously in Atlanta, but the conference failed to cement the formation of a national organization.

To strengthen their efforts and gain more visibility, the BPRS chapters in existence formed the National Black Public Relations Society (NBPRS) in 1998. All of the chapters of BPRS were formed because its members felt that their needs were not being met by the mainstream public relations organizations in existence at that time. They were formed with a mission of providing resources, services, and social venues for practitioners working in public relations, public affairs, communications, media relations, community affairs, governmental affairs, and other affiliated service professions. More succinctly, the organization's website states its mission:

To address the challenges and emphasize the opportunities for the multifaceted constituency that we serve. This organization began more than 10 years ago with the goal to recruit and retain professionals in the industry and reinforce the importance of our role as business strategists and communicators.

Education, expansion, and empowerment are the "success triad" needed to outline targets. To keep pace with the future, members see their reach extended beyond domestic borders. The organization, composed of a cadre of role models for young, inexperienced, entry-level practitioners, also has designed programs to prepare future public relations professionals.

The annual conferences organized by the national organization have provided an opportunity for members and professionals in the communications disciplines to convene to share information and resources and to address hot topics that impact public relations activities. The conventions have addressed such timely issues as understanding convergence in the newsroom, maintaining a competitive edge,

pitching to the national media, cause-related public relations, creative messaging, doing business with the federal government, and public relations and the entertainment industry. Student attendees have been given information pertinent to securing entry-level positions and selecting the right courses for the new millennium. Some specific topics for the student-oriented workshops have been "Internship Options: Discovering Your Career Path" and "Masters and More: The Benefits of Furthering Your Education."

Annual national conferences were held from 1999 to 2003. The 2001 conference was held in St. Paul, Minnesota, with the theme "Techniques & Technology." The fourth annual conference was held in Washington, D.C., with the theme "Public Relations: Power, Influence and Change." For the 2003 conference held in New York, the theme was "Public Relations: Technology Driven, Diversity Focused," and Michele Flowers, president of Flowers Communication Group, was named Public Relations Practitioner of the Year. More recently, the 2011 convention of the NBPRS was held in Milwaukee and the 2012 convention in Washington, D.C.

Marilyn Kern-Foxworth

See also Demographics; Minorities in Public Relations

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NATIONAL INVESTOR RELATIONS INSTITUTE

The National Investor Relations Institute (NIRI) is an association established in 1969 to advance

the practice of investor relations as well as the professional expertise and status of its members. A national association with local chapters across the United States, NIRI serves professionals whose responsibility is implementing investor relations programs in order to attract capital for their organizations. NIRI membership includes more than 5,000 investor relations consultants and corporate officers from major publicly held companies as well as small and midsize companies.

According to NIRI, 45% of its members have financial backgrounds, 21% corporate communication, and 20% public relations. Forty-five percent of NIRI members have more than 10 years of experience in the practice of investor relations. Seventy-seven percent of NIRI members are executives of public companies, 14% are consultants, and the remainder are vendors and associate members. Fifty-six percent of member companies are listed on the New York Stock Exchange, and 37% are listed on NASDAQ. More than 40% of member companies have a market capitalization of \$1.5 billion.

Advancing the practice and professionalism of investor relations remains one of NIRI's priorities. The NIRI (2002–2003) has gone so far as to advance a definition:

Investor relations is a strategic management responsibility that integrates finance, communication, marketing and securities law compliance to enable the most effective two-way communication between a company, the financial community, and other constituencies, which ultimately contributes to a company's securities achieving fair valuation.

Investor relations had humble beginnings in public relations departments where there was a considerable lack of financial expertise and knowledge of the securities markets. Ralph Cordiner, chairman of General Electric Co. (GE), established the first efforts at formalizing a company's communication program with shareholders in 1953. At the same time, shareholder relations positions were being established at other major companies.

Through NIRI's originating chapter organization, the Investor Relations Association, much consideration and discussion went into naming the field, establishing standards of ethical conduct, and distinguishing the type of training needed for the profession. Other organizations, such as the Public

Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the American Management Association (AMA), influenced investor relations with financial communication and management views concerning the practice.

From the first meeting in September 1968, Investor Relations Association leadership sought to form a national organization that could keep up with the changing pace of investor relations. In February 1969, NIRI charter members signed a constitution, and at a May meeting officers were elected. The published proceedings of NIRI's First Annual Conference in 1970 became a valuable reference and included topics on investment research, the role of investor relations in corporate responsibility, the future of the analyst profession, and disclosure.

NIRI's annual conferences, publications, seminars, and workshops continue to provide a comprehensive knowledge base for professional development. Executive alerts and white papers offer summaries and guidance on issues and regulations affecting the practice of investor relations. Local chapter meetings and events allow investor relations professionals to develop networking opportunities.

Rebecca G. Aguilar

See also Investor Relations; Public Relations Society of America

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NEO-INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Neo-institutional theory is advancing one of the dominant approaches (institutional theory) to understanding organizations. It provides answers to questions such as: How and why do organizations change under the influence of their environment or institutional context? How and why do they adopt new ways of organizing, managing, and communicating?

Whereas institutional theory reasoned that members of organizations ritualize the enactment

of organizations, neo-institutional theory is based on the principle that organizations change their behavior, not so much out of rationality or a need for effectiveness, but because of their search for legitimacy. Thus, the institutional or symbolic perspective differs fundamentally from the traditional instrumental or functionalist perspective where organizations are understood as tools or instruments for achieving certain goals.

The conceptual foundations of neo-institutional organizational theory were established at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s where American organizational scholars such as John W. Meyer, Brian Rowan, Lynne Zucker, Paul J. DiMaggio, Walter W. Powell, and W. Richard Scott published a series of seminal articles introducing a set of new key concepts (decoupling, coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism, organizational field, etc.). Since then, neo-institutional theory has developed in many important directions.

Institutions are socially created norms or common understandings about how organizations should be designed and function. Institutions provide stability and meaning to organizational life when they become taken for granted. In 1995, W. Richard Scott clarified the concept introducing his theory of the three “pillars of institutions”:

1. A *regulative* pillar where focus is on how institutions constrain and regularize the behavior of organizations by setting up laws and rules, and by introducing monitoring and sanctioning activities (e.g., national green reporting laws)
2. A *normative* pillar where emphasis is placed on normative rules introducing a prescriptive or evaluative dimension into the life of organizations (e.g., associations for public relations professionals including the environment or the climate in their code of ethics)
3. A *cultural-cognitive* pillar focusing on shared conceptions of reality and the frames through which meaning is made (e.g., organizations and organizational fields practicing and “believing” in strategic environmental management)

The concept of institution refers both to a process occurring over time as well as to a product, that is, some kind of social order that is taken for granted. In 1966, German professors of sociology Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann proposed a theory explaining how the reality of everyday life

is taken for granted *as* reality. Based on this model, Pamela S. Tolbert and Lynne G. Zucker developed in 1996 a model defining various levels or stages of institutionalization: from innovation to habitualization, and from objectification to sedimentation. The same ideas do not enter or leave organizations at the same time.

A distinction is sometimes made between an Anglo-Saxon research tradition and a Scandinavian research tradition within neo-institutional theory. The Anglo-Saxon tradition, especially in its early years, has first of all been interested in the study of the formally decided adoption of institutionally prescribed structures and practices in organizations; this adoption of institutionalized norms is examined by applying mostly quantitative surveys in large populations of organizations. The Anglo-Saxon scholars pay less attention to the processual aspects of the institutionalization process, that is, what happens before (the production of new institutions) and after (the contextualization of institutions) the formal adoption. Organizations are indirectly viewed as the passive receivers of new institutionalized norms, and the institutionalization process itself is defined as *diffusion* (a simple transmission model). From this perspective, it is assumed that organizations become more and more homogeneous as they adopt the same norms in more or less the same way.

The Scandinavian research tradition applies a social constructivist approach, which does not treat institutionally prescribed structures or practices as “out there” but as interpreted and reformulated during the process of adoption. The Scandinavian scholars focus more on the processual aspects of the institutionalization process, especially inside organizations, and these aspects are examined applying qualitative case studies. Subsequently, organizations are viewed as active participants interpreting the institutions in accordance with the local organizational context, and the institutionalization process itself is defined as *translation* (an interactive model).

Today, a growing consensus among all neo-institutional scholars reasons that institutionalization processes are far more complex and heterogeneous than first expected.

A major contribution of neo-institutional theory is that it can account for how private and public organizations, within various types of organizational fields (a population of organizations operating in the same domain and sharing certain

cultural-cognitive beliefs, normative frames and regulative systems), have institutionalized specific public relations practices over time. Recently, a series of important longitudinal studies such as the PR GAP (generally accepted practices) studies conducted by the USC Annenberg Strategic Communication and Public Relations Center since 2002, and the European Communication Monitor (ECM) studies conducted by the European Public Relations Education and Research Association since 2007, have seen the light of day. There is no doubt that these studies will benefit from neo-institutional theory when describing and explaining how and why, let's say oil companies, airlines, banks and assurance companies, universities, and governmental organizations, have institutionalized (interpreted and contextualized) "organizational recipes" such as corporate branding, crisis and issues management, corporate social responsibility, or the communication department (as part of the organizational design) in different ways.

On the other hand, public relations research may also contribute to the development of neo-institutional theory itself by demonstrating, not only how strategic communication has been institutionalized as a specific set of organizational practices, but also how communication institutionalizes. Recently, U.S. scholar Roy Suddaby has encouraged institutional theorists to pay more attention to the critical role and function of public relations professionals in contemporary organizations.

Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen

See also Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Organizational Identity and Persona; Professional Project of Public Relations

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NETWORK THEORY

Network theory is closely associated with systems theory. As such, it addresses the pathways of information flow within and between systems. Each pathway is a repeated or potential route for information to flow from person to person, organization to organization, person to organization, organization to person, and so on. Network theory features the central premise, vital to public relations, that people need and want information.

How they obtain this information or experience the lack of the desired information can affect their attitude toward and knowledge about various topics that are relevant to the goodwill and success of each organization. One of the predictors of satisfaction is that people feel they have the information they want and need relevant to an array of matters and interests. If relevant parties share information and use it wisely and ethically, enlightened decisions can bring harmony rather than friction between people and organizations.

For these reasons, network theory poses two challenges to public relations practitioners. They need to know what information key stakeholding and stakeseeing publics want or need. Also, they need to understand and strategically operate in the networks by which the needed or desired information can get from the organization they represent to the desired audience.

In that sense, communication management as a paradigm of public relations features practitioners' ability to facilitate information flow and foster decisions that arise from the shared information. Thus, network theory poses a challenge of getting information to people who want and need it. This challenge may require that practitioners create networks where none exist. In addition, they need to know how to facilitate and maintain existing networks as well as shape and support new ones.

Information theory, refined by systems theory, rests on many assumptions about the nature of information. Central to that analysis is the reality that what is information or informative depends on the judgment of the people who obtain and evaluate the information. Typically, such people feel various amounts of uncertainty. Uncertainty can be uncomfortable and thus motivates people to seek information, process it, and form useful attitudes.

At various turning points in their lives, people want to know something. They may want information about products, services, missions, visions, policies, community service, problems, solutions, and myriad other aspects of their lives. The amount of information in any or each message depends on the impact it has on each person's sense of uncertainty. Information, so conceptualized, is the impact each message has, as interpreted. The amount of information is measured by the degree to which individuals who receive it and evaluate it become more or less uncertain on some matter based on their interpretation of the information.

So conceived, organizations and individuals are information processors. Each system—organization or individual—takes in information, processes it, and outputs it in various forms. Thus, the three major functional elements of a network are input, processing or throughput, and output. Newspapers and other mass media are seen as parts of networks—systems. In fact, it is logical that networks such as NBC, CBS, and ABC would be called such. They are part of the news and entertainment industry, a system composed of many information networks. Each is in and of itself a network that gathers information (input), processes that information into news, and outputs the information to listeners and viewers.

One of the contributions of network theory is the concept of openness. According to B. A. Fisher (1982),

openness is the free exchange of energy between the system and its environment. That is, to the extent that the boundaries are permeable and allow the exchange of information—what energy is to a physical system, information is to a social system—that system is said to be more nearly open than closed. (p. 199)

Information is to human systems what energy is to natural systems. Information is the energy of human systems. It fuels human systems because people can get and use information that helps them make appropriate decisions and reduce uncertainties.

Network theory provides the rationale needed to analyze the effectiveness of systems' abilities to obtain, process, and output information. Network analysis focuses attention on how well information flows throughout an organization, because of the

quality of structures and functions that facilitate or frustrate information flows and decision making.

As Klaus Krippendorff wrote in 1977, each network is the pathway or pattern of repeated interactions by which information flows between individuals within a group and between groups in an organization. A network consists of person-to-person connections by which information is exchanged. Networks consist of people who interact. A set of pathways, such as information flow between accountants in the accounting department of a company, is a *micronetwork*. In this sense, a micronetwork is a system (or a subsystem). When micronetworks are put together, they form a *macronetwork* (a system or a suprasystem). To some extent, both types of networks correspond to the organization chart, but information also flows through networks that do not correspond to formal organizational structures and functions.

Networks consist of the relationships between the people that make them work. At the most basic level, such relationships can be described or brought to life through process words such as "talks to," "coordinates with," or "reports to." In this way, analysis focuses not only on the number of people involved but also the strength or intensity of the relationship between them, which can be estimated by the frequency of contact and the degree of interdependence.

In this sense, public relations practitioners are often thought to be links or boundary spanners who help or impede the flow of information from the organization to key publics or from those publics to the organization. Thus, successful practitioners help organizations to be more or less open. For this reason, when public relations people help stonewall an issue, they close the network and impede the flow of information. Conversely, they help the organization be open to its publics by being responsive to their interests and serving as the first and best source of information on matters relevant to the organization.

Networks exhibit the property of symmetry, which describes the degree to which the direction or flow of information reveals balance rather than imbalance in a relationship. Relationships can be one-way or two-way, and they can be symmetrical (influence balanced) or asymmetrical (one party has more influence than the other). In a one-way asymmetrical relationship, for instance, one person provides information and influence for the other,

but does not receive much if any in return. Two-way symmetrical relationships exhibit the most balance because influence and information flow freely between the two parties.

Another characteristic of networks is transitivity, the ease with which information flows from one person to the next. Relevant to this analysis is the analogy between information flow and the flow of water within a system of pipes and valves. Each person can be a valve. He or she can open or close the valve. Such actions increase or impede the flow of information. Typical of a line network, person A communicates with person B, who communicates with C, who communicates with D. Person D depends on all of the others for information; for this reason, it may be difficult for A and D to communicate because they depend on B and C. If the information that A wants to get to D flows with relative ease, the system has high transitivity. If the information does not flow because one or more links are impediments, the system lacks transitivity. This characteristic can easily be seen in the organizational practice of routing communication; it also refers to the ease with which communication flows across each link in the chain of authority.

For many years, network theory, along with its companion theories, especially institutional theory, has offered insights into the study and practice of public relations. The logic is simple: To the extent that an organization functions as a system and part of many other systems, it does so as a source and conduit for the flow of information. Such flows are systemically superior when they are two-way. Thus, by this analysis, public relations serves networks, organizations, and individuals by obtaining, processing, and outputting information between organizations and individual publics.

Robert L. Heath

See also Communication Management; Openness; Stakeholder Theory; Symmetry; Systems Theory

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NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

New business development is critical to the livelihood of any public relations firm and involves a variety of methods designed to secure a steady stream of clients. Most clients hire firms on a project basis, although the project may extend anywhere from one to three years. Thus the firm, in order to meet overhead and payroll, must ensure that continued work is available. This stream of work is vital to firm stability as well as to growth of individual staff members, who are challenged by and learn from new opportunities. Although necessary, new business development should be the result of strategic planning for the public relations firm. Firms that wish to maintain a consistent size and to offer a set level or breadth of service may engage in lower-key business development than firms that have charted a planned growth pattern.

All public relations firms' strategic plans for new business development should include a consistent, daily, two-pronged approach: (1) provide only the highest quality of service to existing clients and (2) network. Often overlooked in the quest for new sources of income is the current client. Although the great majority of clients may contract for a specified length of time, an excellent success record with demonstrated results provides impetus for the client

to renew a contract. Similarly, noting opportunities and looking ahead for the client may provide additional work. Critical to this line of business development is educating the client and evaluating the firm's work: The client must understand public relations and its capabilities and must see the results manifested through evaluation.

Providing a high quality of service may not lead to additional contracts from the client immediately, yet referrals are highly valued as clients search for prospective firms. Such referrals also come from networking, which should be defined broadly enough to cover even building bridges from unsuccessful pitches. Future work can also arise from media contacts whom clients may seek out and ask to identify firms by expertise and reputation. Relationships established through a variety of professional associations and personal contacts along with pro bono work also often lead to new business opportunities. Furthermore, networking can build a broad range of affiliates who may be called on as consultants for specialized new business pitches; with a broad range of experts available for hire, firms can more readily demonstrate their abilities to meet a broader variety of client needs.

Another critical element in any firm's strategic plan is promotions. So many firms do not include themselves as their clients when such awareness programs are vital to their own longevity. In addition to public relations-based publications, awards programs and pro bono work offer opportunities to promote the firm's expertise. Peer-recognized work also becomes material to highlight on websites.

Firms may also engage in entrepreneurial activities designed to showcase their expertise and successes. Such activities might include creating a newsletter that targets key executives in defined areas.

More active and aggressive new business development includes typical sales approaches such as cold calls and arranged meetings to discuss possible opportunities. Other active development opportunities come by responding to RFPs (requests for proposals) initiated by clients who are in the market for a public relations firm.

Pamela G. Bourland-Davis

See also Account Executive; Client; Public Relations Agency

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NEWS SERVICES

News services now encompass what were once separate, but related, links in the information channels. News services include organizations such as the Associated Press (AP), clipping services, and organizations like PR Newswire. Generally speaking, news services provide unfiltered news information. These services gather information from many sources and then make it available to newspapers, broadcast news organizations, and magazines for a fee. Because of their linking role in the information dissemination process, public relations practitioners for media relations target news services. Practitioners target their media releases to news services that may pick up the story and disseminate it to their clients. Thus, news services allow practitioners a means to reach a larger pool of news outlets.

The AP is an organization for pooling information (text and photos) among member newspapers. If a big story in New York City occurs, a San Francisco newspaper that is a member of the AP does not have to worry about getting a reporter to New York City. Rather, the San Francisco paper can simply look for copy and photos from an AP member New York City newspaper.

Internet technologies have made it easier for an organization like AP to exist. Instead of members having to rely on traditional wire or broadcast technologies to move information, they simply go to the AP website and upload or download text and photos.

Clipping services, in their traditional form, have been in decline due to the increasing presence and use of the Internet. Traditional clipping services

were very handy in culling particular information. If a person was interested in articles on U.S. steel production across multiple media channels (say, newspapers, magazines, and nonprofessional journals), the clipping service did all the dirty work. They would have subscriptions to a wide variety of publications and employed researchers to copy information from sources at public libraries. The service would then pull all of the elements together in one package and send out a hard copy. Later, clipping services would employ the latest wire and wireless technologies.

The concept behind clipping services is alive and well. Although the Internet has made accessing various news channels easier, the number of news channels has grown by orders of magnitude. Combined with the declining (shrinking) presence of print media, the rise of the Internet, and the end user's (consumer's) increased access to sophisticated search tools (like Atom and RSS Web feeds), the need to cull information is ever increasing.

An example of new technology intersecting the traditional clipping service is Google News, where Google is applying their search engine technology to news stories available across online sources.

Another element to news services is organizations like PR Newswire, a public-interest news wire service. PR Newswire has a similar "look and feel" to services offered by an organization such as the Associated Press. However, it must be stressed that PR Newswire is not a news reporting organization. Rather, it is waypoint for the distribution of press releases and related material. The types of organizations that use PR Newswire for distribution include the federal government, Congress and cabinet-level agencies; political campaign organizations; foreign embassies; associations, unions, advocacy, and civic groups; universities, think tanks, and research organizations; and public relations, public affairs, and law firms. PR Newswire also provides content to media, public relations, and news services including Google, Yahoo! News, and America Online (AOL).

Michael Nagy

See also Media Relations; Media Release

Further Readings

Associated Press: <http://www.ap.org>

Google News: <https://news.google.com>

News on Feeds: <http://www.newsonfeeds.com/faq/aggregators>

PR Newswire: <http://www.prnewswire.com>

NEWS STORY

The news story is the fundamental content component of all news media—print, broadcast, or electronic. Every news story should reflect the shared values among journalists that answer the question "What is news?" Further, the news story is identified and classified by its content and structure. Technology has created both advantages of instantaneous news coverage and disadvantages of questionable source credibility of some stories.

News Values

The process of deciding which stories, among the almost infinite possibilities on any given day, will be *news stories* is not simple. Although there may be close-to-universal agreement among journalists and scholars that certain events (a terrorist killing of an American ambassador abroad, for example) are appropriate content for a news story, decisions regarding many other issues, people, and activities are less clear. What could make an important news story in Chicago, for example, may be of no interest to people in Miami. Of all the possible stories that any news organization selects on a given day, what predicts which stories will become today's news?

Since the earliest days of American journalism, there has been rather remarkable consistency among journalists as to what the criteria are for determining whether a story is newsworthy. These criteria are derived from the values, shared by journalists that define *news*. A review of several prominent news writing textbooks reveals these criteria. Although there is some variation in terminology, the criteria themselves are highly consistent.

Timeliness. Readers must understand why this news story is being told or presented to them at this time. Did the event happen today? Is this story timely because it is the anniversary of an important event?

Proximity. This criterion is why an important news story in Chicago may have no interest to audiences

in Miami; there is not a local angle. People like and want to know what is happening close to them, in their own communities.

Prominence. Well-known people attract much attention. Sports stars, entertainers, and politicians are prime examples of prominent people around whom many news stories are constructed.

Impact or consequence. The number of people who are affected by an issue and how seriously it affects them contribute to the newsworthiness of a story. Hundreds of people being inconvenienced by a detour is likely news in a local community, as is the sending overseas into combat one or two local citizens.

Rarity or novelty. The winning of a lottery is an example of a story that is news because it is a once-in-a-lifetime happening for the recipient. Events that are strange or unique are often news simply because of their rarity.

Additional criteria that are advanced by some journalists include *conflict* and *human interest*.

News Content

Until the last 2 decades of the 20th century, the content of news stories was dominated by several topics, among them governmental issues, disasters, crime, and sports. Undeniably, many news stories still originate from courts, city halls, capital buildings, and arenas. Such stories are often classified as “hard” news; they will be covered regularly by journalists because of their inherent values. Yet subject matter has expanded tremendously as Americans particularly have begun demanding information on a wider range of topics, many relevant to the individual. Many stories about individual interests (entertainment and travel, new product introductions, and decorating, for example) are classified as “soft news”—that is, they do not necessarily conform to traditional news values, but they are still of interest to news consumers. This shift in content has greatly increased the opportunities for public relations practitioners to contribute news stories.

One of the largest topical areas evidencing this expanding content is health. Whether there is a new cancer treatment, an outbreak of the West Nile virus along the Gulf Coast, or a promising

drug for preventing baldness, American news consumers want the information. In the 21st century, the range of subject matter for news stories is greater than it has ever been. Each story must still conform to one or more of the basic criteria, but the way newsrooms look at content itself is far more broad than it was even 20 years ago. At times, the distinction between “hard news” and “soft news” blurs on some of these topics.

Regardless of the specific subject, content of the news story is traditionally identified as a series of answers to six simple one-word questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how? Although there are several ways to structure the story, a news story can always be written on the basis of the answers to the following questions: *Who is involved? What happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Why did it happen? How did it happen?*

News Story Structure

There are many ways in which a news story may be organized, but the most standard construction consists of a beginning (the lead), a middle (the body), and an end (the conclusion). Of these, strong agreement exists among authors of news writing textbooks that the most important structural element is the lead. It is the first thing that is read or heard in a story, and as such it often determines if the reader, listener, or viewer will continue attending to the story.

There are many types of leads, but the most common is the *summary*. Answers to the six questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how) are provided in the first sentence of the story. The summary lead is most often found when the news story is written as an inverted pyramid. In this structure, all of the important information is presented immediately, with support or elaboration following.

Other types of leads may focus more on answering one of the six questions. When the most important element of the story is a person, the lead may emphasize his or her identity. These are labeled *immediate identification* (Michelle Obama . . .) and *delayed identification* (An 11-year-old child was killed earlier today when . . .). Another type of lead presents multiple content elements (The Supreme Court today handed down a decision impacting affirmative action, refused to rule on a domestic abuse case from Indiana, and prepared for their first break of the year). It is generally

advisable to keep the lead simple and straightforward; thus, writers are urged to use multiple-content-element leads sparingly.

Leads may also be anecdotal or narrative; they may be grounded in a quotation; or they may ask a question, tease, or be mysterious. These more creative leads are most appropriate for human interest stories and are least likely to be found in hard news.

The body of the story provides elaboration and support; it often gives context, scope, and impact. Although there are numerous structures for the body, the most common is the inverted pyramid. In this structure a summary lead that answers the basic questions is most often used, followed by supporting information in descending order of importance. It often has no conclusion.

News Story Source Credibility

How and when people get news stories continues to change dramatically with technology. The death of Osama bin Laden, for example, was first announced via a tweet. Traditional journalists struggle with how to integrate social media stories and sources into existing news values. Knowledge of source remains one of the strongest predictors of whether a news organization will pick up a story from a blog or social media announcement.

Public relations practitioners must understand news values, content of interest to various media, and structures of news stories in order to better serve both media institutions that use provided content as well as organizations and clients they represent in the media. And as at perhaps no time in history, being a known and valued source of reliable stories is critical for every media relations practitioner.

Ruthann Weaver Lariscy

See also AP Style; Citizen Journalism/Reporting; News/Newsworthy

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NEWSLETTER

A newsletter is a type of publication often produced by public relations practitioners. Almost all organizations—nonprofit and for profit alike—create and distribute newsletters to their key audiences. With the development of desktop publishing, newsletters have grown in popularity. Although they share similar traits with magazines and newspapers, newsletters are smaller, less formal publications that are directed toward a specific audience, such as employees, customers, members of the community, donors, or volunteers.

Although newsletters fall under the realm of public relations tactics, they have existed long before the modern era of the practice. In 200 BCE, the Han Dynasty in China published a daily newsletter. Newsletters are forerunners of the modern newspaper. In fact, one of the first successful publications in America was called the *Boston News-Letter*.

To be successful, newsletters must have a narrow and clearly defined target audience and a specific objective, such as strengthening ties with volunteers, educating the community about local programs of interest to them, encouraging donors to keep giving money and resources to a nonprofit organization, and informing employees about company policies. Internal company newsletters are common and are called house organs or in-house publications. They are used to build employee morale, promote teamwork, recognize outstanding achievement, and instill company pride.

Effective newsletters must have an overall key message that is communicated throughout each issue. For instance, a school district distributes a newsletter to parents of the children enrolled in the school. The key message is that if parents get involved in their children's education, their children will become more successful in their studies, and the objective is to encourage parents to help their children with their nightly homework and

take an interest in their children's learning. Appropriate stories in such a newsletter would be ones that offer strategies to help children with their homework, tips to get kids motivated to do their homework, easy-to-understand statistics on how helping children with their studies improves performance, a list of free or low-cost tutoring services for parents unable to help their kids, and a profile on an actual student whose performance increased with his parents' attention. Although stories may vary from issue to issue, newsletters carry the same overall theme in each issue and the style and layout remain consistent.

Newsletters are distributed to a specific target audience on a recurring basis. While many appear quarterly, some are distributed weekly and monthly. Few are distributed biyearly or yearly because frequency helps build the relationship between sender and recipient. Although few in number, some short-term newsletters may be distributed daily. For instance, booth sponsors in a trade show might receive a brief newsletter each day of the show, which keeps them up to date on the show's happenings.

No matter the frequency of distribution, newsletter stories are typically short informal news and feature stories although newsletters also include sidebars; a limited amount of calendar information; news briefs; letters to the editor; and bulleted information about programs, activities or employee updates. Most newsletters are four to eight pages in an 8½ × 11-inch format, although they can be larger or smaller and one page to longer, multiple-paged documents. Newsletters traditionally are distributed in printed form; however, many organizations place their newsletters online, and some circulate them via email.

The parts of a newsletter include a consistent grid, nameplate, table of contents, masthead, headers, footers, headlines, subheads, body copy, bylines, pull quotes, captions, and graphics. A grid is a pattern or plan for pages in the newsletter, which include a set of rules that apply throughout the piece, such as the number of columns, space between the columns, and location of headers or footers. The nameplate, also called a flag or a banner, includes the name of the publication; volume, issue, and date; and a brief subtitle that explains the editorial focus or intended audience of the newsletter. The masthead tells the name and

address of the sponsoring organization, editorial staff, contact information, and frequency of the publication. A header and footer is the information, which may include the publication name and date, that appears either on the top or bottom (or both) of each page. Pull quotes are quotations from the body copy or a blurb from the article, which is set in an enlarged type and set back into the article as an attention-getting device.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Antecedents of Modern Public Relations; Brochure; Collateral; Objectives

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NEWS/NEWSWORTHY

Usually, a distinctive writing style and image portrayal process distinguishes news from other communication formats. In a traditional sense, *news* is a compilation of mediated messages assembled according to the norms and constraints of a major social institution composed of businesses dictated by economic imperatives. Yet, with the rise of citizen journalism in recent years, the Internet, blogging, and social media have reshaped the nature of news. Now that news is a 24/7 business, this and other trends diminish the amount of gatekeeping that is possible. For public relations practitioners, many of these developments may mean greater accessibility to audiences so that message dissemination has become somewhat easier.

Scholars, historians, and critics scrutinize journalism's role in society and the cultural implications of newswork. Journalism historian Robert Park suggested that news texts have replaced the town crier of yore who walked through streets singing out the time of day, births, and so forth. Today, news takes the shape of its sponsoring mass medium; thus, the form, content, and production of

print, electronic, and online news differ substantially. While print news is passive one-way communication, electronic and online news is active and two-way. Even television newsmen encourage viewers to engage with reporters and events on websites and social media; these moves Dan Gillmor (2006) attributed to the demise of a newspaper business model. Internet-based news transmission and social media vehicles like Twitter and Facebook, particularly enable interactive communication. Overall, professional journalists circulate knowledge, making public property out of social and cultural assets and “transform[ing] mere happenings into publicly discussable events” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 3). They make abundantly available information that otherwise might be inaccessible due to geographic challenges and resource shortages. In the process, the news fosters a sense of community, defines who we are, and suggests what is important.

Today, some professional journalists in the United States are voluntarily bound by codes of ethics as defined by the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ). Even though journalism is not a licensed profession, it is a respected and legitimate one that promotes fairness, accuracy, and objectivity—although blogging activities and social media use by citizen journalists continually challenge these standards. Most U.S. journalists began their career by earning a college degree and gaining field experience as interns. In the classroom, budding journalists develop a “nose for news,” shorthand for defining newsworthiness, and learn how to internalize important clues known as news values. For example, “impact,” “importance,” and “the unusual” defines about 75% of all news stories. Herbert Gans (2005), a sociologist who studied newsroom cultures, resolved that enduring news values such as ethnocentrism and moderatism enable journalists to decide what is news. “If it bleeds, it leads” is a popular newsworthiness barometer used by television newsmen who seem to attach importance to visual violence. About 100 years ago, legendary news editor Charles A. Dana simply defined newsworthiness in terms of novelty: “When a dog bites a man, that’s not news. But if a man bites a dog, that’s news.”

Todd Gitlin’s meta-analysis of published theories developed to explain news and newsworthiness generated several important conclusions. First,

journalist-centered theories consider news to be a product of professional news judgments and objectivity. As such, newsmen “claim the right to interpret everyday occurrences to citizens and other professionals alike” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 5). Second, *event-centered* news theories invoke a cadre of metaphors to define news. For example, news has been characterized as a “mirror” that journalists hold up to the real world so that they may offer the “reflection” to audiences. Other scholars have invoked “conduit” and “link” metaphors to describe journalists’ liaison function in serving audiences. Media scholars, including those at the Glasgow University Media Group and the University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, negate these metaphors, arguing that since reality is a slippery concept, it is impossible to offer an objective view. Third, *phenomenological* theories characterize news as that which is selected and packaged in a form that audiences readily accept. These theories emphasize the human agency of news and argue that journalism is a practice with a definable milieu that culminates in a manufactured product shaped by a complex, yet artificial or subjective, selection, collection, organization, and dissemination of data.

Beyond analyzing the work of reporters, some researchers have examined what editors do behind the scenes because they also determine what is news. Editors act as gatekeepers, opening and closing the news gate, subjectively selecting, processing, and organizing information that will become news. Furthermore, editors and their reporters also set the news agenda by influencing what people “think about.” For example, findings of a study of how daily newspaper editors construct the front page suggested that ideological biases help them to sift through a census of happenings and issues and to pull out the ones they think are most important. However, it may be argued that gatekeeping and agenda setting are far less common today than 10 years ago.

Hence, citizen journalists and the growth of grassroots media via podcasts and other Internet forms are transforming news from a traditional lecture format to global conversations and redefining what is news or newsworthy. Gillmor anticipated a future of “news activism” wherein citizens “may be able to regain control of the news” (2006, p. xviii). Furthermore, organizations use their

websites and CEOs have become bloggers to open up conversations instead of relying exclusively on traditional organization-centered media relations incumbent upon mass media gatekeepers. Precisely how these developments play out in public relations work remains fertile ground for reexamining *news/newsworthy* definitions.

Donnalyn Pompper

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Citizen Journalism/Reporting; Frame; Framing Theory; Gatekeepers; Media Relations; Social Media

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NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRENDS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Despite the evidence that public relations is a timeless aspect of the human condition, it took on added importance and form during the 19th century. That trend was typical of other professions

such as medicine, nursing, and engineering. The trend revealed the growth of complex organizations that needed professional management and reputation building as well as issues communication. It paralleled the development of media, the industrial revolution, a new era of colonialism, and differentiation and complexity of society.

Print was still the dominant mass media, but speaking and the enactment of organizations and their identity continued to be important. Front persons went from town to town, for instance, calling attention to the circus or other type of show that was coming to town. The arrival of the circus was an event. Publicity and promotion were the name of the game, including getting ample and favorable coverage in newspapers and conversation that created motivations to attend. Instead of relying on drawings, over the century pictures became increasingly important. Posters were put up. Enthusiasm was drummed up for the spectacle, whether P. T. Barnum's circus or the wild west show of Buffalo Bill Cody.

Political campaigns employed professional communication to build and attack reputations. They contested issues by showing either the positive or negative side, depending on the candidates who were being supported or opposed.

The Civil War in the United States helped hone the skills of professional practice. Reporters were embedded in military operations as they are today. They were on the scenes of major battles to either trumpet victory or use defeat to call for more resources. The issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation was timed to correspond to a Northern victory and to seek to coalesce commitment to save the Union. Southern women engaged in a publicity campaign to demonstrate how the cost of food was starving them and their children, especially in the absence of their farmer sons and husbands who were supporting the Cause. Recruitment was an ongoing campaign, as were the issue debates justifying either the Southern or Northern causes. Underfunded, military hospitals raised funds, and professions such as nursing took on a new identity and reputation.

The greatest boon to the profession that became public relations, especially in the United States, was the industrial revolution. Issues management was needed to justify and implement ever larger and more likely monopolistic companies. Definitional

battles occurred over industrial standards, such as pitting direct and alternative currents as the primary distribution system for electricity—the Battle of the Currents. Railroads needed capital. They needed riders and shippers. Battles occurred over the fair distribution of wealth. That contest found itself into politics as did the issue of north and south, east and west. Isms were coming into fashion, started by Populism soon to be followed by Socialism, Communism, and Progressivism. And civil rights became a publicity, promotion, and issues battlefield. This was the case for antislavery groups as well as those championing women's rights.

Perhaps no advocacy campaign, other than that for secession from the U.S. government, was better developed and more skillfully and ethically executed than antislavery. It was international with the American version taking substantial incentive and substance from various conferences and activities in Europe from the earliest decades of the 19th century. In the United States, that campaign along with the one for secession (including battles over fugitive slaves and states' admission to the Union) ran on parallel and collision courses. Definitional and identity battles marked the substance of the battle. And the paradox of slavery in a land of liberty championed on July 4 was carefully scrutinized and vetted in local, state, and national venues. Closely associated with, but also with its own players and voices, women's suffrage and other rights were articulated with the goal of helping individuals and a nation to make enlightened choices. The rights of native populations worldwide were often overlooked. They often had no publicists and newspapers sold more because they showed the triumph of western settlement rather than the tragedy of humiliation and dislocation.

Business had a local presence and often a reputation based on close and even personal contact until massive organizations were created as part of the mass production, mass consumption move to a new commercial, and political, rubric. Public relations helped railroads grow from local infrastructures to national networks. Hundreds of small oil and steel companies were rolled into Standard Oil and U.S. Steel. Gone was the local and personal connection between business leaders and members of the communities, including labor. Now, ownership and management was distant and not always sympathetic to the needs and

wants of consumers for safe and well-made products or for worker safety and reasonable working hours and conditions.

One of the interesting aspects of public relations in the 19th century was the close and sometimes conflicting presence of journalists and the activities of public relations. Newspapers were often advocates for some or many causes. They often were the textual repositories of the thoughts, culture, and ideology of locales as well as the nation. They were brokers of power, and propagandists. It would have been hard for a journalist, for instance, to turn down the exciting opportunity to take a railroad trip to the parts of the nation being opened and populated with new settlers and towns. The only cost of the trip would be one or more favorable stories about the exciting adventure and the opportunity to be exploited. It is difficult to know whether many or even some would have protested being a shill or flack for the railroads. All of that promotion and publicity was designed to feature the opportunities made possible by railroads. Ignored for a long time were the perilous working conditions of laborers.

The key aspect of 19th-century trends of public relations was the steady progress with refinement of the profession as a step toward naming and institutionalizing it. That would be the key trend of the 20th century. In the 19th century, few persons saw their identity as professional publicists, promoters, and issues debaters. There were no organizations, classes, and degrees. That was the inevitable progression from trends toward institutionalization and professionalism of all sorts that were forged in the 19th century.

Robert L. Heath

See also Antecedents of Modern Public Relations; Barnum, P. T.; Battle of the Currents; Issues Management; Media Relations; Promotion; Publicity; Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations in Public Relations

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NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)

A nongovernmental organization (NGO) is a part of the voluntary sector in which individuals organize to accomplish a social goal. The concept of NGOs emerged when many colonies and territories were seeking their independence from colonial powers. These organizations were created during the transition from colonial rule to self-rule. After independence, these organizations continued to work in solving local problems such as infant mortality, education, and illiteracy. The growth of NGOs reflects a shift away from the beliefs that government is the primary provider of services, that economic growth is the singular key to progress, and that leadership is a top-down process. NGOs are organized groups of individuals that are not yet institutionalized. However, some NGOs will become institutionalized as their efforts become indispensable to society.

NGOs do not work for the traditional concept of capital—economic wealth. Instead, their efforts help to create social capital. Social capital is another form of wealth that benefits a society. Much like American nonprofit organizations, NGOs are formed by and sustained by individuals with a specific goal or agenda. Why do people join NGOs? Individuals often feel that they have little power to influence their local community and have an even smaller chance of influencing larger, national issues. The creation of nongovernmental organizations that work to articulate citizen concerns helps to bring important social issues into the forefront of public discussion. To encourage citizens to reach out to NGOs, these organizations can use interpersonal communication, media relations, and strategic communication programs. It is

also important that these organizations extend beyond merely serving elite causes and niche publics and work toward the resolution of larger, national issues.

In the United States, there is a social cause group for almost every issue. Groups organize to protect the environment, children, and animals, as well as to advocate for consumer safety, women's rights, and minority issues. In other nations of the world, especially in societies that have been dominated by repressive governments, there is no tradition of cause groups acting on behalf of social issues. Today, there is a continuing emergence of NGOs throughout the world. These grassroots organizations work on behalf of issues but are not part of the formal governmental structure. Indeed, NGOs provide services that governments fail to provide to their citizens. Many NGOs begin by serving local issues and then, if successful, often become national organizations.

Nongovernmental organizations are not limited by national boundaries. International nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) extend their humanitarian efforts to the political arena. In developed nations, international organizations that operate on behalf of larger social causes include Freedom Forum, Amnesty International, and Greenpeace. These watchdog groups are crucial because they provide an external perspective on the situation in a particular nation. In developing or postcrisis countries, the United Nations, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the George Soros Open Society Foundation provide financial and human resources to help facilitate development. These international organizations underwrite or fund local groups that work to achieve societal goals. INGOs are especially important during the initial stages of a civil society because they work directly with indigenous organizations and provide important training and activating of local civil society leaders.

NGOs have the same organizational needs as other groups. Once a group of like-minded people come together to identify and work on a problem, there are certain structural, legal, and financial imperatives that must be met before the group can begin to work toward its core mission. NGOs usually must register with a regional or national office. The registration process is necessary because it may give the group tax-exempt status and certain

fundraising benefits. The group must be able to articulate a mission statement and create bylaws to govern the organization. Bylaws should spell out how leaders are selected, the different responsibilities of the various elected offices, the ways in which finances will be monitored, and how changes to the bylaws can be enacted. Additionally, it is important for groups to specify in advance of their petition for legal recognition that the organization has identified different types of donors, grants, and corporate resources that can be used to sustain the organization's mission. For instance, an NGO that specializes in prenatal care should begin conversations with different government agencies and corporations that specialize on this issue. Partnerships between NGOs, government, and corporations are crucial to meeting the needs of the NGOs' target publics.

NGOs must also strive for transparency in their operations. Many NGOs have various revenue sources (e.g., grants, donations) and should work to make their financial status and their accomplishments open to public inspection and scrutiny. NGOs that do not use their grants and donations to serve their missions should be held accountable for misusing their resources and abusing the public trust.

NGOs can benefit from the strategies and tactics of public relations. Because NGOs seek to inform, persuade, and change the attitudes and actions of others, they can employ many of the proven functions of strategic communication. For instance, many NGOs seek media attention to expand the reach of their message and to encourage both the public and their elected officials to think about a certain issue. NGOs should create positions such as "Public Affairs" or "Public Outreach Specialist." Moreover, NGOs should train multiple members of their organizations in what constitutes news and how to work with the media. Skills such as news release writing, planning and executing effective news conferences, and helping the media to write stories about social issues can be developed with some training.

NGOs can learn a lot about meeting the needs of their publics by remembering the basic tenets of effective relationship building. NGOs should follow the principles of strategic management. The leaders of NGOs, often not trained in business techniques, should learn about strategic planning and evaluation. NGOs usually direct several programs

simultaneously and need to be able to see ways in which to create synergy between projects.

NGOs can be strategic in the management of their programs by creating specific and viable objectives that can be measured. With a little research, NGOs can create benchmarks of issues both before and during the outreach programs. By creating standards or benchmarks of performance and service, NGOs can monitor their progress, change their programs, and better serve their intended publics. Evaluation does not need to involve sophisticated quantitative analysis or national-level surveys. Rather, short surveys, focus groups, or interviews with people before, during, and after a program can help the NGO to meet its objectives.

Corporations may want to learn more about the NGOs that work in certain areas. Partnerships between NGOs and business organizations are a win-win situation for both parties. NGO-corporate relationships between computer companies, pharmaceutical companies, and health-related organizations can give corporations exposure to new regions and allow them to be good corporate citizens. Moreover, many corporations have philanthropic priorities and are looking for new ways to partner with locally based organizations that can provide evidence of success.

NGOs provide invaluable services throughout the world. Unfortunately, many NGOs are not able to achieve their long-term goals because of poor planning or an overreliance on donations. In many parts of the world, especially during and after a crisis, there is a large amount of assistance available. This financial assistance is not limitless, however. In many crisis situations, donors leave when the crisis appears to be abating. The NGOs that were created during this time of crisis are often left with few or no financial resources when the donor dollars cease to be available. Therefore, NGOs need to become sustainable. Sustainability means that the NGOs use their strengths to create revenue producing ventures within their organizations to help fund public-oriented projects. For instance, some NGOs have developed expertise in survey collection and data analysis. They can make money from this skill and offer their services for a fee to business and other organizations. Other NGOs have developed sophisticated understandings of desktop publishing and can help profit-driven organizations in creating high-quality advertisements and professional

documents. Finally, some NGOs can provide training to newer NGOs in their own country and abroad for small fees and donations. All of these practices help the NGO to be sustainable so it can continue to exist and serve its core mission.

A strong NGO sector has been linked to the development of civil society and democracy throughout the world. NGOs are an important part of any society's development and have much to offer their publics. But NGOs, just like other types of organizations, need to communicate with their members, the media, and their publics to be effective in their core missions.

Maureen Taylor

See also Activism; Advocacy; Community and Community Building

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social, educational, and cultural services. This category of organization is also called *not-for-profit*.

The nonprofit sector has a significant impact not only on quality of life but also on the economy. In 2000, over \$200 billion in donations from individuals, corporations, bequests, and foundations were collected to serve a variety of community needs. This sector may be the fastest growing sector in the United States economy, with over 1.6 million nonprofit organizations in existence. With their focus on issues such as education, culture, religion, social service, environment, and health, nonprofit organizations are an important part of both the economy and community life. Involvement in such organizations has long been characteristic of American culture. Researchers like Harvard professor Robert Putman have suggested that the number or density of such organizations is predictive of a region's economic health, governmental efficiency, personal happiness, and faith in public institutions.

Statistics indicate that the number of nonprofit organizations continues to grow, with as many as 50,000 new charities created in recent years. Times of economic growth encourage the development of nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations are developed within local communities to meet specific local needs such as an animal shelter or boosters to support the local marching band. They exist along with those organizations defined as regional or national, such as the American Lung Association. Included in the nonprofit sector are hospitals, schools, museums, homeless shelters, research centers, youth groups, symphony orchestras, houses of worship, and health organizations such as the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofit organizations comprise the sector of the economy referred to as the nonprofit, voluntary, or third sector. Incorporated under state law as charitable or nonprofit corporations, these organizations are distinguished from organizations that focus on either making a profit (the private sector) or serving as an arm of government (the governmental sector). The nonprofit organization must focus on making some portion of society better or preventing it from becoming worse. As a result, nonprofit organizations provide not only welfare services but also

Characteristics

State and federal laws specify the conditions under which an organization can be classified as charitable or nonprofit. These organizations must have the following four characteristics: They must be incorporated and must have a public purpose; their governance structure must preclude self-interest and private financial gain; they must be exempt from paying federal tax; and they must possess the special legal status that stipulates that gifts made to them are tax deductible. In order for that organization to be classified as tax exempt, to

be eligible for tax deduction, or to be known as a 501(c)(3) organization, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code specifies activities that are and are not permitted. Annual reports detailing the financial activity of the organization must be filed in order to maintain nonprofit status.

Although the majority of nonprofit organizations are funded through donations, sales of products can also help fund the organization, such as the annual cookie sale of the Girl Scouts. Although funding may come from major foundations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's support for improving health in the developing world, the U.S. government and state governments are also involved in funding the services of nonprofit organizations, often through grants for those specific services. Examples include local organizations such as legal services or safe visitation programs.

Traditionally, a separation has existed between governmental funding for services provided by nonprofit religious or faith-based organizations and those services provided by secular organizations, but even that division is disappearing. With increasing attempts to shift responsibility for public service and assistance from governmental programs to nonprofit organizations, recent attention has been directed toward enabling faith-based organizations to receive governmental funding for specific service programs.

With an increase in the number of nonprofit organizations, there has been an increase in competition for public attention, volunteers, and donation dollars. As a result, the public can expect numerous requests for donations every week. Because not all charities are honest and accountable to their donors, public understanding of nonprofits and analysis of their programs and appeals is essential.

Community Chest, later to become United Way, was begun in 1913 in Cleveland, Ohio. Serving as a type of gatekeeper for the community with numerous charities, Community Chest began with the goal of consolidating into a single appeal the needs of a specific community with the appropriate nonprofit organizations. Each United Way organization must meet the specific guidelines established by United Way. Each year as community needs grow and more nonprofit organizations become available, more organizations apply to be included as United Way organizations than United Way can handle. As a result, not every reputable program is part of United Way. And throughout the year each

community experiences numerous additional appeals for funds.

An effective nonprofit organization will focus on gaining the appropriate public attention, public concern for its mission, conviction that the organization is bringing about effective change, and commitment to involvement and donations. These objectives are achievable through an effective public relations approach.

Public Relations Function

The public relations function in most nonprofit organizations includes creating awareness and acceptance of the organization's mission; communicating effectively with key publics, including employees, volunteers, the community, those served by the organization, and the media; developing, maintaining, and monitoring the organization's issue area, organizational policy, and public policy relevant to the organization; and maintaining the organization's reputation with donors. This means that the communication function will include media relations, publicity, issues management, public affairs, speech writing, publications, promotional writing, and, at times, crisis management. Otis Baskin, Craig Aronoff, and Dan L. Lattimore (1997) argued that "public relations is the business of many not-for-profit organizations" (p. 368).

The nonprofit sector has been a starting place for a career in public relations for many individuals. Although starting salaries in the nonprofit sector may be somewhat lower than starting salaries in agencies or in corporate work, the sense of accomplishment through doing something good for the community as well as having the opportunity to work with interesting and successful volunteers has led to higher job satisfaction in this sector.

In their study of communicators and communication departments, David Dozier, Larissa A. Grunig, and James E. Grunig (1995) found that the communication departments in the nonprofit sector are about half the size of the departments in the corporate and governmental sectors. In addition, communicators in the nonprofit organizations and professional trade associations are more likely to have attended graduate school and to hold advanced degrees. Responsibilities of communication professionals in the nonprofit organizations

include contributions to strategic planning as well as manager role knowledge.

Unfortunately, this level of public relations expertise does not exist throughout the nonprofit sector. In many social welfare agencies, insufficient funding to hire individuals with public relations expertise means little public relations activity may be present. As a result, even an awareness of the need or methods to inform the media of organizational news may be lacking.

The public relations function with nonprofit organizations includes several goals. The variety of goals demonstrates the need for a variety of public relations approaches. These range from the unidirectional publicity to a two-way symmetrical approach. Because one goal includes increasing public awareness of the organization, its mission, and its successes, publicity will play an important role for meeting some organizational needs. For example, fundraising programs such as Race for the Cure and the MS Walk-a-thon rely on publicity. Even the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout is based primarily on publicity. Visibility and name recognition are essential for new organizations but are also important to the continued success of older organizations. Both publicity approaches and news coverage can be an advantage in this area. However, the successful nonprofit organization must do more than create awareness—it must also make a difference. At one time, nonprofit organizations assumed that they could accomplish the educational function of their organizational goals such as preventing or detecting heart disease, diabetes, or cancer by simply sending out messages. Success was demonstrated by the number of messages produced or the number of brochures distributed. Many organizations have revised their focus from the source of the message to the actions of the receiver of the message and now look to measure changes in that receiver. This could include not only the number of individuals having mammograms but also early versus late cancer detection rates.

Media relations is an important part of public relations for the nonprofit organization. Because the mission of nonprofit organizations focuses on issues important to the local community, there should be sufficient opportunity to find news the media should want to cover. Understanding the importance of establishing a strong relationship with the media is essential.

Volunteer recruitment and retention are an important public relations activity of the nonprofit organization. These individuals are characterized by their donation of time and service for the benefit of the organization without consideration of pay. As a result, volunteers have a special relationship with the organization. Orientation and training will probably be necessary. This can include training in effective communication skills such as writing news releases or public speaking. Two-way symmetrical communication is important as volunteers work with salaried employees to help set goals and objectives. The process increases volunteer commitment and satisfaction in the organization's accomplishments. Because volunteers must feel that donating their time is as important as giving money, positive relationships must be maintained with the volunteer group. Within this context, recognition of volunteers also becomes important. However, the organization must be alert to appropriate recognition that meets the needs and expectations of the volunteers. For example, some volunteers expect appreciation but are uncomfortable with gifts or too much publicity.

Employees present another focus in the public relations effort. A complicating factor in the nonprofit organization is when a large regional or national organization works to have a presence in the local community where a local office has limited staff and relatively little experience with the nonprofit organization but significant responsibilities in the local community. The responsibilities of developing and maintaining a good relationship with the organization's governing body as well as serving as a leader for the local community call for effective public relations skills.

Nonprofit organizations are increasingly recognizing the necessity of effective relationships with governmental bodies. Accomplishing the goals of the nonprofit organization may necessitate petitions to local city councils for changes such as rezoning for homeless shelters or for smoking ordinances. Effective development and presentation of these petitions becomes another public relations function. Often these responsibilities extend to the state or federal level, where lobbying may be necessary to influence legislative understanding of proposed legislation on issues of concern to the nonprofit organization. Nonprofit organizations are permitted to lobby federal and

state officials with communication on specific legislation and reflecting a view on that legislation. However, they are not permitted to participate in political campaigning. Because the IRS specifies which expenditures are allowable for a nonprofit organization, it is necessary that the organization stay current on the issue. The lobbying effort, however, remains an important public relations function for many nonprofit organizations.

The financial aspects of the nonprofit organization are part of the public relations concern. Fundraising in the form of requesting donations from the public is the most common financial base for the organization. Much of the communication activity of the nonprofit organization may be directed toward getting sufficient donations to enable the organization to accomplish its goals. Although many volunteers enjoy participating in fundraising activities because success is easy to measure, they also are aware of the amount of effort involved in securing those funds. As a result, stewardship is important. As part of the ongoing public relations effort, the organization must be sure that a significant amount of the income goes toward accomplishing the mission of the organization and not toward the fundraising activities themselves.

Because a return is expected from the donation in some kind of improvement in the public's welfare or general benefit, nonprofit organizations must maintain careful financial reports. These financial reports, somewhat similar to corporate annual reports, may be part of the public relations effort of the organization. However, analyses of the financial activity of major national nonprofit organizations by outside organizations compare organizations and enable the public to see whether or not specific organizations are spending donation dollars wisely. As the fundraising expenses, administrative expenses, and program spending are analyzed, the public is shown the efficiency of the dollars it has donated. Increasingly, the public is being educated to expect effective nonprofits to spend less than 25% of their capital on fundraising activities and more than 75% on program implementation. Nonprofit organizations are recognizing the wisdom in limiting staff size and eliminating expensive fundraising projects. From a public relations perspective, the organization must adapt to meet changing public awareness and expectations.

Grants from foundations or governmental agencies often provide significant funding for special

projects of the nonprofit organization. Grant writing may become part of the communication activity of the organization. Because grant writing involves telling the story of the organization, public relations professionals in the nonprofit sector will wisely be prepared. Unfortunately, in times of economic downturn, available funds from grants tend to decrease.

Ideally, the nonprofit organization will manage issues effectively. Whether these issues include increasing public expectations of accountability in fundraising, the successful accomplishment of an organization's mission such as elimination of tuberculosis or polio, or insurance for volunteers, the successful nonprofit will adapt to the changes.

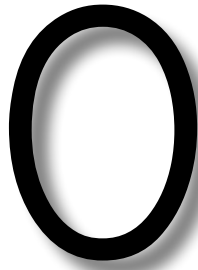
Unfortunately, even nonprofit organizations are susceptible to crisis situations. Sometimes these are major crises such as the one the United Way of America suffered when its leader was found guilty of fraud, conspiracy, and money laundering; that suffered by the American Red Cross when, in the weeks immediately following the New York City Twin Towers disaster, it refused to share its computerized database of the victims; or that experienced by the Catholic Church in the sexual abuse scandals. In any event, a nonprofit organization is not immune. Effective public relations must be prepared to help lead the organization through these crises, rebuilding the organization's credibility and public confidence in it.

Kathy A. Leeper

See also Fundraising; Publics

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OBJECTIVES

Objectives are central to a strategic approach to public relations that is based on research. An objective specifies exactly what is desired from a public relations action. An objective is created from the information collected through formative/background research. Evaluative research is used to determine whether or not the public relations action achieved the objective—whether it was a success or a failure. (Refer to “Formative Research” for clarification on the connection between objectives and public relations research.)

Objectives are generally written using the word *to* and then an action verb, such as *increase*, *reduce*, *earn*, or *convince*. An objective must be quantifiable; you must be able to measure it in some way. Moreover, the objective should specify the amount of desired change stated as a number or percentage. It is the specificity of an objective that creates the clear standard for judging success. The following objectives are measurable and specific: (a) “to increase attendance at the 2004 charity auction to 120” and (b) “to convince 60% of employees to support the restructuring proposal.” A person can count the number of participants to determine if 120 people attended or use a survey to assess employee support for the restructuring program to see if it reaches 60%. Evaluation becomes possible because of the ability to measure an objective and compare it against a specific standard. Some experts recommend that an objective include a target date or deadline. This increases specificity by indicating the

date for the desired change to be achieved. You need to decide what time frame is appropriate for your objective. For instance, the second objective could be rewritten as “to convince 60% of employees to support the restructuring proposal by the end of June.”

There are many different types of objectives. One distinction is between *process* and *outcome* objectives. A process objective checks to determine if certain steps were taken in the preparation and execution of a public relations action. Sample process objectives include writing a news release, getting approval of Web pages, or securing a permit for a city park. Each of these actions can be converted to a full objective. “To send out a news release to 20 media outlets by July 7.” “To receive management approval of the Web pages by October 13th.” “To secure the permit for the park development fun run by March 11th.” All three of these objectives are measurable; you have either completed the action or not, and each one has a set time for when the action should be completed. Process objectives address the question, “Did we do what we were supposed to do?” A public relations action can fail because a certain action or step was not taken. Process objectives are a checklist for actions or steps that must be taken in your public relations action. This checklist is developed as part of the planning process and used to review the execution of the public relations action.

Outcome objectives are used to determine the success or failure of the public relations action. An outcome objective specifies what the public relations action hoped to achieve. A proper outcome

objective often includes the target stakeholder(s) because the public relations message and actions are designed to reach and focus and affect a specific target stakeholder(s). When appropriate, include a specific target stakeholder in the objective. The objective “to convince 60% of employees to support the restructuring proposal by the end of June” indicates employees are the target. You do not include a target stakeholder if you are trying to reach a very general audience as in the objective “to increase attendance at the 2004 charity auction to 120.”

Outcome objectives can be divided into three groups: (1) *knowledge*, (2) *attitude*, and (3) *behavioral*. Knowledge objectives center on learning: The target stakeholders know something after the public relations action that they did not know before the action. There are three types of knowledge objectives: (1) *exposure*, (2) *comprehension*, and (3) *retention*. Exposure means that the target stakeholder(s) has an opportunity to see or hear the public relations action. The public relations action appears in some media or location that the target stakeholder uses, such as a newspaper, radio, or website. Comprehension is the ability of the target stakeholder(s) to understand the message. A message must be written in a fashion and in a language the target can understand. Retention means that the target stakeholder(s) remembers information about the public relations action. Ideally, the three informational objectives are related to one another. Stakeholders must be exposed to a message in order to comprehend it and must understand a message if they are to remember it properly.

Attitude objectives attempt to change how people think or feel. An attitude can be defined as an evaluation of some object. “I love turkey” or “I dislike traffic” are examples of attitudes. In each case, an evaluation (*love* and *dislike*) is made of some object (*turkey* and *traffic*). For an outcome objective, a public relations practitioner is trying to change the attitude of some target stakeholder/audience. The public relations action should alter the target stakeholder’s evaluation of a particular object. “At the end of the three-month campaign, current customers will have a 15% increase in the approval of IBM’s customer service department.” The target stakeholders in this objective are current customers, and the object is IBM’s customer service

department. People should hold different attitudes after they encounter the public relations effort than before it. Reputation is a form of attitude and is a common focus of public relations actions.

A behavioral objective seeks to alter the way people act. Behavior change is the most difficult of the three outcome objectives. People are more likely to resist behavior change than to resist new information or even alter an attitude. People are creatures of habits, and we do not like to change those habits—our behaviors. In a behavioral objective, the public relations action is trying to change how people act. Ideally, the target stakeholder acts differently after the public relations effort than before it. “To have 15% more new donors give blood in 2004 than in 2003.” This objective seeks to get more people (new donors) to give blood—change their behavior.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Benchmarking; Formative Research; Goals; Qualitative Research; Quantitative Research; Reputation Management; Research Objectives

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ONLINE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Online public relations supplements traditional public relations tools (public media, controlled media, events, and one-on-one interpersonal communication) by deploying Internet and mobile wireless technologies to manage communications, to advocate for client interests, and to establish and maintain mutually beneficial organizational-public relationships. Although some tools rely primarily on one-way communication, online is distinguished by the use of social media and interactive tools that can facilitate two-way or dialogic communication.

Online Public Relations Functions and Tools

Public relations practitioners employ a growing array of online tools that perform at least eight distinct functions. These are summarized in Table 1.

Messaging involves disseminating information via emails, text and instant messaging, and microblog services (such as Twitter). Typically messages are targeted at audiences who granted permission to receive them (opted-in) or have become followers of the sender. Messaging thus focuses on outbound communication, but also provides mechanisms for recipients to reply and share messages with others, such as forwarding emails and text messages, or retweeting.

User access entails enabling users to obtain organizational information, to seek assistance, and to perform routine transactions using the two-way capabilities inherent in organizational websites and mobile applications. A sponsored website continues to be the basic platform where an organization maintains an online presence and is where users are typically directed when they receive emails, search Google or Yahoo!, or click on a hyperlinked text or display ad. However, mobile apps are increasingly popular among smartphone users and allow performing specific (usually quite limited) functions that might otherwise be conducted on a website, such as looking up information or making a reservation. In addition to its main organization site, a large organization today can operate multiple special-subject websites, known as microsites. These might be devoted to particular product promotions, customer service/technical support, investor relations, fundraising, health promotion, educational programs, political advocacy, or crisis communications. Online newsrooms are microsites that supply news materials to journalists and bloggers.

E-publishing includes production of electronic publications comparable to traditional newsletters, magazines, annual reports, and other long-form printed publications. E-newsletters are typically distributed as email. Other e-publications (e-zines, e-books, e-reports, etc.) are designed to be read online and are promoted to be downloaded from designated websites. The Web similarly can act as a delivery channel where organizations can distribute forms, manuals, reports, and other materials produced in portable document format (PDF).

Table 1 Eight Functions of Online Public Relations

<i>Function</i>	<i>Principal Online Tools</i>
Messaging	Email, text messaging, microblogs
User access	Websites, mobile apps
E-publishing	E-newsletters, e-zines, e-books, document delivery
Opinion and advice sharing	Blogs, podcasts, and vodcasts
Networking	Social networking sites, location marketing, and related referral sites
Collaboration	Forums, wikis, webinars, Web conferences
Instruction	Videos, slideshows, screencasts, webcasts, webinars, serious games
User engagement	Entertainment-oriented digital games, virtual world sites, online contests and sweepstakes

Opinion and advice sharing by organizations can take place through emails, websites and apps, and e-publications as well as online tools specially designed for that purpose. For example, a blog (derived from Web log) is an online journal or diary where organizational representatives can comment or share ideas about current events and trends or provide practical advice pertaining to the blog's topical focus. Readers can be notified about new postings via RSS syndication and can refer others to individual posts via trackbacks. Alternatively, podcasts are audio programs that present information in an entertaining format and are designed to be downloaded from a service, such as iTunes and played on a mobile device while listeners often engage in daily activities (commuting, jogging, etc.).

Networking injects an organization, personality, or cause into a network of people who come together online on social networking sites like Facebook as well as public sites where people share recommendations and comments about various topics. Numerous social networking sites now encourage organizations to participate in order to build interest in the site and to defray the cost of site

operations. For example, organizations can establish a Facebook page at no charge, but are then enticed to promote themselves within the site using fee-based services, including applications and site advertising. Organizations in social networking sites typically invite members to follow them on the site; post updates; provide free games, applications, and gifts; and encourage members to post comments or make recommendations to their friends. Separately, retailers and other organizations can participate (for a fee) in various location marketing programs that provide incentives (such as discounts or giveaways) for people to visit a physical location. However, similar to social networking sites, these programs also alert a visitor's friends whenever a visit occurs and encourage visitors to post comments or recommendations about their experience. Still other third-party websites compile user ratings and comments about their experiences related to products, services, organizations, websites, and media content. Although positive comments can be beneficial, negative assessments can mar an entity's reputation.

Collaboration enables working professionals and ordinary people to solve problems by seeking and sharing information on specific topics using online forums (bulletin boards and chats), wikis, and interactive webinars and Web conferences. Many of these public collaboration tools require no membership and even allow people to participate anonymously. These same collaboration tools (and others) are incorporated in organizational intranets and extranets.

Instruction deploys online media for training and organizational development purposes and for customer service and technical support. Tools include training videos, screencasts, slideshows, webcasts, webinars, self-paced training or "serious" games, and events conducted in virtual world sites, such as Second Life.

User engagement strives to strengthen a user's already-existing interest or loyalty to a product, service organization, personality, or cause by providing opportunities to participate in entertaining activities. Examples include playing entertainment-oriented digital games where an organization's product or service is integral to the game's storyline or where organizations can create a presence through product placements or dynamic advertising that streams into the game over the Internet. Other

activities include watching entertainment (versus instructional) videos on media sharing sites like YouTube, involvement in virtual world sites, and participation in online contests and sweepstakes.

Managing Online Public Relations

Planning online public relations is no different than traditional public relations: Online opportunities need to be critically analyzed and specific, measurable goals and objectives clearly stated. Moreover, messages and media must be appropriate to the audience's needs, interests, preferences, abilities, and online media habits.

Although the public now expects organizations to be technologically savvy—and to have some sort of online presence—organizations must choose from a widening array of online tools and must then critically evaluate each alternative's effectiveness and efficiency. A unique advantage of online public relations is the ease of tracking user activity and online transactions. Analytics can also provide valuable insights, but only allow organizations to *impute* levels of public awareness and interest offline. Additional forms of evaluation are required.

Importantly, in today's highly fragmented communications environment, an organization's online presence needs to be continuously promoted to guarantee sufficient exposure and usage. Websites, blogs, social networking pages, wikis, podcast programs, YouTube channels, rely on a "pull" (versus "push") strategy and need to be promoted offline and online in order to attract users. Online promotion includes search engine optimization (SEO) techniques and might merit paid online text and display advertising.

For optimal results, online public relations must fully exploit the interactivity inherent in Internet and mobile wireless technologies. In some cases, the purpose of an effort might be to prompt audiences or users to reply, to inquire, or to take immediate action online (register, reserve, order, donate, volunteer, etc.). However, many times a sufficient purpose might be to merely encourage audiences to share information or make recommendations to others. This applies when the ultimate desired action, such as attending an event, cannot take place online. Thus the effort's goal might be to merely create excitement or contagion among users—an outcome variously labeled "buzz," "viral marketing" and "electronic

word of mouth.” In both cases, the resulting online responses represent important *intermediate steps* toward reaching organizational goals and objectives.

Online public relations provides a unique opportunity to engage publics in dialogue—a capability that remains underutilized by most organizations. Because of the considerable staff resources required to maintain a continuing and consistent online presence, only a small proportion of organizations have designated social media managers (also known as online community managers) whose responsibilities are to monitor and to respond (as appropriate) to email, text, and Twitter messages as well as comments posted on blogs, social networking sites, wikis, and other social media. Importantly, to be effective such responses must be authentic and tailored to the specific comments or concerns expressed.

Other unique aspects include the fast pace and ephemeral nature of online communications. Websites, blogs, and other tools need to be continuously updated with fresh content to attract return visitors. These aspects are particularly evident when an organization confronts a crisis. Because of its ability to reach key audiences quickly and directly, online public relations moved to the front line in the mix of media used to respond to crises. Common crisis response tools today include email, text messaging and microblogging, black/dark websites, blogs, videos and images on media sharing sites, and bulletin boards and chats where staffs, emergency responders, and the public can share information and reactions.

The advent of online public relations created a variety of new job positions in public relations, including website developer, application developer, content webmaster, search engine marketing specialist, and social media manager. More than traditional public relations functions, online communications are dispersed throughout an organization, and differentiation between functions performed by public relations, marketing, human resources, information technology, and other units can become quickly blurred. This decentralization requires a clear delineation of responsibilities—as well as policies and guidelines that assure branding and message consistency, content quality, usability of systems, protection of the organization’s digital assets, and the integration of online and offline activities.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Analytics; Authenticity on Social Media; Black/Dark Website; Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Communication Management; Communication Technologies; Crisis Communication; Crowdsourcing; EDGAR Online; Flogging; Integrated Marketing Communication; Interactivity (Audience); Internet Contagion Theory; Multimedia; Podcasts/Audio Sharing; Search Engine; Short Message Service; Social Media; Social Media Press Release; Virtual World Sites; Web Traffic; Web 2.0; Website; Wiki

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Op-Ed

Op-ed refers to the page in a newspaper that is opposite the page on which editorials are published. (Editorials reflect a newspaper's official position on problems and issues.) Some newspapers devote only one page to editorials, letters to the editor, and commentary; editorials typically are to the left and op-ed contributions typically are to the right, although everything is on a single page.

The best newspapers have balanced editorial and op-ed pages. They publish a blend of editorials; letters to the editor (typically, not all letters are published); commentary from local and nationally syndicated political columnists; and *public commentary* from individuals who do not work for the newspaper.

The best newspapers also ensure that a broad spectrum of opinion is reflected in their letters, syndicated columns, and public commentaries. (Editorials do not reflect a broad spectrum of opinion because they are the newspaper's official voice, which is likely to lean to the right or the left.) A good balance is sought on political, economic, social, and cultural issues. This does not mean that two conservative and two liberal items are published each day. It does mean that, on balance, a good newspaper publishes ideas that reflect a wide range of opinions.

The public commentary sections of most newspapers are open to anyone, and public relations practitioners sometimes try to have their organization's views published there. The public affairs officer for a legislator who is sponsoring a controversial and widely discussed bill, for example, might pen a piece explaining the legislation and submit it to all the newspapers in the state (under the legislator's name) in hopes it is published in some of them.

A corporate public relations practitioner might write a commentary about the steps a corporation is taking to preserve the environment as it attempts to develop land in an environmentally sensitive area, and distribute it under the CEO's name. Or a practitioner at one of the ubiquitous think tanks might submit a commentary purporting to show that chlorofluorocarbons are not really a threat to the environment after all.

Unfortunately, newspapers do not screen commentaries as carefully as they do other stories.

Some commentaries contain factual error, and some reflect partisan views that have little basis in fact. For this reason, public commentary sometimes carries little weight with some readers.

Placement in some newspapers is also extraordinarily difficult. The *Houston Chronicle*, for instance, publishes only 18 of the 400 or so submissions it receives each week. Some organizations follow the lead of Mobil Oil Corporation's Herbert Schmertz, who helped pioneer the use of the paid commentary (*advertorial*). Mobil wrote commentaries that looked like op-ed pieces and then paid to have them published in newspapers across the country. Such commentaries get published, but they are not op-ed pieces, and they may have less credibility than commentaries that survive the rigorous screening process.

Michael Ryan

See also Privatizing Public Opinion (and "Publicizing" Private Opinion); Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Public Policy Planning

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OPENNESS

The concept of openness, in terms of public relations, can have internal and external interpretations. From an internal perspective, employees can feel positively about open communication feedback cycles and company newsletters advocating the open-door policies of management. From an external perspective, the media can have negative interpretations of openness, if the company spokesperson is evasive during a crisis situation.

The concept of openness, in terms of public relations and organizational communication, is derived from systems theory. This theoretical framework is concerned with complex, interdependent organizations that operate within dynamic environments. With the multiple pressures that organizations face (mergers, economic considerations, media coverage,

community obligations), openness helps companies see themselves as part of a dynamic web of interdependencies and relationships. Openness involves interaction with the environment, reciprocal exchanges within and outside of organizations. The existence of diverse environments across industries, companies, and governmental entities means that the same organizing principles and solutions cannot be applied in all situations. In short, various contextual and environmental factors need to be considered, and organizations need to have some degree of openness in order to prosper.

Public relations representatives help organizations achieve openness with various stakeholders (i.e., community, media). Thus, they are critical organizational boundary spanners. Larissa A. Grunig, James E. Grunig, and D. M. Dozier argued in 2002 that the systems perspective emphasizes the coordination of internal and external contingencies. Organizations depend on resources from their environments, such as employees and clients. A company with an open system uses public relations representatives to gather information on how productive its relationships are with the community, customers, and other stakeholders. In contrast, J. E. Grunig and associates argued that organizations with closed systems do not actively seek new information, but operate on past history or the preferences of managers. The closed organization clings to the status quo (i.e., how we've always done it), and managers tend to exhibit defensive behaviors, such as resistance to change.

Openness is synonymous with the concept of organizational boundary spanning (OBS). The boundary spanner straddles the edge of an organization. This person has a viewpoint within and outside of organizations; they know many details about the company as well as its clients. Public relations representatives are the liaisons, explaining the organization's actions to its stakeholders and interpreting the environment for the organization. Public relations people should have open feedback loops with the primary decision makers acting as the members of the dominant coalition—the executive team—in the organization. The boundary spanners can alert managers to problems and opportunities in the environment and help them respond to these changes.

If managers keep their systems open, they allow for the two-way flow of resources and

communication between the organization and the environment. The information is used to adapt to the environment, or managers may use the data to try to control the environment. Control can be accomplished through consolidation of resources or persuasive influence. In some cases, this strategy may be appropriate, but eventually some adaptation is required.

According to J. E. Grunig (2000), symmetrical public relations (a balanced approach) values openness and collaboration. Organizations need exchange relationships with the environment. They can be negatively impacted when there is an unwillingness on the part of managers to incur costs that build collaborative relationships. However, they incur greater costs from negative publicity, strict regulation, and other issues that result from closed relationships. Grunig argues that organizations are more effective if they incorporate values of openness and collaboration into their corporate cultures and decision-making processes.

From an internal culture perspective, openness within the organization may not necessarily lead to successful boundary spanning. However, cherishing this value at all levels of the company probably leads to communal, collaborative external relationships with stakeholders. According to John J. Rodwell, René Kienzle, and Mark A. Shadur (1998), some organizational professionals argue that employees must be given information about the company, its activities, goals, and vision. Additionally, they must be allowed to have channels through which information can be delivered to management.

Openness is essential for many organizational processes, such as public relations. Through openness in the system, the communication conduit for many aspects of organizational life is strengthened. Rodwell, Kienzle, and Shadur wrote in 1998 that employee attitude surveys often suggest that communication is an area that needs attention. By establishing and maintaining open feedback loops in the organization, positive internal public relations is likely to flourish. Employee morale and organizational commitment is also positively affected.

Deloris McGee Wanguri argued in 1996 that an environment that encourages discreet and consistent communicative openness is recommended for organizational boundary spanners. From the discretionary viewpoint, this alternative does not advocate the disclosure of privileged information

or knowledge that is potentially harmful to any individual or to the company and its clients. In other words, too much openness is problematic for many organizational relationships. In many cases, good judgment on how much information needs to be revealed is recommended. Additionally, consistency is essential so that trust and respect can develop in these relationships. If the stakeholder learns to trust the consistent communication behaviors of the boundary spanner, respect and continued openness permeate the relational encounters.

Using sound judgment and prudence in selecting information to share can increase communication openness and enhance perceived equity in these public relationships. If the information is accurate and appropriate for the target stakeholders (e.g., customers probably don't need to know specific quarterly financial results), the benefits outweigh the risks. Communicative openness can lead to positive dynamics, such as increased discussion and understanding, enhanced preparation for change, improved communication, and perceptions of communicative equity. In terms of equity, the receiver perceives that the sender is being straightforward and direct. The receiver also perceives that the sender is using proper discretion and consistent communication patterns. Thus, the organizational relationship is balanced. These perceptions of balance are critical for public relations professionals. Although public relations' stature has improved in society, the associations with propaganda and "spin" have not entirely disappeared.

Open systems, by their nature, react to change. These reactions may involve negotiation and compromise. With these dynamics, the boundary spanners and the stakeholders establish rules and then maintain and adapt the rules as needed. Stakeholders learn to trust the source credibility of the boundary spanner when openness is valued.

Candor is a means of achieving credibility, and it must be constantly engaged and reengaged. Companies must engage in active listening with their stakeholders, which is a primary part of any open communication process, and they must respond to the stakeholders' concerns. Solutions may not be readily available, but when such candor is exercised then mutually acceptable alternatives may be negotiated.

Although potential barriers to the effectiveness of communication always exist, openness is an important and useful public relations strategy. It is a strategy, however, that requires continuous adjustments to cultural, structural, and behavioral changes. The practitioner's adjustments are relevant for both the organization and its stakeholders. Through open exchange of information, all parties learn to deal with the changes and their effects on the public relationships.

Ultimately, if the participants in these communication transactions do not trust and respect each other; if the stakeholders do not value the conditions under which the information is shared (i.e., media people recognizing possible spokesperson evasiveness); or if practitioners fail to use discretion in their communication then the resulting relationships are negatively affected and recovery may take many years.

Brian C. Sowa

See also Information; Network Theory; Relationship Management Theory; Stakeholder Theory; Systems Theory; Transparency

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OPPORTUNITY AND THREAT

The idea of threat *and* opportunity in crisis management is rooted in the oft recounted observation that the Chinese character for crisis is made up of two seemingly contradictory symbols: one for opportunity, the other for threat. Managers should view crises and issues not just as threats—to their bottom line, to their reputations, indeed, to their very survival—but also as opportunities—to redefine problems, to promote self-sacrifice, to reaffirm relationships with key constituents, as well as a vehicle to achieve strategic advantage.

Opportunity and Threat Defined

The line of reasoning for treating threat and opportunity together is rooted in the term *wei-ji*, the Chinese word for *crisis*. The term *wei* means threat or danger, while the word *ji* means opportunity. In the pictograph that makes up the word in Chinese, the term for threat is placed at the top, while the word for opportunity is below it. The placement suggests that while the threat in a crisis is real and apparent, the opportunity, though present, is somewhat concealed. The implication, of course, is that in the midst of a situation that seems out of control, astute crisis managers look beyond the threat to see where opportunities lie.

Threat

A crisis is composed of three distinct notions: surprise, a short response time, and a threat. Among the threats that organizations face are a diminished ability to accomplish conventional organizational objectives as well as the real probability of institutional loss. Indeed, most cogent definitions of crises get at the notion that crises are low probability events that threaten organizations' ability to accomplish their basic goals.

Organizations should plan for crises, viewing their likelihood as inevitable given the variegated

risks companies face. Such threats originate from both internal and external sources: internally, they take the form of serious accidents, product safety incidents, or corporate misdeeds by senior executives; externally, they can emanate from activists who challenge a company's environmental record, consumer terrorists—such as was the iconic case with the Tylenol tampering incidents, or natural disasters.

Opportunity

While the notion of threat in a crisis situation is self-evident, the opportunity is not. Most problematic in a crisis is that traditional ways of viewing problems no longer suffice; how to “interpret” the crisis is not readily apparent (i.e., before September 11, 2001, it was inconceivable that a hijacker would not want to negotiate, nor was it apparent that common household items could be potential weapons). This accounts for the fact that most organizations stumble during the first few days of a crisis. Yet, if crisis managers are to strategically rescue their organizations from a crisis, they need to develop a sense-making process by which novel opportunities are enacted in new ways. That is, they have to cognitively recreate a crisis situation by developing a different way of interpreting an event, one that envisions a difficult situation as containing opportunities as well as threats.

One such opportunity is definitional; crises provide organizational officials wide latitude in managing meanings. A crisis is powerful in that it breaks frames; old ways of viewing problems are rendered obsolete. In so doing, it gives a crisis manager an opportunity to redefine a situation in a way that was impossible before, and with new definitions come new solutions for problems. In short, a crisis provides a face-saving way to change paths by providing cover for decision makers—a helpful vehicle to disentangle from seemingly intractable problems. Crises proffer *an excuse to act* to bring about desired outcomes—even though the justification may have little to do with the action.

Second, crises not only embolden people to act, but to do so in a way that is costly to them—in the expectation that the sacrifice brings a better day. Crises provide short windows of opportunities

where people are more likely to sacrifice, or accept dramatic change in order to bring about a long-term good. Hence, the oft-repeated aphorism that “you don’t want a good crisis to go to waste.”

Third, crises provide opportunities for organizations to demonstrate to key constituencies that their concern is for customers more than for the bottom line. That is, crises give companies an occasion to reinforce their reputation and their commitment to ethics. Even if they are at fault, by reacting to a crisis in a positive way and communicating ethically, organizations can use crises to build goodwill.

Finally, crisis managers can use a threat to an industry as an opportunity to position a company for a strategic advantage or create a new direction or vision. The case of StarKist Tuna in the 1990s is instructive. After years of being criticized by environmentalists for the fact that dolphins were caught in its tuna nets, the Heinz Corporation developed a new policy—it would only purchase tuna from suppliers that could prove that their catch was harvested in a manner that is safe for dolphins. The company then put “dolphin-safe” on its tuna cans. The implication of the message was clear: Heinz cared about the environmental consequences of its actions; its competitors did not.

Keith M. Hearit

See also Apologia; Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication

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ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY AND PERSONA

Organizational identity and *persona* refer to the self or character an organization strategically communicates to multiple audiences in order to achieve organizational goals. These concepts are central to the study and practice of public relations because organizational personalities affect public acceptance. Just as humans play multiple roles and seek to manage multiple identities—for example, people manage their work, home, and relational identities—organizations rely on public relations to increase connectedness with audiences. Managing organizational identity and persona involves creating and maintaining a strategically valuable public face while resolving contradictions that might arise as audiences interact with this organization. If an organization creates and manages its identity and persona effectively, each public has incentive to embrace it and its products, services, or policies.

To understand how corporations benefit from identity management, it is useful to examine the concept of organizational persona. Jill J. McMillan (1987) suggested using the term *persona* (from the Latin for mask) to emphasize how organizational identity is symbolically constructed; corporations create recognizable social presences with which audiences can create relationships. As Robert L. Heath pointed out, “the symbols of the organizations’ personae become real in the minds of persons involved despite the fact that the organizations are only symbolic and artificial” (1993, p. 148). In other words, the only way audiences can *know* an organization is through the enactment of its personae. As George Cheney and Jill J. McMillan (1990) observed, as members of an organizational society, people interact with corporate rhetors as well as individual speakers. Every organization enacts its personae in these conversations. If people accept an organization’s persona, that identity is its

voice during the ongoing dialogue with customers about its products and services.

Organizations rarely possess only one persona; the enactment of various personae constitutes an organization's identity—based on each audience's interpretation. In Western society, individuals possess qualities that differentiate them from each other; so too is the case for organizations. Thus, an organization's identity is communicated through its various identifying emblems, logos, insignias, programs, and public actions. As Lars Thøger Christensen and George Cheney (1994) noted,

Some corporations, for example, work to personalize their identities in various ways, including the use of visible representatives (such as Hollywood celebrities or CEOs) or characters (such as Xerox's monk-scribe of some years ago). Other organizations prefer, or even feel compelled, to "center" or "ground" themselves in key values or concerns. (p. 224)

Nike relies on both of these approaches. Not only does its swoosh logo identify it, but its inner-city teen programs reflect its business personality. An organization's identity is not static, however. Savvy organizations recognize that audiences interact with these corporate selves and adjust to these public faces as needed. A company that in the 1950s communicated the identity of responsible benefactor through its logos might recognize the need to update its identity to one of technological innovator to meet current societal expectations. This ongoing need to assess organizational identity can lead to challenges and even paradoxes for companies.

The challenging nature of organizational identity is highlighted in public relations scholarship about activist groups. Linda Aldoory and Bey-Ling Sha (2007) noted that activist groups possess a dual role identity, as they both influence organizations as well as serve as public communicators. Hua Jiang and Lan Ni (2009) pointed out that activist groups often face great difficulty in managing the dual role identity.

Whether public relations scholars are examining the ongoing process of a corporation's or activist group's efforts to maintain organizational identity and persona with multiple audiences, scholars suggest that effective identity management

can be challenging. If audiences accept a given organizational persona, the organization is able to meet its goals more easily. Instead of regulation and close scrutiny, for example, a chemical company that effectively projects the persona of a concerned corporate citizen incurs less public resistance. Audiences who feel the chemical company shares their concerns will in turn identify with it. An important aspect embedded in the concept of organizational identity and persona, then, is the idea of identification. The more a person identifies or relates to an offered corporate persona, the less direct or forceful is the need for a company's persuasion. But, as in all matters, actions speak as loudly as words regarding an organization's identity and persona.

An audience member might identify with one organizational persona, however, and not with its other persona. Theresa A. Russell-Loretz (1995) investigated this paradox in Dow Chemical recruitment videos. She pointed out that organizations must balance the need to be unique from other organizations with the need to be the same, in order to be part of the cultural mainstream. Dow, like all organizations, must convey its unique corporate values for recruitment purposes while simultaneously informing employees and customers that it shares basic Western business practices and procedures with other corporations.

As a cornerstone of successful public relations, all corporations must articulate and monitor their identities and personae. A corporation needs to be able to stand out from other businesses and attract attention. The challenge in word and deed is to create and maintain images in a way that each public finds acceptable and appealing.

Ashli Quesinberry Stokes

See also Identification; Image; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Rhetorical Theory

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P

PAGE, ARTHUR W.

Arthur Wilson Page (1883–1960) was one of the most important pioneers of corporate public relations in United States history. As vice president and head of the Information Department at American Telephone and Telegraph from 1927 to 1947, Page—the first public relations person to achieve that rank—developed and institutionalized many of the strategies and tactics that are still commonly used in the practice, particularly by his use of research to guide policy. During World War II, he assisted with government public information activities and drafted the news release that announced the use of the first atomic bomb. After the war, he spent a dozen years as an independent counselor. Unlike most public relations professionals, then or now, Page became a member of the boards of directors of AT&T, Continental Oil, and Chase National Bank. He was a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Carnegie Corporation, and the J. Pierpont Morgan Library and volunteered for countless other philanthropic organizations. He is still counted among the field's outstanding practitioners, and the Arthur W. Page Society, an organization for senior public relations and corporate communications executives, was founded in 1983 to promote his principled approach to public relations.

Birth and Education

Page was born on September 10, 1883, in Aberdeen, North Carolina, the second of four children of

Willia Alice Wilson Page and Walter Hines Page. Walter Page wrote for and edited several prestigious publications, including *Harper's* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, before founding the publishing house Doubleday, Page and Company, where he served as literary editor of *World's Work* magazine. The Pages were Methodists and Democrats, both of which young Arthur became as well.

Arthur Page was educated at the Cambridge (Massachusetts) Latin School from 1896 to 1899 and the Lawrenceville (New Jersey) School from 1899 to 1901, and he graduated from Harvard College in 1905. At Harvard, he was a member of the Hasty Pudding, two literary societies, and a Southern Club that he had organized. Although his academic career culminated in an undistinguished “gentleman's C,” he never stopped working on behalf of education, raising funds to educate African American teachers, serving on the Board of Overseers at Harvard, becoming a trustee at Columbia Teacher's College, and spearheading a corporate giving campaign for colleges and universities generally. He was honored with Doctor of Law degrees by Columbia University in 1954 and by Williams College in 1959.

Early Career

Page said he wanted to be an architect, but his father wanted him to go into the family business. While at Harvard, Arthur wrote for *The Advocate*, contributing almost all of the editorials published during his senior year, and he spent his summers at *World's Work*, proofreading and collecting pictures

for the public affairs magazine. *World's Work* published 21 feature articles under Arthur's byline after he went there full-time in 1905.

Page began to assume more responsibility, both at home and at work. In 1911, he became managing editor. He married Mollie W. Hall of Milton, Massachusetts, on June 1, 1912. When his father went to London to serve as U.S. ambassador from 1913 to 1918, Arthur took charge of the magazine. Toward the end of World War I, Page went to France to help prepare propaganda for the Allied Expeditionary Force's Psychological Subsection. This group created leaflets on such topics as the amount of food army regulations provided for prisoners. The army dropped millions of the leaflets by airplane during the last two or three months of the war in hopes of convincing German soldiers to surrender.

Page's father died in 1918; as a result, when Arthur returned to the United States in 1919, in addition to editing *World's Work*, he supervised other Doubleday, Page publications, including *Educational Review* and *Radio Broadcast*. He published his first book in 1920, on the part American troops played in Europe during World War I.

American Telephone & Telegraph

By 1926, Page was ready to leave his family's business. He was the father of four children: Mollie (born in 1913), Walter Hines Page II (1915), Arthur W. Junior (1917), and John Hall (1920). He had plenty of writing and editing experience, as well as a strong background in business administration, and he was ready to leave because he no longer agreed with F. N. Doubleday's leadership in the family publishing house. In the meantime, AT&T's new president, Walter Gifford, was in search of a new publicity director. When Gifford and Page met, Page said he would take the job, but only if the company was serious about taking a socially responsible approach to informing the public. Gifford agreed, and Page joined AT&T as vice president on January 1, 1927.

Nine months later, Gifford and Page birthed their most important policy in a speech Gifford made before a meeting of the National Association of Railroad and Utilities Commissioners. Gifford's statement (apparently written by Page) was a credo that would guide Bell System decision making and

public relations for the next 50 years. Gifford pointed out that AT&T's stock ownership was "widespread and diffused" and conceded that AT&T was a monopoly. The company's far-flung stockholders and consumers depended on Bell, giving the system serious obligations: "Obviously, the only sound policy that will meet these obligations is to continue to furnish the best possible telephone service at the lowest cost consistent with financial safety." He believed this long-term policy would succeed, stating, "Earnings must be sufficient to assure the best possible telephone service at all times and to assure the continued financial integrity of the business." He spoke also of the "spirit of service" that marked Bell's history, a tradition that continued with "scientists and experts devoted exclusively to seeking ways and means of making the service better and cheaper."

The Dallas speech was the embodiment of Page's approach to public relations. First, like the speech, Page always emphasized quality service. As a monopoly, AT&T was subject to public criticism and government regulation. Knowing that all corporations operated at public discretion, Page insisted that the public must be served; only truthful communication about beneficial activities could command public support. He also espoused a belief in the two-way function of public relations, contending that the public relations practitioner must act as the agent for the public inside the councils of the company and that public relations must be based on management's policies, if for no other reason than that public opinion could become law. Therefore, public relations figured in the development of the financial policy, and the policy served as the foundation for AT&T's public relations. Finally, Page stressed the importance of character. The Information Department was not burdened with making money; rather, it was the custodian of the company's ideals. It owed it to the public to make sure management upheld the financial policy.

Public Relations Activities

Under Page's supervision, AT&T used advertising, publicity, motion pictures, speeches, employee magazines, brochures, international expositions, and other media to promote its services and improve its reputation. Roland Marchand (1998) describes

AT&T, with its advertising agency N. W. Ayer, as an important innovator in institutional advertising, which aimed to imbue huge corporations with a soul. In 1927, the campaign ran in 446 periodicals with a total circulation of 44 million at a cost of about \$1 million. A favorite publicity tactic was the “first call ceremony,” which celebrated the opening of a new line or the use of some new technology developed at Bell Laboratories. Page’s predecessor at AT&T, James Ellsworth, originated both of these tactics, but Page brought them closer in line with management policies and raised the company’s ethical standards.

Although he headed AT&T’s public relations, Page’s influence extended to the rest of the Bell System as well. AT&T was essentially a holding company, while its Associated Companies (such as Wisconsin Bell or New England Telephone) and its own Long Lines division handled local and long-distance operations, respectively. Western Electric was the manufacturing division, and Bell Laboratories, the research division. With Page’s encouragement, these companies staffed Information Departments with as many as 400 public relations officers employed in AT&T subsidiaries by 1938.

Because of his desire to advocate for the public, Page relied on opinion research, but AT&T treated different publics differently. Page commissioned annual surveys to identify trends in public opinion and encouraged the Associated Companies to conduct research as well. Just before World War II, for example, New York Telephone found that its customers wanted the company to place memo pads in all public telephone booths. Therefore, by 1943 the company had supplied memo pads to more than 2,000 booths. Yet, the Bell System did not treat its employees’ opinions with the same regard. The companies used tactics such as employee stock plans, company unions, and medical benefits to keep workers happy, and the Information Department implemented attitude surveys, analysis of discussion in company union meetings, and interpersonal and mass communication information campaigns. But the companies did not take workers’ desires into consideration when making management decisions. For example, Bell policy during the Great Depression was to lay off employees or cut their hours, whereas AT&T continued to pay its traditional \$9 stockholders’ dividend—despite the fact that earnings could not support it.

The Depression caused other problems for Page and AT&T. By the 1930s, the system controlled the telecommunications industry. AT&T controlled the only significant long-distance network, Bell accounted for 80% of the telephones in the United States, and it owned more than 9,000 patents. Because of AT&T’s dominance, Congress empowered the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to investigate the telephone industry in 1935. Page was personally investigated because, in addition to being a vice president of AT&T, in 1927 he had been made president of Bell Securities, a subsidiary that sold stock to the public and Bell System employees. The FCC reported on its investigation in 1939, but it failed to spur public criticism or congressional action against the company—or Page.

When one of the commissioners, a Harvard economics instructor, wrote a book criticizing AT&T, Page responded with his own book, *The Bell Telephone System* (1941), a plainspoken, methodical defense of company policies and activities. Page explained the financial policy and how it affected the company’s mission to serve, including the public relations function. Harper Brothers published 30,000 hardbound copies; R. R. Donnelley and Sons sold nearly 150,000 more in paperback.

After AT&T

During World War II, Page served the U.S. government as well as AT&T. Although he declined an offer to become an assistant to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, he did agree to serve on the Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation. While directing AT&T’s Information Department, he was also the War Department’s de facto public relations counsel. For example, in 1944 he went to England to help prepare the troops for D-Day; later he conducted a study of the War Department’s Bureau of Public Relations, recommending sweeping changes, many of which were adopted by the army and the navy. He also counseled Secretary Stimson on the use of the atomic bomb, and he wrote the news release handed out by President Harry S. Truman’s press secretary announcing its use in Hiroshima, Japan.

After the war, Page returned full-time to AT&T, but he retired in 1947 at the age of 63. Still, Page’s work was hardly over. He opened a consulting

agency and cultivated an impressive client list, including AT&T, Kennecott Copper, Prudential Insurance, International Telephone and Telegraph, Continental Oil, Chase National Bank, Consolidated Edison, and Champion Paper. Page did not want to build an agency—he hired only a secretary—but simply to advise management on public relations. He also continued to volunteer for numerous philanthropic organizations. The counsel he gave all of these clients was consistent with the approach he had implemented at AT&T.

One of Page's projects caused him to operate more circumspectly than usual. Beginning in 1950, he headed the Crusade for Freedom, the fundraising and publicity arm of Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Free Europe Press. Noel Griesse (2001) reports that the crusade sent out millions of fliers, leaflets, brochures, handbills, and the like, raising more than \$1 million in its first year—but its costs almost equaled that. In its second year, the crusade actually spent more than it collected. Yet public officials seemed not to mind. In fact, RFE was funded mostly by the Central Intelligence Agency. Griesse concludes that the Crusade for Freedom was simply a propaganda front working to convince the public of the importance of fighting communism in Korea and around the world. Page supported the crusade because he truly believed in the importance of its cause.

Page also continued to offer public service, especially in the field of transportation. Having switched political affiliation to the Republican Party, he helped with Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidential election campaign. Ike then invited him to chair an advisory subcommittee to the Presidential Advisory Committee on Transport Policy and Organization. Page also took part in a study of the New York–New Jersey transit. A frequent rider of the Long Island Railroad, Page was named project director by the Metropolitan Rapid Transit Commission in September 1955. The committee proposed a rapid transit loop linking New Jersey's commuter railroad network with Manhattan's subway system by means of two underwater tunnels.

Page's family also kept him busy. His four children produced 17 grandchildren, who often visited him at his Long Island estate. In March 1960, Page went to the hospital for the first of two surgeries for diverticulitis, a disease of the intestines and bladder, and he recovered enough to return to work in May. However, he returned to the hospital in August, and he died on September 5, 1960, in New York City.

Arthur W. Page represented the pinnacle of public relations professionalism. He was among the first members of the "Wisemen," a group of such luminaries as Pendleton Dudley, John W. Hill, T. J. Ross, James Selvage, Paul Garrett, and J. Carlisle MacDonald. This group included only those public relations professionals who had access to policy-making by their clients or employers—the same group that populates the Page Society today.

Karen Miller Russell

See also Globalization and Public Relations; Hill, John Wiley; Propaganda; Regulated Monopolies; Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations in Public Relations

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PAMPHLET

A pamphlet is a printed piece of collateral material used for public relations, advertising, and marketing purposes. Also called a brochure, a pamphlet is a communication tool or tactic and a form of direct media (like fliers, newsletters, and posters), which reach audiences through distribution channels other than mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television). A pamphlet is generally considered a simple form of a brochure, but some designers and practitioners consider *pamphlet* and *brochure* synonymous terms.

Pamphlets are commonly distributed to a target audience interpersonally, in information racks, and through the mail in a standard business envelope or as a self-mailer. To be effective, pamphlets must be strategically sound, which means they need to be targeted toward a particular audience, convey an overall key message, and attempt to achieve a specific objective. Some of the most commonly used objectives in public relations include increasing awareness about a specific organization, and educating the target audience about a specific service or product.

Every organization, whether corporate or non-profit, needs pamphlets or brochures to convey key messages to particular target audiences. A pamphlet is a tactic with a specific objective. For example, pamphlets can be used to inform utility customers about a fee increase, explain sexual harassment policies to employees, or persuade community members to volunteer for a neighborhood cleanup.

Although not considered as elaborate as brochures, pamphlets are produced in a variety of styles, shapes, and sizes. One popular format is an 8½ × 11-inch sheet folded in half, making four printed panels. Another format often used in public relations is a simple two-fold, six-panel, 8½ × 11 pamphlet. Pamphlets need to be created with a unifying design throughout the entire publication, which can be conveyed through an appropriate choice of typeface, line rules, screens and tints, consistent clip art, and color schemes. Since pamphlets communicate information to a single reader at a handheld distance, they also need to offer an orderly sequence of information. The information is presented in stages through panels, and a common design visually connects all of the panels and holds the reader's attention.

Pamphlets are commonly printed in one or two colors, usually black for the type and another color to highlight specific areas. Some public relations practitioners begin with a layout and copy for a pamphlet and then work with a designer or printer to develop the final printed piece. Other practitioners create the entire piece themselves using any number of desktop publishing programs, such as PageMaker, QuarkXpress, Adobe InDesign, and Microsoft Publisher.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Brochure; Collateral

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PARACRISIS

Internet communication channels, especially social media, created many new dynamics for crisis communication. One of those is a convenient tool that stakeholders can use to publicly challenge the social responsibility of an organization's actions thereby creating a challenge crisis (Lerbinger, 1997). A challenge crisis can be initiated when stakeholders identify a problematic behavior and consequently request an organization to change that behavior. Petitioning is the technical term for when stakeholders present demands for change to organizations. The petition is a crisis threat. The threat is based on the potential of the petition, the charge of irresponsible behavior damaging an organization's reputation. Any action that can seriously erode the company's reputation is a threat and becomes a crisis if their reputation is damaged. Petitions have the potential to spark the interest of more stakeholders and create negative impressions of the organization. This is a unique situation where a crisis threat emerges and is managed in public.

When petitioning occurs online, a wide variety of stakeholders can view the event. People frequently confuse these public crisis threats as actual crises because they "look like" a crisis, but actually require no crisis teams to address the threat. These events are called paracrisis because *para* means "like." Paracrisis can be defined as "a publicly visible crisis threat that charges an organization with irresponsible or unethical behavior" (Coombs & Holladay, 2012, p. 409). It is the visibility/public nature of the threat that makes paracrisis unique. Other stakeholders can scrutinize the petition and may join in the challenge because the petition is online. Conversely, even though other stakeholders encounter the message, they might disagree with or simply ignore the challenge.

Whether or not the petition evolves into a true crisis depends in large part on how well or poorly

the threat is managed. Paracrisis place additional pressure on crisis managers because the threat is managed in view of interested stakeholders. Crisis managers must determine if the petition (threat) warrants a response and what type of response should be utilized if one is required. As with any crisis threat, paracrisis are assessed for impact and likelihood. Likelihood and impact are a function of the power of the stakeholder supporting the petition, the legitimacy of the petition (likelihood other stakeholders view it as acceptable), and urgency (willingness and skill of stakeholders to push for the petition).

There are three basic response strategies for a paracrisis: reform, refute, and refuse. Reform embraces the petition and makes the desired changes or similar changes to those requested in the petition. Refute argues against the need to make any changes. Refuse involves ignoring the petition and not engaging stakeholders about the petition. Two organizational constraints, the costs and strategy consistency must be factored into the decision on how a company responds to a challenge. If the requested change costs the organization too much or is inconsistent with organizational strategy, the likelihood of addressing the petition decreases.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Crisis Communication

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PARADOX OF THE POSITIVE/ NEGATIVE

Organizations, often via positively framed language, engage public relations to inform, convince, and motivate publics in ways that seem to benefit

society. The irony of the positive glow of the language is that this same language can cloud a thorough and objective analysis, and thereby confound actions and policies that can flow from such ostensible insight. This type of discursive strategy needs to be guarded against to prevent the damaging consequences of such a paradox.

As such, the paradox of the positive is an imperfection in discourse that is most evident when people or organizations in positions of power make upbeat announcements of actions they are taking, or policies and programs they are implementing that are supposed to produce good and favorable outcomes, and reputational attributes.

For instance, government agencies and promoters of urban renewal can champion the benefits of urban revitalization while ignoring and even masking neighborhood displacement that accompanies urban renewal.

Another example can be found in the public relations efforts of the antislavery movement in the United States. Frederick Douglass, for instance, gave many speeches and wrote extensively about how the nation's self-flattering attention to the Declaration of Independence and its celebration on July 4th masked the reality of slavery and racial discrimination. So attuned were most citizens to the positive attention given to freedoms championed in the Declaration that they did not see the irony of the paradox of the positive publicity for this day of celebration.

Paradox of the Negative

As a counterpart to the paradox of the positive, the negative paradox is an imperfection in discourse where, in the spirit of competition, persons on behalf of organizations (or themselves in the case of public personalities) strategically make negative statements about activities, policies, programs, character, reputation, or efforts of an opposing entity in language that distorts the discourse. This flaw occurs when voices engage in, associate with, or are implementing policies to win a contest(s), prevent opposing entities from winning a contest(s), or to bring the contest(s) to a temporary stalemate.

Overly negative statements are a steering medium used to distort discourse and publics' opinions and perceptions to one interest often at the expense of the other. Conflict between opposing entities, often

takes on dramaturgical qualities, requiring win-lose, noncollaborative public relations efforts where giving into compromise is interpreted as a sign of surrender and has devastating consequences on organizational legitimacy and interests.

During the conflict between the Pacific Northwest's logging industry and environmentalists seeking to protect old growth forests, logging advocates branded environmentalists as radicals and ecoterrorists, and in response environmentalists vilified the logging industry as timber beasts who would devastate the economy of the region, ravage the land, and deplete its natural resources.

Public Relations and Paradox

Overly positive or negative claims are problematic because they stress one perspective beyond the limits of being a fair and true representation of the relevant supporting details. Such bias results in the framing and supporting of issues, policies, and reputations to such a degree that they fail to meet the rhetorical standard that expects communicators to help audiences and publics make enlightened choices. As such, normative insights can guide professional practice so multiple, legitimate interests and publics are simultaneously served rather than having only one interest advanced to the disadvantage of others.

Damion Waymer

See also Collaborative Decision Making; Community and Community Building; Deliberative Democracy; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Rhetorical Theory

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PARENT/STUDENT NEWSLETTER

A parent/student newsletter is a highly popular public relations tactic in the communication plan

of individual schools and school districts. Defined as a two-way asymmetric, segmented, public relations tactic, a parent/student newsletter is designed to not only communicate the key messages of a school or school district to its key publics, but to also give the key publics a glimpse of life inside the walls of the educational system.

To understand the dynamics of the parent/student newsletter, the first step is to break down the definition of the newsletter and examine its three main components: *two-way asymmetric communication*, *segmented audience*, and *tactic*. However, to achieve a complete definition, it is important to simultaneously examine the parent newsletter and the student newsletter as two separate entities. Although one publication can, and often does, serve two different publics, often they are two publications serving two different publics.

The characteristic of segmentation means that unlike the local newspaper, which is sent to a mass audience, the parent/student newsletter is delivered to a targeted list of people with a vested interest in the organization. For example, some school districts send their parent newsletter to all taxpayers, believing that only the taxpayer has an interest in what is happening in the school, whereas others send their newsletter to every household in the school district, believing that everyone in the community has a vested interest in the state of education. When looking at student newsletters, the mailing list is usually segmented to include current students or recent graduates.

Newsletters are referred to as being "moderately interactive," because the audience has a vested interest in the information, and therefore tends to supply feedback in the form of letters, phone calls, or emails. However, the parent newsletter is a good example of a two-way asymmetric tactic because there is a two-way communication between sender and receiver, but the communication has an imbalanced effect, with the school district's or individual school's main purpose to persuade its key publics of the value of the institution. The well-written, proactive parent newsletter acts as the school district's voice when the local media are running unfavorable stories or editorials regarding a particular issue. Although contacts are made with community papers, the real substance of a district's public relations efforts is verbalized in a quality parent newsletter.

However, this may not be true of a student newsletter. A true student newsletter, although most likely edited by an adult faculty member, is written by students for students, and in this format is an example of the public information model of public relations. The purpose of the student newsletter is to disseminate information regarding the activities in school, whether academic or extracurricular. There is little research or persuasion that occurs, and the nature of the communication is one-way.

A tactic is a specific action that is taken to fulfill an objective. A parent/student newsletter is one of a number of tactics available to the public relations professional. In addition to a website, the newsletter is a standard tactic in a school district's or individual school's communication plan and can include articles on budgetary decisions, contract negotiations, extracurricular activities, curriculum changes/additions, and classroom/school highlights.

Kristine A. Parkes

See also Newsletter; Website

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PERJURY

Put simply, perjury is the crime of lying under oath. Although in common law it was considered a misdemeanor, today perjury is usually classified as a felony under both state and federal statutes. Government bodies at all levels depend on the truthfulness of sworn testimony for decision making and proper functioning. By undermining the integrity of these governmental processes, perjury constitutes a serious offense against the state. Subordination of perjury, a related offense, occurs when one person convinces another to commit perjury.

To secure a conviction for perjury, a prosecutor must show that the defendant knowingly made a false statement of material fact while under oath. A person who gives untruthful testimony because of confusion or poor memory does not have the

willful intent necessary for perjury. Furthermore, statements are considered "material" only if they could affect the proceeding's outcome. For example, a witness to a traffic accident who lies about their annual income has probably not committed perjury because the false testimony does not pertain directly to an element of the offense. However, a defendant charged with federal income tax evasion is guilty of perjury for giving the same false statement regarding their yearly earnings.

Although the law prohibits all citizens from committing perjury, public relations practitioners in particular must be scrupulously honest when engaged in lobbying activities or when otherwise testifying before government entities. As a criminal offense, perjury carries serious legal consequences. Perjury is also unethical under the Public Relations Society of America's *Member Code of Ethics* as adopted in 2000, which counsels practitioners not only to "adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth," but also to "maintain the integrity of relationships with . . . government officials" (2003, p. B16).

Alger Hiss's two perjury trials (1949 and 1950) are still considered among a handful of United States "trials of the century." Hiss, a seasoned government official whose professional experience ranged from serving as secretary to Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, attorney with the New Deal, aiding the formation of the United Nations, and serving as president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was charged by magazine editor and former Communist Party member, Whittaker Chambers with supplying government documents to the Russians in the 1930s. Hiss denied the charges, and though the statute of limitations didn't allow for espionage charges to be filed, he was indicted on two counts of perjury in December 1948. A hung jury in 1949 forced a second trial in 1950, in which Hiss was found guilty and sentenced to a 5-year prison term. Although Hiss maintained his innocence until his death in 1996, Soviet files made public that same year provided evidence of Hiss's guilt, but controversy lingers.

Lobbyists found guilty of perjury have tarnished the profession's reputation. For example, public relations practitioner Michael K. Deaver, a former top White House aide to President Reagan, was convicted of perjury in 1988. After leaving

government service in 1985, Deaver started a lobbying firm whose clients included foreign governments and major corporations. Within a year of his departure from the White House, Deaver was found guilty of lying to a federal grand jury and a congressional subcommittee about his contacts with Reagan administration officials on his clients' behalf, in violation of the Federal Ethics in Government Act. Although Deaver faced a possible 15-year prison term, the court sentenced him to 3 years' probation and ordered him to pay a \$100,000 fine and perform 1,500 hours of community service.

Nicole B. Cásarez

See also Ethics of Public Relations; Lobbying; Public Relations Society of America

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PERSPECTIVISM THEORY

The claim that “it is all subjective” is almost commonplace among individuals in the 21st century. This claim reinforces the assumption that one’s knowledge is self-reflexive; that is that it both *affects* one’s perceptions and talk, and *is affected by* one’s perceptions and talk. This is generally talked about as the “problem of knowledge” or the “epistemic problem” and is referenced by the question, “how do you know what you know?” Often, beliefs are informed by family, friends, science, religion, social connections, and education level, among other things; ultimately, much of what is accepted as knowledge is based on a person’s perception about what exists and about what is

deemed “true.” Often disagreements between people are explained as the differences between their individual perspectives. The theoretical names of this problem include, among other names, *perspectivism theory*, a term that encompasses multiple philosophical and theoretical concepts.

The rubric of perspectivism theory can be divided into two different epistemological camps: radical perspectivism and perspective realism. Radical perspectivism presumes that either there is nothing “out there” or that the only thing that matters is one’s individually constructed meaning of what may or may not be “out there.” Radical perspectivism assumes that meaning, reality, and knowledge are constructed through language and that they have no correspondence to anything that may exist apart from the knower. The Greek sophists introduced radical perspectivism into ancient philosophy, and Frederick Nietzsche popularized it for contemporary philosophy. Robert Scott (1967, 1976) and Barry Brummett (1976) introduced radical perspectivism into the study of human communication with their discussions about rhetoric-as-epistemic and the concept of intersubjectivism. The ancient sophists and Nietzsche argued that humans are essentially solipsistic and cannot know anything other than what is experienced and known in their own head. Scott and Brummett argued that knowledge is based on collective, or intersubjective agreements among individuals who constitute a group. An example of this is a code of professional conduct defined by individuals who are part of that organization. A second view of intersubjectivism is that a power-based definition of knowledge helps to create a group of individuals who reinforce the power structures and its assumptions about knowledge. Thus, a political party’s power structure defines what is “real” or “true” and those who adhere to that perspective or to others in that group rally around the group and reinforce its perspective. An underlying assumption for radical perspectivism is that a Nietzschean, “will-to-power” determines what is real rather than anything that may, or may not, exist that is external to the individual or to the intersubjective group.

Perspective realism, on the other hand, assumes that a knowable reality exists apart from the knower, but that humans have a finite understanding of and differing views about that reality. Thus, differences exist because people have differing

perspectives on reality rather than that people have different realities. This may sound like semantic games, but the difference between the two statements is significant because the differences are still held together by what is deemed the common ground of the actual, but never fully knowable reality. Perspective realism was introduced into ancient philosophy, it can be argued, by Isocrates and Aristotle and has been explained to a modernist audience by Evander Bradley McGilvary (1956).

This concept was adapted to the study of communication by Richard Cherwitz and James W. Hixson (1986) when they introduced rhetorical perspectivism and philosophical realism to the study of human symbolic interaction. Cherwitz and Hixson incorporated McGilvary's ideas when they contended that differences in knowledge are analogous to the differences that two people give when they describe the same mountain from two different sides. They are seeing the same physical object, but describing it in two different ways because each has a perspective that is limited by the geographical view of the same object. Another example of perspective realism is Kenneth Burke's concept of "terministic screens." Burke (1966) argued that the language humans use helps them to both explain what is experienced and to determine what will be experienced. Burke does not go as far as the radical perspectivists to argue against the existence of a reality that is external to the knower, but he does contend that our "observations" are as much a result of the particular terminology in which the observations were made as they are of the object observed. Thus, we are affected as much by the language we use as by an external reality.

What application does this have for the study of public relations? Here the possibilities are almost limitless. One simple possibility is the basic understanding of a public. Is a public (or a consumer group) something that is discovered, or is it something that is created? The radical perspectivists argue that a public is only created by how one talks about it; the perspective realists argue that there is a particular public that is "discovered" rather than "created," but that practitioners differ in how they view or understand it because of the language they use to describe it and the various epistemological and historical backgrounds (i.e., perspectives) of those who describe the public.

Similar distinctions apply to those who are on the receiving end of the public relations message. The radical perspectivists argue that each individual recipient of a public relations message understands the message in radically different ways because each audience member has a different reality and no one can exert any control over each individual's "reality." The perspective realist argues that even though each audience member has a different perspective on the message or product or service that is presented, there is enough common ground from the external reality that impinges on each of them that all audience members have something in common in how they understand a message. Thus, although differences exist between audience members, the differences are limited. If the advertisement is about shoes, the perspectives differ, but no one will be thinking about elephants in India.

Mark A. Gring

See also Constitutive Theory of Language; Power, as Social Construction; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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PERSUASION THEORY

One of the main goals of public relations is to persuade an organization's target publics to adopt a certain attitude, opinion, or behavior. Whether a

company is trying to increase its customer base, recruit employees, raise money, or enhance its image, the use of persuasion is key.

Persuasion is not a dirty word, although it is often confused with its “black sheep” cousin, *propaganda*. Whereas propaganda may use coercion, manipulation, and deception to convince people to think or act a certain way, persuasion does not try to take advantage of the public. Instead, people are presented with reasons why they should adopt an attitude, opinion, or behavior. It remains up to them whether they choose to accept these reasons and reevaluate their thinking.

The art of persuasion dates back thousands of years. It was Aristotle, however, who provided “modes of proof” as the basis for persuasive reasoning. To this day, the ethical use of these modes serves as the foundation for public relations practitioners when framing persuasive messages. And as an academic discipline, the study of persuasion has traditionally assumed the neutral role of understanding how human cognition and problem-solving processes work.

Modes of Proof

Classically, Aristotle described persuasion as an art of proving something true or false and identified three ways to offer such proof: through *ethos* (source credibility), *logos* (logical appeals), and *pathos* (emotional appeals).

Ethos

Ethos focuses on the credibility of the source delivering a message. Organizations often select satisfied customers, people who are perceived as peers or celebrity spokespeople to back a product or cause. Source credibility directly impacts the effectiveness of an appeal. If a person delivering the message is not considered to be ethical and believable, it does not matter what other appeals are being used, therefore selecting an appropriate spokesperson is critical.

Ethos appeals are made by using speakers that the target public perceive as having integrity, expertise, and a good reputation. Charisma, likability, and similarity to the audience also are important characteristics. For example, a musician popular with teenagers may be an appropriate spokesperson

for that age group but would probably have little influence over senior citizens. Physical attractiveness and level of authority are other factors.

Satisfied customers who can offer testimonials may be good choices as message sources. A public’s opinion leaders may also be considered. Opinion leaders are respected people to whom others look for guidance. The balance (consonance) theory, which suggests that people consider their relationships with others when listening to and adopting information, provides support for using opinion leaders.

Because of the importance that source credibility plays in delivering persuasive messages, public relations practitioners should carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of selecting a celebrity spokesperson. While celebrities may offer many *ethos* appeals, such as likability, charisma, and physical attractiveness, their every move is often scrutinized by the media. If a celebrity receives negative publicity, for whatever reason, that negativity can transfer to the products or causes the celebrity endorses. In these cases, the sponsoring organization often “drops” the celebrity to avoid a negative connection. For example, several large companies, including Gatorade, Gillette, and AT&T, dropped golfer Tiger Woods after he admitted to marital infidelity (although the companies did not necessarily acknowledge a link between the scandal and their decision to drop him).

Logos

Logos refers to appeals based on logic and reason. These appeals, which aim to address an audience on a cognitive level, offer propositions that are supported by evidence. A proposition might state the existence or value of something; supporting evidence might include facts, statistics, eyewitness testimony, or scientific findings. All public relations messages should include a *logos* appeal. When constructing a message for the purpose of educating a specific group of people or making them aware of something, such information is communicated straightforwardly and objectively.

When selecting *logos* appeals, it is important that public relations practitioners avoid using “errors of logic,” such as false assumptions and unwarranted conclusions; this type of use can change the communication from persuasion to propaganda.

Pathos

Although strong factual information should be the foundation for any argument, if the message is aimed at trying to influence the public then facts and figures can't always stand alone. Because logos appeals lack inspiration and motivation on their own, the most effective messages combine logos and pathos.

Pathos refers to arguments that are based on emotion—on arousing feelings like fear, guilt, anger, humor, or compassion. Public relations practitioners use these appeals when their purpose is to motivate a group of people to think or do something in particular, such as buy a product or support a cause. Pathos appeals can be seen everywhere:

- A public service announcement about drunk driving targets guilt.
- A commercial for a home security alarm system seeks to arouse fear.
- An ad for diamonds focuses on love.
- A fundraising appeal to feed hungry children hopes to arouse compassion.

While such messages arouse emotions that might motivate the public, behavioral research shows that pathos appeals are more persuasive when blended with rational appeals. For example, the fundraising appeal to feed hungry children cannot just focus on the faces of sad boys and girls; it must communicate how many children are in need, why they are in need, what can be done to alleviate that need, and how donations will be used.

Framing Messages

Before developing a persuasive message, public relations practitioners must first determine which appeal or appeals to use to best reach their target public. This choice depends on the wants, interests, needs, concerns, and beliefs of the target public. Human beings share basic needs, such as food, shelter, and clothing. They also want many of the same things—success, love, and security. Interests and beliefs, however, vary among groups based on age, lifestyle, and other demographics.

The concepts of selective exposure and selective attention suggest that people only expose themselves and pay attention to information that is consistent

with their self-interest; if they do not perceive that they are affected by information, they will selectively avoid it. For example, people shopping for a new car are attracted to car ads more than people who are not in the market for a new vehicle.

Analyzing a target public to determine its wants, interests, and needs requires research, which includes examining census or marketing data; conducting polls, surveys, focus groups, or interviews; or evaluating lifestyles.

Once a target public's wants, interests, and needs are analyzed, a message is written to address those wants, interests, and needs. Teenagers, who typically struggle to "belong," are attracted to messages that promise to make them look "cool." Young professionals climbing the corporate ladder are attracted to messages that promise success. Mothers are attracted to messages that promise to make their children happy and healthy.

There are many persuasive techniques from which to choose, including testimonials and endorsements (ethos); surveys, examples, and other factual information (logos); and a variety of emotional appeals ranging from humor to fear to sex appeal (pathos). The key is to select the ones most appropriate for the target public based on the analysis that was conducted.

Consider, for example, a target public consisting of parents of freshmen college students. They are concerned about their child going away from home for the first time and want to ensure their happiness and health. A college sending a message to these parents regarding the availability of refrigerators for dorm rooms may use several persuasive tactics. Using ethos, the message might be delivered by current students, who share their stories about the necessity of a refrigerator. A logos appeal may focus on facts surrounding student lifestyles and offer statistics on how many freshmen usually have a refrigerator. A pathos appeal may stress how having access to a refrigerator enables students to eat healthy foods, which addresses a common emotional concern of parents.

Ethical Use

Because there is sometimes a fine line between persuasion and propaganda, public relations practitioners must understand the differences and implement persuasive tactics in an ethical manner.

One of the most important elements of persuasion is that the information must be true. Unlike propaganda, which distorts facts and exaggerates claims, persuasion should be based on information that an organization honestly believes to be true. If a company claims that a diet pill is responsible for its users losing 50 pounds in 4 weeks, that claim must be true; otherwise, the claim is deceptive. Sources used to deliver persuasive messages must be sincere and relay genuine feelings and emotions, especially if one is giving a testimonial or endorsing a product.

There also is a difference between tailoring emotional appeals to an audience's self-interest, as is done in persuasion, and playing on emotional insecurities in an effort to manipulate the audience. Manipulation may benefit an organization, but it won't meet its public's needs. Extra care should be given when using fear or guilt appeals to make sure the severity of the appeal matches the interest of the public. The greater the target public perceives the fear, the more severe the appeal; moderate appeals should be used if the fear is perceived as moderate. Effective fear appeals tell the audience not only the degree and likelihood of harm, but also how to reduce the chances of the harm occurring.

Several values of the Member Code of Ethics developed by the Public Relations Society of America pertain to the ethical use of persuasion: honesty, or adhering to the highest standards of accuracy and truth; fairness, or focusing on free expression and supporting all opinions; and, advocacy, which stresses responsibility in supporting "informed debate."

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See also Demographics; Frame; Framing Theory; Motivation Theory; Propaganda; Psychographics; Psychological Processing; Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Publics; Rhetorical Theory

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PERT CHART

For complex public relations projects, it is essential to have an effective planning tool. Large-scale projects consume a substantial chunk of a public relations department's budget as well as its human resources, so a practitioner wants to do everything possible to ensure that the project runs smoothly. Planning is an essential feature for large and/or complex public relations actions. Planning helps deliver a quality product on time and on budget. The program evaluation and review technique (PERT), sometimes called the critical path method (CPM), is an excellent resource for planning and monitoring complex projects. The system originally was developed for tracking missile development programs for the United States government. The PERT Chart is much like the Gantt Chart (see, *Gantt Chart*), but it presents information as a network chart rather than as a bar chart. Like the Gantt Chart, a PERT Chart requires a practitioner to identify all the tasks to complete, the time each task takes, and the sequence of the tasks.

PERT Charts are designed to help practitioners plan the time that a public relations action takes and track its progress. They provide a method for organizing, scheduling, and coordinating tasks. Planning experts argue that PERT Charts provide a better visual depiction of tasks and contingencies than Gantt Charts. However, since they require the user to learn certain terms and symbols, they can be more difficult to interpret than a Gantt chart. There are advantages and disadvantages to each. In general, PERT Charts are more technical; numbered circles or boxes represent the tasks, and arrows connect tasks and indicate if tasks are sequential or concurrent. If an arrow runs between two tasks, such as between "conduct an interview with the CEO" and "write the story about the

CEO,” the tasks are sequential. Diverging arrows, such as for “select paper for newsletter” and “write newsletter stories,” indicate that the tasks are concurrent.

PERT Charts also deal with external contingencies, or factors beyond the practitioner’s control that can still affect the time a public relations project takes to complete. For example, a practitioner hires a printing company to produce brochures for a product launch. The brochures must be shipped to the company. External contingencies include the ability of the printer to complete the brochure on time and to have the brochure shipment arrive on time. A strike or fire at the printing company could delay the completion of the brochure. Bad weather could delay the arrival of the shipment. Practitioners must consider the external contingencies when planning how long a project takes. The skilled practitioner builds in extra time as a hedge against external contingencies.

PERT Charts also use the terms *critical path* and *dummy activities*. The critical path is the longest path through the chart and indicates the maximum time needed to complete the project. Let us assume a project takes 70 days to complete—it has a critical path of 70 days. The path is critical because any delay in a task on this path delays the project. For instance, assume that tasks four and eight are on the critical path while three, five, and seven are not. (PERT Charts label tasks by number.) Slight delays in tasks three, five, or seven do not affect the completion date because they are scheduled to take less time (30 days) than the critical tasks (70 days). Clearly a very long delay in any tasks can disrupt a project, but any delay in a critical path task delays a project’s completion. A PERT Chart provides an easy way to identify the critical path for a project.

A dummy activity is a task that must be completed in sequence, but requires virtually no resources or time to complete. It is still important, however, because failure to execute it delays the project. For example, say that a brochure is drafted and emailed to a manager for review. The email must be sent, but doing so uses only a brief amount of time and electricity. Dotted lines are used in a PERT Chart to illustrate this type of dummy activity.

PERT Charts even have a formula for calculating the time of a project. First, the manager identifies the best-case scenario time (the quickest possible

time to complete the project), the worst-case scenario time (the longest possible time it should take to complete the project), and the most likely time to complete the project. Those numbers are then entered into the following formula:

$$[(\text{Best time} + (\text{Likely time} \times 4) + \text{Worst time}) \div 6]$$

In addition to task and time, a PERT Chart can include responsibilities for tasks. People can be assigned to tasks so that it is clear who is responsible for what in a project. If there is a delay on a task, everyone knows whom to contact about that task.

As with a Gantt Chart, a PERT Chart is only as good as the thought process that went into the planning. It does not magically add overlooked tasks. However, seeing the public relations action may indicate to planners that something is missing. The PERT Chart is used to guide the execution of the action as well. The manager plots what tasks have been completed and the time it has taken. When these data are entered, it becomes easy to see if the project is on track or how far ahead or behind it might be. The PERT Chart also serves as a reminder so that tasks are not forgotten. A manager knows exactly what has been done and what still needs to be done. Finally, these charts are helpful for developing budgets: by knowing exactly what needs to be done, a practitioner can calculate the costs of the materials, personnel, and equipment needed to complete the project.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Gantt Chart; Process Research

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PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropy is a unique characteristic of American society, and public relations practitioners play an important role in preserving the tradition of giving and helping. Broadly defined, philanthropy is voluntary action for the public good, including

voluntary giving, voluntary service, and voluntary association.

Our tradition of philanthropy was dramatically demonstrated in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Within hours after the attacks, millions of dollars in unsolicited contributions began pouring into the offices of disaster-relief charities. By week three, gifts surpassed \$750 million. One month after the tragedy, the total stood at \$1 billion.

About 140 charitable organizations were involved in collecting and distributing the financial assistance so generously given. These organizations are part of our country's nonprofit sector, which is composed of more than 1.6 million tax-exempt organizations that are neither businesses nor government agencies. Collectively, their mission is to provide "goods" not provided by the business sector, which is ruled by the marketplace, or by the government sector, which is ruled by the ballot box. The nonprofit sector, also known as the voluntary or third sector of the U.S. economy, is grounded in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right to form associations. Nonprofit organizations are the operationalization of voluntary action and serve as a conduit for voluntary giving and service. For example, following the terrorist attacks of September 11, charity officials reported that offers of volunteer help, blood donations, and donated goods were so numerous that they far exceeded immediate needs. Across the United States, without being asked, people left families, jobs, and their own problems to travel to the disaster sites to do whatever they could.

As dramatic as this demonstration was, it should not be viewed as an aberration. A historic and deeply rooted cultural belief in the United States is that social needs, to the greatest possible extent, should be addressed by private voluntary action rather than by government. Americans also eschew a dominant role for churches in meeting social needs, which is prevalent in countries with one state religion. Philanthropy is highly salient in U.S. society because it is linked to such core values as religious freedom, opposition to powerful government, and individualism.

In his book on the history of U.S. fundraising, Scott Cutlip (1965/1990) stated, "America's philanthropy is typically American—born of the

cooperative and generous spirit bred on the frontier, required by the problems of large-scale industrialization and urbanization, [and] made possible by the enormous accumulation of capital wealth" (pp. 530–531). Cutlip reported that during World War I, the American Red Cross War Council raised \$114 million in just 8 days—an amount that when adjusted for inflation far surpasses the \$129 million raised by the Red Cross in the same number of days following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. President Woodrow Wilson had proclaimed June 18–25, 1917, as National Red Cross Week, and the amount of money given in that short time represented more than \$1 for every man, woman, and child in the United States.

Voluntary Giving

America's tradition of philanthropy is the envy of other industrialized nations. In 2011, Americans gave a total of \$298 billion, of which 81% came from individuals, 14% came from foundations, and 5% came from corporations (Giving USA, 2012). With only a few exceptions, giving has increased every year since studies measuring philanthropy began.

Americans give money for many reasons, but fundamentally they make gifts because giving is a customary, admired, and expected behavior in our society. According to Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy Panel Study (2007), 65.5% of all U.S. households gave to one or more charitable organizations in 2006—the most recent year for which figures are available—and the average amount given per household was \$2,213. Wealthy individuals adhere to a philanthropic standard that is unusual in the modern world. The standard was outlined more than a century ago by legendary philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who proclaimed, "He who dies rich dies disgraced" (1889/1983, p. 108). Attesting to the standard's continued influence, 95% of high net worth households donated to at least one charity in 2011 (Bank of America, 2012). The wealthiest 3% of American households accounted for roughly half the amount given by all individuals in 2011, excluding bequests.

Approximately 700,000 companies report charitable contributions on their income-tax return every year. On average, these companies give away about 1% of their pretax revenues. Foundations,

unlike the other sources of gifts, are required by law to give away each year an amount equal to 5% of their financial assets. There are approximately 76,610 foundations in the United States; their combined assets total almost \$644 billion.

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University (2011) maintains a list of gifts of \$1 million or more from 2000 to 2010. Currently, the “Million Dollar List” contains 61,461 qualifying gifts from individuals, corporations, and foundations. The largest gift on the list is an approximately \$30 billion donation of Berkshire Hathaway Inc. stock from Warren Buffett to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, pledged in 2006 and to be paid out over twenty years.

Voluntary Association

The United States has a large and pervasive nonprofit sector consisting of 1.6 million nonprofit organizations, of which more than 1 million, or 68%, are charitable nonprofits, meaning that gifts to them are deductible from donors’ taxable income. This third economic sector allows Americans to collectively promote causes that they believe are in society’s best interest. Naming just a few broad categories, nonprofits are engaged in arts and culture, education, health, human services, recreation, and religion. Most major social action in the past, such as civil rights, women’s rights, and environmental protection, began in the nonprofit sector.

Americans’ propensity for forming nonprofit organizations was first noticed as distinctly American by Alexis de Tocqueville almost 180 years ago. As he noted, Americans of all ages and all conditions constantly form associations. De Tocqueville was convinced that this propensity was a significant factor in the vitality and success of American democracy. Contemporary scholars agree: The nonprofit sector fosters the pluralism on which democracy depends.

Charity Versus Philanthropy

Scholars have identified two primary yet distinctive thrusts in voluntary action: *compassion*, most closely associated with charity, or helping the poor and needy; and *community*, concern with civic improvement and social change, or philanthropy. Today, authorities agree that charity primarily is

carried out by government through welfare programs. Cutlip said the term *charity* was replaced by *philanthropy* after World War I. Philanthropy translates from its Greek origins to “love of humankind.” It is an investment in civilization. In a contemporary context, charity is a part of philanthropy, but only a minor part.

The term *charitable organization* is a legal term; it does not refer to programs dealing with the poor. Rather, the term is used by lawyers to refer to organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as serving religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, or educational purposes. The greatest proportion of charitable organizations—and the bulk of the money given to them each year—has to do with purposes not defined as charity.

Public Relations Practitioners

Many practitioners specialize in fundraising, or helping charitable organizations attract philanthropic dollars by managing their relationships with donor publics. Other practitioners serve as corporate contributions officers, helping businesses make contributions that are mutually beneficial for the community and the company. Practitioners in all three economic sectors utilize philanthropy to help their organizations succeed and survive. They represent diverse pluralistic voices in the marketplace of ideas and encourage interaction, thereby strengthening our democratic society.

Kathleen S. Kelly

See also Cutlip, Scott M.; Fundraising; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Nonprofit Organizations; Public Relations

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PHOTO-OP

One way for an organization to gain media attention is to create an opportunity for a news photographer to get a great shot. A picture can be a powerful message, and by having the right photograph picked up by media, an outstanding opportunity can be created. A photo opportunity (photo-op) is a planned act that sums up the entire public relations campaign in a picture. When creating a photo opportunity to promote an event, it is essential to visualize how the event is portrayed in pictures rather than words.

To get coverage of an event featuring a great photo-op, a news release or media alert is sent to

media to notify them of the photo opportunity. The photo-op has a greater chance of getting noticed if the event is truly newsworthy. Notification of a photo-op spells out a unique visual for print and broadcast media outlets and is formatted like a media release or media alert. It is a condensed version of a news release limited to one page that spells out the details of the event and also intrigues its recipients. The alert is formatted with headings like “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “contact information.” Special attention is given to describing the visual appeal of the event.

Some examples of common photo-ops are a tree planting, a ribbon cutting, a signing ceremony, a plaque or check presentation, or a ground breaking for a new building. Although these examples may get media coverage, in order to truly attract media attention, a photo-op has to be creative. One must imagine the photo as it appears on the local broadcast of the evening news or on the front page of the newspaper and make certain that it conveys the right message. The organization's logo should appear prominently in the photo. The logo provides immediate identification with the organization or company and can appear on the podium, a backdrop behind the speaker, or even on a T-shirt or a hat.

A single glance of the photo should reveal the entire thrust of the event, or the entire public relations campaign. A photo-op is simple so as not to confuse the audience and the image. It is best to avoid a photo opportunity that is time sensitive. An everlasting image appears in newspapers and magazines for some time to come, but if a photo's timeliness is limited to one day, such as a Fourth of July celebration, its circulation is greatly limited. The photo opportunity should also appeal to all media. One must imagine how the event plays out on television, in print, and on the Internet.

The appearance of a celebrity or other public figure creates intrigue and interest in the photo-op. A classic staged event to promote the film, *The Seven Year Itch* was developed using special blowers installed in the grate underneath Marilyn Monroe's feet. Photographers captured the memorable planned image when her skirt “accidentally” flew up. This staged photo-op has everlasting appeal.

Nancy Engelhardt Furlow

See also Media Relations; Media Release

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PHOTOSHARING

Photosharing is the process of uploading digital photos online and sharing them, publicly or privately, with other users. Sharing can take place on various media platforms, such as websites or applications that have the ability to upload and display photos. The term *sharing* is defined as others having the ability to view photos, but may or may not have the opportunity to obtain the photos for personal use, depending on the copyright status.

In public relations, advertising, and marketing, photosharing is implemented as a way to visually communicate with stakeholders. High-quality photos can be uploaded and shared—free of charge. This visually stimulating tactic can add a competitive advantage to a communication plan. Starbucks is an example of an organization that is using Instagram, a photosharing application, to share photos to its followers from events at retail locations and its headquarters. Photosharing allows an organization to provide visual proof of its dedication to its stakeholders.

Photosharing websites were created in the early 1990s, due to the popularization of digital cameras. For the first time, digital cameras allowed consumers to upload pictures directly from their camera to their computers in one step. Because of this, sites were created to store uploaded photos. These sites, such as KodakGallery.com and Shutterfly.com, allow users to create online photo albums, edit photos, and order photos through local drugstores or have photos sent directly to them. Desktop photo management applications, such as iPhoto, allow users to edit photos, display photos in albums

and in a chronological view, and share photos through preset features. Basic photosharing can be found on numerous websites that offer peer-to-peer, peer-to-server-to-peer, and peer-to-browser networking. Examples of these sites include Flickr.com, Photobucket.com, Picasa.com, Snapfish.com, and Smugmug.com.

Photosharing recently advanced the digital camera and the Internet by including the ability to use portable devices, such as smartphones. Users of smartphones, such as the iPhone, can automatically transfer photos taken by the phone and upload them to a photosharing site; the most prominent is Instagram. Instagram is a free photosharing program that allows users to take a photo, edit it with various preset filters, and share it among a variety of social networking sites. Another type of photosharing is known as social network photosharing. Users share captured photos on social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest.

Many organizations are not only uploading photos to a photosharing site, they are also adding captions, tags, and comments to these photos. Including metatags increases the chance of a photo appearing in a search engine. Other components to include along with the photo are company names, product names, geographic areas, and descriptions of the photos.

Jenna McVey

See also Social Networking; Tagline

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PITCH LETTER

A pitch letter is a public relations sales tool. It is written to interest a media representative in a potential story idea and is tailored to a specific media outlet (unlike a news release, which may be distributed very broadly).

The most effective pitch letters draw on the writer's knowledge of the media outlet and their representatives. First, a story must be pitched to the appropriate media outlet. Often this decision is fairly easy, since local media outlets are the targets for many public relations efforts. However, at other times broader audiences may be needed to achieve public relations objectives. For example, a paper mill in the Pacific Northwest has developed new effluent treatments that both reduce pollution control costs and greatly improve the quality of the water the plant discharges. The cost reduction aspects could be pitched to a trade journal to generate positive press with industry peers, and the water quality issue could be pitched to a sport fishing magazine to improve the company's image with those who fish. The key is to understand what the public relations objectives are for a story, and then pitch the angles to the right media outlets to achieve them.

Another important aspect of the media outlet is the editorial calendar. Some larger publications have special or themed issues planned months in advance. Familiarity with editorial calendars, available through certain media directories, enables public relations practitioners to pitch stories that can result in very important placements.

Next, the story must be pitched to the appropriate person. There is no point in pitching a story about a company's community relations efforts to a news editor; depending on the outlet this type of story probably should be sent to the business or community editor. Pitching a story to the wrong person wastes time for both parties. On the local level, developing good working relationships with area media make most of these choices fairly clear. On a broader scale, media directories should be used to pinpoint the best person at a specific outlet to receive the pitch letter. A pitch letter should never be addressed "Dear News Editor." This type of mistake typically ensures failure.

Finally, a story must be pitched in the appropriate manner. The letter should reveal the writer's understanding of the audience of the media outlet, the relevance of the story to that audience, and key points of interest. Assistance in arranging interviews and other information gathering should be offered. The point is to generate interest in the story with the media, not to write the story for them. As for tone, a hard sell is rarely, if ever, appropriate.

The media value their independence and will not be told what stories they need to write. Beyond that, the choice between a straight business approach, creativity, and some mix is determined by appropriateness to both the topic and the outlet.

Maribeth S. Metzler

See also Media Release; Press Agency; Press Kit; Publicity

PLANK, BETSY

Betsy Ann Plank (1924–2010) is widely acknowledged as a pathfinder and legend in public relations. Her career, spanning more than 60 years, was filled with "firsts." Indeed, many U.S. practitioners consider her public relations' First Lady.

Plank was the first woman to serve as president of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). She was the first and only person to be selected for three of PRSA's top individual awards: the Gold Anvil Award (1977) for being the outstanding U.S. professional, the Paul M. Lund Public Service Award (1989) for exemplary civic and community work, and the first Patrick Jackson Award (2001) for distinguished service to PRSA.

Plank was the first woman elected by readers of *Public Relations News* as Professional of the Year (1979) and also was named one of the World's 40 Outstanding Public Relations Leaders by the same publication in 1984. She was the first recipient of both the Arthur W. Page Society's Distinguished Service (formerly Lifetime Achievement) Award (2000) and PRSA Educators Academy's David W. Ferguson Award (1997) for exceptional contributions by a practitioner to public relations education.

In 2000, the Institute for Public Relations honored Plank with its highest award, the Alexander Hamilton Award, in recognition of her major contributions to the practice of public relations. In 2001, she was inducted into the Communication Hall of Fame at the University of Alabama, her alma mater. Five other universities similarly have recognized her as an outstanding public relations professional.

Despite all the accolades, Plank refused to view her achievements as anything extraordinary. She stated,

Mea culpa, I never had a plan! I simply seized opportunities as they came along and have been very blessed. I also credit my family—they always had expectations of excellence and hard work and were so supportive. I had the freedom to explore everything. There was no gender-bias there and, in retrospect, perhaps that accounts for my never recognizing any during a long career lifetime. (personal communication, October 23, 2002)

Plank was born on April 3, 1924, in Tuscaloosa Alabama. She attended her hometown university, the University of Alabama, where in 1944 she earned a bachelor's degree in history, with English literature as a minor. In later years, Plank liked to point out that there was no such thing as a public relations major when she attended college, and for that reason she became a leading advocate of public relations education.

Her career in public relations began serendipitously in 1947. At that time, she moved to Chicago in search of continuing a career in radio broadcasting—without success. But then she met one of the city's only women executives, Duffy Schwartz, Midwest director of the Advertising Council, who became her first mentor. Schwartz recommended Plank for a temporary position at a public relations and fundraising agency serving nonprofit organizations and coached her in the unfamiliar field. After several months, Plank was offered a full-time position and worked at that agency and others throughout the 1950s.

In 1960, Plank joined Daniel J. Edelman, Inc. (now Edelman Public Relations Worldwide) and served as executive vice president until 1973. Plank then became director of public relations planning for AT&T before transferring to Illinois Bell (later SBC Communications), where she was the first woman to head a company department, directing external affairs and a staff of 102.

Plank spent more than 17 years with SBC (now AT&T) and helped shape and articulate the company's response to the divestiture of the Bell System—what she considers the greatest challenge in her career. “We had a couple of years to break up the world's largest corporation and prepare it without a single missed step,” she recalled (College of Communication and Information Sciences, 2009, para. 4). “There were many problems. It was fascinating to live through, challenging to prepare for and carry out, and almost twenty years later, the

telecommunications industry hasn't settled down yet” (para. 4).

Plank retired from corporate practice in 1990, and worked as an independent consultant through her Chicago-based firm, Betsy Plank Public Relations.

Much of Plank's energies throughout her career were devoted to public relations education, with particular emphasis on the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). She admitted that, in her later years, students and their education were her most compelling interest and joy. She explained, “My professional life has given me a deep appreciation for colleges and universities preparing students for ethical practice in the evolving profession of public relations” (LaBresh, 2000, n.p.).

According to Plank, one of her proudest achievements occurred while she was president of PRSA. Not surprisingly, it reflected her confidence in the new PRSSA. Prior to 1973, a PRSA committee of “elders” had governed PRSSA. With Plank's strong advocacy, bylaws were amended to permit the student organization to govern itself. “It's a joy to have been part of such a watershed event in the history of PRSSA's remarkable and responsible leadership,” she said (personal communication, October 23, 2002).

Plank served as the national advisor to PRSSA from 1981 to 1983. At the beginning of her tenure, she and Jon Riffel, often referred to as the “godfather” of PRSSA, established what is now known as Champions for PRSSA, a group of professionals who have special, ongoing interests in the student society and its members. In 1988, the Champions created annual PRSSA scholarships, which were later endowed and named for her. Since the program began, more than \$100,000 in scholarships—with lead gifts from Plank—have been awarded.

In 1993, the student society honored Plank with its 25th Anniversary Award. Today, PRSSA has more than 300 chapters at colleges and universities across the nation, with more than 10,000 members, and Betsy Plank is widely known as the “godmother” of PRSSA.

Plank cochaired the 1987 Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, which developed guidelines for public relations curricula at U.S. colleges and universities, and was a member of the 1999 and 2006 commissions. She was instrumental in establishing PRSA's Certification in Education in Public Relations (CEPR) program in 1989, which offers a review and endorsement

process for undergraduate studies in public relations. Nearly 40 programs across the globe currently hold CEPR status.

Plank saw education and research as the most important developments in the future of public relations. She explained,

The hallmark of every respected profession is a formal program of study. Originally, few people in public relations were educated for it. Most came from newspapers or other media as I did, and concentrated primarily on publicity. Today, the field needs men and women who have studied for the practice, know its theory, principles, ethics, and expectations and who have a command of the skills and research required for it. (personal communication, October 23, 2002)

Plank emphasized that research is essential to assess the attitudes of an organization's publics and to evaluate the impact of public relations. "Research and education—both formal and lifelong—are moving public relations to a stronger recognized position of professionalism" (personal communication, October 23, 2002).

To Plank, public relations was about building reputation and relationships. Although she was an early endorser of new technologies, she believed that interpersonal communication is key to effective practice. She stated:

Communications technology is a magic, wonderful tool, but simply a tool. It will never replace the human encounter, the willingness to listen and to address differences constructively. That requires understanding of human behavior, psychology and motivation—and that doesn't come with a keyboard! What is fundamental to public relations is how we help our clients relate and respond to their constituencies—employees, customers, owners, and the community at-large. (personal communication, October 23, 2002)

Plank also believed that recent crises in the corporate sector present a wake-up call to organizations about their credibility, ethics, and need for transparency—all emphasizing the strategic importance of ethical public relations. She stated,

I foresee public relations addressing many more functions—all aspects of the organization's

reputation and relationships. These crises provide a unique opportunity for public relations professionals to say to their clients, "We can help in restoring and reinforcing the organization's relationships of trust with [your] key stakeholders," and then to perform and position public relations in its strongest counseling and policy-making capacity. (personal communication, October 23, 2002)

Plank expressed gratitude for her chosen career:

I am so fortunate to be in a field that I love very much and of which I am very proud. This is a profession rooted in the history of this country, which was founded on the idea of people having an informed choice, participating in dialogue, reaching compromise and consensus. Public relations has played an essential role in that tradition and democratic process, which is now reaching people worldwide. (personal communication, October 23, 2002)

Plank continued to counsel clients and to pursue her passions for advancing public relations education and its students until her death in May 2010. She was a leading force in and contributor to the establishment of the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations at the University of Alabama in 2005. Named in her honor and housed in the College of Communication and Information Sciences, the Plank Center sponsors research, national awards, and service programs. Plank bequeathed part of her estate to the center, substantially increasing its endowed fund (Kelly, 2010).

The "Call to Action" section of the Commission on Public Relations Education's 2006 report quoted Plank: "Today, there are too few 'angels' supporting public relations education, but just a few can lead the way" (Kelly, 2010, n.p.).

Through her many contributions and her numerous accomplishments, Betsy Plank will continue to positively influence the profession of public relations.

Kathleen S. Kelly

See also Institute for Public Relations; Page, Arthur W.; Public Relations Society of America; Public Relations Student Society of America

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PODCASTS/AUDIO SHARING

A podcast is an audio or video recording that can be received, downloaded, and listened to or watched using a personal computer or tablet, such as an iPad; a portable media player, such as an iPod; or a mobile device, such as an iPhone. The term *podcast* is derived from the words *broadcast* and *pod* as audio files were produced and made popular for iPods, a portable media player that plays audio files that was created and marketed by Apple, Inc., in late 2001.

Podcasts are ordinary MP3 audio files not limited to iPods; they can be played back on personal computers. Users can download an entire episode from the host's website or stream episodes from the website if downloading is not available. Files can be in MP3, MP4, or Ogg Vorbis formats. Podcasts enable users to create and publish audio content on their own computers. The only necessity is a podcast recording and

editing program in order to create a podcast. Most personal computers come equipped with audio recording and editing software. As of this writing, there are numerous software applications for recording podcasts, including WordPress PodPress Widget, Quicktime Player, Sound Studio, ePodcast Creator, Hipcast, Levelator, Podcast Station, Propagan, and WebPod Studio.

Ben Hammersly, who wrote "Why Online Radio Is Booming" in the February 12, 2004, issue of *The Guardian*, is thought to be the person who coined the term *podcasting* as an evolution from *audio-blogging*, its precursor. However, the person credited with actually creating the idea of streaming content in episodes via the Internet is Adam Curry, a former MTV (Music Television) VJ (video jockey), who worked with software developer Dave Winer to move MP3 files to iTunes using an RSS-to-iPod script called iPodder.

Podcasting has been deemed a useful business tool for several reasons. It is an easy, inexpensive way to reach consumers and to build a platform. From a public relations standpoint, practitioners can use podcasting for promotional purposes, including keeping publics informed (an excellent venue for interviews) and describing how products are used. Most social media experts agree that content should be relevant, up-to-date, and interesting.

Podcasting has obvious advantages, mainly that voice is a much richer form of communication (i.e., human) and is immediate. The mobility and time shifting capability of podcasting enable users to download a podcast at their leisure. Disadvantages of podcasting are few; one is that organizations or individuals must pay advertisers to market their podcasts, most of which garner small niche audiences. However, advertising during podcasts has proven to be effective.

As the technology improved, podcasts developed into a variety of formats, including enhanced podcasts that can display visual images with audio sound. One format is video podcasts, or vodcasts, which include video clips. Other popular formats include podcast novels, or podcast audiobooks, which are a combination of a podcast and the sound from an audiobook.

Kathy Keltner-Previs

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Interview as a Communication Tool; Promotion; Social Media

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POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES

Political action committees, often called PACs, are an important aspect of American politics and the American electoral system. They came to exist legally so that a variety of types of organizations could make donations to candidates for federal office—something until recently that many organizations (especially corporations) could not do directly. This changed in 2010, creating some confusion about PACs themselves and resurrecting controversy about the public policy impact of unlimited donations to campaigns.

A PAC is any organization in the United States that campaigns for or against political candidates or advocates on behalf of a piece of legislation or ballot initiative. State rules vary, but at the federal level an organization becomes a PAC when it receives or spends more than \$1,000 in any federal election. A PAC as well as any standard candidate committee can accept up to \$5,000 a year from any individual, half for the primary and half for the general election. Political action committees and candidates cannot accept money from corporations, unions, or associations; federal election codes prohibit them from giving money directly to a candidate or a candidate's committee. Many PACs represent special interest groups like the National Rifle Association of America (NRA); others represent large conservative or liberal coalitions.

A 501(c) organization is a nonprofit, American tax-exempt organization. There are 28 types of nonprofit organizations in the IRS Revenue Code that are exempt from federal taxes. Some analysts feared in 2012 that secret monies were being shifted to 501(c)s in order to pass the funds on to super PACs with the ability to shield the identity of the donor. Additionally, there is some concern that 501(c)s are becoming more overtly political and may be the “shadow” super PACs as they have differing reporting requirements than do all PACs.

A super PAC possesses no limitations on who contributes (corporation, individual, union) or how much they contribute. They can raise as much money as they can and spend these unlimited amounts on advocating for the candidates of their choosing.

Super PACs came into existence in July 2010 following the outcome of a federal court case known as *SpeechNow.org v. Federal Election Commission*; their fundraising power was cemented and expanded with the Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* in the same year. *Citizens United* directly addressed the issues of limits on corporate expenditures and held that laws restricting these expenditures that were banned under previous case law (*Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce* holding) and by federal statute (2 U.S.C. §441b) violated the First Amendment. *Citizens United* was a nonprofit corporate entity that sought to use its general funds, generated by contributions from individuals and for-profit corporations, to produce a movie *Hillary* that was a negative documentary-style film about Hillary Clinton. The film, released in 2008, was distributed to provide a negative portrayal of Clinton as she was running for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States.

Technically known as independent expenditure-only committees, super PACs, while they may raise unlimited sums of money and spend unlimited sums to overtly advocate for or against political candidates, must, however, just as with a traditional PAC, report their donors to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) on a monthly or quarterly basis. Unlike traditional PACs, super PACs are prohibited from donating money directly to political candidates. In the presidential election campaign of 2012, the majority of funds received by

super PACs were from mega-donors, individuals who contributed a half million dollars or more each.

Other differences between PACs and super PACs include that traditional PACs are limited to a \$5,000 annual limit on contributions they can accept from individuals and are prohibited from accepting contributions from corporations and labor unions. The super PAC is not bound by these restrictions as long as it does not give money directly to a candidate or other political committees that give directly to candidates, nor coordinate how it spends its money with a federal candidate. Within those guidelines a super PAC may accept donations directly from corporate or union treasuries and in amounts that are limited only by the size of the donors' bank accounts. In the 2012 election, Sheldon Adelson, a Las Vegas resort executive gave more than \$35 million to a pro-Mitt Romney super PAC; movie mogul Jeffrey Katzenberg gave \$2 million to the super PAC supporting Barack Obama's reelection. These donations could not have been received by any traditional PAC.

While a super PAC cannot officially be connected to a particular candidate, unofficially it is widely known and accepted that there is an affiliation. It is not unusual for former aides of candidates to run a super PAC that exists to raise money for that candidate. Examples of these from 2012 include Newt Gingrich's *Winning Our Future* super PAC and Obama's super PAC *Priorities USA*. Candidates can officially conduct fundraising events for a super PAC; they just cannot personally ask for larger than the amount limited by federal campaign law.

Political action committees were invented by labor unions in 1943 as a loophole around federal campaign laws. The first PAC was organized by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and was a model for later PACs. Corporations were not allowed to form PACs until the passage of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (FECA). By opening the door to corporate money being used to set up PACs, the FECA and its 1974 and 1976 amendments brought about a new and much larger role for trade associations and corporations in politics. Enormous growth in the number of PACs actively involved in politics soon followed.

PACs get their funds not from the sponsoring group's treasury, but from its members, employees, or shareholders. PACs that work to raise money from people employed by a corporation or in a trade union are called "connected PACs." They rarely ask for donations, but are legally free to do so. "Unconnected PACs," also called "independent PACs," raise money by targeting selected groups in society. The Supreme Court ruled in 1985 that there should be no limits on the spending of PACs on a candidate's behalf, provided that the expenditure is not made in collaboration with a candidate. The PAC must maintain legal independence. An individual's contribution to a PAC is limited to \$5,000. With the creation of super PACs beginning in 2010, PACs are less a presence in campaigns for national offices; they still exist, but tend to be associated with a cause (like the NRA) or a lower level office campaign (state senate).

The relationship among political parties, PACs, 501(c)s, and super PACs is unusual because it is both symbiotic and parasitic. On one hand, it seems they are bound to be competitors. They all raise money from the limited pool of political givers, try to elect candidates, and strive for the attention of candidates and office holders. They do, however, have very different perspectives. Political action committees act on the basis of a narrow viewpoint, whereas parties operate from a broad-based vantage point. 501(c)s provide an umbrella of protection to donors; and super PACs are clearly aligned with a particular national office candidate and because of the mega-money they collect and distribute have what many think is unequalled power in electoral politics in U.S. history.

While some members of Congress make a point of not accepting PAC or super PAC monies, others heavily depend on such contributions. Prior to 2010, there were voiced concerns about the role and influence of PAC funds in elections; what elected official, went the reasoning, could resist the influence of contributions on public policy decisions? After 2010, these concerns were magnified at many levels: how could huge contributions from corporations and individuals *not* influence an elected official's position on certain issues or votes?

Yet, controversial as the Supreme Court rulings have been, the bias for First Amendment speech

rights for *everyone* (including wealthy individuals and mega-wealthy corporations) prevailed. Some in the United States would like to see the amount of PAC, 501(c), and super PAC monies greatly reduced, fearing its potential influence on legislators. Even though records from PACs and super PACs are made public and checked by the FEC and media members and the public are free to view them, some are still uneasy about the power of these umbrella fundraising entities and the legal dodging of limits placed on donations received. But, there is little motivation among the president, senators, and congressmen to alter a system that has benefited them so much. As public criticism rose throughout the last decade of the 20th century and first decade and a half of the 21st century, Congress considered several reform proposals, but no legislation was passed. The future of the PACs, 501(c)s, and super PACs donation system continues to evolve. The current system is confusing for many and is thought by some analysts to contribute to public mistrust in government.

Ruthann Weaver Lariscy

See also *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010); Political Public Relations

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POLITICAL ECONOMY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

There are many definitions of political economy, some reflecting the history of the subject and others pointing to differences in focus between schools of thought. Broadly, political economy can be understood as dealing with the way the economic and political matters of the state are interrelated, or to quote Vincent Mosco's (2009) definition, it is "the study of the social relations, particularly power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources" (p. 24).

Conceptually, political economy developed within the discipline of moral philosophy in the age of the Enlightenment and originally was concerned with matters of moral judgment and governance as well as production of wealth in society. The subject, grounded in liberal philosophy, saw individual self-interest and freedom as the engine of social prosperity. By the end of the 19th century, the discipline lost interest in the political and focused instead on the economic, developing mathematical models to explain the economy.

Such models focused on the concept of the market and its mechanisms—the relationship between supply, demand, and price; the market's tendency to equilibrium or self-regulation became the basis for understanding large, complex economic systems and supplied the discipline's conceptual toolkit. This set of ideas, as initially articulated by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), is referred to as the classical approach. The subsequent development of economics, based on mathematical methods, is known as the neoclassical school, as encapsulated in Alfred Marshall's *Principles of Economics* (1890). In more recent years, efforts have been made to reclaim the original scope of political economy, combining moral and political as well as technical economic analysis.

An important contribution to the discipline was made by Karl Marx in his seminal work *Capital: Critique of Political Economy* (Volume I was published in 1867, the remaining two volumes appeared posthumously) and by his followers whose main interest lay in offering a critique of the capitalist system. In this view, economic activity is far from the clockwork model advanced by the classical political economy; instead, it is

seen as driven by the exploitation of the class who produce commodities which, when sold on the market, create surplus value (profit) for those who own the means of production (capital). The capitalist system is seen as crisis prone, based on conflict and the exercise of power that permeates all spheres of life. The Marxist approach thus combines economic and political analysis of capitalist society and its cultural institutions.

Another approach to political economy, important for the study of communication and public relations, was articulated by the institutional school, associated with Thorstein Veblen's work (*The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899; *The Theory of Business Enterprise*, 1904). This work focused on the role of institutions rather than the market or labor as key for understanding the production and distribution of wealth in society.

So far, as a discipline, public relations has not concerned itself with political economy in any self-aware, transparent, systematic, or extensive way. The engagement of public relations with political economy can be most usefully approached as part of the academic study of communication and thus mapped onto the relevant approaches in the political economy of communication.

As shown by Ryszard Ławniczak (2007; 2009), public relations has a poor understanding of economics, but a few examples can be offered of classical economic concepts being introduced into the discipline. Oscar Gandy's (1992) treatment of information as a commodity with its own production cost is behind the concept of information subsidy, which was borrowed from media studies and applied widely to explain media relations, and the influence of sources on media content and, by extension, on public policy. The argument here is that media relations provides free information to journalists and thus reduces the production cost of media content. Marvin Olasky's (1987) critique of public relations, from an extreme liberal (liberal in the European sense) position, is based on a belief in the primacy of the self-regulating market and the consequent rejection of any attempt to intervene in the market. Olasky interpreted the early American history of public relations as a destructive influence that worked to kill free enterprise by colluding with government in the regulation of business in the name of progress and responsibility.

If economic analysis is lacking in public relations, the field's engagement with the political side of political economy is more apparent. David Miller and William Dinan's (2000) work is an example of the institutional approach to the public relations industry, tracking the rise of the public relations consultancy against the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s in Britain.

Research focusing on the indirect role that public relations plays in commodity production and in the production of social relations can be seen as inspired by Marxian or critical approaches. For example, public relations has been shown to play a role in the postcommunist transformation of the economy in Poland, and more broadly in the extension of the neoliberal models of the economy across the globe (see, Ławniczak, 2007). Finally, like the political economy of communication, public relations has recently engaged with international and global dimensions and postcolonial critiques.

Magda Pieczka

See also Critical Theory; Modernity and Late Modernity; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations; Postmodern Public Relations

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POLITICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Political public relations is a relatively new concept and research field; however, the practice of political public relations has existed for years. It is informed by both traditional public relations practices and political communication. Basic to the study of the practice of public relations in politics, the key concepts of political public relations center on informing and persuading various audiences. In their book, *Political Public Relations*, Jesper Stromback and Spiro Kiouis (2011) explained that it can best be understood as a management process by which an organization or individual uses purposeful communication for political purposes and seeks to influence, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics. This is done to help support the organization or individual's mission and to achieve its goals.

Political public relations lies at the intersection of political communication, public relations, political science, public affairs, and other related fields of research. It goes beyond the surface level understanding of public relations as being mainly concerned with media relations or news management and builds on the contemporary meaning of public relations adapted to political contexts and processes. It provides a practical link between abstract political concepts of governing and assists in presenting the human side of politics. One of its primary goals is the use of media outlets to communicate specific political views and interpretations of issues in the hope of obtaining public support for political policies or campaigns. Political public relations relies on thematic and persuasive strategies. The strategic and purposeful approach in political public relations and its designation as a management function are two of the main differences between political public relations and political communication.

Political communication can be traced at least as far back to humble beginnings in the 19th century. Public relations scholar Scott Cutlip's

1995 book, *Public Relations History*, provides a working frame of reference regarding the emergence of public relations practice in politics. Beginning his examination in the 19th century, Cutlip identified the use of strategic and systemic communication tactics in presidential campaigns. George F. Parker, an aide to President Grover Cleveland is identified as a crucial figure in the early practice of public relations in politics. In the 1882 presidential campaign, Parker helped President Cleveland combat negative newspaper attention by distributing copies of President Cleveland's speeches in advance to newspapers.

The 1896 presidential campaign saw the first organization of publicity and campaign management. Both the Republican and Democratic parties organized their campaign headquarters, participated in national speaking tours, and produced written pamphlets meant to "educate" voters. William McKinley won the presidency and continued throughout his short time in office to monitor newspapers and other printed sources. Print media dominated the political campaigns until the advent of radio in 1928 and television in 1952.

Today, there is an abundant selection of communication mediums and channels and many times all of them, if not most of them are used in political public relations. Although political public relations is very important in the political communication process and has a long and prominent history, there is not much research or theory regarding it. Most public relations theory and research focuses on strategies and tactics used in the corporate sector while most political communication research neglects or briefly touches on public relations theory and research.

The audience of political public relations includes other political actors, political parties, political action committees, government and nongovernmental organizations, the media, citizens between elections, and voters during elections. In the context of political public relations, both the mass public and situational publics are relevant. Because of this, political public relations practitioners must use both direct and indirect communication channels in addition to a range of strategies and techniques to promote, reinforce, and amplify their message.

Relationship creation and development with key publics is extremely important in political public relations. As with traditional or corporate

public relations practices, political public relations success can be measured by the relationship between an organization and its publics. The main difference between the two is that with political public relations, the political environment tends to be more contentious and conflictual than the environment of many other organizations. Because conflict and dissention are at the core of politics, the management of relationships in political contexts can often be difficult. Nonetheless, key features to quality relationships in political public relations remain trust, openness, satisfaction, involvement, control mutuality, investment, and commitment.

Reputation and image management are also important components of political public relations. This is often accomplished through policy development, lobbying, and issues management to name just a few. The use of political public relations for this purpose is to build reputations, create a competitive advantage, ensure long-term political survival, or enhance the ability to win an election or campaign. These efforts are vital to influence stakeholder perceptions and overall outcomes.

Global and digital communication are becoming more popular and, as a result, the importance of political public relations in society continues to increase. By informing and persuading the public, political public relations strives to promote democratic ideals and understandings. Political public relations encourages a rich interaction between those actively engaged in politics or the political process and those who are uninterested or completely disengaged.

Melissa W. Graham

See also Event Management; Government Public Relations; Paradox of the Positive/Negative; Press Agency; Relationship Management Theory; Reputation

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POLITICAL SPEECH

Political speech is speech on issues of political and social importance. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides that the government cannot restrict an individual's right to speak regardless of what the government might think about that speech or the speaker. The First Amendment originally referred only to Congress, but today it applies to all levels of government.

Scholars justify the First Amendment's protection of the right to freedom of expression in several ways. One is self-governance. A working democracy depends on the ability of individuals to freely discuss politics without fear of censure. Another justification is the attainment of truth. The idea is that truth is found only if society is able to test concepts through open discussion. The freedom to criticize government is seen as a stabilizing force in society. Unrest comes when individuals are not free to voice their displeasure and seek change. Finally, expression is seen as necessary for self-fulfillment or self-realization. The ability to express oneself is what sets humans apart from animals, and therefore, the right to freedom of expression is crucial to human dignity and integrity.

In determining whether government regulation of political speech is constitutional, the courts use a strict scrutiny standard. That is, the government must establish that the regulation protects a compelling interest and that the regulation is narrowly tailored to achieve that interest. Because of the importance of ensuring a robust public debate on political issues, some false political speech is permitted. For example, individuals can libel or defame political figures with impunity provided their statements are not made with actual malice—knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard of the truth. The purpose is to prevent speakers from being chilled by the threat of government censure.

Until 1978, corporations were not thought to have First Amendment rights because corporations cannot achieve self-fulfillment nor can they “speak” or express themselves. All they can do, some media law

scholars argue, is spend money to have someone speak on their behalf. Beginning in 1978, however, the U.S. Supreme Court came to recognize that corporations do contribute to public policy debates and that individuals have a First Amendment right to hear a corporation's position on policy issues. The purpose of political speech by a corporation is not to promote a product or service but, rather, to voice the corporation's views on a matter of public importance. Such speech falls within the realm of public relations.

The first case in which corporate political speech was recognized involved a Massachusetts law prohibiting a corporation from spending money to influence the vote on matters that directly affected the corporation's business. The First National Bank of Boston challenged the law because it wanted to publicize its views on a proposed constitutional amendment that would have granted the state legislature the right to impose a graduated income tax on Massachusetts residents. First National opposed the amendment and sought to inform its customers of its position via a public relations campaign.

In denying the bank's claims, the lower court said that the issue was whether corporations had First Amendment rights. The court concluded they did not, but the Supreme Court disagreed. The Court said the issue was not whether corporations had the same speech rights as natural persons, but whether the First Amendment protected the speech in question. In other words, the content of the speech determined the protection granted, not the nature of the speaker. Voters were entitled to hear First National's views on the topic. The speech was not made less important because it came from a corporation rather than from an individual.

Two years later, the Court reinforced its protection of speech by a corporation, holding that the government could not restrict a corporation's speech simply because the speech might be offensive to some people. Nor can the government force a corporation to disseminate messages on political or social issues with which it disagrees, although the government can force a corporation to carry certain messages about its products, such as the Surgeon General's warning on tobacco packaging.

Not everyone agrees that corporations should have First Amendment protection for political speech. Critics focus on corporate wealth and power, arguing that corporations' power and influence can

distort the debate on public policy issues and corrupt the democratic process. Congress addressed this issue on numerous occasions in an attempt to limit large political contributions from corporations and unions to parties and campaigns. In the past, the Supreme Court upheld federal limits on corporate contributions to political campaigns, on the grounds that large contributions undermine citizens' faith in government honesty and integrity, while rejecting limits on corporate expenditures for political communication because such restrictions necessarily reduced the political discourse.

The Supreme Court in 2010, however, struck down such restrictions on contributions as unconstitutional, thereby allowing corporations and unions to spend monies directly from their treasuries to advocate political positions and outcomes, as long as the messages are produced independently and not associated with any candidate's campaign.

While contributions and expenditures in connection with political campaigns and candidates are clearly political speech, the line between political and commercial speech can blur in other circumstances. When activists accused Nike, the multinational athletic equipment manufacturer, in the early 1990s of running sweatshops overseas, the company defended itself via a public relations campaign. An activist then sued Nike under the California false advertising statute, claiming the company's statements were false and misleading. Nike argued in return that the statements constituted political speech, not commercial speech, because such labor conditions were a matter of public importance. The question regarding the type of speech is not an idle one because commercial speech receives lesser First Amendment protection than does political speech. The California Supreme Court held that the speech was in fact commercial because Nike hoped to influence consumers with its message. Nike was free to discuss the issue of overseas labor in the abstract, the court held, but it could not discuss its own practices unless it was truthful and nonmisleading.

The focus of political speech is on the right of individuals to hear the views of corporations on matters of public importance to those individuals rather than on the right of corporations to explain their position on issues that relate to their own business practices.

Karla K. Gower

See also *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010); Commercial Speech

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PORTFOLIO

A portfolio presents evidence of the professional capabilities and accomplishments of a student or professional practitioner. Portfolios are especially valuable during a job interview; they present evidence of the candidate's professional proficiency. A portfolio consists of samples of the person's work that reveal their knowledge, work ethic, skill, and creative talent.

Students who are studying public relations with that career goal in mind need to carefully and strategically develop a portfolio. Thus, they might write for their campus newspaper or get stories aired on the campus radio or television stations. Students' portfolios should contain materials produced as class projects; such projects demonstrate the skills they are honing to qualify as an intern or entry-level employee. They are wise to carefully participate in class projects and extracurricular activities with the intent of producing work that can augment their portfolios. They might plan and help execute a fundraiser. They can submit their work for various contests.

To gain proficiency, they might write stories for the newsletter (today, often presented online) of their Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter. They might manage and refine its website or otherwise contribute in some meaningful

and identifiable way to that site. Increasingly, new media are challenging public relations practitioners' skill development. Students have real advantages to know and demonstrate their social media skills.

PRSSA chapters often set aside days when students can meet with professionals to discuss what materials should be in portfolios and get a critique of materials they already are using. Professionals can offer advice on how to augment the portfolio with materials that they find most useful when they make hiring and promotion decisions.

Similar to the students, professionals should develop and carefully groom a portfolio and introduce samples of their work, including earned awards. Organizations like the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators hold annual contests where a wide array of public relations campaign strategies and tools are peer judged.

Internships are a vital part of a student's academic and professional preparation. They not only help the student learn the ropes of the profession by seeing what professionals do, but they also offer the student opportunities to produce work that can be added to a portfolio. Any student who takes an internship is wise to negotiate the opportunities to perform work that can add to their portfolio.

A portfolio fleshes out the student's or practitioner's professional life story and demonstrates that person's skills; what used to be a packet of paper samples today often is packaged and presented online. The portfolio might even exist on a CD, a flash drive, or a personal website. A well-developed portfolio can mean the difference between getting a job and merely being a candidate.

Robert L. Heath

See also International Association of Business Communicators; Internship; Public Relations Society of America; Public Relations Student Society of America

POSITION AND POSITIONING

Only recently have the terms *position* and *positioning* emerged from boundaries imposed by sales and marketing models that limited their use as

heuristics and frameworks in broader public relations applications. Melanie James (2011) advanced possibilities for incorporating position and positioning in the public relations literature, offering a provisional conceptual framework that also calls for deep consideration of persuasion's ethical implications. Moreover, other public relations researchers use comparable concepts as stand-in terms.

To begin understanding position and positioning's roots as context for their application in public relations, it is useful to recall the integrated marketing communication (IMC) approach wherein all elements of the marketing mix—advertising, public relations, personal selling, etc.—are used to build relationships with key stakeholders. Integrated marketing communication campaigns designed to nurture bonds with consumers are most successful in competing for a share of the consumer's mind (and increasing sales) since their brand is the one the consumer readily thinks of when deciding which product/service to buy amid a sea of competitive brands. Prabu David (2004) warned that blurring of lines between public relations and marketing in an IMC context could lead to overemphasis on consumers "at the expense of the broader public" (p. 186).

Public relations practitioners consider a product's or service's position when developing messaging strategies for communicating with audiences, even though they may characterize the concept somewhat uniquely and use different terms to conceptualize it. While public relations practitioners and academics may not offer formal operationalizations for position and positioning, they nonetheless imply its significance in relationship building. For example, not-for-profit organizations' fundraising campaigns often depend on differentiating products/services from competitors by promoting unique qualities of service, benefits, responsiveness, speed to market, and low price. Kirk Hallahan (1999) used *framing* to describe ways that information may be included or excluded to (de)emphasize particular meanings. It is important to note that this may constitute a move that edges dangerously close to *spin* outcomes for which Stuart Ewen (1996) and others intensely criticized public relations practitioners. Nevertheless, Alex Wang (2007) used *priming* to describe ways that public relations

practitioners structure communication about corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. In political arenas, a key public relations role is to enable candidates and parties to alter their identities and stances via "discursive constructions," with the hope that constituents vote a certain way (Roper, 2005, p. 145). Melanie James (2011) found positioning extensively used among 57 award-winning public relations campaigns in Australia and offered a provisional conceptual framework, suggesting that the concept is useful when practitioners face situations of deliberate self-positioning, forced self-positioning, deliberate positioning of others, and forced positioning of others.

Anyone employing the position/positioning concept in public relations must carefully consider multiple variables, including timing, context, and historical underpinning. Notably, public relations' image promotion and reputation protection strategies that reinforce stakeholders' already positive perceptions of an organization's position are much easier to implement than repositioning (or reversing) consumers' negative views. For example, Johnson & Johnson's successful handling of the 1982 Tylenol product tampering episodes included re-emphasizing hospitals' trust in administering Tylenol to patients. On the other hand, Winn-Dixie supermarkets found that changing customers' negative perceptions of the stores' beef quality since the 1998 charges of selling past-due meat is comparatively more challenging. Meanwhile, public opinion on BP's handling of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010 remains mixed despite ongoing public service announcements and community outreach about the company's continuing commitment to environmental cleanup and compensation.

As simple as these dynamics may seem on the surface, the position-positioning process is a deeply complex one that depends on context and orientation. For example, public relations practitioners use two-way communication connecting organizations and consumers and other key publics for the purpose of developing solid, mutually beneficial relationships. Advertisers use one-way communication strategies to generate sales by positioning a product or service using strategies like corporate image, country of origin, problem-solution, service capability, product/service benefits, comparison to competitor, relationship to a well-known symbol

(avoiding disregard of a culture's heritage, traditions, and symbols), link with a celebrity, and relationship to a certain lifestyle. Because consumers will reach their own conclusions about a product or service in the absence of (or despite) an official position, careful and ongoing attention must be focused on research, message construction, implementation, and measurement. In this way, public relations practitioners are consciously aware that their role includes "intentional representation" or positioning (Berger, 1999, p. 186).

Donnalyn Pompper

See also Advertising; Brand Equity and Branding; Frame; Framing Theory; Integrated Marketing Communication; Marketing; Media Networks; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Spin

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POSTCOLONIALISM THEORY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Postcolonial theory provides a critical lens through which to examine not only the academic discipline of public relations, but also the practices and strategies of public relations in a globalized world. This theory helps uncover the traces of colonialist styles of thinking manifested in prevailing discourses on economy, society, culture, and politics that influence public relations.

Postcolonialism is a way of theorizing challenges and resistances to dominant, often Western, theoretical and methodological perspectives. It is used effectively in cultural and literary studies to challenge theorizations of life and society formulated by mainstream scholars and thinkers from Europe and North America. The postcolonial perspective gained currency in the domain of communication studies when *Communication Theory* published a special issue on the subject. In their introductory essay in that issue, Raka Shome and Radha Hegde (2002) pointed out that "there is a growing awareness of the limitations and parochialism of theory so steeped in Eurocentrism that it either ignores completely or oversimplifies the complexity of the 'rest' of the world" (p. 260).

Postcolonial theory seeks to address this imbalance. Indeed, postcolonial historian Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2000) work, *Provincializing Europe*, decenters the universalized notion of Europe as "an imaginary figure that remains deeply embedded in clichéd and shorthand forms in some everyday habits of thought" (p. 4) and opens the way for public relations to see beyond the usual Eurocentric ways of determining strategic stakeholders for organizations.

Following this lead, communication scholars in recent years are trying to articulate radically new ways of looking at public relations theory and practice that dismantle both overt and covert forms of economic, social, and cultural imperialism inherent in such theory and practice (e.g., Dutta & Pal, 2011; McKie & Munshi, 2007). This line of inquiry

has been an integral part of what Lee Edwards and Caroline Hodges (2011) called a “socio-cultural turn in public relations scholarship” (p. 3).

Traditional approaches to public relations place an overwhelming emphasis on the communication of corporate goals. This communication is channelled through messages about a dominant, largely Western model of economic growth and development. Postcolonialists argue that such a model is often shaped more by “the logic of capitalisms—a politics fueled by global capital” (Munshi & Kurian, 2005, p. 514) espoused by powerful Western corporations than driven by the needs of people around the world. In a postcolonial examination of the predominantly western paradigm of public relations, David McKie and Debashish Munshi showed how the Bhopal gas tragedy of 1984 in India, which claimed thousands of lives and maimed countless others, is predominantly seen through the eyes of a major Western corporation. Most mainstream public relations literature depicts the ways in which the parent company dealt with the crisis and maintained its line of communication with its shareholders and investors. Subsequently, too, the emphasis has been to “treat Bhopal as a source of data to help frame guidelines for Western centres without much concern for the fate of the victims of the tragedy” (McKie & Munshi, 2007, p. 67).

Similarly, Mohan Jyoti Dutta and Mahuya Pal (2011) detailed how transnational corporations control policymaking through their public relations practices, including spending enormous amounts of money on targeted lobbying. Postcolonial scholars also expose the ways in which the structure and machinery of mainstream public relations are tied up with the neocolonial agendas of global corporations (Munshi & Kurian, 2005; Pal & Dutta, 2008a; 2008b). However, postcolonial theory is also making way for voices of resistance to challenge the power of dominant structures (Dutta & Pal, 2011).

Postcolonial theory facilitates reexamining public relations from the point of view of the historically marginalized “other.” It plays an active role in the convergence of a variety of critical perspectives through the lenses of gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality. For example, a new body of work on race and public relations is aligned with postcolonial theory (see, e.g., Edwards, 2010; 2011; Munshi & Edwards, 2011). Addressing diversity, Edwards (2011) said that both critical race theory (CRT)

and postcolonial theory “situate the perspective of the ‘other’ at the centre rather than at the periphery of research” (p. 79), thereby focusing on otherwise neglected issues of power.

In public relations literature, one of the earliest references to postcolonial theory is in a 1996 essay by Nancy Roth, Todd Hunt, Maria Stavropoulos, and Karen Babik who, drawing on postcolonial scholar Edward Said (1978), talk about the need to address issues of relative power in the framing of universal ethical principles for the practice of public relations. Postcolonial scholars long argued that global relationships and interactions have to be understood in terms of existing power differentials within and among nations, institutions, and organizations.

The sustainability of public relations depends on addressing the issue of power differentials and acknowledging the existence of a multiplicity of publics. Postcolonial approaches provide an opportunity to look outside the dominant frame and effectively reach out to a broad range of publics instead of being limited to a few elite publics. In a rapidly globalizing world with major demographic shifts, recognizing a broad spectrum of publics is not just a moral imperative for public relations scholars and practitioners, but an economic, social, and political one as well.

Debashish Munshi

See also Circuit of Culture; Empire, Public Relations and; Globalization and Public Relations; Power, as Social Construction; Socioculture and Public Relations; Third Culture Public Relations Practitioner

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POSTMODERN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Postmodern, an adjective derived from postmodernity, describes attempts to identify the period that comes after modernity as being distinct and distinctive. Postmodernists oppose modernist attempts to see contemporary reality as objectively or scientifically identifiable. They distrust explanations that claim to be valid for all cultures, genders, and groups. Their attempts to identify a change in reality and to win assent for the naming of a new period is not just a matter of academic concern. At stake is the public understanding of contemporary reality, which, in turn, sets parameters on what is considered possible in the present. Because of this impact on issues of power, disputes about how to characterize an age will not be solved by scholarly decision alone, nor resolved by easy consensus.

Framed in this way, postmodern public relations can be broadly defined through the following four major characteristics: (1) it sees the world as having changed sufficiently since modernity to merit the coining of a term for this new stage; (2) it seeks to go beyond Western modernizing based on autonomous human subjects as the only way, or even the best way forward for this new social stage; (3) it presents postmodern thinkers as key to identifying and engaging with the new stage that is increasingly global in its reach; and (4) it acts on that thinking by developing individual contributions imported from other fields—particularly those contributions that address power issues directly, that are sensitive to the many Others of Western modernity. All four themes have political implications and, although individual writers import different external thinkers and emphasize differences between modern and postmodern public relations, elements of all four surface in postmodern public relations writing.

Some scholars drew from French theorist, Jean Baudrillard's ideas about the nature of contemporary reality in general, and of his concept of the simulacra in particular. They saw these as identifying a new stage of society through how media have become both ubiquitous and so powerful that the signs of the media have become virtual realities of their own. Taking that difference as key, these scholars analyzed such examples as Hill & Knowlton's Citizens for a Free Kuwait campaign in the 1990s. In the U.S. Congress, they foregrounded Hill & Knowlton's use of eyewitness testimony, alleging that Saddam Hussein's forces committed atrocities by taking babies from incubators and leaving them to die on a concrete floor. Although the testimony was later shown to be fabricated, it circulated widely in the media and illustrated how false, yet seemingly real, representations could not only pass for real, but also have material effects with life and death consequences. The emphasis on media power is not original, but postmodernists argue that the sheer critical mass of mediation makes it a characteristic of the present age demanding specific attention as a distinguishing characteristic. Designed to bring the United States and other nations into the first Gulf War (1991), the Hill & Knowlton campaign, in retrospect, resembles a practice run for the weapons of mass destruction rationale that contributed to the later 2003 war in

Iraq, which attracted the sobriquet of weapons of mass deception. Both campaigns brought leading contemporary practitioners into disrepute and raised public concern about the ethics of modern public relations.

Drawing from the work of Jean-Francois Lyotard, later postmodernist contributors identify mainstream public relations practice as limited by its modernity. They call for a critical examination of the practices of modern public relations and contest its legitimacy as the metanarrative, or one true history of the field. Building on the then-dominant excellence project, South African researchers attempted to replicate that project's results in their country. They found James E. Grunig and Todd T. Hunt's 1984 four-model (dimensions) prototype so inapplicable to their country that it brought into question the whole modernist mindset of universally replicable experiments and held back nations from developing their own models. In contrast to the modern search for the one true way, postmodern theorists make difference central and seek a plurality in approach, in methodology, and in geographical locations. Even if this means an acknowledgement of fragmentation and the absence of a unifying paradigm, they prefer such diversity as a more accurate representation of reality.

Some go so far as to view dialogue as hidden control that erases the possibility of radical politics and favors dissent over consensus. They dismiss both dialogue and consensus as forms of language games designed to produce the illusion of voluntary support for further power grabs by already powerful subjects. They see this action in creating a coalition of the willing to go to war, and in creating an environment where deregulation and market power are the overriding factors in economic decisions. As the world's rich get richer and the poor increase debt, they reject that form of economic rationality as the only discourse. Social critics of public relations point out the field's substantial contribution in legitimizing that discourse and in opposing initiatives to reduce environmental degradation when such initiatives threaten corporate growth or restrict market forces.

Concerns stretch into the past as well as the present and postmodernists reposition the premodern as having continuing relevance rather than

disposable transition to modernity as the so-called end of history. Public relations scholars similarly resist attempts to label all precorporate public relations as prequels and reject the early-20th-century starting date of corporate public relations as the launch date of all public relations. Redeeming the public relations of preceding centuries, they value its continuing relevance to the present. These critics seek to make the field's history more inclusive (e.g., by including progressive women's movements). Papers at the International Public Relations History conferences question whose purpose these histories serve and whether the nation-state is the best historical building block in an age of globalization.

Opponents contend that postmodern public relations theorists fail to deliver change in practice. As the Hill & Knowlton example shows, however, they clearly highlight the need to change some practices, including the vexed area of professional ethics in public relations where they draw from Zygmunt Bauman to offer different routes to change. They suggest that the almost universal move of professional associations to codify ethics is superficially moral, but in execution is less just and less practically effective than an ethics of care for the Other. They focus more on concrete experience than on abstract principles, which have to be changed in different times and places to take account of different circumstances, cultures, and religions. After all, modern public relations in the 1984 Bhopal MIC release case applied different standards of morality to the Indian victims and to the U.S. shareholders. Such clashes of values in international public relations demonstrate how there are no universal ethical standards. By that reasoning, scholars cannot claim that there is a standard practice. Consequently, George Cheney and Lars Christensen's (2000) postmodern question ["What would a non-Western, nonmanagerial, and nonrationalist form of public relations look like?" (p. 182)] remains unanswered.

Celebrants of postmodernism's emancipatory potential in public relations ignore the ironic dimension of that question in invoking a more inclusive new world order to create a more just new world order. Most conflate postmodern values with the progressive values of critical theory and describe it as an amoral celebration of a commodified, consumerist, and unjust status quo that, in Bauman's

terms, is life-denying. Some do acknowledge that public relations as a management function has led to substantial advances for modern public relations, but few stop to consider the contradictions as envisioning a new role for the new postmodern age. Attempting to realign postmodern public relations practitioners with this new period, Derina R. Holtzhausen (2012) resituated practitioners as activists where “Activism is resistance . . . [that] means caring for the Other without asking anything in return, . . . [means] living life meaningfully, consciously, actively, honestly, . . . [being] intolerant of practices that marginalize, dehumanize, and discriminate, [and] speaking truth to power” (p. xv). She presented a program for changing the behavior, roles, and responsibilities of a practice that, increasingly, while it is still normative, and visibly fragmented, is illustrated by a wide range of examples from life.

David McKie

See also Activism; Codes of Ethics; Critical Discourse Analysis; Critical Theory; Dialogue; Enlightenment and Modernity; Ethics of Public Relations; Modernity and Late Modernity; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations

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POWER, AS FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES

Power is viewed in several ways in public relations; the managerial or structural-functional view of power is a central perspective. This view focuses on the roles, functions, and structures in organizations through which power is located and enacted. Power is the ability to get things done by shaping perceptions, decisions, and behaviors of others; influence is the process through which power is used or deployed. Public relations practitioners require power to help their organizations make informed choices about internal and external affairs and to communicate effectively with key groups and publics. Through their special knowledge of communications and publics, professionals can help organizations build positive relationships with others, solve problems, and acquire and maintain social legitimacy. To do so, however, practitioners must be in a position to participate in strategic decision making in their organizations.

Excellence theory, developed by James E. Grunig and colleagues (1992), reflects this managerial perspective and underscores the importance of strategic decision making. Public relations is a function that attempts to manage strategic communications to help organizations achieve particular goals with publics, solve problems, and capitalize on opportunities. Functions consist of individuals who are assigned roles and responsibilities that, if carried out effectively, help the unit support the organization. Power comes into play because decision making in organizations is often the result of conflicts and struggles carried out by competing functions or groups. For example, the public relations function competes with marketing, advertising, sales, human resources, and legal functions to obtain needed resources to fund preferred programs. The functions also compete to gain the attention of key decision makers and to win favorable decisions regarding tactics or strategies the organization should pursue in dealing with crises or other issues.

Many of these functional conflicts are intended to influence members of the organization's dominant coalition, the leading form of structural power in most organizations. Structural power includes *authority* (position in the hierarchy, membership in committees, and span of responsibility),

controllable resources (budget, people, technologies and equipment), and the *functional team* (size and capabilities of the work unit). The dominant coalition is typically a group of senior executives who represent the apex of the hierarchy and control substantial resources. They make the crucial strategic choices, decide who gets what resources, and shape organizational values and beliefs through their decisions and actions. Public relations practitioners have long sought access to and membership in the dominant coalition to give the function a greater voice in such decision making. A function or profession so empowered can help plan, carry out, and evaluate an organization's communications with publics and thereby positively contribute to an organization's ability to meet its goals.

The work roles that practitioners carry out, and the perceptions of those roles by senior executives, are a related aspect of managerial power. David M. Dozier and Glen M. Broom (1995) studied public relations roles extensively and contrasted the technical versus managerial roles with regard to involvement in decision making. As technicians, practitioners carry out production activities (e.g., writing, design, and distribution activities), but are not engaged in policy decision making. In the managerial role, practitioners also have research, problem-solving, and strategic-thinking capabilities, and they are held accountable for results. Professionals who possess managerial skills, experience, and a managerial worldview are more likely to gain membership in the dominant coalition, or access to its members.

Bruce K. Berger and Bryan H. Reber (2006) extended the managerial perspective by exploring public relations power at individual and functional levels. They identified five types of influence resources that individual practitioners and functional teams can develop and use in the dominant coalition and in other decision-making arenas to try to influence decisions. These types of power sources are (1) individual (experience, skills, and personal qualities); (2) structural, as noted above; (3) relational (coalitions, social networks, relationships); (4) informational (research data, political intelligence, control over information); and (5) systemic (professional codes and standards, measures of the value of practice). They concluded that practitioners must engage in strategic power

relations to compete with other individuals and groups, all of whom use similar influence resources to affect decision making.

Membership in organizational power circles carries advantages. It signifies that formal authority has been granted to the public relations professional and provides regular access to key decision makers and to more strategic information. Being present in strategic circles also provides professionals with opportunities to speak, advocate, debate, and actively participate in strategic decision making. Not all public relations leaders are members of the dominant coalition. They may be too passive, limited by their lack of business or organizational knowledge or expertise, or inexperienced in organizational politics and power relations.

Important structural-functional forms of power for practitioners include participation of the public relations leader in strategic management processes of the organization; the leader's membership in the dominant coalition, or a direct reporting relationship to an executive who is a member of the dominant coalition; and a skilled and strongly equipped and integrated communication function that is separated structurally from other functions in the organization.

Other views of power in public relations compete with the managerial perspective. A rhetorical/discourse perspective focuses on organizational discourses or texts that contend to construct and shape meaning, and practitioners are sometimes seen as discourse technologists. A critical perspective critiques the practice and views public relations as power in the service of large, dominating organizations that attempt to dictate and control meaning. A variety of sociological perspectives examine how public relations helps organizations acquire legitimacy in the larger social system.

Bruce K. Berger

See also Critical Theory; Excellence Theory; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Discursive; Power, Symbolic; Rhetorical Theory; Systems Theory

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POWER, AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Power as social construction means that power involves enactment processes that form identities, values, and interpretations of the world. When power is understood as a social construction, it is regarded as something that exists everywhere and affects everybody in a society, also those who traditionally are believed to have power (i.e., the powerful). In this understanding, power directs and controls people by managing their “soul.” Thus, power is exercised as a covered control through upbringing and socialization into cultures, and teaches people how to behave to be successful within different cultures and communities.

From a power perspective, people are not completely free to pursue their own interpretations, and by following norms, values, and knowledge in a culture, people collectively enact and reproduce a social order. This implicit power exercise is very effective, since members of a culture automatically control each other and secure that the social order is maintained. Power as a social construction broadens the understanding of power, which often is considered as something one-sided and entirely negative—one person’s ability to affect and dominate others (i.e., *sovereign power*). Power is perceptual and is produced and maintained through communication. Consequently, this understanding of power changes how power relations between an organization and its publics are apprehended.

Power as a social construction is based on the thinking of Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckmann, and Michel Foucault, among others. These scholars belong to social constructionism, which is a tradition that focuses on interactions and communication that create and uphold a social reality. Berger and Luckmann (1966) declared that social realities and identities are produced and reproduced through discourses that are dominating in a society. Foucault studied discourses that

he perceived as historically produced systems of ideas, which set frames of the “truth.” According to Foucault (1980), discourses shape what people believe is true, natural, and normal. Power operates here on a deep and often unconscious level. However, Foucault also stressed that people have potentials to make resistance and make their own choices. Power is therefore not to be taken as something *a priori*—it is always subject to renegotiation and change through communication.

During childhood and adolescence, people learn their mother tongue and get access to a language that directs thinking and sensemaking. Karl E. Weick (1995) claimed that words in a language matter to both self and to a larger collectivity. People use words from society, from vocabularies of organizations, vocabularies of professions and so forth in order to make sense of what is happening. Weick stressed that there never is a perfect matching between words and the world, but from a power perspective words influence understanding and sensemaking of the reality. Words define and accordingly affect what people see but also cover alternative understandings; words benefit certain legitimized views of reality. Hence, words, languages, and cultures which are socially constructed, make up a frame within which people make sense of the world. There is consequently a natural relation between power and communication. Communication is a tool for exercising and reproducing power, and power relations are enacted through discursive practices and daily interactions.

Organizational members with formal hierarchical positions and those with access to valuable resources (e.g., expertise, knowledge, and networks) have larger possibilities to exercise power. Through sensegiving processes, these persons can enforce their understanding on other, dependent persons. Such power exercise does not occur explicitly, and organizational members are in most cases not aware of this delimitation. Power is most treacherous when individuals are affected by subtle, understated messages that become part of their consciousness without their awareness.

Public relations as an idea and a practice is profoundly related to power as social construction, since it mainly consists of word producing, sensemaking, and framing activities where certain legitimate understandings of the world are communicated to different publics. Activities of public

relations officers (e.g., writing press releases and articles in the house magazine, planning and producing publicity campaigns, lobbying and meetings with internal and external stakeholders) all have in common that they are political because the overall goal is to affect others' perception of the socially constructed world. Public relations activities are generally executed by persons with some kind of formal position and access to resources, and thereby have good possibilities to influence others. Although it is important to emphasize that even public relations officers are affected by power through dominant hegemonies, it is also important to underline that coworkers and other publics are not powerless but, rather, are active sensemakers. They can resist power, for example by actively reinterpreting or neglecting public relations material and activities. Additionally, social media have made it even easier to find alternative understandings of the reality and mobilize different forms of resistance. Internal and external publics and stakeholders can utilize the potentials of social media to suggest alternative agendas, to start consumer revolts or boycotts by engaging active publics that advocate different opinions, and so forth. There are several examples of consumer activism that challenge established social order and propagate for other views in order to change ideologies of consumption. Consumer movements and media activism is powerful and have forced many organizations to change their activities. Ideally, public relations can function as enabler of collaboration and co-created meaning between an organization and its publics, and facilitate that the power struggles between organizations and different publics are productive and generate creative solutions.

Mats Heide

See also Activism; Agenda-Setting Theory; Co-Creation of Meaning Theory; Critical Theory; Discourse Theory and Analysis; Foucault, Michel, and Public Relations; Framing Theory; Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, Discursive; Power, Symbolic; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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POWER, DISCURSIVE

Discursive power is played out through the construction and popularization of meanings designed to advance particular interests. More generally, power is a central dynamic in society; it provides the rationale for all of our institutional arrangements as well as our day-to-day interactions. Discursive power is also a central dynamic within public relations practice and, therefore, a central concept for public relations theory and research. Through the exercise of discursive power, public relations practitioners act on behalf of governments, organizations, and individuals to influence or transform sociopolitical regimes and effect socio-cultural change.

Stewart Clegg, David Courpasson, and Nelson Phillips (2006) contend that power may be understood both as the capability to do certain things and as a source of control over others. The latter understanding of power has strongly negative connotations that are linked to wars, despotic regimes, and the petty tyrannies exercised within organizations. However, power as a capability can be viewed more positively, as is the case, for example, when we think of the empowerment of individuals. As Michel Foucault (1980) argued, power can be perceived as positive and productive as well as repressive and destructive. Our view of power is thus highly contextual and may change depending on the circumstances in which it is exercised.

Discursive power is relational and is played out in a myriad of processes and practices. As Foucault (1980) argued, power is “not something that is acquired, seized or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian relations” (Clegg et al., 2006, p. 94). This conception of discursive power leads us to focus on

the relationships between and the strategies deployed by the actors within a discourse. The objective for actors engaged in discursive power struggles is to normalize certain ideas and thereby establish particular regimes of meaning that support the interests of those actors.

Power becomes visible when it is enacted, and discursive power is often enacted through the discursive practices of public relations practitioners. Drawing on Norman Fairclough (1992), discursive practice is understood as the practice, “not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning” (p. 64). Such social constructions, resulting from discursive processes, create a textual justification of power and power resources.

The art of signifying the world within texts is central to the work of public relations practitioners. In crafting texts—such as speeches, webpages, media releases, and tweets—practitioners are not neutrally reflecting a preexisting reality. Instead, they are engaged in the active process of attempting to legitimize and popularize particular ways of understanding the concepts, causes, individuals, and organizations they represent. From this perspective, public relations practitioners may be seen as engaged in discursive contests over meaning through the production of texts.

Ian Parker (1992) was one of the first theorists to suggest that discourses are made up of chains of associated texts, which draw on one another to establish, maintain, and contest particular meanings. As Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy (2002) contended,

Texts are not meaningful individually; it is only through their interconnection with other texts, the different discourses on which they draw, and the nature of their production, dissemination and consumption that they are made meaningful. (p. 4)

In making sense of a specific text, humans draw on their prior knowledge of similar texts and of the norms and rules of the discourse context within which the text is situated. If, for instance, someone lacks context for a text, say a scrap of paper with a few words written on it, the person might likely ask, “but what does it mean?” The words are clear, but the meaning may still be

obscure. It is our understanding of discourses that enables us to derive meaning from texts.

Meanings that are circulated and recirculated within discourses may attain the legitimacy of knowledge, and knowledge is inextricably caught up with the concept of discursive power. The most influential contribution to our understanding of the relationship between power and knowledge within discourse theory is undoubtedly found in the work of Foucault. In his major work, titled *Power/Knowledge*, Foucault (1980), argued, “The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power” (p. 52). For example, the whole academic enterprise may be seen as an example of the production and reproduction of a particular discursive power/knowledge configuration. A university has the power to grant various ideas the status of knowledge and various individuals the status of knowledge experts. The collective status of knowledge experts held by academics, in turn, underpins the power of the university. Thus, power/knowledge configurations are mutually reinforcing within discourse.

The effects of public relations practice are seen within discursive power/knowledge configurations. Its success is evident when desired meanings become established as knowledge. It is also at work when established power/knowledge configurations are brought into question. For example, the ongoing campaign that publicizes the views of the few scientists who dispute the validity of the science of global warming, leads many to question whether global warming is “real.” William Freudenburg and Violetta Muselli (2010) argue that, as a result of this campaign, the way in which knowledge is validated within the science system has been brought into question, with allegations that dissenting views are suppressed. Power/knowledge configurations should not therefore be seen as stable: there is always the potential for contest and change. As Clegg et al. (2006) contend, “While discourse shapes power relations at a moment in time, over time the actions of differentially powerful agents accrete and modify discourses” (p. 294). Practitioners may be seen as central agents in such change processes. As Judy Motion and Shirley Leitch (1996) have discussed elsewhere, their role in social change has been characterized by Fairclough (1992, p. 91) as that of “discourse technologists.”

Through the creation and dissemination of texts, public relations practitioners engage in an ongoing contestation of meaning. The prize to be won is the legitimacy of specific discursive power/knowledge configurations which advance or hinder particular interests.

Shirley Leitch and Judy Motion

See also Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, as Social Construction; Power/Knowledge and Public Relations; Power Resource Management Theory

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POWER, SYMBOLIC

Symbolic power is central to the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1991; 1997). Most simply, it may be defined as the power to define reality in a way that others perceive as normalized and legitimate, failing to recognize the interests that underpin that particular version of the world. “Reality” refers not only to a particular event, but also to relations, behaviors, attitudes and values that are perceived to be appropriate and “normal” in a particular social context. Those who enjoy symbolic power tend to be positioned at the top of the social hierarchy, enjoying a status underpinned by attributions of symbolic value that give them the power

to construct a version of reality that others are unlikely to contest. As Pierre Bourdieu explains, because symbolic power is about the ability to “name” a version of reality, language is central to its operation.

Symbolic power is the ability to define a whole context rather than singular aspects of it. Dominated individuals buy into the legitimacy of the whole, and their position is constituted within that whole. Therefore, they tend not to recognize the legitimacy of alternative perspectives. Moreover, to challenge one or other aspect of this reality is to challenge the principles that underpin the whole—and therefore to destabilize one’s place in the world. On the basis of this, Bourdieu argued that symbolic power is relatively stable.

In this sense, Bourdieu’s ideas align with Gramscian notions of hegemony, where social values are manipulated by dominant groups in society in order to maintain their own position. There are also echoes of Karl Marx’s false consciousness in Bourdieu’s tendency to emphasize the degree to which misrecognition reduces dominated groups to alternative views of society. However, Bourdieu differed from both these theorists in that he couches his work in the context of separate fields, spaces of competitive social relations that have their own logic and where symbolic power manifests differently. These different fields notwithstanding, he does argue that there are two overarching fields, of power and the economy, which encompass all other fields and shape their respective structures.

Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic power is particularly suited to public research in two ways. The first relates to the occupational purpose. Public relations works specifically in the interests of particular organizations, with the objective of improving their position relative to competitors and persuading audiences of the legitimacy of their activities. The manipulation of language is central to the success of public relations; disguising organizational interests in campaign outcomes is exercised through the construction of messages that emphasize benefits for audiences rather than for communicators. In this sense, public relations specifically aims to generate misrecognition of these interests and persuade audiences that their concurrence of a particular message is both acceptable and personally advantageous. At the same time, it tends to

normalize particular values, attitudes, and behaviors (e.g., consumption, altruism, citizenship responsibilities) and marginalize others. In this sense, the occupation is understood as one that generates symbolic power on behalf of others. While this work may be understood in purely commercial terms as more or less successful, in sociocultural terms the effects of this work are to produce particular hierarchies of value through the meanings associated with the products, services, or behaviors that public relations promotes.

Symbolic power is also a useful heuristic for research that focuses on the ways in which the occupational field is constructed. The object of research is on the assets and resources that practitioners draw on to make their way up the public relations hierarchy, and in particular those resources that are symbolically valued, such that laying claim to them has greater meaning and importance than their objective attributes suggest (e.g., across the field as a whole multinational clients are seen as more prestigious than local community associations; political or financial public relations are seen as more prestigious than a specialization in ethnic communications).

Bourdieu called these resources symbolic capital. The more symbolic capital one has, the more likely it is that one can exercise symbolic power in the field. The question for researchers is to what extent this symbolic capital is available to all practitioners, or only to certain types of practitioners. The matter of who is able to exercise symbolic power in the field significantly affects the degree to which existing hierarchies are sustained or changed. This in turn affects the openness of the field, practitioner career trajectories and, more widely, the relative importance of different groups in society as audiences for public relations work (because more resources are likely to be allocated to types of public relations that generate prestige rather than those that are inconsequential for practitioners' or consultancies' position in the field).

The latter point is crucial because access to public relations is a means for minority voices to articulate their positions in the public sphere. Yet, if these groups are neglected because they do not represent symbolic capital for practitioners, they are disadvantaged, ultimately to the detriment of democracy. In this sense, the way in which public relations generates itself and uses symbolic power

is central to its ability to contribute to Robert Heath's notion of the fully functioning society.

In public relations research, the notion of symbolic power has yet to be widely used, although Lee Edwards provided an initial example of how the practice exerts symbolic power through its cultural intermediary function.

Lee Edwards

See also Fully Functioning Society Theory; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Discursive; Power/Knowledge and Public Relations; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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POWER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT THEORY

Robert L. Heath (2008) claimed “power and control are two of the molar concepts in the theory, research, and best practice of public relations” (p. 2). The fundamental assumption of power resource management theory is that those who have control over resources (also known as stakes) have differing degrees of power over one or more of the following: decision-making processes, resource recognition and/or allocation, criteria building, interpretation of events or communication, agenda setting, issues management, and the like. In essence, there are as many resources as there are economic, political, and social contexts. Definitions of what might be considered resources and the values assigned to

them are largely a phenomenon of social construction. Resource definitions and values can be characterized as states instead of traits. Definitions of resources as well as assigned values can and often do change through ideological discussions or contests over what is or what should be.

Traditionally, however, public relations resources are those “things” that have the potential to accomplish organizational goals. In the arena of activism, Heath suggested that

power resource management entails the ability to employ economic, political and social sanctions and rewards through means such as boycotts, strikes, embargoes, layoffs, lockouts, legislation, regulation, executive orders, police action, and judicial review . . . [It] assumes the ability of a group, a company, or a governmental agency to give or withhold rewards—stakes. (1997, p. 161)

Heath argued that power and control are linked to legitimacy, in that legitimacy gives an organization (or individual with a public image) the public right to make arguments relevant to its position, even if that position is against current public opinion.

In an earlier discussion, Barry Barnes (1988) wrote that power resource management theory conceptualizes power as being “embedded in society as a whole” (p. 61); however, not everyone or every organization has the discretion to use power. “The possession of power is the possession of discretion in the use of that power. When one person [or organization] is said to have more power than another it is a matter of the one having the discretion over a greater capacity for action than the other” (p. 61). Heath (2008) might argue this discretion is really legitimacy.

The complexities of understanding power and the discretionary or legitimate use of it in public relations become more clear when contextualized among three levels of power. The first, and most traditional, conceptualization of power assumes that one has power over another to the extent that one can get the other to do something they (or it) would otherwise not do. This is the most obvious presence of power. Persuading members of a public to contribute to a new philanthropic effort or to adopt a specific interpretation of an organization’s intended identity over an alternative one are examples of the first level of power.

The second level assumes that power comes from the mobilization of bias, meaning the ability to represent sectional interests as the interests of the masses within a given population; the definitions and values of a few are made to take precedence over the definitions and values held by the majority. For example, when public relations strategies and tactics are used to develop consensus around economic, political, or social issues (regardless of party lines) to favor one group of the public over others that have stakes in the outcome, then they are being used for the mobilization of bias. It is important to note, however, that this process is rarely a conscious one in the minds of the majority participants.

The third level assumes that power, and the discretionary use of it, come from the ability of an individual or organization to engage in discursive practices resulting in the creation of a given population’s wants and needs. At this level, the populations under study accept the construction of their wants and needs by parties other than themselves without question. The economic, political, and social norms by which a population operates and is governed are accepted as real and immutable, when in reality they are the results of the reification and institutionalization of the mobilization of bias. Public relations strategies and tactics can be and have been used in the institutionalization process. They also have been and can be used to challenge institutionalized norms, thereby bringing about change and new ideas.

Then, from the standpoint of power resource management theory, power may be viewed as coming from the discretion, socially given, to determine and/or manage valued resources in complex ways within socially meaningful economic, political, and social arenas. To the extent that public relations is used to construct, add meaningful value to, and exercise discretion over resources, it is integral to power.

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See also Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Discursive; Power, Symbolic

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POWER/KNOWLEDGE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The term *power/knowledge* is associated with French philosopher Michel Foucault, who was interested in the sites of modern power, the forms it took, and the ways in which it was exercised. As Foucault peeled back layers of power, he came to define society by its multiplicity of fields of knowledge or expertise. Foucault maintained that knowledge is “both a creator of power and a creation of power,” and that power is “both a creator of knowledge and a creation of knowledge” (Motion & Leitch, 2007, 265). For Foucault, power and knowledge are joined together as “power/knowledge,” an inseparable, interrelated concept signifying the struggle and negotiation inherent in all human relationships.

According to Foucault, power/knowledge is joined together through discourse, a term he used to refer to everything written or spoken about a specialist practice/knowledge, “controlling” those who lack expertise in a specialist field. Experts make statements about their specialist area of practice, such as the biosciences, engineering, finance, law, media, medicine, policymaking, sports, or telecommunications. By first establishing and then regularly repeating these statements wherever possible, and by constantly measuring, analyzing, and defining aspects of their field, experts create *regimes of truth* governed by discursive rules of their field.

Experts, for example, constructed “obesity” into a field of medical expertise. In so doing, these experts established rules that identify the obese, while regularly conducting research about obesity, thus establishing a modern regime of truth in which obesity is cast as a health problem, even a disease. This regime of truth now exerts power over policymakers, food manufacturers, parents, schools, and consumers, to name just a few.

So how does power/knowledge connect with public relations? Arguably, in two ways. First, it is a specialist field of expertise governed by discursive rules. These rules may vary across different regions and countries. For example, in certain countries it is expected that public relations practitioners have a university degree, are able to write well, and possibly even hold industry certification. Public relations practitioners may be expected to have a good network of media contacts. Increasingly, young practitioners entering public relations are expected to understand how to design, manage, and deliver social media campaigns. These are examples of discursive rules that govern public relations knowledge and expertise.

In larger markets, public relations developed into a set of specialist subfields, constructing further regimes of truth. These subspecialisms of public relations include these discourse contexts: consumer, fashion, financial, technology, travel, and public affairs. Intense market competition, together with the proliferation of specialist media, enabled these subspecialties to exist as public relations practitioners choose to differentiate themselves by establishing a unique set of discursive rules to govern evolving fields of expertise, thus asserting power/knowledge. In this way, technology public relations practitioners may need to have in-depth knowledge of the latest computer hardware or software, while financial practitioners may need to know various market rules, and/or possess skills like issuing company results via the stock exchange.

The second way in which power/knowledge is connected with public relations is potentially more important than the first. Sites of modern power increasingly involve specialist fields contesting other experts through discourse. Public relations operates within discourses privileging one set of messages over others, often translating expert terminology into messages that intended audiences can easily understand. In this way, public relations

activity is the servant of global power relations, producing statements about expert practices that help to establish and maintain these regimes of truth and propagate power/knowledge.

Examples of public relations' influence can be seen in some of the contentious global debates of our time. The prospect of climate change is one such global debate where public relations techniques are used not just to assert evidence of man-made climate change but also to contest such evidence and produce competing accounts. This is because many of the specialist fields involved in this long-running debate use public relations to assert power/knowledge in climate change discourses. Some of the specialist fields involved in the resulting discursive struggles and negotiations include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), academic think tanks and activist groups, governments and policymakers, multinational corporations that extract fossil fuels, as well as newer companies producing "green" energy, and financial institutions involved in "green" trading or investing.

What sorts of tools do public relations practitioners use to assert, contest, or transform power/knowledge? Some of the typical discursive tools used include feature stories, interviews, speeches, and thought leadership. Of these, thought leadership—in the form of proprietary research and white papers or policy papers—is a particularly useful way to promote power/knowledge. Thought leadership provides experts with a means of explaining industry issues or analyzing trends in an in-depth manner, which establishes trust in their knowledge and expertise. Thought leadership also provides specialist fields with a platform to present new ideas or new directions that might result in greater profits or political influence.

Finally, what of regular citizens? Do they possess power/knowledge? Perhaps so. The changing nature of global media has certainly transformed the interaction between laypeople and expert systems. In many countries, individuals have increased power to scrutinize experts and question their knowledge, sharing, and disseminating views and skepticisms widely via social media. People can question government and corporate announcements instantaneously, join in online discussions, and debate and engage in

public relations activity themselves in order to generate new knowledge and promote new perspectives from the bottom up.

Clea Bourne

See also Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Discursive; Power, Symbolic; Power Resource Management Theory; Social Media; Zones of Meaning

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PRACTICE/PRACTITIONER

Generally, public relations literature refers to *practice/practitioner* in one of four ways: (1) in a discussion of differences between academic and practitioner with suggestions for linking the two worldviews, (2) in a discourse of broadly prescribed goals for those who are in public relations, (3) in a critique of ethnocentrism in public relations work beyond U.S. shores, and (4) in a review of concerns about respectability of the profession and ethics of public relations practice.

First, many have written about an academic-practitioner dichotomy by drawing attention to the differing orientations between the two. This discussion offered advice for bridging the gap given a long-standing critique that academia and practice could be better integrated. Basically, an academic teaches in higher education settings, builds public relations theory and conducts research, and focuses on public policy issues inherent to organization–publics relationships. A public relations practitioner strategically

serves as a member of an organization's management team and deals with marketplace dynamics. Public relations practice ranges from pure problem solving to pure relationship building as practitioners work in for-profit (public relations agencies, corporations, companies) and not-for-profit settings (government, education, fundraising, trade organizations). A license is not required to practice public relations, yet the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) encourages practitioners to earn the accredited public relations (APR) credential.

A practitioner should have a solid understanding of their complex pluralistic society and possess beneficial knowledge of human behavior in order to support organizations in setting and achieving goals. A foundation in psychology, sociology, political science, and management science is useful. Moreover, practitioners should be well versed in popular culture, social trends, technology, and political policy issues. Practitioners act as consultants, mediators, decision makers, and public voices in the community, with employees, in trade/industry, and as media liaisons. Required skills include being able to write and speak well in multiple contexts, analyze and interpret publics' opinions, conduct research, set objectives and measure results, counsel senior-level management, and manage resources. Also, practitioners mentor public relations student-protégé interns who garner beyond-the-classroom experience that bodes well for them when interviewing for a full-time position.

Alternatively, public relations academics conduct research to build the public relations body of knowledge and enhance public relations' reputation as an ethical profession, and in doing so offer best-practices advice. Several academic journals publish scholars' research findings, including *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Public Relations Inquiry*, *Public Relations Review*, and *Public Relations Quarterly*. Public relations scholars set the tone for early theory building when they examined practitioners' roles, conflict and crisis reduction, gender and ethnicity workplace issues, globalization, effectiveness measurement, social issues/case studies, and more. Overall, public relations scholars draw from theoretical perspectives of diverse social science fields to offer multidisciplinary perspectives.

In an effort to mend a disconnect between the academic literature and public relations practice, James E. Grunig (2006) posited that a mutually

beneficial outcome of public relations scholarship is to improve public relations practice. Similarly, Karla K. Gower (2006) offered up *application* as common ground connecting the two orientations and urged academics to make their research more useful to practitioners. Earlier, the 1995 *Manager's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communications Management* by David Dozier, Larissa A. Grunig, and James E. Grunig was the first major work to link public relations theory and practice. Expanding on this project's recommendations, Prabu David introduced a 3Ps model of professional values, practice, and pragmatics; three anchors for accommodating both theoretical issues and practical constraints associated with public relations work. The framework is particularly useful for examining "interactions between professional practice and values within the context of situational pragmatics" (David, 2004, p. 200).

Second, public relations literature refers to practice/practitioner in connection with broad goals for performing public relations well, including acknowledgement that it is practiced within larger socioeconomic milieu. Specifically, Derina Holtzhausen and Rosina Voto (2002) posited that public relations practitioners conduct themselves as a conscience of organizations, a postmodern view suggesting that practitioners perform as activists on behalf of organizations and other entities. Characterizing today's public relations practice as "fluid and complex," Gower (2006) opined that critical examinations of what "practitioners do and the consequences of that practice for society" are essential (pp. 177, 180).

Third, a growing subset of public relations literature that refers to practice/practitioner offers critique of ethnocentrism in the context of public relations practice beyond U.S. shores. For example, T. Kenn Gaither and Patricia A. Curtin (2008) opined about limitations of a Western neoliberal model of international practice embedded in international case studies that compare/contrast public relations in one country or region to that of the United States. Such a basis involves using an ethnocentric lens and is unsound and unfair given that geopolitical nations operate under more diverse ideologies and economic systems than those in the United States.

Finally, much public relations literature focuses on respectability and ethics of the practice/practitioner. Both practitioners and academics work diligently to improve unflattering characterizations

of the public relations field and to support ethical practice. On the whole, the basic tenants of ethical public relations practice have not changed significantly since Ivy Lee penned his *Declaration of Principles* in 1906. Reasoning that public relations practice makes it possible for “causes, industries, individuals, and institutions [to] make their voice heard in the public forum” (Cutlip, 1994, p. ix), others have tempered the charge by urging practitioners to circumvent the “seven deadly sins” (Broom & Sha, 2013, p. 51): overpromising what cannot be delivered, overselling public relations’ capabilities, underservicing by using junior staff (but promising senior staff attention), emphasizing financial results over performance, short-sightedness instead of long-term strategic thinking, enabling encroachment by lawyers and others, and violating ethical standards.

Warnings to avoid temptation to sidestep ethical principles may be rooted in the nature of power in public relations practice and its capitalist underpinnings. In the service of organizations and individuals, public relations practitioners seek to influence agendas, frame debates, and ultimately put facts and values into play and such influence too frequently is criticized as a dishonest means for narrow self-interests and propaganda. Lee Edwards (2009) posited that practitioners may legitimize actions of powerful companies and in turn, become privileged as individual professional practitioners (albeit sometimes unconsciously). This slippery-slope dynamic fosters potential to compromise a practitioner’s and the public relations profession’s ethics. Bruce K. Berger (2005) suggested that practitioners may be guilty of irresponsible advocacy rooted in powerful economic producers, but holds out hope that public relations can be equally effective in the service of nondominant coalitions and society overall. Through the years, public relations trade organizations and task forces have organized to advance the profession’s metamorphosis from press agency or publicity to reputable facilitator of two-way communication between organizations and constituents. Offering his vision for an eventual paradigm of public relations that adds value to a fully functioning society, Robert L. Heath (2006) called for ongoing “reflective soul searching to define the ethical status of what public relations practice does but does not destroy its soul” (p. 95).

Donnalyn Pompper

See also Accreditation; Advocacy; Codes of Ethics; Encroachment in Public Relations; Internship; Lee, Ivy; Postmodern Public Relations; Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, Symbolic; Power/Knowledge and Public Relations; Press Agency; Professional and Professionalism; Professionalism in Public Relations; Public Relations Society of America

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PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

The precautionary principle is a centerpiece of risk communication theory. From a public relations perspective, organizations engage in policy debates that have a simultaneous impact on them and their stakeholders. Uncertainty is inherent in all risk communication and decision making, as competing voices argue over the extent to which a risk exists, who it is likely to affect, and with what magnitude. As such, the debate centers on whether the presence of the risk, such as a chemical in food, poses a benefit or unacceptable harm. Typically science cannot solve the issue with certainty.

Thus, discourse employing the precautionary principle is a means of managing uncertainty. Steve Maguire and Jaye Ellis (2009) defined the precautionary principle as “a guide for decision making about risks—and inevitably, therefore, about risk-generating activities and technologies—in a context of scientific uncertainty” (p. 119). The essence of the precautionary principle, from a communication and risk decision-making standpoint, requires a willingness of all relevant parties to recognize, analyze, and openly discuss uncertainty in a public format with the objective of preventing harm or at least keeping it within acceptable limits.

Burden of Proof

At present, this principle is applied in policy decisions that are based on risks to the environment. It is seen as a “conservative” assessment championing the rubric of “do no harm.” When organizations seek to harvest natural resources or build new facilities, for instance, there is an inherent impact on the environment. The organization may see this impact as trivial or sufficiently outweighed by

potential benefits. Conversely, residents or environmental groups may judge the environmental impact as risky and intolerable. The principle provides a standard framework for structuring public deliberation of such risk issues especially when the consequences of a risk can only be determined over time.

Public debates on risk issues typically focus on scientific evidence that notable harm will or will not occur based on the changes advocated by the organization. In some cases, however, the scientific evidence is conflicting, sparse, or simply not available. In these cases, the precautionary principle asserts that the changes advocated by the organization should not be implemented until better evidence is available. This proposition places the burden of proof on the organization proposing the implementation of new technology, access to resources, or new facilities. Guided by the precautionary principle, burden of proof refers to which party has the responsibility for proving that a proposed change will or will not create unacceptable levels of risk.

If the principle is not implemented, organizations can argue that the burden of proof lies with those opposing the proposed change. From this perspective, those opposing change are obligated to generate conclusive evidence that the harm caused by the proposed action outweighs the benefit. Shifting the burden of proof may appear as a subtle philosophical distinction; however, the impact on communication and public policy is considerable. From the rationale of the precautionary principle, if an organization cannot establish that the changes they seek create a negligible risk to citizens and the environment, the proposed changes should be delayed until sufficient evidence is available.

The precautionary principle is applied in varying degrees ranging from modest to aggressive. Modest applications encourage earnest dialogue among the organization, local government, residents, and other stakeholders. The intent is that no decision is made that fails to account for the needs of any party involved in the debate. Aggressive applications specifically mandate that “proponents of the activity”—not the public—“bear the burden of proof” (Maguire & Ellis, 2009, p. 120) for meeting an evidence threshold establishing safety before the proposed action is completed.

Precautionary Discourse

Although the precautionary principle has other legal implications, the dialogue generated by the shifting burden of proof is of paramount interest to public relations scholars. In part, rich dialogue is needed because the evidence available in risk situations is ambiguous. In other words, the same evidence can be interpreted in different ways. In many cases, a clear and singular calculation of risk levels is unattainable. Myles Leslie (2006) observed, “the inevitable failure involved in applying mathematics to the incalculable requires the precautionary principle to acknowledge other emotional, judgmental ways of viewing the world” (p. 372). Thus, the uncertainty and ambiguity found in many risk issues requires public discourse. A public discourse of precaution “admits evidence not just from objective reality, but also from people’s fears, from the way they perceive their world to be risky” (Leslie, 2006, p. 372).

Ideally, a discourse of precaution is a means through which the level of risk can “be identified, a course charted, and precautionary actions taken to ameliorate or prevent a potential threat to human and environmental health on behalf of current and future generations” (D’Souza & Taghian, 2010, p. 193). Ultimately, then, a precautionary discourse introduces three criteria to a public discussion of risk: levels of uncertainty must be acknowledged, a range of options should be proposed and discussed, and all relevant parties should be engaged in the discourse. From the perspective of the precautionary principle, a failure to meet these minimum criteria should result in rejecting the proposed change.

Applications of the Precautionary Principle

Not surprisingly, the precautionary principle draws criticism. Some contend that the precautionary principle creates unreasonable burdens for industry and society that foster economic hardship and limit innovation (Ratzan, 2002). There is also inconsistency in identifying the point in deliberation where a threshold of sufficient evidence is generated in favor of moving forward with a proposed endeavor. Without a clear threshold, opposing groups can unendingly claim that more evidence is needed. Thus, there is potential for abusing the precautionary principle. Moreover,

Leslie (2006) observes that external pressure can overwhelm those implementing the precautionary principle. She explained that when “placed under enough stress by their tasks, even agencies like the public-health units will retreat from exclusively precautionary reasoning” (p. 373). Although these concerns are valid, “at its best, the precautionary principle, redistributes the burden of scientific uncertainty about risks, triggering and democratizing societal deliberations as to whether and how to respond” to potential hazards (p. 134).

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See also Collaborative Decision Making; Risk Communication; Risk Perception; Risk Society

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PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARIES

Today, a White House press secretary’s primary responsibility is to be the official spokesperson for the President of the United States and their administration. Additionally, the press secretary’s responsibilities include meeting with the president and other senior administration officials, conducting press briefings, helping the president prepare for press conferences, handling press arrangements for presidential trips, fulfilling interview and information requests, writing and disseminating news releases, meeting with the press secretaries of various departments, and gathering information about the administration.

Historically, some White House press secretaries acted as policy advisers and speech writers, helped make personnel decisions, and have been the voice of reason in times of crisis. Depending on their relationship, some press secretaries were even able to speak in a frank and direct manner with the president. Thirty individuals, 28 men and 2 women, have served the president of the United States in the capacity of press secretary.

It was widely accepted that George Ackerson was the first individual whose sole responsibility was to handle press relations on behalf of the president. Although Ackerson did not hold the official title of press secretary, President Herbert Hoover employed Ackerson in that capacity from 1929 to 1931. The title given to Ackerson and the nine men who followed him in that position was secretary to the president. James Hagerty, who handled press relations for Dwight D. Eisenhower, was the last person to hold this title. In 1956, the title was dropped by legislation. As a result, Hagerty was the first person to officially hold the title of press secretary.

In the early years, the press secretary and his assistant primarily dealt with Washington-based print reporters and radio. But as communication technologies evolved, the press corps covering the president has grown. Subsequently, these changes in technology forced the Press Office staff to grow as well. Now, the White House Press Office employs several people who handle issues that deal with specific areas of the administration and whose responsibility it is to convey the “official administration position” to the press.

The White House Press Office currently falls under the jurisdiction of the White House Office of Communications, which was established by Richard M. Nixon in 1969.

Stephen Early, who ran Franklin D. Roosevelt’s press office, was the first press secretary to successfully handle the press and his success helped define the role of the press secretary for years to come. Charlie Ross, who was one of Harry Truman’s press secretaries, shared a unique relationship with Truman. They were boyhood friends growing up in Independence, Missouri; thus, Ross was a true administration “insider.” Perhaps the most successful press secretary was Hagerty. He is credited with expanding the role of the press secretary and adding the element of frankness to the post.

The following is a list of those individuals who either acted in the capacity of press secretary or held the official title: George Ackerson (1929–1931), Theodore Joslin (1931–1933), Stephen Early (1933–1945), J. Leonard Reinsch (1945), Jonathan Daniels (1945), Charlie Ross (1945–1950), Stephen Early (1950), Joseph Short (1950–1952), Roger Tubby (1952–1953), James Hagerty (1953–1961), Pierre Salinger (1961–1964), George Reedy (1964–1965), Bill Moyers (1965–1967), George Christian (1967–1969), Ronald “Ron” Ziegler (1969–1974), Jerald “Jerry” terHorst (1974), Ronald “Ron” Nessen (1974–1977), Joseph “Jody” Powell (1977–1981), James “Jim” Brady (1981–1989), Larry Speakes (1981–1987), Marlin Fitzwater (1987–1993), Margaret “Dee” Myers (1993–1994), Michael “Mike” McCurry (1994–1998), Joseph “Joe” Lockhart (1998–2000), Richard “Jake” Siewert (2000–2001), Lawrence “Ari” Fleischer (2001–2003), Scott McClellan (2003–2006), Robert “Tony” Snow (2006–2007), Dana Perino (2007–2009), Robert Gibbs (2009–2011), and Jay Carney (2011–present).

Adam E. Horn

See also Government Public Relations; Political Public Relations

PRESS AGENCY

Press agency is the practice of attracting the attention of the press through techniques that manufacture news, no matter how bizarre. Methods associated with press agency include staged events, publicity stunts, faux rallies or gatherings, spinning, and hype. A common practice in the late 1800s and early 1900s, press agency is not part of mainstream public relations. Rather, it is a practice primarily associated with major entertainment-related events, such as Hollywood premieres and boxing events.

The goal of press agency is to attract attention rather than gain understanding. Although it is considered an old-fashioned reference, even today, the term *press agent* is sometimes used interchangeably with *publicist* in traditional Broadway theatre and motion picture industries. Today’s

entertainment industries are populated with publicists rather than press agents. Publicists are individuals skilled in media relations and adept at getting the name of clients or events in the media by carefully constructing messages that inform, educate, and persuade. Some are astute in branding and positioning strategies to aid their clients' careers. On the other hand, press agents typically want attention—good or bad—in most any form.

Press agency has been called persuasion for short-term advantage, through the use of truth bending and even distortion, but it can also be simply the staging of provocative acts in order to get publicity and draw attention to an individual, event, or cause.

The evolution of public relations can be described by four models: press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetric, and two-way symmetric. The earliest, which is the press agency/publicity model, is described as one-way communication in which truth is not an essential component up to the most sophisticated form of practice, which is the two-way symmetric model, focusing on mutual understanding, mediation, and two-way balanced flow of information. Therefore, it is understandable that one of the earliest proponents of the press agency/publicity model was Phineas Taylor (P. T.) Barnum, the famed American showman and promoter who put Gen. Tom Thumb on exhibit and launched a mobile circus featuring Jumbo the elephant and freak shows. Barnum wrote letters both praising and criticizing his circus show to newspapers under an assumed name.

In the early part of his career, Edward L. Bernays was a master of press agency. He persuaded 10 debutantes to hold up Lucky Strike cigarettes, manufactured by his client, the American Tobacco Company, as “torches of freedom” while participating in New York’s Easter parade. In 1929, Bernays staged a global news event by organizing the “Light’s Golden Jubilee,” a worldwide celebration commemorating the 50th anniversary of the electric light bulb for his client, General Electric. Bernays managed to secure several prominent individuals for the event, including car-maker Henry Ford, electricity scientist Thomas Edison, and President Herbert Hoover.

Henry Rogers, a founder of Rogers and Cowan, one of the largest and most successful West Coast

entertainment publicity firms, became well known when he promoted an unknown contract player for Columbia Pictures named Rita Hayworth. He contacted *Look* magazine with a telegram from the Fashion Couturiers Association of America, a fictitious group, claiming that Hayworth was the best-dressed off-screen actress. *Look* magazine took the bait and put Hayworth on the cover and printed 10 pages of photographs.

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Barnum, P. T.; Bernays, Edward; Entertainment Industry Publicity/Promotion; Promotion; Publicist; Publicity; Spin

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PRESS KIT

The traditional press kit is a package of information put together for a special event, such as a press conference, new product launch, or media preview event. Its use is reserved for events that merit more extensive information than a standard news release provides. While traditional press kits are not used as an everyday public relations tool, their online counterparts are a common component of the information that organizations provide on their websites.

The focus of a press kit is always information. The media should find the kit to be a helpful resource when reporting on the event. Materials that do not further this purpose should not be included in the kit. Maintaining the focus on information enables a public relations practitioner to provide the media with helpful material and avoid the appearance of impropriety (and clutter).

The anchor piece in a press kit is a news release about the topic of the special event. Other written pieces are included, as appropriate, in support of the news release. These can include additional news releases, fact sheets, backgrounders, biographies, photos with cutlines, and article reprints. Product samples are included when they are the focus of the event, but not in excessive amounts.

Press kits are typically packaged in a two-pocket folder. The folder itself is usually specially printed for the event. This additional expense is another reason press kits are not used on a daily basis. The folder should look professional and carry through with the theme of the event, if one exists, or the branding of the organization. Inside, a business card insert cutout is fairly standard on one of the pockets. When the folder is lying open, the main news release should be the top item in the right pocket (where the eyes naturally go first), with a table of contents on top in the left pocket. Although not always included, a table of contents can be quite helpful, especially in a large press kit. It should list, in order, what is contained in each pocket. Again, the purpose is to assist the media in covering the story, and anything that furthers that purpose is included.

Press kits are provided to members of the media at the event for which they are designed. Those who can't attend the event are sent a press kit immediately after the event concludes. Another option, and one that has grown in popularity, is to provide electronic press kits online through an organization's website. Many organizations have a button on their homepage that is a direct link to their online newsroom. A pdf of a large document is made available, as well as videos and all standard written tools and photos. A distinct advantage here is that large amounts of information are accessible at any time in a format easily used by the media. This aspect is essential in the world of the 24-hour news cycle. Finally, with the increasing use of corporate websites by individuals to gather information, particularly in the area of investor relations, having these specialized groupings of information available to anyone who cares to look for them provides a nonmediated method of reaching important publics.

Maribeth S. Metzler

See also Collateral; Media Relations; Media Release; Promotion; Publicity

PRIVATIZING PUBLIC OPINION (AND “PUBLICTIZING” PRIVATE OPINION)

Legions of books, articles, feature stories, and editorials decried the influence that large companies' version of the free market system has on the public opinion of the United States. That theme was central to the 2012 presidential campaign. Critics claim that corporations have the dollars and incentive to create a public opinion, and public policy arena that privileges the role and interests of large companies in society. As such, critics claim that instead of public opinion constraining undesirable corporate practices, industry justifies its practices by shaping a favorable and supportive public opinion.

Central to this discussion is the concept of privatizing public opinion. On this topic, Michael J. Sproule reasoned, “Organizations try to privatize public space by privatizing public opinions; this is, skillfully (one-sidedly) turning opinion in directions favorable to the corporation” (1989, p. 264). Endless pounding of the public collective mentality by messages supplied by deep-pocket corporations can lead the public to believe that what is good for industry is good for them. Recall one of the highlights of American popular culture: “What is good for General Motors is good for America.” Premises like these are offered to guide the interpretation and problem-solving efforts of key publics, a form of propaganda. Thus, we also encounter “banks too large to fail.”

The premise underpinning an era of General Motors advertising applied the premise, “What is good commercially for industry is good for Americans.” By this logic, Detroit automobile manufacturers used publicity and promotion to create a culture of new car ownership. Each fall, with great fanfare, the new models would roll off the design and assembly lines. The new season of automobiles was headline news. It was featured in newsreels at movie theaters and sufficiently important to *Life* magazine that an entire issue was devoted to the display of status and freedom in the shape of the latest models. These were carefully positioned and differentiated so that they demarked class structure. Of even greater relevance, the “true American” bought a new car each year—to have the latest model to show status and patriotism. Less trendy or affluent Americans were supposed to buy a new car

at least every three years. Americans owed their identity—and paycheck—to Detroit. It was the American way. Thus, public opinion was privatized.

Similarly, instead of adopting the premise, if banks are too big to fail and therefore need to be regulated and even broken up, the corporate logic was that banking was too necessary to the economy and complex for government to regulate the industry. Instead, it was the role of government to assure that the banks did not fail, no matter how egregious their mismanagement.

The evolution of this theme started in the middle of the 19th century as large industry replaced local or regional businesses. To operate as they preferred, the robber barons needed a favorable public opinion. They needed to be perceived as operating in the public interest. Although the first half of the 20th century saw a great deal of contentiousness over this view, the role industry played in World War II and postwar prosperity clearly demonstrated to believers in this version of the American way that the public owed deference to industry. It helped a million soldiers win the war and brought an era of prosperity that slowly put the Great Depression aside as a nightmare that had interrupted the American Dream. By the end of the 1950s, America had achieved the age of deference. Industry ruled supreme. It produced the cornucopia of goods and services.

If industry had privatized public opinion, the activism that marked the last four decades of the 20th century in the United States worked to “publicize” private opinion. Activists argued that industry must truly serve the public interest. The public interest defined by citizen activists—publics and stakeholders—would now tell industry the standards by which it would operate.

Out of this shifted equation, we had civil rights, consumer rights, environmental rights, animal rights, and so forth. The era of activism indicted the corporate view of public opinion and condemned many of the operating principles as violating what was the essence of the true American way. Industry did not have a right to clear-cut timber, strip mine minerals, or pollute indiscriminately to produce the American lifestyle. Activists were alarmed, for instance, when certain rivers changed color, since they suspected that manufacturers were changing dye colors and discharging their waste into the environment. Discharge into the environment became offensive rather than necessary.

Out of this dynamic clash of interests came a new sense of the definition of public relations. The 1960s launched increased interest into what became an issues management approach to corporate positioning and public communication. Dialogue replaced monologue. The definition of the principles and premises of society allowed for all voices to be heard. The dynamics of regulation and legislation changed; public trumped private on commerce matters.

A rhetorical view of public relations features the dialogue between factions. It sees efforts by industry to privatize public opinion as challenged by activists who argue for views that would “publicize” the private opinions of company executives, who must now position their companies and industries to avoid clashes with politicized activists. Public relations plays a robust role for all sides in this grand debate, in doing so it can put public back in control of private on commercial matters.

Robert L. Heath

See also Activism; Advertising; Age of Deference, End of the; Differentiation; Issues Management; Position and Positioning; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Discursive; Promotion; Propaganda; Public Interest; Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Publicity; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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PROACTIVITY AND REACTIVITY

In the world of public relations, being proactive instead of reactive can determine whether an organization thrives or dies. Proactive public relations is associated with strategic planning, whereas reactive public relations consists of a piecemeal approach to addressing problems and opportunities.

There are numerous reasons an organization should involve public relations in its long-range planning:

- The goals of public relations are coordinated with the goals of the entire organization.
- Strategies and tactics can be carefully thought out and developed rather than haphazardly put together.
- Programs feature a more positive rather than defensive approach.
- It's easier to formulate short-term, reactive plans when necessary—for example, in a crisis situation—if a long-term plan already exists.

Whether organizations lean toward proactive or reactive public relations depends on three factors: whether the organization is an open or closed system, how top management views the public relations function, and the role of public relations within the organization.

Open Versus Closed Systems

The survival of any kind of system is based on how well the parts of that system work together. Organizations are no different; they are systems that consist of interdependent parts working toward a common goal—successfully achieving the mission of the organization. The degree to which these parts work together may be influenced by whether they work in an open or closed system. Although no organization can be totally open or completely closed, every organization leans toward one or the other system.

The characteristics of an open system include honest, two-way communication cultivated by an atmosphere of trust. Open systems rely on feedback to adapt to changing situations and meet the expectations of their publics. Closed systems, on the other hand, foster an atmosphere of distrust that results in limited information being provided to key publics and little, if any, feedback. Closed systems risk the threat of dying because they are insensitive to their publics' needs and unwilling to change.

Characteristics associated with each system are often determined by the traits held by the senior management of an organization and, in particular, its chief executive officer.

The View From the Top

The chief executive officer and senior management are also main factors in how public relations is viewed within their organization and how proactive it is allowed to be. The perception senior management has of public relations often comes from how the function first came into existence within the organization. Was the position created because the CEO understood the value of public relations, as a result of a crisis, or has the department just always “been there”? The location of public relations on the organizational chart and how accessible the chief executive officer is to public relations are indicators of how senior management views the function.

Practitioners must also do their part to earn respect and maintain the support of management by engaging in honest relationships and keeping a track record of contributions to the organization's success. In addition to basic communication skills, public relations practitioners who possess knowledge of business and finance, problem solving, and research techniques are perceived as more strategic—and proactive—thinkers and are often given more opportunity to become part of the decision-making process.

The Role of Public Relations

Within an organization's structure, public relations is most often a staff function, a position that provides counsel and advice to the line functions that produce profits. The practitioner's responsibilities once again depend on the organization and its senior management.

Practitioners working in an organization with characteristics of a closed system focus more on implementing tactics—such as sending out news releases or developing a brochure—that are independent of each other rather than part of an overall strategic plan. Such a reactive approach focuses on one-way communication and emphasizes the organization more than the publics it serves.

Organizations that lean toward a more open system provide a setting where public relations practitioners engage in a proactive approach that emphasizes strategic planning, features two-way communication, and focuses on the organization's publics.

When There Is a Crisis

Proactive organizations can weather crises more successfully simply because they have a reputation for being open and operating in their publics' best interest. In addition, their proactive nature has no doubt led them to prepare a crisis communication plan, which anticipates various crisis scenarios and responses.

Two classic examples of proactive and reactive public relations during a crisis are the Tylenol scare of 1982 and the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in 1989. When seven deaths in the Chicago area were traced back to cyanide-tainted Tylenol, Johnson & Johnson, the makers of the pain reliever, stopped production of the capsules and recalled all 31 million bottles on store shelves throughout the country, a loss of \$100 million. This short-term financial loss resulted in long-term financial gain, however, because of the proactive approach by Johnson & Johnson, which put the safety of its customers first.

Exxon took a reactive approach when its tanker *Valdez* ran aground in Alaska's Prince William Sound, spilling 11 million gallons of oil that altered the environment and killed an abundance of wildlife along 1,300 miles of shoreline. Exxon chose to be defensive about the accident rather than accept responsibility and, in doing so, appeared to only take actions when public outcry demanded it. Exxon customers cut up their credit cards, the company's "most admired company" ranking dropped more than 100 places, and its \$3 billion environmental cleanup received little notice.

Ann R. Carden

See also Crisis Communication; Management Theory; Openness; Systems Theory

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PROCESS RESEARCH

Process research is the easiest of all forms of research that a public relations practitioner encounters. Process research keeps track of what tasks were performed and which tasks still need to be performed in the public relations activity. Think of process research as a checklist of things to do or a shopping list; if you go to the grocery store without your shopping list, the odds are great you will forget something. The same is true for public relations activities. If a practitioner fails to identify all the tasks necessary to complete, then the odds are great they will miss a task. Depending on the task, this type of oversight could cause the entire public relations activity to fail.

Process research also involves creating and monitoring schedules. Scheduling includes identifying and organizing the various tasks that practitioners need to accomplish to complete the activity and when each task should be completed to remain on schedule. A schedule tells a public relations practitioner what needs to be done and when it must be finished. The first part of scheduling is identifying what needs to be done—the tasks. It is critical to think of all the tasks that need to be done. Forgetting a task can throw off the schedule. It is good to brainstorm as a team, since more minds are better than one. The second part of scheduling is arranging the tasks in the proper sequence. The practitioner must understand which tasks are dependent on others and which tasks need to be completed in a specific order. For example, a practitioner cannot lay out a newsletter until the stories are written and cannot send a news release to the media until the proper people have approved it. The third and final part of scheduling is determining how much time each task takes. The entries on PERT and Gantt Charts provide additional information about scheduling. In the end, the schedule provides a guide of what tasks the public relations department must perform, the order of those tasks, and how long each task should take to complete.

The schedule also serves as a checklist. As each task is completed, it is marked off the schedule. It is common to note completed tasks on both PERT and Gantt Charts. The key is not to forget a task. It is terrible to have a public relations activity fail

because someone forgot to complete something. Even seemingly small tasks can cause failure. The inability to deliver material to a printer on time can delay the publishing of an important piece of the public relations effort or mean that it arrives too late to be usable.

The danger with process research is that some practitioners confuse it with evaluative research. Saying that you will send news releases to 15 media outlets and then sending them does not equate to success in a public relations effort. In doing this, you did not achieve an outcome objective; you just completed a task and achieved a process objective. Claims of success are greatly exaggerated when process research replaces evaluative research. In this example, if you wanted to determine if you succeeded, you would study where the 15 news releases were used and what impact they had on target audiences. Process evaluation is a useful tool as long as it is not confused with or used as a substitute for evaluative research.

There is a second, more advanced use of process research. In a public relations campaign that spans a long time period, such as 4 or more months, a practitioner may run checks to determine if the campaign is having the desired effect—if progress is being made toward achieving the objectives. If substantial financial and time commitments are being made to a campaign, a process check is advisable. If the test shows that the desired change is not occurring, there is time to make adjustments to tactics and/or messages. An example helps clarify this point. MacCorp wants to establish itself as a leader in community development. It does a lot for the community, but the message does not seem to be reaching the residents of Niles, the town in which MacCorp is located. Research found that currently only 25% of residents view MacCorp as a leader in community development. Therefore, its public relations department designed an 18-month public relations campaign to promote MacCorp's existing community relations efforts and to highlight three new initiatives designed to strengthen K–12 education in the community. The objective is: "After 18 months, 60% of the residents of Niles will view MacCorp as a leader in community development." The public relations department anticipates seeing some effects after 6 months. At 6 months into the campaign, MacCorp's public relations department

might do a survey to check on perceptions of its leadership in community development. If there is some movement in a positive direction, the public relations campaign seems to be on track. If there is no change or a drop, aspects of the campaign might need redesigning to avoid a complete failure. For instance, the message may not be reaching the target, so different media options might be employed. Process research can be used to check on the progress of a public relations activity toward achieving its objective. Such a process check costs time and money. However, it is a useful investment when an organization has already committed large amounts of both resources to a campaign.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Gantt Chart; PERT Chart; Public Relations Research

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PROFESSIONAL AND PROFESSIONALISM

Professionals in public relations, whether practitioners or educators, are challenged to meet "the societal need for expertise and credentialism" while providing a "crucial link between the individual's struggle for a fulfilling existence and the needs of the larger society" (Leeper & Leeper, 2005, p. 645). Because morals are cultivated by and handed down within professions, public relations leadership, through research and codes of ethics, contributes to the necessary infrastructure and standards essential to the professional benefit of society.

Several academic developments advanced the discipline toward an ever higher level of professionalism. In 1989, the first theory book in public relations

reported national research evaluating the state of U.S. public relations curriculum offerings in college and university catalogs (Neff, 1989, p. 167). By the early 1980s, 240 departments were offering public relations (21 had graduate programs) with public relations mentioned in either the title or course description. The data pointed to widespread offerings among diverse departments: 41% were communication(s), 21% journalism, 17% business, 8% interdisciplinary, 7% mass communication, 4% miscellaneous, and 2% public relations. These varieties of program locations also were likely to hold different standards of professionalism.

In the 1980s, only journalism departments had an established association with a public relations division that sponsored research: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). This period was a tipping point for public relations professional and academic association development; it witnessed the emergence of a diverse body of knowledge reflecting various disciplinary perspectives. The increasing curriculum interest in public relations at colleges and universities needed to be reflected in the respective associations. This situation was resolved by establishing public relations research interest groups, divisions, and tracks in professional and academic associations that had previously lacked public relations representation.

Slowly such organizations gained momentum in developing division status and contributing research agendas that added to the public relations body of knowledge through refereed research as well as short courses relevant to certification and accreditation. These associations (both academic and/or practitioner based) included the Association of Women in Communications (AWC, which sponsors student chapters), AEJMC, International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Public Relations Society of America (PRSA, along with the Public Relations Student Society of America and the Educators Academy), International Communication Association (ICA), National Communication Association (NCA), International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC-Miami) in conjunction with the Institute for Public Relations, Central States Communication Association (CSCA), and International Academy of Business Disciplines (IABD).

The maturation of the public relations discipline as a force for professionalism is supported

by the historical establishment of values through several efforts. These include development of ethical codes; a refereed body of knowledge; creation of a professional organizational infrastructure; development of accreditation standards for both the professional practitioner and academic public relations programs, including the growing opportunities for degree programs from undergraduate through doctoral degree programs; along with internships and fellowships for students, academics, and practitioners; and training for practitioners interested in teaching. This growth in professionalism through associations provides a platform for furthering the profession by building on a foundation of nearly 7,000 refereed presentations of research since the inception of public relations units. Beginning in the 1990s, three national commissions focusing on undergraduate (1998 and 2006) and graduate (2011) education standards have provided an introspective view of the discipline. The standards were widely distributed and integrated into many academic programs across the United States. The Commission on Public Relations Education said in its October 1999 report, "the changes in public relations practice since the 1987 [report] . . . are numerous and profound. By any measure the growth of the public relations profession over the past decade has been astonishing" (n.p.). Public relations units within academic and/or professional associations supplied most of these accomplishments.

By 2012, public relations was making steady progress to meet the key indicators listed by Glen M. Broom and Bey-Ling Sha (2013) needed to demonstrate a discipline's professional status.

1. Professional associations representing a variety of disciplines
2. Educational programs (strong curriculum development since the 1980s and association units producing refereed research and establishing standards for the discipline)
3. Body of knowledge, refereed research presented at conferences and published in journals and books
4. Independent practitioners, including systematic programs for accreditation
5. Essential service aimed at building society's literacy on public relations, presenting awards for professional and academic leadership to that end

Beyond these critical developments, special programs have developed often in conjunction with major universities. One is the Plank Center (named after Betsy Plank), which provides financial awards for top student research, provides internships for academics in agencies, and leads initiatives in bringing together top activists in the public relations profession to facilitate leadership in the discipline in key areas. Another is the Arthur Page Society, which seeks to inspire cutting-edge research. Also, the Institute for Public Relations is a depository for research projects; it sponsors workshops on measurement and evaluative analysis of public relations. Such efforts are moving the discipline of public relations in the United States toward a profession of import that is based on strong ethical premises.

Academic institutions and associations outside the United States are rising to the challenge. The non-U.S. public relations approach stresses interdisciplinary programming with business departments and a literature influenced by critical methodology.

Bonita Dostal Neff

See also Association for Women in Communications; International Association of Business Communicators; Plank, Betsy; Public Relations Society of America; Public Relations Student Society of America

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PROFESSIONAL PROJECT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

The *professional project* is a concept developed in the sociology of the professions, most notably by Magali Sarfatti Larson in the 1970s, to explain the organization and behavior of professional groups over time. The term refers to an organized effort conducted by an occupational group to capture an area of work and to defend its monopoly. Larson saw the professional project as a process of converting specialist knowledge and skills into economic and social rewards.

Thus to succeed, a professional group needs to develop expertise that can be turned into economic value and to defend its position in a competitive market by acquiring and deploying social resources, such as social prestige and public legitimacy. While the existence of a professional project may not be clear to members of a professional group, it emerges in retrospective analysis as a coherent and clearly directed set of actions undertaken by the professional group over a period of time. The term *professional project* is often used interchangeably with *professionalization*.

The concept draws on established approaches and ideas in the sociology of the professions, especially those derived from the work of classical sociologists, such as Max Weber, and extensions of Marxian approaches to knowledge, production, and social stratification; for example, the view that the profession should be understood as a social mobility project directed at achieving social closure. In other words, this line of inquiry focuses on ways in which a profession acts as a group to improve its social position by controlling conditions of inclusion into the professional group and access to work. Thus, the professional project explains the position of a particular professional group in terms of the degree of social closure it has achieved at any particular time by investigating the

interrelationship of the following factors: the profession's body of knowledge and its production; the education and training of practitioners; the autonomy to define and control professional work; the ability to control the market for services and define the economic value of the expert's work; the social standing and public legitimacy achieved through representation; access to social elites and power networks; and the profession's relationship with other social actors.

The professional project takes a critical approach to the profession in that it does not take for granted the positive role professions play in society, as argued by Émile Durkheim, one of the founders of modern sociology. Neither does it accept the view that the profession's prestige and autonomy follow in a straightforward way from the strength of its body of knowledge or value system. The profession is thus seen as an inherently political project.

While the term *professional project* is not often used in public relations, there is nevertheless an extensive body of work concerned with the various aspects of this phenomenon, usually referred to as professionalization. A number of broad themes can be offered to describe and organize the variety of relevant work, such as the establishment of the occupational group and its institutionalization; public relations ethics; the public image of public relations; the enactment of the professional role in organizational contexts; the institutionalization of practices and types of knowledge; and the feminization of public relations.

The establishment and institutionalization of the occupational group is typically followed at a national level through historical narratives of the development of the occupational group, its organization through professional associations, provision of professional education and training, and development of the field in terms of sites of practice (client organizations) and types of practice (e.g., media relations, corporate communications, or public affairs and lobbying).

Ethics is important in relation to both the development of professional identity and claims to legitimacy. In public relations, ethics is considered in the context of communication ethics: It is worked into public relations theory through models of public relations practice like those proposed by James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984), or

framed in terms derived from the theory of the public sphere as proposed by Jürgen Habermas.

Studies of the public image of public relations focused on the media representations of practitioners and their practices and typically examined the ways in which practitioners' work and expertise are understood and evaluated by journalists. Public image is relevant to the public relations professional project as a strategy for achieving public legitimacy, but is also interpreted as an indicator of the level of the profession's success in this respect.

The enactment of the professional role in organizational contexts and the institutionalization of practices and types of knowledge illustrate a more recent development in the study of the professions, namely the recognition that while professionals shape the organization for which they work, organizational policies and strategies shape professional action and knowledge in return. Here, we refer to research on public relations roles and studies of how specific types of knowledge are shaped through organizational practice, for example corporate social responsibility.

Gender and, to an extent, race, have also been investigated. Here the attention tends to focus on the impact of the large numbers of women in the profession on the professional project as well as on asking broader questions about equality, inclusion, and social stratification.

Magda Pieczka

See also Ethics of Public Relations; Excellence Theory; Habermas, Jürgen, on Public Relations; Practice/Practitioner; Professionalism in Public Relations

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PROFESSIONALISM IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Many definitions have been offered and long lists of attributes proposed to define the meaning of profession and professionalism. In regard to public relations, this debate examines whether it meets the standards required to be a profession.

Harold L. Wilensky (1964) reasoned that professions, as such, must center on exclusive, technical skills, standards of training, trustworthy service and quality, and adherence to professional norms. Kathy and Roy Leeper (2005) concluded that by adhering to these kinds of standards in a career or job field, professions and practitioner-professionals are thereby held accountable to socially acceptable standards of ethics, integrity, quality, and service. These professional standards result in citizens being protected, and society being stabilized.

To be considered professionals, James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) pointed out that public relations practitioners have long been urged to be members of a professional organization, adhere to professional norms and values, be educated in an intellectual tradition that encompasses a common and recognized body of knowledge, and be professionally trained in technical skills. Glen M. Broom (2009) charted the progress of public relations toward “achieving professional status” (p. 120) judged against the following criteria:

1. Specialized educational preparation to acquire unique knowledge and skills
2. A body of theory-based knowledge, developed through research, that provides us with principles of appropriate public relations practice
3. Codes of ethics and standards of performance established and enforced by a self-governing association of colleagues

4. Autonomy in practice and acceptance of personal responsibility by practitioners
5. Recognition by the community of a unique and essential service

Organizations like the Commission on Public Relations Education, Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), and Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management offer recommendations for undergraduate and graduate curriculum. PRSSA requires specific course content areas to establish and maintain university student chapters. The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) require institutions that apply for accreditation to adhere to strict standards for certification. Professionals who are members of PRSA and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) are encouraged or sometimes required to earn continuing education credits through conferences, workshops, and courses.

The growth of undergraduate and graduate public relations programs set the stage for the development of a body of theory-based knowledge that is interdisciplinary yet unique to the field. Public relations professors and organizations, such as the Institute for Public Relations (IPR), IABC, PRSA, Global Alliance, the Center for Global Public Relations, and the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations engage in and support research in public relations. A clear sign of professional status, according to Broom (2009), is “the increasing demand for research and critical examination of the conventional wisdom guiding the practice” (p. 129).

Public relations research is distinctive in that it informs both theory-building and professional practice. Likewise, there are outlets for research findings that are directed toward professionals (*The Strategist*, *Public Relations Tactics*, *PRWeek*, *IABC’s Communication World*) and academics (*Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Case Studies in Strategic Communication*, *Public Relations Journal*, *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*). Knowledge is gathered and disseminated through organizations’ and funding agencies’ websites, blogs, and e-newsletters, such as those operated by Ragan and O’Dwyer. Much of this wealth of theory- and application-based

research does not get widely disseminated, nor carefully integrated into the practice, which is not the case with its counterparts in medicine or engineering. This failure casts doubt on whether public relations meets this professional standard.

The growth of public relations led to the establishment of professional organizations whose codes of ethics and standards of performance members are expected to observe. However, there are no mechanisms for self-policing, enforcement, or licensing in most countries' public relations associations; Brazil is one exception, revoking licenses of unethical practitioners and removing them from the profession. Values of maintaining client and social trust, honesty, advocacy, objectivity, integrity, expertise, professional privilege, free expression, and social responsibility are centerpieces of the codes of ethics of PRSA, IABC, the International Public Relations Association's (IPRA), and Global Alliance.

In the United States, a lively debate addressed the virtues of licensing in the public relations profession as a means of ensuring professionalism and to keep out individuals who were not properly qualified. Some professional public relations organizations, such as PRSA and the Canadian Public Relations Society, encourage professionalism and accountability through voluntary accreditation. However, there is no formal coordination of accreditation standards, processes, and enforcement across the more than 50 international bodies. The lack of a single, credible accreditation or certification agency weakens claims of professionalism and also suggests that there is not a single and required body of knowledge nor meaningful ethical standards.

Based on an understanding of the field's evolution and the current realities in public relations, it can be concluded that while progress toward professional status continues, it does not meet all of the commonly recognized standards needed to be a profession. There is generally agreed standard education preparation and training, yet with no entrance requirements or licensing anyone can say they practice public relations. There is an abundance of theory-based and practical research, yet it is not widely disseminated either in academic or professional circles. All professional public relations organizations have codes of ethics, however, they only apply to members and, without licensure or required accreditation, there are no mechanisms

for accountability and enforcement. Finally, the reputation of the field of public relations is mixed, with regular examples of organizations and practitioners whose behavior is judged to be unethical, manipulative, and irresponsible. And, there is confusion about what public relations is or what public relations practitioners do. As one effort to help set the groundwork for professionalism, W. Timothy Coombs and Sherry Holladay (2007) described some of the ways in which public relations has a substantial and positive influence in society.

In public relations, as in most professions, many practitioners dedicate their careers to ethical, responsible, and expert practice. As they continue a practice that meets the standards of professionalism discussed earlier, and continue dialogue that examines the value that effective and ethical public relations brings, progress toward professional status continues.

Denise P. Ferguson

See also Accreditation; APR; Barcelona Principles; Codes of Ethics; Ethics of Public Relations; Histories of Public Relations; Theory-Based Practice

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PROGRAM/ACTION PLANS

A program/action plan is a tactical roadmap that links the goals and objectives developed during precampaign planning with the desired outcomes

of the campaign. Whereas the strategic planning process outlines specific goals and objectives for each targeted public, the program/action plan focuses on the tactics to use to achieve those goals and objectives. Tactics are specific communication behaviors, vehicles, or tools that are used to operationalize the strategies. Tactics come in many forms and may use controlled and uncontrolled media. Examples are letters, meetings, press releases, press conferences, social media messaging, websites, placed media messages (advertisements), posters, billboards, and protests. For each tactic, the action plan identifies who is accountable for performing tasks, meeting timetables or schedules, deploying necessary resources, and staying within budget.

Planning

Public relations students and practitioners are often familiar with the acronyms used to describe public relations campaign planning processes, such as Marston's (1979) RACE (research, action planning, communication, evaluation) and Hendrix's (2001) ROPE (research, objectives, programming, evaluation). The goal of these planning processes is to provide a methodical and systematic mechanism to help the campaign planner understand the issue at hand, clearly identify publics, develop realistic and attainable goals and objectives, select appropriate and effective strategies and tactics, execute those strategies and tactics, and finally evaluate effectiveness. It not only serves as a blueprint for the nature (such as the selection of channels and media), order, and timing of the tactics to be used during the campaign, but also articulates the roles and responsibilities for those involved and the allocation of available material and budgetary resources.

Applications

When developing program/action plans, the practitioner must remain focused on the larger picture: the desired outcomes of the campaign. To reach those objectives, the practitioner must clearly identify the decision makers who make up the publics that are or will be involved. Similarly, the practitioner must use current knowledge or research in determining what influences the decision maker, factors and

processes to use to arrive at a decision and take action, and finally how best to reach and impact that decision maker. While research is crucial in any public relations program, it is even more necessary in a global environment, where strategies and tactics have to be tailored across international borders and/or cultures. These behaviors or "tactics" must be coordinated to maximize the effectiveness of the campaign strategies. Tactics are selected and prioritized by their ability to reach and affect the target public.

At this stage, the choice of channel selection and placement are addressed; communication vehicles are selected for their ability to gain the target's attention and to persuade or motivate the target. Finally, the effective campaign planner builds in sufficient redundancy to increase the "reach" of the campaign and to reinforce the impact of previous strategies and tactics. For example, if voters in a local referendum are the targeted public, letters to the voter (based on lists of registered voters) might be coupled with an ad campaign that uses print or broadcast ads, blog posts, social media messaging, and an advocacy approach that targets newspaper articles on the referendum issue. Multiple tactics should be used to increase the reach of the campaign, to reinforce previous strategies, and to build resonance whenever time, material, and budgetary resources are available.

The effective program/action plan defines the roles and responsibilities for all involved in executing a particular tactic. This level of specificity not only allows for the more efficient use of resources like time and manpower, but is also important in the budgeting process. As part of the delineation of roles and responsibilities, the action plan should identify who is held accountable for effective execution of the tactics.

The scheduling and timing of tactics are vital to a successful program/action plan. An effective campaign consists of a series of coordinated tactics that are used to reach a set of goals and objectives. This means that tactics should be scheduled and implemented to maximize their effectiveness while minimizing the impact of competing effects, such as distractions, possible distortion, or competing campaign messages. Careful attention needs to be given to the nature of the campaign, complexity of the issues, and levels of current knowledge and involvement of all key publics.

For example, the importance of scheduling and timing can be demonstrated by examining the use of campaigns around U.S. holiday seasons. Although some tactics can be “tied in” to holidays (such as the use of the New Year by Mothers Against Drunk Driving to maintain awareness of the ravages of drinking and driving), many campaigns should avoid holidays because their targeted publics are focusing elsewhere, as are the mass media that might be used to reach them. Careful scheduling and timing can maximize the efficiency of resources like budgets and staffing. For example, unless the campaign is using the political process or needs to impact public opinion during an election period, a campaign tactic used around an election not only gets less attention from the media and key publics (who are focused on the candidates and other electoral issues), but costs more because of the increased market costs of buying media time and space.

Tactics should be scheduled to maximize the use of available manpower or staffing. Realistic timelines need to be developed to ensure that all steps are completed to produce high-quality messages and to effectively implement tactics. Timelines are even more important in a global environment, when time is needed to accurately translate messages into multiple languages, gain approval and access to regulated media, and when social media messaging requires monitoring and frequent updates. Although last-minute work and tight deadlines can be used to deliver fast results, poor message quality and staff “burnout” may detract from long-term success. When determining staffing, carefully examine the use of paid and unpaid campaign workers; although volunteers who are committed to an issue can often perform as well as paid personnel, they may lack expertise or professionalism and may be “less available” when faced with competing events or schedules.

Finally, effective action plans must carefully include realistic budgetary outlines for all tactics and include a small reserve to cover unforeseen costs, to target unexpected obstacles, or to counter messages and tactics used by competing organizations. Similarly, the campaign professional builds the costs of summary as well as interim or midcampaign evaluation into the planning process. Effective action plans can use formative and evaluative research, as well as interim evaluations, especially

when facing complex or emotional issues. The use of many levels of evaluation in a campaign helps to ensure that programming and tactics are achieving results and are on track to meet strategic goals and objectives, and that summary results are available to evaluate campaign effectiveness and to demonstrate return on investment to clients.

Dean Kazoleas

See also Evaluative Research; Formative Research; Goals; Objectives; Strategies; Tactics

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PROMOTION

Promotion, a partner to publicity, is used by an organization to gain awareness, increase awareness, inform, and foster positive thoughts of and actions toward an organization, product, service, or issue. Whereas publicity is aimed at achieving short-term awareness, promotion can build and even change audiences' and markets' views over time. Doug Newsom, Judy Van Slyke Turk, and Dean Kruckeberg (2004) defined promotion as going “beyond press agency into opinion making. Promotion tries to garner support and endorsement for a person, product, institution or idea” (p. 4).

Publicity and promotion employ typical and specialized strategies and tactics. As Kirk Hallahan (2010) emphasized, publicity grows out of organizations' intent to make some matter “public.” As such, promotion uses publicity to achieve long-term organizational purposes.

P. T. Barnum, as have countless others, realized the need for continuous strategic communication to build and advance a market and to develop a customer base for his businesses. Barnum used media messages and events to focus public attention on his circus and his display of unusual items, animals, and people. Thus, he might publicize the arrival of a huge elephant and feature its name:

Jumbo. People were attracted to novelty, as they are today, but today people might tune in to television to see an elephant. In Barnum's day, they had to travel to see one, and it had to be taken to them. As the elephant traveled across the country, Barnum worked to get media comments and reports, which he could use in the next town to attract crowds to his show. Ever the showman and promoter, Barnum even took advantage of Jumbo's unfortunate and untimely death. When Jumbo was struck by a train and killed, Barnum used that tragedy as a photo opportunity. Images can be seen on the Web today of people standing around and sitting on the massive beast, which was eventually stuffed and put on display.

Promotion, like publicity, occurs in a competitive environment. Voices compete in a public bazaar for market share, brand equity, and brand loyalty. Promotion depends on reporters or other voices, even critics, to comment about an organization and its personnel, executives, mission/vision, policies, products, and services. Negative publicity needs to be addressed by various strategies. Some change strategies are communication based, and others may require improvements in the organization—in its personnel, plans, policies, products, or services. But change can be a positive message in promotion.

Similarly, promotions by one company or industry typically meet counter promotion when practitioners make claims seeking competitive advantage. Nevertheless, promotions by an entire industry, such as carmakers, become blended into "one" message which features the positive and complex roles that automobiles play in our lives. Thus, promotions can create culture. Automobile companies are legendary for their efforts to promote automobile and truck sales. For years, fall was the time when these companies launched their new products. Magazines as well as news features at movies covered the introduction of new models. To the uncritical eye, these promotional presentations seemed to express the objective opinion of reporters. The same techniques are used today. Print and electronic media outlets are essentially unfiltered conduits through which promotional claims flow to customers. Even as the industry promoted itself, so did individual brand lines struggle for brand equity and market share.

Promotion is used to target specific customers or potential customers. Markets can be segmented

by demographics. Media, both print and electronic, develop to bring customers and vendors together. Thus, teen magazines and television programs are tailored to the youth market because of the news, commentary, and entertainment that they endorse. Promotion sustains a flow of messages to keep constant attention on products and services that may appeal to the members of the target market. Today, social media are vital to promotions.

Some of the greatest promotional efforts include those for Disney characters, such as Mickey Mouse, and Sesame Street characters. Today they are iconic, archetypical. Perhaps no industry has done that better than entertainment, including the use of award shows—the Grammys and the Academy Awards.

Promotions are often used in conjunction with other public relations functions. For centuries, colleges and universities used promotions based on athletic competitions, student accomplishments, and faculty merit to foster student relations, alumni relations, donor relations, and government relations. Activists use promotion to keep attention focused on public policy needs and organizational change.

Excellence is a product and service theme with many faces, purposes, and ends. Companies use new product promotion to attract new and continuing customers. "New and improved" is a promotional archetype used repeatedly in marketing, advertising, publicity and promotion.

Promotions as antecedents of modern public relations stretch back to the dawn of various civilizations. One of the oldest continuing forms of promotion, for example, is the fair, an updated version of the bazaar. County and state fairs have outlived the rural dominance of agriculture production in the American economy. Today, they are a part of rural culture that now attracts thousands of urban dwellers and are staged in urban settings. They promote agriculture, agricultural products, and agricultural lifestyle and are a meeting place of vendors and customers. Local young women are featured as fair queens. County fairs lead to state fairs, which lead to trade fairs and world fairs. They promote culture.

Promotions and publicity are the most typical public relations functions in terms of expenditure, and they are sometimes the most controversial.

The effort of Edward Bernays to promote the sale of Lucky Strike Green cigarettes to women is one of the most critically discussed promotional campaigns. Promotion can be judged to be unethical because it rests less on facts and more on activities and events that may create impressions, identifications, and false motivations regarding a product or service. Ethical questions focus on the extent to which promotion reduces the target customer's ability to make an informed and rational choice about a product, issue, cause, or service.

Although fraught with ethical problems, promotion, along with publicity, is here to stay.

Robert L. Heath

See also Barnum, P. T.; Bernays, Edward; Brand Equity and Branding; Lucky Strike Green Campaign; Market Share; Publicity; Target

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PROPAGANDA

The word *propaganda* comes from the Latin word meaning to propagate or to sow; in its most neutral sense, it means to disseminate or promote particular ideas. Propaganda is defined in many ways, most of which center on synonyms like *lies*, *distortions*, *deceit*, *manipulation*, *psychological warfare*, *brainwashing*, and the more recent word, *spin*.

Spin, in particular, emphasizes the frequent difficulty of differentiating public relations from propaganda in that it is associated with the manipulation of political and corporate information to affect the way in which news is presented. As a result, the term *spin doctors* is now often used as a synonym for professional public relations practitioners. Propaganda has been associated with

mass communication, mass persuasion, mind control, and mass brainwashing. It has a history of being used to promote an ideology and way of life that benefits some to the disadvantage of others. Few examples are more notorious than the propaganda efforts of Hitler, which he claimed to have learned from the British and American propaganda machines during the First World War.

People often label tactics they don't like as "propaganda," whereas when they approve of mass media campaigns they call them "preaching of truth." Modern practitioners of public relations and academics focus on the concepts of symbolic manipulation, cognitive manipulation, scientific mass persuasion, and asymmetry as defining attributes that separate propaganda and unethical public relations from ethical and responsible approaches to the profession.

Many scholars grappled with a definition of the word *propaganda*. The French philosopher Jacques Ellul, in his book *Propaganda* (1965), suggested that it was an essential part of modern technologically advanced societies, and Michael Sproule (1994) suggested that it is "the work of a large organization, nation, or group to win over the public for special interests through a massive orchestration of attractive conclusions packaged to conceal both their persuasive purpose and lack of sound supporting reasons" (p. 8). The social psychologist Leonard W. Doob summarized these definitional difficulties in 1989 by suggesting that "a clear-cut definition of propaganda is neither possible nor desirable" (p. 375).

Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell have created a definition that focuses on propaganda as a communication process, more specifically on the purpose of the process: "Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (1999, p. 6). This definition stresses that propaganda is "willful, intentional, and premeditated" (1999, p. 6). Although it clearly establishes propaganda as a neutral technique, it also comes close to a definition of public relations held by some of its practitioners and many of its critics, thus emphasizing the difficulty in establishing a clearer differentiation between the two practices.

The relationship of propaganda to public relations has always been a contentious one. Both of

these practices stem from a common desire to affect the attitudes and perceptions held by people, collectively defined as publics, crowds, citizens, or consumers, toward an infinite variety of subjects, in order to shift opinions and beliefs in a desired direction. Propaganda in particular was defined in largely negative terms because of its close historical association with religion, warfare, and political practices. Public relations, thanks largely to the strenuous efforts of its own practitioners, managed to establish itself as a legitimate activity that enhances the images and perceptions of a wide variety of institutions. However, the common ancestry of these two practices tends to blur the distinction between them, with the result that there is often confusion in the minds of the public as to what entails propaganda versus legitimate and ethical public relations.

Public relations emerged at the end of the 19th century as a means of utilizing the increasingly powerful mass communication media to further the objectives of American industry, as well as to shape the public perception of a wide range of institutions and influential individuals. It was not coincidental that public concern about the increasing significance of the media in modern life was brought into sharp focus at precisely the same time as part of the ongoing examination of the strengths and weaknesses of an increasingly urbanized and industrialized America. These critics, labeled as muckrakers by both their detractors and supporters, focused on issues that threatened the orderly development of a progressive democratic society. In 1905, the journalist Ray Stannard Baker published a series of five articles examining the scandalous business practices of the railroads. The first four essays were exposés of such things as excessive shipping rates and illegal rebates, but the final essay tackled a relatively new subject when it examined the manner in which the railroads were able to corrupt public opinion by using press agents and dubious financial relationships with newspapers and magazines. Baker's work was the initial salvo for what was to be a series of exposés that examined how press agents, promoters, and the newly emerging practitioners of public relations were moving their influence outside of government and directly affecting and shaping public opinion.

Will Irwin in 1910 began his 15-part series for *Collier's* magazine, which examined the newspaper

industry. As Michael Sproule indicated, "Irwin's ability to trace links between outside interests, newspaper content, and public opinion made his . . . [work] a cornerstone in the foundation of postwar propaganda consciousness" (1997, p. 24). Irwin meticulously detailed how newspaper editors were being increasingly influenced by pressure from advertisers, including direct economic subsidies, as well as by privileged individuals with economic power. He rejected the notion of banning advertising, however, and hoped that the increasing professionalization of journalistic practices would do much to eliminate the current abuses.

In later years, George Creel, before he became head of the Committee on Public Information in the First World War, undertook a muckraking examination of the public relations practices of large charitable organizations, in particular the Rockefeller Foundation. Creel concluded that some gifts from these organizations did indeed affect the way in which information was presented to the public.

Walter Lippmann (1915), in one of his early essays, examined the role of public relations as used by American industry in the ongoing battle to establish a minimum wage. In recognition of the contentious role of press agency and other publicity techniques, the Post Office Appropriation Act of 1912 mandated full disclosure of a magazine's and newspaper's ownership and also required that all material published for payment had to be labeled as an "advertisement."

These and other muckraking attempts to illuminate the increasing role of public relations practitioners in manipulating public opinion became what is now known as the Progressive propaganda critique. This early confusion between legitimate public relations practices and more directive propaganda activities was only natural considering their similar objectives. In the period after the First World War, the increasing professionalization of public relations required that this emerging industry clearly differentiate itself from the discredited propaganda techniques associated with the war effort. George Creel's (1920) infamous book, *How We Advertised America*, left a bitter taste in the mouths of Americans who felt that they had been manipulated into supporting what was ultimately an unsatisfactory victory. The result of the massive efforts to mobilize public opinion was to leave a

legacy of suspicion and hostility in the mind of the public, and the concept of propaganda became an anathema.

In this atmosphere, two pioneers of public relations, Ivy L. Lee and Edward L. Bernays established themselves as public relations professionals, perhaps because both had a solid background in propaganda activities. Lee had worked for the Red Cross and in later life was associated with the propaganda activities of both Japan and Nazi Germany. Throughout his professional career, he stressed that “the essential evil of propaganda is failure to disclose the source of information” and used this as the cornerstone of his ethics of publicity (Lee, 1925, quoted in Sproule, 1997, p. 55).

Edward L. Bernays published a book actually entitled *Propaganda* in 1928, and he was not ashamed to use the word *manipulation* in his writings. In his earlier work, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923), Bernays outlined his philosophy of public relations and acknowledged the need for the public to be informed by specialists occupying the middle ground between lack of knowledge and a stubborn tendency to hold fixed views. He noted that “the advocacy of what we believe in is education. The advocacy of what we don’t believe in is propaganda” (p. 14). In *Propaganda* (1928) he fully acknowledged the need for propaganda activities in a modern society, suggesting that the best propaganda was that associated with socially sound objectives. In a series of popular articles and speeches in the interwar period, Bernays advocated the use of propaganda as an alternative to force and as a means of making known minority opinions to society as a whole.

Many students of Bernays’s profession believe he was imbued with the sort of analysis that made his double uncle, Sigmund Freud, an international icon for revealing the mysteries of the human mind. Bernays was fascinated by the workings of the human mind and had ample opportunity to study his uncle’s thoughts on people’s desire for identification, love of tribalism, and need for leadership. Bernays became a student of mass psychology and loved to speculate on the ways that the opinions of large numbers of individuals could be shaped. He became legendary for his self-touted ability to mold public opinion. Although he later worked to divorce himself from the tobacco industry, he at first delighted in his success at promoting

Lucky Strike Green packaging to women. To his credit, however, Bernays avoided developing a consulting relationship with Adolph Hitler and Joseph Goebbels, who had invited his counsel because they were familiar with his book on propaganda.

The culmination of the propaganda critique came with the establishment of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) in 1937. The IPA, much to the consternation of its critics, saw its mandate as that of analyzing all forms of propaganda, and it did not limit itself to examining the increasingly ominous words emanating from foreign countries, particularly the fascist regimes in Italy, Germany, and Japan. It was only a matter of time before the institute tackled domestic propaganda as manifested in the manipulation of public opinion and attitudes by professionals directly engaged in this activity. During its short life it took on such contentious issues as the establishment of “suspect” research foundations devoted entirely to extolling the virtues of certain industries (a favorite tactic of Bernays), the role of public relations firms in opposing social legislation like wage and tax reform, and the use of preprepared stories and photographs for distribution to newspapers and magazines that cast certain industries in a favorable light.

In an increasing atmosphere of international conflict, such activities as these did not endear the institute to its supporters, and eventually it was closed in January 1939, never to reopen after the war. This closing symbolized the demise of the propaganda critique, and it can be seen as a victory for the increasing professionalization of the public relations industry. Although the study of propaganda reached its zenith during the Second World War, it now concentrated on understanding the psychological processes of persuasion and the successful creation of specific targeted messages. The studies of propaganda techniques and strategies conducted for the United States government during this period serve as one foundation for the academic discipline of communication studies.

Many leading public relations practitioners, in addition to Lee and Bernays, had their own tussles with the aura and ethics of propaganda. Two of the more influential, John W. Hill and Albert Oeckl, are worth considering to appreciate the efforts that practitioners have made to separate their profession and its strategies from the taint of propaganda.

John Hill drew what he thought to be a clear line between the ethical approach to public relations and the unethical approach to propaganda that tainted it and its practitioners:

Public relations in its controversial usage is sometimes dubbed “propaganda.” Actually propaganda was a “good” word until brought into disrepute when Hitler and the Communists began to pollute the airways with their “Big Lies,” and made it a “bad” word. In a public relations battle in a free country it is important that there be no lies. Different interpretation of the facts is possible, and each side is entitled to present its views, leaving it to public opinion to decide which to accept.

The purpose of public relations in its best sense is to inform and to keep minds open. The purpose of “propaganda” in the bad sense is to misinform and to keep minds closed. Business managements have every reason and right to communicate regularly with all segments of the public whose support they seek; and more, to work for better understanding of the private enterprise system. (1963, p. 6)

Relations between Hill and Bernays were always strained, for many reasons. Without doubt, one of those reasons was their views on the rationale for, and the strategic practice of, public relations. Hill aspired to the “journalistic” rather than “mass persuasion” tradition of public relations, which assumes a valued role for informing citizens who are capable of making informed decisions. For this reason, the virtue of public relations, he believed, was that it offered information for people’s consideration.

Hill was serious in his systematic efforts to work through his rationale of public relations in contrast to propaganda, which he believed discredited both the practitioner and the client:

I have no patience with those who try to attribute insidious and mysterious powers to public relations. Such ideas are wholly fanciful and without basis in fact. Quacks, charlatans, and so-called “hidden persuaders” may come and go in the field of public relations but their time is short and their achievements ephemeral.

Nothing could be more absurd than to imagine that the so-called “corporate image” can be

created by a clever use of words or by “slick” stunts. The ability of a specific business, or of business in general, to defend itself against its detractors and to project its worth to people begins with definitely existing policies and intrinsic values. The rightful purpose of public relations is openly to confirm, strengthen, and defend these values. Without integrity this cannot be accomplished. (Hill, 1963, pp. 161–162)

Bernays, in his own and others’ minds was a practitioner who believed in the value of the “clever stunt.” Such was not the stuff of a practice claiming to add value to society, a goal worthy of a dignified profession.

Albert Oeckl is one of the most influential practitioners and academics on the development and evolution of the profession in Germany. He began his career as a junior lawyer in the Reichs Propaganda Ministreium in Munich (1934–1935). However influenced he was by the works of Bernays and the legendary Goebbels, he matured to a view of public relations that featured working for the public, in the public interest, and in the public sphere. His view of public relations was that every message and strategic action must meet the ethical standard of contributing to the good of the community and serving its interest. He aspired to what has become featured as the symmetrical view of public relations.

Propaganda studies have experienced a minor revival since the 1980s as political issues surrounding the study of the subject are less contentious, thus allowing academics and others to examine the role and function of propaganda in modern society without fear of being criticized. In particular, the war in Vietnam and the two subsequent military campaigns against Iraq provided an enormous opportunity to examine how public opinion can be manipulated and shaped. In very recent years, thanks largely to the emergence of the Internet, numerous sites were established to examine precisely the interrelationship between public relations and what are deemed to be propaganda activities. The result of all this activity tends to show that there is indeed an aspect of public relations practice that comes dangerously close to meeting a definition of propaganda.

In the world dominated now by the large media conglomerates, the role of propaganda assumes a greater significance and is practiced increasingly with an unseen subtlety. It often blends seamlessly with legitimate public relations practices, and it is highly likely that this trend continues into the foreseeable future. Despite this problem, leading practitioners and academics have sound reasons to divorce public relations from propaganda. Such diligent efforts are slow to pay off; the goal, however, is important and worthy of the effort. This debate, perhaps beyond any other, is the fundamental pursuit of leading practitioners and professionals in public relations. That struggle is enduring, not fleeting.

Garth S. Jowett and Robert L. Heath

See also Bernays, Edward; Committee on Public Information; Hill, John Wiley; Lee, Ivy; Lucky Strike Green Campaign; Page, Arthur W.; Privatizing Public Opinion (and "Publictizing" Private Opinion); Spin; Symmetry

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PSYCHOGRAPHICS

Psychographics are a component of audience segmentation methods that discover actionable audience segments by examining individual psychological, sociological, and anthropological factors—such as motivations, attitudes, self-concepts, and lifestyles—that influence a particular decision about a product, person, ideology, or medium.

Although Russell Haley and Emanuel Demby both claimed to originate the term *psychographics* in 1965, rapidly expanding technological access to audience descriptors in the following decades delayed a settled understanding of the concept. To illustrate the confusion, Rebecca Piirto Heath (1995) wrote that such widely used research techniques as geodemographics (generally considered psychographics), is not psychographics, whereas much survey-based research that includes a measurable attitude, interest, opinion, or lifestyle question is psychographics. Barrie Gunter and Adrian Furnham (1992) conversely classified attitudes and opinions research as psychographics, but suggested that lifestyle research is not. Heath (1995) dismissed as psychographics research any qualitative techniques, such as focus groups, projective techniques, in-depth interviewing, and emotional probing. Yet in a 1996 article, she labeled these so-called psycho-qualitative tools as an important and growing trend in psychographics. Increasingly, any distinctions are further weakened by a near-total knowledge of the behavior of individual consumers available through giant databases. Traditionally, the four major classifications of psychographic studies focused on geodemographics, life cycles, personal values, and lifestyles.

Geodemographics

Geodemographics, in its simplest form is plotting the residential location of concentrations of particular audience characteristics—of high-income single men, for instance—so that communication efforts are directed with more cost-effectiveness. As extended by proprietary systems like PRIZM or ACORN, researchers overlaid demographic knowledge with questions concerning consumer behavior and attitudes. The oldest of the geodemographic

methods, PRIZM, was introduced in 1974. Now called Nielson PRIZM (Potential Rating Index for ZIP Markets), this technique reduces U.S. Census block group statistics to 14 distinct categories that take into account age, income, presence of children, marital status, homeownership, and urbanicity. The system correlates these classifications with consumer purchase records to categorize an individual neighborhood of households into one of 66 different consumer segments that represent two groups: social and lifestyle. The resulting segments are labeled with such names as Boomtown Singles, Bedrock America, Rustic Elders, Bohemian Mix, and Shotguns and Pickups. The company assists clients by examining mailing lists of current customers and determining insight about what psychographic traits those customers possess. That knowledge then allows marketers to know where additional similar customers may be found.

Life Cycles/Generational Cohorts

The generational cohort to which one belongs is another psychographic characteristic that aids professionals in more clearly defining their targeted publics. William Straus and Neil Howe (1991) conducted extensive generational theory research. They define a generation as a cohort group whose length approximates the span of a phase of life and whose boundaries are fixed by peer personalities. Further, a generation is shaped by its “age location” (e.g., participation in epochal events that occur during one’s course of life). Examples include the Great Depression, the Korean War, World Wars I and II, the Vietnam War, and, most recently, the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. During each stage of the life cycle, a set of collective behavioral traits and attitudes is produced. Straus and Howe refer to each generational cohort’s traits and attitudes as its “peer personality.” Attitudes of one generation affect how that person’s children are raised and, later, how those children raise their offspring.

The Generational Influences Model offers a visual diagram of how the generation to which an individual belongs affects their behaviors in today’s marketplace. This model is derived from 30 years of research collected via the Yankelovich MONITOR, an annual study that tracks American’s lifestyles and values. People possess individualized

value systems that affect the way they interact and view the world around them. Our value systems are affected by an array of environmental conditions we experience as children. Members of a generation are linked through the shared life experiences of their formative years.

According to Yankelovich Market Research, a person’s “life stage” represents how old an individual is, and, therefore, where that individual is situated in life—either physically or psychologically. “Current conditions” reflect events that affect what a person buys (e.g., layoffs, recessions, wars, political turmoil, and technological innovations). Our “cohort experiences” represent habits that define and differentiate the generation to which we belong. These experiences serve as the “filters” through which a person interprets all subsequent life experiences. As the Generational Influences Model explains, our life stage and current social and economic conditions play dominant roles in forming our cohort experiences, which, in turn, influence our values and preferences, and therefore have an effect on our marketplace behaviors as consumers.

In short, the Generational Influences Model explains that a person’s life stage, in combination with current conditions, aids in the development of each generation’s cohort experiences. The cohort experiences, in turn, aid in developing individual core values, which influence preferences; these preferences and values serve as guideposts for marketplace behaviors.

To put these concepts into more concrete terms, each generation has its own typology. The literature offers a plethora of labels and categories. And, although the dates may vary a bit, the more mainstream, research-based cohorts include the Matures—to include the Greatest Generation (those born before 1928) and the Silent Generation (born 1928–1945); the Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964); Generation X (born 1965–1980); Generation Y or also known as Echo Boomers, Millennials, Net Generation (born 1981–1994); and Digital Generation, also known as Generation M (for multi-tasking), or I-Generation (born after 1994).

Personal Values

Values are central to peoples’ lives, and because of their importance, values can influence attitudes and behaviors. The study of human values occurred

as early as 1931 (e.g., Allport & Vernon's *A Study of Values*). Enjoying a history rich in empirical examination, values-related studies occur among an array of disciplines and within a variety of theoretical frameworks. However, until Milton Rokeach began conducting values research throughout the 1960s and 1970s, many of the previous studies that examined values included them as a subcategory of attitudes. Rokeach is credited for operationally defining and investigating values separate from those of attitudes.

Fundamentally, Rokeach's values theory is derived from consistency theory. As consistency theory explains, people are driven to reduce inconsistencies in order to regain cognitive balance in their lives. All consistency theories begin with the same premise: people are comfortable with consistency. Values theory explains that people are guided by a need for consistency and that inconsistency creates a pressure to change. Specifically, Rokeach defined a value as

an organized set of preferential standards that are used in making selections of objects and actions, resolving conflicts, invoking social sanctions, and coping with needs or claims for social and psychological defenses of choice made or proposed. . . . A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. (1979, p. 5)

According to the values theory framework, values serve as standards that guide ongoing activities. Rokeach explained that values serve as general plans for resolving conflict and making decisions. Values serve motivational functions and as conceptual tools humans employ to maintain and enhance self-esteem.

Values are learned. They have dual purposes: they serve as cognitive representations of societal demands and as individual needs for morality and competence. Values transform these individual needs into shared goals and modes of behavior. Each person has a highly organized belief-attitudes-value system that guides behavior. These values are elaborately related to one's attitudes and behavior. Whereas values represent abstract ideals—positive or negative—that are not tied to any one specific

object or situation, attitudes focus on specific objects and situations. Further, values are more stable over time than attitudes because they are more centrally connected to an individual's cognitive system. As a result, values serve as better predictors of an individual's behavior over time than do attitudes; thus values represent an efficient, measurable set of variables more closely tied to motivation behavior than are demographic measures.

Once a value is internalized, it becomes, unconsciously, a standard or criterion for guiding action, for developing and maintaining attitudes toward objects and situations that are relevant to justify our own—or others'—actions and attitudes, for morally judging ourselves and others, and for comparing ourselves with others. In short, values are our "internal barometers." Put another way, values serve as that little voice inside our heads that guide many of our decisions and behaviors.

Lynn R. Kahle and his colleagues (1983; 1997) sought to develop a measure that corresponded with Rokeach's values and Abraham Maslow's 1943 hierarchy of needs in order to operationalize Maslow's work. Through extensive research, Kahle developed the List of Values (LOV), an instrument that encompasses a nine-value typology for use in conducting consumer-based research. Kahle noted that the LOV does not claim to provide an exhaustive inventory of every personal value, but it nevertheless provides a useful instrument applicable for an array of social science studies.

These nine LOV indicators are better represented at a more abstract level by "value domains" that reflect either an external or internal orientation based on an individual's locus of control. This concept explains the degree to which a person feels that the control of his or her world belongs to self (internal) at one extreme, or to fate (external), at the other extreme. Internally oriented values include self-fulfillment, self-respect, fun and enjoyment, excitement, sense of accomplishment, and warm relationships with others; externally oriented values include sense of belonging, sense of security, and being well respected. The external values imply a dependence on people or circumstances outside the individual's own control, whereas the internal values imply a more controlled independence on self.

One of the earliest commercially accessible psychographic systems using this conceptualization

was VALS (Values and Lifestyles), built by Arnold Mitchell and provided to the market by SRI International. The 1978 version used Maslow's hierarchy of needs as its conceptual model, defining four major hierarchical groups: need-driven, outer-directed, inner-directed, and integrated. To counter significant criticisms, the company developed VALS2, which deviated from the original's orientation toward social hierarchy and instead focused on multiple personality attributes that were more closely focused on individual buying behavior.

Today, there are a variety of instruments available for studying personal values (e.g., Rokeach Value Scale, Schwartz Value Scale, AIO, and Value Tracking via Yankelovich MONITOR). However, the LOV appears to be one of the more mainstream measures used by academicians and practitioners because of its brevity and ease of administration, its availability for public use, its ability to incorporate demographic measures, and its repeated success across various industries (e.g., high degree of reliability and validity).

Lifestyles

Lifestyles research examines psychological self-concepts that can be analyzed to determine future actions. Originally, these insights were limited to information primarily interpolated from demographic data or from self-reported survey data. For instance, a marketing company might assert that households that have a family income in the top 10 percentile of the nation pursue an "affluent" lifestyle. Yet some families might use their income to rent villas on the French Riviera, and other families to purchase heavy construction equipment for their businesses.

The advent of all-encompassing databases that capture lifestyle behaviors, such as individual consumer buying habits, recreational choices, and media behaviors, transformed all types of psychographic research and also changed the focus of psychographic research applications. Inventory control systems using universal product code technology give retailers and researchers the capacity to track an individual's buying behaviors, and huge computer storage capacity gives marketers the power to integrate that data with public information (e.g., auto registrations as well as home prices with media subscription

and direct marketing purchases), to obtain true information about what individual consumers value and their self-perceptions.

This lifestyle research provides information that when overlaid on previous psychographic systems gives further valuable insight into and refinement of consumer motivations. It shifts the segmentation philosophy of psychographics. Life cycle and geodemographics research methods basically overlaid certain psychographic data onto broad swaths of consumers defined by geography, class, income, or sex. The new database lifestyle research allows individual consumers to signal their membership in a psychographic class by their combinations of behaviors. For instance, a cost-effective psychographic classification that focuses on motorcycle enthusiasts identifies information like the kinds of magazines they read, products they consume, and lifestyle activities they engage in rather than their age, sex, or income. This focus on a more well-rounded, holistic segmentation approach—especially with the advent of social media tools—provides advertising, marketing, public relations and other communication managers with more useful information about their audiences.

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See also Demographics; Efficacy/Self-Efficacy; Segmentation of Publics; Social Media

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PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSING

To the extent that public relations efforts attempt to influence the behavior of target audiences, practitioners must understand the psychological processes that underlie people's responses to messages on a given topic.

Psychologists generally differentiate between three dimensions of human behavior that can influence learning and behavioral decision making: the cognitive, the affective, and the conative. Simply stated, cognitions deal with what people know—the information and thoughts stored in memory. Affect relates to people's physiological responses, including level of arousal, feelings, and emotions. Conation deals with both the unconscious (automatic) and conscious (reasoned and deliberative) observable actions. Behavioral decisions made in response to public relations efforts typically involve some combination of these three processes.

Cognition

The acquisition of new knowledge can be examined from three principal perspectives. *Classical conditioning* suggests that people learn by making associations between objects, illustrated by Pavlov's early psychological studies where he taught a dog to associate the ringing of a bell with being fed. *Operant or instrumental conditioning* focuses on altering people's knowledge or behavior by giving them rewards. *Social learning theory* stresses that people learn by observing others, accepting the behaviors of others as norms, and then modeling personal behavior after others.

Cognitive learning usually begins by *exposure* to a message. *Perception* of a message uses the

human senses to collect new information and is followed by *comprehension*, which involves making sense of a message. *Understanding* involves reconciling new information with a person's extant knowledge stored in memory. Importantly, *remembering* information involves more than the simple passing through of a message into the brain. Instead, people analyze the information, focus on key parts, amplify on those parts, and make "mental notes" about information in a process known as *elaboration*.

Schemas

Cognition refers to the mental mechanisms that lead individuals to perceive, think about, and elaborate on public relations messages and appeals. Although practitioners tend to assume that members of target audiences respond in similar ways to communications, such is not the case. Rather, individuals constantly build unique frameworks of knowledge, beliefs, and expectations based on their personal history, current circumstances, future plans, and interactions with others. These cognitive structures—representing the attributes and relationships among people, objects, and events—are known as *schemas*.

Schemas are believed to improve the efficiency of cognitive processing by allowing people to process information quickly. They also provide predictability about people and events by creating expectations about topics in people's minds. Schemas influence the types of messages that people notice (*attention schemas*), how they process information contained in the messages (*encoding schemas*), as well as how they retrieve information from memory (*retrieval schemas*). Other types of schemas include *event* or *script schemas* (the anticipated sequence of events or behaviors to expect in particular situations), *prototypes* (mental models of the characteristics of items in a particular category of objects) and *role schemas* (expectations about people playing particular roles).

Stereotypes are one type of schema. Stereotypes, or *person schemas*, are based on the physical appearance and behavioral characteristics of other groups of people. According to social learning theory, people form stereotypes based on what they learn from parents, peer groups, and mass media. From these and other sources, people learn

to separate others into different social categories based on age, gender, race, and other characteristics. Stereotypes can lead people to habitually look for a particular desirable or undesirable trait in another group and depend all too often on caricatures that accentuate only certain (often unfavorable) features. Although stereotypes simplify and thus can contribute to the efficient processing of messages, they often produce biased judgments and behavior.

People vary in their use of schemas to assess public relations messages. In many cases, for example, people compare or screen new messages for relevance to information already stored in memory and focus on inconsistencies. Schemas involve assertions between related topics, so creative messages often involve making linkages between two seemingly unrelated sets of schemas. Examples are as simple as using similes or metaphors to make comparisons.

Research indicates that schemas congruent with existing attitudes toward a topic are more likely to be retrieved from memory than incongruent schemas. Also, schemas that are “primed” by exposure to specific messages are more readily accessible in memory and thus are more likely to influence subsequent behavior. Priming can occur even when people are unaware that they were exposed to the priming messages. Effective message framing can facilitate the priming process by providing cues to what schemas should be evoked to process a particular message.

Schemas, once formed, are resistant to change and often produce self-confirming effects. However, public relations messages can and do lead to schema change under certain conditions. The *bookkeeping model* suggests that the slow accumulation of information over time can lead to gradual schema change. Under the *conversion model*, schema change is rapid and occurs when people are overwhelmed by new evidence. According to the *subtyping model*, people create schema subtypes based on exposure to new information in messages. Research indicates that subtyping is the typical mechanism by which schemas change.

Heuristics

Heuristics are a second type of cognitive mechanism that can produce rapid reactions to public

relations messages. Heuristics are “mental shortcuts” or “rules of thumb” that people use in place of deliberate thinking when making decisions. People tend to use heuristics when they lack information or are overloaded with information, when they lack time to think carefully, when the decision is unimportant, and when the heuristic rule comes quickly to mind.

Like schemas, there are many types of heuristics. The *simulation heuristic* is used to make decisions based on a mental rehearsal of the sequence and outcome of events. The *representative heuristic* is used to categorize people based on a few traits that appear typical of that category. According to the *availability heuristic*, information that is more easily recalled from memory is correspondingly more influential in making decisions. Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman (1974) confirmed that individuals use heuristics automatically and without awareness when making routine decisions.

The two leading persuasion process models—Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Heuristic-Systematic Model—argue that heuristic cues (known as peripheral cues in the Elaboration Likelihood Model), can influence persuasion and are particularly important in cases when people are not motivated to pay attention to arguments.

Heuristics and schemas can increase the efficient processing and persuasiveness of public relations messages; however, they can also reduce accuracy, leading to errors in cognition. *Optimistic* or *negative bias* (the expectation of positive or negative outcomes) can influence the processing of messages, leading people to ignore or pay greater attention to negative messages concerning threats in the social environment. Errors can also occur when people rely on intuition or irrational assumptions when making decisions, or suppress thoughts that are inconsistent with behavioral intentions.

Cognitive Consistency and Dissonance

Social psychologists Fritz Heider and Leon Festinger were among the first to argue that people strive toward consistency, balance, or consonance between mental representations of their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Whereas Heider’s balance theory primarily dealt with consistency among attitudes, Festinger’s 1957 theory of cognitive dissonance showed that the consistency principle was

relevant to a wide variety of cognitive elements, including behavior and behavioral decision making.

When beliefs, attitudes, behavior, and other elements are inconsistent with one another, people experience a negative affective state of discomfort or tension known as cognitive dissonance. The magnitude of dissonance tends to be greater when the belief, attitude, or behavior is more important or highly valued by the person, as well as when the belief, attitude, or behavior is proportionally more dissonant with other cognitive elements.

To reduce tension and maintain cognitive consistency, people try to bring their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors into alignment with one another, typically by modifying the cognitive element that is easiest to change. Exposing target audiences to messages that are contrary to existing attitudes and beliefs can thus provide a motivational force for behavioral change. In general, people deal with inconsistency through avoidance, reactance (countering, such as mentally rebutting some claim), or discounting (dismissing the importance of the fact or the credibility of the source).

Affect

Affect is a broad term that encompasses emotions, moods, feelings, and other affective states. Susan McLeod (1991) differentiated among various forms of affect based on their stability and intensity. *Feelings* are typically associated with physical sensations, such as pleasure or pain. *Emotions* involve distinctive physical and affective reactions to particular attitude objects (people, issues, or events). Emotions can be dominant or secondary in a given situation and can stand alone or combine to form various emotional states. *Moods* are more general in nature and express the positive or negative way people feel at particular times. Because moods are less intense and more fleeting than emotions, they are easier to change in desirable ways.

Psychologists differ as to whether cognition and affect represent separate systems within humans; however, they generally recognize that people devote varying levels of both thought and emotion to information processing and behavioral decision making. Kristie Fleckenstein (1991) conceptualized affect and cognition as states located at the opposite ends of an affective-cognitive continuum

and suggested we should think of affect and cognition as linked and expressible in degrees. Moods, feelings, and emotions cluster at the affective end of the continuum, attitudes at the midpoint, and evaluation (assessment of information according to previously stored criteria) at the cognitive end of the continuum.

The priority of cognitive or affective influences on learning and behavioral decision making is the subject of ongoing debate. Psychologist Fredric Bartlett argued in 1932 that affects are not simply a product of rational thought. Instead, affect often assumes primacy and initiates the formation of knowledge structures and serves as the basis for information encoding and retrieval. Conversely, people often employ cognitive techniques like counterfactual thinking and thought suppression to regulate emotions, moods, and feelings. Thus, there is often close correspondence between cognitive and affective states and subsequent judgments and behavior.

Psychologists generally acknowledge that emotions, moods, and feelings can influence the way people process new information. Messages must arouse audiences in order for them to pay attention, and message creators can appeal to people's emotions to enhance message processing. The goal is to create sufficient levels of affective response—but not so much that people are overwhelmed so that they cease learning or become distracted. Thus, overly attractive spokespeople, highly graphic scenes of death or destruction, and excessive fear appeals can interfere with effective communication.

Conation

A third aspect of the human mind relevant to public relations efforts is conation: the unconscious or conscious impulse, desire, inclination, or intention to take action. Until recently, the study of conation lagged behind that of cognition and affect, in part because the three domains are intertwined and often considered together when assessing human behavior. Isolating conation from other influences on behavioral decision making thus becomes difficult. Most psychologists agree, however, that conation is a separate and important element of human behavior and that decision making cannot be fully explained without taking conative factors

into account. Behaviorism is a school of psychology that rejects the influence of cognition and affect and devotes itself solely to studying actions.

In 1997, cognitive psychologists Richard Snow and Douglas Jackson placed conation between cognitive and affective domains, with motivation and volition constituting the conative domain. Motivation can involve achieving human *needs* (physiological, safety, social, esteem, self-actualization, etc.), *goals* (achieving particular outcomes), or *gratifications* (pleasure or satisfaction). Motivational factors provide the direction, energy, and persistence necessary to achieve change, while volition encompasses freedom of choice, the will to act, and self-regulation of behavioral effort.

Snow and Jackson envisioned motivation and volition as forming a sort of conative continuum or pathway by which individual wants, needs, and goals are transformed into intentions and actions. Other researchers are more inclined to interpret motivational factors from an affective perspective and volitional influences from a cognitive viewpoint. Conation—the inclination to take action—thus becomes the psychological “bridge” between affect, cognition, and behavioral change.

Conative behaviors in public relations generally deal with particular actions that are mutually beneficial for people and for organizations. The most obvious behaviors that practitioners try to influence in the for-profit and political arenas include buying, investing, working, donating, and voting. However, not-for-profit organizations help people to learn new skills, develop cultural or recreational activities, grow spiritually, engage in healthful habits, and avoid risky or antisocial behaviors.

Influencing Behaviors and Attitudes

Influence in public relations involves altering a person's cognitive, affective, or conative behaviors and is the underlying process for relationship building. Most well-managed communications programs specify both organizational goals as well as behavioral change objectives that help the organization achieve its desired outcomes. Although the behavioral objectives of many campaigns can be to merely increase a person's knowledge (awareness, recognition, or recall of a brand or key message point) or to generate affective response (emotional leaning toward a client's product, message, or organization),

most programs specify conative actions as the desired outcome.

Traditional hierarchy of effects models suggest that behavioral change results from a person moving along a continuum from awareness to interest to desire to action (also known as the AIDA model). Variations of this notion emphasize awareness to comprehension to conviction to action and awareness to knowledge to liking to preference to conviction. Diffusion theory suggests a similar process that involves knowledge-persuasion-decision-implementation-confirmation. These models suggest that change begins with learning, after which people develop feelings and then act. More recent research suggests that in some instances the sequence is reversed. Research about low-involvement decisions suggests that people develop feelings toward topics, engage in minimal cognitive learning, and then act. Alternatively, forcing people to change their behavior can effect behavioral change. In this dissonance-radical behaviorism approach, people act, respond affectively, and then learn (by observing their own behavior).

Both these approaches and most behavioral change models suggest that attitudes toward topics moderate a person's eventual behavior. An *attitude* is a predisposition toward a topic that combines both cognitive and affective dimensions—what a person knows and how they feel about it (likes it, is neutral, or dislikes it). Thus, many public relations campaigns have as their stated purpose to *crystallize attitudes* (shape or form predispositions about new topics), *reinforce existing attitudes*, or *change attitudes* (the most difficult outcome to achieve in a campaign).

Importantly, if an attitude is composed of both cognitive and affective dimensions, public relations campaign strategies essentially can influence attitudes in two ways: change what people *know* about a topic or change how they *feel* about a topic (i.e., increase their positive response or the importance of the topic in their mind).

Various attitude theories, such as Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen's (2010) theories of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior, suggest that attitudes are reasonably good predictors of behaviors, provided that a person is able to engage in the requisite behaviors and that the person's goals do not change. Whereas attitude measures ask people about their assessments of a particular

topic (good-bad, valuable-not valuable), behavior intention measures the probability that a person will act. Purchase intention and voting intention are particular cases of behavioral intent related to the purchasing of goods or services or going to the polls, respectively. Behavioral intention measures ask people the degree to which they want to, intend to, plan to, or need to take a particular action and thus are better predictors of behavior than mere attitude measures.

The influence of public relations messages and appeals on learning and behavioral decision making depends greatly on the cognitive, affective, and conative states of the people exposed to the messages. Public relations efforts can be directed toward shaping, reinforcing, or changing the cognitive or affective processing of messages to achieve the desired end result. When a target audience is knowledgeable and motivated to process messages, a well-reasoned argument, supported by factual evidence and quality reasoning, is more likely to be effective in shaping attitudes and behavior. When audience members are unwilling or unable to process messages logically, however, an emotional appeal may increase acceptance of the messages. Since people differ in their ability to put their thoughts and feelings into action, messages aimed at helping audience members develop conative attitudes and skills—the setting of goals, the development of plans, self-regulation of effort, and commitment to achieving desired results—also become critical in achieving behavior change. Elsewhere, it has been argued that public relations message designers can facilitate psychological processing by enhancing the motivation, ability, and opportunity of audiences to process persuasive messages.

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See also Diffusion of Innovations Theory; Information Integration Theory; Involvement; Persuasion Theory; Social Construction of Reality Theory; Theory of Reasoned Action

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The term *public affairs* has multiple meanings related to public relations. Most commonly, the term describes the management process by which mostly corporate organizations seek to influence public policy, policy makers, and stakeholders

considered critical to their successful operations. Such influence strategies often include building and maintaining relationships and reputations with strategic publics or stakeholders, often within governments. This conceptualization of public affairs is sometimes considered a subcomponent of public relations or a public relations specialty focused on influencing public policy, legislation, and regulation. In this case, public affairs may be considered government affairs or government relations. It is sometimes called corporate affairs, external relations, or external affairs. Within government and nonprofit circles, particularly North American ones, public affairs is often used interchangeably with the term *public relations*. Government and government communicators may use the term *public affairs* to avoid potential negative connotations and misconceptions surrounding public relations. However, unlike common lay understandings, neither term is synonymous with publicity, propaganda, or media relations.

Reflecting the term's myriad meanings, the Public Relations Society of America has a "public affairs and government" section that describes itself as supporting government and military communicators as well as those at firms, businesses and associations that are tasked with communicating with stakeholders on public policy or public safety issues. The Public Affairs Council defines public affairs as an organization's efforts to scan and influence its business environment where public affairs is seen as an umbrella function that entails government relations, communication, issues management, and corporate social responsibility strategies aimed to impact public policy and establish and maintain reputations and relationships with priority stakeholders. This understanding of public affairs is closely linked with lobbying and other attempts to influence an organization's operating environment. Across the various conceptualizations and definitions of public affairs, scholars stress the emphasis on reputation as one point of agreement or consensus.

Public Affairs Activities and Challenges

Given today's complex global markets, swiftly changing technologies, and rising environmental pressures and communication challenges, private and public sector organizations increasingly recognize public

affairs' strategic value in cultivating relationships with key influencers in governments, communities, and among special interest groups. This recognition of public affairs' importance may be a reason why a recent report on the state of corporate public affairs by the Foundation for Public Affairs found that 80% of companies did not cut their public affairs budgets during the economic recession. In an integrated public affairs program, typical programs may include business/government relations, community relations, corporate social responsibility, media relations, international/global relations, investor relations, issues management, relationship management, and risk and crisis management. Organizations are relying on grassroots networks, social engagement, issue-based websites, and electronic issue advertising to manage issues, reputations, and relationships.

Declining trust in both corporate and government entities makes reputation and relationship management more critical and more difficult. With anticorporate and antigovernment campaigns and messages on the rise, public affairs professionals encourage corporate organizations to reinforce legitimate commitment to corporate social responsibility, prepare for increased shareholder activism, and offer enhanced transparency and accountability. An additional challenge then for practitioners is to build or maintain a public affairs management function that focuses on long-term relationships and reputation.

Public Affairs Research

Similar to the research path of public relations, public affairs writings in the 1960s were largely offered by practitioners and focused on practice, mostly originating from professional reports produced by associations. By the 1980s, public affairs scholarly research increased and expanded in scope to include a broader understanding of the field. This enlarged arena of public affairs players included local, regional, national and international governments, special interest associations and organizations, and public opinion communities, including scientists, local communities, and opinion makers. The field continues to grow and diversify—though its inherent interdisciplinarity also creates challenges. Despite their connections, public relations and public affairs theory and

research remain largely separate. When public affairs is addressed within the public relations literature, it is largely as a subspecialty or subfunction of public relations. Despite this separation, there is a burgeoning field of public affairs research and theory that can inform and be informed by public relations research.

One such area of synergy centers on issues management, which public relations and public affairs scholars consider a key function of their disciplines. Public affairs researchers argue that issues management is the area of public affairs that most effectively demonstrates the value and strategic contribution public affairs makes to achieving organizational goals and strategies. Public relations scholars also focus on issues management as a key component of effective public relations.

Some challenges facing public affairs researchers overlap with those facing its practitioners: changing roles of governments, expanding globalization, and technology shifts. For example, the growth of online activist and pressure groups creates new opportunities and difficulties for studying and practicing public affairs from grassroots/advocacy, corporate, and government perspectives. An additional hurdle continues to be expanding beyond a U.S. and European focus in public affairs research. The future of public affairs research and practice revolves around understanding and managing how organizations, private and public, relate to government and society.

Abbey Levenshus

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Government Public Relations; Government Relations; Issues Management; Military Public Relations; Public Relations Society of America

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PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Public diplomacy is the primary communication tool for governments to influence public opinion in foreign countries and as such, a vital tool in managing the reputation of countries. While traditional diplomacy is conducted between governments, public diplomacy is direct communication between a government (or governmental organization) and foreign citizens to evoke favorable opinions, attitudes, or behavior toward the country, its policies, and people. The most typical tools of public diplomacy include cultural and educational exchange programs, international film festivals, promotion of learning languages, art exhibitions and shows, international broadcasting (the transmission of news via state-funded international radio, television, and Internet), and speeches of politicians.

The evolution and practice of public diplomacy were significantly shaped and contextualized by the Cold War and the political environment where U.S. and Western European public diplomacy targeted regions of conflicts and closed systems with significant information deficiencies behind enemy lines. Initially, it was a foreign policy tool of great and middle-power countries; recently, however, smaller countries, regional governments, minority groups (such as the Roma community in Europe), unrecognized nation-states, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), as well as global intergovernmental organizations (European Union or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) engage in public diplomacy.

One of the most frequent criticisms of public diplomacy is that it is simply a euphemism for propaganda, resulting in the two terms labeled as synonyms or used interchangeably. *Public diplomacy* was coined in the 1960s as an alternative term to *propaganda*, which by then had become an ideologically charged concept in the height of the Cold War.

Public diplomacy goals can be grouped into three main categories:

1. *Self-presentational goals*, where the government projects or promotes a particular identity or how the government—or the country it represents—wants to be perceived. It often entails a predetermined and envisioned message, image, or picture.

2. *Instrumental goals*, which can be further divided into preparative and situational types of goals. Situational objectives help convey a position on a particular issue; in this case an issue or problem drives public diplomacy, which tends to be an ad hoc and sporadic activity. Preparative goals help create a receptive environment where people are more willing to listen to an idea, message, or argument for foreign policy goals.
3. *Relational goals*, where public diplomacy is an instrument of developing, maintaining—or sometimes terminating—relationships, which may or may not be beneficial to both countries. Communication's role is to create shared views and mutual understanding between the government and foreign stakeholder groups about a particular issue or policy.

Several changes in the political, economic, and technological environment in the 21st century led to a rethinking of public diplomacy's role in conducting international relations as well as to the reconceptualization of public diplomacy. These changes are reflected in the emergence of “new” public diplomacy, which is characterized by engaging foreign publics in dialogues, building long-term relationships, and developing network structures of cooperation. New public diplomacy centers on ideas and values rather than ideologies and unilateral interests.

Beside the political/military dimension of public diplomacy, an economic dimension evolved during the past two decades. *Corporate diplomacy* can be considered as the economic face of public diplomacy where the preparative goal of public diplomacy prevails: public diplomacy is used to create an environment where business deals can thrive. Transnational corporations use strategic communication to influence political agendas of foreign governments, while governments are also keen on attracting foreign direct investments and transnational corporations to their territories in the forms of trade and investment promotion, or nation branding.

The role of business in public diplomacy is increasingly discussed particularly when government foreign policies and actions may jeopardize business objectives. Disapproval of foreign policy decisions and actions are often retaliated by boycotts of the consumer goods and brands of the country, such as the Arab boycott of American products to protest against U.S. support for Israel

during the early years of the 2000s. Negative or poor images of a country, its government or policies can trigger public diplomacy responses. Several countries poll foreign public opinion about the perceptions of the country and poor results often mobilize public diplomacy resources.

Governments regularly commission global public relations consultancies to develop and implement public diplomacy campaigns, and public relations practitioners are employed by ministries of foreign affairs. A strategic communication approach to public diplomacy received greater attention after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 when several reports and analyses produced by U.S. think tanks and different committees called for more emphasis on a strategic approach.

Public diplomacy is an interdisciplinary field; international relations, diplomacy, international marketing, public relations, and international communication each makes their own contribution to the field. Public diplomacy can be conceptualized as international public relations, the aim of which is to establish mutually beneficial relations between a government and publics of other nations.

Benno Signitzer and Timothy Coombs (1992) paved the way for a public relations approach to public diplomacy by exploring conceptual convergences between the two disciplines and opening the door to cross-fertilization. Public relations concepts and models are increasingly applied and tested, including James E. Grunig and Todd T. Hunt's 1984 models of public relations, application of excellence theory for public diplomacy behavior, and adoption of the relationship management framework in public diplomacy. At the same time, public diplomacy theory has also informed public relations scholarship by reconnecting public relations to power (L'Etang, 2009).

Gyorgy Szondi

See also Empire, Public Relations and; Excellence Theory; International Public Relations Association; Nation Branding; Propaganda

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PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGN

A public health campaign is an effort to persuade a defined public to engage in behaviors that improve health or refrain from behaviors that are unhealthy. The communication elements of public health campaigns reflect four critical elements. First, campaigns are strategic and organized efforts. Second, they are typically designed to yield specific outcomes or results. Third, they normally focus on a large number of individuals. Fourth, they usually have specific beginning and ending dates. Public health campaigns typically follow seven steps: defining the problem, developing objectives, identifying target audiences, developing message strategies and tactics, selecting appropriate communication channels, implementing the campaign, and evaluating both the process and campaign outcomes.

Define the Problem

The first step in any public health campaign is to assess and define the nature of the health problem. In 1999, Christopher Rissel and Neil Bracht outlined two basic forms of community health analysis. The health planning approach, sometimes referred to as the “trickle-down” approach, associates the concept of health with the absence of disease. Government agencies most often use the health planning approach. Through the routine collection of data, tracking the outbreak of diseases along with other related information, including demographics, living habits, and environmental risks, epidemiologists and other health experts identify and prioritize health threats on a local, national, or international level. The community development approach, sometimes referred to as the “bubble up” approach, examines community

health from a perspective that promotes individual and community empowerment. The broader concerns of educational, social, and economic vitality are factored into the analysis and any subsequent health intervention.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ report, *Healthy People 2020: Improving the Health of Americans* reflects a health planning approach. Armed with statistics of current and emerging health threats, epidemiologists and other health experts devised this report. The *Healthy People 2020* report is one of the major engines driving the prioritization of specific efforts in current health services and research. For example, statistics continue to show that African Americans are dying from some forms of cancer at rates disproportionate to Caucasians, revealing the need for more effort in promoting earlier disease detection among this at-risk population. As a result, state and federal departments of health are placing special attention on this problem.

An example of the community development approach is Keene State College’s Early Sprouts Gardening Project. This program works to provide a 24-week curriculum model for preschools in New Hampshire, with three primary goals: (1) improve the food preferences of young children to eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products; (2) promote school-based and family dietary changes; and (3) reduce the risks and outcomes of childhood overweight and obesity. The program attempts to connect preschool children to their food supply from a “seed to table” approach. Children in the program learn about growing, harvesting, and preparing food. Early Sprouts was adopted in several New Hampshire communities, including Claremont, Drewsville, Hillsborough, Keene, Nashua, and Manchester. Supporters of the program represent a broad spectrum of local community and corporate organizations, such as the Kiwanis Club of Keene, Hannaford Super Markets, Monadnock United Way, and Stonewall Farm.

Develop Objectives

Once specific problems are identified, development of specific goals and objectives is the next step in the public health campaign process. *Healthy People 2020* sets national goals and objectives for policy, programs, and activities to address the

major U.S. health challenges. This includes a focus on the social determinants of health, with recognition that the inter-relationship of family, social, economic, and physical environmental factors are key determinants of health. Many of the goals from *Healthy People 2010* have been retained, but there are also several new foci. For example, one specific objective is to decrease adolescent school absenteeism due to illness or injuries. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that in 2008 14.6% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years missed 11 or more whole school days due to illness or injury. The target objective is to reduce this number 10% by 2020, from 14.6% to 13.1%. Another example pertains to genomics. The National Health Information Survey determined that in 2005, 23.3% of women with a family history of breast and/or ovarian cancer received genetic counseling. The target objective is to raise this number by at least 10% to 25.6% of women receiving genetic counseling by 2020.

Identify Target Audiences

Public health campaigns often involve segmentation of the community into a variety of dimensions that include such factors as demographics (e.g., race, income level, and age) or psychographics (e.g., fear levels and readiness for change). Charles Salmon and Charles Atkin identified three basic types of target audiences in 2003. First, is the focal audience whose health-related behavior is to be changed. An example is a campaign initiated by the organization, Us Helping Us. CDC statistics indicate that Black men who have sex with men in their teens and 20s led all groups becoming HIV-positive between 2006 and 2009. The Us Helping Us organization is mounting efforts to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and preventive behaviors in the Black community. The second type of audience is composed of those individuals who are capable of influencing focal audience members. An example is Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America's effort to target parents with an information campaign to reduce childhood obesity. This stems from the belief that parents are a primary source of influence on their children, and that one of the best ways to change a child's eating and exercise behavior is through parents. The third type of target audience is composed of individuals capable of altering the

environment in ways that shape individuals' health behavior. For example, in Tennessee, a coalition of individuals, neighborhood leaders, community organizations, and business partners, called Livable Memphis, work in part to influence public policy makers to enact policies that promote healthy regional growth, such as new infrastructure that provides adequate walking and biking spaces, and good environmental stewardship.

Developing Strategies and Tactics

The effective use of strategies and tactics is key for a public health campaign's success. A sound foundation in social science theory is essential for a campaign to yield its full potential. A good example of a useful theory is Kim Witte's 1992 extended parallel process model (EPPM). Many health campaigns involve communicating some element of threat. The threat may come from continuing an unhealthy behavior or from not engaging in a healthy behavior, for example, continuing to smoke or not exercise. The EPPM provides an explanation why some individuals react to a health message by going into a danger control response, which means taking action to control or eliminate the threat, while other individuals react to the same message by going into a fear control response, which means engaging in a process that controls fear rather than the threat.

Often fear control responses are maladaptive and may involve message avoidance or erroneously rationalizing that they are not subject to a threat when in fact it applies to them. Critical elements of the model include a person's perceived susceptibility to a health threat, the severity of the threat, the efficacy of responding to the health threat in a prescribed way, and a person's self-efficacy (i.e., their perceived ability to adopt the suggested behavior). The key is to tailor messages in a way that responds to each person's perceptions to promote danger control and minimize or eliminate fear control. A 2012 study by Shelly Campo and colleagues found that the EPPM was a useful construct in segmenting and tailoring health campaigns that target the problem of unwanted pregnancies.

Selecting Communication Channels

Once message strategies and tactics are developed, communication channels must be selected to

deliver this content. The major types are mediated channels and interpersonal channels. Mediated channels include traditional media like television, radio, and newspapers; as well as interactive media, such as CD-ROM programs, websites, and computer games; and social media like Twitter and Facebook. There are several media features to consider in deciding which channels are appropriate for a particular campaign. These include *reach*—the proportion of the audience exposed to the message, *depth*—the ability to provide detailed information, *accessibility*—the ease of placing messages in the channel, *personalization*—the degree to which messages can be tailored to individual needs, *economy*—the cost of placing messages in a channel, *targetability*—the degree to which audience niches can be reached, and *participation*—the degree to which audience members are involved while processing a message (Atkin, 1994).

Often, the audiences most in need of health information are the most difficult to reach. For example, low socioeconomic populations can be hard to reach. People in these populations typically do not go to the doctor regularly and they tend not to read newspapers or magazines. They watch a lot of television but do not consume much news or documentary programming. Creative solutions are necessary for reaching this at-risk group. A number of campaigns used barbershops and nail salons to reach people in low-income minority populations. For example, in 2011 Ronald G. Victor and colleagues tested the effectiveness of a barber-based intervention for improving hypertension in Black men. Barbers were trained to become health educators, monitor blood pressure, and promote physician referrals. The researchers found a significant lowering of blood pressure among male barbershop patrons as a result.

Implementation

Implementation of a public health campaign should occur only when the previous steps are thoroughly developed. It is also important to understand the collaborative nature of many public health campaigns. As Timothy Edgar, Vicki Freimuth, and Sharon Hammond pointed out in 2003, few large-scale public health campaigns are implemented by a single organization. Often many partners, such as foundations, state and local agencies, advocacy

groups, researchers, pharmaceutical companies, health professionals, and private contractors work together to design and implement a campaign. These partnerships bring strengths to a project, as each organization has unique resources and expertise. For example, a foundation, government agency, or pharmaceutical company may provide the funding necessary to carry out a public health campaign. Researchers guide the scientific development in order to uncover new knowledge. A public relations firm develops and implements a publicity effort to inform the community about the health campaign and to recruit volunteers, and health professionals work with the campaign team to deliver care to patients and forward the resulting data to the research group. Although collaboration provides great benefits, it is important to realize that competing interests often characterize such partnerships. An understanding of group and organizational communication is critical in order to yield the most effective public health campaign.

Campaign Evaluation

The final step is evaluation, although the process actually begins with the research conducted to determine needs before the start of a campaign, proceeds during the campaign to determine if benchmarks are being met, and continues after the conclusion of the campaign with the assessment of campaign outcomes. In 1999, Phyllis Pirie identified three basic types of evaluation. Evaluation for *accountability* seeks to determine if a campaign is worth the financial expenditure. Funding agencies and policymakers are particularly concerned with this. Evaluation for *program improvement* searches for ways to change activities for maximum benefit. This is a chief concern of campaign management and staff whose focus is on promoting the success of their campaign. Finally, evaluation for *generalizability* seeks to determine if a campaign could be mounted effectively in other locations. In addition to researchers, policymakers are particularly interested in generalizability in order to decide whether they should advocate the program on a wider scale. Pirie noted that outcome evaluation is effective only when careful needs and process evaluation are done. Otherwise, one cannot know for certain what is accounting for the outcome. On a community level, “pre-posttest” evaluations are

generally not as strong because there are so many variables outside the campaign that might influence outcome. Pirie argued that comparison of similar communities without a program is a more certain way of gauging campaign outcomes. For example, in 2008 Judy M. Berkowitz, Marian Huhman, and Mary Jo Nolin examined the impact of the VERB campaign, a national media advertising campaign urging increased physical activity for youth aged 9 to 13 years. The study compared six “high-dose” communities that received 50% more advertising with other similar communities. The researchers found that high-dose communities reported higher levels of understanding of VERB than other similar communities.

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See also Extended Parallel Process Model of Risk Communication; Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Risk Communication

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PUBLIC INTEREST

Public relations practitioners have long realized that their practice could either serve the public interest or be at odds with it. Realizing that, they face two challenges. One is knowing what the public interest is and then knowing how to serve it.

Consideration of what constitutes the public interest is central to discussions of the role of public relations in society and continues to challenge those who craft and implement codes of professional practice. Actual and proposed codes of ethics for public relations practitioners suggest that public relations should be practiced in the public interest. The Preamble to the Public Relations Society of America's Code of Ethics says, in part, “The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is committed to ethical practices. The level of public trust PRSA members seek, as we serve the public good, means we have taken on a special obligation to operate ethically” (PRSA, 2012a). Likewise, textbooks on public relations emphasize that the public relations profession shares with its clients a social responsibility. “Public relations focuses on society in the broadest sense and should work in the

greater interest of society rather than the narrow interests of the organizations it serves,” according to Doug Newsom, Judy Turk, and Dean Kruckeberg (2013, p. 15).

There is no argument that public relations should serve the public interest. The challenges arise in defining and describing public relations practice in the public interest. Has the definitional challenge become too much for the profession? The term *public interest* has all but disappeared from the indices of public relations textbooks, with the concept subsumed under social responsibility. Harold Burson, founder of Burson-Marsteller public relations, fears that the definition of public relations adopted via crowdsourcing in 2012 abandons action in the public interest. Defining public relations as “a strategic communications process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics” (PRSA, 2012b) emphasizes the daily communication activities that practitioners perform while deemphasizing public relations practitioners’ role in decision making, where public relations has traditionally served as the corporate conscience.

Burson says that public relations comprises just two components, and acting in the public interest is the first of them. Burson argues that those who choose careers in public relations “have an implied obligation to what we call the ‘public interest,’” which he defines simply as “to do what’s best for society” (Burson, 2012).

Walter Lippmann defined the public interest as “what . . . [people] would choose if they saw clearly, thought rationally, acted disinterestedly and benevolently” (1956, p. 40).

In contrast to the challenge to be disinterested, public relations professionals are not disinterested; they are partisan. This and the persuasive functions of public relations to crystallize, change, and activate attitudes seem in conflict with Lippmann’s definition of the public interest. Nor is it always benevolent, as illustrated by public relations strategies to encourage tobacco consumption while concealing information about associated health hazards. Carried toward what can be called the propagandistic practice of public relations, a professional can aspire to shape attitudes toward the interests of the client. Such efforts may be asymmetrical and counter to the public interest.

“Our function as public relations professionals is to help reconcile employer goals with the public

interest,” Burson wrote in his blog. PRSA Statement of Professional Values (2012a) codifies that function: “We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent.”

D. L. Martinson (1995; 2000) focused on the repetition of day-to-day actions and decisions as the source of practice in the public interest; repeated truth telling becomes habit and serves the public interest. The Public Relations Society of America (2012a) concurs, admonishing practitioners to “adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public.” Martinson further advised that practitioners avoid excess in advocating for a client when the client’s interests are in conflict with those of society. Loyalty to a client does not require violation of the rights of others.

Thomas H. Bivins (1993) questioned whether it is even possible for a public relations practitioner to discharge their duty as an advocate for a client while at the same time equally serving the public interest. He concluded that this responsibility may best reside at the macro level, the level of the profession rather than at the level of the individual. To help solve problems of this sort, Bivins proposed three paradigms under which public practitioners might serve the public interest. Once he laid out these paradigms, he disputed the notion of whether public relations practice within those paradigms actually served the public interest. In paradigm I, the public interest is served by every individual acting in the best interest of the client. This principle erroneously presumes that all clients operate in the public interest. In paradigm II, the practitioner balances work for paying clients with pro bono work for causes. The cause-related work, however, serves a special interest. In paradigm III, the public interest is served by ensuring that every client in need of professional public relations service can receive that service. This paradigm makes access to professional public relations services an obligation of the profession as a whole and not to the individual practitioner.

To extend his analysis of the role public relations plays in serving the public interest, Bivins (1993) offered a fourth paradigm that attempts to codify the obligation of the profession to serve the public interest. According to paradigm IV, “If public relations as a profession improves the quality of debate

over issues important to the public, then the public interest will be served" (p. 1). This might require pro bono work to ensure that multiple viewpoints are expressed. However, it does not require equal opportunity of all viewpoints to be expressed.

Scott Cutlip, Allen Center, and Glen Broom's classic textbook *Effective Public Relations* (1985) relies on the utilitarian definition of public interest as "serving the larger good over short-term private interests" (p. 482). They located responsibility for such service within the notion of corporate social responsibility, as did John W. Hill. According to Hill (1958), "Big companies, if they are properly managed, have a keen sense of public responsibility . . . and make sure that each of their plants is a good neighbor in its respective community" (p. 39).

As counselors to management, public relations practitioners help their employers and clients find ways of "identifying its own interest with the public interest," Hill (1958, p. 21) said. Corporate policies of maintaining the strength and welfare of the company in ways consistent with the community interest, building a labor force by providing the best possible working conditions and wages, and investing in the goodwill of those essential to the corporation's success contribute to the corporation's success. "Good corporate public relations depend, first upon sound policies truly in the public interest," Hill (p. 163) reasoned. Hill defined the public interest as that which "promotes the general welfare, well-being, and security of the citizenry" (p. 238).

Acting in the public interest is an absolute essential for long-term success; that's why the public relations professional must have a voice in the decision-making process. Some look at this position as representing the company conscience; others, as service as an ombudsman.

The entire public relations industry suffers when practitioners represent bad clients. But, Hill (1963) admonished, "the better informed the people are, the more capable they are of judging where the public interest lies" (p. 256). Thus, he would agree with Bivins that the role of public relations in the public interest lies, in part, in stimulating and participating in open, public debate of issues relevant to various publics' interest.

The responsibility for stimulating debate served as the core principle underscoring the 2000 revision of the PRSA Code of Ethics: "Protecting and advancing the free flow of accurate and truthful

information is essential to serving the public interest and contributing to informed decision making in a democratic society. . . . We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate" (PRSA, 2012a, n.p.).

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See also Codes of Ethics; Corporate Social Responsibility; Ethics of Public Relations; Hill, John Wiley; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Propaganda; Publics

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PUBLIC OPINION AND OPINION LEADERS

Public opinion is the collection of individual views or attitudes on a particular issue. Of course, not everyone has a point of view on every issue or topic, but rather select issues that may have a personal interest. As matters are perceived to be important, people's level of cognitive involvement motivates them to seek information, including the opinions of others—thus the role of the opinion leader.

Public opinion is extremely difficult to measure. The public, by and large, tends to be passive and only a small number of people at any given time actually form an opinion on a particular issue. Additionally, one issue may elicit a response or attention from one section of the public, whereas another issue may be the focal point for another group of citizens; thereby, it is difficult to gauge an accurate reading of public opinion.

Change in public opinion can be seen as evolutionary. Over time, attitudes toward women in the workplace evolved, leading to acceptance and support of women holding positions of political and corporate power. The same is true for minorities. In both cases, opinion did not change rapidly, but rather gradually grew and shifted over time. However, events can trigger a rapid change in public opinion, such as the change in attitudes toward BP after the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Mass media can shape public opinion in many ways. Through agenda setting, news reports shape public perception of issues by highlighting certain news stories and downplaying or marginalizing other issues. Additionally, the way that news stories are framed or presented can influence public opinion on an issue. For example, how the media frame the debate on healthcare reform can influence the public's perception of the issue; and different media voices shape the opinions of different audiences. The swaying of public opinion based on the coverage of events is more daunting today than ever with the abundance of news outlets, rapid-fire reporting, and biased media outlets.

With the advent of social media, public opinion susceptibility to the role of the opinion leader is more pronounced. An opinion leader, or influencer, is someone who is influential and respected by a

segment of a larger population. Opinion leaders help shape public opinion because people listen to what they say; they are often seen as experts on certain topics. Opinion leaders form networks by talking to other individuals who share information and viewpoints on specific topics. They are keenly interested in an issue and better informed than the average person. Opinion leaders must be active in attaining and sharing information about the issue to maintain their "leadership" role. Opinion leaders like to let their opinions be known.

Because anyone can voice an opinion via Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc., identifying an opinion leader can be a challenge. Traditionally, opinion leaders voiced their opinion to a select group and could shape attitudes and behaviors of their followers. Because of social media, opinion leaders can be anyone who has a following, but as quickly as an individual can be identified as a leader, the tide can change and that individual can fall out of favor with their followers. As the importance of opinion leaders in influencing consumer behavior becomes better understood, online opinion leaders are now a sought-after group. Opinion leaders are identified by the number of messages posted and reposted by others as well as the number of connections, followers, or "friends" they have. These highly connected individuals are often courted by marketing firms to promote various products or issues. In word-of-mouth marketing, the role of opinion leaders is especially important because of the influence they hold over other consumers. Opinion leaders are described as being highly interested in the subject, better informed on the issue, avid consumers of media, early adopters of new ideas, and good organizers who can get people to take action. Opinion leaders are broken down into two groups: formal and informal. Formal opinion leaders include elected officials, heads of companies, celebrities, and so on. Informal opinion leaders are individuals with clout within the community who influence their peers and are seen as role models.

Reaching opinion leaders is important in the political arena because an opinion leader's view carries weight in the community. This is demonstrated through the two-step flow theory of communication. Sociologists Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld (1955) found that while the mass media have minimal influence on which candidate a person selects, voters were most influenced by what

they heard through personal communication with community opinion leaders. This theory holds that people who are active and gain information on the issue, evaluate the information, form an opinion on the subject, and then express that opinion to others form public opinion.

Everett Rogers (2003) described the importance of opinion leaders in terms of the “diffusion of innovation.” His theory states that there are five levels of adoption of innovation (innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards), which spreads over time through communication channels, emphasizing personal and not technical perceptions of the innovation. Innovators are the first individuals to adopt an innovation and are often seen as opinion leaders, especially to other innovators. Early adopters often have the highest degree of opinion leadership among the other adopter categories, whereas early majority adopters are seldom seen in positions of opinion leadership. Late majority individuals have little contact with others and offer very little opinion leadership. Finally, laggards are the last to adopt an innovation and show little to no opinion leadership.

Opinion leaders existed long before mass media. Religious leaders, politicians, and great thinkers like Aristotle used their knowledge and charisma to influence people on behalf of causes. Today, however, opinion leaders are able to reach more of the public, or at least important segments of it, through traditional and new media.

Nancy Engelhardt Furlow

See also Agenda-Setting Theory; Coalition Building; Diffusion of Innovations Theory; Framing Theory; Involvement; Social Construction of Reality Theory; Social Media; Two-Step Flow Theory; Word of Mouth Marketing

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PUBLIC POLICY PLANNING

Public policy planning entails understanding which government policy constraints and incentives can affect the ability of organizations to operate and to achieve their mission and vision. Although public policy can be normative as well as governmental policy, public policy planning is vital to businesses; it also affects decisions and actions taken by managements of nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

In myriad ways, public policy supports, corrects, and rationalizes private sector planning. It is one of two broad forces that create the environment for business practices and policies: market forces (called the private sector) and public policy (the public sector) of the economy. How public policy influences—supports, facilitates, or impedes business practices—constitutes a political economy.

The public policy arena helps define opportunities and constraints for business practices by suggesting legitimate and illegal means for generating revenue and managing operating costs. Legislatures create rules. Regulators implement legislation through incentives and sanctions. Through legal interpretations, litigation can stop, modify, mitigate, or create policies developed by legislators and implemented by regulators.

Public policy planning consists of considered constraints and opportunities created through government policy that can affect the strategic business plan that executives develop to achieve their business missions and visions. Costs of operations tend to rise when activists successfully achieve higher levels of operating standards, such as increased corporate responsibility standards relevant to consumer protection or lowered emissions for better air quality. Business plans must conform to the legislative, regulatory, and litigation constraints and

opportunities that are created in what is the public interest.

Throughout the 20th century in the United States, savvy public relations counsel cautioned business executives to never lose sight of their need to understand and operate in the public interest. Nevertheless, executives often assumed that what was good for them was good for society. At various times, especially in the second half of the 20th century, activists worked to turn that equation around as competing interests battled to privatize and “publicize” public opinion.

The turbulent 1980s created a much different environment for executive managements in the United States. Originally, if management wanted to create and implement a business plan, consideration was largely limited to how it would position the organization vis-à-vis its competitors within an industry or across various industries. The questions were often reduced to “What will the market bear?” and “How can we position our business to succeed because it serves a niche or competes successfully for various reasons?” Much of the strategic planning in this era shifted from bureaucratic, to high uncertainty, and eventually to strategic responses to the prevailing changes in the public policy arena. The business response finally acknowledged the end to the era of deference.

The foundation of the public policy arena and corresponding policy planning comes from the reality that businesses are artificial citizens. They are creations of the state to serve some public interest. They operate at the pleasure of society as long as they serve the public interest.

Businesses often lose sight of this reality and ignore how public relations in partnership with general counsel should engage in issues management. For this reason, issues management argued that public policy challenges cannot be separated from the larger chore of strategic business planning. Some policies are truly in the public interest and the business must understand that. Other policies might not be, and they need to be opposed or changed. But this debate elevates above the interest of the company to that of the community served by that company. Optimally, the blend of private and public policies make society more fully functioning. And, public policies that were offensive to some companies, such as automobile safety, inspired advertising and

promotional campaigns to use safety as the rationale for brand equity and loyalty.

The public policy arena offers many opportunities for the strategic organization truly committed to effective public relations. Trend analysis supported by the expertise of operations, public relations, and corporate legal counsel can monitor and assess trends looking for advantages as well as threats to current operations and policies.

One trend is that changes that increase the cost of operations in one industry might offer business opportunities in another. Requirement of the chemical manufacturing and refining industry to do more to abate its impact on the environment can mean new or more business for companies that sell services and products to that end.

Another trend is to shift the cost of business from one industry to another. If lower standards of automobile safety lead to increased numbers of fatalities and long-term disability injuries, the insurance industry can work with other interested parties, including consumer advocates, to raise automobile safety standards.

Activists often call for higher standards of operations, improved corporate social responsibility. Changes in policy can lead to higher operating costs, but they also lead to reduced likelihood of onerous litigation settlements because the activist claims are used to assess the standards of corporate responsibility.

In similar ways, public policy planning is used to foster the future of nonprofit and governmental agencies. The extent to which public policy gaps lead to community needs not being met by business or government creates opportunity and challenge for nonprofit organizations. Some nonprofit organizations directly or indirectly engage in government relations to create and change regulations and legislation. Government agencies benefit by understanding public policy trends as they pitch their budget needs to Congress and other legislative bodies.

Public policy planning has become increasingly important to all sectors of the economy. For this reason, public relations continues to play many roles in public policy planning.

Robert L. Heath

See also Age of Deference, End of the; Executive Management; Fully Functioning Society Theory;

Government Relations; Issues Management; Lobbying; Position and Positioning; Privatizing Public Opinion (and "Publictizing" Private Opinion)

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

However old the practice of public relations is, its identity—as we know it today—started to become a professional practice in the latter part of the 19th century in the United States. This steady progress was typical of many other kinds of professionalism; then, the 20th century witnessed its institutional development as a refined set of strategic best practices, an academic discipline to prepare future practitioners, and the subject of sophisticated scholarly investigation and discussion. As is true of all professions, each one engages in battles for identity—part of which centers on definitions.

In the opinion of some, public relations is the art of stealthy communication tactics whereby messages penetrate awareness so that marketing teams can manipulate consumer opinions and politicians can propagandize citizens. These outcomes occur, the lore continues, because the art of public relations employs strategic structures and functions in service for various elites to create interest and discussion, even reporting, to address some matter in favorable ways. The power of such messaging and positioning is that it comes across as discussion by "others" and therefore derives power from their credibility rather than being the voice of the sponsoring organizations. Thus, public relations can create "buzz." It can "spin" the truth to make "up" seem "down" and "cold" seem "hot" to advance the selfish interest of some organization, marketer,

issue advocate, or politician. Journalists and other critics viewed practitioners as flacks (press agents), to characterize this art as disingenuously self-interested. To this string of "definitions" can be added deception, propaganda, and engineering of consent—the list goes on and on.

In contrast, the definition of public relations can feature its contribution to the ethical decision making of executives. It can be highlighted as a professional practice and academic discipline dedicated to fostering effective two-way communication to create mutually beneficial relationships between some organization and persons (individually or as an organization) whose opinions can make or break the future success of the sponsor. Some discussants of the nature of public relations advocated that instead of fostering sham relationships, senior practitioners are the consciences of their employers. They know better than other disciplines the moral standards by which their employers are judged. They advocate that first the organization must be good before it can be effective in its communication efforts over the long term. Practitioners recognize that the challenge of ethics is both broad and often seen as "the devil is in the details." Each word can pose ethical challenges as well as the formulation of the public relations policy of the organization.

Thus, as ethically responsible, public relations is a set of management, supervisory, and technical functions that foster an organization's ability to strategically listen to, appreciate, and respond to those persons whose mutually beneficial relationships with the organization are necessary if it is to achieve its mission and vision.

In essence, public relations practitioners are problem solvers. They are counselors who advise managements on how to best harmonize with their operating environments. They are tacticians and technicians, as well as managers, who use communication tools like media releases, employee newsletters, fundraising campaigns, publicity and promotions, investor reports, and issue backgrounders and fact sheets. They help organizations reduce legitimacy gaps by adjusting to the standards of corporate responsibility by which they earn support. They do this within the democratic tradition whereby multiple voices contest private and personal policies and behaviors to achieve a fully functioning society. Public relations is a meaning-making profession.

Conceptualization of the profession was one of the challenges of the 20th century. One of the earliest practitioners to offer a coherent and grounded point of view was Ivy Lee, who was characterized by his biographer as a “courtier to the crowd.” His ideas, like those of many of his successors, featured the democratic spirit that called on the practitioner to put accurate and credible information before the public that would—and could—then judge the worthiness of the case being made. In this way, practitioners should bridge the relationship between the organization and society. Ray Eldon Hiebert (1996) captured the essence of Lee’s career: “His work was central to the entire problem of public communication in a complex and industrial environment” (p. ix). Lee was compared to major figures of the American colonial period, such as Sam Adams and Thomas Jefferson. “Like them, he understood the necessity for using words to get people to understand his point of view. Unlike them, however, he lived in an age when words could be used increasingly to maintain rather than prevent an excess of power” (p. ix).

For better or worse, the rise and definition of public relations in the past two centuries paralleled the growth and diversification of mass media. Today the practitioner may elect, or be required, to participate in any communication arena ranging from mass media to narrow and tailored messages presented, for instance, in a letter. The Web and social media are now vital tools as well as thorns in the heel of practitioners and clients.

Early on, the specter of the public, the audience, the judge and jury of approval, was the central theme of practitioners. None became more famous for his ability and thoughts on how to engineer consent than Edward Bernays. He believed that creating and responding to public opinion was the primary challenge facing practitioners on behalf of their clients. The challenge, as he framed it in 1923, was to respond to the public: “The public to-day demands information and expects also to be accepted as judge and jury in matters that have a wide public import” (p. 34). However, Bernays believed that the wise practitioner not only carefully selected information, but also framed it in ways that predicted favorable reception and utilization of such information to the benefit of some organization. The public deserved information, but it needed to be guided by a wise and paternalistic

practitioner who could crystalize public opinion and engineer consent.

Similar to Lee, John W. Hill, the founding principal of the public relations company Hill & Knowlton, built his sense of the profession on democratic ideals forged from his experience as a journalist. He believed it “is an outgrowth of our free society” (1958, p. vix). Hill reasoned that the practice of public relations operated in a climate of enlightened and rational public opinion. He thought companies, governmental agencies, trade associations, and nonprofit organizations operated in the climate of public opinion where they enjoyed the fruits of goodwill and suffered the consequences of its violation. They took their license to operate and prosper from their ability “to serve the needs or wants of people” (1958, p. viii).

Hill discussed public relations as a practice and as a condition. The practice focused attention on wise counseling and effective communication within the limits of the strength of the case that either side of a controversy could make as well as the ethical reputation of the organization. The objective of public relations as a practice was to create the condition of sound public relationships. Thus, he concluded, “Public relations bears directly upon the area of values associated with good will. Its task is not one of communications only, as some have supposed. Its roots reach to the very heart of corporate policy” (1958, p. ix). To this end, “Every corporation, group, or organization dealing with people has public relations, which may be good, bad, or indifferent” (1958, p. 163). The practice creates organized public relations that can affect the relationships an organization has with its publics. Thus, Hill reasoned, “I say ‘organized’ public relations advisedly. Every business, and for that matter, every activity with public overtones, has public relations whether or not it recognizes the fact, or whether or not it does anything about it” (1958, p. 259).

Unlike those who believe public relations is the skillful art or science of engineering consent, Hill cautioned,

It is not the work of public relations—let it always be emphasized—to outsmart the American public in helping management build profits. It is the job of public relations to help management find ways of identifying its own interests with the public

interest—ways so clear that the profit earned by the company may be viewed as contributing to the progress of everybody in the American economy. (1958, p. 21)

The first step in public relations is to create sound policy that deserves the fruits of goodwill as it serves community interest. On this point, Hill reasoned,

When corporate policy is sound, it serves the community interest and is deserving of the support of public opinion. But this is not to say that it will get this support merely because it deserves it. The people must be informed. Lacking correct information they may withhold their support. This is a job for public relations. (1958, pp. 54–55)

Practitioners before and since the era of Hill recognized that the discipline is more than a communication function. It is a relationship building and repairing discipline that starts with the ability to understand the challenges of the give and take, the exchange, between any organization and its stakeholders. An organization that is clever may be too clever. Hill advised, “Public confidence in the corporation as an institution must be earned and deserved. ‘Smart publicity’ will never replace sound management policies and acts in building a solid foundation of good will” (1958, p. 163). Thus, public relations practitioners need to serve as the corporate conscience, a concept explicitly stated by Hill a half century ago. He recognized the strategic advantage of thinking in terms of key publics, audiences, or stakeholders instead of broadly focusing attention on the opinions and the organization’s relationship with the larger sense of “the public.” Thus, he indicated he had witnessed a move among practitioners from an interest in press relations to relationships with other audiences. The list included customers, employees, government, stockholders, neighbors in the locations where the company operated, educators, and others.

For Hill, counseling was more important than communicating. What did he think constituted public relations counsel?

Public relations counsel are not lawyers. They are not management engineers. They are not

sales specialists. . . . Then on what do they counsel? Curiously enough the recommendations for which they are asked in one way or another may impinge on any of these fields. (1963, pp. 131–132)

His years of experience led him to advise that “counseling on public relations calls for a variety of special experiences, abilities, and qualification. In my opinion the most important single element is integrity, which is a matter of character. Next to integrity I would rank judgment” (1963, pp. 131–132).

The counseling part of public relations counts a great deal for the outcome because

public relations has no mystical power to work miracles. What is achieved in any worthwhile sense must be based on integrity, and on sound attitudes, policies and actions at the very top level of management. This makes public relations a management responsibility, and it is so considered by most advanced companies today. The old slogan—if it ever existed—‘The public be damned’ has given way to the eternal question in the ear of managements, ‘What will people say?’ This is bound to have a good effect upon the conduct of corporate affairs. (1963, pp. 259–260)

Such views suggest that the interests of stakeholders must be known and considered by any organization wanting their goodwill. Without such support, the organization might not fail, but it is bound not to flourish. Thus, Hill drew on the influence he received from Ivy Lee to conclude, “Public relationships, he wrote, involved not simply ‘saying’ but ‘doing’—not just talk, but action” (1963, p. 16). Organizations had to strive to demonstrate their commitment to truth and the desire to serve the public interest. If the organization only used words and not actions, it could never enjoy the license to operate.

Luminaries like those cited above recognized that public relations entails processes, but also participates in the co-creation of shared meaning. For a very long time, public relations was an art and science central to an organization’s need for high-quality relationships. In the 1990s, academics trumpeted relationships—an idea that even then was 50 years old.

In the 1950s, even before the writing of Hill, pioneers featured relationships, a concept that was often overshadowed by the influence of mass communication theory and systems theory. In that decade, Rex F. Harlow and Marvin M. Black featured that concept in the revised edition of *Practical Public Relations*, published in 1952 under the auspices of the Public Relations Society of America. They believed that society required cooperation to function effectively. To public relations fell the responsibility of fostering cooperation. They defined public relations as “the art and science of getting along well with other people” (1952, p. 4). What they saw as the challenge of modern society was helping organizations deal with increasingly complex and multiple, even conflicting relationships.

At the same time, Harlow and Black were parsing their definition of public relations, Scott Cutlip and Allen Center (1952) published *Effective Public Relations*. They were well aware of the balance between counseling, technical, and relationship-building expectations. Eventually, they would offer this definition: “Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (2000, p. 6).

A quarter century later, under the sponsorship of the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education, Harlow (1976) undertook the project of crafting “the” definition. An extensive literature review revealed the views of 83 professional leaders—a veritable who’s who; from their ideas, Harlow synthesized a “working” definition:

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools. (p. 36)

One of the cornerstones of the definition was a commitment to serve the public interest. That theme was not new, and it endures today.

In the search to define the discipline, and set its sails for effective and ethical practice and research, no single definition of public relations is totally and universally satisfying. People who like public relations and believe it adds value to society define it in positive terms. Its detractors see it as hollow, shallow, spin, and manipulation. Leading practitioners and academics know the division of opinion exists. They recognize that winning people to the positive side is not a matter of proposing a definition, but of building the practice on sound and enduring principles. Any definition of public relations therefore constitutes not merely a description of what proponents think the practice is, but also constitutes a challenge and mandate for how the profession should endure for the good of society.

Public relations is not only about information. It deals with positioning the organization to deserve genuine goodwill because its interests are interlocked in a mutually beneficial way with those of its critics—and supporters. That too is a daunting challenge because critics often do not want a mutually beneficial relationship that truly acknowledges the worth of the target of their dislike.

Public relations is about choice and evaluation. It deals with shared and conflicting meaning, interests, differences and concurrence—the fostering of and adapting to preferences and expectations relevant to organizational and idea legitimacy. It is never neutral or merely the sharing of information; it is always some sort of strategic judgment of important matters. It looks to understand and aspire to meet or exceed the value expectations of persons whose interest and support is needed. Its supporters acknowledge that it is dialogue, not monologue.

And, the search for the quintessential definition continues. The pursuit searches for and examines the key concepts, functions, structures, societal roles, and ethical boundaries. In that pursuit, Lee Edwards (2012) offered a postmodern perspective that defines the profession this way, “The flow of purposive communication produced on behalf of individuals, formally constituted and informally constituted groups, through their continuous

trans-actions with other social entities. It has social, cultural, political and economic effects at local, national and global levels” (p. 21).

The practice of public relations requires a hierarchy of skills, managerial, supervisory, and technical. It requires communication skills, those essential to messaging and meaning making. It relies on process, but adds true value as it explains and enacts meaning making. It builds and draws on integrity. It must foster trust, which is constantly tested by what managements say and do. Thus, good public relations creates good public relations. Likewise, bad public relations fosters bad public relations.

As is true of the definition of any profession, it must address its uniqueness, but also its value for society. Its presence in society is judged by whether and how it adds value to the members of a society, however global.

Robert L. Heath

See also Communication Management; Corporate Moral Conscience; Corporate Social Responsibility; Counseling; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Issues Management; Relationship Management Theory

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PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCY

A public relations agency, or firm, is a company hired by another organization to provide certain services. Some 3,000 or more public relations counseling firms operate in the United States.

The hiring organization is referred to as the client. Under the best of circumstances, the firm helps improve the client’s reputation and its relationships with its publics. The services can range from strategic and managerial—such as planning and implementing annual major campaigns and providing senior-level counseling—to the more tactical, such as generating news releases or printed promotional materials.

Increasingly, companies are turning to outside counsel even when they have internal public relations departments. Most of America’s most admired companies have a relationship with a public relations firm. Clients hire firms for different reasons. There might be a need for expertise that the client doesn’t have, or there might simply be a staff shortage that an agency can help fill.

Some companies prefer to use the term *firm* to connote their emphasis on counseling and strategic planning and to differentiate from advertising agencies. Public relations is a management team concept that the term *agent* or *agency* doesn’t imply. Many, though, use the terms interchangeably.

The Council of Public Relations Firms, a trade association representing large U.S. public relations firms, estimates that about 20,000 public relations practitioners work for public relations firms in the United States, and more than 40,000 worldwide. The larger companies, such as Hill & Knowlton, employ as many as 2,000 people worldwide. However, public relations is also a field in which independent practitioners, or freelancers, can thrive.

Several publications and organizations—including O’Dwyers *Directory of Public Relations Firms*, *PR Week*, and the Council of Public Relations Firms—track rankings of the top companies by revenue. Rankings can shift annually due to mergers and acquisitions and business factors, as well as ranking criteria and a firms’ willingness to disclose financial information. Some of the largest U.S. firms (based on global revenues) are BSMG Worldwide; Burson-Marsteller; Edelman Public

Relations Worldwide; Fleishman-Hillard International Communications; GCI Group/APCO Worldwide; Golin/Harris International; Hill & Knowlton; Incepta (Citigate); Ketchum; Manning, Selvage & Lee; Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide; Porter-Novelli; Ruder Finn; and Weber Shandwick Worldwide. Fifty percent or more of public relations revenues are generated by the top 10 firms.

Structure/Operations

Account Team

Typically, the agency assigns a specific team to work on the client's business or *account*. Titles vary within an agency, but there is usually an account supervisor or manager responsible for handling the account. Other account team members, such as the account executive, coordinator, and others, report to the supervisor.

Compensation

The client pays the firm for its work either by providing a retainer (a set monthly fee), an hourly rate, or a combination of these. Hourly rates vary for each person who works on the job, whether senior, mid, or junior level, intern, or administrative staff.

Trends

Growth

Government figures project rapid growth for public relations firms through 2013 as companies increasingly hire external consultants rather than hire full-time staff.

Jobs Less Centralized

The larger firms and most public relations jobs tend to be concentrated in large cities, such as New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, where major media, corporations, and policymakers are headquartered. Many firms have local offices in other metropolitan areas. Clients often prefer that firms have offices in their locales, so many major firms will even open up an office to serve a large client.

Ownership

In recent years, large advertising agencies and communications holding companies have acquired many of the top public relations firms. Examples are Omnicom Group Inc., which owns Fleishman-Hillard, Ketchum, and Porter-Novelli; and London-based WPP Group PLC, which owns Hill & Knowlton Inc., Burson-Marsteller, and Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, among others. In 2013, only one of the top 10 firms, Edelman, was still independent.

International Focus

Public relations is increasingly global. Numerous U.S. public relations firms opened offices around the world or merged with or acquired firms in other countries. Large European companies like WPP Group PLC and Publicis acquired medium and large U.S. firms to increase their global presence.

Consolidation

Once it was common for major corporations to employ numerous public relations firms for different parts of their business, but now many have cut down to a few or just one. For example, International Business Machines Corp. (IBM) and SAP AG, Europe's largest software producer, reduced their number of public relations firms from as many as 50 to 3 (IBM) and from 12 to 1 (SAP). On the other hand, hundreds of firms reported gaining new clients who had never before used public relations.

History

The practice of hiring a public relations agency dates back to the early 1900s, when the first publicity firms were established. These developed partially because companies began to realize they needed to respond to the "muckraking" activities that called for political and business reforms. The first known firm was The Publicity Bureau, founded in Boston in mid-1900. These firms were narrow in focus, chiefly providing media relations services, such as disseminating press releases in an effort to get a client's name in the newspaper.

Ivy Ledbetter Lee established a cornerstone of modern-day public relations principles when he founded his firm, Parker & Lee, in 1906 and issued his famous Declaration of Principles. Lee declared that his company would not work in secret like other firms (such as The Publicity Bureau, which secretly operated news bureaus for the railroads). Instead, his firm would fully disclose its work on behalf of the client. He also stated that the firm would disclose information of value and interest to the public. These principles are now, in fact, important tenets of the Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations of the Public Relations Society of America, the world's largest professional society for public relations practitioners.

Other important agency figures of the early 1900s included William Wolff Smith, George F. Parker (Lee's partner), Hamilton Wright, Pendleton Dudley, and Thomas R. Shipp.

World War I and the Committee on Public Information, or "Creel Committee" (1917–1918), provided a training ground for numerous practitioners, including Carl S. Byoir and Edward L. Bernays. Other important counselors of the post-World War I period were Doris A. Fleischman (Bernays's wife); Harry A. Bruno; John W. Hill (of today's top-10 firm Hill & Knowlton); Edward D. Howard II of Cleveland; and Glenn C. Hayes of Chicago. Joseph Varney Baker opened the first minority-owned firm in Philadelphia in 1934, and the political campaign consultancy got its start in 1933 when Clem Whitaker and Leone Baxter opened their firm in San Francisco.

Post-World War II growth saw the establishment of firms like Burson-Marsteller and Edelman. Earl Newsom became one of the practice's first independent counselors, advising companies like the Ford Motor Company and paving the way for a new era in public relations firms.

Catherine L. Hinrichsen

See also Bernays, Edward; Client; Fleischman, Doris Elsa; Hill, John Wiley; Lee, Ivy; Muckrakers (and the Age of Progressivism); Public Relations Society of America; Publicity

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PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

A public relations department is the unit within an organization responsible for its public relations function, whether externally, internally, or both.

These departments were first established in the United States in the early 1900s. Today, more than 5,000 U.S. companies and 2,000 trade associations have public relations departments. Corporations, nonprofit organizations, religious groups, government agencies, and universities all engage in public relations activities. Even some public relations firms have their own public relations departments.

Some larger companies, such as AT&T, employed as many as 800 people in their public relations departments, while others are a one-person operation. The department size is related to the size of the organization and perhaps the perceived importance of public relations within the organization. The trend, though, is toward smaller departments than in the past. Some might also oversee the activities of a public relations agency. Regardless of the size, the department is most effective when it has close access to senior management.

Structure

Organizational structures vary and largely depend on how and why the department was first established. While some organizations have a stand-alone public relations department with its own senior executive, public relations is often a subgroup of marketing, sales, human resources, or a related department.

Most public relations counselors agree that ideally the public relations department director should either report directly to the CEO or have a close working relationship with that person. They

believe the public relations staff should have a voice in shaping the company's mission and strategic planning, and serve as a counselor to senior management.

Public relations is the most common name and is used by about 30% of departments. Other names include Corporate Communications, Public Affairs, and Community Relations. The U.S. government, which employs thousands of public relations people, tends instead to use titles like public affairs or communications, because of a law prohibiting the hiring of "public relations" people.

Public relations might need to compete with different departments, such as advertising, for a share of the budget. However, a study of America's most respected companies found that the more a public relations function is designed, practiced, and evaluated against the organization's strategic business goals, the greater its support from top management for budget size and the greater its perceived contribution to the organization's success.

Addressing Publics

The public relations staff can demonstrate its value to senior management by participating in the organization's decision-making process and measuring its impact on its publics rather than focusing too narrowly on tactics and communication output. The ability to anticipate and consider the perspectives of different publics is another way the public relations department brings value to the organization.

Examples of publics—also called stakeholders—can include employees, board of directors, shareholders, local residents, suppliers, government officials and regulators, financial analysts, customers/consumers, donors, volunteers, students, faculty, media, and others. The public relations department should conduct research among these publics to measure attitudes about the company and its programs and policies, and recommend to executives how best to address the needs of these varying publics. The ability of the department to establish long-term relationships with them is another measure of public relations' value to the organization.

Understanding the Industry

A successful public relations department, in addition to understanding communications and management, also understands the company's business

and the industry in which it operates. Sometimes a lack of broad business experience and technical knowledge can hinder the staff's ability to effectively counsel management. The public relations department is more effective when it can use its in-depth knowledge of the organization and the industry to counsel leaders. It also gives inside staff an advantage over outside counsel.

Use of Outside Counsel

In addition to the public relations department, an organization might also employ outside counsel, such as a professional public relations firm or freelancers, supervised by the inside staff. The department can often benefit from an outsider's perspective, and the firm usually offers expertise lacking among the in-house staff. Some leaders feel that the days of the traditional large in-house public relations department are coming to an end as companies increasingly downsize staff and turn to outside counsel. The ability to effectively manage outside counsel is another valuable service the public relations department can offer.

History

The history of public relations departments contributed much to their relevancy today. In the early 1900s, publicity and public relations went through a boom period, and organizations began forming their own in-house functions. This was largely due to growing public pressure for corporations to begin acting in the public interest and become accountable to the public. Some of the earliest public relations departments were for nonprofit organizations, such as the YMCA, whose 1905 fundraising campaign was a forerunner of today's United Way drive.

Public relations pioneer, Ivy Ledbetter Lee, recognized for his role as an early public relations counselor, was also instrumental in shaping public relations departments. He helped spur the growth of publicity departments and trained many corporate public relations managers.

In the 1930s, many businesses—including Bendix, Borden, Eastman Kodak, Eli Lilly, Ford, General Motors, Standard Oil, Pan American, and U.S. Steel—established public relations departments to help them regain public confidence that had been worn down by the Great Depression.

Paul Garrett was an early leader in corporate communications. His program for General Motors, which hired him to set up a corporate communications department in 1931, was a model for many corporations.

Another influential leader was Arthur W. Page, who became AT&T's first public relations vice president in 1927. Page was instrumental in defining the role of the public relations department within the company. When he was hired, he made it clear that he would not be a publicity man; rather, he would help shape policy. He also pointed out that the company's reputation was determined by its performance: "All business in a democratic country begins with public permission and exists by public approval." Page was the first person with a public relations title to serve as an officer and member of the board of directors of a major corporation.

In honor of Page, senior public relations executives created the prestigious Arthur W. Page Society in 1983, to strengthen the management policy role of the chief corporate public relations officer.

Today, companies still turn to their public relations departments in times of economic downturn and prosperity alike, realizing that public trust and confidence are indispensable to the company's success.

Catherine L. Hinrichsen

See also Lee, Ivy; Page, Arthur W.; Public Relations Agency

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PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION, HISTORY OF

As publicity and public relations boomed in the United States during the 1920s, colleges and

universities began to offer courses that were the forerunners of modern public relations education. These courses came on the heels of the emergence of journalism as a separate field of study at universities, especially land-grant institutions in the Midwest.

The first public relations course was offered in 1920, only 2 years after World War I, at the University of Illinois by Josef F. Wright, the university's newly appointed publicity director. As was the case later at other schools, there was little demand for Wright's publicity methods course, but Wright was motivated by a desire to bring prestige to his calling.

Indeed, many of the first courses in publicity were taught by college publicity directors, such as Frank R. Elliott, who introduced a course in publicity at Indiana University 2 years later. Eventually, regular faculty started teaching publicity. One notable example was Lawrence Murphy, who took over Wright's course at Illinois in 1927 and later became director of the journalism school at Minnesota.

The first course titled "Public Relations" was offered by Edward L. Bernays at New York University (NYU) in 1923. He had just authored his seminal work, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*. He taught the one-semester course twice in the Department of Journalism, then as a part of NYU's School of Commerce, Accounting and Finance. James Melvin Lee, the department head and noted journalism historian, was skeptical yet urged Bernays to proceed. Lee urged Bernays to attract working journalists by promoting the class in professional publications like *Editor & Publisher* and *Printer's Ink*.

In the same year, NYU's School of Social Work offered a course under the direction of Evart and Mary Swain, who had pioneered publicity and philanthropic fundraising at the Russell Sage Foundation. The course quickly became an established part of the social work curriculum and was augmented by other courses in writing and communication.

Other schools followed suit, including the University of Oregon, where a course in publicity was taught by public relations officer George Godfrey in 1927, and University of Minnesota, where Thomas E. Steward taught a class in press relations in 1929. After 2 years, a course at the

University of Washington taught by Byron Christian was suspended following a torrent of criticism from the state's newspaper editors and publisher organizations. By the late 1930s, courses were added at such diverse schools as American University, University of Texas, and Wayne State University. Meanwhile, courses in public opinion had begun to be offered at schools like Princeton.

By 1924, journalism educators turned their attention to the emerging field of publicity and its implications. In that year, Ivy Lee was a keynote speaker at the annual convention of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism—the first major forum where public relations received serious attention by educators. Separately, Bernays sought visibility for the fledgling field in other academic circles by making presentations and publishing articles in scholarly journals in such diverse fields as sociology, political science, economics/statistics, and marketing.

Rex L. Harlow, a pioneer educator known as the father of public relations research, was on the faculty of Stanford University's School of Education when he began teaching a public relations course in 1939. This was the same year that he organized the American Council on Public Relations (which later merged to create the Public Relations Society of America [PRSA]). Harlow was a recognized leader in practitioner education and crisscrossed the country giving workshops and seminars. He is credited with providing as many as 10,000 practitioners with their first formal introduction to the field.

At the same time, Kalman B. Druck, a young executive at the Carl Byoir firm who later formed his own major agency, taught a course at the City College of New York. Druck's class emphasized modern public relations principles—the importance of two-way communication, defining publics, and avenues for communication to and from key constituencies. The course became a model for other classes after being described at length in an industry directory in 1945–1946. Ironically, the course could list only eight book titles as references.

During World War II, the first major in public relations was established at Bethany College, a small church school in West Virginia that continues to offer public relations. Following the war,

public relations education enjoyed a growth spurt as colleges and universities hired staff to teach public relations methods. The most prominent program created during this period was at Boston University's School of Public Relations and Communications, founded in 1947. Most notable among the second-generation educators hired after World War II was Scott M. Cutlip at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

The survey of university-level education was published in 1937 by Bernays and Doris Fleischman and reported public relations programs at 31 schools. A decade later, Alfred McClung Lee found that at least 30 schools offered 47 different courses under public relations titles. By 1956, that number increased to at least 136, including 14 programs labeled as offering a major in public relations. The period was marked by the first substantial output of books and articles on the booming craft, and recognition of the field as a unified profession under the aegis of the Publicity Society of America.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, educational offerings by colleges and universities continued to expand, with substantial programs offered today at 300-plus colleges and universities in the United States. The faint beginnings of legitimate research emerged from a handful of teachers in the field. The first organization of teachers, the Council on Public Relations, was organized in 1956 as a unit of the Association for Education in Journalism. The Public Relations Society of America set up an Educational Advisory Council in 1959. The Association for Education in Journalism's public relations division was formally organized in 1966. By the mid-1970s, public relations education flourished as academic departments committed themselves to the professional training of practitioners. These included speech and communications departments in addition to journalism programs. In 1968, Walt Seifert of Ohio State University proposed creation of the Public Relations Student Society of America to encourage students in public relations careers. Whereas public relations workers traditionally had been former newspaper or magazine writers or editors, public relations agencies and departments began to recruit young professionals directly from colleges.

Standards for instruction at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels became concerns of professional and educators alike, leading to the creation of several Commissions on Public Relations Education. The first commission to promulgate guidelines for education was organized in 1975 by Scott M. Cutlip and practitioner J. Carroll Bateman. Subsequent commissions updated their work in 1984, 1999, and 2006. Standards for graduate education were promulgated in 1987 and 2012.

Scholarly research in the field languished in the early years, in part because of the limited publications that accepted serious research on public relations topics. In 1975, *Public Relations Review* was launched under the editorship of Ray Hiebert of the University of Maryland. Initial financial support was provided by the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education (later organized as the PRSA Foundation).

In 1984–1985, James E. and Larissa A. Grunig, of the University of Maryland, launched a second journal that ran a brief stint. Their efforts were resurrected 4 years later by publication of *Public Relations Research Annual* for 3 years, which was converted to the *Journal of Public Relations Research* in 1992. Several other journals now regularly publish research in the field, most notably the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *Journal of Communication Management*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, and *Journal of Public Affairs*.

Today, research is presented at the annual meetings of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, International Communication Association, and National Communication Association. Academic meetings specifically devoted to public relations include the PRSA Educators Academy, the International Public Relations Research Conference, the Bledcom International Public Relations Symposium, International Crisis and Risk Communication Conference, Barcelona Meeting, International History of Public Relations Conference, and European Public Relations Education and Research Association.

Public relations education and research are supported through a variety of organizations, such as the Institute for Public Relations (IPR) in the United States and various regional and national

professional organizations around the world. In the United States, research centers devoted to various aspects of public relations have been established at Pennsylvania State University (ethics), University of Alabama (leadership), University of North Carolina at Charlotte (international), and University of Houston (issues management) among others. Endowed chairs in public relations have been funded by donors at Michigan State University, University of Oklahoma, and University of Oregon. Outstanding educators are recognized annually by the profession through the PRSA Outstanding Educator of the Year Award, the IPR's Pathfinder Award, and the PRSA Foundation's Jackson, Jackson & Wagner Behavioral Science Prize. Bibliographic studies published periodically in the field's scholarly journals chronicle both the breadth and depth of research in the field.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Bateman, J. Carroll; Bernays, Edward; Cutlip, Scott M.; Fleischman, Doris Elsa; Harlow, Rex; Institute for Public Relations; Lee, Ivy; Plank, Betsy; Public Relations Society of America; Public Relations Student Society of America; Publicity; Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations in Public Relations

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PUBLIC RELATIONS FIELD DYNAMICS

Public Relations Field Dynamics (PRFD) is a model that allows for the concurrent measurement and monitoring of multiple parties in a perceptual environment. PRFD is adapted from the study of small group communication and derived from Robert Bales and Stephen Cohen's System for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups. At the center of PRFD is the notion of a fluid field encompassing all relevant actors. These actors (e.g., an organization and its publics) can be measured at one point in time or across the development of a controversial issue. A field theory like PRFD takes into account that every behavioral act takes place within the overall context of the interactive field.

The small group system was to macro-level applications vital to public relations. The dimensions in the PRFD system reflect (a) a friendly versus unfriendly relationship, (b) self-orientation versus community orientation, and a (c) low influence versus high influence capability. These three dimensions are essential to the study of public relations. Perceptions of friendly versus unfriendly behavior are relevant at all levels of interaction. This dimension taps fundamental notions of friend or foe.

The community versus self-orientation dimension reflects perceptions of how motivated an organization is to achieve either an integrative or distributive outcome in a given situation. This ties directly into perceptions of trust. Companies that are perceived to be more interested in the bottom line at the expense of the community have serious public image problems. One such example in recent times is the managed care industry, which has been accused by some as being more interested in costs than care. Members of the media are often particularly skeptical of an organization's community orientation. In general, the more an organization can demonstrate to the media and other publics that it has a genuine community

orientation, the more successful the organization is in negotiating its position.

Finally, the influence dimension measures how much power or influence an actor is perceived to have in a given situation. Knowledge of this can help an organization determine which groups are most attentive and involved in a public relations situation. For example, if a group perceives an organization has a large influence on them, they are likely more attentive to the organization than groups that perceive organizations with little influence. Conversely, knowledge of how influential a public sees itself in relation to the organization provides insight into how likely that public is to exhibit active behavior, helping practitioners determine communication strategy. PRFD allows organizations to identify allies, antagonists, and potential mediators. Combined, the three dimensions provide a powerful framework to map the entire field or public relations environment.

Situating the three behavioral dimensions with field theory provides several advantages. First, the three dimensions are viewed as mutually exclusive. Thus, for any one interaction, behavior may be described as high influence or as low influence, but not as both. Second, the dimensions are orthogonal. Placement on one dimension does not predict placement on other dimensions. Third, any specific placement on a dimension is not seen as inherently good or bad. Rather, the evaluation of behavior depends on other interactions in the public relations field.

The system is graphically displayed placing the friendly-unfriendly dimension on the horizontal axis and the community versus self on the vertical axis. The influence dimension is represented by circle size—the more perceived influence, the larger the circle. Figure 1 displays three hypothetical actors in a relational field.

Fourth, PRFD allows behavior and perceptions to be tracked over time within a comparative framework. This is particularly useful to the study of issue negotiation, as it allows organizations to test alternative public relations strategies as issues develop and change over time. Fifth, PRFD is a system for viewing the impact of a public's or organization's internal dynamics on the larger interdependent field.

Another key strength of this system is its ability to map the relative degree of polarization and

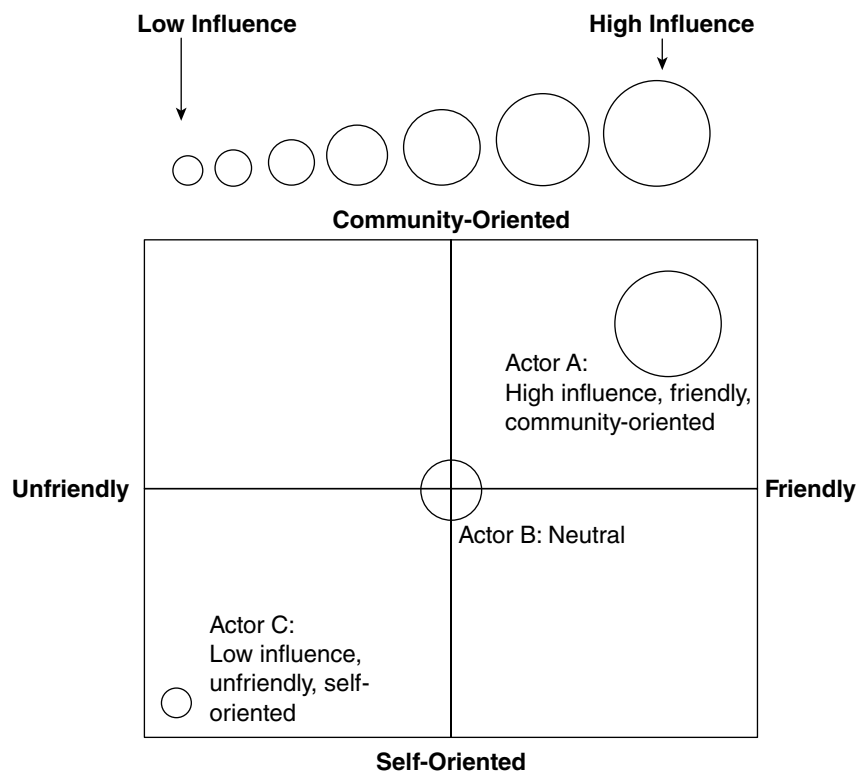


Figure 1 Field Diagram of the Perceived Relational Landscape

unification among the salient parties within a given environmental field. Polarization is the degree to which constituents are dissimilar in their opinions and perceptions; unification is the degree to which constituents are similar. Polarization and unification can occur on a single dimension, on two dimensions, or on all three. The more dimensions that are polarized, the more difficulty publics have in communicating with each other in ways that make “sense” to the other publics. For example, an organization that perceives itself as having high influence likely uses dominating rhetoric in an attempt to defeat a less influential organization. Such an attempt is likely seen as confirmation that the dominant organization is not willing to listen to the choices of others.

One key component of the system is its ability to identify potential mediators in a given situation. As in any type of negotiation, organizations attempting to negotiate public relations issues

with publics or other organizations are often confronted with environments in which some key publics are too polarized from the organization to enter into meaningful dialogue. In such cases, the most useful strategy may be to work with a mediator to establish productive contact. Almost any actor in a relational field can be a mediator, but those actors who are most likely to be acceptable to disparate parties are ones who are more friendly than unfriendly, who are more community-oriented than self-oriented, and who have greater influence in the relational landscape. Because a mediator is likely to be in a more neutral position than extreme ones held by other actors, the mediator can translate or interpret from one position to another in a way all involved parties can trust.

In 2005, James H. Cunningham extended PRFD by integrating the graphical three-dimensional framework with dimensions derived from contingency theory. In this approach, the dimensions

consist of (1) perceived culpability of the organization, (2) reasonableness of public demands, and (3) how damaging the situation is to the organization. Using the system in a military crisis response exercise, he found that practitioners found it useful to both validate their decisions and to consider more strategic approaches.

Jeffrey K. Springston

See also Evaluative Research; Formative Research; Issues Management; Public Policy Planning; Public Relations Research

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PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH

The topic of public relations research is vast. Consider that this volume has more than 20 entries that are directly related to research. This specific entry provides an overview to public relations research and indicates how it is utilized in the public relations process. The first half discusses research

in general, including the two basic approaches to research and some of the methods used in research. The second half explains the role of research in the practice of public relations and building the public relations body of knowledge.

Research involves the collection of data or information. Data are simply observations about the world around us. Research can be divided into two general approaches: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative methods are descriptive and interpretive. Researchers collect data that provide descriptions of behaviors or events in a naturalistic setting—the data are collected in the “real world” rather than a laboratory. Researchers then interpret what these data mean. Different researchers can derive different interpretations from the same data. That is why qualitative methods are considered subjective; the data are open to multiple interpretations and all can be correct—or incorrect. Qualitative researchers are not trying to generalize their results beyond the sample they have studied. Their results only apply to the sample they studied.

Quantitative research is objective and reduces data to numbers. These numbers are then analyzed using accepted statistical principles and statistical tests. The agreement on statistical measures and principles make the results objective. Multiple researchers looking at the same data analysis should reach the same basic conclusions. For example, a basic statistical test is the correlation. A correlation looks for relationships between two variables. It indicates if two concepts vary in a similar fashion. For instance, the value of one variable increases each time the value of a second variable increases. Each statistical test has an accepted level of significance, a point at which the finding is considered important. The level of significance in public relations research tends to be .05. That means the results have only a 5 in 100 chance of being an accident. This means that if ten researchers run the same set of data and the correlation had a significance of only .10, all 10 would say there is no relationship. The reliance on numbers and statistics provides the agreement that makes quantitative research objective. Moreover, quantitative researchers are trying to generalize. They want to claim that the results should hold true for the general population and not just their sample.

Researchers have a variety of methods for collecting data. Quantitative research might use surveys and/or experiments. Qualitative researchers might use case study or focus groups. Each of these methods has specific entries in this volume. The way that data is collected reflects the general orientation selected for the research, qualitative or quantitative. The possible sources of data increased with the rise of online communication with a particular focus on social media. Quantitative researchers can collect survey data online or systematically code messages appearing online. Qualitative researchers can use online messages for case studies or textual analysis as well as conduct focus groups online.

The importance of research to public relations can be traced through its basic use in public relations—the importance practitioners place on research, and research's growing importance in training public relations practitioners. We can see how research fits into the practice of public relations by quickly reviewing four steps in the public relations process. A number of similar four-step plans have been presented to describe the public relations process. Scott Cutlip, Allen Center, and Glen Broom's model is a commonly used one. Step one is situation analysis, the practitioner needs to understand what is happening in the situation. The practitioner must understand what is happening before planning a response. Step two is strategy, the practitioner decides what should be said and done. This involves creating objectives, identifying target audiences, and creating messages. Step three is implementation, the practitioner decides how and when to deliver the messages. This concerns the selection of communication channels/media and the timing of the message. Step four is assessment, practitioners determine whether or not the objectives were achieved. The focus is on finding evidence of success or failure.

The situational analysis is formative research. Formative research provides the information needed to identify the problem or opportunity, identify target audiences, and develop objectives. The public relations process begins with research. Without this information/data, it is impossible to develop the strategy step. Implementation involves the use of process research. Process research tracks what the practitioner has done. Moreover, practitioners research the various media options available

before selecting the media used in a public relations action. Assessment is evaluative research. Evaluative research provides evidence of the practitioner's ability to meet the objectives. Research is used throughout the entire public relations process and is inherent in the process.

Research is essential to building the body of knowledge for public relations. The body of knowledge is what we know about the practice. It includes theories and concepts that can be used to explain how public relations works. A growing body of knowledge improves the practice of public relations by providing new insights into the profession and providing new ways of executing various aspects of public relations. Every profession needs a developed body of knowledge. Medicine, for example, draws on a large body of medical research to fuel its development and growth. Research is essential to creating knowledge in general and for developing theory. Research helps us understand various aspects of the public relations process—it builds knowledge about public relations. Theory must be tested to determine if it is valid. Theory can only be tested through research. Public relations research is applied; it tries to solve problems encountered by practitioners. In turn, this applied research generates new knowledge about public relations and theories of public relations. As research solves practitioner problems, the practice of public relations becomes more effective. An illustration is the 1979 Jones and Chase model of issues management. The model improved the practice of issues management by making it more systematized and effective. New knowledge and theories about public relations improves the practice of public relations.

For years, public relations researchers were the ones championing the value of public relations research. Practitioners nodded in agreement, but little was done to make research an essential part of the public relations practice. That trend has changed as practitioners now value and try to utilize research. The 1999 Commission on Public Relations Education and the Public Relations Society of America's Silver Anvil Awards stand as testimony to the respect research has gained among practitioners.

The Commission on Public Relations Education was composed of practitioners and educators.

Their task was to decide the shape of public relations education for the next century. As a field evolves and changes, the training required to enter the field changes. The commission sought to understand the current and future demands of the field. Those demands would provide the foundation for the curriculum used to train future public relations practitioners. Research emerged as one of the key skills needed by future practitioners. A significant change in the curriculum from the previous commission report was the addition of a class dedicated to public relations research. Research was now recognized as a central job skill in public relations and a critical component of the public relations curriculum/training. Research moved from the periphery to the core of the public relations practice and education.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is the largest professional organization of public relations practitioners in the United States. Each year PRSA sponsors the Silver Anvil competition. This competition recognizes the best work in the field and is one of the highest honors a public relations department or agency can achieve. Following the four-step process of public relations, each entry is judged on (1) research—collect information/data used to create objectives, target audiences, and key strategies; (2) planning—identify objectives, target audiences, and key strategies; (3) execution—explain the tactics used in the public relations effort; and (4) evaluation—assess outcomes to show whether or not an objective was achieved. Research is essential to earning one of public relations highest honors. Formative research documents the research criteria, process research documents the execution criteria, and evaluative research documents success or failure to achieve an objective. Practitioners are reminded of research's value and the practice reaffirms its importance through the Silver Anvil Awards.

Research is establishing itself as a core element of public relations. That does not mean all practitioners embrace or even use it. A review of Silver Anvil Award entries reveals lapses even in those public relations efforts seeking to be honored. However, public relations research is now a required element in public relations curriculum. This means that future practitioners, coming from

strong public relations programs, will have the skills and knowledge necessary to execute public relations research. As recently as the 1980s and 1990s, properly trained practitioners were not being provided the research skills. As a result, research was neglected out of a lack of skill. Lack of skill should not be a barrier with recent and future graduates.

Beyond developing knowledge and improving the practice, research has a bottom line component. Public relations practitioners, like others in the business world, are becoming more accountable for their actions. Management wants to know what a unit is actually contributing to an organization or what an agency is providing to a client. Research provides hard evidence of what public relations is or is not contributing to an organization or client. Setting and achieving objectives is hard evidence of contributions. It is through research that objectives are formulated and evaluated. Public relations practitioners need to engage in proper research to establish their contributions to the organization or client. Performance reviews require the type of hard data research provides. Documenting public relations' contributions through research influences critical factors, such as size of a budget, retaining a client, or retaining one's job. Research makes intellectual and practical contributions to the practice of public relations.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Experiment/Experimental Methods; Chase Model of Issue Management; Formative Research; Process Research; Qualitative Research; Quantitative Research; Sampling; Statistical Analysis

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PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Immediately following World War II, pent-up public demand for products and services ignited the American economy. The marketplace explosion also generated new needs for marketing publicity, public relations, and people who knew their way around a typewriter.

Earlier in the 20th century, the value of public relations was established by such pioneers as Ivy Lee, John Hill, Edward Bernays, Arthur W. Page, and Rex Harlow. But few in the postwar population entering the field had knowledge of or experience in the practice. Facing a new environment that required uniting client objectives to public interests, many neophytes—as well as veterans—recognized the need for a national, collegial association in which they could share experience and make connections, establish standards of practice, and hone professional skills.

On August 7, 1947, at Chicago's Lake Shore Athletic Club that "gleam in the eye" became a reality with the formation of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). It was not a case of spontaneous generation. In 1936, the New York-based National Association of Public Relations Counsel (NAPRC) held its first meeting. In 1939, the West Coast produced the American Council on Public Relations (ACPR). In 1944, Washington, D.C., was the birthplace of the American Public Relations Association (APRA), and publicity clubs were up and running in a few major cities.

Convened at the Chicago table were six leaders from the ACPR and NAPRC. (APRA had declined the invitation and its merger with PRSA did not occur until 1961.) Six months later, the state of New York chartered the new national organization. It began with six chapters—Chicago, Detroit, Hawaii, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco—and President W. Howard Chase, was chairman of the executive committee, and Earl Ferris, chairman of the board of directors.

The first committees addressed eligibility, education, and professional standards. The *Public Relations Journal*, established in 1945 by ACPR, became the official publication of the new society.

During November of 1948, PRSA held its first national conference in Chicago. In an October 1970 *Public Relations Journal* article, Rea Smith, acting executive director of the PRSA, recalled that two of the impressive speakers were Margaret Mead and S. I. Hayakawa.

From those ambitious beginnings in the late 1940s, PRSA continues to track and contribute to the development of the contemporary profession and its growth in specialized areas of practice. The first special-interest section formed was the Counselors Academy in 1961. Today, that section roster includes 16 others: Association, Corporate, Counselors to Higher Education, the Educators Academy, Employee Communications, Environmental, Financial Communications, Food and Beverage, International, Independent Practitioners Alliance, Military and National Security, Multicultural Communications, Public Affairs and Government, Strategic Social Responsibility, Technology, and Travel and Tourism.

Concern for ethical and professional standards has always been dominant on the society's agenda. In 1954, PRSA drafted a Code of Principles and a Code of Ethics. In 1960, it adopted a definitive Declaration of Principles, a Code of Standards, and enforcement procedures through Judicial Panels. From time to time, the Code is revised, especially to keep pace with the requirements of the financial practice. PRSA's most critical—and embarrassing—ethical crisis occurred in 1956, when its president was charged by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) with insider trading. Rather than undergo the society's judicial process, he chose to resign his membership. President-elect John Felton promptly stepped into the position, becoming the only person to serve more than one term as president.

By the 1990s, it was apparent that the complex enforcement process rushed increasing litigation and change to the authority of a professional association. Thus, today, enforcement responsibility is vested in the board of directors, which may expel a member who is found guilty by a government authority or court of illegal behavior. The recent charge to the Board of Ethics and Professional Standards is to focus on raising the understanding of the code by all society members.

Stressing both ethical and professional performance is PRSA's accreditation program, a written

and oral examination of a member's knowledge, mastery of, and qualifications for public relations. Initially proposed in 1963 by the Counselors Academy solely for its own members, the PRSA Assembly voted to extend the opportunity to all eligible members of the society. Accredited members must now maintain and update their qualifications every three years. Now a major item in the society's budget, the examination is periodically reviewed and revised, and by 2003, more than 4,000 members had earned the hallmark of Accredited in Public Relations (APR).

Organizations that partner in accreditation through the Universal Accreditation Board include the Agricultural Relations Council, the Florida Public Relations Association, Maine Public Relations Council, National School Public Relations Association, Religion Communicators Council, Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development, Southern Public Relations Federation, and Texas Public Relations Association.

Education for the increasing number of public relations students in U.S. colleges and universities became an ongoing PRSA priority in the 1960s. With more schools offering public relations studies, the society established the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) in 1968. In the following year, they chartered 17 schools for "alpha" PRSSA chapters, each sponsored by a PRSA chapter and having both faculty and professional advisors. By 2004, there were 243 PRSSA chapters with more than 8,000 members. Since 1973, PRSSA has been self-governing through a national committee of students, with guidance by professional and faculty advisors.

Annual conferences of PRSA and PRSSA are held simultaneously in the fall. Attended by 1,500 to 2,000 members and guests, the PRSA International Conference features leading authorities on major issues and more than 70 professional development sessions. While the two conferences have separate programs, there is much opportunity for interaction between professionals and students, who are invited to the society's general sessions. PRSSA produced its own conference, with more than 1,000 students attending.

Paralleling PRSA's nurture of students are Commissions on Public Relations Education—in 1975, 1987, 1999, and continuing—to research and recommend guidelines for formal education in public

relations. Sponsored by PRSA and the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the commission also invites other professional and academic groups to participate. While researching and developing a report, the commission customarily meets at least three times annually and is cochaired by a leading practitioner and educator. Research conducted by both the 1987 and 1999 commissions revealed surprising agreement among practitioners and educators about what should be taught in public relations studies. Both commissions recommended at least five courses in a public relations undergraduate program, which became a standard for chartering a school for a PRSSA chapter.

PRSA also holds two seats on the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, which reviews and accredits academic units where public relations is frequently taught. For public relations programs in these units or those housed in other units, PRSA offers a voluntary review and certification program administered by the Educational Affairs Committee.

To recognize and encourage exemplary performance, annual awards play a major role in PRSA. An inheritance from the APRA merger, the annual Silver Anvil awards honor outstanding public relations programs and the Bronze Anvils recognize outstanding tactics within a program or campaign. Awards to individuals include the Gold Anvil for an exceptional lifetime career and contributions to the profession; Outstanding Educator; the Paul Lund Community Service Award; the Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA; and the Public Relations Professional of the Year. The annual honorees receive their awards and recognition during the annual International Conference.

Another honor is membership in PRSA's College of Fellows. Founded in 1990, the college is a group of more than 300 accredited members distinguished by their careers, ethical performance, community service, and commitment to the profession. Each has been elected to the College and is expected to serve as a role model and mentor to other PRSA members and to aspiring students. Recently, the College encouraged Fellows to make gifts and bequests to public relations studies in colleges and universities of choice.

PRSA's foundation efforts had a bumpy history and are now in a second reincarnation. Established

in the mid-1950s, the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education had its halcyon years in the early 1960s, when it sponsored a series of annual lecture-essays on the role of public relations in the early history of the United States and Canada. Written and presented by such noted historians as Dr. Allan Nevins, Dr. Eric Goldman, and Dr. Ray Allen Billington, the published lectures endure as one of the most enlightening and proud records of the profession's heritage. Other major initiatives of that foundation included a fellowship program for educators, a scholarly journal (*Public Relations Review*), and a bibliography of public relations literature.

In the 1980s, however, an unfortunate controversy developed and that original foundation became the Institute for Public Relations, headquartered at the University of Florida. Subsequently, PRSA established another PRSA Foundation, responsible for student scholarships, research awards, and the society's Body of Knowledge. In the 1990s, the Body of Knowledge began supporting the Communications Career Academies' program to interest bright high school students—primarily African Americans—in public relations careers. The foundation's curriculum of more than 50 lesson plans for that program is also available to PRSA chapters for their outreach to high schools throughout the country.

Recognizing that much of the PRSA's work, particularly in education and professional development, qualified for 501(c)(3) status, the society took that significant action in 2003–2004. As one result, the foundation board became advisory, reporting to the PRSA Board of Directors, and part of larger funding efforts to support cancer research, scholarships, and other programs of lifelong education.

After 47 years as the society's publication of record, the *Public Relations Journal* was succeeded in 1995 by the *Public Relations Strategist*, a quarterly magazine addressing major trends and issues facing public relations and its clients and designed for readership by both public relations and business management. The year before, PRSA introduced *Tactics*, a monthly publication reporting immediate news of professional interest, practical counsel, ideas, and commentary.

PRSA's membership of more than 17,000 is organized through 18 districts and 116 chapters.

Governance includes a representative national assembly of approximately 360 members and a 17-member board of directors. In addition to the president/CEO, president-elect, treasurer, secretary, and immediate past president, one board member represents each district and two serve as at-large members.

Currently, the PRSA staff of approximately 50 is responsible to the Executive Director, Catherine Bolton, APR. In 2004, the board approved relocation of the PRSA headquarters to 33 Maiden Lane, in Manhattan's financial district.

The makeup of PRSA's leadership has evolved over the years. In early years, most presidents came from the corporate sector, and increasingly, they come from agency practice. In 1973, PRSA named its first woman president (the author) and by 2005, nine women have been elected to head the society. In the ranks of president, one is of Hispanic heritage, one African American, and two are educators. Many PRSA alumni served on the board, with two becoming president (in 2002 and 2004).

Despite that ascension to leadership by the new generation, an ongoing challenge is persuading the majority of PRSA graduates to transition to the professional society. Entry-level salaries often discourage joining and not enough employers currently sponsor membership and the professional opportunities it brings. If those alumni do join, they are often "lost" in a sea of seasoned veterans and become discouraged. Recognizing that problem, some PRSA chapters are making special efforts to welcome and serve those younger members. In 2004, those efforts inspired a national group, New Professionals, to serve associate members—particularly PRSA alumni—who seek mentoring and help in lubricating early career progress and participating in the society. A month after the group's launch, more than 100 members enrolled and 40-plus senior members volunteered as mentors.

PRSA members have many opportunities to participate in leadership activities through numerous committees populating PRSA at the chapter and national levels. The customary route to national positions is through chapter leadership.

Since 1980, PRSA objectives and goals were driven by a strategic planning process, customarily with blueprints for action in 5-year increments. The process addressed issues from sophisticated communications technology to serve members

more effectively to a stronger role in international public relations.

International interests have early roots in PRSA. In 1952, three society delegates attended the organizing meeting of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA). In 1961, PRSA joined the Inter-American Federation of Public Relations Associations and developed an ongoing liaison within the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS). In 1964, PRSA cosponsored with CPRS and IPRA, the Third World Congress in Public Relations held in Montreal. The society has also cosponsored two World Congresses in the United States. It now takes a leading role in the new Global Alliance of 60 professional associations throughout the world. Meeting semiannually, the Alliance agenda includes subjects like ethical standards, professional development, and legislation.

In 2003, PRSA adopted the following three ongoing program priorities:

1. Professional development—a concept of lifelong learning, embracing all of the society's educational efforts, from academic to continuing education at every level. The latter includes such member services as seminars through meetings and the PRSA website, conferences, the Professional Resource Center, and publications.
2. Diversity—seeking a membership which is more representative of American society, serving and being responsible to multicultural needs, and supporting client objectives related to diversity.
3. Advocacy—spokesmanship for the profession and ethical practice to the public at large via media, speaking platforms, and coalitions with other public speaking groups; a vigilant “watch” for legislative and judicial actions which could have a negative impact on the practice.

In sum, they reflect the following pervasive professional concerns:

Improving the capabilities of professionals and their prospects for moving up the ranks of management rather than being subordinate to such functions as marketing, advertising, and human resources.

Persuading more minorities to enter the field, particularly as American society becomes more diverse. Not only is this a “right thing to do,” but

professionals who understand and give voice to the culture of growing constituencies are essential to building productive relationships for clients.

Gaining respect for public relations, its role and value, remains an elusive goal and stubborn frustration. Its perception as a “soft,” expendable function in cost-cutting crunches and client crises continues to be the profession's own public relations problem, and its problem to solve.

Going on 6 decades, PRSA has become the world's largest association of public relations professionals. Even more significant, it is parent to the largest paraprofessional organization of students preparing for future practice. Beyond size alone, as the practice has grown, changed, and matured, so has PRSA. Both face escalating challenges to performance, ethical behavior, and trust. However, the fundamental mission of both remains the same—to foster responsible, constructive dialogue and relationships in a democratic society where decisions are shaped and made in the workplace and home, marketplace, and voting booth.

Betsy Plank

Note: Betsy Plank founded the PRSSA in 1968 and was the PRSA's first female president in 1973, and is the only person to win three of the organization's top individual awards—the Gold Anvil, the Paul Lund Community Service Award, and the Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA. Special thanks to the Public Relations Society of America's staff and Professional Resource Center for their contributions to this entry.

See also Plank, Betsy; Public Relations Student Society of America

PUBLIC RELATIONS STUDENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA

In retrospect, the late 1960s were curious, unlikely times for the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) to launch a student organization.

Students were rebelling against the Vietnam War and constraints imposed by the “elder culture.” Campus unrest—even riots—made daily headlines. Members of older generations were shocked at the “flower children,” their penchant

for drugs, indiscreet sex, and suggestive music, their protests, and their contempt for traditional American values.

None of that was evident in the growing relationship between PRSA and its younger generation.

In the 1960s, education for public relations was beginning to flourish in U.S. colleges and universities, which recognized the practice as a burgeoning career field for their graduates. Increasing numbers of educators were highly respected and influential in PRSA and they championed student-professional encounters. There were public relations “clubs” at six schools: the universities of Florida, Southern California, Texas, and West Virginia, and at San Jose State College and Utica College.

As early as 1950, PRSA had considered a student organization, but didn’t act on that vision until 15 years later. A rapid chronology then followed:

1965—President Ovid Davis invited students of the six clubs to attend PRSA’s National Conference.

1966—President Robert Wolcott repeated the conference invitation.

April 1967—Board member Jon Riffel arranged for San Jose State’s club members to meet with the Spring Assembly in Pebble Beach, California, to demonstrate how a professional–student relationship could work well.

- In a statement to the Assembly, the Long-Range Planning Committee said, “Perhaps our greatest concern for the future is the questions of where the next generation of practitioners will come from. Let public relations grow wild, without benefit of academic preparation, and a half century from now, it will be as forgotten as phrenology.”
- The Assembly unanimously approved a resolution by Professor Walter Siefert to form a committee to study creating a student organization and report to the Fall Assembly in Philadelphia.
- President J. Carroll Bateman appointed a joint committee of PRSA and the Association for Education in Journalism (AEJ) to develop the report, with assistance by Dr. F. H. “Chris” Teahan, director of education (later vice president) of PRSA.

November 1967—The report to the Assembly recommended formation of the Public Relations

Student Society of America (PRSSA). The vote was unanimous.

January 1968—President Edward P. VonderHaar appointed a committee of two practitioners, two educators, and two students and chaired by Jon Riffel; its charge was to develop plans for PRSSA and requirements for its chapters.

By year-end 1968—The Board had chartered 14 schools for PRSSA Chapters: the universities of Central Missouri, Florida, Houston, Kent State, Maryland, North Dakota, Northern Illinois, Ohio State, Southern California, Syracuse, Texas, West Virginia, San Jose State College, and Utica College.

These and additional chapters thrived and grew. PRSSA organized them into districts, following the PRSA pattern. PRSSA agencies and “Pro-Am” programs increased, as did internship opportunities. More students attended the PRSA National Conference and took advantage of internship opportunities. PRSSA launched a national publication, *Forum*. All were signals of an enthusiastic and productive relationship.

Nationally, a PRSA Committee on Student Organization governed PRSSA. It had two “token” students. By 1973, student leaders began to chafe at that junior role. At the 1973 PRSA Conference in Honolulu, they felt their muscle and persuaded the Board and Assembly to permit self-governance.

Students promptly elected their first national chair, Joan Patrick O’Connor of the University of Southern California, and other members of the National Committee: vice chair, editor, and nine district chairs. The PRSA Board appointed the faculty and professional advisors—but with limited voting privileges. Chris Teahan was administrator of the new national organization.

Another seminal action at the Honolulu conference was the introduction by the PRSA Education Committee of a PRSSA competition. Now known as the J. Carroll Bateman Case Study Competition, it is the premier program for chapter teams to demonstrate their research, planning, and performance skills.

The downside of the student organization’s rapid growth was the severe strain on the PRSA budget to support PRSSA. The National Committee recognized the program, took responsibility, and initiated national membership dues.

Students continued to attend the society's annual conferences in the fall. In 1976, however, PRSA and the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) cosponsored the Seventh World Congress of Public Relations in Boston. Scheduled in August, it served as the society's Annual Conference. For students, the timing conflicted with summer jobs, school, and vacations.

Rather than skip a conference opportunity, the resourceful PRSSA President, Maureen Prater, risked producing a separate conference at her own school, the University of Dayton, in October. The venture was a success, attended by 300 students and professionals, and even eked out a minuscule profit. It also set a precedent. Since that time, PRSSA produces its own national conferences, held simultaneous to the PRSA conference to take advantage of interaction with professionals. Today, more than 1,000 students customarily attend.

In 1981, the student organization claimed a unique group of advocates: the Champions for PRSSA. Designed to identify PRSA members and chapters having a special interest in students and their education, the Champions supplement the support provided by PRSA to PRSSA. Among the Champions' contributions are sponsoring annual PRSSA chapter awards for outstanding performance; producing a publication and videotape recounting PRSSA history; recognizing retiring National Advisors; sponsoring the annual scholarships for outstanding students; publishing a handbook of advice for getting and keeping entry-level jobs; and serving as speakers, judges, and counsel for PRSSA programs.

Several other PRSSA scholarships and awards also honor individuals or have been established by individuals. They include the Altschul Internship Award, the Lawrence G. Foster Award, the Professor Sidney Gross Memorial Award, the Steven Pisinski Memorial Award, and the Gary Yoshimura Scholarship. An annual scholarship is also awarded by PRSA's Multicultural Section.

The role of the PRSSA administrator is key to PRSSA's continued performance. PRSSA leaders and members are on the scene for only a brief period of time—usually two years at the most—before they graduate and move on. Thus, their administrator provides essential continuity to the student organization. The late and legendary Chris Teahan was the first and longest serving

administrator—who, along with Jon Riffel, is a First Founding Father of PRSSA. After his retirement, Colleen McDonough served PRSSA, then was succeeded by Elaine Averick, who became the students' "Godmother" before she retired. Today's new Godmother-in-Progress is Janeen Garcia, wise counsel to PRSSA and broker of its relationships with PRSA.

In recent years, PRSSA changed its National Committee structure from geographic districts to program areas. There are now elected Vice Presidents for Chapter Development, Member Services, Professional Development, Public Relations, Regional Activities, and Internships/Job Services. A Webmaster position was also added to support and keep pace with PRSSA's increasing use of the Internet to communicate with and provide services to members. The PRSSA President makes annual reports to the PRSA Assembly and is a voting delegate.

Education has always been the driving force behind PRSSA's relationship with PRSA. Both educators and practitioners share the concern to prepare students for the profession that continues to grow in its scope and responsibilities. Students themselves recognize that this preparation spans academic study, practical experience, and mentoring.

PRSA's original provisions for chartering a school for a PRSSA chapter reflected those interests. PRSA Bylaws (Article XVI, Section 2) state its aim for PRSSA to "foster the students' understanding of current public relations theories and procedures, encourage them to the highest ideals and principles of the practice of public relations, and instill in them a professional attitude."

Originally, PRSA's requirement for a school charter was the offering of at least two courses in public relations. In the mid-1970s, that provision obviously shortchanged preparation for the growing field. As a result, PRSA and the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism decided to take a new look. They cosponsored the First Commission on Public Relations Education, cochaired by Scott Cutlip and J. Carroll Bateman. In its 1975 report, the Commission recommended four courses and outlined their content. The PRSA Assembly then adopted that standard for chartering a school.

The Second Commission went to work in the mid-1980s and was cochaired by William Ehling

and Betsy Plank. It had 25 members representing professional and academic groups. The commission's 1987 report recommended 15 semester hours of public relations study—the equivalent of five courses—and their content. The PRSA Assembly then adopted that increased standard for school charters. At its next assembly, PRSA also endorsed the five-course requirement, reaffirming its commitment to education.

Appointed in the late 1990s, the Third Commission was cochaired by Dean Kruckeberg and John Paluszek and included 47 educators and practitioners. Its 1999 report, "A Port of Entry: Public Relations Education for the 21st Century," had worldwide distribution and impact. It confirmed the five-course standard, but emphasized that it was a bare minimum, with eight courses as the ideal undergraduate education in public relations. The Third Commission continues to monitor education and is responsible for future updates and recommendations.

Both the Second and Third Commissions began their work with extensive research among educators and practitioners, who expressed substantial—and unexpected—agreement on course content.

Initial predictions for the impact of the five-course requirement were dire—many schools would find it unacceptable and a threat to their curriculum authority and would abandon their charters. The predictions were wrong. Instead, schools qualifying for charters increased.

Oversight of adherence to that charter requirement is vested in PRSA's Educational Affairs Committee. Based on commission reports, its recommendation for courses—or equivalent content—are Introduction to Public Relations, Writing and Production, Research, Supervised Public Relations Experience (e.g., internships), and Strategy and Implementation (i.e., Case Studies and Campaigns). The PRSA National Committee has oversight of other charter requirements: at least 10 members in good standing, a sponsoring PRSA chapter, and faculty and professional advisors who are PRSA members. The PRSA Board retains authority to grant or withdraw charters, based on recommendations of the PRSSA National Committee and the PRSA Educational Affairs Committee.

The educational underpinnings of PRSSA give it integrity, unique stature, and respect as the world's largest paraprofessional public relations organization in schools of higher education.

One related issue remains thorny. While chartered schools are required to offer five public relations courses, there is no eligibility requirement for formal public relations study by PRSSA members. In practice, most have declared a major in public relations or are minoring in the discipline. The traditional rationale for open membership is to allow interested students from other areas of study—journalism, advertising, or business, for example—to be members so that they can become familiar with the role of public relations and bring that understanding to their future careers. Based on their interest or PRSSA experience, many of these students take an introductory course in public relations. Nevertheless, the debate about PRSSA eligibility continues and awaits future resolution.

Another stubborn issue of concern to both PRSSA and PRSA is how to encourage PRSSA graduates to transition to the professional society, particularly to take advantage of its opportunities for professional development, contracts, and leadership. Estimates are that only 18% of graduates become PRSA associate members. Recognizing that not all graduates enter the field, the stretch goal is 50%. Obstacles for achieving that include the prohibitive price of dues for entry-level workers, limited employer sponsorship, discomfort in transitioning from campus to an intimidating company of veteran professionals pursuing their own agendas, and difficulty in finding career mentors.

Both PRSA and PRSSA launched strong efforts to address these problems. The student organization mounted an ongoing campaign to promote the value of PRSA membership to early-career progress and to encourage students to aim for Associate membership immediately after graduation. The campaign is working—PRSA chapters are joining the effort. A few already initiated successful programs to attract and serve young professionals. Spurred by those examples, in January 2004, PRSA formed a national New Professionals advocacy group. Cochaired by Gail Liebl, past president of PRSA and past chair of the PRSA Technology Section, and Mary Beth West, PRSSA alumna and former PRSA Board member, the group's first announcement yielded an initial enrollment of more than 100, with more than 40 professionals volunteering as mentors.

Meanwhile, PRSA and the Champions cosponsor Associate membership for graduates of the PRSSA National Committee. Beyond its deserved

recognition of service to PRSSA, it assures that the senior society claims the proven leadership promise of these “best and brightest.”

By 2004, PRSSA comprised 243 chapters, more than 8,000 members, and was still growing and going strong.

At the conclusion of his “Brief History of PRSSA,” Chris Teahan posed a rhetorical question: “Given the knowns, is it a risk to predict that within the next few years one of these erstwhile ‘kids’ will be elected to the PRSA presidency and that future Grand Old Men and Women of Public Relations will be alumni of PRSSA?”

The first half of his prophecy came true in 2002 and 2004 when two PRSSA alumni—Joann Killeen and Del Galloway—became PRSA presidents. As for becoming Grand Old Men and Women of Public Relations, that, too, will happen. Just wait and see.

Betsy Plank, founder of PRSSA

See also Professionalism in Public Relations; Public Relations Education, History of; Public Relations Society of America

PUBLIC SECTOR

Simply, the public sector is that part of society that is not the private sector. Or, conversely, the private sector is that which is not inherently public. The private sector is generally thought about as private decisions and actions by individual and corporate persons. Thus, in contrast, the public sector is that which is not private, that which deserves to be done and thought because it is in the interest of all people—natural or artificial. In that balance between the public and private sectors, a crucial nexus is the point at which the private violates public expectations and public interests. Likewise, theorists are concerned at which point the public sector intrudes incorrectly into private activities, choices, and preferences. Knowing and managing this balance is one of the tasks of public relations practitioners and is, perhaps, the most profound rationale for the profession and its practice.

Public relations theory building over the past several decades generated a considerable body of literature suggesting new perspectives and processes

for public relations. A key concept in this theory building is the questioning of the definition of *publics* and *the public* as they affect public relations in normative and positive theories and models. James E. Grunig argued, “A positive model is a theory that describes and explains how public relations is practiced. A normative model explains how public relations should be practiced” (2000, p. 13). Perceptions about “publics” and “the public” in both types of empirically based and normative theories have a significant impact on the understanding of how public relations should be practiced and how public relations is practiced.

In an opening discussion in their textbook *This Is PR*, Doug Newsom, Judy Vanslyke Turk, and Dean Kruckeberg quoted Lucien Matrat’s perspective on public relations. Matrat said,

Public relations, in the sense that we use the term, forms part of the strategy of management. Its function is twofold: to respond to the expectations of those whose behaviour, judgments and opinions can influence the operation and development of an enterprise and in turn to motivate them. (2004, p. 2)

Establishing public relations policies means, first, harmonizing the interests of an enterprise with the interests of those on whom its growth depends. The next step is putting these policies into practice. Newsom, Turk, and Kruckeberg moved the argument by quoting Matrat further: “This means developing a communication policy which can establish and maintain a relationship of mutual confidence with the firm’s multiple publics” (2004, p. 2). This perspective on multiple publics is reflective of much of the scholarly definitions of public relations. Individually, these groups are defined as *publics*. Much of the research and practice focuses on defining the precise nature of these groups (publics) and to effectively relate with them and to move away from the concept of *the public*. The dominance of the “publics” perspective is illustrated by Scott Cutlip when he stated “there is no such thing” as the general public (1994, p. 360).

In 2000, critical scholars Shirley Leitch and David Neilson took issue with the dominance of the perspective and deconstructed the basic theory of publics and presented a revised version of the concept. Leitch and Neilson deconstructed the concept that there is no general public by using

the theoretical frameworks of Habermas (1962/1991). In Habermasian terms, there is “the public” and “the public sphere” (Leitch & Nielson, 2000, p. 130). From this perspective, “The public is made up of all the citizens of a nation. The public sphere, as distinct from the private sphere, is the ensemble of public spaces available for debate between citizens” (2000, p. 130). Leitch and Neilson suggested that these public spaces may be a community meeting or a public chat room on the Internet. Leitch and Neilson argued that public relations theory and model building that is centered on the concept of publics is heavily weighted in favor of organizations and attempts to abandon the concept of the democratic processes within society. This, they stated, is detrimental to society and also may be detrimental to the very organizations that marginalize or ignore the discussions among members of the society.

Leitch and Neilson indicated that the discussions that are held in the public sphere are the essence of a democratic society. They stated, “Democratic debate by the public within the many sites of the public sphere occurs in relation to, but distinct from the ‘system.’ The system includes both ‘political subsystems’ (state) and ‘economic subsystems’ (economy)” (2000, p. 130). They argued that in its ideal form the public sphere is the site where public opinion can form. The authors suggested that “through the democratic structures of society, public opinion places limits on and leads to reforms within the system.” (2000, p. 130). Leitch and Neilson recognized that in practice the concept of public opinion is not unitary nor may it be easily interpreted. This, however, is one of the challenges of effective public relations research and strategies development because it is out of this public domain and public opinion that organizations often face serious challenges from groups that emerge from the discussion.

Many questions remain regarding how individuals form opinions in the public sphere. How do these individuals come to think in particular ways and then how do these individuals become part of larger groups holding similar positions? Robert L. Heath (1994) argued that the forming of opinions comes from the individual’s interaction with the system in a particular situation. For example, an individual in a neighborhood may form an opinion in opposition to a governmental system that

wishes to place a new prison in the individual’s community. If other members of the community also share the feeling that they do not want the prison in their community, there is, in Heath’s terms, a zone of meaning held by those individuals. That is, they share the same meaning for the issue. Heath suggested that the zones of meaning may apply to an issue, an event, or even an organization. Although the shared zone of meaning often results from opposition to issues, events, and organizations, the shared zone of meaning may also be in support. An example of this is support by parents for additional school crossing guards to ensure the safety of their children. This, of course, is the ideal situation for an organization that is supporting this action.

Although the discussion focused on the zone of meaning being shared by a group, a zone of meaning may be held by an individual. This individual may be of concern to organizations within the system. An example of this is the resident critic of the city council who represents only one view. When this view or zone of meaning becomes shared by others, the concern for organizations is even greater.

The sharing of this zone of meaning results in actions by the individuals holding the meaning. If the individuals join together in some form of united effort and action, they are called an activist group. This group may then move to attain the goals that reflect the zones of meaning shared by the members of the group. If these groups are effective, they may stop an activity that they oppose. An example of this is the community group suggested previously that wished to prevent the building of the prison. If they are effective, they may be able to convince the legislature that there is a better place to build the prison. However, if an activist group shares a zone of meaning that the building of a new prison may be economically beneficial to their community, they may take actions to convince the governing body that their community is a better place to build the prison than some other community.

The organizational structures of these activist groups are problematic. As Leitch and Neilson suggested, their perspectives and resulting action may not be unitary or easy to interpret. Individuals and groups that share concerns in a particular sphere may not be taking exactly the same path to alter the

environment. As Leitch and Neilson reasoned, there are numerous voices and organizations in areas like women's rights and the environment. Because there are significant differences of approach and action by the various activist individuals and groups, organizations wishing to form relationships must be cognizant of the differences within the activist groups.

The importance of the activist groups to organizations is that they, the activist groups, may come to control the social, political, or economic agenda within society. That is, the positions and perspectives that the activist group holds become the dominant viewpoint or opinion in the society. J. E. Grunig argued that "indeed, many public relations practitioners believe their organization have lost control to activist group" (2000, p. 18). This loss of agenda setting to the activist individuals or groups may be severely detrimental to organizations that hold positions in opposition to those of the activist groups.

With the deconstruction of Leitch and Neilson and the theoretical underpinnings of Heath that there are zones of understanding in the public sphere, public relations theories and models must recognize and include the concepts of group development. This understanding must be included in the normative model and in the positive model. This should lead organizations into the concept of environmental scanning, that is, to monitor the environments of society to understand the various zones of meaning that may exist in the public sphere. As suggested by Hugh Culbertson, Dennis Jeffers, Donna Besser Stone, and Martin Terrell in 1993, the effective models must scan the social, economic, and political environments where an organization may exist.

John Madsen

See also Privatizing Public Opinion (and "Publicizing" Private Opinion); Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Public Sphere Discourse; Publics; Zones of Meaning

Further Readings

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public service announcements (PSAs) are public relations tools used to broadcast announcements free of cost. The tradition of the Federal Communications Commission is to expect television and radio broadcasting companies to demonstrate their community responsibility by providing free air space for important, noncommercial announcements. Because radio and television stations prosper through the sale of advertising time, they are reluctant to provide very much time and space for such announcements.

Such announcements have real value to non-profit organizations, which can use them to notify members of the community of some event, such as a blood drive, or some need, such as limited available supplies of blood for transfusions. At times, companies can also qualify for free advertising time by being engaged in some community activity that the stations deem valuable enough to broadcast. Perhaps large and continuing commercial advertising time purchases qualify these businesses for free time for PSAs.

At various times, PSAs are viewed as not worth the effort. Often stations are only willing to run them at extraordinarily low viewer or listener times. Many of these run when stations have a

hard time getting advertisers to spend dollars to reach “nonexistent” viewers or listeners.

As times change, so has the future and fortune of PSAs. Many radio and television stations now partner with the more visible and worthy nonprofit organizations. For instance, on a monthly or quarterly basis, a station may take on a strategic partnership that serves to enhance the station’s community image. It might promote the Salvation Army at Christmas. It might promote the March of Dimes or the American Heart Association (near Valentine’s Day). The station tells of events, perhaps in the news segment, to publicize them. In this way, that version of a PSA actually has more clout than it would if run only as an “ad.”

Radio and television stations have calendars of events and often also agree to cover events, such as a charity fundraiser. They announce its date and build up mentions of same; they report on its success as a fundraiser. This “soft news” gives the image that the station cares about the community and serves the role of publicizing the event, the cause, and the nonprofit organization.

Thus, with the advent of the Internet, radio and television stations can go that additional step in their community service. They announce various nonprofit events on their website. The station links viewers to the charity through social media. The charity may also link back to the station, which is a way to repay it for its community service.

Robert L. Heath

See also Event Management; Promotion; Publicity

PUBLIC SPHERE (ÖFFENTLICHKEIT)

The term *public sphere* was discussed for many years, especially in European countries. The term is relevant to the theory, teaching, and practice of public relations because it forces attention and gives substance to efforts to understand the form and content of the public arenas where practitioners do their work and academics conduct research.

Many writers were interested in the implications of this term, including Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill in the

18th and 19th centuries, and Hannah Arendt and Joseph Schumpeter in the 20th century. Their discussions dealt with the phenomena captured in terms like *the public*, *publicité*, and *the public sphere*. Even earlier, the adjective “publicus” was used to designate a political order, or polity, in which the people were the carrier and the guarantor for the ruling law. During the 18th century, the German noun *Öffentlichkeit* (public sphere) developed out of the verb *öffentlich* (public). Since the 18th century, the term has much to do with claims for reasonable thinking in the tradition of the European Enlightenment.

In communication science and in public relations research, we can read much about *publics*, a term that refers to specific groups of individuals. In a similar way, public relations practitioners and academics sometimes discuss *the public* as some kind of totality of publics. In contrast to these terms, the term *public sphere* is discussed in sociology and is connected with sociological and political analyses. Today, primarily in a European perspective, we can find several traditions relevant to the use of the term. This discussion essentially distinguishes at least two important, different, and modern models of what is called the “public sphere.” The first model is a *deliberative* or *discourse model*; the second can be called a *mirror model* or a *liberal model*. The first model is connected with the writings of Jürgen Habermas (1991), especially his classic book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*); the second model is based on the liberal theory of democracy and systems theoretical approaches, especially writings of the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1990).

In 1962, the German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1991) published his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, which was translated into English and published in 1989. During that same year, a conference was organized by the American sociologist Craig Calhoun in which the Habermas approach was discussed extensively and critically. In this treatise, Habermas described the historical development and transformation of the public sphere beginning with ancient understandings and continuing with the representative public sphere in the Middle Ages, until modern understandings beginning with the 18th century.

On the basis of historical and semantic analyses (public vs. private; public vs. secret), he distinguished two distinct spheres: the private sphere and the public sphere. In the modern form, beginning with the bourgeois society, the “public sphere” first appears as a specific domain, a domain of social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. The public sphere is open in principle to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere—so reasoned Habermas—is constituted in every conversation in which private persons come together to form a public. Citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest. Public sphere

is defined as the public of private individuals who join in the debate of issues bearing on state authority. Unlike the Greek conception, individuals are here to be formed primarily in the private realm, including the family. Moreover the private realm is understood as one of freedom that has to be defended against the domination of the state. (Calhoun, 1992, p. 7)

Later, Habermas defined the *public sphere* as a kind of network for the communication of contents or topics and opinions. Communication flows are filtered and synthesized in such a way that public communication is condensed to topics from which the specific public gathers and forms opinions. Public opinions are not representative in a statistical sense and are not the same as the aggregated individual opinions. The public sphere is characterized by a typical communication structure, which refers to the social space that is generated through communicative acting. For Habermas (1991), “public sphere” still is a central sociological concept like “act,” “actor,” or “group.”

For Luhmann (1990), the public sphere also can be seen as a net of communication acts without being forced to connect further communication acts. The concept of the public sphere refers to social systems, not to psychic systems. Based on the distinction between medium and form (Fritz Heider), Luhmann in his systems theoretical approach defined the “public sphere” as a kind of medium in which forms are continuously built and resolved through communication. In the view of Luhmann, it is—in contrast to Habermas—not necessary to combine the concept of the public

sphere with implications of rationality or irrational elements of “mass psychology.” Topics, and even more specifically issues, are continuously generated as “forms” of the public sphere. Luhmann proposed to use the mirror metaphor to designate the most important social function of the public sphere. The mirror public sphere is necessary for the political system, one of the functional systems of society to observe not only their own face, but also the observations of other actors (e.g., opponents and rivals). Like the market, public sphere—as a mirror—is an observation or perspective of observers and is suited or fitted for self-observation of the society and for building up certain expectation structures.

Both models, the discursive model of Habermas and the mirror model of Luhmann, are essentially normative. One critical argument concerning the Habermas model always focused critical attention on the difficulty of separating (historical) descriptive from normative parts in his approach. One problem with both approaches is the difficulty of linking them with empirical studies that could generate arguments for testing the strength of one model or the other.

From these reasons, a new theory of the public sphere was developed in the Social Science Research Center Berlin (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin) starting in the early 1990s. Friedhelm Neidhardt, Jürgen Gerhards, and others have developed a modern theory of the public sphere, in critical discussion with Habermas and Luhmann that describes the structures of modern public sphere yet positions them so that empirical studies can be connected with the model.

The public sphere in this perspective is defined as a “forum for communication,” an open “communication system” that, in principle, is open for all actors who want to inform themselves about something, who want to communicate, or want to observe the communication of others. Certain “arenas” exist in this forum in which different actors inform other actors and communicate with each other. The most important actors are different types of “speakers” and the media. At the “gallery” of the arenas, a more or less great account of spectators is assembling, the *auditorium* (Publikum). The auditorium observes the arena communication in which speakers and the media, under certain conditions, come to a relative “consonance” on the

basis of different opinions. In this case of consonance of opinions, the model speaks of “public opinion.” Public opinion is the common opinion between the speakers and the media in the arena. Different from this public opinion are the aggregated opinions of the spectators in the gallery. It is an empirical question regarding which opinions of the spectators, both in kind and content, are the same as the public opinion (in the arenas).

Three *functions* of the public sphere are distinguished through the analysis of various theorists: the *transparency function* (open for all actors, for all topics of general importance), the *validation function* (arguments and positions should be open for changes through public discussion), and the *orientation function* (public communication generates public opinions that can be convincing in various ways and degrees by the audience). The model further distinguishes between types of arenas that occur on *different levels*: the first level is called the level of “Encounters.” Communication that occurs in the bus, on the street, in railway stations, in waiting lines (queues), or at university campuses marks an elementary type of a “small” public sphere. Typical for that type of public sphere is the instability and the relative poorness of structures (not many structures of this type exist).

The second level is arenas of assembly. Assemblies normally are not only public, but also focused at topics or issues. In the history of the public sphere, the “freedom of assembly” was an important step in the struggle for civil rights. The freedom to have demonstrations is another institutionalized form of the freedom of assembly. In modern societies, the public sphere is essentially defined through mass media.

The third level of arenas and public sphere primarily developed during the 19th century; freedom of the press is the historically first, institutionalized form of the mass media communication level. The three levels of arenas can be interpreted as three qualitatively different steps in the process of historical development and differentiation of an autonomous system of public sphere. On each level the capacity of information gathering and information processing of the system increases. At the same time, from level to level, a professionalization of communicator roles (journalism, public relations) can be observed along with a decrease of audience roles and audience activities.

Communicators (“speakers”) and the (mass) media are the most important actors in the public arena on the third (mass media) level. The audience only plays the role of an observer, although some individuals from the audience can change and become actors in the arena. The reverse process is also possible. Neidhardt (1994) distinguishes between four types of “speakers”: *representatives*, *experts*, *advocates*, and *intellectuals*. Representatives represent organizations like private companies, political parties, associations, churches, and so on. They can act professionally (as responsible for the communication of the organization) in their main job or avocation. *Advocates* do not have political power, but they speak for troubled persons or professions. Examples are foundation administrators, social workers, alcohol rehabilitation speakers, and so on. *Experts* and *Intellectuals* are also important actor groups for the modern public sphere. The “speakers,” but also the media organizations, work with different specific end *strategies* (*attention strategies*, *selection strategies*, *persuasive strategies*, bottom-up, top-down strategies, etc.), which lead to certain *public communication patterns* like an *information* (communiqué) model and an *agitation* model, and so on.

This concept of the public sphere today is relevant not only for sociologists, but also for theoretical considerations of public relations activities of organizations. Holmström (1996, p. 149) argued that both the Habermas and the Luhmann theories represent two different worldviews. If that is true, a second problem arises: which of the two paradigms is most adequate in describing public relations phenomena. This line of questioning and the answers given depend on which aspect of the phenomenon one wishes to describe. The “arena model” of the public sphere seems to be convenient. It serves as a theoretical basis for public relations research not only because there are good possibilities of connecting this model with middle range public relations theories, but also because the results of empirical public relations and communication research can be combined with this theory.

Günter Bentele

See also Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Public Sphere Discourse; Publics

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sphere has been the subject of much analysis and criticism, and the theory has undergone some minor revisions. The concept of the public sphere was presented by Habermas as both an empirical description and an ideal.

As conceived, the bourgeois public sphere was viewed as “the sphere of private people come together as a public” (Habermas, 1991b, p. 27). It was an arena in which there was equality among all of the participants in social discourse, where all topics were open for discussion, and was inclusive, at least in principle. Habermas conceded that, in fact, some potential participants were excluded, but argued that all had an equal chance to meet the criteria of education and property to be included.

The public sphere is a space where public opinion can be formed. The formation of public opinion “refers to the functions of criticism and control of organized state authority” (Habermas, 1991a, p. 399). The public sphere mediates between the realms of the private and the state, and the guarantees of the basic rights of citizens in the liberal state depend on the demarcation between the two. For such mediation to be effective, discourse in the public sphere must be critical and rational. Above all, such discourse must rise above simply aggregating individual interests and form a bridge between self-interest and the common good. (Habermas’s writings on communication action and on discourse ethics, drawing on the works of George Herbert Mead and Lawrence Kohlberg, are an attempt to show how this can be done.) For this bridge to exist, society must institutionalize the “practices of rational public debate” (Habermas, 1992, p. 448). Habermas’s last major work, *Between Facts and Norms* (1996), addresses the basic constitutional guarantees he sees as necessary structures. Among the structural guarantees are freedom of press and assembly. This recognizes the importance of communication institutions to achieving the functions of the public sphere.

In his empirical description of the evolution of the public sphere, Habermas saw it as a product of a particular epoch, arising first in Great Britain around 1700 and then in France (c. 1750) and Germany (c. 1800). The social precondition was a market economy that led to exchange relationships based on contract and parity of individuals before the law. Legitimation of the law became dependent on public opinion.

PUBLIC SPHERE DISCOURSE

In 1962, Jürgen Habermas wrote the seminal *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Since then, the concept of the public

This seemingly ideal public sphere was transformed during the late 1800s. It became squeezed by the state taking over more and more functions of the private sphere and private interests assuming a more public character, thereby stressing self-interest at the expense of the common good. The communication industry changed by decreasing its political and news or information functions and becoming increasingly involved with turning the public sphere into an arena of consumption, both of products and of culture. As a result, Habermas wrote, we now have a public sphere “in appearance only” and the “sounding board of an educated stratum tutored in the public use of reason has been shattered” (1992, pp. 171–175).

This change came about, at least in part, because of the rise of the new media. In Habermas’s analysis, public debate was supposed to achieve a consensus on what is in the best interest of all. But the rise of the new media expanded the public sphere to include those less educated and less oriented to a concern for the public interest. Conflicts based on self-interests emerged and the public sphere became an “arena of competing interests” as opposed to a search for the common good. When such private interests are taken into the public realm, the original relationship of the private and public realms dissolved. This expanded public sphere lost its public character and became more consumer oriented, focusing on tastes and preferences. It became a public sphere in name only. In Habermas’s words, “the public is split apart into minorities of specialists who put their reason to use nonpublicly and the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public, but uncritical. Consequently, it completely lacks the form of communication specific to a public” (1992, p. 175). The media changed from “being a merchant of news to a dealer in public opinion,” a purveyor of advertising and private interests. This change has been exacerbated by the increasing concentration in the media, which has come to dominate, and manipulate, the public sphere (p. 175).

Specifically addressing the practice of public relations, Habermas wrote that “economic advertisement achieved an awareness of its political character only in the *practice of public relations*” (1992, p. 193, italics in original). He sees public relations techniques as dominating the public sphere. Whereas advertising is generally in the private sphere, “opinion management” lays claim to the

public sphere by hiding its private agenda in the guise of interest in the public welfare (Habermas, 1992, p. 193). Habermas claimed that “public relations do not genuinely concern public opinion, but opinion in the sense of reputation. The public sphere becomes the court *before* whose public prestige can be displayed—rather than *in* which public critical debate is carried on” (1992, pp. 200–201, italics in original). In sum, Habermas saw public relations as corrupting the public sphere.

Habermas’s development of the concept of the public sphere has been subjected to several criticisms, among them that there were competing public spheres, not one, and that the exclusion of the role of women in his initial analysis was an omission. While defending his initial analysis, he conceded the validity of these and other criticisms. As a result, he revised his theory in several ways. The revisions were, first, that the rise of the social-welfare state resulted in inappropriate bureaucratic and social intrusions into various spheres of activity that must be taken into account. Second, while Habermas defended his interpretation of the changing nature of the media infrastructure as moving from critical to manipulative, he suggested that the analysis was too simplistic and pessimistic. Third, that the consensus formed in the public sphere may result in a tyranny of the majority, as opposed to being a constraint on power.

For Habermas, the public sphere provides a space for rational and critical debate. For this to happen, problems and issues must be identified and thematized, solutions developed, and the issues dramatized to the extent that they are taken up by the political structures. But he wrote that it is an open question whether “a public sphere dominated by mass media provides a realistic chance for the members of civil society” to bring about meaningful changes (1992, p. 455). It is also an open question as to whether the new interactive media can recreate the original concept of the public sphere.

Perhaps because of this pessimism, Habermas turned his attention from the public sphere to discourse ethics. His concern and approach to ethics is mirrored in the discussion in recent public relations literature about different models of public relations (press agency, two-way symmetrical, etc.) and the resulting ethical implications of those models. Habermas’s indictment of public relations

seems to be less applicable to public relations models based on interaction, transparency, and relationship building.

The concept of the public sphere, as developed by Habermas, is important for both the field of public relations and for our notion of a democratic civil society. A space where issues can be rationally discussed, critical opinions formed, and that is inclusive in scope is an ideal worth striving for and lends legitimacy to the system. It can be argued that such a civil society is, ultimately, in the best interest of any and all particularized private interests. At its best, public relations has a positive role to play in achieving that ideal.

Roy V. Leeper

See also Critical Theory; Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Publics

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PUBLICIST

A publicist is an individual who generates publicity. The act of obtaining publicity is simply the dissemination of planned messages to targeted media in hopes of obtaining media coverage and thereby furthering the organization's interests. In most cases, the coverage is intentionally placed by an

individual rather than a news reporter covering an assigned story for publication. Publicity can be sought by any individual, but those who specialize in it are called publicists. Many public relations practitioners, whose job title may not be that of publicist, usually are involved in some activities that generate publicity. Although publicity may be a strategy used in a public relations program or campaign and is often confused with public relations, public relations is a much broader concept. Skilled publicists are experts in media relations, a sophisticated specialty that involves forming ongoing positive relationships with media gatekeepers.

Publicists act as conduits for information flowing from an organization to a public through the use of mass media so that the public understand, sympathize with, and are favorably predisposed toward the organization. *Publicity* is a broad term that refers to the publication of news about an organization for which print space or broadcast time is not purchased, such as is the case with advertising. Unlike advertising, which is a controlled tactic, publicity is uncontrolled. Although a publicist can attempt to place a very different story than what actually appears in the media, as opposed to advertising, news media in the form of stories appear to be a third-party endorsement by the media organization.

Much of the information in the media originates from public relations sources, particularly those generated by the role of publicist. Good publicists become a trusted source to media gatekeepers, earn a reputation of accessibility and honesty, and know their topics well. They are keen at what makes news and develop messages that are purposefully planned, executed, and distributed through selected media to further the particular interest of their organization or client. Publicists know when journalists are on deadline, thoroughly understand the editorial profile of the particular media they are targeting, and are familiar with the work of the journalists they are contacting.

Publicists write a variety of public relations tactics, including news releases, feature stories, backgrounders, position papers, biographies, fact sheets, and media advisories. They produce press kits, write pitch letters, and make pitch calls and work with many different media gatekeepers, including city editors, feature editors, section editors, assignment directors, radio news directors, and television

producers. Moreover, publicists are astute at managing online newsrooms for their organizations and clients. They work with media directories, know the editorial calendars of publications that interest them, and subscribe to clipping services so they can track coverage.

In general, practitioners in the public relations practice use publicity as just one of the many tools in the communication step of the public relations process, but there are certain fields where publicists can be found in abundance. For instance, they are commonly found in government and entertainment-related industries. Publicists working primarily for government institutions or agencies are called public information officers. Publicity also plays a large part in the entertainment industry. An entire field of journalists reports on the expansive world of entertainment to satisfy their public's interest. Publicists in the entertainment field focus their time on gaining coverage for their clients, attractions, or organizations. They prepare press materials and pitch stories to media gatekeepers. They work with feature editors of metropolitan newspapers, associate editors of magazines, assignment editors of television news shows, producers of television programs, news directors and program directors of radio stations, and a myriad of other journalists. A skilled publicist studies the work produced by a particular journalist and the editorial environment of the publication or show in an attempt to develop an interesting angle tailored for that particular media outlet.

Four models are widely accepted to describe the evolution of public relations: the press agency or publicity model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetric model, and the two-way symmetric model. The earliest, which is the press agency or publicity model, is described as one-way communication in which truth is not an essential component. The public information model focuses on publicity, however, to the extent that disseminating truthful information is central to the practice. The two-way asymmetrical model tries to persuade and relies on feedback from stakeholders. On the other hand, the two-way symmetric model is considered the most sophisticated form of practice because it focuses on mutual understanding, mediation, and two-way balanced flow of information.

Press agency is closely associated with publicity in the entertainment world. Press agency is the

practice of attracting the attention of the press through techniques that manufacture news. Methods associated with press agency include staged events, publicity stunts, faux rallies or gatherings, spinning, and hype. A common practice in the late 1800s and early 1900s, press agency is not part of mainstream public relations. Rather, it is a practice primarily associated with major entertainment-related events, such as Hollywood premieres and boxing matches. The goal of press agency is to attract attention rather than gain understanding. Even today, however, the term *press agent* is sometimes used interchangeably with *publicist* in traditional Broadway theater and motion picture industries. Today's entertainment industries are populated with publicists rather than press agents. Publicists are individuals skilled in media relations and they attempt to get the name of their clients or events in the media by carefully constructing messages that inform, educate, and persuade. Some are astute in branding and positioning strategies to aid the careers and success of their clients. On the other hand, press agents want attention—good or bad—in most any form.

Press agency has been called persuasion for short-term advantage, through the use of truth bending and even distortion, but it can also be simply the staging of provocative acts to get publicity and draw attention to an individual, event, or cause. Therefore, it is understandable that one of the earliest proponents of press agency was Phineas Taylor (P. T.) Barnum, the famed American showman and promoter who put Gen. Tom Thumb on exhibit and launched a mobile circus featuring Jumbo the elephant and freak shows. Barnum was a master of press agency. For instance, he wrote letters under an assumed name both praising and criticizing his circus show to newspapers.

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See also Bernays, Edward; Entertainment Industry Publicity/Promotion; Lucky Strike Green Campaign; Media Relations; Press Agency; Promotion; Publicity

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PUBLICITY

Publicity involves using communication to make an entity publicly known. Seeking publicity is the opposite of maintaining privacy. The term is used to describe both the outcome of a communication effort (e.g., “newspaper publicity”) and the process of obtaining coverage (“doing publicity”). A professional who conducts publicity work is a publicist.

Communication Strategy

Today publicity is considered a major communication strategy used in public relations generally associated with obtaining coverage in the news and entertainment portions of mass media—newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. Numerous tactics can be used to attain publicity, such as distributing news releases. However, publicity can involve dissemination of information in any medium, including newer online and mobile media. Whereas advertising requires purchasing time or space, publicity does not involve paying a fee for exposure. Instead, media personnel share the information because of its informational value to audiences.

Types

Publicity about an organization, product, service, personality, or cause can be generated by the entity or by others interested in the entity’s activities. Publicity can be favorable or unfavorable. *Controlled publicity* (such as the typical personnel announcement) is internally generated and almost always favorable. *Compromised publicity* originates from an entity, but can turn unfavorable

when negative comments or perspectives are added by media or others. *Corroborative publicity* is favorable and originates externally—and is especially valuable because it comes from an ostensibly independent third-party source. *Countervailing publicity* is unfavorable and originated externally—and can include attacks, criticisms, or other detrimental information.

Origins

The antecedents of modern publicity include all the ways that people through the centuries shared news and information—tribal drums, stone tablets, papyrus leaflets, and printed handbills. Publicity activities began to rely on public media with the advent of the newspaper (circa 1620). The first news release dates to 1758.

Modern publicity emerged in the mid-1800s with techniques pioneered by Amos Kendall to promote the American presidency, by P. T. Barnum to promote the American circus, and by the railroads to promote the American West. The first corporate publicity department was established by Westinghouse in 1889. Meanwhile, the first public relations consulting firm (The Publicity Bureau in Boston) opened in 1900. Public relations pioneer Ivy Lee famously referred to his work as publicity, a term that was widely used to describe public relations prior to World War II.

Importance

Today, publicity is considered a mundane aspect of public relations work. However, publicity is vital to public relations because awareness, knowledge, and favorable predispositions are all prerequisites to forming relationships, shaping behavioral intent, and gaining acceptance. Publicity is described as one of four models for how public relations is practiced and serves as a critical element in each of the major purposes when public relations is practiced over time: profit, recruitment, legitimacy, agitation, and advocacy.

Publicity as Persuasion

Publicity Versus Propaganda

Publicity has generally fallen out of favor as a term because of its close association with

propaganda and *persuasion*. Propaganda usually involves messages controlled by the sender and riddled with lies or half-truths. The source is usually not identified, and audiences have limited access to other information. By contrast, effective publicity must be truthful because it is subject to the scrutiny of third-party gatekeepers who distribute it and by audiences exposed to competing perspectives. Entities seeking publicity for legitimate purposes usually want their names and activities to be identified prominently.

Persuasion and Influence

Clearly publicity is a form of persuasion, which is defined generally as the use of communication to influence the thoughts and behavior of others. Similar to other persuasive strategies like speechmaking, publicity attempts to influence people's knowledge, attitudes and/or actions. These represent the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of human behavior. Publicity contributes to persuasion efforts primarily by creating salience (awareness) and credibility, and by providing more varied and detailed information than included in advertising on the same topic. Importantly, responses to publicity vary widely based on an audience member's involvement in and knowledge of the topic. This limits publicity's ability to manipulate people. Publicity operates in a highly competitive environment; therefore, publicists must be diligent to enhance the motivation, ability, and opportunities for audiences to process their messages.

Negative Publicity

Publicity messages that focus on a risky or undesirable aspect of a topic can be especially powerful because people are psychologically vigilant and invoke autonomic physiological responses when confronted with danger. Negative publicity can validate beliefs and result in heightened effects if it resonates with prior negative experiences. However, people tend to discount or dismiss negative publicity that directly contradicts personal experience—until mounting evidence prompts them to reexamine their judgments.

Organizational Strategies

Publicity Seeking and Avoidance

Many organizations proactively seek publicity by establishing public relations departments or retaining consultants. Incessant publicity-seekers (especially personalities) are pejoratively referred to as *publicity hounds*. By contrast, other entities avoid the public limelight because they are shy or think publicity is detrimental. Generally, however, avoiding publicity leads to distrust, misinformation, and missed opportunities to make an entity's position known on important matters.

Purposes

Publicity is used to (1) signal an entity's planned activities to constituents and markets; (2) articulate an organization's values, goals, and positions on issues; (3) stimulate stakeholder behaviors that contribute to revenues or performance goals—such as buying, investing, donating, voting, or working; (4) manage the entity's reputation; and (5) create a record of the entity's activities or establish its place in history. For organizations with limited financial resources, publicity is often used in lieu of more costly forms of promotion, such as advertising.

Publicity and Marketing

Marketers describe product publicity as a component in the promotion mix (which also includes personal selling, advertising, and sales promotion/direct response). Integrated marketing communication campaigns usually launch with publicity as a means to capture free (unpaid) exposure and to capitalize on the inherent newsworthiness of a new product or service before it becomes old news. Publicity primes audiences with ideas and insights about products and services and thus facilitates recognition and learning of subsequent promotion messages. Advertising typically follows publicity and is deployed to broaden awareness, create desire, and ideally prompt action through repeated exposure. Direct response and sales promotion are added to facilitate or encourage purchase behavior.

People consistently report they prefer to read about product and services as news. But only people with high levels of involvement typically

read publicity articles or watch videos about a particular topic—unless there is another reason to do so (such as the presence of a celebrity or a link-age to another topic of interest). Evidence suggests people process publicity differently from advertising by employing different cognitive rules for assessing arguments. Thus, audiences might let down their guard against persuasion attempts while processing publicity compared to advertising. Importantly, evidence questions the much-touted claim that publicity carries an implied third-party endorsement effect.

Since the 1980s, differentiating publicity from advertising is muddled with the emergence of hybrid messages that appear to be news or entertainment, but actually are product promotion messages. Examples include paid product placements in movies, TV shows, and electronic games; advertorials in magazines and newspapers; infomercials on late-night television and on cable networks; and video news releases. The confusion is compounded with the advent of websites, apps, blogs, shared videos, and other online communications that are not clearly advertising or publicity.

Publicity and Public Affairs

Publicity plays a vital role in politics and public policy. Many political entities—governments, politicians, and advocacy groups—seek publicity as a means to influence public opinion, which can be defined as the collective beliefs and values related to political matters among citizens, voters, opinion leaders, lawmakers, and/or public officials. Publicity is used by advocates in the agenda-building process to create visibility for particular issues and problems and, more specifically, support for a particular position on the issue.

Media effects research about the agenda-setting function of the press demonstrates high correlations between topics that receive the most attention in the media and those that members of the public say are on their minds or that they talk about with family and friends. Not surprisingly, publicity contributes to public dialogue and debate about important issues—essential processes in a democratic society. Research suggests that the media, public policy, and public discussion agenda are interconnected and that attention in one arena improves chances of discussion in the others.

Although publicity is sought by all types of political entities, the term is generally avoided in government based on a 1913 prohibition (Gillett Amendment) against the unauthorized use of publicity and propaganda by federal agencies. Politicians and issues advocates commonly refer to publicity as free media (versus paid media). Similarly, publicity is conducted by staff with titles like public information officers, public affairs officer, or press secretary.

Publicity and Culture

Publicity plays a critical role in the creation and preservation of culture—the system of beliefs, values, ideas, tradition, and mores found in a society or community. Publicity helps construct social reality, the worldviews shared among individuals and groups. In doing so, publicists act as rhetors and rely on culturally significant media symbols, words, images, and sounds. Through story-telling narratives, they create a persona (personality or position) for an entity by crafting an image and giving the entity a voice through the use of the argumentation, evidence, emotion, and figurative language. The power of publicity is best evidenced in fads, or the sharp, but ephemeral rise in public interest in a particular product, service, fashion, or entertainment offering.

Publicity plays an essential role in promoting popular culture fare, and the term *publicist* continues to be used widely to describe practitioners whose task is to create excitement and build audiences for movies, TV shows, music, theatrical productions, and books. In a similar way, indirect exposure through media previews and reviews by critics is a primary way that many people are exposed to the great ideas and serious works of creative expression found in a culture—painting, sculpture, dance, symphonic and chamber music, theater, and fiction and nonfiction books.

Role in Mass Media

Reliance on Publicity

Sources are critical players in today's global public information system and supply more than 40% of the content found in modern mass media. Publicists and media personnel are mutually dependent on one another and engage in exchanges

where content is traded for exposure. Media relations (a specialty within publicity) fundamentally involves negotiating access to audiences by publicists and to sources by media personnel. Publicity materials often represent content that might not otherwise be accessible to media and are termed *information subsidies* that reduce the costs (workload and expenses) incurred by media organizations in producing news and entertainment.

Techniques

Three basic techniques are used to generate publicity; the numerous tactics used in publicity are all variations on these ideas. The most widely used technique is to produce materials that can be used by media essentially as provided, with a minimum of editing. Examples include news and feature stories, bylined articles, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, photo features, graphical charts and infographics, videos, and audio tracks. The second (and most effective) technique is to provide a spokesperson who can tell an entity's story in an informative and engaging way through one-on-one interviews or group interviews (such as news/media conferences). Finally, entities can stage events where reporters and bloggers are invited to report on the activities, interview participants, and share their personal reactions through images and words. Examples include grand openings, premieres, speeches and presentations, celebratory observances, demonstrations and rallies, and sporting events. Publicity stunts are clever events created specifically for the purpose of generating media coverage.

Keys to Success

Effective publicity involves (1) determining what's newsworthy and interesting to media and their audiences, (2) understanding specific media genres and story structures, (3) adhering to the conventions of storytelling applicable to the genre and medium, and (4) recognizing the constraints (such as deadlines) under which media operate.

Regulation

Ethics

Publicity activities are governed by ethical standards established at the societal, organizational,

professional, and individual levels. These include, but are not limited to public expectations about truthfulness and fairness, organizational policies dealing with disclosure of information, and professional standards focused on maintaining public trust and social responsibility.

In the United States, publicity activities are protected against governmental prior restraint under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as a form of freedom of speech. However, the manner in which publicity is conducted can be regulated consistent with government's authority to oversee activities in which it has a compelling state interest and is mandated to protect the public. Publicists must especially avoid deceptive claims, inadequate disclosures in investor relations, unfair labor communications practices, and the use of discriminatory language in communications pertaining to employment, banking, and housing. Various other specific requirements might apply to organizations in particular industries or endeavors.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Fact Sheet; Feature; Media Relations; Media Release; Pitch Letter; Press Agency; Puffery; Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders

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PUBLICLY HELD COMPANIES

A publicly held company is one whose stock is owned and traded by the public. A company becomes publicly held through an initial public offering (IPO) of securities in compliance with the registration requirements of the Securities and Exchange Act of 1933 (“the 1933 Act”) as well as applicable state laws. Companies “go public” to raise money for working capital, research and development, new business ventures, or debt retirement. Additionally, a corporation may become publicly held to improve shareholder liquidity, boost the firm’s marketplace profile, or to improve its chances of attracting and retaining qualified personnel. On the other hand, an IPO is an expensive and time-consuming experience that subjects the company to state and federal filing and disclosure requirements, exposes management to increased personal liability for corporate actions, and results in a loss of corporate flexibility and control.

Public relations practitioners who represent organizations that intend to go public must be aware that Section 5(c) of the 1933 Act prohibits companies from offering stock before filing a detailed registration statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The 1933 Act defines an “offer” broadly as any “attempt or offer to dispose of, or solicitation of an offer to buy, a security or interest in a security, for value” (15 U.S.C. §77b[3]). A company that issues a press release about an intended public offering before a registration statement is filed, for example, is likely to be making an illegal offer to sell an unregistered security. Although public relations practitioners can continue to provide product-based information and engage in regular communication activities during this prefiling period, care must be taken to avoid what the SEC calls “conditioning the market” by generating publicity that arouses interest in the company’s securities.

After the registration statement is filed, the SEC imposes a waiting period during which the company must refrain from advertising its shares or otherwise offering them for sale except pursuant to a preliminary prospectus that complies with the requirements of Section 10 of the 1933 Act. This “quiet period” is designed to give potential investors time to familiarize themselves with the detailed information disclosed in the registration process. After the SEC declares the registration statement effective, the registered securities can be bought and sold legally.

While the 1933 Act regulates primarily the initial issuance of securities, the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934 (“the 1934 Act”) regulates the subsequent trading of those securities. Pursuant to the 1934 Act, most public companies must file annual, quarterly, and current reports with the SEC about their operations. Especially relevant for public relations practitioners are the 1934 Act requirements that public companies provide an annual report to shareholders and conduct a yearly shareholder meeting where shareholders elect the board of directors and vote on corporate policy proposals, including proposals submitted by shareholders. Shareholders who cannot attend the annual meeting can vote by proxy. Under the 1934 Act, shareholders must be furnished with proxy statements that disclose all-important facts about matters to be voted on at shareholders’ meetings.

SEC Rule 10b-5 requires a public company to make full and timely public disclosure of all material information that could affect an investor’s decision to purchase, sell, or hold the company’s stock. Companies that knowingly make false or misleading statements of a material nature commit securities fraud. Furthermore, any corporate insider (including public relations representatives) who knowingly disseminates a false or materially misleading press release or other corporate communication is also liable for fraud. Ignorance is no defense—public relations practitioners are expected to conduct a “reasonable investigation” to determine if statements made in corporate communications are, in fact, true. State “blue-sky” laws also prohibit fraud in connection with the sale of securities.

In 2000, the SEC adopted Regulation FD (Fair Disclosure), which provides that if a company intentionally discloses material nonpublic information to securities analysts or selected shareholders,

it must also simultaneously release that information to the general public by means of an SEC filing, a press release, a teleconference, or a Webcast. According to the SEC, the rule is meant to eliminate a company's ability to give certain brokerage firms or institutional investors an unfair marketplace advantage by informing them of material information before communicating it to the investing public.

Rule 10b-5 also prohibits insider trading, which is the purchase or sale of company stock by corporate insiders who have access to material information that is not publicly available. Company officials, including public relations staffs, must refrain from purchasing stock in their own or anyone else's name until such inside information is disseminated fully to the public. Furthermore, corporate insiders are also guilty of securities fraud if they "tip" family members or friends by passing them nonpublic material information to enable them to trade in the company's stock. In this situation, the "tippee" may also be liable for fraud.

In response to financial scandals like Enron, Congress passed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 ("the 2002 Act"), which imposes additional disclosure and certification requirements on public companies and their officers. Notably, the 2002 Act requires all public companies to have independent audit committees, to adopt a code of ethics for senior financial officers, and to include in each annual report an assessment of management's financial reporting practices. The chief executive and chief financial officers of public companies must personally certify the accuracy of the information contained in their annual and other financial reports. Furthermore, corporate attorneys must report evidence of material violations of federal securities laws to company officials, the audit committee, or the board of directors.

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See also Annual Reports; Investor Relations; Material Information; Securities and Exchange Commission

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PUBLICS

Publics are specific groups of people who are linked by a common interest or problem. Researchers believe there is no such thing as a "general public." Strategic public relations manages relationships with key publics on whom the success of the organization depends. Such publics are specific and more easily identified than a nebulous, general public. Most organizations have a diverse set of publics derived from what an organization does and whom it affects. Some of these publics require constant and long-range relationships, whereas others exist as temporary and short-term relationships.

Public relations is managed strategically when it is designed to build and maintain relationships with the publics most crucial to the success of the organization. The key to effective public relations is systematically identifying key publics and appropriately prioritizing these publics according to the situation. James E. Grunig and Fred Repper (1992) defined three stages in the strategic management of public relations: the stakeholder stage, the public stage, and the issue stage. Following this framework, publics can be identified in three ways: relationship to the organization (stakeholder stage), relationship to the situation (public stage), and relationship to the public relations strategy (issue stage).

Relationship to the Organization

Publics' relationships to the organization are usually identified with a stakeholder analysis. J. E. Grunig and Repper defined a stakeholder as "people who are linked to an organization because they and the organization have consequences on each other" (1992, p. 125). One approach to identifying stakeholder publics is to consider how they are "linked" to the organization. J. E. Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) used a linkage model to identify

stakeholder relationships to organizations. The resulting model has four linkages that identify stakeholder relationships to an organization: enabling linkages, functional linkages, diffused linkages, and normative linkages.

Enabling and Functional Linkages

Enabling linkages are those that allow organizations to exist, such as relationships with government regulators and legislators. Enabling linkages identify stakeholders who have some control over the organization, such as stockholders, board of directors, regulators, finance firms, and so on. When enabling relationships falter, resources can be withdrawn and the autonomy of the organization restricted.

Functional linkages are those that allow the organization to function, by providing resources, such as labor or raw materials. Functional linkages include employees, suppliers, contractors, distributors, and so forth. Functional stakeholders are essential to the day-to-day operations of any organization.

Organizations must maintain frequent communication with enabling and functional linkages to develop healthy, long-term relationships because the stakeholders in these linkages can have immediate consequences on the autonomy of the organization.

Normative and Diffused Linkages

Normative linkages are associations or groups with which the organization has a common interest. Stakeholders with a normative linkage to an organization share similar values, goals, or problems. Many organizations belong to professional associations made up of competitors or peers, who maintain normative linkages to collectively address problems.

Diffused linkages are those in which the organization must respond to sporadic publics like activists or special interest groups. Stakeholders belonging to the diffused linkage often identify themselves when the organization does something that affects them, in which case they become an active public. These publics include members of the community, the media, voters, and others that organize to face a problem. Diffused publics are usually episodic and their relationship to the organization is often temporary.

Communication and interaction with the diffused and normative linkages are less frequent and tend to focus on short-term relationships, crises, industry challenges, or activist situations, such as a boycott.

Relationship to the Situation

Publics organize from among the ranks of stakeholders when they recognize a problem and decide to do something to seek redress. According to John Dewey (1927), a public is a group of people who face a similar problem, recognize the problem, and organize themselves to do something about the problem. Dewey explained a *public* as a group that evolves around a situation.

Building on the Dewey definition of a public, J. E. Grunig developed a situational theory of publics to segment them based on active or passive communication behavior. Those publics who do not face a problem are *nonpublics*, those who face the problem, but do not recognize it as problematic are *latent publics*, those who recognize the problem are *aware publics*, and those who do something about the problem are *active publics*.

By breaking down publics according to their perceived relationship to an issue, communication messages can be presented in a clearer manner and strategies become more precisely targeted. By that reasoning, latent publics need more information about the issue to help them recognize the problem. Aware publics with high constraint recognition need information about how they can become involved and make a difference. Active publics seek information and are predisposed to act, so the strategy should focus on two-way communication strategies that involve the publics in the issue.

Relationship to the Strategy or Tactic

When publics have organized, the issue stage begins. In this stage, public relations managers engage in issues management to collect data on the extent of the problem and to develop strategies for remedying the issue. According to Laurie Wilson (2008), there are three types of publics to consider when developing public relations strategies: target publics, intervening publics, and influentials.

The publics whose participation and cooperation are required to accomplish organizational goals are target publics. Target publics can be profiled by

their demographics, lifestyles, values, media preferences, influentials, and self-interests. Intervening publics pass information on to the target publics and act as opinion leaders. Sometimes these publics, such as the media, are erroneously identified as target publics. Influentials can be intervening publics, but they also affect the success of efforts in other ways. Influentials can either support an organization's efforts or work against them. The opinion of personal sources is much more influential than public relations messages alone. Therefore, successful campaigns must also consider how messages are interpreted by influentials that act as either intervening or supporting publics.

Segmentation of Publics

Careful segmentation of publics helps a public relations program reach only those who care about the issue or message, at the appropriate information and education level to be understood. This strategic approach prevents waste incurred by spending funds on publics who care little about the issue at hand. Employed symmetrically, the concept of publics is an essential element of building and maintaining relationships with those groups most vital to the organization.

Shannon A. Bowen and Brad L. Rawlins

See also Excellence Theory; Issues Management; Situational Theory of Publics; Stakeholder Theory; Symmetry

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PUFFERY

Puffery is the use of unsubstantiated praise or vague or implied claims in advertising, publicity, and other forms of promotional communication. The claims are intended to enhance the attributes of the subject and often take the form of exaggerations (e.g., “whiter than white” and “miracle cleaner”), superlatives (e.g., “best,” “ultimate,” “tastiest,” and “sexiest”), vague adjectives (e.g., “brilliant,” “amazing,” “exceptional,” and “great”), or opinions, which may not be attributed to anyone. From a legal standpoint, a distinguishing characteristic of puffery is that it consists of statements of value or opinion, not of fact. The attributes claimed are impossible to measure, confirm, or deny because they are a matter of taste or individual judgment.

Puffery is associated with the early press-agentry tactics of public relations, such as P. T. Barnum's classic slogan to promote his circus, “the greatest show on earth.” Although puffery continues to be an accepted and ubiquitous practice in advertising, its use in public relations is widely denounced within the field today. It is viewed as amateurish and ineffective because it sacrifices long-term credibility for short-term public attention. Many journalists immediately disregard publicity pitches that rely on puffery rather than factual information. The continued use of puffery in public relations contributes to a negative image of public relations practitioners as “flacks.”

Legal and Ethical Implications

The United States Federal Trade Commission (FTC) permits the use of puffery in promoting products, services, and ideas. Promotional materials, such as press kits, videos, brochures, and other collateral, are viewed as vehicles of commercial trade and subject to regulation by the FTC. Although there may appear to be a fine line between puffery and deceptive advertising, there are legal distinctions. U.S. courts repeatedly upheld the legality of puffery. The courts' rationale is that it should be expected that “any seller will express a favorable opinion concerning what he has to sell; and when he praises it in general terms . . . buyers are expected to and do understand that they are not entitled to rely literally upon the words” (*Restatement of the Law of Torts*

48, 1965, para. 542). Guidelines created by the FTC to define deceptive advertising exclude puffery, noting, "The commission generally will not bring advertising cases based on subjective claims, such as taste, feel, appearance or smell" (*FTC Policy Statement on Deceptive Acts and Practices*, 1983).

Puffery becomes deceptive only when it falsely claims the substantive superiority of a product or service, and when it can be demonstrated that the false claim is likely to affect consumer choices. The law pertaining to false advertising under Section 43(a) of the Lanham Act requires that plaintiffs demonstrate that the ad or promotion is either literally false or that it is likely to mislead and confuse consumers. To prove that it is misleading, the plaintiff must introduce empirical evidence of the statement's impact on consumers. The bottom line: As long as claims are so vague or subjective that they cannot be directly tested or substantiated, they are considered puffery and are legal. Puffery cannot be false representation, because it does not include statements of fact.

In a 2001 case involving two U.S. pizza chains, Pizza Hut sued Papa John's, claiming its slogan, "Better Ingredients. Better Pizza," was false advertising. The Fifth Circuit Court ruled that the slogan was mere puffery, a vague expression of opinion. In addition, the court ruled that Pizza Hut provided insufficient evidence to show that consumers purchased Papa John's pizza because they believed the company used better ingredients. However, Papa John's was ordered to stop making more specific claims about the superiority of its dough and sauce. Because these were material, measurable claims, they were not considered puffery and were unprotected if not substantiated.

There are other legal considerations related to puffery that are of concern to public relations practitioners. Statements of puffery in advertising and promotional materials may unintentionally create express warranties that can leave a company vulnerable to consumer lawsuits. Agencies and individual practitioners may be legally liable if it can be shown that they participated in the production or dissemination of a statement that they knew, or should have known, was false or misleading. For publicly traded companies, puffery may present a potential conflict with securities laws that require companies to accurately report all information that might influence investors.

The Public Relations Society of America's Code of Professional Standards does not address puffery per se; however, its statement of professional values notes that "we adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public" (Public Relations Society of America, 2003, p. B16). Similarly, the American Association of Advertising Agencies' Creative Code (2011) states, "we will not knowingly create advertising that contains false or misleading statements or exaggerations, visual or verbal . . . [or] claims insufficiently supported."

Ivan Preston, a leading authority on the topic of puffery, as well as other scholars and consumer advocates, attacked puffery from ethical and legal standpoints and called for changes to address the legal loophole presented by puffery cases. Preston (1996) argued that puffery is, in fact, deceptive, because it causes consumers to more highly appraise the attributes of products and the importance of those attributes. Inflated expectations of the product's performance may in turn influence purchasing decisions. Targeting puffery to vulnerable populations, such as children or the elderly, raises particular ethical concerns.

Avoiding Puffery in Public Relations Writing

Public relations textbooks and the trade press discourage the use of puffery in public relations writing. Instead, media releases and other press materials should closely model the objective tone, factual substance, and concise characteristics of journalistic style. Adjectives praising a product or service and product claims should be substantiated or encapsulated in quotes from an identified source. Practitioners should also check for industry-specific guidelines for language use issued by the FTC, including those for the dietary supplement industry, website operators, home study courses, and environmental claims. Certain words, such as "new," "recyclable," and "biodegradable," may only be used if the product meets FTC guidelines for those words (Wilcox, Ault, Agee, & Cameron, 2001, p. 236).

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See also Barnum, P. T.; Press Agency; Spin

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PYRAMID STYLE

The pyramid style is used by journalists when writing news stories and public relations practitioners when writing media releases and other pieces. Using this format, the most important information goes at the top of the story and the least important information goes at the bottom. This way, readers obtain the information they need even if they read only the first part of the piece.

Pyramid style is used for media releases so no critical information is lost if an editor cuts the release from the bottom, just as an editor may cut news stories to prepare them for publication. The first paragraph or two of the media release should be able to stand alone and tell the story.

In a media release, the pyramid begins with the most important part, the “lead,” which states the main purpose of the release. Once the news angle is clearly stated, the writer shows why the information

is significant to the audience. An editor should be able to read these first few lines and determine why the information is newsworthy—or why the media release should be thrown away.

The lead is followed by the “five Ws” used by journalists—who, what, where, when, and why—that were not already addressed. At this point, the release should stand on its own without additional details, if necessary. The audience has all the information it needs to pursue the topic.

As the pyramid works its way to the bottom, it is time to add additional information on the subject of the media release; this information expands on and complements the facts already presented. This section ranges from one sentence to several paragraphs. If the release has not already included information on how the readers—not the media—can get more information on the topic, this information is included here.

The release ends with the organization’s boilerplate. This optional component is a one- or two-line description of the organization’s mission—what it does, why it exists. It may also include information on the organization’s product lines, history, or market standing. The boilerplate should be consistent for every release regardless of the topic.

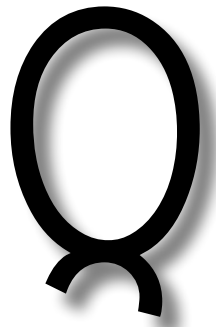
The pyramid writing style is used for pieces other than media releases. For example, each entry in this encyclopedia is written in pyramid style. Just as an editor may read only the first few lines of a media release, readers of this book may not read each entry in its entirety. Therefore, each entry begins with a definition of the topic, an explanation of why it is important, and basic information. The topic is then more fully discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

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See also Media Release

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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research is conceptualized and designed to provide in-depth information on a research theme or topic. Such information is expected to provide insights that are unachievable with quantitative research. But critics of qualitative research reason that it is too subjective and lacks quantifiable grounding.

Qualitative research is employed as both formative and evaluative research (e.g., at the beginning and end of public relations campaigns), and is often used in marketing research, test marketing, and political campaigns. In fact, it is difficult to conceive of modern public relations efforts that do not involve some component of qualitative research, often in conjunction with quantitative research.

Robert Yin (2003) discussed qualitative research as having the primary strength of being able to answer questions of why or how something happens. That approach can be contrasted with quantitative research that answers the questions to what extent, how much, how often, and so on, indicating a difference in the generalizability of data. In research firms, qualitative data are often sought to explain or gain greater insight into the “why” to explain statistical findings. Combining qualitative and quantitative data is called mixed methods, and can result in more explanatory and reliable findings because of the large amount of both statistical and detailed data available to understand the topic.

Qualitative research employs many data-gathering methodologies, such as case study, historical analysis, secondary (e.g., library or industry) research, focus groups, interviewing, participant observation, text and document analysis, semiotics and proxemics, and ethnography. A methodology often associated with qualitative research is content analysis, but its inclusion as a qualitative method has been questioned by some, who argue that it is a quantitative method. Based on public relations use, it is considered a mixed method of research.

Qualitative research has a rich theoretical tradition that emerged from anthropology and sociology, especially the sociology of the so-called Chicago School of researchers. Researchers used extensive participant observation and interviewing techniques to gain understanding on everything from the class systems in society to organizational hierarchies and various subcultures. They gave qualitative research a rich theoretical backing in symbolic interactionism, conflict theory, labeling theory, or grounded theory as a means to viewing situations, constructing questions, and the context driving the qualitative studies. Psychologists and organizational psychologists contributed to the use of qualitative methods by probing motivation, attitude formation, and behavioral change.

Organizational communication theorists applied these methods to understanding communication and behavior among workers, managers/supervisors, and between both categories of organization members. Such analysis is used by public relations scholars to understand why and how

communication takes place between organizations and publics. In public relations, it is used to gain insights into organizational reputations and to better understand the publics with whom organizations interact.

Advantages and Challenges

For public relations professionals, qualitative research provides important advantages over its quantitative counterpart. First, the data are rich; they provide an in-depth understanding of a person, organization, event, or other research object.

Second, data gathered are not impersonal facts; they are value-based. All research methods address questions of definition, but qualitative methods are best at answering questions of value and policy. “How well did the company’s standards of corporate social responsibility [value] compare with those of key stakeholders? Should the policies [policy] or standards be rethought, abandoned, or continued unchanged?” Quantitative methods are best at answering questions of fact and may address questions of value as population norms, usually reported in broad percentages (“56% support tax cuts”).

Third, qualitative research can be less expensive to conduct than quantitative research, because quantitative methods look at large numbers of people whereas qualitative methods examine a small number. The quantitative survey may require 400 or more people to answer questions, whereas focused and in-depth interviews may concentrate on only a few persons. Sometimes, the population examined is quite small, but relatively homogeneous. Physicians are a case in point; the same is true for influencers and decision makers who purchase oilfield technologies and services.

Fourth, qualitative methods work best when practitioners need to conduct environmental scanning or monitoring in relation to a specific issue or public relations opportunity or threat. In-depth qualitative research allows patterns to come to light that may not be readily apparent. For example, participant observation documents behaviors from a lengthy observation, noting the power relations among members of a community and in regard to the company sponsoring the research. This type of examination can reveal patterns, meaning construction, and other factors needed to be alert to possible

problems in procedures, organizational structure, or the chain of communication.

For all of the advantages offered by qualitative research, data gathered by this method are limited to the quality of the interpretation. The data are tied to the specific situation in which they were gathered, meaning the results cannot be generalized to a different situation with any degree of confidence. This restriction is important, because misuse of qualitative research occurs most often either when data gathered for a case study are applied to a “similar” situation or when findings are taken out of context. For these reasons, in order to support the other’s strengths and augment the weaknesses, the ideal situation is to use both qualitative and quantitative data.

Bias is one of many problems researchers encounter. In the case of quantitative research, bias may find its way into the design of the study and the questions used to generate data. That problem may also be true for qualitative studies, moreover, analysis is also subject to researcher interpretations that often reflect biases.

Qualitative Methods

Several qualitative methods are used to gather data. Each method presented as follows can be a stand-alone method to collect data or used in conjunction with another method to collect data.

Historical and Secondary Research

Historical and secondary research are closely related. Historical method is found in almost all fields, but is considered a qualitative method when the end result is the gathering of historical facts and figures (often this occurs during the definitional stage of a research project). Historical data, for instance, may be vital to understanding the causes for a crisis. Comparative historical studies can be employed to determine whether different responses for similar types of studies were more or less effective and ethical.

Secondary research is learning what one can from sources, such as documents and archives. Historical/secondary research can be broken into two complementary parts: strict data gathering and rhetorical analysis.

Case Studies

The case study is an in-depth look at an organization, event, issue or topic, or public relations campaign. It is specific to a particular problem, occasion, or opportunity, and the researcher often uses historical and secondary methods in addition to other qualitative methods (such as interviews) in constructing the case. The case is simply a topic, organization, or issue under study. Subjects that help the researcher understand the case are usually called informants. Informants may provide formal interviews, documents, informal insights, or simply let the researcher observe their day-to-day interactions. This methodology also applies to developing strategies and testing them to understand the discourse basis for responses, programs, and reactions. This approach can, for instance, shed light on how publics construct opinions and develop responses to corporate activities.

Interviews

An interview asks questions and thereby generates data in the participant's own words. A participant is asked a series of questions designed to gain information from an individual about themselves personally, or about events, or other things. The interview is controlled largely by interviewers, who have, through historical/secondary research, done background research on the intended topic. An interview schedule or questionnaire is then used to ensure that all relevant questions are answered and subsequent probe or extended questions are sometimes employed and the interviewee's responses are recorded for later analysis.

Long Interviews

These interviews occur over a long period of time, or successive interviews, generally culminating in more than 3 hours of interview time for each participant. The goal of long interviews is to allow a lengthy enough time to discuss numerous subjects in detail for a full understanding of a complex organization or topic.

In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews delve very deeply into one specific subject, such as ethics. Unrelated subjects

may be touched on tangentially, but in-depth interviews seek detailed understanding of one phenomenon, issue, or topic.

Dyad and Triad Interviews

These interviews include two or three people who have a commonality and discuss an issue together. For example, the three public relations professionals who manage an oil spill crisis together may be interviewed in a triadic interview. Doing so captures their collective understanding of situations often yielding more complete data than individual interviews.

Elite Interviews

These interviews seek to capture the understandings of those at the very apex of an organization or an issue, such as a CEO, a president, or a chief communication officer. Elite interviews are exceptionally rare because they are difficult to attain. The limited amount of access to most elites by researchers, and the constraints on the time and availability of elites lead to very few elite interviews being conducted. Despite the drawbacks, elite interviews are remarkably valuable in that they provide a unique perspective from the top of an organization—that perspective normally includes a far more complex understanding than most participants offer. Data from elite interviews are correspondingly rich; therefore, these studies are often published with smaller numbers of participants or even one informant as the primary source of data.

Focus Groups

Expanding the concept of interviews to a larger group of people discussing a topic is the concept behind the focus group. Focus groups are used extensively in public relations research, marketing research, and many forms of integrated research topics. For firms in the research industry that collect data for clients, focus groups are the most common form of qualitative research conducted, and it would be unthinkable not to conduct focus groups for a major study. The focus group method of research collects information from a group of participants who focus on a specific concern, concept, or product.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is used to systematically quantify the terms, concepts, policies, or issues that occur in some form of text, such as a website, organizational policy manuals, charts of organizational structure, and so on. Although document analysis can be a stand-alone research method, it is normally used in the public relations context as a supporting method to understand a case. It differs from historical or secondary analysis because document analysis creates new, unique research—known only to the researcher—based on systematically studying the documents of an organization or client. These types of studies may help to understand the processes of an organization, to increase efficiency or simplify tasks, or to identify overlaps or gaps in communication. Various forms of charts and diagrams are employed to represent the amalgamation of data gained through document analysis.

Documents can be subjected to various kinds of textual and discursive analysis. Such analysis offers insights into perspectives that may complement one another or compete in ways that lay the basis for conflict. For instance, employees in an agency might be asked to make statements and those statements are compared to the policies and procedures of the organization to determine the employees' sense of power concentration and distribution. It can reveal standards of professionalism and determine whether employees believe that performance biases occur because of gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual preference.

Shannon A. Bowen

See also Content Analysis; Evaluative Research; Focus Group; Formative Research; Gender and Public Relations; Identity Theory; Interview as a Research Tool; Power, as Social Construction; Quantitative Research; Race and Public Relations; Situation Analysis; Theory-Based Practice

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QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research is almost always associated with the formal evaluation of numbers. That is, quantitative research is something that extends from the physical sciences to the social sciences and focuses on methods that follow certain prescribed rules for the gathering of, typically, numeric data. That said, it is important to understand that numbers by themselves have no meaning except the meaning that we establish in our theory. Quantitative research, then, focuses on research methods that allow researchers to say, with a certain degree of confidence, that something they systematically measured (via numbers) actually represents a larger number of people, or that something actually caused a change in something else.

The key to quantitative research is found in (1) measurement and (2) the collection of data in such a way that it can be reliably and validly interpreted when replicated by others. This, in turn, is found in the formal rules of quantitative research methods. These methods include survey research and experimental research, but arguments have been made to include content analysis as a formal, quantitative method. However, the majority of content-analytic studies focus on simple counts (Was a release picked up or not? Where or when was it reported?); thus, its use is more informal than formal. (It must be noted that thematic content analyses, which require a measurement item or scale for evaluation may approach the formal nature of quantitative measurement.)

The key to any quantitative method is the gathering of data via some form of measurement. Measurement is the assigning of numbers to observations in a manner that establishes validity and whose reliability can be assessed. All attempts at evaluating the attitudes, beliefs, or values of others requires the creation of some type of scale, a measure that focuses not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. Measurement scales attempt to identify how people will or have behaved, and why they behave in those ways. Once the data are gathered, it is analyzed using statistical analysis. Because the responses to stimuli questions or experimental conditions are collected as numeric data, they are submitted to descriptive and/or inferential statistical analysis. This analysis collapses the individual responses to those of the group to which the individuals belong.

Quantitative research differs significantly from qualitative research in that quantitative research methods are not concerned with individual respondents per se. Users of quantitative research are more interested in how large numbers of subjects respond to stimuli. Thus, whereas qualitative methods provide rich data, quantitative methods provide normative data that can be parsed according to demographic or psychographic differences.

Part of quantitative research involves how data are collected. Because it is impossible to follow all members of a population around or ask them questions regarding their intentions to exhibit a behavior, quantitative research samples from a population in an effort to draw conclusions from the sampling. Public relations research often surveys respondents from a given population to better understand how people feel or behave. Some sampling techniques allow for conclusions that describe only those people who might have been available at the time of data collection. Other sampling techniques allow conclusions to be drawn about the larger population from which the sample was obtained. The former sampling techniques are called *nonprobability* (or *convenience*) sampling, whereas the latter are called *probability* sampling.

Sampling also occurs in experimental research. Experimental sampling is not concerned with generalizing to a larger population. Instead, it is employed to ensure that participants are chosen in such a way as to discount any possible biases that participants bring with them to the experiment.

Survey

The dominant quantitative research method found in public relations is the survey or poll. Polls are distinguished from surveys by their length and the type of information that each attempts to obtain. Polls are very short—often comprising no more than 10 questions, including demographic or psychographic information—and last a few minutes at most. Surveys are longer, often taking over 15 minutes to complete, and attempt to delve into the reasoning behind why respondents think or act as they do. Both polls and surveys sample from a larger population.

When respondents are randomly selected from the population in such a way that any member could have participated in the study—a probability sample—the results can be generalized to that larger population. When respondents are selected due to availability or because of certain characteristics—a nonprobability sample—the results are limited in their ability to be generalized beyond those people surveyed or polled. Probability sampling allows researchers to estimate both how accurately they sampled the population and the potential for error in the measurement of respondents' answers. Nonprobability sampling, while allowing for estimates of measurement error, cannot establish sampling accuracy because the sample was not drawn at random.

There are two basic survey or poll types. The most common is the “snapshot,” wherein one set of respondents is surveyed or polled once. When researchers are interested in what people think over time, a cross-sectional survey or poll is conducted. Cross-sectional surveys or polls measure from a population at various times and allow for comparison, and are often called “longitudinal” research designs. Cross-sectional designs are of three types: trend, in which different snapshots are taken from different samples over time; panel, in which the same sample is measured at various points in time; and the cohort-trend design, which follows different groups who share certain characteristics, such as age (e.g., a yearly survey of 18-year-olds of their views on voting).

Surveys or polls can be conducted in a variety of ways. Most commonly, respondents are asked questions over the telephone. Other ways of contacting people to gather survey or poll data include physical, person-to-person contact where a formal interview is conducted; the mail questionnaire, in

which a questionnaire is printed and mailed to respondents; and the electronic (Internet or fax) method, in which questionnaires are sent to respondents via facsimile or on the Internet.

Experiments

The experiment is rarely found in public relations research. Experiments typically test theoretical relationships between concepts and are the only way that a researcher can infer that something actually caused something else to occur. Experiments are highly controlled and contrived research projects that establish, in isolation, the impact of one variable (a concept or idea that has been defined in such a way as to be potentially observable or measured) on another. Experimental variables are either measured (the dependent variable) or manipulated (the independent variable) under highly controlled circumstances. It is this control that allows the researcher to say within a certain degree of confidence that the impact of changing the independent variable caused a change in the dependent variable. Further, because of the formal nature of experimental measurement, the dependent variable's reliability and validity can be established and compared to preestablished accepted norms.

The experiment also allows very sophisticated statistical analyses to be conducted. Because of the experiment's controlled nature, the direction of and confidence in the impact of one variable on another can be estimated and presented within

those set acceptance levels (typically a 95% level of confidence that one variable caused a change in the other variable). Further, because the relationships between the variables are theoretically established, the impact of several independent variables on one or more dependent variables can also be examined.

The experiment is a very powerful research method. Its very power, however, is also a limitation. Whereas a random survey of a sample allows researchers to generalize results to the larger population, the experiment's generalizability is almost nonexistent. The experiment's need for control makes findings difficult to extend to other contexts, but it does tell us that under the same circumstances a causal relationship will exist.

Don W. Stacks

See also Experiment/Experimental Methods; Measuring/Measures; Reliability; Sampling; Scales; Statistical Analysis; Survey; Validity

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R

RACE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Race and public relations can be productive partners or roadblocks to one another in the pursuit of a fully functioning society.

Race

Race is a social construction with powerful implications for the practice and study of public relations as well as the quality of the context in which it occurs and the purposes to which it is applied. Being a social construction, race is bound by language. Subject to interpretation, it can be defined, redefined, and changed throughout time, and does not necessarily translate constructively across space, boundaries, and cultures. Such social construction is based on perceived scientific, biological differences that have myriad power and relationship consequences.

Throughout history, people have used phenotypes or physical characteristics—which include but are not limited to hair texture, shape of nose, and skin pigmentation—to create classification systems that are used to functionally categorize humans. However, “attempts to employ racial classifications for humans based on scientific criteria have foundered because they were too rigid to account for the tremendous variation within different races” (Scupin, 2006, p. 156). Clearly bounded, racially distinct populations do not exist—cannot be found in the world. Yet despite the scientific evidence discounting the biological

demarcation of race(s), it remains a powerful, unifying or divisive social construct that has implications for the practice and discipline of public relations—and the identities and quality of life of individuals and societies.

Public Relations

Academics, practitioners, media commentators, and the lay public vary on their definition of public relations; however, they view public relations as including but not being limited to the following functions: understanding inner workings of the strategic communication process or the relationships that result from the process; exploring how to make that process better by strengthening relationships between organizations and publics; discovering what factors impede, thwart, or stymie the facilitation of the process or the building of relationships; and unearthing the role that power differentials between organizations and publics play in the strategic communication process or the relationship-building process, even the quality of society where such activity occurs. As much as it entails process, public relations wrestles with language-based meanings, a reality significant to the role it plays in race, and vice versa.

Race plays a role in the types of jobs practitioners hold and the types of assignments they receive. Practitioners might be pigeonholed, meaning that they become the organization’s liaisons who are primarily responsible for public relations efforts that involve the racial group that they “represent.” For example, Nneka Logan (2011) discussed what she coined as

the White leader prototype in public relations. The White leader prototype is “a historically constituted, ideological discursive formation that organizes professional roles along racialized lines in ways that privilege people who are considered a part of the White racial category” (p. 443). Further, it “communicates the notion that leaders in public relations are (or should be) White, which reproduces Whites as actual leaders in a self-sustaining system that makes White leadership appear normal, neutral, and natural, rather than the result of racialized practices” (p. 443). Her analysis of practitioners in public relations positions of leadership found that the vast majority were White despite the increased entrance of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American (AHANA) persons into the discipline. This focus on segmenting and instrumentalizing publics for purposes of selling products and services is a shallow use of public relations’ potential regarding race. Such practitioner perspectives can see race as a variable—something to be instrumentalized and managed through public relations.

In terms of public relations as an academic discipline, race as an area of thoughtful consideration is fledgling but gaining increased attention. Scholars are exploring the role race plays in the risks (living near a landfill, chemical company, or nuclear site) that persons are or are not exposed to, overall health and wellness of persons, the life chances that persons might or might not have, the education they may or may not attain, as well as how organizations knowingly or unknowingly manage or mismanage relationships with all raced persons—for everyone is raced.

From a critical perspective, Lee Edwards (2012) presented a theoretical discussion of race and public relations. Society is inequitable; public relations operates on local, national, and global levels. Marginalized persons (publics, stakeholders and communities, including stigmatized racial groups) face greater disadvantage than other less or nonstigmatized groups. Thus, public relations scholars and practitioners are obligated to address the ways in which public relations contributes to or combats this inequity in terms of its internal structure and culture, its practices, its effects, and the meanings with which it wrestles.

In practice and theory, race plays a key role in public relations, and public relations plays an integral role in race. To assume that race only

matters in public relations when organizations are interested in dealing with raced persons or when racially marginalized persons challenge an organization is wayward. Practitioners and scholars must explore the myriad ways that race shapes and influences the practice of public relations as well as be cognizant of subtle or blatant ways that public relations perpetuates racial dysfunctions throughout society.

Damion Waymer

See also Critical Race Theory; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Public Relations; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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RAILROAD INDUSTRY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

The railroad industry dramatically changed the United States during the 19th century. It gave rationale and lots of work to journalists and other writers who molded the practice of public relations.

In that regard, the railroads helped spawn the public relations profession.

The relationship was synergistic. Public relations helped gain acceptance for this essential element of the U.S. infrastructure at a time when it met lots of resistance. It was noisy and spewed sparks. It scared people and farm animals. It was opposed because it competed with established modes of transportation. Public relations added to the ability of railroad entrepreneurs to gain legislative support for their innovation. Once the railroads were beginning their operation, they needed to expand. They would die without markets for their services. They used far-reaching promotion campaigns to attract riders and freight.

Before, during, and after the Civil War, vast regions of the East, Midwest, Southwest, and Far West began to open to farmers and merchants. Railroads followed and facilitated westward migration. Minerals, farm products, and other resources could now be moved over longer distances. All of this activity was a source of raw materials, labor, and markets for new industrial products, especially farm implements and other industrial equipment.

As it was introduced to the fledgling railroad industry, society was hesitant to adopt this industrial beast that shocked citizens' sensibilities of safety. The industry truly was unsafe. Engines could start fires along the lines. Employees worked at great risk, a problem that persisted into the 20th century. Newspaper editors and other concerned citizens alarmed citizens to the peril of this industrial monster.

By 1850, much of this opposition had waned. Events demonstrated the virtue of rail transportation. Towns welcomed the arrival of railroad service. Bands played. Politicians spoke. Local militia marched and displayed community enthusiasm for the trains that brought mail, relatives and friends, and freight.

The Civil War demonstrated the virtues of an efficient rail system. Without doubt, one of the advantages of the Union during the war was superior ability to move men and materials strategically and quickly. The Civil War also cost the lives and working ability of thousands of men in the prime of life. Immigrants were needed to open the new regions of the nation, exploit its resources, and supply industrial labor needs.

Public relations was a fledgling profession at the time. The broad array of newspapers served as a primary mass medium supplying information and appeals to a broad set of audiences. This medium, coupled with other forms of communication, became widely and enthusiastically applied to publicize and promote railroads and the countryside they opened to domestic and foreign laborers and families looking for a better future.

Railroads needed settlers. They were heavily subsidized by a federal government willing to give land, which could be sold to finance railroad construction and operation. To turn raw land into operating capital, the executives of the rail industry turned to professional communicators to get the word out that land was available. Opportunity awaited those who were bold. Bounty was to be had for the taking. This migration would sell land. Farmers would produce crops. They would need supplies and equipment. Towns would spring up like prairie flowers in spring. Vast fortunes would be made. States would be established. Minerals would be brought east to the manufacturing centers. The nation and its citizens would prosper. Popular culture would develop as legends abandoned facts. Even the motion picture industry, not even born, would use the West and railroads as the fodder of countless visions on the flickering screen. No longer was the western migration moving at the speed of plodding animals pulling wagons. The scream of the whistle time and again announced a new force firing the nation. This was a dream. But people needed to get the message and fall in love with the dream.

The publicity effort in one sense was simple. Newspaper persons were hired by railroad companies or thriving communities to write books and favorable news stories that would reach target audiences. Or newspaper persons were given free trips with ample adventure and boosterism conversations. Countless writers strained their thesauruses to find ever more glowing terms to fuel the migration. These messages were translated into languages of all of the people of Europe and even China, where labor was abundant and times were hard.

As is ever the case with companies, railroad companies needed to achieve name recognition. Regions and towns were made legendary by the names that became embedded in popular culture: Baltimore & Ohio; Southern Pacific; Northern

Pacific; Great Northern; Burlington; Atchison, Topeka, and Sante Fe; Denver & Rio Grande; Illinois Central. The Southern Pacific knew that it needed markets to be viable. Even before its rails reached Los Angeles, its publicist, Charles Nordhoff, was hired. He was a reporter for the *New York Evening Post* who understood the Eastern press. He wrote *California for Health, Pleasure and Residence*, published in 1872, to attract a wide array of readers who identified with those motives.

Publicity was used to demonstrate to influential citizens the need for certain routes. Owners attracted investors and built relationships with legislators. These relationships often led to problematic business relationships. Perhaps the worst was the willingness of legislators to overlook the railroads' notorious lack of safety. Railroad operations killed or injured workers by the hundreds. Safety devices solved part of the problem, but labor relations were a constant source for the need of public relations.

As much as it needed continuing government relations, the industry fostered publicity and promotion. Techniques developed by the industry became the stock and trade for the profession. Investors needed to be assured that each company operated in ways that protected and promoted the interests of shareholders. Personal contacts were always important. Rail leaders wanted to be able to talk personally with legislators, newspaper people, investors, and influential local citizens. Favorable press was sought. Boosterism was the constant message set before this array of publics. The industry hired lobbyists. Prominent citizens from other walks of life could look forward to being paid for their opinions on extending railroad routes, as well as for their defense of rates and safety records.

Promotion required an endless string of favorable newspaper stories. Meetings and conventions were held. Some were staged events that in turn could be the subject of favorable news reports and editorials. Advertising was widely used. Newspapers that needed advertising dollars might be less willing to write harsh and accurate stories about the industry.

Secret press agents were widely employed. Reporters and editors were offered free passes. A trade association sponsoring the industry publication, *Railway Age*, established in 1880 a Bureau of

Information. Executives were quite willing to commission and fund favorable books and articles. Railway staff might write such articles and then look for prominent citizens who would lend their names as authors. The objective was to get opinion leaders to support and promote the industry. Such leaders were co-opted to be "objective" spokespersons for the industry in an effort to attract support of other power elites. Local officials within a community—or even the governor—could often be relied on to participate in ground-breaking ceremonies.

Guidebooks and pamphlets were published in huge quantities. These publicity tools extolled the virtues of the West as the land of opportunity. Often quite shoddy in content as well as publication standards, these tools were often remarkable in their exaggeration. Wealth and health were standard themes. They featured opportunity to virtually every segment of the U.S. and European populations. They placed stories in European newspapers to attract investors, labor, and customers. They exploited chance circumstances. Having no role in the discovery of minerals in the West, they were quick to broadcast discoveries to lure passengers to gold fields and merchants to prey on miners. They hauled ore and supplied workers with food and dry goods. They made markets that they in turn served—the true mark of the entrepreneur.

To residents in crowded cities and disparate parts of the world, the vast expanse of the American West had huge appeal. Land offices were opened where people were likely to be looking for opportunity. Pamphlets were published in English, German, French, and the languages of Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Letters from "success story" authors were placed in influential newspapers. These manufactured firsthand accounts were carried by emigrants as "contracts" of their new and bountiful future. To persons accustomed to thinking of land parcels in the few acres, dreams of vast and unclaimed acreages in the thousands were irresistible.

Without doubt, one of the greatest publicity stunts of American culture occurred on May 10, 1869, at Promontory Point near Ogden, Utah. Dignitaries drove spikes of gold and silver to celebrate the creation of a transcontinental railroad by linking the Union Pacific and Central Pacific. Another

burgeoning industry made the event even more dramatic. Telegraph wires were attached to the heads of the hammers and to spikes. Each time a hammer struck a spike that message was transmitted to awaiting news reporters, dignitaries, and the general citizen. This moment created a new word for the American vocabulary—transcontinental.

Practitioners, as the railroad industry demonstrated, were vital to gaining attention and creating meaning that became part of a culture. They helped create a way of thinking and acting. They also engaged in defensive efforts to protect an industry challenged on safety issues by workers and by customers who fought for fair rates. Railroads helped to create the full range of activities associated with public relations.

Robert L. Heath

See also Event Management; Government Relations; Pamphlet; Promotion; Publicity; Trade Associations

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REALLY SIMPLE SYNDICATION

Really simple syndication (RSS) is a collective term for technologies used to automatically and efficiently broadcast content across the Internet to individual users. Public relations practitioners who manage websites, blogs, news portals, or multimedia content may establish an RSS feed to transmit information from these sites. Users who wish to receive updates from such sites choose to subscribe to these RSS feeds, typically by clicking on an RSS icon on the website or by entering the feed's URL, or hyperlink, into an RSS reader. The RSS reader, or aggregator, is software that enables the user to view information transmitted from websites.

RSS technology emerged in the mid-1990s. Organizations such as Netscape and the British

Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), among others, worked to develop tools and file formats that would enable them to proactively and regularly “push” information to interested users. The standard file format for an RSS feed is XML, or extensible markup language. This format makes it possible to publish information once, yet have that same information viewed by many people using different platforms and programs.

An RSS feed, or news feed, enables organizations to stay in frequent contact with individuals who are interested in the latest news and developments. Likewise, individual users benefit from an RSS feed by regularly receiving new information without having to repeatedly check the organization's website or multimedia platform for updates. Users may subscribe to multiple RSS feeds, enabling them to receive timely updates from many organizations, all in one place. Additionally, users may protect their privacy using RSS feeds, which allow them to receive information without having to provide an email address or other personally identifiable information.

David Remund

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Website

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REFLECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Reflective management constitutes an epistemological approach to executive management that is based on late modern social systems theory's focus on the dynamics of social forces. A reflective management paradigm of organizational legitimacy has four cornerstones:

- The evolution of society changes the legitimating notions and legitimizing practices that mediate interrelations between organization and environment.

- The formula for organizational legitimacy today is reflection.
- Reflective management requires a triple synthesis of self-understanding, sensitivity, and self-presentation.
- Six megatrends carry forward these transformations.

New legitimating paradigms evolve to cope with modernization's increasing strains on life and nature, society's accelerating complexity and diversity, and growing global interdependence. Managerial decision making has to relate not only to market and state but also to the public sphere (a specific way of reasoning on matters of common interest from a societal perspective) as well as to publics (different stakeholders, each with its perspective on the world and the organization). Public relations competencies and processes grow increasingly essential to managing organizations legitimately.

In the vast complexity of legitimating notions and legitimizing practices, a general formula for legitimacy can be identified: reflection (adjective: reflective). In reflection, a perspective is raised to a second-order observation of its own observations: the organization sees itself as if from outside, and as mutually interdependent with its environment. It learns to develop restrictions and coordinating mechanisms in its decision-making premises. This broad, open, polycontextual perspective on its own role and responsibility in society facilitates flexible and inclusive ways of coordination in the increasingly complex, diverse, and dynamic society of liquid modernity. The reflective paradigm replaces solid modernity's reflexive paradigm, based on the first-order perspective of reflexivity (adjective: reflexive) that implies a self-centered perspective from within and consequently a narrow, unambiguous, monocontextual tunnel vision.

Reflective management practices require three interrelated organizational functions: self-understanding, sensitivity to environment, and self-presentation.

Self-understanding is about the organization's understanding of its role and responsibility, and of the nature of its decision premises. Reflexive decision making is based on given, inevitable, taken-for-granted premises and is inattentive to its unintended consequences, despite often far-reaching,

side effects. When the organization conflicts blindly and negligently with different worldviews, it reflexively sees itself as victim. In contrast, the reflective organization sees its decision premises as contingent, resulting from choices that could have been made differently. It opens up to change, flexibility, and continuous deliberations on the company's role and responsibility in engagement with its environment.

Sensitivity refers to the way the organization constructs and understands its environment. Whereas reflexive management sees an environment to be managed, the reflective approach implies an environment to be respected and aspirations of engagement. The first-order reflexive perspective does not distinguish between the environment as it is observed and as it is. The result is prejudiced and frozen positions. The environment remains an unproblematized mirroring of the organization; companies reflexively see the environment mainly as markets, investments, employment, resources, and consumption. In reflection, from a second-order perspective, the organization sees itself within the condition of sociodiversity, and as environment to its environment.

Self-presentation is about the organization's more or less intended way of presenting itself. Reflexivity means blind, self-absorbed self-presentation. From this enclosed first-order worldview of uniformity, the organization does not see conflicts or try to cover up, silence opponents, or dissolve disagreements by information. In contrast, reflective management openly acknowledges responsibility as decision maker. From its second-order worldview of sociodiversity it sees the inevitability and potential of conflicts, exposes their background, and facilitates exchange of views.

The conclusive test of reflective management is whether reflective self-understanding, sensitivity, and self-presentation are integrated. Is reflective sensitivity to the environment constitutive to self-understanding and decision-making processes?

The social complexity involved in the legitimating notions that evolved during recent decades can be divided into six megatrends related to structural aspects of society. These trends provoke the need for reflection as the basis for balancing considerations in public relations processes.

The megatrend of *insensitive society* focuses on society's structurally determined insensitivity to life and nature. The reflective organization

balances society's success and relevance criteria (politics, economy, science, law, health, mass media, etc.) with considerations of life and nature. Keywords are *triple bottom line* and *sustainability*. Themes range from lifestyle diseases to climate changes and the global distribution of wealth. The issues arena is characterized by confrontations between nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) representing life and nature and those organizations representing society's well-established success and relevance criteria.

Decision society relates to the growing awareness of the asymmetry between decision maker and those affected by a decision. The legitimacy of decisions is constantly questioned by the perspective representing potential victims, increasingly organized in NGOs. It requires a reflective perspective to increase the autonomy of decision making by accountability and transparency, and to involve the environment without disclaiming responsibility as decision maker.

Partnership society focuses on how the increasingly diverse and highly specialized society activates more or less formalized partnerships where mutual engagement and individual integrity are inextricably linked in order to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration and increase specialized knowledge. Decision makers must reflectively understand independence and interdependence as mutual preconditions.

Governance society focuses on how new political coordination forms activate the need for decision making to reflectively balance market considerations with interconnectedness produced by a shared societal vision. From regulation by means of unicentric state control and multicentric market coordination, new societal governance is characterized by polycontextual self-regulation and coregulation by means of policy networks, ideas of corporate social responsibility, and participation in public communication processes. These focus on public purpose and on the organization's own role and responsibility in society. Control mechanisms and sanctions take polycontextual forms, such as mass-mediated legitimacy crises and failing support from stakeholders.

Trust society captures the growing need for trust as a safety strategy for social interaction. In yesterday's solid society, safety strategies were based on law, formal rules, and shared, taken-for-granted

norms. Today, society is fluid, hypercomplex, diverse, dynamic, uncertain, and chaotic. Stakeholders choose whether to risk trusting an organization by extrapolating information and experience that are insufficient for certain knowledge and secure anticipations, but nevertheless establish certain expectations. The reflective organization generates trust by balancing authenticity with responsiveness; consistent identity with continuous change; benefits and risks of interacting for oneself with those of the counterpart.

Glocal society relates to conflicts between legitimating notions as globalization increases interdependence between societal and cultural forms, and the need to take global as well as local considerations. Decision making must take on a metareflective position: the organization acknowledges its worldview as rooted in a specific cultural and societal context in a pluralist diversity instead of taking it for granted and universal.

Legitimizing paradigms relate to societal forms. The reflective paradigm is based on ideas and societal structures of late (or liquid) modernity and parallels legitimating notions presented in the UN Global Compact, for instance.

Susanne Holmström

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Dialogue; Executive Management; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Transparency

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REGULATED MONOPOLIES

Regulated monopolies are organizations that are granted the legal right to operate in an environment where there is freedom from competition. The grant to operate in this manner is given by

governmental agencies, and there is recognition that the monopoly is counter to traditional free-market theory and policy.

To offset the freedom from competition, the granting agencies may stipulate a variety of conditions that may include, but may not be limited to, the rates charged customers, the services that are to be rendered, the required amount of infrastructure building and maintenance, and the level of services that are required of the monopoly holder. Because of this unique arrangement, organizations operating regulated monopolies have need of business and public relations strategies to support their continued successful operations. Effective strategies must reflect the history and role of the regulated monopoly in the economic system.

The concept of the regulated monopoly in the United States began at the end of the 19th century and start of the 20th century. Prior to the late 19th century, the governmental philosophy at the federal, state, and local levels was generally one of *laissez-faire*—keep government out of regulation and let competition determine the provider of services. Government recognized the importance of competition, and in 1890 the Sherman Antitrust Act was passed to reduce monopolies and ensure competition. President Theodore Roosevelt used the act in the early part of the 20th century to attack the power of the industrial trusts. The growth of the industrial empires and the monopolies that they created and the resulting abuses of economic power became issues of public discussion. For example, unregulated railroads that had monopolies in certain areas of the United States could charge shipping rates that made it difficult for producers to maintain a profit for their ventures because shipping rates were set very high by the monopolistic rail carrier.

Much of the impetus for government action was the public discussion of the economic abuses by large monopolistic organizations caused by the writings of journalists called *muckrakers* by President Theodore Roosevelt while he was in office in New York. He later came to respect the writings of the muckrakers as they supported him as he sought to ensure competition in the American economic system. These writers and their publishers centered articles on the alleged economic and social hardships that the monopolistic organizations had created in society.

Out of this environment grew the regulated monopoly. The concept was used to ensure that essential services would be provided at reasonable economic cost, but the possibility for abuse was to be diminished by governmental control. Many of the controlled monopolies were created out of a need for services, but where the cost of providing duplicate investments that would ensure competitive services was economically unfeasible. Examples of these monopolies were municipal water, sewer, and telephone systems, and electrical and gas systems. These services are often provided by corporations owned and operated by municipalities (municipal corporations). In many communities these vital services are provided by for-profit private corporations. The following discussions are premised on the idea that the regulated monopoly is a business entity that is privately owned or a corporation that is owned by stockholders. In most states municipal corporations as well as for-profit corporations are regulated by policies of a state board or regulatory commission. In some states these boards and regulatory commissions are elected; in others these boards and commissions are appointed, usually by the governor with confirmation of the appointees granted to the legislature, often the higher ranking body if the legislature is bicameral.

The monopoly may be granted through license, contract, or franchise. In most states and communities the monopoly is granted for a period of time and must be renewed from time to time through a prescribed set of state regulations. These regulations, as noted earlier, may also indicate the rates, level of service, and other requirements. If rates are to be increased, or in some cases decreased, the rate change must be sought and received through the regulatory agency.

Public attitudes about regulated monopolies may change over time. Two examples may be considered. In the early part of the 20th century, much of the U.S. telephone system was controlled by regulated monopolies, especially AT&T. In the last quarter of the 20th century, the government and the courts moved strongly to end many of the monopolistic practices and to deregulate the industry. It was argued that technology made it economically possible to have competing providers. The argument was also made that competition would result in better service at lower cost. A similar, ongoing, and

unresolved example is the public school system, which is, of course, a publicly owned and operated system. Advocates of privatizing the public school systems argue that the public schools are a regulated monopoly and that competition would result in better schools at lower cost. Many same-thinking individuals suggest that all services provided by governmental regulated monopolies could better serve the society if privatized.

An organization that is a regulated monopoly must develop business and public relations strategies that will allow it to function effectively in the environment in which it exists. The strategic challenges for the regulated monopoly are similar in many ways to those of organizations operating in the private realm, but the regulated monopoly must recognize its unique place in the environment.

Key to the effectiveness of public relations strategies for the regulated monopoly is to recognize those publics that will influence its ability to function effectively. Among the publics that must be considered are the customers or clients, the regulators and policymakers, the activists concerned with the industry or service, the media, employees, and any of their organizations such as unions, suppliers, and political forces that may have dominion over the environment in which the regulated monopoly exists.

Perhaps the most intriguing challenge for the regulated monopoly is the building of relationships with the regulators. Individuals appointed to the boards or commissions that regulate the monopoly are usually selected through the political process and often represent the political and economic philosophy of the dominant political power. The person or persons appointed to such boards and commissions have the power to regulate, and, therefore, they are critical to success for the organization. Regulated monopolies must understand and become involved in the selection process of the regulatory boards or commissions. There may be many relationships that have to be built. If the individuals appointed are named by an executive, such as a governor, elected county executive, or mayor, it is imperative that the regulated monopoly attempt to build relationships with these executives. If an effective relationship has been built, the executive may consult with the organization before naming a new candidate or reappointing a seated member seen as favorable to

the organization. If individuals viewed as antagonistic to the regulated monopoly are nominated by an executive but must be confirmed by a legislative body, the public relations strategy may be to build relationships with the confirming body with the purpose of preventing the confirmation of the nominee. Should this strategy fail, the appointee may be more difficult to work with in the future, so the strategy is not without risk to the regulated organization. If the regulators are elected, the regulated organization may wish to recruit individuals to stand for election that are favorable to the management strategies of the regulated monopoly. During the course of the election campaigns, the regulated monopoly organization may work for the election of those favorable to its positions and work in opposition to those individuals opposed to its positions.

Once the regulatory agency is in place, keeping good relations with the agency is paramount for management and public relations strategy. Key to this is the recognition that the customers served by the regulated monopoly may be the organization's strongest allies, or may be the strongest antagonist if services are not provided to fulfill the needs and wants of the customers satisfactorily. Because many regulated monopolies provide essential services, their efforts are critical to the customers. If the services are not delivered effectively, significant opposition can be expected from the customers, and this can result in significant pressure on regulatory agencies to become more restrictive. This may be especially true in times of crisis, and effective public relations strategies must be prepared by the regulated organization in these situations.

An example of such a crisis was the failure of the electrical systems in the summer of 2003, when significant portions of the northeastern United States and much of southeastern Canada were plunged into darkness. At this time several activist individuals and groups issued statements critical of the electrical companies and their policies, and these statements were reported by the media. The media also sought out individuals and organizations that had been monitoring the electrical industry as part of their activist activities.

If regulated monopolistic organizations are to conduct effective public relations, they must have significant crisis plans in place, and they must also

have strategies and policies to effectively counterbalance the activist individuals and organizations.

John Madsen

See also Activism; Muckrakers (and the Age of Progressivism)

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REINFORCEMENT THEORY

Reinforcement theory was proposed in 1960 by Joseph T. Klapper to challenge the dominant media effects theory. Reinforcement theory argued that media do not have a dominant effect on readers', viewers', or listeners' attitudes, beliefs, and motives. The effect is limited or minimal, largely because people filter life experiences selectively and prefer to maintain rather than change them. Klapper's work acknowledged that some mediated campaigns work powerfully to reach audiences and form opinions in ways predicted by propaganda experts; however, in other cases campaigns are notorious failures, achieving very little if any effect on opinions and behavior. At best, reinforcement theory reasons, mass-mediated messages can situationally and functionally have varying effects, but for the most part, effects are limited because of myriad countervailing factors. People, according to this theory, are not sponges that take in messages like water.

For the better part of the 20th century, supporters of dominant effects theory described mass-mediated messages as *magic bullets*. The advertiser or program developer, according to this theory, loads the message into ads or news program content and fires the bullet into the minds of viewers, who accept it uncritically, especially if audiences are exposed repeatedly to the same message content. Out of dominant effects research came the axiom "Scholars are interested in who says what through which media to effect changes in targeted audiences." The assumption of this propaganda research was that strategic effects would always occur.

Many studies conducted by the time Klapper's 1960 book, *The Effects of Mass Communication*, was published had demonstrated that mediated messages were likely to be only partially effective, or even substantial failures, in achieving specific targeted goals. Thus, reinforcement theory postulated that audiences of mass-mediated communication are likely to engage messages selectively and to have multiple influences, including interpersonal communication, that must be acknowledged to explain how much impact the media have on people's opinions. The theory reasons that changing opinions requires substantial cognitive effort. People do not change capriciously. They are exposed to a wide array of themes, arguments, and conclusions in the media to which they attend. They tend to consolidate or reinforce existing opinions rather than change them each time they are exposed to a new set of opinions presented through the media.

Klapper's work was a sound review of a substantial body of social science research. He argued that five mediating factors or conditions need to be considered by investigators and media critics who seek to explore and explain media effects: (a) the clusters of predispositions that result in selective exposure (which messages to receive), selective perception, and selective retention; (b) the groups and their norms, which influence media use, predisposition, and impact; (c) the information, content, and predisposition that is disseminated via interpersonal communication; (d) opinion leadership; and (e) the nature and role of the mass media in a society with an operating disposition to freedom of speech.

Selectivity occurs at many points in the communication process. Since people cannot consume all of what media offer, they choose to read, listen, and view some materials and not others. Children watch television shows tailored to them and are quickly bored by entertainment and news intended for adults. Likewise, parents may watch programming with children but do so for reasons other than sheer entertainment or opinion formation.

People are selective in how they receive and interpret the content of media. Klapper argued, "By and large, people tend to expose themselves to those mass communications which are in accord with their existing attitudes and interests" (1960, p. 19). Liberals may watch the same news program

as conservatives but get completely different messages. People do not view in a purely neutral or objective fashion. They are not passive, at least when they have well-formed opinions and preferences. They filter what they see, hear, and read through the attitudes, beliefs, and values they possess prior to the media experience. Thus, for instance, if children or adults see ads for products such as beer or cigarettes, they will accept or reject the messages not only because of the intrinsic appeal of the message as presented, but also based on attitudes toward and knowledge about the product. Thus, if a public relations practitioner uses promotion to increase the audience for a rock concert, that message conveyed through the media is likely to attract attention and be persuasive based on what audiences believed and preferred prior to receiving the information rather than due to the message as such. Fans of the group may be excited and even seek more information, whereas others might be uninterested.

Selective retention or recall is another factor that, according to reinforcement theory, leads to minimal or limited effects. People do not recall all of what they see, hear, and read. What they “think they saw, hear, or read” may actually be what they wanted to “see, hear, or read” to reinforce existing opinions, preferences, and even stereotypes. For this reason, several people who encounter the same ad or promotional public relations message are likely to recall the message differently. The same can be said for responses to crises and issues. People with a favorable view of a company are likely to have a positive bias toward the reports on a crisis it is suffering. People who hate the company are likely to focus on the negative. Also, people are likely to recall news and promotional messages differently. We can even predict substantial amounts of distortion in this recall. Crucial facts that conflict with the person’s preferred position on the matter may be forgotten, distorted, or discounted.

One of the most important factors in predicting media use and impact is the degree to which individuals find the content useful. In essence, people ask: Is it amusing? Does it help me form opinions that separate good outcomes from bad ones?

People rely on group norms—persons with whom they identify—for opinion formation. Group norms are a vital part of audience profiling through demographic profiles. Selectivity in this

regard can be really sneaky. People tell one another what they saw, heard, or read in the mass media. Thus, the first person is likely to have given a selective interpretation of the message that is reinforced in impact because of the positive interpersonal connection between the two parties.

Since media reports often contain opinions of people who are opinion leaders, it may well be opinion leaders rather than the media per se that influence audience opinions. People tend to favor one interpretation of the news, that of the person whom they see as an opinion leader. The same phenomena operate in promotion; third-party opinion can be a major influence on the impact of promotion.

Reinforcement theory advocates do not discount the possibility that media under specific circumstances can have a telling impact on the formation or conversion of opinions, but that is not the norm.

Robert L. Heath

See also Advertising; Demographics; Promotion; Propaganda

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RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT THEORY

“Public Relations is the effective and efficient management of organization-public relationships, based on common interests and shared goals, over time, to engender mutual understanding and mutual benefit” (Ledingham, 2003, p. 184). In this conceptualization, the term *relationship management* refers to the process of managing organization-public relationships in such a way as to benefit organizations and publics alike. Ledingham further defined relationship as “the state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either can impact the economic, social, cultural or political well-being of the other” (2003, p. 184). In this theory, the term *organization-public*

relationships is a convenience and is not intended to suggest greater importance in the relationship of an organization or a public.

In this way, the notion of relationships as the domain of public relations has forced a reconceptualization of the discipline. In the past, public relations practitioners considered their function to be the production and placement of persuasive messages primarily through the mass media in order to enhance an organization's corporate reputation or its products or services. Performance usually was measured in terms of communication quantity. Benefit for the organization's publics was not generally considered a necessary part of the public relations function.

Conversely, today's public relations manager increasingly sees the public relations function as managing the *relationship* between a client organization and the publics with which it interacts. The practitioner does so by using practice applications such as special events, as well as governmental and community relations. Publicity is recognized as an important application, but only one of many. The concept of relationship management, then, switches program evaluation from the quantity of communication vehicles to the quality of the organization–public relationship (OPR).

Another key component of the relational concept is the notion of mutuality. Research indicates that perceptions of mutuality (mutual control, mutual understanding, mutual benefit) are linked to long-term relationships, positive perceptions of an organization's public positions, and loyalty toward an organization's product and services. Perceptions of mutuality are linked to positive relationships with internal publics—such as employees or volunteers—which help build organizational morale.

Finally, the so-called relational perspective provides an overarching framework for scholarly inquiry and for developing educational curricula.

A relationship management process model, SMARTS, has been advanced, consisting of scan (environmental surveillance), map (setting goals and objectives), act (developing and pretesting initiatives), rollout (putting programs in place), track (evaluating the success of the initiatives), and steward (monitoring and maintaining relationship quality). Other models delineate antecedents, maintenance and outcomes of OPRs, or offer processes for further analyzing those relationships.

The emergence of relationship management as a foundation for public relations study and practice is said to have been spurred by four key developments:

1. *Recognition of relationships as the domain of public relations.* The notion of relationships as the domain of public relations—rather than the organization, the public, or the communication process—provided a unifying concept for public relations and gave rise to a major shift in the core focus of the discipline.
2. *Reconceptualization of public relations as a management function.* The idea of managing OPRs introduced principles and processes linking public relations to organizational goals. Moreover, reconceptualization underscored the need for public relations managers to account for their activities in ways understood and appreciated by senior management.
3. *Identification of components and types of relationships.* Key dimensions of OPRs were identified and linked to public perceptions and choice behavior. Also, OPR measurement scales were developed for use in measuring organizational quality and predicting public behavior.
4. *Construction of organization–public relationship models.* A multistep model was developed to provide insight into the “coming together” and the “coming apart” of organization–public relationships.

OPRs mimic interpersonal relationships in terms of dimensions that impact relationship quality. These dimensions include trust, openness, credibility, mutual control, emotion, intimacy, similarity, immediacy, agreement, issue perception, shared interests, relational history, and in certain cultures, face and favor. Moreover, organizational–public relationships have been found to cluster into three relationship types—interpersonal, professional, and community. An interpersonal relationship refers to the personal interactions of organizational representatives and public members. A professional relationship refers to the delivery of professional services to public members, and community relationship is linked to perceptions that the organization supports the interests of the community. Also, relationships may be communication driven (symbolic) or

behavior driven (programmatic), underscoring the importance of both in developing long-term, mutually beneficial relationships.

In addition to managing relationships with internal and external publics, public relations practitioners working within an organizational structure have learned the importance of developing relationships with senior management, the dominant coalition that determines organizational policy and procedures. In that interaction, public relations practitioners are increasingly called upon to demonstrate the impact of program initiatives on organizational goals. Hence, the field is seeing increased exploration of relationship models and application of various relationship-measurement strategies.

The popularity of relationship management has soared since the early 1990s, mainly on the strength of American scholarship. Today, the concept is spreading throughout Europe and Asia, where research is pointing out the usefulness of the concept across differing cultures and socioeconomic systems.

The next classification strategy includes *indicators of and contributors to* relationship state. They include communication frequency, complexity, access, and use; perceptions of problem agreement, needs fulfillment, goal sharing, and reciprocity; mutual satisfaction, benefit, and consensus. Also social exchange, transactions, and submissiveness; formalization and standardization; symmetry and intensity. Other indicators include duration, valance, and content, as well as information resource and flow.

The final classification strategy gleaned from the literature is that of Relationship Monitoring, a means of identifying changes in relationship state. These include scanning, observation, storage/access, and co-orientational determination.

Academic literature relevant to public relations provides key findings for practitioners charged with managing OPRs. Ten such findings are presented below:

1. The domain of public relations is relationships.
2. Successful relationships involve benefit both for an organization and for interacting publics.
3. Organization–public relationships are dynamic; that is, they change over time.
4. Relationships are driven by the needs and wants of organizations and publics, and

relationship quality depends on perceptions of the degree to which expectations are fulfilled.

5. Effective management of organization–public relationships leads to increased understanding and benefit both for organizations and publics.
6. The success of an organization–public relationship is measured in terms of relationship quality, rather than message production or dissemination.
7. Communication is a strategic tool in managing relationships, but communication alone cannot sustain long-term relationships in the absence of organizational behavior.
8. Organization–public relationships are influenced by relational history, the nature of the interaction, the frequency of exchange, reciprocity, and other dimensions.
9. Organization–public relationships can be categorized by type (personal, professional, community), and whether they are symbolic (communication driven) or behavioral (program driven).
10. Relationship building is applicable in all aspects of public relations study and practice.

John A. Ledingham

See also Mutually Beneficial Relationship

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RELIABILITY

Reliability is often defined as the dependability or consistency of the scores on a measurement scale or the coding of a content analysis. That is, something that is reliable is also dependable. It may not be accurate, but it is dependable—like a watch that keeps perfect time but is always five minutes late. In research terminology, however, reliability is something that can be measured and is found in establishing a measure's scale or, in the case of content analysis, coding dependability. Reliability requires two things. First, the measure that is being tested for reliability must be quantitative and it must be numeric. Second, there must be at least two items in a scale—two coders, or a single coder who recodes after a period of time. Based on these criteria, reliability may be established through statistical analysis. Which analysis is employed depends on the type of research conducted.

Reliability is often discussed as the difference between what we know and what we do not know. By this we mean that all measurement or coding has the potential for error. Some of that error is *systematic* and known; the rest is *random* and unknown. Reliability establishes the relationship between known and unknown error in a measure or coding. *Excellent* reliability is one that accounts for more than 90% of the systematic error; 80% to 90% reliability is typically referred to as *good*; and reliability below 80% is worrisome. Numerous reliability statistics are used, and

they differ according to what the research is seeking to measure.

Types of Reliability

As noted, we can establish reliability for both scores on measurement scales (attitudinal or general knowledge tests) and content analysis coding. All statistical reliability tests provide indices that range from 0 to 100, either as a *correlation* or as a percentage-of-agreement score. Further, the type of data acquired dictates which specific tests are employed. In general, data can be defined as being either categorical (i.e., the data represent frequency counts and percentages of specified categories, such as yes or no, male or female, good or bad) or continuous (i.e., the data represent responses on a continuum where the distance between one unit and the other is equal, such as age or income).

Measurement Reliability

In traditional measurement a measure's reliability in general has been established by examining how people respond to the statement in a measure. If the measure represents an attempt to assess attitudes or beliefs, then reliability is established via statistical analysis for the appropriate type of data the measure yields. If the measure is to be used over time, a different type of reliability is employed—one that is more applied and typically relies on correlational analysis.

When creating an attitude measure or *scale*, the researcher attempts to predict how individuals feel or evaluate some abstract object such as credibility or persuasiveness. Although there are many different types of attitudinal measures, public relations typically employs what is known as the *Likert-type scale*, which requires people to respond to a series of statements as to whether they (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (2) disagree, or (1) strongly disagree with each statement. The responses are then summed across items. This assumes the data are continuous in nature and the computed score represents the participants' evaluation on the item. Reliability for Likert-type scales is established using *coefficient alpha* statistics. A coefficient alpha of .80 or better is generally accepted as good to excellent, an alpha of .70 adequate, and an alpha less than .70 problematic. An example of this type of measure would be

James E. Grunig and Linda Childers Hon's 1999 measure of relationships. A second attitudinal measure asks people to pick only the statements that they agree with. This type of measure yields categorical data, and its reliability is established statistically by the KR-20 statistic.

Once a measure has its internal reliability established, it is often tested to see whether it is reliable in comparison with other groups or populations. In some cases the same people are administered twice, with a period of time separating each administration. This is *test-retest reliability*, with scores between the two administrations correlated to see if the participants responded similarly in both administrations. In other cases, the measure would be split into two representative questionnaires, and different groups would receive one or the other questionnaire. This is *split half reliability*, and the correlation between the two groups establishes the measure's reliability.

Coder Reliability

Coder reliability establishes how dependable the coding is in a content analysis. Content analysis codes messages for certain *units of analysis*, placing instances of each into predetermined categories. A unit of analysis might be viewer sex using the categories male and female. To ensure that the coding is accurate and dependable, coders individually place the content into the appropriate categories (or if there is only one coder, the material is coded twice after a sufficient time between codings) and the number of correct versus incorrect codes is established.

There are at least four different types of coding reliabilities that can be used in a content analysis. Most common is Ole R. Holsti's coding formula that identifies how many items have been coded and then calculates the number of coded items for each coder, yielding a reliability coefficient between 0.00 (totally unreliable) and 1.00 (totally reliable). However, Holsti's formula fails to take into account that the coders may have agreed by chance on their coding. Cohen's (1960) kappa basically computes the same formula as Holsti's formula but takes into account chance, and is found in a number of statistical computer packages. Both, however, fail to take into account that the coders may have agreed by chance on their

coding. William A. Scott's pi index and Klaus Krippendorff's alpha attempt to take chance out of the equation. Because they are more difficult to calculate, they are reported less often.

Relationship to Validity

As noted earlier, reliability establishes how dependable the scores on a measure or coder are. It does not, however, establish whether that measure or coder is actually reflecting what it should. This reflects a measure or coder's *validity*. Reliability is required before validity can be established; without accurate measurement, the validity of the measurement or coder cannot be assessed. Thus, reliability is an initial requirement of any form of measurement or coding scheme, but it may not actually be measuring or coding what the researcher wants.

Don W. Stacks

See also Measuring/Measures; Scales; Statistical Analysis; Survey; Validity

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RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Religious institutions and faith-related organizations rely on public relations to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships, lines of communication, cooperation, and understanding with internal and external publics. As nonprofits, religious organizations such as local places of worship, denominational associations (e.g., Southern Baptist Convention), parachurch (e.g., Focus on the Family, World Vision), and faith-based issues organizations (e.g., Sojourners, The Jewish Federation) employ media relations, community relations, donor relations, development and fundraising, public policy advocacy, and member and internal relations to meet organizational goals.

For centuries, religious organizations have recognized the power of communication to influence public opinion, convert nonbelievers, and maintain the loyalty of the faithful. Ancient leaders in the Jewish and Islamic faiths, and those in the Christian church of the first century, utilized rhetoric and premodern public relations techniques such as speeches, letters, oral teaching, and staged events to increase their follower base and maintain morale.

The spread of Christianity in the 17th century was grounded in public relations techniques. After the invention of the printing press and movable type, the Catholic Church formalized its efforts to spread church doctrine using mass communication techniques by establishing the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, or Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622. The contemporary word *propaganda* has its origin in this proselytizing function.

The history of public relations employed by religious organizations in the United States is rich and varied. Letters were exchanged between George Washington and the New Port Hebrew Congregation and Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Quaker groups to negotiate an inclusive civil religion. The third largest U.S.-based denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, was founded in 1845.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), representing the leadership of nearly 80 million members, the largest single denomination in the United States, evolved from the National

Catholic War Council, which was founded in 1917. The Office of Media Relations represents the Catholic bishops of the United States to the media and the media to the bishops. Employees are involved in traditional public relations activities, including preparing and distributing statements and other resources for the media, arranging for interviews with bishops and staff of the USCCB, organizing press conferences, responding to media queries, and credentialing media for coverage of such events as the bishops' annual meetings.

One of the major religious events of the 20th century was the Roman Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), which among other outcomes led to the de-Europeanization of the church and its adaptation to the cultures of its members in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere. Vatican II, which opened in October 1962, required ongoing public relations efforts before and after December 1965 when the council closed. Media relations to targeted audiences and messages framed about the reforms played out in churches and parishioners' lives.

Some religions and denominations use public relations strategies to create favorable public opinion for their faith and be active in the public sphere, attempting to effect changes in political campaigns, public policy, and provide aid to improve human conditions globally. For example, in 2004, the Southern Baptist Convention hosted voter registration drives, including the Mobile Voter Registration Rig, an 18-wheeler semitrailer truck that traveled the nation, with the aim of registering 2 million voters to support George W. Bush.

Parachurch organizations, faith-based organizations that work outside of and across denominations to engage in social welfare and evangelism, are usually independent of church oversight and typically Protestant and Evangelical. Some parachurches focus on serving members and like-minded followers with practical, faith-based advice for daily living. For example, Focus on the Family "provides relevant Christian advice on marriage, parenting, and other topics" with "practical resources for every age and lifestyle," according to the website. Others, such as World Vision, provide humanitarian aid and practical solutions to end social ills such as hunger and disease, and are active in public policy advocacy on issues such as child health, hunger, and child trafficking.

Finally, faith-based issues organizations may be directed at one or more issues that are linked to values adhered to by members, and use public relations to mobilize followers and persuade decision makers. An early example is the Women's Christian Temperance Union; organized in 1873, it was the first mass organization among women that joined the secular with the sacred to effect social reform. Sojourners, a progressive Protestant organization, is committed to "faith in action for social justice," according to its website. These organizations have found the digital and social media to be a godsend for mobilizing followers and pressuring government and corporations acting in opposition to the values espoused by the organization. For example, the American Family Association (AFA) capitalized on Internet technology's ability to instantaneously and inexpensively communicate with members and followers of the organization when it mobilized thousands of people to pressure organizations to stop advertising on television programs that promote lifestyles and values that are in opposition to the AFA, and to boycott organizations that offered benefits to same-sex couples and donated money to homosexual organizations and events. The AFA developed the boycottford.com website, posting numerous documents "exposing and indicting Ford's pro-homosexual agenda" and links to websites that provide Ford's "gay-themed advertisements" (Coombs & Holladay, 2007, p. 72). This mobilization blitz was effective: within one week Ford dealers met with the AFA, and soon after the AFA suspended its boycott.

Whether a denominational association, local congregation, parachurch organization, or faith-based issues organization, religious organizations rely on public relations for their internal and external relationship-building. Such efforts are designed to maintain each organization and its mission primarily through internal publications aimed toward members, followers, or interested recruits. Like traditional corporate "house organs," internal publications attempt to keep members informed about organizational news and, more importantly, the organization's issues. Internal documents establish and reflect religious organizations' values, and serve as manifestos for personal and corporate action. Increasingly, technologies such as organizational websites, email and e-newsletters, and social media perform similar functions. Likewise, effective public

relations is essential for carrying messages to external publics and building relationships with those publics that are necessary for survival, to spread the word about the faith, and to work toward the organization's vision of heaven on earth.

Churches and synagogues, as well as organizations such as dioceses and districts, employ their own public relations people, have interactive websites, and function at a very high level of professionalism.

The Religion Communicators Council (formerly the Religious Public Relations Council) is the oldest professional association of public relations practitioners in North America, older even than the Public Relations Society of America, with nearly 500 member organizations.

Denise P. Ferguson

See also Activism; Advocacy; Antecedents of Modern Public Relations; Community Relations; Event Management; Functions of Public Relations; Issues Management; Media Relations; Nonprofit Organizations; Propaganda

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REPUTATION

Reputation is a collective representation of stakeholders' perceptions of the organization that is created over time, and subject to change. Based on the organization's identity, its previous performance

and behavior, reputation involves the expectation of future delivery of desired results and fulfillment of expectations. Organizational reputation is a multidimensional construct that incorporates management, leadership, quality of services and products, financial performance, workplace environment, corporate social responsibility, ethical standards, and communication.

Benefits

The numerous benefits of a favorable reputation justify why organizations should be interested in acquiring and sustaining it. Reputation provides competitive advantage and is equally important for government, corporations, civil organizations, and nonprofit organizations. Graduates and professionals look at reputation in their search for jobs; so organizations that are better off are more likely to attract and retain top employees. Customers consider reputation in their buying and purchasing decisions. Investors carefully select where to invest their money. Insurance companies look at reputation, which signals organizations that are lower risk. It proves crucial in entering new markets, as well as in mergers and partnerships. Favorable reputation allows corporations to dictate prices for their products and services. Finally, favorable reputation attracts positive media coverage and becomes extremely valuable in times of crisis.

Because of the presence of new communication technologies, growing numbers of potential crises and increased scrutiny from global pressure groups, reputation is becoming more vulnerable than ever before. During a crisis, stakeholders are more likely to view organizations in a positive manner if there has been a record of previous positive, acceptable, and ethical behavior.

Even though reputation is often conceptualized as an intangible asset, evidence points to a positive correlation between favorable reputation and financial success. This is becoming increasingly important for public relations and strategic communication, because the profession is expected to prove its contribution to the business bottom line.

Measuring reputation contributes to an argument that reputation is an asset that has corporate value. In his reputation quotient model, Charles Fombrun identified six categories for measuring reputation: emotional appeal of an organization,

quality and value of products and services, financial performance, vision and leadership, workplace environment, and social responsibility. There is also a yearly published survey “World’s Most Admired Companies” by *Fortune* magazine. Forbes and Reputation Institute conduct a large study on corporate reputation of the United States’ most reputable companies as well as the world’s most reputable companies called RepTrak.

Personal and Corporate Reputation

Reputation of corporations’ leaders and CEOs contributes to overall corporate reputation. In certain cases, the reputation of the founder or CEO can be a driving force in determining reputation of the institutions as stakeholders easily identify corporations, products, and highly prominent leaders such as the case of Walt Disney, cofounder of The Walt Disney Company, Steve Jobs, the cofounder of Apple, Bill Gates, cofounder and chairman of Microsoft, and Mark Zuckerberg, cofounder of the social networking site Facebook.

Reputation and Relationship Management

Increasingly recognized reputation value puts the profession of public relations in the spotlight as its leadership role in reputation matters is becoming more strategic and proactive. In that sense, reputation is closely linked with organizations’ relationships with multiple constituencies.

The relationships that organizations build and maintain with their stakeholders have a direct effect on reputation. Relationships have to do more with overall behavior and performance than with only communication and messages, but ultimately it all affects reputation, so reputation can be viewed as the outcome of organization–public relationships. Likewise, organizations with positive or favorable reputations are more likely to create mutually beneficial relationships. Organizations with strong relationships and reputations are perceived as trustworthy, which in turn leads to cooperation and collaboration.

Public relations as a management function influences organizations’ values and standards; ethical and responsible business practices make organizations more reputable. At the same time, practitioners collaborate with other departments

such as advertising and marketing to help create strong and reputable corporate brands. They recognize employees as important internal publics who are a primary source of information for people outside the organization.

Reputation Management

Because of the competitive advantage and potential threats to corporate reputation, there has been more emphasis on the importance of strategic reputation management. Organizations that plan and approach their reputation strategically learn how to show their values in their policies, behavior, and communication; they take into consideration the benefits of their stakeholders and local communities, while respecting the environment in which they operate. An iconic example of aligned business strategies and corporate values is Johnson & Johnson whose management referred to the company's credo in making decisions with long-term effects during the Tylenol crisis. In 1982, police investigation determined that seven people died after taking extra-strength Tylenol capsules laced with cyanide. Even though the capsules were infected with cyanide after they reached the shelves in Chicago, Johnson & Johnson decided to immediately recall the product from the market. Approximately 31 million bottles of Tylenol were recalled, which caused a loss of more than \$100 million. The company's care for its consumers established their lasting favorable reputation that distinguished the company from its competitors. Reputation, thus, does not happen in a vacuum, but rather is a means of differentiation and finding the unique position among competition.

While it is true that an organization has the reputation it deserves, corporate communication attempts to influence stakeholders' perceptions and interpretations of past, present, and future events as they help form such reputations. In that sense, reputation management has often been referred to as impression management. People's perceptions of organizations come through personal experiences, experiences of their family members and friends, and mass media. Even though personal experience has the strongest impact on the impressions, people do not interact with all organizations personally in order to gain such experience. That is why they rely on other

persons' experiences and mass media. Therein lies the opportunity for organizations to manage their reputation through media visibility, advertising, and publicity in order to create positive and favorable impressions. Another approach to managing reputation requires a behavioral approach based on organizations' consistency in their policies, actions, and communication.

While communication strategies and messages have an impact on stakeholders' perceptions, if those messages are not aligned with corporate behavior, there is a chance of reputational damage. Words must correspond with actions. Messages create expectations, which if not fulfilled damage organizations' trustworthiness which is basic to reputation.

Reputation Dimensions

Cees van Riel and Charles Fombrun proposed six communication dimensions of reputation: visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity, transparency, consistency, and responsiveness.

Reputation depends on *visibility* of the organization. Visibility is achieved through public prominence, for example, media and market presence, which are interrelated. Corporations that have high market presence tend to receive more media coverage and that can have both positive and negative effects depending on the organization's performance.

Distinctiveness means differentiation from competitors through characteristics that are exclusive and unique to the organization.

Authenticity is related to organizational identity, its core values, and business philosophy. It is reflected not only in corporate messages but also in behaviors that demonstrate organizational trustworthiness.

Stakeholders and the law are pressuring organizations to be *transparent* requiring authentic insight into all corporate matters: policies, products, leadership, financial reports, and socially responsible practices. Provided information must be complete, accurate, relevant, timely, and useful for stakeholders.

An organization's identity is reflected in its behavior and communication. Organizations acquire a positive reputation when action and message are *consistent*. Corporate actions and messages need to

be consistent across different departments, but also internally and externally to achieve the desired reputation with internal and external stakeholders.

Finally, *responsiveness* demonstrated by an organization's willingness to engage in dialogue with its stakeholders and be ready to make adequate changes based on feedback. Such feedback reveals stakeholders' judgments as to whether the organization met their expectations.

Danijela Radić

See also Credibility; Image; Image Repair Theory; Impression Management Theory; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Subjective Expected Utilities Theory

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beliefs, and actions of various, and sometimes conflicting, stakeholder groups. Reputation management seeks to emphasize an organization's positive attributes while carefully managing its risks to reduce the likelihood of negative impacts on its overall reputation.

The importance of organizational reputation should not be minimized—96% of CEOs consider corporate reputation a vital component of business success. A positive reputation can yield benefits to an organization including employee recruitment and retention, shareholder returns, consumer support, and buffering from activist groups and other environmental disturbances. Over time, a positive reputation can minimize critics, solidify the organization's place in society, stabilize its workforce, and enhance its position within an industrial field. Conversely, a negative reputation can signal to stakeholders that an organization is not worth their support as a consumer, employee, or shareholder and may expose the organization to attacks from activist groups. If an organization continues to have a negative reputation, it may find itself unable to continue operations, exposed to undesirable litigation and legislative action, facing diminished stock price, and unable to attract and retain top talent.

Reputations are value judgments that are cumulative based on past organizational performance. Because reputations are based on past performances, an organization's reputation is not static. It ebbs and flows and is directly influenced by organizational behavior. An organization's reputation is inferred from past performance that in turn influences expectations for current and future performance. In other words, stakeholders use an organization's past actions (positive and negative) to determine what resources should be provided the organization now and in the future.

Reputations exist along a continuum and are highly susceptible to change based upon stakeholders' direct (e.g., purchases) and indirect (e.g., word of mouth communication) interaction with the organization. Stakeholder groups determine reputations by their emotional, financial, social, and cultural attachments and activities related to the organization. Each stakeholder group has unique performance measures that influence their assessment of an organization's reputation. For example, consumers are most likely to base an

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Reputation management is the strategic use of organizational resources to influence the attitudes,

organization's reputation on the quality of goods and services; whereas investors are likely to determine an organization's reputation based upon stock and management performance. Thus, organizational reputation is not a single, unified construct and different stakeholders may hold different assessments of organizational reputation. It is important to note, however, that stakeholder groups often overlap (e.g., employee and shareholder) and thus individuals may evaluate an organization on a variety of measures. Reputation management is complicated by the need to assess the evaluative premises of different stakeholder groups and determine how the organization is delivering on distinct performance measures.

Similar to legitimacy, an organizational reputation is communicatively coconstructed by the organization and its stakeholders. As such, reputations are carefully managed and monitored to ensure that the organization is meeting the expectations of its stakeholders. Reputation management, therefore, is an ongoing process whereby the organization monitors how its activities are perceived by stakeholders. In this regard, the organization may select particular activities (e.g., product introductions, employee benefits) that it knows will have a positive influence on its reputation. These moves can serve to enhance existing positive reputational attributes or improve a negative or neutral reputation. Stakeholders evaluate an organization's claims based upon their own experiences with the organization to determine the legitimacy of the reputational claims an organization is advancing. Further, stakeholders communicate with the organization and others about their perceptions of the organization's reputation. While stakeholder communication is typically informal (e.g., blogs, word of mouth) when compared to the highly strategic and stylized organizationally sponsored communication, it is still powerful in determining an organization's reputation. Reputation management should be cognizant of points of convergence and divergence with stakeholder impressions of reputation.

Distinct from legitimacy, reputation serves a differentiating function between the organization and its competitors. Thus, reputation communication may highlight the distinctive features of an organization to distinguish it from its peers. In this way, reputation management creates value

for the organization in so much as stakeholder groups give the organization a preferred status in relation to its competitors. Reputation, as a comparative function, is influenced by the organization's size, industry position, business segment, management quality, and news coverage. In this vein, reputation management requires a complete understanding of an organization's competitors and industrial field to develop communication strategies that provide evidence of distinction.

Craig E. Carroll and Maxwell McCombs (2003) highlight the role of the media in influencing organizational reputation. The quality and quantity of coverage an organization receives can influence stakeholder perceptions of the organization's reputation. In addition to traditional media, organizations need to be aware of social media and online communication (e.g., blogs) that provide a forum for both reputation enhancement and degradation. Organizations rely on nontraditional media as a way to communicate with stakeholders about a variety of organizational activities. Further, organizational sponsored websites, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter offer opportunities to share reputation enhancing activities and reports with stakeholders. The interactive nature of the medium allows for direct feedback and opens up opportunities to monitor stakeholder perceptions of reputation in new and exciting ways. Conversely, the online communication channels give voice to stakeholders who have an unfavorable perception of an organization. Thus, reputations are vulnerable to online blogs, websites, Facebook, and Twitter communication that criticize an organization's actions. Astute reputation management encompasses all forms of media and requires active media scanning for discussions that influence reputation.

Because reputations are highly vulnerable to negative information, organizations should communicate regularly with stakeholder groups about the positive actions an organization is conducting. In addition, when a reputation becomes tarnished an organization must take action to eliminate the situation that contributed to the formation of a negative reputation. Furthermore, the organization must realize that reputation is a cumulative evaluation; thus, negative actions are considered in relation to positive attributes. Stakeholders weigh the two sets of attributes to determine an overall organizational reputation. This form of

ongoing evaluation highlights the importance of consistent and credible communication with stakeholders in the formation and management of organizational reputation.

Amy O'Connor

See also Co-Creation of Meaning Theory; Information Integration Theory; Investor Relations; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Social Media; Stakeholder Theory; Stakes

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RESEARCH GOALS

Research in public relations includes both practitioners constructing and executing public relations actions and researchers in pursuit of knowledge. The “Goals” entry in this encyclopedia refers to strategic actions and choices made by practitioners to achieve specific campaign-driven outcomes. In that case, research should not just happen but should be designed to reveal something that is relevant to understanding and solving the problem facing the public relations practitioner.

Research goals are what direct public relations researchers. Research goals guide the research study and are the general outcomes desired by the researcher. The general goal of public relations researchers is to create knowledge and build upon the public relations body of knowledge. Research goals can be divided into two types: applied and basic. The goals of applied research involve trying

to solve some practical problem, such as what publics are most likely to communicate on an issue or which message strategy would be most persuasive for the target public. The goal is the practical application of the research results. In most cases, practitioners are pursuing applied research goals.

Basic research goals seek to develop theory. A theory is a systematic view of a phenomenon, which specifies the relationship between variables; it explains how things work by establishing relationships between concepts or variables. These relations must be tested to prove the value and accuracy of the theory. The goal of some research is to test aspects of a theory, such as proving that two variables are related as prescribed in a theory. The articles published in research journals often pursue basic research goals, and the reader must decide how to apply that knowledge to public relations situations. However, public relations research can pursue both goals in the same study. Public relations is applied in nature, so testing a theory will often provide answers to practical problems as well. Research designed to test situational crisis communication theory, for instance, provides insights into how best to communicate after a crisis occurs.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Campaign; Crisis Communication; Goals; Public Relations Research; Research Objectives

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Like practitioners, public relations researchers need to develop objectives to guide their research projects. A research objective works with the research goal and specifies what is to be studied. Research objectives can take the form of a research question or a hypothesis.

A research question is stated as a question that explores the relationship between two or more

variables or concepts. Research studies abbreviate research questions as *RQ*. Here is a sample *RQ* from an actual study: “How do journalists perceive the role of information subsidies supplied by public relations practitioners in the construction of news?” (Curtin, 1999, p. 58). The example is an open-ended research question because it leaves the direction of the relationship open; it just indicates that a relationship does exist. The sample *RQ* simply looks to see what type of relationship exists between journalist perceptions and information subsidies. A closed-ended research question will specify the direction or form of the relationship. A closed-ended version of the earlier *RQ* might be “Do journalists perceive the role of information subsidies supplied by public relations practitioners in the construction of news negatively?” The revised *RQ* specifies that journalists will have a negative perception of information subsidies.

A hypothesis states a predicted relationship between two or more variables or concepts. Research studies abbreviate hypotheses as *H*. Here is a sample *H* from an actual study: “Respondents in the favorable relationship history condition will hold more positive organizational reputations than those in the unfavorable condition” (Coombs & Holladay, 2001, p. 326). The sample *H* is a one-tailed hypothesis because it states the direction or form of the relationship between the variables. There will be a positive relationship between relationship history and organizational reputation. A two-sided hypothesis states that a relationship will exist between two or more variables or concepts but does not indicate the form or direction of the relationship. A two-sided version of the earlier *H* might be “There is a relationship between the relationship history condition and organizational reputation.” The revised *H* does not specify the direction of the relationship but just indicates that a relationship exists.

Each research study you read should provide an *RQ*, *H*, or both. The study will be designed to answer the *RQ* or *H* while the text of the research report will focus on explaining the answers.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Objectives; Public Relations Research; Research Goals

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RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

The term *resilience* is defined as the capacity to return to equilibrium after a displacement. Resilient materials and systems bend and adjust to absorb pressure without breaking. In public relations literature, and specifically in risk and crisis communication research, resiliency is examined at the community level. Resilient communities are able to maintain operations or quickly return to normal following a disturbance such as a natural disaster. Community resilience has been described as both a process and an outcome.

There are four key elements in the process approach to community resilience: anticipating threats, reducing vulnerability to hazard events, and responding to and recovering from hazard events when they occur. Risk and crisis management and communication are essential throughout the process approach to community resilience. As an outcome, resilience is defined as a loose antonym for vulnerability because a resilient community is able to withstand or quickly bounce back from external shocks, stresses, changes, or disturbances in the social, political, or physical environment. When considered an outcome, resilience can be examined to determine what resources enable the community to be resilient. The resources are then assessed according to the attributes of the 4R's: robustness (ability to withstand stress); redundancy (extent to which elements are substitutable); rapidity (ability to achieve goals in a timely manner); and resourcefulness (capacity to identify problems and mobilize resources). Community building and community relations help establish these resources.

Fran Norris, Susan P. Stevens, Betty Pfefferbaum, Karen F. Wyche, and Rose L. Pfefferbaum (2008) provided a framework for a theory of community resilience that identified four primary networked capacities of community resilience: economic development, social capital, information and communication, and community competence. Together, these capacities provide a strategy for community preparedness, response, and recovery.

Economic development includes fairness of risk and vulnerability to hazards, level and diversity of economic resources, and equity of resource distribution. Hazards are not evenly distributed across populations, and individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are not only more likely to live in areas prone to hazards, but also less likely to have the financial resources to rebuild and recover from a disaster. Communities that have just a few primary employers can be devastated by a disaster that affects the industry. Poor communities are also less successful in mobilizing support after disasters.

Social capital includes received and perceived social support, formal and informal ties to the community, organizational linkages and cooperation, sense of community, and attachment to place. Social support includes having family and friends nearby who are able and willing to help as well as relationships between individuals and their neighbors and the larger community network, including religious groups, schools, and community organizations. Sense of community and attachment to place promote community recovery as a requirement for personal recovery. Community relations is essential in building social capital to bring organizations and municipal services together to support community rebuilding and renewal.

Information and communication includes narratives, responsible media, skills and infrastructure, and trusted sources of information. Effective communication before, during, and after a disaster can be crucial in reducing damage and loss of life, while rumors and misinformation can exacerbate a crisis. Likewise, media coverage that sensationalizes disaster information rather than providing instructional messages for self-protection can hinder community response and recovery. Therefore, public relations practitioners and crisis communicators must ensure accurate information is reported through trusted sources. Establishing a protocol for communication and effective media relations

can truly be life or death strategies in a disaster. After a disaster, information resources are needed to assist communities with rebuilding and recovery. Libraries, schools, media outlets, and other information resources can also provide forums for sharing communal narratives of the disaster to assist with emotional recovery. Disaster memorials offer a continued outlet for communal narratives.

Community competence includes community action, critical problem-solving skills, flexibility and creativity, collective efficacy and empowerment, and political partnerships. Communities must be able to adapt to changing environmental conditions following a disaster. Scholars suggest that resilience has both inherent qualities that function well during noncrisis periods and adaptive qualities that demonstrate flexibility in response during disasters. Developing, testing, and evaluating emergency and crisis plans can help identify potential weaknesses that can be addressed before disaster strikes. Encouraging the preparation of emergency kits and plans for families and community groups can ensure emergency services can focus on responding to those most vulnerable in a disaster. Establishing relationships and outlining aid agreements with neighboring communities can assist in building community competence.

Public relations practitioners, and specifically risk and crisis communicators, can foster community resilience by reaching out to agencies, organizations, and institutions to establish relationships and determine what resources are needed to help a community prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster. Effective community relations can prime an organization or agency to play an integral role in community resilience.

Shari R. Veil

See also Community and Community Building; Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Crisis Renewal Theory; Emergency Management; Risk Communication; Social Capital

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RESOURCE DEPENDENCY THEORY

Resource dependency theory (RDT) is a strategic management theory used to explain organizational behavior and effectiveness. RDT is concerned with how the need for resources affects an organization's actions within its environment. In public relations, it helps explain why organizations develop relationships with other organizations and publics. The theory demonstrates how and why public relations can contribute to organizational effectiveness through the relationships that provide resources organizations need to survive and flourish.

Resource dependency theory views an organization's environment as containing resources necessary for its survival. That environment consists of networks of interorganizational relationships that influence access to resources. Resources are anything on which an organization depends to survive, such as financial, material, cultural, or symbolic resources. Without the proper mix and amount of resources, an organization will eventually fail. Resource dependency theory consequently assumes that organizations lacking in certain resources will seek to establish relationships with individuals or entities that can provide those resources. The theory reasons that organizational actions are related to particular dependencies. In other words, organizations will engage in actions designed to fulfill their resource needs.

Resource dependency theory is linked to systems theory in that both perspectives recognize that organizations are interdependent with other actors in their environment. Resource dependency

theory conceives of organizations as open systems that interact with other systems—other organizations or publics—in the environment. Organizations are interdependent with others because individual organizations do not control all of the conditions necessary to successfully function. Thus, other actors influence the goals of an organization and the extent to which it can achieve those goals as they grant or withhold needed resources. Consequently, the business and management literature has noted that organizations will try to reduce uncertainty and gain control over their environment through acquiring resources that will enhance their power and minimize dependence on other organizations, while at the same time increasing the dependence of other organizations on themselves.

In RDT, power is defined as the control over scarce resources on which others depend, such as information, expertise, credibility, prestige, access to higher echelon members, and control of money, rewards, and sanctions (cf. Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006). A complete list of resources is impossible, as “different phenomena become resources in different contexts” (Clegg et al., p. 127). A scarcity of certain resources may cause one organization to become dependent on another. Resource dependency theory cautions that power is situational and contingent upon changing relationships and environmental conditions. Uncertainty increases when organizations are highly dependent on others. Organizations must cope with and adapt to their environments by building relationships so that critical resources may be exchanged even in the most challenging of conditions.

Resource Dependency and Public Relations

Resource dependency theory is helpful for public relations as the theory emphasizes that attention and care must be given to the interdependencies organizations have with their environment. As in systems theory, RDT recognizes the importance of strategic interfaces—connections or relationships—between an organization and its environment. Public relations helps manage quality interfaces among organizational systems and subsystems to other systems.

Additionally, public relations researchers have drawn on RDT to explain the nature of

relationships between organizations and their publics. Relationship management theory drew on RDT to explain antecedents of relationships. Relationships form because an organization needs certain kinds of resources, which might include tangible items like money or supplies, but might also include intangibles such as information or legitimacy. Because relationships represent the exchange or transfer of resources, the nature of the resource exchanged is an important attribute of relationships, and helps to define them.

Organizations are thought to have four different types of relationships or “linkages” with different kinds of stakeholders or publics in their environment, each a different type of power relation and resource dependence. Organizations have *functional* linkages with publics that provide needed inputs, such as suppliers and employees, and that accept organizational outputs, such as consumers or retailers. *Enabling* linkages exist with those publics that have power over the organization and provide it with the resources and autonomy it needs to operate, such as stockholders, legislators, regulators, or boards of directors. Organizations have *normative* linkages with publics like trade associations, professional societies, or even competitors, which share common values or face similar threats from the environment. Lastly, organizations have *diffused* linkages with publics that arise because of the actions of the organization, including publics like the media and activists that may work to erode the power of organizations. The existence of organizational linkages and their types are likely to change based on the conditions of the environment.

Resource dependency theory has informed perceptions of the consequences of organization–public relationships in relationship management theory, as gaining needed resources allows an organization to survive, grow, and to pursue other goals. Given this, RDT has been compared to stakeholder theory, in that both theories recognize organizational dependence on internal and external stakeholders. Both RDT and stakeholder theory argue that certain stakeholders are contextually more or less important, largely due to the resources they may control. Resource dependency theory consequently helps public relations

prioritize relationships with stakeholders based on the nature and importance of the resource exchanged. Publics and stakeholders have greater power over an organization when they control contextually valuable or urgent resources. Relationships with these resource-providing stakeholders should thus be prioritized.

The identification of strategic publics informs how public relations can make organizations more effective. One way to measure effectiveness is by the extent to which an organization successfully manages the demands of resource providers. Public relations can help to reduce uncertainty in the environment by identifying and managing strategic interdependencies, thereby stabilizing relationships with resource-providing publics so that the organization will survive. Further, when necessary resources are exchanged with strategic publics, organizations are more likely to accomplish goals—a significant indicator of organizational effectiveness. Maintaining quality relationships is therefore an avenue to organizational effectiveness, and a proxy measure for how public relations can contribute to an organization’s bottom line. In building relationships with strategically important publics, public relations makes organizations more effective.

Erich J. Sommerfeldt

See also Power Resource Management Theory; Relationship Management Theory; Stakeholder Theory; Systems Theory

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RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Firms and individuals have a variety of alternatives for employing their scarce capital. Return on investment (ROI) is one of the many analytical methods individuals and firms employ to aid in the allocation of funds. Although there are many definitions of ROI depending on the context, a working definition can be the amount that an individual or firm earns on the capital invested.

From the viewpoint of the individual, ROI is often considered in the context of investing in a common stock. For example, if the investor buys 100 shares of XYZ Corp. at \$20 per share and sells the same stock at \$25 per share (ignoring commissions), the ROI is $(25-20)/20$, or a 25% ROI. The question of whether the 25% ROI on XYZ Corp is “good” depends on the benchmark to which the ROI is compared. The most common benchmark to which common stock ROIs are measured is the S&P 500 Index (which measures the return of the 500 large stocks on an unmanaged basis). For example, if the S&P went up 30% during the same period of ownership, the XYZ ROI of 25% would be considered a poor relative ROI. Conversely, if XYZ Corp. stock went down 10% when the S&P 500 went down 15%, XYZ Corp. would be considered a good relative investment because it outperformed its benchmark.

From the viewpoint of the corporate financial manager, ROI is employed in the process of selecting among the various capital project investment opportunities available to the firm, such as building

a new plant, launching a new product, entering new markets, and so forth. *Capital budgeting* is the process the manager employs to determine which project(s) a firm should undertake to maximize firm value and, hence, the firm’s ROI to shareholders and creditors.

There are many methods to rank the attractiveness of a firm’s capital projects, including payback period, internal rate of return, and net present value. In general terms, an investment to the firm has value if the return on investment is more than it costs the firm to acquire. How the ROI is calculated depends on the method employed by the manager. As a rule of thumb, the best measure of ROI in the capital budgeting context is the net present value method, which indicates that the projects that provide the highest positive net present value should be given the highest rank.

There is no magical ROI threshold that is appropriate for each security investment or capital budgeting project. Each investment must be evaluated according to its risk profile, the firm’s cost of capital, and norms of the industry in which the firm operates. Moreover, it is necessary to evaluate the ROI over relatively long periods of time, say 5 to 10 years, to get a feel of how a firm deals with the ups and downs of the business cycle.

Public relations is one of many organizational functions that is called upon to enhance businesses’ ROI. For this reason, strategies such as publicity and promotion are used to support marketing. Also, public relations can help reduce costs by successful crisis and issues management.

Henry Hardt

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Issues Management; Management Theory; Promotion; Publicity

RHETORICAL ARENA (CRISIS THEORY)

The rhetorical arena is a theory of crisis communication emphasizing the complex and dynamic nature of organizational crises. Crisis communication research typically is interested in studying how organizations in crisis defend their image or

reputation applying various types of crisis response strategies (cf. image repair theory), or how situational factors such as the attribution of crisis responsibility to the organization in crisis made by stakeholders have or should have an impact on the choice of response strategy (cf. situational crisis communication theory). Thus, with a few exceptions, there has been a strong focus on the crisis communication produced exclusively by the organization in crisis, and not by other actors involved.

The theory of the rhetorical arena tries to remedy for this bias by introducing a multivocal approach. In a crisis situation, an arena opens up and a multitude of voices start communicating: the spokesperson of the organization; employees trying to make sense out of what is happening; news media pointing out “heroes and villains”; citizens attacking the organization on Facebook or Twitter; politicians linking the crisis to their political agenda; public relations experts commenting on the crisis preparedness of the organization, for example.

The rhetorical arena is inspired by complexity science claiming that a crisis is an open complex system consisting of a large numbers of elements (the voices) interacting dynamically and in nonlinear ways. Individual voices are typically ignorant of the behavior of the whole system in which they are embedded.

Another source of inspiration is Niklas Luhmann’s theory of social systems according to which communication is not the transmission of messages between a sender and a receiver, but a process of selection: (1) the selection of information, (2) the selection of utterance, and (3) the expectation of success, that is, the expectation that the selection will be observed, understood, accepted, and used as a basis for further connections.

The theory of the rhetorical arena includes a two-layered model consisting of a macrocomponent and a microcomponent. The sociological macrocomponent describes the arena itself providing an analytical overview of all the voices and the complex and dynamic configuration of communicative processes taking place inside the arena (see Figure 1).

Corporate as well as noncorporate voices meet, compete, collaborate, and negotiate. The relationships between the voices vary according to their resources (economic, political, and symbolic capital) as well as their access to power, influence, networks, and media. Inside the arena, dialogue and consensus (the goal of excellent crisis public relations) are more an exception than a rule.

The communicative processes form specific patterns combining two or more interactions. Some of these patterns are not coded and emerge in unexpected ways, whereas others are coded, for instance

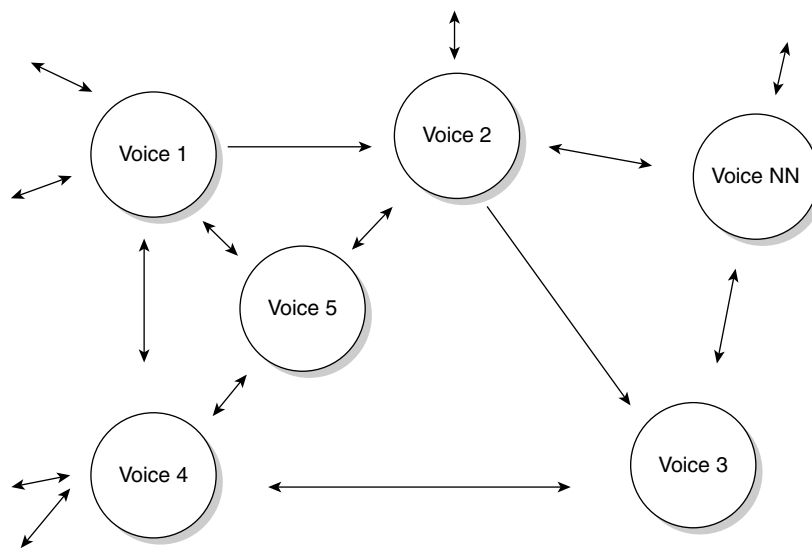


Figure 1 Macrocomponent of the Rhetorical Arena

Source: Johansen, W., & Frandsen, F. (2007). *Krisekommunikation*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

as a specific course of events forming a discourse history. An example of this is the press release, one of the most popular text genres in crisis communication. Typically an organization in crisis sends out a press release informing the media, in a preformulated way, about the crisis event and its role. The press release is then read and interpreted by the news media turning it into a news article, which is then again read and interpreted by the readers transforming the article into a conversation, a blog, or a tweet.

The rhetorical microcomponent accounts for the individual communicative processes taking place between senders and receivers in the arena (see Figure 2). The model consists of three elements (crisis communication, sender, and receiver) and four parameters (context, media, genre, and text) articulating the specific “choices” made by the voices and thus having an impact on the form and content of the crisis communication.

The most complex parameter, *context*, consists of psychological contexts (e.g., cognitive frames) as well as sociological contexts (e.g., the societal context, that is, national culture, economic, political, social, and legal conditions; the organizational context, that is, organizational structures and (sub)cultures; and the situational context). The

media parameter concerns the communicative characteristics of each type of medium influencing the how, when, where, and why of a crisis message. The *genre* parameter concerns “families of texts” sharing the same communicative purpose and the genre conventions guiding the identification and understanding of the texts. The last parameter, *text*, deals with various textual or discursive tactics, including all the verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources that can be mobilized in the production and reception of crisis messages.

The rhetorical arena is not a new version of the public sphere theory as established by Jürgen Habermas (the deliberative model) or Niklas Luhmann (the mirror model), respectively. The many voices communicating in a crisis situation are not only located in the public sphere (the media, citizens, politicians, and experts) but also appear in semipublic and private spaces (e.g., employees working for an organization in crisis). However, this doesn’t mean that the public sphere does not play an important role for how a crisis develops over time; the media, for example, often serve the function as “accelerators.”

The rhetorical arena is neither a new version of the stakeholder theory as formulated by American management scholar R. Edward Freeman (1984)

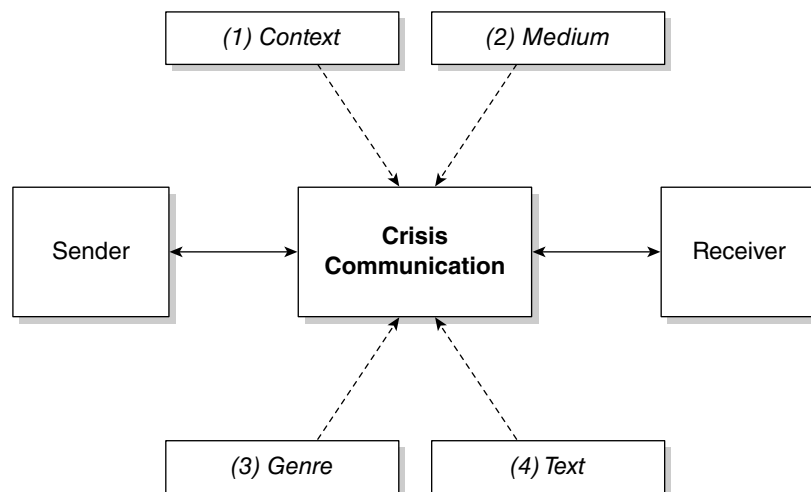


Figure 2 Microcomponent of the Rhetorical Arena

Source: Frandsen, F., & Johansen, W. (2010). Crisis communication, complexity, and the cartoon affair: A case study. In W. T. Coombs & S. J. Holladay (Eds.), *Handbook of crisis communication* (pp. 425–448). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. Reprinted with permission.

who defined stakeholders as groups and individuals who can affect, or are affected by, the achievement of an organization's mission. The stakeholder map generated by many an organization, also and perhaps especially in a crisis situation, only represents the "gaze" of one specific actor (the organization in crisis) and does not necessarily include all the voices inside the arena (e.g., unexpected third parties).

Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen

See also Chaos and Complexity Theory; Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Image Repair Theory; Managerial Bias in Crisis Communication; Public Sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*); Rhetorical Theory; Situational Crisis Communication Theory; Stakeholder Theory

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RHETORICAL THEORY

Messages and the meanings they produce are an essential result of public relations. Practitioners are in the message and meaning business. Among other concerns, public relations theory and professional best practices require a solid understanding of messages and the meaning they can create. Practitioners are paid to influence what people know, think, and do. The rhetorical heritage provides a long-standing and constantly developing body of

strategic and critical insights to help practitioners be effective and ethical in the way they create messages and participate in the process by which society creates meaning.

Systems theory is useful for understanding and shaping the process of public relations, but it fails to help practitioners and scholars understand the messages that are strategically and ethically relevant to each task. For over 2,000 years in Western civilization, the rhetorical heritage has examined the nature of messages and the strategic challenges in addressing rhetorical problems that demand the formation of shared meaning. Critical studies complete the troika of leading approaches to public relations. Some lines of critical investigation grow from the rhetorical heritage. Other approaches to criticism draw heavily on social theory to investigate and critique the roles large organizations play in the discourse of society.

Rhetorical theory features the role information and fact play in shaping knowledge and opinions as well as motivating actions. It addresses the ways that evaluations are debated and confirmed or challenged through discourse. People compete in public debate to assert the strength of their ideas and their interpretations of facts. They know that others may disagree. They often respond because they disagree. This spirited debate is the essence of the rhetorical heritage that values the right and ability of people to get messages and make judgments accordingly.

Rhetoric, as a term, has fallen on hard times in the past four decades. During the antiwar and activist protest era of the 1960s, the cry of the agitator in response to any establishment statement was "That is pure rhetoric." Rhetoric, instead of signaling informed and reasoned discourse, came to be associated with sham and hollowness. Media reporters picked up this meaning of the term.

By this influence, many people acquired a narrow and limited understanding of rhetoric as deceptive and shallow statements made falsely in an effort to manipulate and control rather than to reveal or assess fact, value, and policy. It is associated with spin, vacuous statements, propaganda, and pandering to audiences' interests. Some may see it only as telling people what they want to know or are willing to accept, rather than relying on judgments of knowledge, truth, and reason.

Adhering to the best Western rhetorical heritage, academic programs in English and speech communication include courses in rhetoric and rhetorical studies. Studied and taught in that context, the term *rhetoric* refers to the strategic options of communication influence within ethical standards. It is the rationale for suasive discourse. As a discipline, it addresses the ways people persuasively assert and challenge fact, value, and policy. It recognizes that humans deal with their lives through words and other influential symbols. They create collective action by appealing to one another. They dispute, cajole, agree, identify, challenge, and confirm. All of this is the domain of rhetoric, the rationale for forging conclusions and influencing actions. Rhetorical theory explains how people co-create meaning through dialogue that can define and build mutually beneficial relationships.

Rhetoric is the rationale for effective discourse. It consists of a well-established body of strategic guidelines regarding how messages need to be proved, structured, framed, and worded. It is concerned with how each message needs to be designed to be informative and persuasive. Because rhetorical theory arises out of disputes and differences of opinion, it offers guidelines on how people can negotiate differences and work together in collaborative decision making. It informs, creates divisions, and bridges divisions. It motivates people to make one choice in preference to another. If people everywhere shared the same information, opinion, and motives, there would be no need for rhetoric.

At its best, rhetoric is founded on the substance of good reasons and can help make society better for all. At its worst, it can involve deception, manipulation, slander, character assassination, distortion, misinformation, and disinformation.

Champions for the rhetorical heritage believe that freedom of discourse is the answer to the misuse of the art. The best corrective for deception, for instance, is a demonstrated case that one side of a controversy is engaging in deception. Public discourse, the forum of rhetoric, allows for combatants to challenge, correct, and elevate the discourse of society.

Society, according to Kenneth Burke, is a marketplace of competing ideas. This marketplace requires rhetoric that addresses “the Scramble, the Wrangle of the Marketplace, the flurries and flare-ups of the Human Barnyard, Give and Take, the wavering

line of pressure and counter pressure, the Logomachy, the onus of ownership, the War of Nerves, the War” (1969, p. 23). For society to function, actions of the people of society need to be coordinated. Cooperation, even competition, requires rhetoric to foster shared perspectives and ways of acting in concert. Each perspective is a way of thinking. It is based on a set of facts and an interpretation of those facts. Each perspective offers its unique way of viewing reality. The terms of the perspective focus attention in unique ways and feature some alternatives as being preferable to others. For instance, sports enthusiasts share a perspective in which athletic competition is entertaining. That perspective might clash with one that is based on the fine arts. We can easily imagine the perspective of a sports enthusiast leading to different motives compared with those by one who prefers the fine arts. One person, by this logic, would want to see a ball game rather than attend the opera or symphony. Family feuds come from competing perspectives. Religions constitute different perspectives. Perspectives are fostered and countered by marketing, advertising, and publicity. Some people want pickups, and others prefer sports cars. Some individuals support the unlimited possession of guns; others call for restraint, reflecting a different perspective. Activists—concerned citizens in a community—might argue with school board officials to oppose cuts in spending for the arts while athletics remains fully funded. Thus, rhetoric gives voice to competing preferences.

Championing the role of rhetoric in society, Christopher Lentz reasoned, “Truth should prevail in a market-like struggle where superior ideas vanquish their inferiors and achieve audience acceptance” (1996, p. 1). A scholar of the rhetorical heritage, George Kennedy recognized the role ancient Greek and Roman societies played in its development. “In its origin and intention rhetoric was natural and good: it produced clarity, vigor, and beauty, and it rose logically from the conditions and qualities of the classical mind” (1963, p. 3).

Rhetoric is enlivened with facts, as well as values and policy recommendations. It deals with choice. Which is best, most correct, and preferable? Rather than featuring rhetoric as vacuous statements, Aristotle believed that the communicator is obliged to prove any point he or she asserts. Proofs

of several kinds were the substance of rhetoric. These proofs were logical when they dealt with facts and reasoning. They featured emotions as part of human nature. They revealed the character of the speaker. In this way, an audience could assess the credibility of all speakers by considering the values on which they based their life and built their messages. The end to which all discourse should be aimed, Aristotle reasoned, was what was good for society. He worked to inspire people who used rhetoric to do so because it advanced the quality of society. Values and good reasons have been a classic ingredient of rhetorical discourse, along with a scrupulous interest in the soundness of arguments based on fact and flawless reasoning.

Ethics is a fundamental ingredient in rhetoric. Drawing from the work of Aristotle and other Greeks, a Roman teacher, Marcus Fabius Quintilian (1951), was firm: "My ideal orator, then, is the true philosopher, sound in morals and with full knowledge of speaking, always striving for the highest" (p. 20). He continued, "If a case is based on injustice, neither a good man [or woman] nor rhetoric has any place in it" (p. 106). Such advice should inspire organizations using public relations to seek first to be ethical as a prerequisite for sound communication. For more than 2,000 years, persons who have considered the nature and societal role of rhetoric have recognized the need to be ethical as a first step toward being an effective communicator. Any organization that does not aspire to the highest levels of corporate responsibility is likely to find that its actions discredit its statements. Actions speak, and speak louder than words.

Appeals to join one point of view, to make one choice in preference of another, is the rationale for rhetoric. People identify with one another as they share perspectives. Thus, perspectives become the basis of rhetorical appeals. Advocates reason that one perspective is superior to its competitors. They court others to agree, to see the world in a particular way, and to prefer some actions instead of others. Public relations uses identification in publicity. It informs, evaluates, and recommends. For instance, practitioners might publicize a baseball team, an amusement park, or a brand of exercise equipment.

Rhetoric entails appeals to make adjustments. Skilled communicators adapt ideas to people. They know that if ideas are too foreign, they will

be rejected. Ideas change slowly. A nonprofit organization might, for this reason, ask that donors adapt to the ideals and mission of the organization by giving modest amounts of money to support its charity. The nature of its charity has to be adapted to the people, by demonstrating that it fits with their values and preferences. Rhetoric also asks that people adjust to ideas. They might not at first accept the rationale for giving, but over time they can be convinced that this charity makes the community a better place to live.

Where there is agreement, rhetoric is not needed. Its rationale comes from uncertainty, doubt, difference of motive, and difference of opinion. In ancient Greece and Rome, individuals spoke in public to advocate one point of view in contest with competing views. Today, in an increasingly global society, organizations tend to speak or otherwise communicate instead of people. Even when individual voices stand out, they do so because they speak for an institution, an organization, and even a nation. The newsworthiness of their case is not only where they agree with others, but also where they disagree. This is as true for the promotion of products as it is for the advocacy of going to war or seeking peace. The voice might be a publicist for a small company advocating the virtues of its product or the president of a mighty nation seeking support for some policy or course of action.

Rhetoric can emphasize difference. Public relations practitioners may communicate to differentiate one product or service from another. Activists offer publics a choice between one vision of the future versus another. They might ask audiences to support them for increased sanctions against drunk driving as a choice to save lives and reduce injuries.

Rhetorical statements create narratives that give meaning to person's lives. We can imagine that narrative is one of the most characteristic forms of rhetorical statement. From childhood, we are taught that stories begin with "once upon a time" and may end "happily ever after." They might also have tragic endings. Narrative gives form and substance to rhetorical statements. Reporters use the form and substance in news reports. If the report is a crisis, then responding organizations engage in the narrative so that society eventually learns the "story" to account for what happened, why it happened, and what will be done to prevent its recurrence. Events, a standard public relations tool, are

designed to have narrative form and content. Practitioners want audiences to pay attention to see who is doing what, why, how, when, and where. One of the major publicity events each year in the United States is the Academy Awards ceremony. Prior to the big night—and following it—stories are told about actors and other artists to attract audiences to see who won, why they won, what they wore, how they reacted to victory or defeat, and where their movie will be playing next.

Large organizations and activists often engage in advocacy and counteradvocacy regarding narratives of the future. The focal question is whether certain products or services as well as operations will lead to a tragic end or a “happily ever after” outcome. This competition asks listeners, readers, and viewers to adopt one narrative, one vision of the future, and make choices based on that preference. Activists often use the rhetorical tactic of comparing a picture of a dire future to one that is better. They advocate changes to avoid the dire future and achieve the better one.

Society cannot function without rhetoric. When it is working at its best, rhetoric serves society in fostering enlightened choice. Its vitality originates from the reality that facts require interpretation, some values are better than others in making specific decisions, and policies always require contingency and expedience.

Each rhetorical statement is a strategic response to a rhetorical problem. A rhetorical problem is an exigency that must be addressed because it raises doubt on some matter relevant to the actions and choices made by an organization. This problem sets the conditions for an appropriate response. A crisis, for instance, might constitute a rhetorical problem. This problem is different depending on the cause of the crisis.

A rhetorical enactment view of public relations acknowledges that all of what each organization does and says becomes meaningful because of the interpretations—meaning—people place on those actions and statements. Markets, as well as publics, can be influenced by what the organization does and says—and by what it does not do or does not say.

Publics offer competing perspectives through their rhetorical efforts that challenge the views and actions of organizations. For instance, activists in a community might be concerned about soot emitted

from a manufacturing facility. They may call for higher standards of environmental aesthetics as well as of public health and safety. These calls might include letters to opinion leaders, speeches and rallies, and lobbying efforts with appropriate regulators. Disgruntled customers vote with their feet—and credit cards. They support one business by making a purchase from it. At the same time, this choice makes a statement of a lack of support for competitors.

Rhetorical theory champions the spirit and principles of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The right to speak is testimony to the positive role that public discourse plays in society. Rhetoric is a body of principles and strategies that strengthens the voice and enlivens the ideas of competing points of view. As it informs the way individuals communicate for themselves, it also is relevant to the practice of public relations. It offers strategies and challenges, but ultimately rests on the principle that to be effective each individual or organization needs first to be ethical, good.

Robert L. Heath

See also Activism; Collaborative Decision Making; Critical Theory; Event Management; Promotion; Propaganda; Publicity; Publics; Stakes; Systems Theory

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RIGHT TO KNOW

The right to know evolved in two distinct periods. In its preconceptual form, it was a right to be educated about the purposes of government and to be informed about the actions of government as formulated by John Milton, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, John Wilson, and James Madison, among others. In its contemporary understanding, the people's right to know is a mechanism to empower people through education and knowledge so they can watch over governments and industries and improve their lives regarding health, safety, economic, and environmental concerns.

After the failure to expressly include a right to know in the U.S. Constitution, the first attempts to establish a right to know as law came from a few legal scholars and journalists during the 1950s. Harold Cross, a retired attorney for a newspaper, made the term *right to know* popular with the publication of *The Public's Right to Know*. Three years after the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act of 1966 (FOIA), another statute carrying a different version of the right to know was enacted as a direct consequence of the efforts of the Environmental Movement: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. However, the right to know in NEPA, as in FOIA, was still not fully developed.

The ideological concept of the right to know has never been fully recognized by the Supreme Court or clearly stated in a federal law until the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986. It's important to highlight both the *preventive* and *participatory* characteristics of the right to know in EPCRA as they represent a good first step to empower citizens to act directly in the policymaking process. EPCRA differentiates from previous laws like the FOIA in that it brought a right to petition the government for information

but not a right to know with the preventive and participatory characteristics. Furthermore, EPCRA also included private corporations into the mix of entities that needed to make the information available, recognizing them as part of the group of institutions that directly affected the public interest.

Susan Hadden (1989) developed a contemporary four-level concept of right to know applied to environmental risks that provides a solid summary of the concept as it relates to public relations and other communication fields. The *basic level* has the purpose of ensuring that citizens can find information. The *risk reduction level* aims to reduce risks, preferably through voluntary industry action but also by government if necessary. The *better decision-making level* allows citizens to participate in the decision-making process, and the *alter balance of power level* empowers citizens to participate in the decision-making process in the same or higher standing than government and industry.

Community right to know fits in the overall construction of marketplace advocacy. Ultimately right to know is about advocating social justice communication for environmental issues, risks and crises, and moving beyond the sovereignty of consumer choice as one of the guiding communication mechanisms.

Michael J. Palenchar

See also Community Relations; Crisis Communication; Ethics of Public Relations; Risk Communication

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RISK COMMUNICATION

Risk communication is a community infrastructure, transactional, discursive communication process among individuals and organizations regarding the

character, cause, degree, significance, uncertainty, acceptance, and control of a risk. Risk communication provides the opportunity to understand and appreciate risk bearers' and other stakeholders' concerns related to risks generated by organizations and nature, engage in dialogue to address differences and concerns, carry out appropriate actions that can mitigate perceived risks, and create a climate of participatory and effective discourse as a rationale for collaborative decision making for a more fully functioning society. This definition incorporates that the purpose of risk communication is not necessarily to reduce the sense of risk or risk awareness but to engage and encourage vigilant community stakeholders regarding its discussion and management. This logic suggests that infrastructures within a society are created, changed, and managed to discuss, challenge and make enlightened decisions relevant to risk tolerance, mitigation, and communication.

Following the lead of anthropologist Mary Douglas that the rationale for the industrialized and the evolving technological society is the collective management of risk, in the past three decades the concept of risk's broad application and examination has become adopted across multiple academic disciplines, including public relations. Identifying or pointing to a specific date or event that launched risk communication is challenging as it grew organically out of a variety of perspectives and initiatives, whether they are community-based activism, government response, or industry initiated. Researchers have argued that the field of risk studies and in particular risk communication matured in the 1970s and 1980s as evidenced by the appearance of distinct paradigms, models, and conceptual frameworks that provided structure and coherence through scientific investigation, case studies, and empirical findings, as well as the emergence of professional risk societies that focus on risk communication, specialized journals, and academic programs.

Concepts of risk have a common element, which is the distinction between possible and chosen action; thus, risk is inherent in being human. Risk communication can be part of and influence these choices. As risk bearers, humans learn to live in varying degrees of comfort with ambiguity, contradiction, and imperfection. The

challenge when addressing risk is uncertainty; that change has no constituency. There is always a constituency for staying the same but change is a risk. So change (risk) needs a voice, an advocate in favor or disfavor, and that advocacy is often through risk communication.

Risk communication public relations campaigns typically involve large organizations, such as manufacturing facilities, whose activities can pose a risk to key members of a community. Other types of risk communication campaigns are managed among risk bearers and risk arbiters, activists and nongovernmental organizations, working to better manage the health, safety, and environmental impacts of risk-generating organizations.

Numerous multidisciplinary approaches to risk communication have been advocated over the past 30 years. Some of the significant research agendas related to risk communication include the following: (1) risk perception/expressed preference, (2) mental models, (3) precaution advocacy/outrage management, (4) infrastructural, (5) sociocultural, and (6) critical theoretical. *Risk perception/expressed preference* is based on years of risk analysis and perception research that has focused on the discrepancy between potential and actual risk bearers' perceptions of environmental and technological risks, and those of the science and policy experts. This landmark research focused on concepts such as dread, unknown, involuntary, unfamiliar, uncontrollable, unfair, memorable, acute, focused in time and space, fatal, delayed, artificial, and undetectable as key psychometric variables.

Second, through the integration of decision theory and behavioral research, the *mental models* approach of risk communication is based on the concept of how people understand and view various phenomena grounded in cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence research. Mental modeling suggests that those affected by a risk will create their own interpretation of the event based on the construction and interpretation of the information within their own cognitive processes. Successful integration of information with existing beliefs requires creating coherent mental models, allowing people to make sense of what they hear and make consistent inferences regarding bearing risks.

The *precaution advocacy/outrage management* perspective of risk communication is based on the

concept that precautionary communication is used to alert people to hazards that people are insufficiently concerned about, while outrage management is used to calm people who are overly concerned about less hazardous situations. The *infrastructure model* of risk communication features building and sustaining relationships that foster discourse and the sharing of perceptions, and communication and action structures based on shared meanings across varied and multiple constituencies, issues, and levels of understanding. Risk assessors and communicators realize that each key public makes an idiosyncratic response to each risk based on its unique decision heuristic.

A *sociocultural perspective* toward risk communication is based on the experiences of everyday life and is not necessarily about management problems but about the relationship risk communication has with respect to the societies in which it is produced and to the social systems it coproduces. Last, *critical theoretical* scholarship has recently become an increasing focus of risk communication research. While applied scholarship has been critical of policy and practice within the field, as well as challenging early assumptions of risk communication, it routinely, either intentionally or unintentionally, disregarded issues such as socioeconomic status and power, especially historically constructed power relations, on which critical theoretical researchers focus. Oftentimes, risk communication studies are still fundamentally dominated by rational, logical, and predictable approaches.

From a historical perspective, risk communication research and activities took on a source-oriented, linear approach to communication, characterized as an exchange of information about risk among interested parties. During this period, classified as the technical risk assessment period, industrial spokespersons were advised to appease or assuage publics' apprehension by being credible and clear. Risk communication progressed beyond a source-oriented approach to a more interactive risk perception and risk management approach, where communication is viewed as an interactive process of exchange of information and opinion among individuals, groups, and institutions. However, these models overassume the power of information and rational decision making and do not acknowledge the power resources that concerned publics employ to

exert political pressure in their effort to impose higher operating standards on the source of the ostensibly intolerable risk.

The current version of risk communication features complex social relations operating within community infrastructures. Within this process, risk communication requirements are often a political response to popular demands. Numerous researchers have argued that the main product of risk communication is not necessarily information or access to information, but the quality of the social relationship it supports and the ability of that information and relationship to engage in transparent decision making related to managing risk.

If exposure to risk is not new, then why is there a renaissance in risk communication? Researchers have suggested numerous reasons, including a long-term decline in public confidence and trust in traditional social institutions—especially government and industry; the growth in environmental and right-to-know legislation; a dramatic growth in the rise of citizen environmental and other activist groups and nongovernmental organizations; and new media technologies (e.g., social media) that potentially provide risk bearers, activist groups, and related organizations greater access to information and organization decision making, and the direct creation and distribution of such information, for increased community dialogue about risk. This is a major institutional shift in society moving from trust in public institutions to trust in citizens groups.

Ultimately, communication scholars have developed numerous typologies of best risk communication practices, including risk communication theme group researchers with the National Center for Food Protection and Defense (NCFPD) which suggests the following guidelines: risk and crisis communication is an ongoing process; conduct pre-event planning and preparedness activities; foster partnerships with publics; collaborate and coordinate with credible sources; meet the needs of media and remain accessible; listen to publics' concerns and understand audience; communicate with compassion, concern, and empathy; demonstrate honesty, candor, and openness; accept uncertainty and ambiguity; and give people meaningful actions to do (self-efficacy).

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See also Age of Deference, End of the; Crisis Communication; Issues Management; Mental Models Approach to Risk Communication; Precautionary Principle; Resilient Communities; Right to Know; Risk Perception; Risk Society; Social Amplification of Risk

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RISK PERCEPTION

Although risks have been elements of human life since time immemorial, the diversity and complexity of modern reality make individuals more exposed to risks, in both private and professional life. At the organizational level, various networks of both national and international character shape the company's performance, and it is, consequently, the task of both managers and workers to perceive risks and respond to them.

Risk perception is understood as the process of observing, recognizing, and understanding something or somebody that may cause harm, loss, or

danger. Risk perception is characterized by people's judgments as well as how individuals describe and estimate hazards and dangers. Thus, risk perception in public relations involves the risk apprehension and estimation by various stakeholders, at the internal and external level of organizations as well as the examination of similarities, differences, and even contradictions in the way diversified stakeholders perceive the same risks.

Taking into account the methodology of risk perception, various theories explain underlying risk apprehension and estimation. One way of discussing risk perception is to divide current theories into the following categories: classical decision analysis, psychological decision theory, social-psychological judgment and attitude theory, sociological systems theory, and policy analysis. Classical decision analysis deals with the rational reasons of making choices. Psychological decision theory (together with social judgment theory) focuses on the individual processing of ideas, taking into account the social perception of rationality and motivational factors. Social-psychological research concentrates on the relation between the social value system and one's personal attitudes and choices. In sociological studies researchers concentrate on group attitude to risks, taking into account social values, power relations, and group opinions.

Another approach in the studies on risk perception is the fuzzy-trace theory that specifies that any meaningful inputs are assumed to be encoded into memory in two forms: a verbatim representation that is objective and reflects the real situation and a gist representation that is derived from the subjective interpretation of the current state. The gist representation depends on various cultural factors, such as one's identity, gender, social role, life experience, and genetic aspects.

In consequence, the same information can be perceived differently by two people, depending on their attitude toward risk since risk perception depends on various individual and group characteristics. Taking into account the societal dimension of risk perception, certain zones of meaning can be traced in the communities since group members vary in terms of risk knowledge, attitudes to risk, and interest in information on risks. There is also a difference in risk perception of laymen and professionals. Although lay people may have limited information on hazards, their

conceptualization may be richer since they take the variety of factors into account, as well as the ones omitted in expert opinions. Taking the cognitive sphere of apprehension and estimation into account, risk perception is determined by several factors such as the suspected losses, disaster potential, and risk circumstances.

Risk perception can be also studied through the risk perception model by Vincent T. Covello (2010). The following factors determining risk perception can be exemplified: trust, voluntariness, controllability, familiarity, fairness, benefits, catastrophic potential, understanding, uncertainty, delayed effects, effects on children, effects on future generation, victim identity, dread, media attention, accident history, reversibility, personal stake, ethical and moral nature, and human versus natural origin. Risk perception can be also researched by taking into account the four semantic images of risk in public perception by Ortwin Renn. The first one, called *pending danger*, encompasses artificial risks that have large catastrophic potential but their randomness is perceived as a threat. The second one encompasses *slow agents* that concern artificial ingredients in food, water, or air and have delayed and noncatastrophic results, with high tendency to blame the responsible entity. *Cost-benefit ratio*, on the other hand, concerns money-related advantages and disadvantages directed at the variance of distribution and discrepancies between risks and gains as well as probabilistic thinking. The fourth element, *avocational thrill*, concerns individual's control over the influence of risk, skills that are indispensable to comprehend danger, voluntariness of actions, and noncatastrophic results.

Perception of risks depends on different visual and verbal elements. For example, pictorial and verbal metaphors may strengthen or weaken the way a given risk is perceived. Moreover, due to the fact that most of the data to which one is exposed goes unnoticed, symbolic communication, especially metaphors (both verbal and nonverbal) draw attention to a particular risk and make one interested in the metaphorically presented risks.

Magdalena Bielenia-Grajewska

See also Communication Management; Risk Communication; Risk Society; Zones of Meaning

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RISK SOCIETY

The risk society thesis, initially conceptualized by German sociologist Ulrich Beck in 1986, has been proclaimed a significant theoretical milestone in the social sciences. Beck's perspective on understanding the changes in late modern society is unique. In contrast to postmodernism, he describes today's societies as the extension of industrial societies. Five interrelated societal changes mark core ideas of Beck's risk society theory: the new quality of risks, reflexive modernity, the transformed role of science, the development of subpolitical arenas, and the fragmentation of social structures.

First, in their quest to create wealth, industrial societies developed technologies that produced many "goods" for society but also brought unforeseeable consequences, the "bads" or new or elevated

risks. These uncontrollable, manufactured risks characterize the risk society and have penetrated and created change in all levels of society. Defined in contrast to purely nature-based risks from past human experiences—such as natural disasters or diseases—manufactured risks are man-made, global, and delayed in onset. They defy calculations and are therefore uninsurable. As these risks cannot be experienced directly they require expert definition. Catastrophes are risks manifested.

Second, the risk society is reflexive, meaning increasingly concerned with its own results. Extending beyond Anthony Giddens's or Scott Lash's conceptualizations of reflexive modernity, which focus on knowledge or reflection of the modernization process, Beck also includes the dimension of non-knowing or unawareness. Knowledge, so Beck reasons, is tied to expert definitions of risks, whereas unawareness of risks and its consequences opens up spaces for competing discourse. Due to this shift, the role of science and the meaning construction of risk have opened new realms for public debate. Due to the complexity of unawareness and manufactured uncertainties, science no longer provides answers to anticipate the potential harm of a risk. With new technologies and economic developments scientists can no longer predict, calculate, or ensure which side effects will emerge and what their consequences may be. Risk research is conducted while risks are being created. As experts are struggling to gain knowledge, people may be experiencing the harmful impacts from risks. Nevertheless, laypersons' experiences with risks do not hold equal status to scientific knowledge.

However, in conjunction with the development of the subpolitical arena, more coconstruction of the meaning, definition, and approaches to risk from both experts and laypeople are debated. With more knowledge, personal experience, and uncertainty about potential consequences, people form subpolitical, social, and activist movements around issues. With the wealth of risks, these movements become more pronounced but also fragmented, mirroring developments in technology and science itself where specialization hinders integration of complex risk interactions.

An increase in risk bearers' voices is partially tied to the individualization processes triggered by risk distribution and new labor market trends. Individuals now have to create and follow individualized

life paths based on personal decisions and self-reflexivity. The responsibility for risk impacts has largely been shifted away from the manufacturers of the risks to the risk bearers who must make decisions based on limited scientific knowledge and personal experiences.

Most risk society criticism falls into one of two lines of reasoning: First, the global character of the theory is questioned as most examples and explanations seem to flow from Germany or Western societies. This line of criticism includes feminist and critical theorists who point to a lack of diverse perspectives in the formulation of the risk society. Beck, however, has recently addressed these points with his view on the cosmopolitization function of risk. Second, although individualization is a core element in the development of risk societies, the individual level of analysis and human agency play only a small role. How individuals make sense of risks and react to them but also how organizations use this knowledge in their risk communication, advertising, and management are not sufficiently discussed.

Communication scholars have slowly adopted the ideas of the risk society into their work. Beck identified communication as an element within risk society, however, but did not give it a central role. Implicitly, the construction of risk perceptions, creation of subpolitical movements, and social changes are driven by communication. In today's world risk societies, organizations have to communicate to retain legitimacy and trust, politics are negotiated within the subpolitical arena, and science experts share their findings about risks and impacts with organizations, politics, and laypeople. Also, in risk societies communication effectiveness becomes more situational and issue or scenario focused (Knight, 2004). Long-term credibility and trust gains in importance in risk discourse. How well an organization mastered past risk events is used to analyze its uncertainty reduction capabilities. Thus, reputations of organizations matter; especially as the risk discourse is speculative in nature, an organization's corporate social responsibility strategy and perceived ability to address uncertainty will determine which potential future risk scenario is lived out in the present.

Beck mentions that it is the role of public relations professionals to present their organizations' voice in the public discourse with the goal to reduce manufactured uncertainty. The risk society

however provides more avenues for public relations. Richard Jones (2002) drew further conclusions for public relations professionals, focusing on the development of subpolitics through value and identity. Both characterize organizational publics in the risk society. Although publics seem to form around issues, the public debate is driven by underlying and deep-rooted values and identity. For publics and organizations issues are tied to their sense of identity, making it more challenging to foster change. Jones also underscores public relations' integral role in the discourse arena. Here publics co-create meaning through communication about issues. More room for future public relations research relying on tenets of the risk society remains.

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See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Issues Management; Public Sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*); Publics; Risk Communication

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RULES THEORY

Rules theory addresses the cultural and societal prescriptions and proscriptions for communicating in specific cultural contexts, with the idea that following and surpassing expectations for communication rules will lead to more favorable communication outcomes. Applied to public relations, rules theory can be used to examine the communicator's message strategy, the audience's evaluation of the communicator, and use of rules for relationship management. In the practice of

public relations, rules theory from the communicator's perspective addresses the ways organizations must, must not, should, or should not communicate with their publics in order to achieve their goals. Specific communication goals are often specified as compliance gaining; relationship formation, maintenance, or dissolution; persuasion; and consensus building. Although research on rules theory has accumulated in the disciplines of organizational communication, social psychology, and sociology, the application of rules theory to the area of public relations is relatively recent.

The origin of rules theory has been credited to the 1953 publication of Austrian-born philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's book *Philosophical Investigations* (Shimanoff, 1980). The introduction of rules theory for communication is often credited to Donald P. Cushman and Gordon C. Whiting (1972). Their approach was influenced by the symbolic interactionist perspective developed by George H. Mead and focused on how communication is used to accomplish goals and construct meaning.

The first communication scholar to thoroughly synthesize previous definitions of rules to differentiate rules from other concepts and to offer methods for measuring rules and developing theory was Susan B. Shimanoff in her book *Communication Rules: Theory and Research* published in 1980.

Although scholars may have different views on rules, most agree communication rules are invoked in situations of human communication—whether it is interpersonal, group, organizational, or mass communication. Rules are socially constructed and are distinguished by their strength, the perceived consequences of noncompliance, and their contextual range. Shimanoff wrote, “A rule is a followable prescription that indicates what behavior is obligated, preferred, or prohibited in certain contexts” (1980, p. 57). In her work, Shimanoff noted that another characteristic of a rule is that it must be tangibly or otherwise followable.

Cushman (1977) has pointed out that for rules to be present, parties in communication must agree upon what constitutes the rules for communication. This suggests that communication conflict may occur if rules are not shared. In addition, Cushman has noted that part of what makes

rules contextual is that not only are they tied to specific situations, but that they are also determined by the communicator's role (i.e., a public relations officer may address a group of activists differently than an employee group). Rules are not the same as descriptive norms, laws, habits, heuristics, and principles (see Shimanoff [1980] and Cushman [1977] for concept explications). Rules are quite similar to the psychological concept of injunctive norms, which examine how people respond to messages about what is considered correct social behavior (Jacobson, Mortensen, & Cialdini, 2011).

Rule Strength

Rules generate their power from the perceived social consequences of compliance, which serve as enforcements. This social force originates from our knowledge, experience, or perception of the social judgment that will be made about us for following or not following a rule. The social judgments that result from adhering to or defying rules may result in some form of either censure or approval. The degree of censure or approval corresponds to the strength of the rule that was (un)heeded.

Shimanoff introduced three kinds of rules classified by their strength: prohibitive, obligatory, and preferred. She defined prohibitive rules as those that tell us what one *must not* do (e.g., furnish the media with inflated earning reports), whereas obligatory rules prescribed what one *must* do (e.g., appear before a U.S. congressional hearing regarding workplace policy and mine safety). These two types of rules were considered to have greater social force than the third rule she identified, preferred rules. Preferred rules, accordingly, dictate what one *should* or *should not* do. The probability that judgments about the communicator will result from not honoring preferred rules is less certain than the probability that judgments will result if one defies an obligatory or prohibitive rule.

Cushman and Whiting (1972) distinguished rule strength in their discussion of procedural rules, or rules about communication order and interaction. The authors use different terms to describe rules. For them, rules can be formal (more permanent) or informal (more flexible). The authors also proposed that rules must be able to be

presented as “in context X, Y is required or permitted” (p. 228). For example, when an organization holds a press conference, journalists should be allowed to ask questions. Rules that are required are considered formal rules; those that are permitted are perceived as more informal because the consequences of rule compliance, censure, or approval are applied less severely. As Shimanoff (1980) noted, use of the term *preferred* is better than *permitted*, because, she argued, the latter does not imply that sanctions or rewards are applied.

Shimanoff noted that rules differ by their intensity: “The intensity of a rule is measured by the degree of its salience in a given situation: the less important a rule, the less likely deviations from that rule will be negatively sanctioned” (1980, p. 97). Here, she suggested that even among obligatory rules, some carry more weight in an evaluation than do others (i.e., covering up corporate negligence and disregard for car passenger safety may be viewed as more severe than telling a reporter, “No comment”).

Compliance

Rule compliance specifies whether rules are followed. Shimanoff suggested that rules can be either met or violated and indicated that rules for preferred behavior were “empowered by rewards rather than punishments, but smaller or fewer rewards may be viewed as a type of punishment” (1980, p. 94). For Shimanoff, rule violations were measured on a continuum and meeting rules was viewed as dichotomous.

It has been suggested that rule compliance be designated as a continuum. Rule violations occur when rules are not followed and lead to negative evaluations (i.e., the company does not take responsibility for the safety of its products, blames an employee, and is rated negatively). Rules are met when the individual follows the rule (i.e., the company takes responsibility for its product's defect). The new concept introduced is that of surpassing the rule. This happens when the rule is followed but also exceeds expectations in the positive direction (i.e., not only does the company accept responsibility, but it reimburses its customers for the cost of the product). The idea is that rule compliance varies and hence censure and approval, as well as rewards and sanctions, also vary by strength.

Contextual Range

A rule's contextual range relates to the variety of situations in which a rule can be applied. Cushman and Whiting (1972) defined the range of rules as "the number of different contexts or circumstances in which the same action is applicable" (p. 233). In other words, some rules are more generally applied across situations, whereas others are more restricted to use in specific circumstances.

An examination of rules theory at the interpersonal level has suggested that if there is co-orientation between communicators on rules (i.e., communicators understand and agree on the interpretation of rules), then communication symmetry is possible. Thus, communication becomes dialogic.

An exploratory study identified communication rules held by consumers for interacting with both informational and e-commerce websites (Len-Ríos, 2003). The research found different expectations depending on whether the website's main function is to provide information (e.g., news websites) or to sell products to consumers (e.g., e-commerce). This research indicates that at the level of person-to-organization communication, rules are dependent on the role of the individual (consumer vs. news reader) and on the role of the organization (e-commerce vs. informational site).

More recently, Maria E. Len-Ríos, Amanda Hinnant, and Sun-A Park wrote research that has been conducted in the realm of media relations, investigating health journalists' rules for using health information subsidies (2009). Surveys of health journalists revealed that as a whole, they viewed using public relations materials from universities and local health departments more favorably than they did using public relations materials from businesses or the federal government. Results also suggested that different types of news organizations (i.e., broadcast vs. newspaper and local vs. national) had different rule preferences concerning what news sources were more appropriate to use in developing their news stories.

Rules theory can also be used in studying the way practitioners should communicate with audiences in times of crisis (Len-Ríos, 2008). Barry Schlenker and Bruce Darby (1981) examined the social rules for providing apologies. They found that rules for apologies varied by how responsible

the individuals felt the offender was for the accident and the severity of the resulting injury. The researchers learned that people expect more complete apologies when the consequences of an accident are more severe.

While rules theory in communication has often been concerned with how a communicator should communicate, researchers in psychology have used the similar concept of injunctive norms (or perceived rules) to understand how publics will respond to promotional messages that include messages about social behaviors. Much of this work is based on research by psychology professor Robert B. Cialdini who has advanced the *focus theory of normative conduct* (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990; Jacobson, Mortensen, & Cialdini, 2011) that examines how people respond to messages when there is a tension between what a person should do and what everyone else is actually doing (descriptive norms). For instance, in the area of health promotion, Rajiv Rimal and Kevin Real (2003) studied, for the purpose of understanding how to reduce alcohol consumption on college campuses, how perceived rules (or injunctive norms) and group identity influenced college students' drinking behaviors. They found that "those who perceived that society *disapproves* of consumption and simultaneously believe that most of their peers drink were themselves more likely to drink" (p. 197, italics in original). From this, a rule for the subgroup of consumers can be inferred: College students should not conform to societal expectations because most other students do not. This study also shows that among particular publics there can be reactance to rules designated by the larger society.

Research on rules from the interpersonal literature is particularly relevant for the areas of relational public relations and crisis management. In the 1980s, rules theory was applied to organizational communication to examine how rules affected communication within organizations. Since the 1980s, academics have studied communication between supervisors and employees and the perceived appropriateness of displays of emotion in the workplace.

Although rules theory is relatively new to public relations, it is used (a) to examine co-orientation to foster symmetrical communication, (b) to determine how communication affects perceived relationships

between individuals and an organization, and (c) to identify and predict how messages will be received and effect behavior change.

María E. Len-Ríos

See also Codes of Public Relations Practice; Corporate Social Responsibility; Online Public Relations; Public Health Campaign; Risk Society

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S

SAMPLING

Sampling refers to the process of selecting the people or the objects to be used in an analysis. Although sampling is most commonly associated with surveys, sampling also can be used to select messages for analysis. For example, a practitioner may be interested in examining a subset of the news stories that appeared about a product recall, a lawsuit, or a plant opening. Although this discussion will focus on sampling people, similar principles can be applied to sampling messages.

Researchers use sampling when they cannot survey everyone from the population of interest. A population refers to the group of people of interest. A census is when researchers are able to survey everyone from the population. However, typically this is not feasible. Researchers determine a sampling frame—a complete list of the membership of the population from which they will select their sample. The sampling frame is composed of the set of people that have a chance to be sampled. Researchers use a sampling method to obtain a sample, a subset of the population that is used to represent the population. A primary goal is to ensure that the sample closely matches the population so that one can generalize from the sample to the population. In other words, you want the sample to represent the population. This discussion briefly overviews basic concepts associated with sampling. Readers should consult additional references for more detailed information.

There are two categories of sampling methods: (a) probability (scientific) sampling and (b) non-probability (convenience or nonscientific) sampling. Probability sampling requires the use of a random selection of people to be included in the sample. Every member of the population has a known probability of being included in the sample. Probability sampling is preferred because it can provide more accurate, unbiased data and permits the calculation of the sampling error. Sampling error often is reported as the “margin of error” and reflects how confident the researcher can be in the accuracy of the results. Sampling error is calculated using a formula that assumes the random selection of cases to be included.

Sample size is a concern for researchers because it affects the accuracy of the sample. Statistics books provide tables indicating the sample size desired for a particular level of confidence in the accuracy of the results.

Commonly used strategies for probability sampling include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling. Simple random sampling resembles drawing the sample from names put in a hat. Names of the members of the sampling frame are put into the hat and the desired number are drawn. Computer programs can be used to approximate pulling names from a hat.

A second sampling method is systematic random sampling. This method requires an unordered list of members of the sampling frame (e.g., members are not ordered by geographic region, age, or any other characteristic). A starting point is selected randomly (e.g., the 12th, 37th, or 101st

name on the list) and every n th name (e.g., every 11th, 20th, or 35th name) is selected for inclusion in the sample.

A third method of random sampling is stratified sampling. It is called stratified because the people are organized (stratified) based upon some characteristic of interest, such as age, ethnicity, or sex. These stratification variables are selected because you believe they would make a difference in how people would respond to your survey. Then simple random sampling or systematic sampling is used to select a proportional representation from each strata of interest. For example, if your sampling frame is comprised of 70% women and 30% men, you may want to ensure that those proportions of women and men are evidenced in your final sample. This would enhance the precision of your sample.

Although random sampling methods are preferred, it may be impossible to meet the requirements for probability sampling. In this case, researchers use nonprobability sampling. However, it is important to note that nonprobability sampling precludes calculation of sampling error, offers questionable generalizability, and is subject to bias in participant selection. Nonprobability samples demonstrate bias because respondents are not selected randomly. Perhaps the survey participants differed from those who did not participate on important variables of interest, such as attitudes toward the organization or the campaign. Data obtained from the survey participants may not reflect the data that would have been obtained from a randomly selected sample. Researchers often turn to nonprobability sampling when a complete sample frame is difficult to determine or cost considerations make probability sampling less attractive.

Convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling often are used. In convenience sampling, a sample is selected based upon being in the right place at the right time to be asked to participate. For example, people walking by a kiosk in a shopping mall might be asked to complete a survey. Or people waiting in line for an art exhibit might be asked to participate. Their availability and willingness to complete the survey are the basis for their inclusion in the sample.

Purposive sampling is used when researchers need to select participants who possess certain

characteristics of interest. Characteristics might include having used a particular product, knowledge of a controversial issue, or a subscription to a local newspaper. For example, a researcher might be interested in the opinions of people who have seen a series of public service ads (PSAs) on television. The researcher does not want to include those who have not seen the PSAs since they would not be able to answer the survey questions. The researcher might attempt to recruit participants at community picnics, driver's license facilities, and high school football games. The researcher only asks those who have seen the PSAs to participate in the surveys.

In snowball (network) sampling, a person who has already participated in a survey might recruit others to participate through word-of-mouth referrals. Participants give researchers access to other potential participants who might be recruited by the researcher. This method is useful when organizations are reluctant to release the names of their members due to confidentiality issues (e.g., support groups for families of alcoholics) or when informal networks of people who are likely to be interested in or affected by the same issues need to be reached (e.g., dog owners who are concerned about or might be affected by a community action such as dog owners using a dog park or participating in local events involving dogs). For example, a researcher might be interested in the attitudes of "soccer moms" toward the proposed building of a soccer field near a landfill. Because the city's soccer club organizers do not release the names of people involved in the club, the researcher contacts a few soccer moms who then provide the names of other soccer moms who could be contacted for participation in the survey.

Sherry J. Holladay

See also Evaluative Research; Formative Research; Public Relations Research; Survey

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SANDBAGGING

Sandbagging is a term used to describe the efforts of an organization or an individual to avoid answering questions asked by reporters or key publics. Sometimes the response is as simple as “No comment.” At the extreme, the response is couched in more complex terms, such as “We are establishing a commission to investigate. When we have found the facts, we will report them.”

The term has military roots. For example, in the late 19th century it meant “to strike unexpectedly; to take by surprise.” In the early 20th century, it meant “to intimidate, coerce, bully as by threats.” This slang term further shows up as a verb in cooperation with “ghosting” and “goldbricking” when referenced as a Vietnam War slang term to mean “hiding out in the rear as if not seen.”

This slang term also appears as part of mainstream gambling terminology—“to downplay or misrepresent one’s ability in a game or activity in order to deceive (someone), especially in gambling.” Further, various online dictionaries describe this term (verb) as follows: “to treat harshly or unfairly; to misinform, mislead—to give false or misleading information” and “to conceal or misrepresent one’s true position, potential, or intent, especially in order to take advantage of.” A person who carries out such behaviors is a *sandbagger* (noun). This term appears to also be framed as a propaganda technique when used in a political context.

Lisa T. Fall

See also Spin

SCALES

The term *scales* may have multiple meanings to public relations practitioners. One use of the term denotes a particular measurement instrument such as a scale to measure reputation, credibility, or ethical climate. This use typically references an established measurement instrument developed by researchers, for which validity and reliability information is available.

Another use of the term describes a type of measure or scale, such as a Likert scale or a semantic

differential scale, which uses particular types of response options or answer scales. The scale refers to the way in which respondents record their answers.

Another use of the term is related to the previously mentioned use of answer scales and is synonymous with level of measurement or kinds of data to be analyzed. Practitioners may speak of answer scales that refer to how respondents record their responses to survey questions, which in turn produce certain types of data for analysis. Level of measurement is important because it dictates the types of statistical analyses that can be performed on the data.

In 2002, Don W. Stacks identified two types of attitude measures commonly used in public relations research: (a) Likert-type scales and (b) semantic differential scales. These scales can be adapted to examine attitudes toward a variety of things.

Likert-type scales use standardized response categories to record reactions to a series of statements reflecting issues of interest. Likert-type scales often provide five options for responses: (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) neither agree nor disagree (neutral), (d) disagree, and (e) strongly disagree. Alternatively, the scale may be enlarged to seven categories by adding two options to the ends of the answer continuum: (f) very strongly agree; and (g) very strongly disagree. An advantage of the Likert-type scale is its consistent use of answer options that respondents find easy to complete. A practitioner might be interested in assessing community support for a proposed landfill to be built outside of town. The practitioner could write a series of statements reflecting issues related to the proposed landfill in order to gauge community sentiment. Statements might include (a) “The proposed landfill would provide jobs for the community,” (b) “The proposed landfill would pose health hazards to community members,” and (c) “The proposed landfill is necessary.” A survey containing these items would be administered to a randomly selected sample of community residents. Respondents would record their reactions to the statements using the Likert-type scale options. The practitioner would analyze the data to obtain a clearer view of community attitudes toward various aspects of the issue.

The semantic differential scale consists of a series of items designed to assess the connotative

meanings associated with a stimulus or attitude object, such as an organization, a person, a practice, a product, or a concept. The term *semantic* refers to meanings and *differential* reflects differences. A connotative meaning is a personal or emotional meaning, whereas a denotative meaning is the “dictionary meaning.” While there generally is high agreement on denotative meanings, this is not true for connotative meanings because they arise from personal experiences and perceptions. For example, the denotative meaning of *McDonald’s* would relate to its being a fast-food restaurant. In contrast, the connotative meanings associated with McDonald’s might vary widely and include meanings such as “fun,” “playful,” “convenient,” “unhealthy,” “inexpensive,” and “tasty.”

Practitioners often are concerned with connotative meanings because they reflect personal perceptions and these are important for understanding stakeholders. The stimulus used in research might be a person like George W. Bush or a well-known community leader. Alternatively, the stimulus might be a product like genetically engineered food or an organization like A2Z Corporation. The different meanings reflected in the responses to items on the semantic differential scale can be compared to the meanings for other related stimuli, such as other restaurants, opposing political candidates, or different organizations.

The semantic differential scale consists of a series of bipolar (opposite) adjective pairs (good/bad, weak/strong) separated by a number of blanks or lines (usually seven) signifying response options. Respondents are asked to indicate their reactions to the stimulus by marking the blanks or options reflecting their connotative meanings on dimensions of interest. Traditionally, the three meaning dimensions used are evaluative (good/bad, valuable/worthless, realistic/unrealistic), potency (weak/strong, large/small), and activity (active/passive, hot/cold, weak/strong). The reactions can be summed to provide a summary evaluation of the stimulus. The semantic differential scale’s usefulness stems from its ability to discern connotative meanings and its ease of completion.

When the term *scale* is used to refer to level of measurement, it refers to the type of data to be used for analysis. There are four levels of measurement. The first level of measurement is called *nominal*.

Nominal data represent unordered categories, names, or labels for a variable, such as sex (male or female), employment status (employed or unemployed), political party affiliation (Republican, Democrat, or Independent), or place of birth.

Ordinal-level measurement provides data that reflect the rank order of a variable on a single dimension. The options signal relationships to one another. However, there is no assumption of equal spacing between the options. For example, the answer options “good,” “fair,” and “poor” might be provided for a question about the respondent’s assessment of the current employment opportunities in the community. In relation to the other two options, “good” is assumed to reflect a more positive assessment whereas “poor” reflects a more pessimistic assessment. However, it cannot be assumed that the “fair” option is truly halfway between the two options. “Fair” is only assumed to be more positive than “poor.”

Interval-level measurement assumes equal distances or standard intervals between options. The Fahrenheit or Celsius temperature scales provide good examples from the sciences. Each degree represents a known interval. In research, true interval level measures are rare. Because statistical tests for interval-level measures often are more powerful and better known than tests for ordinal-level data, researchers tend to prefer interval-level data and analyses, and often treat ordinal-level data as interval-level data in their statistical analyses—a practice that is not without debate. For example, the commonly used Likert-type scale is technically an ordinal-level measure but is often treated as an interval-level measure. To elaborate, there is no standard interval or equal distance between “strongly agree” and “agree” or any of the other options. Although “strongly agree” is closer to “agree” (thus reflecting ordinal measurement), it technically is not correct to say that there are equal intervals between any of the options. However, in practice, researchers often act as if these do represent equal intervals.

Ratio-level measurement is considered the highest level of measurement and assumes a true zero point. A zero represents an absence of that variable. For instance, income, number of years of formal education, and number of purchases from a particular vendor represent ratio-level data because

they potentially have zero as an option. Theoretically, respondents could report no income, no formal education, and no purchases from the vendor.

Sherry J. Holladay

See also Measuring/Measures

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SEARCH ENGINE

Search engines are tools used by computers to locate digital information. The modern search engine has evolved into a multibillion dollar advertising machine that keeps track of user search data and sites visited. Search engines have also become a primary tool for nonprofit organizations, businesses, marketers, and advertisers to attract customers online.

Modern search engines are capable of searching for images, texts, video, maps, news, scholarly articles, patent filings, entertainment, and more. Search engines can conduct sophisticated textual searches using Boolean logic, image searches by timeframe, size, similarity of content, color, theme, faces, image type, for example, and can conduct sophisticated data and information searches.

Although the term *search engine* is most closely associated with the tools used to search for information on the World Wide Web, any digital search interface such as eBay.com or Amazon.com, or the interfaces used by universities and public libraries to search for books, magazines, multimedia documents, and so forth can be called search engines. Search engines work by examining archival databases generated from the billions of currently accessible websites.

Search engines use an assortment of indexing logics. Most search engines create indexes based on keywords, phrases, categories, and other heuristics. Some search engines like Yahoo, use human beings to help create categories and index data,

while other sites like Google do all of their indexing electronically, via spiders and robots (programs that automatically examine webpages and create keyword and phrase indexes).

Initially, scores of search engines competed for success. Only a handful of search sites have survived as key players. Google and Yahoo have emerged as two of the most visited and most used websites in the world.

Using Search Engines More Effectively

When searching the Web, most search engines allow users to employ Boolean logic (*AND*, *OR*, *NOT*), phrase searching (surrounding words with quotation marks), wildcard searches (replacing prefixes and suffixes with an *), and nested searching (complex searches created by using parentheses and algebraic logic). Suggestions for effective Web searching include the following:

1. Use multiple keywords—sometimes a dozen or more.
2. Search for phrases (*words in quotes*), especially with proper names, whenever possible.
3. Rare or unusual words such as *defenestrate* make it easier to narrow results.
4. Common words such as *computer* make narrowing results difficult. Instead, use technical terms and proper names whenever possible.
5. Order search terms from most important to least important.
6. Avoid sifting through large lists of search results. Add new search terms or rephrase the search by adding quotation marks.

Michael L. Kent

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Home Page; Information Retrieval System; Search Engine Optimization; Web Traffic; Web 2.0; Website

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SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a tool that gives a webpage a higher ranking and increased visibility in a search engine's organic search results. Organic search results are generated by a search engine's algorithm rather than by paid or media relations—earned product placement. Pages that appear earlier or more frequently or are higher ranked in a search engine result page (SERP) receive more visitors. Search engine optimization targets different kinds of search, including but not limited to image, local, academic or scholarly, video, and industry-specific searches. By understanding SEO, public relations professionals can use other techniques such as sentiment analysis and conversation monitoring in order to better craft dialogue and messages to reach a larger percentage of an intended audience.

A search engine creates an internal database of webpages and then searches them according to an internal index to return results. Search engines rely on spiders or crawlers—software algorithms that search Web servers and follow hyperlinks—to search and store webpages within the search engine database. The system then parses these stored pages according to keywords and key phrases to create a keyword index database that can be searched later. Search engines also use algorithms, such as Google's PageRank algorithm, to assign importance to certain pages. The PageRank algorithm computes the reputation of the page and its relevance to the user by analyzing how often the page has been updated, how many other pages link to or cite the page, and the quality of the linking or citing pages.

SEO professionals analyze how search engines work to maximize their clients' pages' chances of being featured prominently among search results. When site operators began optimizing in the mid-1990s, they simply submitted the page address to various search engines to receive attention from the engine's crawler. Contemporary search engines catalog both on-page factors, such as keyword frequency, meta tags, headings, links, and site structure, and off-page factors, such as the quantity and importance of external links to the page. Google claims to use more than 200 factors when ranking sites, but search engine companies closely guard

their algorithms to prevent “gaming” of their search engine, so this cannot be verified. Search engine optimization service providers study patents held by various search engine companies to gain insight into their algorithms, or attempt to reverse-engineer them.

Employing overly aggressive SEO techniques can result in being banned from search results. Techniques that break search engine company regulations and terms of use or are looked upon by the SEO community as unethical are referred to as “black hat” SEO techniques. In 2005, Traffic Power allegedly used black hat SEO techniques and was subsequently banned along with some of their clients by Google. However, many of the black hat SEO techniques, such as BlogPing (BP), can be used in an acceptable fashion by “white hat” or legal SEO practitioners. Black hat BP consists of establishing a large number of blogs, linking them together, and pinging them, or sending messages that the blog has been updated. The white hat version involves pinging only a few links, which still attracts crawlers in just a few days.

Search engine optimization is not an appropriate strategy for every website, and other Internet marketing strategies can be more effective, depending on the site operator's goals. A successful Internet marketing campaign also depends upon building high-quality webpages to engage and persuade, setting up analytics programs to enable site owners to measure results, and monitoring a site's conversion rates, or the percentage of successful visits (e.g., portion of overall visits that result in a purchase or subscription). Good public relations professionals know that using proper SEO in accordance with search engine guidelines will get their sites higher rankings on search engines, and easy tricks like “keyword stuffing” and “doorway pages” will just end up getting their sites banned.

Kristin Saling

See also Information Retrieval System; Process Research; Public Relations Research; Search Engine

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is the federal agency established to enforce the laws and rules governing U.S. securities markets. The SEC's primary functions involve the registration of securities and compliance with the rule of full disclosure—timely, relevant, and accurate information about a security and the issuing company that helps an investor make a buy, sell, or hold decision. The expertise of investor relations professionals depends in part on knowledge of the SEC and its regulations concerning securities and the publicly held companies that issue those securities. Investor relations professionals must also understand disclosure opportunities beyond filing requirements that could occur in releases, responses to rumors, and comments.

The SEC administers the Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, along with a cohort of laws created to help protect investors. Those include the Trust Indenture Act, the Investment Company Act, the Investment Advisors Act, and the Public Utility Holding Act. These laws were written to prevent the kind of market collapse that culminated in the crash of October 1929.

Investors had no such protections in the boom of the 1920s when market manipulation and an absence of ethics, rules, and laws were prevalent. A highly speculative stock market and other weaknesses in the economy courted financial catastrophe and an ensuing depression. Congress held hearings to find ways to restore the public's faith in the securities markets. Participants in the hearings agreed that a corporation issuing a stock

or bond must be fair and honest in disclosing to investors information about the company, the security, and level of investment risk, while brokers, dealers, and exchanges must be fair and honest in issuing securities to investors.

The Securities Act of 1933 established strong civil and criminal liabilities for omissions and distortions of facts concerning the issue of stocks or bonds. The Securities and Exchange Act of 1934 created the SEC and required stock exchanges to register with the five-member commission. The Trust Indenture Act of 1939 required that debt securities (bonds, debentures, and notes) not be offered for sale to the public unless a formal agreement (the trust indenture) between the issuer and the bondholder conformed to standards of the act. The Investment Company Act of 1940 focused on compliance of disclosure of information about mutual funds and investment objectives as well as on investment company structures and operations. The Investment Advisors Act of 1940 required that investment advisor firms or sole practitioners register with the SEC and conform to regulations. The act was amended in 1996 to limit registration to advisers with at least \$25 million of assets. The Public Utility Holding Act of 1935 established regulation of interstate holding companies engaged in the electric utility business or in the retail distribution of natural gas.

The SEC implements the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, which requires corporate officers to certify company financial statements or be subject to criminal penalties. Among other provisions, the act mandated creation of the new Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB). The act was signed into law in response to questionable accounting practices and poor internal controls that led to the failures of such high-profile public companies as Enron, WorldCom, and Global Crossing.

SEC commissioners are appointed by the president of the United States and a chairman is designated from among the five members. The SEC is organized into 4 divisions and 18 offices, headquartered in Washington, D.C., with offices in New York and other regional locations across the United States. Approximately 3,100 analysts, accountants, lawyers, technical staff, and assistants work with commissioners to oversee the U.S. stock exchanges, broker-dealers, investment

advisors, mutual funds, and public utility holding companies.

Publicly held companies meet certain filing requirements with the SEC, and the Division of Corporation Finance is charged with reviewing those documents, which include (a) registration statements for newly offered securities; (b) annual and quarterly filings (forms 10-K and 10-Q); (c) proxy materials sent to shareholders before an annual meeting; (d) annual reports to shareholders; and (e) filings related to tender offering filings, as well as mergers and acquisitions. Corporation Finance also works in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Accountant to monitor activities of the accounting profession, particularly the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), that form generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

The Division of Market Regulation regulates broker-dealer firms and self-regulatory organizations (SROs), which include the stock exchanges and the National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD). This division also oversees the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (SIPC) that insures customer accounts of member brokerage firms against the failure of those firms.

The Division of Investment Management oversees and regulates the \$15 trillion investment management industry and administers the securities laws affecting investment companies (including mutual funds) and investment advisers.

The Division of Enforcement investigates possible violations of securities laws, recommends action, and negotiates settlements on behalf of the SEC. Typical violations include: (a) insider trading; (b) misrepresentation or omission of important information about securities; (c) manipulating the market prices of securities; (d) stealing customers' funds or securities; (e) violating broker-dealers' responsibility to treat customers fairly; and (f) sale of securities without proper registration.

Rebecca G. Aguilar

See also Annual Reports; Investor Relations

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SEGMENTATION OF PUBLICS

Public segmentation is a conceptual and operational effort to identify *a public about a problem* (vs. nonpublic) that brings individuals together to form a social entity. A *public* is a group of individuals who recognize a problem and are motivated to do something about it. The members of a public tend to become communicatively active about the problematic state to ideate and effectuate a solution for closure of the problematic situation. A public is distinct from nonpublic, mass, or general population in that its members show differential communicative behaviors about the problematic state such as being motivated to learn, think, and talk about it. They may differ on how the problematic state should be resolved (e.g., a public and a counter public about the same issue). They may or may not see each other face to face and may not be organized or be only loosely structured.

Public segmentation forms an essential part of a public relations practitioner's repertoire because identifying different segments of publics based on various factors provides the practitioner a guideline to design differentiated, more effective communication strategies for these distinct segments, rather than generating communication en masse for all parties involved in an issue.

Conceptually, public segmentation should be approached from theoretical explications of what a public is and how differentiated publics are in their behaviors. Situational theory, such as James E. Grunig's situational theory of publics and the more generalized situational theory of problem solving of Jeong-Nam Kim and Grunig, provide a theoretical base for segmentation through its predictor variables: problem recognition, constraint recognition, and involvement recognition.

From such theory, two sets of typologies of publics are used based on different problem-specific

perceptual characteristics displayed by these publics. The first typology, *within-a-problem/issue*, is based on motivational differences among publics about the problem, and how actively or passively they communicate: active public, aware public, latent public, and nonpublic. The second typology, *across-issues*, is based on the breadth of the problem of interest and the extent of motivation: all-issue publics, those that are active on all issues in question; single-issue public, those that are active on only one or few of the issues; apathetic public, those who are completely inattentive; and hot-issue public, those that become active about an issue after it receives extensive media coverage.

Recently, situational theorists have proposed new dimensions based on the further segmentation of publics. Kim, Lan Ni and Bey-Ling Sha refined J. E. Grunig and Fred C. Repper's model of strategic management, which identifies three stages of the development of an issue; they proposed segmentation strategies for each of these stages. For the *stakeholder stage*, they recommend segmenting the stakeholders based on how they are situated in relation to the organization's consequences and resources. In the *public stage*, they use the situational variables to segment publics, and in the *issue stage*, they propose combining consequences and resources and the independent variables of the situational theory to segment publics. To summarize, Kim, Ni and Sha recommend using cross-situational variables to segment publics during the stakeholder stage and using *situational* variables during the public and issue stage.

Ni and Kim proposed an additional public typology by breaking down aware publics and active publics that form around a controversial issue based on three problem-solving characteristics of publics—the *openness to approaches* in problem solving (open or closed), the *time or history* of problem solving (chronic, situational, or dormant), and the *extent of activeness* in problem solving (active or passive). Based on this refinement, they put forth eight types of publics based on the three problem-solving characteristics.

Kim and Ni identified another useful typology that finds application in two different types of public relations problems—*organization-initiated PR problem* (OPR) and *public-initiated PR problem* (PPR)—to complement the segmentation of publics using situational theory. They used a relational

theory-based frame and identified publics based on the quality of relationship (high vs. low) and type of relationship (behavioral vs. reputational). They then synthesized the typologies of publics based on situational theory and relational theory and suggested segmentation options for practitioners depending on the type of public relations problem they are facing and their goals in problem solving (see Kim & Ni, 2013, for a more detailed synthetic segmentation method).

As for the operational procedures of public segmentation, there are two methods available. The first method is the *canonical correlations* method of public segmentation. The canonical correlations method can simultaneously correlate the independent and dependent variables of situational theory while producing one or more canonical covariates, similar to factors from factor analysis, which can then be used to segment publics. In this method, the independent variables and dependent variables of the situational theory are clustered and canonical covariates across multiple problems or issues are calculated. This approach allows researchers to identify subpublics within-a-problem or issue (e.g., active or aware public) as well as identify publics across-issues (e.g., all-issue public or apathetic public). The second, a simpler procedure, is the summation method. This method, originally suggested by J. E. Grunig and Todd Hunt in 1984, was formalized by Kim in 2011. The summation method can also segment both types of subpublics but the computational procedure is simpler and more user-friendly. The summation method works by converting multipoints survey data of the situational variables into binary data (high = 1 or low = 0) using the midpoint as the cut-off. The values of the situational variable measures above the cut-off point are assigned a value of 1 and the values below it are 0. The measures for each of the three independent variables of situational theory are then summed and publics are classified into activist (3), aware (2), latent (1) or nonpublics (0) based on the sum of their scores. It must be noted here that the constraint recognition, being a negative-coded variable, must be reversed for the summation method to give accurate results. The summation method is user friendly and highly accurate, and has gained popularity among researchers. Practical examples of the use of the summation method

may be found in Kim (2011) and Kim, Shen, and Morgan (2011).

Jeong-Nam Kim and Arunima Krishna

See also Activism; Environmental Scanning; Issues Management; Psychographics; Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Situational Theory of Problem Solving; Situational Theory of Publics; Stakeholder Theory; Strategies

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SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE

Short message service (SMS) enables mobile telephone users to exchange short text messages. The key to SMS is that the message be short: The maximum length of a text message is 160 characters in the form of letters, numbers, or symbols in the Latin alphabet. For other alphabets, the maximum SMS size varies.

The terms *SMS* and *text messaging* have become synonymous. This is not surprising given the history of SMS, which was invented in the late 1980s in Europe. Engineers wanted to create a simple messaging format whereby messages could reach mobile phone users when cell phones were turned off or were out of signal range. The first SMS text message was sent from New York City to Melbourne Beach, Florida, via a Motorola beeper in 1989 by Raina Fortini, who used upside down numbers to create words. The first commercial SMS text message, “Happy Christmas,” was sent in the United Kingdom by Neil Papworth using a personal computer to Richard Jarvis using an Orbitel 901 handset in 1992. It was not until the following year that Riku Pihkonen sent the first typed SMS on a GSM (global system for mobile) phone.

SMS is currently the most commonly used data application in the world. Approximately 2.4 billion users, or nearly three quarters of the world’s mobile phone subscribers, interchange text messages on cell phones. This is probably due to the numerous advantages to SMS. One, it enables users to communicate discreetly in public spaces via silent communication. Two, it can be less time consuming than making a voice-to-voice phone call. Three, its mobile application enables users to send messages without being logged on to a computer in order to receive email or instant messaging. Four, users can store and retrieve messages for long periods of time, and can forward messages to additional users. Finally, SMS technology has proved to be an ideal way for hearing-impaired and physically challenged individuals to communicate.

In addition to sending personal messages, many businesses are taking advantage of SMS technology to market goods and services. SMS can be used to send messages to large populations at one time, anywhere in the world. Press releases and other forms of public relations communication tools are

now being delivered in SMS, video, podcasts, and microblog formats. As with any technology that has the potential of reaching mass audiences, there are disadvantages to SMS, especially in terms of privacy and cyber attacks. Overloading control channels with mass messages has the potential of crashing cell phone systems. Other disadvantages include unreliability, whereby some messages are delayed, and approximately 1% to 5% of messages are lost completely.

Because of the limited number of characters that are used in SMS communication due to space, time, and cost restraints, some researchers are focusing on SMS language, also known as *txtese* or *txt-speak* (e.g., “CU L8R” instead of “see you later”) in everyday communication.

Kathy Keltner-Previs

See also Media Release; Online Public Relations

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2002, Ronald D. Smith wrote, “Without a clear and early statement of the situation to be addressed, you will not be able to conduct efficient research or define the goal of your communication program later in the planning process” (p. 19).

The situation analysis makes it possible to develop hypotheses about causes of and solutions to a problem. The American Marketing Association in 2012 noted that systematic collection and study of data on internal and external factors helps “identify trends, forces and conditions with the potential to influence the performance of the business.” Through research, a practitioner can gain a thorough understanding of the organization’s relevant publics, its environment, and opportunities as well as challenges related to solving the problem. The situation analysis also helps identify the additional research needed in order to develop a successful plan. As Donald Parente wrote in 2000, the situation analysis should be organized, structured, detailed, and focused.

Importance to Public Relations Practitioners

Situation analysis is the foundation of public relations planning—whether for a comprehensive campaign or just one element such as a writing project. Because the effectiveness of the plan depends on the quality of information gathered in the research process, a thorough situation analysis is critical to setting and meeting the objectives of the project.

A situation analysis is a key to successful decision making. Before a situation or problem can be addressed, the communication team in conjunction with the rest of the organization’s leadership must come to a shared understanding of the issue at hand. The situation analysis should clarify the current situation and provide evidence to support any hypotheses.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

A vital part of public relations planning—whether it is strategic planning, development of a specific project, or solving an immediate problem—is understanding the circumstances an organization faces. A situation analysis is the detailed explanation of factors that have the potential to influence an organization or a specific problem or project. In

Situation analyses can be structured in a variety of ways, posing a myriad of questions about the current problem, the background of the organization, the organization’s environment, and the significance of the situation. The situation analysis may reveal gaps in existing information, pointing the way to the development of primary research.

Conducting a Situation Analysis

A method of identifying a company's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the environmental opportunities and threats was developed at the Harvard Business School in the 1950s and 1960s. This framework was refined into what is now known by the acronym SWOT. Looking both inside and outside the organization, its strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) are analyzed, and its opportunities (O) and threats (T) are identified. Robert A. Sevier (1998) described strengths and weakness as internal or institutional, whereas opportunities and threats are typically external or environmental. Sevier cautioned that different audiences may place the same characteristic in opposite categories—one considering a characteristic to be a strength, whereas another audience may consider the same characteristic to be a weakness.

Another approach to conducting a situation analysis is to develop categories of internal and external factors. The internal factors that may be analyzed include the following:

1. *Mission*: Organization mission statement, charter, bylaws
 2. *History*: Descriptions of programs, services, products of the organization
 3. *Resources*: Statistics on budget, staffing, sales, profits, stockholders
 4. *Policies*: Policies and procedures related to the problem
 5. *Position statements*: Opinion quotes from key executives regarding the problem
 6. *Current plan*: Description of the current handling of the problem
 7. *Stakeholders*: Description of the organization's current internal stakeholders
 8. *Controlled media*: Samples of communication tools with content controlled by the organization for use with both internal and external audiences—Web, annual report, employee communication, for example.
2. *Supportive stakeholders*: Lists and background information on those who share the organization's positions on the situation
 3. *Opposing stakeholders*: Lists and background information on those who oppose the organization's positions on the situation
 4. *Public opinion research*: Information on consumer/customer opinions related to the situation including analysis of comments from media coverage and social media
 5. *Competition*: Identification of organizations and causes competing for resources and support
 6. *Events*: Lists of important dates or events related to the organization and the situation
 7. *Regulatory bodies*: Lists of government agencies and others with power affecting the situation; copies of relevant legislation, pending bills, and government publications
 8. *Existing research*: Published research on topics related to the situation; relevant publications, records, directories

External factors that may be analyzed include the following:

1. *Uncontrolled media*: Content analysis of media exposure the organization cannot control—news coverage of the situation, bloggers, social media traffic, for example

Additional areas to consider in situation analysis include the organization's culture, emerging issues and trends in the organization's environment, history of the problem, consequences of the problem, opportunities for solutions, challenges or obstacles to solutions, and publics that may not yet fit into supportive or opposing categories.

A public relations audit may also be part of the analysis of internal factors. The audit may include examination of the organization's performance—the quality of goods or services as well as the viability of its causes and ideas. Structure may also be considered in the audit. This includes review of the organization's mission as it relates to the problem, the role public relations plays within the decision-making body, and identification of resources (personnel, equipment, budget, time) that may be needed to address the situation. Smith (2004) pointed out that the final area of focus for the audit is the public perception of the organization's visibility and reputation.

Information for the situation analysis can be gathered using both formal and informal methodologies. Secondary (or existing) research can be gathered from organizational records or online databases. Primary (or original) research, for

example, may use focus groups, interviews, content analysis, and surveys.

The situation analysis should clarify all assumptions and back up assertions with evidence.

Phyllis Vance Larsen

See also Communication Audit and Auditing;
Environmental Scanning; Research Goals; Research
Objectives; Opportunity and Threat

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SITUATION ETHICS

Situation ethics began in the 1940s and 1950s as a movement among Roman Catholic theologians who saw in the post–World War II environment a constellation of unique moral challenges that the traditions of law and casuistry were not equipped to address. Law and casuistry were tied to hierarchy and authority, and the experience of World War II showed how immoral following orders could be. So these theologians sought a way to

listen for the voice of God in complex, particular circumstances. Spurning rules and paradigm cases as being too rigid, they argued that truly moral decision making was marked by deep personal responsibility and dialogue. But these theologians failed to persuade their superiors. In 1952, Pope Pius XII put an end to the movement among Roman Catholics by condemning situation ethics as dangerously subjective and relativistic.

Situation ethics returned as a Protestant debate in the 1960s. Popularized as “the new morality” by Episcopalian ethics professor Joseph Fletcher (1905–1991), this incarnation of situation ethics was championed as the golden mean between legalism at one extreme and licentiousness at the other. According to Fletcher, situationists are neither slaves to rules and regulations nor heedless of the needs of others. Rather, they follow only one rule, and that is to do the loving thing in every situation they face. Fletcher argued that no behavior is right or wrong intrinsically; more accurately, behaviors are right only if they lead to good consequences and wrong only if they cause harm. “The situationist enters into every decision-making situation fully armed with the ethical maxims of his community and its heritage, and he treats them with respect as illuminators of his problems,” Fletcher wrote. “Just the same he is prepared in any situation to compromise them or set them aside *in the situation* if love seems better served by doing so” (1966, p. 26). Fletcher summarized his situation ethics in six propositions: “Love only is always good, love is the only norm, love and justice are the same, love is not liking, love justifies its means, and love decides there and then” (1966, p. 9).

In philosophical terms, situation ethics falls under the category of teleology, a way of justifying behavior according to consequences rather than principles (the ends justify the means). More specifically, it is a type of utilitarianism (the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people). Because situation ethics came out of the Christian faith, it is sometimes referred to as *act-agapism*, referring to *agape*, the Greek word for selfless love used in the New Testament. In act-agapism, good emerges when the individual chooses the most loving course of action on a case-by-case basis.

Striking a responsive chord at a time when traditions were being questioned, situation ethics found

a wide range of business applications. In *The Moral Crisis in Management*, Thomas Petit (1967) wrote, "The situational model . . . best fits the American manager's self-image of a tough-minded individual who demands freedom and is willing and able to be responsible in its exercise" (p. 167). Fletcher himself in 1967 applied situation ethics to business management, asking, "What, in the situation, is the most constructive decision to make, as measured by a primary concern for people, and not for profits alone nor only for . . . one company's sake?" (p. 167). In an example of a clothing manufacturer who pays an illegal kickback to fulfill an essential order from a department store chain, Fletcher said that the manufacturer's bribe was the right thing to do in the circumstances. He broke a law certainly, but more importantly he kept his employees working and did not have to cut their pay. In this case, following the law would have devastated his employees and their families.

Applications of situation ethics to public relations followed. The most common example involved a company with a policy of full disclosure to the media being justified in deciding to withhold information that could harm an employee, a client, or the community. A more extreme application was put forth in 1989 by Marquette University professor Steven Goldzwig, who argued that serious social change—he gave as an example the struggle against racial inequality—could at times justify "suggestion, innuendo, even misuse of facts." Desperate situations require desperate measures, argued Goldzwig, who said that demagoguery and techniques of propaganda may be "legitimate means of pursuing laudable social ends" (p. 220).

The main attraction of situation ethics is its commonsense recognition that circumstances matter when making moral decisions. People generally follow the rules—they tell the truth and keep promises, for example—but they also understand that breaking the rules is occasionally warranted. Sometimes lies need to be told—to catch criminals, perhaps, or to protect national security—and sometimes a promise needs to be broken—if it was made in haste and keeping it would cause more harm than good. Situationism is often congruent with lived experience.

Another appeal of situation ethics is that it takes very seriously Immanuel Kant's philosophy that people should always be treated as ends in themselves, never as means to an end. Slavishly

following rules, by contrast, can cause immense harm. "Always produce maximum profits" is a common rule that pleases Wall Street investors, but among other things leads to wages that are below subsistence, employment that does not provide for health care, and working conditions that endanger employees. Similarly, merely following the rules can keep companies out of legal trouble while they ignore concerns for employee welfare, public safety, and the environment. Situation ethics avoids these pitfalls by focusing on people rather than rules.

Despite these attractions, situation ethics has fallen out of favor. Its greatest weakness is that it grossly underestimates the value of moral rules. Understood in their broadest sense, moral rules are needed to sustain human community. People seldom or never need to decide whether to deceive, to cause pain, or to break a promise. Following moral rules maintains community; breaking moral rules destroys community. For this reason, following moral rules does not require justification. However, breaking moral rules always requires justification because it damages the basis of civilized society. Breaking moral rules introduces distrust, thus undermining the cooperation necessary for community.

Situation ethics has fallen out of favor for more practical reasons as well. It privileges individual judgment over conventional wisdom and assumes that the individual is capable of transcending self-interest and limited perspective when deciding to break a moral rule. For that matter, it assumes that the individual can calculate the potential harms and benefits of any particular action, as if the individual can peer into the future to see short-term and long-term effects of any particular act. It is even conceivable that maximizing the happiness of most people will cause harm to a few, thus creating what British philosopher and economist John Stuart Mill called "tyranny of the majority." Mostly, though, situation ethics ignores the fact that moral rules generally work, and work well. That is why certain practices achieved the status of moral rules.

To say that situation ethics has fallen out of favor is an understatement. The term is used today with utter scorn and contempt. Instead of meaning the application of *agape* in concrete circumstances, as Fletcher intended, situation ethics has come to refer to self-interest, rationalization, and a lack of

professionalism. It now means immorality pretending to be good, an attempt to excuse unethical behavior. Canadian public relations specialist Nigel Atkin in 1999 typified today's low regard for situation ethics when he defined it as "where you do that which is least painful, and hope that not many people find out about it" (p. 349). Public relations practitioners have spent the last few decades writing and revising codes of ethics, looking for principles that can be applied locally, nationally, and even internationally. They are more likely than ever to reject the situationist claim that rules are meant to be broken. Instead, they are still searching for meaningful rules that their colleagues can agree to follow.

John P. Ferré

See also Codes of Ethics; Deontology; Ethics of Public Relations; Moral Philosophy; Utilitarianism

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SITUATIONAL CRISIS COMMUNICATION THEORY

Early research in crisis communication was descriptive rather than predictive. Practitioners would report what they did during a crisis, and researchers would examine case studies of high-profile crises to learn the best practices. From this research mix emerged a list of crisis types (frames for viewing a crisis event) and possible crisis response strategies (what managers say and do once a crisis begins). What was missing was a connection between crisis types and crisis response strategies.

Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) was developed to provide a theoretical connection between these two critical crisis factors. The driving variable in SCCT is crisis responsibility, to what degree do stakeholders hold the organization in crisis responsible for the crisis.

Situational crisis communication theory is a fusion of attribution theory and rhetorical theory. Attribution theory holds that people search for causes for events, especially negative ones that are associated with high uncertainty (Weiner, 1986). People will attribute the event to either situational factors (external) or the person involved in the event (internal). For crises, stakeholders can attribute the crisis to the organization (internal) or to environmental factors (external). Marketing research found that crisis responsibility attributions by stakeholders matter. Increased crisis responsibility intensified the damage from a crisis such as reducing purchasing intentions. Moreover, the marketing research found that some crises generated stronger attributions of crisis responsibility than others.

Situational crisis communication theory used attribution theory to develop a framework for assessing potential stakeholder evaluations of crisis responsibility. Crisis responsibility was assessed by combining measures for personal control and blame found in the attribution literature. The first step was to identify if there were patterns in attributions people made about the various crisis types that appeared in the crisis literature. Survey research found that basic crisis types could be grouped into three categories predicated upon the attributions of crisis responsibility they generated: (1) *victim* (very low attributions of crisis responsibility)—natural disasters, workplace violence, rumors, and malevolence; (2) *accidental* (minimal attributions of crisis responsibility)—challenges, technical-error accidents, and technical-error product harm; and (3) *preventable* (strong attributions of crisis responsibility)—human-error accident, human-error product harm, and organizational misdeeds.

The next step was to identify factors that might alter the initial attributions of crisis responsibility. These variables are called intensifiers. Experimental research found that prior reputation (treatment of stakeholders) and crisis history (previous crises) influence attributions of crisis responsibility. Attributions of crisis responsibility intensified as prior

reputation became more negative and an organization had previous crises. Note that SCCT is receiver focused as it seeks to understand how stakeholders (receivers) perceive the crisis. Assessments of the crisis type and intensifiers are combined to determine the degree of crisis responsibility stakeholders are likely to ascribe to an organization.

Rhetorical theory was essential to identifying the crisis response strategies that were available to crisis managers. William L. Benoit's 1995 image restoration/repair theory built upon corporate apologia research to develop a comprehensive list of possible crisis response strategies. Benoit's list was modified to form the crisis response strategies used in SCCT. Situational crisis communication theory sought to connect the crisis response strategies to the crisis situation. Crisis response strategies were arrayed along a continuum from defensive to accommodative. This continuum reflects the amount of responsibility the organization is accepting for the crisis. The SCCT strategies include attacking the accuser, denial, scapegoating, excusing, justification, compensation, apology, reminding, ingratiation, and victimage. Compensation and apology represent the highly accommodative strategies while attacking the accuser, denial, and scapegoating are the highly defensive strategies. Situational crisis communication theory's receiver orientation tries to understand how stakeholders perceive the crisis response strategies instead of assuming they will have the effect intended by the crisis responder.

Responsibility became the linchpin between the crisis type and crisis response strategies. SCCT posited that as attributions of crisis responsibility intensified, crisis managers need to use strategies that increasing accepted responsibility for the crisis. By using this matching strategy, crisis managers can maximize the ability of the crisis response strategies to protect an organization's reputation, reduce the anger generated by a crisis, decrease the likelihood of negative word of mouth, and maintain purchase intentions (Coombs, 2007).

Situational crisis communication theory argues that there is an ethical base response that should be used in crisis response. Crisis managers can then determine what additional crisis response strategies to utilize after the ethical base response is employed. The ethical base response is composed of instructing and adjusting information. Instructing information tells stakeholders how to

protect themselves physically from a crisis. Instructing information includes warning people to not use defective or dangerous products and orders to evacuate or to shelter-in-place. Adjusting information helps stakeholders cope psychologically with a crisis. Adjusting information includes expressions of concern or sympathy and actions taken to prevent a repeat of the crisis. For most crises, the ethical base will be an effective response. Crisis managers must utilize additional, accommodative crisis response strategies when attributions of crisis responsibility are strong. Attributions of crisis responsibility are strong for preventable crises and accidental crises that have one or more intensifiers present. For these crises managers would need to use some combination of compensation and apology in order to protect the organization's reputation and minimize the damage inflicted by the crisis.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Apologia; Attribution Theory; Crisis Communication; Image Repair Theory; Rhetorical Theory

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SITUATIONAL THEORY OF PROBLEM SOLVING

Situational theory of problem solving (STOPS) was developed to explain people's motivated communicative actions when they encounter problematic life situations. Jeong-Nam Kim theorized STOPS as a continuation of its parent theory, situational theory of publics (STP), James E. Grunig's theory about the role of information during human decisions. STP builds on the concept of publics, defined by John Dewey as being issue groups that form around problems that affect people and motivate their involvement, information reception, and processing. These are measures for identifying and segmenting publics.

The original version of situational theory criticized the assumption postulated in economic decision-making theory that decision makers have perfect knowledge, and information is available freely and sufficient for them. In reality, people make decisions with imperfect knowledge or lack relevant information as they face the risks of their choices and decisional consequences. People become motivated to seek more information about their decisions as the risks or the opportunity costs associated with those decisions increase. It is, therefore, fallacious to assume information behaviors in decision situations to be constant or to conceptualize people are inactive as they recognize the need for knowledge and information in decision situations.

J. E. Grunig explained human communication as a purposeful action related to the problems that one identifies. This conceptual transition is an important theoretical landmark for the development of both STP and STOPS. Specifically, the situational theories posit that (a) communication behaviors increase and decrease across people's decision situations; (b) communication could better be understood as a variable (vs. a constant) and better be a dependent variable; (c) (de)motivators of communicative behaviors could vary across situations, as one's personal perceptions about problem significance, connection, and obstacles in doing something about the problematic situation vary. As such, situational theory upset the common assumptions (i.e., the perfect knowledge assumption and the sender-based view of communication) to the notion of communication being an activity through which people cope with their problematic life situations within the constraints of one's internal and external conditions. It

reversed the causal order of information behaviors as being dependent variables that increase (or decrease) as people face (solve) genuine (vs. habitual) decision situations. Situational theory stood out as one of the few theoretical outliers distinct from most communication theories during the 1960s (cf. uses and gratification theory) that assumed communication to be an activity that a message sender engages in with message recipients for the purpose of persuasion, education, or social influence.

STOPS builds upon, incorporates, and advances STP. First, STOPS has shifted the theory's focus from decisional situations to problematic situations. The original theory came out of a critique of the problems in economic decision-making theory and is grounded on the relationship between information and decision making. In contrast, STOPS directs focus explicitly on problem solving and communicative actions. This means that STOPS sets the unit of theoretical analysis of the theory as the problem solver or the social actor with the purpose of coping with and the closure and resolution of problematic states rather than the decision maker or the economic man with the purpose of satisficing decisions for maximizing utilities or satisfaction (e.g., a problem solver often needs to produce and give information to others, while a decision maker rarely does so).

STOPS redefines and modifies the independent variables of STP and introduces new ones. Specifically, it explicates *problem recognition* as a state with varying magnitudes of discrepancy between experiential and expected states. It is a cognitive problem following one's failure to preconscious problem solving (i.e., perceptual problems) that one starts realizing some level of discrepancy or indeterminacy that interrupts and intrudes one's routine perceptual and cognitive processes. In addition, the person with the problem recognition starts to assess the connection between the problem and oneself and the extended self such as friends and significant others, that is, *involvement recognition* of the recognized problematic state. Once a problem is recognized, the person starts to assess the internal and external barriers or obstacles that limit efforts to do something about the problematic state, the *constraint recognition*. Notably, these three variables could be either consciously or unconsciously perceived and may or may not be accurate and subjective, reflecting one's

individuality. They are more perceptual and less effortful and cognitive.

In contrast, the *referent criterion* is more cognitive, referring to any knowledge or subjective judgmental system that could influence one's cognitive problem-solving efforts and communicative behaviors. It could be more knowledge based and experiential information that one could carry forward from previous problematic situations or more affective and expectational solutions that one may improvise immediately or in an earlier phase of problem solving. More importantly, although the origin and type of referent criterion may be different, it is functionally equivalent, in that it guides problem-solving efforts and increases communicative actions related to the given problem situation. In addition, unlike STP, STOPS redefines the referent criterion as an independent variable that influences one's communicative behaviors, information forefending, and the information forwarding and sharing (see J. E. Grunig, [1997], for the earlier conceptualization of referent criterion).

While these four variables are situational perceptions and cognitive states a problem solver experiences, STOPS also introduces a motivational variable, *situational motivation in problem solving*, defined as a state of situation-specific cognitive and epistemic readiness to undertake problem-solving efforts. This new motivational variable helps further explicate the previous definition of problem recognition—that is, people detect that something should be done about a situation and stop to think about what to do as it removes the stop-to-think tendency as a joint effect from the situation-specific perceptual variables. In other words, one's perception of seriousness of a problematic state would be high but this alone cannot make one motivated enough to expend cognitive and behavioral efforts to the given problem.

Finally, another notable generalization of the STOPS, developing from STP, is its communication-based dependent variable. According to STP, the dependent variables are information seeking and information attending. These dependent variables limit the scope of communication to information consumption. STOPS addresses this limitation by acknowledging that publics display other communication behaviors that are pertinent to public relations. These are conceptualized by Kim, J. E. Grunig, and Lan Ni as communicative actions in problem solving (CAPS). The CAPS

model has a second-order factor structure with six first-order factors. The six subvariables of the CAPS model represent a more general view of information behaviors of problem solvers or members of publics. They are divided into three categories or domains—information acquisition, information transmission, and information selection—each with a proactive dimension and a reactive or passive dimension.

This characterization of the subvariables follows the conceptualization of the dependent variables of STP where information seeking was described as a proactive action—"the planned scanning of the environment for messages about a specified topic" (Clarke & Kline, 1974, p. 233), while information attending was more passive—"the unplanned discovery of a message followed by continued processing of it" (p. 233). Information transmission refers to the dissemination of information to others, actively through information forwarding (the planned, self-propelled information giving to others) and passively through information sharing (the reactive provision of information only when solicited). Information selection refers to the acceptance and rejection of certain information in taking and giving, either based on source or on content, actively through information forefending (the extent that one fends off certain information in giving or taking in advance by judging its value and relevance) or passively through information permitting (the extent to which a communicator accepts any information related to a problem-solving task). Notably, information forefending could either be to economize one's cognitive resources in problem solving or to optimize one's preferred solution and desired end states. Here, the former forefending tendency is associated more with the factual, experiential referent criterion, while the latter forefending tendency is associated more with affective, expectational referent criterion. Regardless of the given types or sources of selectiveness, it helps problem solvers solve a metaproblem, that is, how to manage informational tasks en route to problem solving.

The main goal of STOPS is to describe and explain communicative aspects of human problem solving by conceptualizing perceptual and cognitive processes and epistemic motivation that rise and fall in life situations. STOPS is conceptually compatible with the themes proposed by STP (see Figure 1). The developmental history

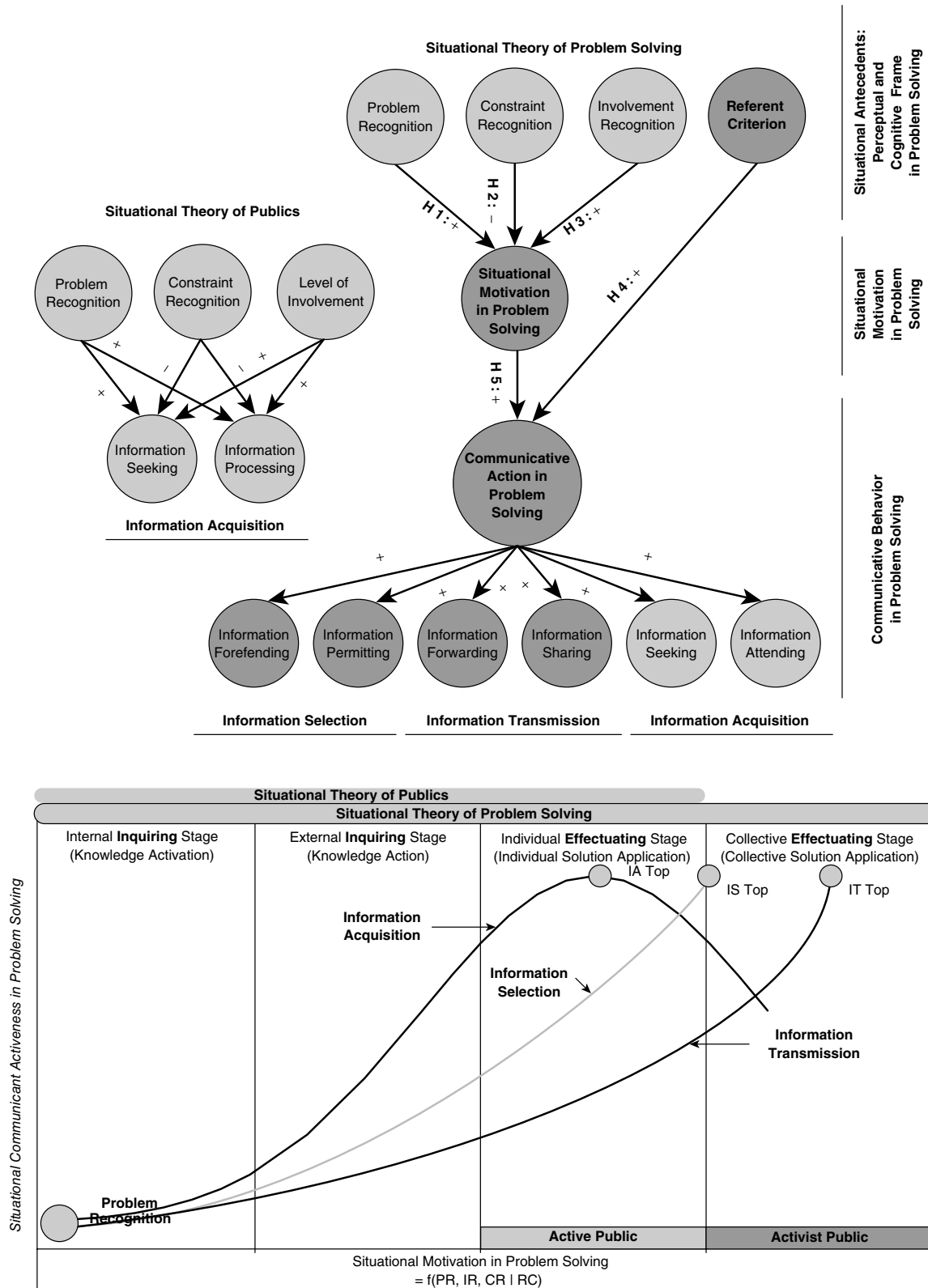


Figure 1 Situational Theory of Publics and Situational Theory of Problem Solving

Source: Kim, J.-N., & Grunig, J. E. (2011). Problem solving and communicative action: A situational theory of problem solving. *Journal of Communication*, 61, 121.

of the two theories shows how a good theory can and should continuously evolve to generate a better understanding of the phenomenon of interest.

Jeong-Nam Kim

See also Activism; Segmentation of Publics; Situational Theory of Publics; Stakeholder Theory; Strategies

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SITUATIONAL THEORY OF PUBLICS

James E. Grunig developed the situational theory of publics to put meaning into the term *public*, which is one of the two key words in the phrase *public relations*. Public relations practitioners often use the term *public* to refer to the mass population,

which they also call the general public. At other times, they use the plural term *publics* to refer to the groups for which public relations programs are planned—especially journalists, employees, consumers, investors, governments, local communities, and members of associations and nonprofit groups. Practitioners also commonly use the terms *stakeholders* and *publics* interchangeably.

In contrast, J. E. Grunig distinguished between stakeholders and publics and used the two concepts to segment the general population into categories that help communication professionals identify strategic publics and to plan and evaluate public relations programs. He considered the term *general public* to be a contradiction in terms because a public is always a specialized group whose members have a reason to be interested in the activities and behaviors of organizations.

In its current state, the situational theory of publics is part of J. E. Grunig's theory of the role of public relations in strategic management. Following the lead of John Dewey, who wrote about publics in the 1920s and 1930s, J. E. Grunig theorized that publics arise when organizations make decisions that have consequences on people inside and outside the organization who were not involved in making that decision. In addition, publics often want consequences from organizational decisions that organizations might be reluctant to provide, such as lower prices, stable employment, or less pollution.

J. E. Grunig reserved the term *stakeholder* for general categories of people who are affected by the actual or potential consequences of strategic, or important, organizational decisions. Stakeholders are people who have something at risk when the organization makes decisions. Stakeholder categories generally are the focus of public relations programs, such as employee relations, community relations, investor relations, consumer relations, or government relations.

Within each of these stakeholder categories, however, the situational theory can be used to identify types of publics that differ in the extent to which they communicate actively, passively, or not at all about organizational decisions that affect them. Active publics, in turn, can change from loose aggregations of individuals into organized activist groups. Active and activist publics make issues out of organizational consequences, and these issues may lead to crises. Thus the situational

theory can be used to identify active publics in programs of environmental scanning, issues management, and crisis communication.

Situational theory is built from an explanation of why people communicate and when they are most likely to do so. It uses the concepts of active and passive communication behavior to segment the general population into publics likely to communicate about one or more problems that are related to the consequences of organizational behaviors. The theory is situational because problems come and go and are relevant only to people who experience problematic situations related to organizational behaviors. As a result, publics arise and disappear as situations change, and organizations rarely, if ever, have a permanent set of publics.

In addition to explaining who an organization's publics are at a specific time, situational theory explains when communication programs are most likely to be effective—that is, to have effects on the short-term cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors of different publics and on the long-term relationships with these publics. As a result, situational theory provides a useful tool for strategically managing public relations programs—identifying publics, choosing realistic short- and long-term objectives for communication programs, and evaluating the outcomes of these programs.

Situational theory is similar to theories of market segmentation because it provides a method for segmenting the general population into groups relevant to public relations practitioners. Marketing theorists provide several criteria for choosing a concept for segmentation. Segments must be mutually exclusive, measurable, accessible, pertinent to an organization's mission, and large enough to be substantial. Most importantly, the people in market segments must have a differential response to marketing strategies.

In this sense, situational theory of publics predicts the differential responses most important to public relations professionals: (a) responsiveness to problems and issues; (b) amount of and nature of communication behavior; (c) effects of communication on cognitions, attitudes, and behavior; (d) the extent and quality of organization–public relationships; and (e) the likelihood that publics will participate in collective behavior to pressure organizations.

Situational theory also helps to explain the nature of public opinion because it incorporates the assumption that two of the classic theorists of

public opinion, John Dewey and Herbert Blumer, first made about publics: Publics arise around problems that affect them. Dewey also recognized the crucial role that publics play in American democracy. The situational theory formalizes the classical conceptions of publics and provides concepts and variables for identifying and measuring publics and their opinions.

When situational theory is expressed formally, it consists of two dependent variables (active and passive communication behavior) and three independent variables (problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement). The two dependent variables, active and passive communication behavior, also can be called information seeking and attending. Information seeking is premeditated—“the planned scanning of the environment for messages about a specified topic” (Clarke & Kline, 1974, p. 233). Information attending is message discovery—“the unplanned discovery of a message followed by continued processing of it” (p. 233).

The three independent variables are defined as follows:

Problem recognition: People detect that something should be done about a situation and stop to think about what to do.

Constraint recognition: People perceive that there are obstacles in a situation that limit their ability to do anything about the situation.

Level of involvement: The extent to which people connect themselves with a situation.

High problem recognition and low constraint recognition increase both active information seeking and passive information attending. Level of involvement increases information seeking, but it has less effect on information attending. Information seeking and the independent variables that precede it produce communication effects more often than information attending. People communicating actively develop more organized cognitions, are more likely to have attitudes about a situation, more often engage in a behavior to do something about the situation, and are more likely to develop a relationship with an organization.

J. E. Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) used combinations of the situational variables to define non-publics, latent publics, aware publics, and active publics and to calculate the probability of

communicating with and having effects on each type of public. J. E. Grunig (1997) described four kinds of publics identified by research: (a) *all-issue publics*, which are active on all problems measured in a study; (b) *apathetic publics*, which are inattentive to all of the problems; (c) *single-issue publics*, which are active on one of the problems; and (d) *hot-issue publics*, which are active only on a single problem that involves nearly everyone in the population and that has received extensive media coverage.

Hot-issue publics emerge from a triggering event such as an accident, crisis, or media controversy. However, they tend to dissipate when media coverage subsides. Linda Aldoory and J. E. Grunig (2012) addressed the extent to which organizations need relationships with hot-issue publics because they turn into active publics or whether they need only to address media coverage of a crisis at the time it occurs. Qualitative interviews about a number of hot issues showed that hot-issue publics seldom become active publics but that they remain aware of the problem after it gets less attention. Thus, organizations need to use principles of crisis communication to cultivate a short-term relationship with hot-issue publics and to continue a longer term relationship with the then more aware public.

Jeong-Nam Kim and J. E. Grunig (2011) extended the situational theory of publics into a situational theory of problem solving. The theory of problem solving adds four subvariables (information forwarding, sharing, forefending, and permitting) to the two dependent variables of the theory of publics (information seeking and attending)—thus extending the reach of the theory to information selecting and sharing as well as acquisition.

James E. Grunig

See also Activism; Crisis Communication; Environmental Scanning; Issues Management; Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Segmentation of Publics; Situational Theory of Problem Solving; Stakeholder Theory; Strategies

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SOCIAL AMPLIFICATION OF RISK

The emergence of large-scale risks in the late 1970s and early 1980s, such as the 1979 partial nuclear meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania or the 1984 chemical leak at a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, was accompanied by changes in public risk perceptions and reactions. Technical or expert definition of a risk threat could no longer explain or predict the public's response to that risk.

Created to help explain the complexity of this discrepancy, the social amplification of risk framework (SARF) integrates both the technical assessment and sociocultural experience of risk. Proposing this theory, Roger E. Kasperson et al. (1988) explained “that risk events interact with psychological, social, and cultural processes in ways that can heighten or attenuate public perceptions of risk and related risk behavior” (p. 179). The framework character of SARF allows competing theories from various disciplines to be integrated to elicit new research. It

encourages the incorporation of fragmented empirical findings and the creation of new hypotheses.

The social amplification of risk framework sparked much social science research. Early work in the 1980s and 1990s focused mostly on supporting and refining core assumptions of the framework such as characteristics of amplification stations or elements of the amplification processes. The last decade of research has treated SARF as an established framework—even a theory—to explain and trace amplification and attenuation processes of emerging risks such as nuclear waste storage, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), blood transfusions, and genetically modified foods.

The social amplification of risk framework builds upon the assumption that perceptions and reporting of risks involve two main stages: First, the transmission of information about a risk event to amplification stations and second, the mechanisms of response, or rippling effects, within society. The starting point in the SARF is a risk event. Risk, according to Kasperson (1992) has two dimensions: the objective and physical characteristics as well as the social interpretation of the risk. In the first stage of the amplification process, information about the risk event flows and risk-related behaviors occur. Risk information can be gained either by direct experience (which is rare) or through information sources such as the media or informal networks of friends, coworkers, and family. Following the source-receiver communication model premise, each risk signal is processed by social or individual “amplification stations” like scientists, the media, interest groups, institutions, or networks of people. Every station processes the information about a risk event and amplifies or attenuates it through processes of analysis and communication. Each receiver of a message as a part of variously complex networks engages in amplification within its social context and therefore acts as an amplification station.

The amplification of a risk is achieved by distributing large volumes of information, when disagreement about the actual harm of a risk exists among experts, and when a risk is sensational in nature or represented as such. The cultural and social meanings attached to the risk can further heighten fear of a risk. Receivers of information attach social values to the risk and interact with their cultural and peer groups to determine and

validate the importance of a risk. Based on these interpretations and interactions, responses are formulated, which lead to changing, accepting, tolerating, or ignoring a risk.

The second stage in the amplification process follows these informational and behavioral responses. Secondary impacts ripple away from the risk event to influence changes in (un)related areas of society. Examples of secondary impacts are, among others, those in local business sales and property values, in political and social pressures, in changes of risk analysis and response systems, and in altered images and perceptions. Policy changes might also be evoked, triggering or hindering risk reduction actions.

Early criticism on the initial proposition of SARF pointed to a lack in conceptualizing context in the amplification processes. Since, culture as “super-variable” and context in the form of layering have been introduced in different studies. However, the cross-cultural application of SARF has been tested only in a limited amount of studies. Two additional points of critique have led to further refinement of SARF in the last decades. First, although Kasperson et al. (1988) mentioned both attenuation and amplification as possible responses to a risk event, most research has focused on fleshing out the amplification processes. Especially the role of the media as influential amplification station has received much research attention, underscoring its role and power to distribute risk information and influence meaning creation. Second, in SARF both individual and group level interpretations of risk are mentioned when describing amplification and attenuation processes. However, the importance of social groups, networks, and individuals in these processes has not been presented in detail. To address these shortcomings some studies have focused on better understanding the processes in each stage of the SARF. To date most studies focus on the first over the second stage, largely providing support for the core tenets of the social amplification of risk processes.

The social amplification of risk framework allows the tracing of a risk event and its social impacts over time to follow and even explain amplification or attenuation. It provides room to incorporate communication theories to explain co-creation of meaning surrounding certain risk issues based on risk perceptions. The framework’s explanatory and integrative power can provide public

relations professionals guidance in communicating with publics about emerging or unknown risks with the goal to lower or trigger a heightened sense of awareness. Issues managers and risk communicators can provide amplification stations with accurate risk information and assessment. Public relations professionals may act as amplification stations by communicating risk information to their publics.

Tatjana M. Hocke

See also Culture; Issues Management; Network Theory; Risk Communication; Risk Perception; Risk Society

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SOCIAL CAPITAL

The notion of social capital has been popular in social science for quite some time. It can be defined in brief as networks and the benefits which accrue from inclusion in those networks. This entry briefly introduces three positions on social capital and gives an overview of some potential applications within public relations.

Strands of Research on Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu, James S. Coleman, and Robert D. Putnam are probably the three chief classical theorists of social capital (see, e.g., Field, 2008). For Bourdieu, social capital was one of several resources actors might employ to pursue their interests and position themselves, thus explaining

social hierarchy. Bourdieu defined social capital as connections with and membership in groups, and pointed to two main components: the size of an individual's network and the volume of the capital the other parts of the network have and to which the individual gains access. The “problem,” from an instrumental perspective, is that social capital must be established well before a need appears, “as if for [its] own sake, and therefore outside [its] period of use” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 252).

According to Coleman (1998), social capital is “the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organization and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or a young person” (p. 300). Coleman's notion of social capital was based in rational-choice thinking and the notion that people are calculating in pursuit of their own interests. He also saw social capital as a public good, however, and lamented the erosion of the family and the fact that the responsibility for socialization has been transferred to the schools.

Putnam (2000) is probably the one scholar who has done the most to popularize the concept. With the phrase “bowling alone,” he summarized his analysis of social change in modern society: Participation in public life has declined; trust, social cohesion and community values have disintegrated. In short, there is less social capital. Social capital is here defined as “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 19). According to Putnam, the basic problem of this development is that social capital is needed to create a happy, well-educated, healthy and safe society. A society rich in social capital is also an efficient society, as it leads to less conflict and more satisfied citizens.

As John Field has pointed out, these authors see social capital as a resource—either for individuals or society. They have thus been accused of ignoring the negative side of social capital in, for instance, fostering inequality. A main point of many critics is that social capital can be used for both good and ill, much like public relations.

Public Relations and Social Capital

Public relations researchers have drawn on all the aforementioned scholars. Øyvind Ihlen for instance, has combined the work of Bourdieu as well as that

of Nan Lin to provide a better fit for the analysis of the social capital of organizations. Drawing on these two authors generates questions such as: What kind of investment does or should an organization make in social capital? What is the size of the organization's network? What other kinds of capital are potentially accessible through the network? And finally, what has the organization gained economically, politically, and socially? Following Bourdieu, answers would be expected to be accompanied by a comparison with other organizations in an analysis that has power issues at its center, thus addressing the criticism mentioned in the last paragraph.

Vincent Hazelton and William Kennan (2000) argued that social capital can contribute to the organizational bottom line by leading to increased or more complex forms of social capital, reduced transaction costs, and improved productivity and efficiency. From this perspective, social capital has three dimensions: structural (network ties), content-communicative, and relational. Since public relations efforts are instrumental in developing these dimensions of social capital, it is clearly of value to organizations.

Agreeing with the latter point, Vilma Luoma-aho (2009) has posited that public relations should be defined as "the creation and maintenance of organizational social capital" (p. 247). Public relations could lead people to bowl together again. *Bonding* social capital is the starting point for organizations as this can create social cohesion within an organization, while *bridging* social capital is applicable to external stakeholder relations.

While the mentioned publications are theoretical in scope, Erich J. Sommerfeldt and Maureen Taylor (2011) provided an empirical example of how internal relationships of social capital can be measured through network analysis. The authors measured levels of trust and support, and diagnosed the relative strengths and weaknesses of the relationships. They also draw attention to how the public relations function requires internal social capital in order to solve external problems.

Despite these efforts, it seems safe still to say that organizational social capital needs to be better understood, better integrated, and further researched. This could be decisive for public relations practice.

Øyvind Ihlen

See also Bourdieu, Pierre, and Public Relations; Fully Functioning Society Theory; Public Relations; Relationship Management Theory

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SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY THEORY

The social construction of reality theory contends that reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must scrutinize the manner in which this occurs. From this orientation, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in 1967 described reality as a quality related to phenomena that humans recognized as having a being

independent of their own volition and described knowledge as the certainty that phenomena are real and possess specific characteristics. In essence, people conceive their distinctive social realities through contact and interaction with others.

Building on the work of Alfred Schutz, Berger and Luckmann argued that the reasonableness of knowledge in everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by individuals and subjectively meaningful for them as a rational and coherent perspective. From the perspective of a social construction of reality theory, the domain of everyday life is not only taken for granted as reality by members of society in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives, but it is a world that originates in people's thoughts and behaviors, and is maintained as real by the objectifications of subjective processes and meanings by which the intersubjective commonsense world is constructed.

A large amount of public relations research comes from the traditional theoretical position known as objectivism. This perspective operates on the assumption that awareness, knowledge, behavioral intentions, and behaviors are a given in nature, essentially uncontaminated by social factors.

On the other hand, a social constructionist orientation is a generally accepted and growing perspective in the field of public relations, arguing that public relations claims are subject to social interpretation and negotiation. From a rhetorical perspective to public relations, it is through dialogue that participants identify, create, and manage meaning by the rhetorical processes of statement and counterstatement. The study of public relations in this sense seeks to advance marketplace and public policy discourse by pursuing organizational responsibility and discourse that lead to the co-creation, comanagement, or codefinition of meaning (zones of meaning) that resolve fact, value, and policy issues for a fully functioning society. From a public relations perspective that appreciates and incorporates social constructionist perspectives, steeped in rhetorical traditions, public relations can help individuals and groups from lay persons to decision makers understand, critique, and employ socially constructed, value-laden choices.

For public relations scholars and practitioners, social construction of reality theory raises questions about whether the differences among key

stakeholders' realities may not be understood in relation to various differences among the multiple publics and stakeholders. Numerous communication and public relations scholars contend that communication cannot be considered and realized without an appreciation for the interpretations communicators bring to symbolic discourse; otherwise the study of human communication, including public relations, is limited to mechanistic analysis.

Language, as such, is the means by which people function on two levels: that of their individual thoughts and the realization that others' thoughts have similar meanings and interpretations. By concentrating on language and the subsequent symbolic meaning, public relations research can provide insight on relationships between words and issues, and between content and meaning, as well as by examining how interaction transpires regarding issues development.

Communication and public relations scholars examine the social construction of reality through the scrutiny of symbols and meaning within the substance of messages constructed and shared by organizations with key stakeholders. It is through these messages (symbols) that people create, manage, and share interpretations of reality through social interaction, which allows society to function by the sharing and giving of meaning to physical and social realities. Ultimately, this sharing provides a footing for cooperative behavior through social reality—the understanding each person has of what other people know.

It was Berger and Luckmann's contention that the sociology of knowledge must concern itself with whatever passes for knowledge in a society, created by individuals and groups within that society, regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity of such knowledge or the criteria used to evaluate such knowledge. This human knowledge, or perception, is identified, developed, rationalized, maintained, and altered in social situations. As if almost directly speaking to public relations scholars, they argued that the sociology of knowledge must seek to understand the processes of social construction in a manner that taken-for-granted everyday experiences (reality) easily functions for people.

Communication theories abound in public relations literature, and the concept of socially constructed knowledge and perceptions permeates the

field's literature. A limited list of theories developed from this perspective include social cognition theory, social exchange theory, social identity theory, social judgment-involvement theory, social learning-social cognitive theory, social penetration theory, and the broader category of social theories of media effects.

For example, the relevance of mass communication studies to public relations is bound up with socially constructed realities; because mass communication is bound up with society, it is strongly influenced by the immediate circumstances of culture, history, and society. The forms of the symbolic environment, though socially constructed, are often reflected in and perceived through mass media.

Within risk communication studies, social constructionist concepts treat risk as social constructs that are determined by structural forces in society. Issues such as trust, control, and fairness among others are reconstructed from the beliefs and rationalities of people in society, and these social constructions reflect the interests and values of the individuals and the shared meaning of terms, cultural artifacts, and natural phenomena among groups. In a sense, what individuals and societies choose to call risky is largely determined by the social and cultural construction of perceptions, rather than some objective nature.

Within organizational studies, it is often viewed within organizational legitimacy research as a complex process of a socially constructed reality, based on localized social norms and values. In the science and health communication field, numerous researchers have examined media coverage of scientific findings as socially constructed. Many researchers in the field of sociology of ignorance argue that scientists' claims regarding knowledge are either inherently social or at least partially subject to social processes.

Though not specifically coining this theory, aspects of social construction theory can be traced back to at least Plato's famous cave analogy, where the prisoners not only see shadows or reflections, but their knowledge of the people outside the cave is also created by shared perceptions. This shared, socially constructed perception is a result of their discourse about those shadows and reflections.

Building from the lead of philosophers and historians like Nietzsche, Dewey, Heidegger,

Wittgenstein, Scheler, and Kuhn, social construction theorists generally accept the claim that knowledge is socially determined and constructed. Earlier this century, Walter Lippmann discussed similar important aspects of the social construction of reality in describing how democracy works and the role of public opinion within the democratic system. Lippmann in 1922 argued that "man is no Aristotelian god contemplating all existence at one glance" but rather develops views of the world based on the "behavior of other human beings, in so far as that behavior crosses ours, is dependent upon us, or is interesting to us" (p. 18). The individual and collective sense of reality is ultimately constructed by our experiences and relationships with others who also shape our experiences.

Ultimately, the social construction of reality theory argues against a purely objective sense of perception. Knowledge is not something that exists only as part of our cognitive functions and is only learned from informative communication. Rather, the construction of discourse is created through social interaction, and that discourse can only be recognized after it becomes routine of the normative conventions that form the social communities in which societies function and live.

Michael J. Palenchar

See also Perspectivism Theory; Risk Communication; Social Exchange Theory

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SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Social exchange theory adapts microeconomic theory to a wide variety of exchanges between people and groups. Indeed, social exchange theory is not one theory but several theories that describe the emergent properties of social interaction. Social exchange theory has been invoked to explain how social relationships form, expand, and deteriorate. These theories have also been applied to characterize relationships between individual stakeholders and organizations.

Social exchange differs from economic exchange in that it is relatively informal. It involves obligations that cannot be specified in advance and, compared to economic exchange, has a longer time horizon. Unlike economic exchange, the elements of social exchange are quite varied and cannot be reduced to a single monetary exchange rate. Social exchange thus requires greater trust that others will honor their promises. Social exchange also contrasts with economic exchange in that it tends to foster feelings of personal obligation and gratitude that are usually absent in exchanges that are purely economic.

Simple social exchange models assume that the rewards and costs of an association drive relationship decisions. When relationship rewards exceed costs, a party typically moves toward expanding the exchange in a relationship. When costs exceed rewards, the person may freeze the exchange or terminate the relationship. In a mutually beneficial relationship, each party supplies resources that the other party wants that have less value to the provider than the resources that are received from the other party. Such an exchange results in mutual relationship satisfaction and stability.

Why, then, do people often put up with less-than-satisfactory relationships? John Thibaut and Harold Kelly (1959) proposed two comparison standards to differentiate between relationship satisfaction and relationship stability. Relationship satisfaction increases when the balance of rewards and costs in the relationship exceeds the person's *comparison level*. A person's comparison level is based on social norms, a person's past experience in relationships, or social observation. When the reward cost ratio falls beneath comparison level expectations, the person is dissatisfied with the

relationship. Parties to the same relationship may have rather different comparison levels and thus different expectations regarding what is a satisfactory relationship.

Relationship stability is determined by how a relationship compares with the comparison level of alternatives. This standard reflects the level of profits that the person thinks are available in alternative relationships. If a current relationship is perceived to be more profitable than available alternative relationships, then that party will likely stay with the relationship.

Combining the two comparison standards, one can distinguish between four kinds of relationships. In a *still-born relationship* profits fall beneath both the person's comparison level and comparison level of alternatives. The person will likely be dissatisfied with the relationship and perceive better available alternatives. Such a relationship will likely be terminated. In an *unstable relationship*, the relationship compares favorably with one's comparison level but compares unfavorably with one's comparison level of alternatives. The person is satisfied with the target relationship but considers an alternative relationship to be more attractive. A *malaised relationship* compares unfavorably with the comparison level but is rated as better than the perceived alternatives. Such a relationship will be stable even though the person is dissatisfied with it. A *blissful relationship* exceeds both comparison standards and is characterized by both relationship satisfaction and stability.

An important extension of social exchange theory is found in Caryl Rusbult's 1987 investment model. This model posited that the greater the nontransferable investments that a person has in a relationship, the more stable the relationship will be. In this view, relationship commitment or stability is a function of relationship satisfaction plus relationship investment minus perceived alternatives. A person may find she has a great deal invested in a relationship and is thus reluctant to terminate it. She may pour additional resources into the relationship and attempt to salvage her endangered investments. The investment model has been applied to types of relationships of interest to public relations practitioners such as employment and customer associations.

The importance of relationship investment is illustrated in the tenets of relationship marketing. Relationship marketing theorists advocated a

differentiated and unique relationship with each customer via the use of computer databases and information processing technologies. According to Don Peppers and Martha Rogers (1997), the customer tells the firm what he wants. The firm makes it and remembers the customer's preferences for the next time. The "learning relationship between a customer and an enterprise gets smarter and smarter with every individual interaction, defining in ever more detail, the customer's own individual needs and tastes" (p. 15). The increasing degree of convenience represents a customer investment that will be lost if he deserts to a competitor. Peppers and Rogers wrote, "The learning relationship creates what is, essentially a barrier that makes it more difficult for a customer to be promiscuous than to be loyal" (p. 15).

Social exchange theory also investigates how parties respond when they experience relationship dissatisfaction. Rusbult (1987) described four generic options that parties can employ in response to an event that triggers relationship dissatisfaction. *Exit* consists of leaving the relationship. It is a likely response when people have few investments, low prior relationship satisfaction, and perceive available alternate relationships. *Voice* consists of various communicative responses in which a party brings up the relational problem and seeks redress or relationship repair. *Loyalty* consists of increasing one's commitment to the relationship without making the dissatisfaction the focus of communication. The loyalty and voice options are typically exercised when a party is satisfied with the relationship and is highly invested in it. The *neglect* option tends to be exercised when relationship satisfaction is low, but the person perceives few alternatives.

Social exchange theories enable one to describe power dynamics in a relationship. When levels of interdependence in a relationship are low, both parties have little influence over each other. As the levels of relational interdependence increase, the influence of each party increases. The relative balance of dependencies within a relationship determines the distribution of influence within the relationship. The person who is more dependent on the relationship will have less power. The person who is less dependent on the relationship will have more influence within the relationship. In organizational contexts, a party gains power to

the degree that he helps the organization obtain a critical resource or manage an important threat. If he is able to control access to and use of such resources, this control translates into considerable influence and power. One can increase his influence by incrementally increasing the organization's dependence on the key resource (Pfeffer, 1981).

Relationship management theory in public relations is derived from social exchange theory. In this work, the organization-stakeholder relationship is the unit of analysis. Considerable work has been devoted to measuring dimensions of organization-public relationships. For instance, Samsup Jo (2006) found that trust, relationship satisfaction, and relational commitment were the primary factors of organization-public relationships in a Korean retail setting, thereby highlighting core social exchange concepts. Parallel work has differentiated various types of organization-public relationships (Hung, 2005). This work is important because it identifies types of exploitative and one-sided relationships in addition to those that involve high levels of mutuality. This corrects for an implicit "positivity" that characterized some of the early work using the relationship management metaphor. Scholars have also explored organizations' attempt to cultivate and maintain organization-stakeholder relationships (e.g., Ki & Hon, 2009).

Social exchange theories continue to make important contributions to public relations scholarship. The contribution, however, need not be confined to the individual organization-stakeholder relationships. For instance, Robert L. Heath in 2006 integrated social exchange theory with systems theory and rhetorical theory to develop a normative model of how public relations should contribute to a fully functioning society. This involves debating, negotiating, and harmonizing the interests of organizations, stakeholders, and the larger public interest as society confronts issues of risk management. In summary, social exchange theories continue to contribute to the ongoing conversation about what role public relations does and should play in society.

Greg Leichty

See also Issues Management; Relationship Management Theory; Resource Dependency Theory

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SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social learning theory (also called social cognitive theory) is a general theory of learning that explains how people not only learn directly through their own trial-and-error efforts but also through observation of other's behaviors and the positive or negative outcomes of those behaviors. The theoretical foundations of social learning theory can be found in the work of Albert Bandura. According to his principles of social learning theory, people learn to perform behaviors by observing others and subsequently modeling those behaviors. For this reason, the learning process is referred to as modeling, observational learning, or vicarious learning. Social learning theory holds that behavior should be conceived in the broad sense to include both overt

(observable) as well as covert (emotions and thoughts) behaviors. In addition, Bandura's 1978 principle of reciprocal determinism (also called reciprocal causation) claims that a person's behavior, personal characteristics (including cognitions and feelings), and environment interact with and affect one another to influence behavior.

Four factors account for social learning: (1) attention, (2) retention, (3) behavior reproduction, and (4) motivation. The first factor is attention. In order to learn from the model's behavior, the individual must pay *attention* to that behavior. Failure to attend to the behavior means the behavior process cannot be encoded in memory. The second factor, *retention*, is necessarily dependent on the first factor. Visual as well as verbal elements of the behavior performance must be stored and recalled at another time. In addition to storing the performance, the person retains the consequences of that behavior. Was the behavior rewarded or punished by valued others? Remembering that a particular behavior was rewarded and another behavior was punished will increase the likelihood that the rewarded behavior will be enacted. Cognitive rehearsal of the behavior and outcomes aids retention. The third factor is *reproduction* of the observed behavior. The individual must have the physical or verbal skills or both as well as knowledge needed to effectively replicate the desired behavior. The person must understand the circumstances that led the behavior to be rewarded as well as how to enact the behavior. The final factor is *motivation*, which is related to the individual's internal mental states. An individual may recall how to perform an action but choose not to reproduce it. Motivation can stem from both internal and external factors. Internal factors include the individual's emotion states, personal characteristics (e.g., risk aversion, extroversion), and feelings of self-efficacy, as well as imagined outcomes—rewards or punishments—for performing the behavior. An individual's motivation to produce the behavior will increase when anticipated positive rewards, whether internal (such as feelings of mastery or self-reinforcement) or external (such as tangible awards or verbal phrase) are contingent upon the behavior performance. Recalling that the model received desired positive reinforcement for performing the behavior also should enhance motivation.

The role of self-efficacy in social learning has attracted attention from researchers interested in modifying people's motivations to enact desired behaviors. Self-efficacy expectations refer to beliefs that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce particular outcomes (Bandura, 1977b). Self-efficacy is important to behavior reproduction because it affects whether the person will attempt to perform the potentially rewarding behavior, how much effort the person will exert to perform a behavior, and how long the person may persevere in trying to enact the behavior. Enhancing a person's self-efficacy expectations should increase the likelihood of behavior enactment.

Social learning theory has been applied in studies of media effects to explain why people model what they see, read, or hear in the media. The theory can be used to account for behaviors that are consistent with as well as contrary to mainstream norms. Because valued others can be the model as well as the sources of reinforcement for behavior performance, both prosocial and antisocial behaviors may be modeled and reinforced. For example, a person may learn how to smoke a marijuana cigarette by watching a friend smoke and receiving positive social feedback when smoking. In contrast, a person may learn to model behaviors depicted in a public service announcement that demonstrate how to decline a friend's invitation to use marijuana. Research in the media effects tradition often has been directed toward understanding why people model dangerous behaviors (e.g., stunts or violence) and how to counter the likelihood of enacting the behaviors (e.g., warnings such as "don't try this at home" or "professional actor on a closed track").

Social learning theory has many applications in public relations, ranging from social marketing campaigns to effective risk prevention efforts. By presenting models that target publics can identify with, effectively demonstrating how to engage in desirable healthy behaviors or how to avoid undesirable risk-provoking behaviors, and showing positive outcomes that ensue from the desired behavior, public relations practitioners encourage publics to learn strategies and tactics for enacting the target behaviors. Thus the theory holds implications for the effective design of campaigns designed to influence behavior. Recent social marketing campaigns aimed at decreasing bullying in schools and

increasing physical activity among young people provide examples of campaigns that rely on observational learning to teach appropriate behavior.

Criticisms of social learning theory include the inability to predict precisely the impact of a model on behaviors. For example, the role of valued others as models and reinforcers may be difficult to establish. Valued others may be actual or imagined. This complicates the prediction of which factors will be seen as positive reinforcers by different people. The complexity of the relationships between behavior, personal characteristics, and social environment, called reciprocal determinism, makes it difficult to predict a specific constellation of factors that will produce desired behaviors for members of a target public (Bandura, 1978).

Sherry J. Holladay

See also Efficacy/Self-Efficacy; Learning Theory; Reinforcement Theory; Social Marketing; Word of Mouth Marketing

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SOCIAL MARKETING

Social marketing evolved from the discipline of marketing and focuses on the use of marketing concepts and techniques to promote social causes and to counter antisocial behavior. It differs from commercial marketing by its emphasis on achieving social change and the well-being, health, and safety of the community rather than on increasing sales, profits, and value for shareholders. Social marketers promote such outcomes as health, environmental protection, animal welfare, human rights, freedom, and other common good issues. They

conduct educational campaigns, usually funded by nonprofit organizations and government agencies, aimed at solving social problems (e.g., obesity, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, road safety, sun protection, birth control, immunization, and responsible parenting, as well as clean-up and recycling).

Core principles of social marketing include clear behavioral change goals, an attempt to segment audiences and reach out to specific target audiences with specifically designed messages and intervention programs, an effort to increase incentives and remove barriers to behavior change, and systematic measurement of intervening programs and campaigns' impact. In many cases, social marketing campaigns seek to influence decision makers and legislation to achieve individual behavior changes as well as societal structural changes.

Since its introduction by marketing scholars Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman in 1971, social marketing as an academic discipline has consistently ignored relevant and useful public relations theories and concepts. Inspired by commercial marketing, health education, and health communication theory, social marketing still lacks a discipline-specific theory framework. In a process of "reinventing the wheel" social marketing literature uses terms such as *media advocacy* to describe what public relations calls *media relations* and *upstream movement* to describe the public relations function of lobbying. The different terminology describes similar professional tools. In reality, the two relatively young disciplines overlap: Social marketing campaigns involve public relations practices, and many public relations practitioners provide services to social marketing programs. Both work to build relationships with specific stakeholders based on persuasive communication, understanding, and trust. However, the academic disciplines have ignored each other, and it was not until after 2000 before public relations textbooks started to refer to social marketing as a relevant field.

The reservation social marketing scholars have about public relations might be explained by the controversial reputation and perceived unethical image of the profession. Their rare comments on public relations tend to see it as an ineffective effort to put a gloss on messages and to promote the organization rather than to solve social issues. Some identify the contribution of public relations as limited to the stage of "raising awareness" about

social problems and sometimes influencing attitudes. They do not position public relations as significant in attempts to influence behavior change. That change is the bottom line for social marketing.

Social marketing could benefit a great deal from the superior experience and knowledge that public relations has in overlapping areas—particularly in terms of cost-effective methods, theories that can augment the marketing mix, and public relations' longer track record in education and research. Public relations educators could similarly benefit from the inclusion of social marketing as part of the core curriculum. The emphasis of social marketing on the use of research to understand client motivation to maintain or change a behavior, and its creative approach to intervention programs could enrich public relations practice as well as its body of knowledge. Following social marketing prosocial aims and ethical intent could enhance public relations' reputation.

Social marketing is often confused with social media and online networking and with the concepts of corporate social responsibility and societal marketing that relate to specific business practices. Businesses might conduct social marketing campaigns that are aimed at prosocial causes but eventually result in improved organizational image and increase in sales and profits. Thus a sportswear brand has a vested interest in promoting active lifestyle and a beauty products company benefits from a campaign that promotes positive body image in young women to reduce anorexia. Social marketing differs from the organization-centered approach of public relations. In many cases, social marketing has to compete with messages delivered by public relations practitioners in the business sector that promote consumerism and the consumption of alcohol or tobacco, fat and sugary products, lottery, and so on. From Alan R. Andreasen's 2006 point of view, social marketing ought to be identified mainly as the domain of government and nonprofit organizations, especially health promotion, and with improving citizens' quality of life. Genuine social marketing campaigns are funded by public resources and are accountable to public interest groups.

Social marketing research has been growing with active research centers and projects affiliated with universities and Ministries of Health. The

international peer-reviewed magazine *Social Marketing Quarterly* (SMQ), which started in 1994, provides a stage for scholarly publications. The *International Journal of Non-Profit & Voluntary Sector Marketing* and the *Journal of Health Communication* provide other outlets for the development of the discipline. Alongside publishing, opportunities for the exchange of ideas and experiences have developed in the last decade by newly formed associations in Europe, the United States, and Australasia. However, in terms of teaching, the discipline's scope is limited. This is changing as more elective papers on social marketing are included in marketing, management, and communication degrees.

Margalit Toledano

See also Cause-Related Marketing; Corporate Social Responsibility; Goals; Marketing; Objectives

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digital and mobile environments. Social media combine the use of innovative strategies with digital communication technology platforms, enabling users to share knowledge; engage in digital storytelling through conversations and visual components; collaborate with others; engage in crowdsourcing tasks and contribute ideas to solve problems; conduct strategic monitoring and analytic analysis online; and build relationships within a community sharing common interests, investments, and needs.

Compared to traditional media, social media are open and accessible, dynamic, modifiable, and decentralized. Where traditional media feature a primarily one-way dissemination of content, social media provide means for real two-way or group conversations. The cost of entry to traditional media is quite high, but social media users create content at very little if any expense. In place of traditional media's designated spokespersons, multiple voices from all walks of life produce user-generated content in social media. To a much greater extent than traditional media, social media create and maintain networks of personal relationships. Information from traditional media is frequently delayed, but social media are immediate, breaking barriers of time and location.

Social media feature a wide range of communication channels, including social networking sites (Facebook and LinkedIn), blogs and microblogs, intranets, podcasts, video sharing (YouTube), photo sharing and editing networks (Flickr or Instagram), social networking Q&A sites (Quora), collaborative websites (Wikipedia and Scholarpedia), virtual worlds (World of Warcraft and Second Life), microblogging or presence applications (Twitter), social bookmarking (Delicious or Pinterest), and news aggregation and RSS. Jan H. Kietzmann, Kristopher Hermkens, Ian P. McCarthy, and Bruno S. Silvestre (2011) wrote that each social media site focuses on one or several of seven major functions: identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups.

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace, can be internal or external in their specialization of audiences. Social networking sites are particularly influential sources of user-generated content. Social networking sites can be defined as “(1) web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media provide the ultimately networked communication hub of dialogue, relationship management, and information creation and dissemination in

(2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). Individuals share their statuses with others on newsfeeds, initiating dialogue with posts and shares on their status wall, and participate in conversations and other forms of dialogue on profile walls of other users. Individuals share their insights and statuses with others to spark interest or dialogue with their friends or to provide content they believe to be helpful or entertaining.

A *blog*, short for “Web log,” is a collection of individual submissions or posts that usually appear in reverse chronological order, from more to less recent. Blogs typically contain text, photos, and links to other online material. *Microblogs* are blogs in which updates feature limited numbers of characters. Twitter is a leading microblog site that has become increasingly popular among public relations professionals. Compared to Facebook, Twitter positions itself as being more specific in the actions and features offered to audiences. Twitter focuses on simplicity and the ability to use its features in various sources such as mobile, wireless, and instant message. Although some blogs and microblogs are maintained by professional journalists, blogging has greatly increased the volume and influence of user-generated content for public relations and strategic communication professionals.

Videosharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo provide unique visual creation and uploading opportunities that allow individuals, organizations, or agencies to share their story through videos that are easily searchable online. Photosharing sites such as Flickr and Instagram represent emerging platforms for creating, curating, and sharing visual information to a mass audience in the form of still pictures that are editable. Social bookmarking sites allow users to save and manage documents in various formats (links, PDFs, videos, tweets, published articles, etc.) from a centralized location. Users also have the option to assign tags or key words to each of these documents to allow others to search for them or as a personal reference tool.

Users of social media vary in their level of active participation. Some users actively participate by creating their own digital content, and interact with others one-to-one or one-to-many on a social

platform. Other users are more passive consumers of information that others share, create, and curate into a centralized place on a social media platform.

Social media have transformed the way businesses target consumers and how organizations create and implement campaigns. From sharing news articles through the microblogging website Twitter to networking with friends, professionals, and brands on the social networking phenomenon Facebook, consumer use of social media outlets is revolutionizing the public relations profession in the 21st century. Best practices within social media for public relations and communication professionals include the following:

- Integrate participation in social media as part of the daily routine, just like checking the news or email.
- Connect with people online and establish strategic relationships with key audiences in positive situations before any crisis occurs.
- Create engaging dialogues through online channels relevant to audience members.
- Monitor and evaluate the analytics and metrics associated with social media platforms and conversations for both research and practitioner purposes.
- Be consistent with content across all social media platforms as well as in traditional media outlets.
- Recognize that social media is not for the short term—it is a long-term process and investment.
- Educate your organization and community about social media along with future trends.
- Monitor and evaluate conversations across social media platforms.
- Prepare an evolving social media policy for training and education, and run scenarios and simulations in real time.
- Manage relationships proactively—be helpful and bring value to the conversation and relationship.
- Maintain proactive online reputation management practices both personally and for the organization.

Karen Freberg

See also Network Theory; Really Simple Syndication; Social Media Press Release; Social Network Analysis; Social Networking; Social Networks/Niche Networks

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SOCIAL MEDIA PRESS RELEASE

The social media press release is a modern interpretation of the traditional press release, formatted for the digital age. It is often in the form of a webpage, designed to appeal directly to bloggers and consumers, as well as reporters and editors. The social media press release enables bloggers and the general public to find news and share it directly through their online social networks, providing a complement to the traditional distribution method facilitated by the news media.

Like a traditional press release, the social media press release typically contains a short announcement written in news style. However, it often includes the same information repackaged into bulleted points or a detailed outline. In addition, the social media press release provides further resources, including multimedia files (high-resolution photos, compressed video, digital audio, graphics), hyperlinks to RSS news feeds and previous news coverage on the topic, and social media tags. Social media expert Todd Defren is generally credited with creating in 2006 one of the first known templates for a social media press release.

As Internet use and functionality grew, the traditional press release became less effective. Journalists wanted more digestible bits of information, along with multimedia elements and links to additional resources that would help bring a story to life and provide easy access to more depth and context. Additionally, the launch of Google News in 2002 meant that public relations wire services, such as Marketwire and PR Newswire, became searchable via the Internet. For the first time, consumers, as well as journalists, could have immediate access to

news releases. This technological advancement, along with the development of social media over the subsequent years, cleared the way for the rise of the social media press release, ushering in new ways for public relations practitioners to handle content, style, and format. For example, incorporating keywords into the headline may improve search engine results, helping an organization more quickly reach those interested in learning about an important announcement.

David Remund

See also Media Relations; Media Release; Search Engine; Search Engine Optimization; Social Media

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SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Social network analysis (SNA) is the examination of social networks and their behavior through the framework of network theory. In network theory, networks typically consist of nodes within the network connected by edges or links. In social networks, the nodes represent individuals, groups, organizations, or larger social systems. The links connecting the nodes signify relationships such as friendship, kinship, organizational position, sexual relationship, and so forth. Regardless of the level of social

system or type of relationship, SNA seeks to describe the structure and pattern of these relationships and to understand both their root causes and end consequences. The study of these relationships has been used throughout anthropology, biology, communication studies, social psychology, public relations, and sociolinguistics to examine network dynamics and locate influential actors within each network. The study of social networks helps public relations professionals influence perception and spread strategic messages through a network by identifying and leveraging these influential actors.

Relationships in the network can be directed (“seeks advice from”), undirected (“shares information with”), positive (love, friendship, alliance, partnership), or negative (hatred, anger, rivalry). Network analysis can involve the qualitative study of these connections or a quantitative study of the number of relationships, regardless of how good or bad they are.

Clusters are used to identify and classify groups in a social network. A *cluster* is a tightly knit, highly bonded group both belonging to and distinct from the larger network. Identifying clusters has become one of the most important applications of SNA. As Amazon has demonstrated with its algorithms that show what other customers who bought certain items also bought, sales can be improved by identifying these linked groups in the larger network. To identify clusters, analysts often look at relationship density. A node’s or actor’s density is the number of links that connect that node or actor to a group of interest divided by the maximum possible number of links that could exist from that node or actor. The closer the density is to 1, the more connected that node or actor is to the rest of the network.

Analysts try to find the *bridgers* and the *hubs* in the network to best analyze network behavior. Bridgers are individuals who have connections in multiple clusters, and thereby bridge distinct subgroups in a network. This connection makes them important relay points between clusters. Bridgers are often overlooked because their significance is not obvious from their density. A better metric is betweenness centrality, a measure that calculates the number of shortest paths to other nodes that pass through that node. Analysts also use network constraint. An individual’s network constraint measures how many links a node has with other

nodes that are already connected to each other. High betweenness centrality and low network constraint indicate bridgers.

Hubs are individuals within a social network who have the most influence, or are sought after by other network members. They are best measured using in-degree centrality, or counting the number of directed links (“seeks advice from”) as opposed to undirected links (“shares information with”) from other nodes to the hub node. More advanced metrics count not only the number of directed links but also how influential the nodes seeking the hub node are in the network.

Kristin Saling

See also Knowledge Networks; Media Networks; Network Theory; Social Networking

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SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking has become popular over the last few years and can be understood as the grouping of individuals into specific circles. Any communication channel that allows for two-way interaction can be used for social networking. Social networking is based on a network structure that allows people to both express their individuality and meet people with similar interests. That can be done in person but is often conducted online. Social networking has revolutionized the way people communicate and share information.

Social networks have evolved into online communities used by millions of people on a daily basis. Websites are commonly used for social networking; they are known as social sites, connecting members in this online community. Many of these online community members are professional

acquaintances, friends, or just individuals who share common interests in hobbies, religion, politics, for example. Once a person has access to a social networking website, he or she can begin to socialize. This socialization may include reading profile pages of other members or contacting and connecting with them. Social networking sites incorporate email type messaging, instant messaging (IM), and chat. Many social networking sites allow for file sharing, blogging, photo and video publishing, and the ability to incorporate content from other platforms.

The first basis for social networking that caught the public's attention was the means to connect with former classmates. Classmates.com was launched in the United States in 1995 and acquired over 40 million users in a little over 10 years. An equally successful site, Reunion.com started in 2002 and expanded the Classmates.com objective to beyond the classroom. Friendster and Myspace were two of the most popular early social networking sites that connected individuals with friends, coworkers, or others with similar interests online. Facebook, launched in 2004, is the most popular social networking site with over 900 million users.

The friends that people can make are just one of the many benefits of social networking online. Diversity is another benefit because the Internet gives individuals from all over the world the ability to connect online through social networking sites. This means that although users are in one country, they can develop an online friendship with individuals from other countries. This enables learning about different communities and cultures.

Social networking sites have become increasingly popular over the past few years because of their high level of engagement and reach. Consequently, this is one of the main reasons they have become of such interest to public relations practitioners and marketers. Businesses and organizations are able to communicate directly with stakeholders through social networks. In addition, they are able to receive feedback and comments from stakeholders as well. The relationship development potential that social networking sites provide is enormous and continues to grow.

Melissa W. Graham

See also Social Media; Web 2.0

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SOCIAL NETWORKS/ NICHE NETWORKS

Social networking sites (SNS) are the most widely used form of social media and describe platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn (and, traditionally MySpace). In 2012, Facebook had 901 million users, and LinkedIn reported 175 million users. Social networking sites are used to (re)connect with friends and acquaintances as is the case for Facebook and professional contacts for LinkedIn. For organizations and public relations practitioners, SNS offer the opportunity to communicate with constituencies via a direct-to-consumer approach.

For organizational use of SNS, Facebook Pages and LinkedIn, Company Pages are created to communicate broadly with constituencies who “follow” or subscribe to updates from an organization. Facebook Pages are often aimed at evangelists or those who subscribe based on a shared interest in the organization and may serve as third-party endorsers for organizations. LinkedIn Pages, on the other hand, are aimed at professionals who have similar business interests and are interested in learning more or discussing industry and topical issues. Importantly, the individuals who follow LinkedIn Pages already have an interest in the organization and its mission or content. Users are not typically recruited through contests, promotions, or amusing content as is generally the case with Facebook Pages.

As a result of the volume of users of major SNS, niche networks formed as a specialized subset of users. Niche networks focus on a shared interest (e.g., alumni groups or dog lovers). Facebook

Groups were designed to be more intimate than Facebook Pages and are often invite-only groups that resemble niche networks in purpose. Similarly, LinkedIn Groups generally focus on past and present employees and members of an organization, professional organizations, or users who share similar business interests.

Although they differ in purpose, Facebook and LinkedIn as social networks share the following features:

Profile: Both Facebook and LinkedIn allow organizations to create a customized profile page. The profile photo will generally be the organization's logo, and basic information will be included as descriptive content.

Posts/Status updates: Posts refer to the regularly posted content on behalf of the organization to include key messages and promotional content.

Comments: Comments refer to the posts made by followers of a page, either in response to a post made by the organization or on its own. Organizations should always allow users to leave comments on SNS because disabling the comment function restricts dialogue and transparency. Organizations should respond to applicable comments within a timely manner. Depending on the communication staff's capabilities, it is appropriate to respond to comments within one hour to one day. Negative comments and customer service queries are unavoidable for many organizations on SNS. Handling such comments is a delicate situation; however, if handled properly, it offers communicators the opportunity to create evangelists and brand loyalty. Staff may either respond directly to comments or may direct a participant to a private conversation (direct message).

Identification: Organizations can identify with other groups and organizations on Facebook and LinkedIn. An organization may want to publicly affiliate with a nonprofit organization or cause they are supporting on Facebook. Or, an organization may join and contribute expertise to a relevant industry or topical group on LinkedIn.

Melissa D. Dodd

See also Social Media; Social Networking; Web 2.0

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SOCIALIZATION THEORY

Organizational socialization refers to the process by which an individual comes to appreciate and acquire social knowledge and skills essential for assuming an organizational role, namely what is required to be a public relations professional. Through organizational socialization, people learn the ropes by (a) developing work skills and abilities, (b) acquiring appropriate role behaviors, and (c) adjusting to the workgroup's values and norms.

Fredric M. Jablin in 1987 pioneered the communication theory of organizational socialization to explain the development process by which an individual learns the value system, norms, and required behaviors of an organization. His view of the process features four stages: anticipatory socialization, encounter, metamorphosis, and exit. *Anticipatory socialization* is the process, prior to entering any particular organization, by which people develop expectations and beliefs about particular occupations.

Jablin divided anticipatory socialization into two sequential substages: vocational anticipatory socialization and organizational anticipatory socialization. The first substage refers to accidental and deliberate processes by which a person reduces an initial limitless number of career possibilities to a few realistic choices. Organizational anticipatory socialization is the process by which an individual develops beliefs and expectations about organizations and respective positions for which he or she has applied. Relevant information sources include organizational presentations (annual reports, job advertisements, brochures, job preview materials) and interpersonal interactions (organizational representatives and interviewers, other applicants, current employees, teachers, and other social network ties).

Encounter allows individuals to learn what the organization considers to be acceptable behaviors and attitudes. During *metamorphosis*, the newcomer becomes an accepted, fully functioning, participating member of the organization by learning and acquiring new attitudes and behaviors or modifying existing ones to be consistent with the organization's expectations. *Exit* refers to one's disengagement from an organization, including voluntary turnover, layoffs, job transfer, and retirement.

Socialization theory postulates that when individuals are "better" socialized, they enjoy greater job and communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. From a pedagogical point of view, improved socialization for public relations students will mean better prepared and performing practitioners. A prospective public relations student learns about and identifies with the work the profession entails (i.e., vocational anticipatory socialization) and what types of organizations engage in this work and what specific public relations jobs or positions are available (i.e., organizational anticipatory socialization).

Public relations scholars have investigated how students learn about the profession via mass media (e.g., movies, TV shows), talks with peers, friends, and family, and educational institutions (e.g., reading materials, lectures, assignments, extracurricular activities, and academic rationale to guide and justify the practice). More specifically, they learn academic standards, professionalism, and certification, especially through public relations organizations such as the Public Relations Society of America, the

Public Relations Student Society of America, the International Association of Business Communicators, and Women in Communication, and participation in public relations organizations, internships, part-time, or other work experiences.

Shannon A. Bowen (2003) addressed the ill effects of the profession's lax job of anticipatory socialization of students. She found that students hold negative impressions of the field, lack management knowledge, have little understanding about relationships, and have little knowledge about the amount of research necessary to perform public relations, largely owing to mass media's negative portrayals of the profession. She also found that public relations students often confuse it with marketing and advertising, image management, and manipulation. Such misconceptions result from long-term exposure to negative and misleading images portrayed in the news and entertainment media.

Students enrolled in an introductory mass communication course often hold a narrow view of public relations (i.e., identifying "advocacy" as its primary role). But George L. Daniels and Lillie M. Fears observed in 2006, as students are introduced to their majors, they delineate actual public relations functions. They also suggested that from the viewpoint of integrated marketing communication, the "confusion" of public relations with marketing and advertising "is acceptable and, even preferred" (p. 187). In their view, this affords students a broader view of public relations, one that is in line with the current practice.

Maureen Taylor and Michael L. Kent's content analysis of *Public Relations Tactics* revealed that its articles did not offer solid evidence for the actual value of social media in the practice of public relations, lacked healthy skepticism of social media, and gave inaccurate information that can lead to a false sense of a public relations career.

Other scholars found that students with public relations education perceived a greater management role for public relations practitioners than their counterparts without a public relations education. Students who had work experiences were significantly more oriented toward the management role for public relations practitioners than their peers who did not have work experiences.

Stephen Bremner examined a daily journal of an intern in a small public relations firm in Hong

Kong. He reported that the female intern went through “language socialization” from academic “classroom like” discourse with detailed explanations on her tasks, activities and observations to insider “PR like” discourse with little explanations, thereby signaling her being socialized into the public relations community.

Because professional socialization is so vital to the satisfaction of employees and their knowledge of the profession, socialization theory of public relations education will continue to be refined.

Jaesub Lee

See also Employee Communication; Network Theory; Professional and Professionalism; Professionalism in Public Relations

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SOCIETY

All professions base their identity and measure their contribution from their ability to add value to society. Legendary practitioners recognized that their profession had to add value to society through their services to clients. They shaped what they believed was the ethics of their practice as well as the skills of their service against this metric. They may be faulted for failures, some of which are more clearly understood in retrospection, but they took this responsibility seriously as they defined the role of public relations in society. The eternal question is not “Does each profession serve society?” but perhaps “How does society sustain each profession?”

For instance, John W. Hill, principal founding partner of Hill & Knowlton, recognized that public relations practitioners were needed to help organizations understand and meet their contract with society. They were servants of each society that gave them life. Hill in 1958 advised, “Public relations is an outgrowth of our free society, in which the ideal of an enlightened and rational public opinion is brought ever closer as understanding increases between groups and individuals” (p. vix). For Hill (1963), the primary role of public relations was to serve “the public interest” (p. 256).

The early years of the *Public Relations Review* witnessed many articles that addressed the standards of corporate responsibility that must guide practitioners and their clients. In those treatises, service to society was a constant and serious theme. Ron Pearson examined how critical standards surrounding the practice reflected different views of the role of business in society. Practitioners were in a position to adjust business to society or society to business. They could be the pawns of business or the servants of society.

Systems perspectives on public relations reasoned that an organization cannot long prosper or even survive if it is out of harmony and does not behaviorally adjust to the interests of its publics and stakeholders. A rhetorical perspective on public relations views dialogue as the essential struggle to codefine and manage interests and perspectives. This view of public relations assumes that public discourse refines ideas, vets facts and sharpens their interpretation, evaluates value

priorities, creates and demolishes identifications, and scrutinizes personal and sociopolitical policies and actions. *Critical theory* adds depth to such considerations by exploring the presence, causes, and remedies to alienation. To this end, and that of the other perspectives central to public relations, the fundamental concepts are balance and harmony.

The iconic social thinker, George Herbert Mead explored such themes in 1934 as he built his sociology on the belief that normative behavior results from individual and collective dialectics of mind, self, and society:

Our society is built up out of our social interests. Our social relations go to constitute the self. But when the immediate interests come in conflict with others we had not recognized, we tend to ignore the others and take into account only those which are immediate. The difficulty is to make ourselves recognize the other and wider interests, and then to bring them into some sort of rational relationship with the more immediate ones. (pp. 388–389)

A society—composed of people and organizations they create—learns from actions, reactions, mistakes, and reevaluations based on the analysis of mistakes. As a profession, public relations can serve society by helping to avoid and solve these mistakes.

To create society, humans foster a shared sense of mind, self, and society. Mind, as individual and collective, requires shared meaning. Without shared meaning, coordinated human activity is impossible. The key elements of information (facts and knowledge), evaluation (attitude and value), action (based on choice), and identifications, the essential ingredients of rhetoric, are essential for society. Through symbols that allow discourse, people arrange society rather than merely enact it at a purely sensory level. In the blending of collective interests, people manifest and manage their self-interests.

Discourse allows the human species to recognize and manage risks. As Mary Douglas postulated in 1992, “Cultural theory is a way of thinking about culture that draws the social environment systematically into the picture of individual choices” (p. xi). The rationale for society and cultures grows from awareness of and shared sense of

danger; this condition required a shared risk as the foundation for collective problem solving to achieve self and collective interest.

As characterized by Douglas, the rationale for society and culture is the collective management of risk—joint problem recognition and problem solution. So conceived, each profession plays a unique role in the collective management of risk. Out of this dialogue emerge idioms that express views of reality and preferences—norms.

In the search for security, words (symbols) count. Meaning defines interests, the balance of interests, risks, and the management of risks. Is this not the realm of public relations, not alone, but in conjunction with other professions? What is meaning? What meaning counts? Offering one of the best expressions of the logics that help discuss this view of society, famed linguist Edward Sapir, quoted in Benjamin L. Whorf’s *Language, Thought, and Reality* (1956), emphasized the centrality of language and meaning to the human experience,

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, not alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (p. 134)

Society, by this view, can be conceptualized as a complex of cultures, each with its peculiar idioms. Interests are defined, challenged, marginalized, and privileged through terminologies.

At times, organizations use public relations to privilege their view of reality. Worry about this propagandistic view of public relations focuses on the ability to co-create meaning through distortion, lies, misinformation, false reasoning, masked interests, blame shifting, and imbalanced relationships to benefit some interests at the disadvantage of others. What is also amazing is the inherent ability humans have to shrug off propagandistic control and engage in individual and collective reengineering of ideas, risks, and solutions.

It is unrealistic to expect any profession to set all matters right. All take their rationale from that challenge. Professions are enriched by challenging

themselves to serve the larger interests of humanity, the good of society.

Robert L. Heath

See also Antecedents of Modern Public Relations; Hill, John Wiley; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Reflective Management; Rhetorical Theory; Risk Society; Systems Theory

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SOCIOCULTURE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The sociocultural turn, which has emerged in public relations scholarship in recent decades, is concerned with studying aspects of the social and cultural context that produce and sustain different forms of public relations, as well as the influential role that it plays in society. In contrast to the often espoused view that public relations is a product of U.S. American culture, scholars engaging with sociological and cultural inquiry encourage broader views of practice that place significance on the inextricable link between culture (the group) and cognition (the individual), and the interrelationship between public relations and the sociocultural context within which public relations activities are performed—whether global, national, or local. Emphasis is placed, therefore, on diversity within the profession and practice and its centrality to everyday life.

Sociocultural approaches to public relations represent a “turn” in public relations theory toward the socially constructed nature of the practice and what is produced. The four key themes explored in this way are (1) the impact of culture and society upon public relations, (2) its influence upon society and culture, (3) public relations itself as a culture, and (4) the engagement of practitioners with the contexts within which they perform their work. All four themes raise issues concerned with power, authenticity, participation, and the position of public relations as a profession within society. As an occupational group, practitioners specialize in the production and dissemination of symbolic discourses about brands, services, people, and policies in order to encourage real change in the values, attitudes, or behaviors of the intended audience. Through this process, public relations produces particular sociocultural identities and practices that uphold or transform the way we understand ourselves, the groups we belong to, and the world around us.

The meanings created in the practice or generated within public relations professional cultures cannot be analyzed in isolation from the environment in which they are produced. A sociocultural understanding implies an appreciation of how public relations has been affected by politics and economic events, as well as different histories—at the micro (individual or group), meso (community or national), and macro (global) level. A useful framework that can be used to understand this complex interrelationship is Paul Du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay, and Keith Negus’s “circuit of culture,” which, when applied to public relations, suggests that the meanings produced through professional practice circulate and are sustained in society through five “moments”: production, regulation, consumption, representation, and identity. These moments serve to open up links among societal culture, economy, production and consumption, and the communication activities in which practitioners engage.

As part of a sociocultural approach it is important to understand the role of mediators of culture, cultural intermediaries. Public relations can be understood as a cultural intermediary occupation that is engaged in the production and transformation of meanings by promoting the latest styles and attitudes to wider audiences in society. The work of cultural intermediary occupations (which include

graphic design, advertising and branding, retail, fashion, and journalism) is increasingly central to economic and cultural life due to the power and influence they command. Practitioners as cultural intermediaries negotiate the competing discourses surrounding culture, identity, and power within the fields with which they interact—the occupational (or professional) field, the organizational (agency or client) field, and the industry (product or service) field. Scholars explore the social make-up of practitioners, their values, motivations, and perceptions of effective public relations practice, as well as the wider workplace cultures they inhabit, to consider how each influences the roles they perform. In turn, consideration is given to how public relations activity serves to maintain certain societal structures and norms.

Sociocultural approaches to the study of public relations can draw on a diverse range of disciplines including social psychology, anthropology, cultural studies, political economy, feminism, diaspora studies, and ecological studies, to name a few. There are also a range of research methods that might be adopted including ethnography and other forms of in-depth qualitative inquiry, narrative and discourse analysis, and storytelling techniques, as well as visual analysis. In applying any of these methods, emphasis is placed upon reflexive inquiry, which would ask deeper questions on issues such as the relationship between public relations and democracy, the relative privileging of different views and behaviors in and through public relations work, and diversity in types of professional practice as well as within the occupational culture.

Caroline E. M. Hodges

See also Anthropology and Public Relations; Bourdieu, Pierre, and Public Relations; Circuit of Culture; Culture; Diversity: Public Relations Profession; Ethnography of Public Relations; Postcolonialism Theory and Public Relations; Power, as Functions and Structures; Power, as Social Construction; Power, Discursive; Power, Symbolic; Professional Project of Public Relations; Race and Public Relations; Society

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SOCKPUPPET

A *sockpuppet* is an online persona controlled secretly by an Internet user for the purpose of deceiving others. A sockpuppet is not merely a pseudonym for protecting one’s privacy online. People use sockpuppets to hide their own biases or conflicts of interest when expressing opinions. Because word-of-mouth marketing is considered more credible than traditional paid marketing, businesses, public relations firms, and political campaigns have used sockpuppets to simulate word-of-mouth marketing as they promote themselves or their clients.

Sockpuppets are relatively easy to create. On most blogs and social networking sites, users can set

up multiple profiles with unverified information—although this practice often violates a website’s terms of service. People can pretend to be almost anyone online. It is possible to uncover the identity of a sockpuppet by tracing someone’s IP address, but unless other users become suspicious, a sockpuppet may go undetected for years.

People generally use sockpuppets to promote or defend their interests or to attack opponents. For example, between 1999 and 2006 Whole Foods CEO John Mackey posted messages on a Yahoo! forum under a false identity. These messages sought to bolster Whole Foods’ public image while criticizing its competitor, Wild Oats. Had Mackey posted under his own name, readers would have recognized immediately that he was a biased source. By pretending to be someone else, he apparently hoped readers would give more credibility to his comments.

Sockpuppets have played a part in political campaigns, as well. In 2006, Congressman Charles Bass, a Republican from New Hampshire, became embroiled in controversy after one of his aides was caught posting messages on Democratic websites under a false identity. Posing as a Democrat, the aide had tried to discourage other Democrats from making campaign contributions to Bass’s opponent, arguing that the election was a foregone conclusion.

Sockpuppets have been used by authors to write positive reviews of their own books, by journalists to argue with their readers, and by the U.S. military to infiltrate and influence terrorist networks online. One unique type of sockpuppet is the strawman sockpuppet. People use strawman sockpuppets to make their opponents look foolish, claiming to represent a particular viewpoint, but making weak arguments for that viewpoint.

Sockpuppets are a clear violation of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Member Code of Ethics. The code requires members to avoid deception and reveal the interests they represent. When individuals or organizations are found to be using sockpuppets their reputations are likely to suffer. In some cases, the consequences can be more severe. Congressman Bass’s aide was forced to resign. Whole Foods’ effort to acquire Wild Oats was delayed by a Federal Trade Commission investigation. In Europe, business people who falsely represent themselves online as customers can face fines or even prison. Sockpuppets may be a tempting tactic for communicators to employ, but the

risks associated with exposure, as well as the ethical and legal considerations, argue against this practice.

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See also Astroturfing; Codes of Ethics; Flogging; Public Relations Society of America; Trolling; Word of Mouth Marketing

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SOUND BITE

When a reporter interviews a subject for a news story, often only a small segment or a single quote from the actual interview will be used in the broadcast. These small segments are known as *sound bites*. A sound bite is a reference to the short comments that broadcast media use during news stories.

Although an interview with a reporter may last 30 minutes, what actually appears in the edited broadcast version will most likely be paired down to a 30-second (or less) sound bite. A sound bite is on average less than 10 seconds. Radio broadcasts tend to limit sound bites to only one sentence, a mere 8 to 10 words. Television sound bites are only one or two sentences in length, or about 25 words.

Because the length of a sound bite is so limited, it is important to have statements prepared in advance of an interview to increase chances of having the media use crucial portions of an interview. Once the prepared message has been delivered, it is important to stop talking. Answers to questions during the interview must be short and direct. Also, using clear and concise language as well as colorful and descriptive words will increase odds of the media using portions of an interview. By using short and direct responses and providing short sound bites, it is possible to have two short bites appear in one news segment.

For an effective sound bite, it is important to distill information into two or three key points. It is necessary to have a clear and concise message and corresponding key points to convey during an interview. By sticking to three key points or less, the audience is less likely to be confused and lose interest.

Unfortunately sometimes the sound bite may be taken out of context and be misleading. It is important that any spokesperson for an organization be prepared for an interview—have key messages already prepared that will make great sound bites and avoid using terminology that may be used out of context and sound negative. An interview subject who talks in sound bites is more likely to be included in the story since it facilitates editing and is short enough, and interesting enough, to fit the quick time frame of broadcast news.

Nancy Engelhardt Furlow

See also Actuality; Interview as a Communication Tool; Media Relations

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SOUTH AFRICA, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Because South Africa is the economic “powerhouse” of the African continent, the development of public relations and communication management is on a steady course and leading most other African and developing countries. South Africa has also recently become one of the partners in the recently created economic alliance BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and now South Africa). South Africa, its

communication strategies and public relations practice, will inevitably become a new force on the continent, where public relations exponents will become more innovative with strong communication leadership qualities. The practice in South Africa is in a further leadership trajectory resulting from the three King Reports on Corporate Governance for South Africa and the King III Report’s emphasis on the governance of stakeholder relationships.

South Africa as Context

South Africa, inhabited by 50 million people (according to the recent 2012 census), is both a developing country as well as an already-developed economic entity. As part of the African continent, and boasting a peaceful political transition in 1994 after 40 years of the apartheid regime, it is still a socioeconomically diverse and complex country. South Africa is more prosperous than most other countries on the African continent, but it will have to develop a whole spectrum of social, political, and intercultural assets to become a truly democratic environment.

Poverty, unemployment, and political strife and insecurities are continuous problems and will have to be addressed more assertively by the social and political leaders of South Africa in the future. It is, however, the top performing economy (with the highest gross domestic product—\$357.2 million) in Africa. There are loud and insistent voices that plead for the nationalization of mines and other business sectors and these “negative noises” inevitably further hamper steady foreign investment in South Africa.

Against these social, political, economic, and cultural diversities, public relations and communication professionals are challenged to operate in innovative manners that need to be focused on the issues at hand—and these issues are ever changing. Furthermore, public relations and communication management practitioners often have to represent conflicting interests and complicated arguments of individuals, companies, and incompatible parties.

Communication Infrastructure

To operate at all, public relations practitioners and communication managers need access to an efficient, diverse, and modern communication infrastructure. It is a fact—perhaps surprisingly—that the African continent is more connected to social (mobile) media than elsewhere in the world.

The context of new media and huge variations are found throughout the continent. South Africa is among the top 20 countries that rank in numbers of Internet nodes. Internet connectivity in South Africa is about 30 times larger than the next largest African country, Egypt. Full Internet facilities are accessible throughout the country with about 150 Internet service providers (ISPs) commercially available. Although costs are still high, South Africa is geared to assure more affordable services for its people in the future. After competing with *inter alia* Australia, the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) satellite site will be mainly managed in South Africa. Two SKA receiver components will be built in South Africa and one in Australia. These will compose the world's most powerful radio telescope (decision announced by the South African government on May 25, 2012).

According to the Division of Communication of UNESCO there had already been 33,954,960 mobile subscribers in South Africa in December 2008, while at the same time 17 million utilized radio as the main medium of communication. Less than 5 million still use landlines. Mobile communication has increased from 17% of adults in 2004 to 76% in 2010. Today, out of 50 million South Africans, 29 million use mobile communication—more than radio (which had previously been the most popular medium of communication in South Africa). There are four licensed mobile operators—MTN, Vodacom, Cell C, and 8ta, according to the South African Info Report of November 23, 2012.

Although South Africa has the best information and communication technology infrastructure on the African continent, there are still the high costs of international bandwidth that remain. These and a lack of coordination in development projects in the communication technology fields are still impediments to professional practitioners.

Media in South Africa

South Africa is growing into one of Africa's major media centers. Since 1994—at the onset of a new democracy—there has been a relative exemplary media freedom in the country. However, future media freedom has recently been crippled by whispers of the Protection of Information Bill and the proposed Media Appeals Tribunal. These will hamper media freedom and the freedom of access to

information a great deal if adopted by government. Such moves will also inevitably have a negative influence on the utilization of all information—even by public relations practitioners and communication professionals.

The All Media and Products Study (AMPS) by the South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) reported in 2008 that 48.61% of South African adults prefer to read newspapers. Media 24 owns the *Daily Sun*, the new mass market tabloid whose success has turned the South African newspaper market on its head in the last couple of years. It has a daily circulation of 500,000 and a readership of 7.76 million. There are strong and established television networks available in the country. South Africa's most popular news site is News 24.com (online). Apart from Media 24 (owned by Naspers), there are Avusa, Caxton and CTP Group, Primedia, *Mail & Guardian*, and Multichoice (the large subscription TV channel), as well as e-TV.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), which had been established in 1936, operates four television stations, three are free-to-air (SABC1, SABC2, and SABC3) and one is e-TV—a private station, which is accessible to more than half of the South African population (owned by black empowerment group Hosken Consolidated Investments and Venfin Limited). Currently there is also a newly established African news channel—e-NCA.

Multiple subscription TV services provide a mix of local and international channels. The country enjoys a well-developed mix of public and private radio stations at the national, regional, and local levels. The state-owned SABC radio network operates 18 stations, one for each of the 11 official languages, 4 community stations, and 3 commercial stations. There are more than 100 community-based stations that extend coverage to rural areas. As of 2010, South Africa had 4,835 million Internet hosts and more than 5 million Internet users. There are also traditional media and unconventional media that are still effectively being utilized by public relations practitioners—for example, community and indigenous drama and music.

The onset of social networks and social media has broken age barriers. Facebook is fast becoming a mainstream medium in South Africa as well as an important stakeholder where professional communicators are concerned. Social media is crossing

urban-rural divides. Facebook is acquiring approximately 100,000 new users a month. LinkedIn has reached 1.93 million users at this stage and Twitter is gaining users. Wireless spots are increasing across the country and the city of Stellenbosch has decided to become the first with wireless access to its citizens. However, social media is for social networking and although it is being utilized for business, the South African corporate environment is still trying to find ways of making it an accessible corporate communication tool. Another challenge is to measure social media effectiveness. It is a fairly popular public relations channel in South Africa as South Africans are getting more connected and are seeing M-commerce and smart phones (mobile communications) taking over.

Public Relations Practice

The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) celebrated its 57th birthday in 2012. Furthermore, it was accredited in 2012 by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)—recognizing PRISA as the professional bedrock of the public relations industry in South Africa and indeed in Africa. PRISA has 1,109 senior current paid and 215 student members for 2012. It is part of and has been a founding member of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management. PRISA also has a consultancy arm—the Public Relations Consultancy Chapter (PRCC) with approximately 50 consultancies as members. The training arm of PRISA—Provox—is offering continuous professional development (CPD) programs for practitioners in the corporate environment. PRISA further offers internationally recognized accreditation (APR) and has regions across South Africa—in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal (Richardsbay), KwaZulu-Natal (Durban), Western Cape, Free State, and Eastern Cape.

Education and Training

The academic, professional, and vocational education and training in public relations and communication management are strong and in some instances leading the world. South African universities offer diplomas, certificate courses, undergraduate degrees as well as postgraduate degrees (up to PhDs) in public relations.

In most cases, public relations programs are offered in the faculties of Arts or Humanities at South African universities, as part of organizational communication or journalism, media studies, and mass communication. In a few other educational institutions, most notably the University of Pretoria, public relations and communication management programs are offered as a degree course in the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences. There are also a number of technical institutions and colleges that offer public relations courses for further training and development. South Africa has more than 20 such institutions.

Future of Public Relations in South Africa

Public relations (and communication management) will continue to develop throughout South Africa and contribute to the wider social and economic development of the country and continent. However, the world financial crisis of 2008 to 2009 and the subsequent economic, social, and political meltdown that continues in major markets that the continent both trades with and from which it receives investment, have had a huge impact on individual economies and their continued viability. Emphasis might be seen to move away from the European Union and the United States in the direction of the BRICS economic block.

The alliance of the BRICS states could bring about new opportunities for public relations in this changing political, social, and cultural landscape. South African public relations and communication management practitioners, already at the cutting edge of social change, are well placed to take advantage of these new challenges and opportunities.

The most significant new and developing initiative on South African shores came from the King Reports on Corporate Governance. The King III Report on Corporate Governance in South Africa, in its Chapter 8 on Governing Stakeholder Relationships, has opened the door for communication managers for South Africa and elsewhere to continue their work and practice in a more legitimate way in providing them with a “license to operate.”

The “Pretoria School of Thought” at the University of Pretoria (under the coordination of authors such as Rensburg, de Beer, Steyn, and Groenewald) is rapidly becoming a thought leader in building

onto the body of knowledge in public relations and communication management in the world.

Ronél Rensburg

See also Africa, Practice of Public Relations in; Engagement (Stakeholders); Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management; Social Media; Stakeholder Theory

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SPAIN, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

Spain is perhaps the only country in the Western world that has struggled to counter its poor international reputation since the time of the conquest of America to the current financial crisis. This phenomenon is known as the *Black Legend* (*Leyenda Negra*)—a style of historical propaganda that demonizes the Conquistadores and in particular the Spanish Empire as a politically motivated attempt to incite animosity against Spain.

Anti-Spanish propaganda was started in the 16th century when Spain was at its height of political power. The propagandists were rival European Protestant powers (especially England and the Netherlands) who employed propaganda as a means to morally disqualify the country and its people. The Black Legend exaggerates the extent of the activities of the Inquisition, the cruelty to American indigenous subjects in the territories of the Spanish Empire, and the treatment of non-Catholics such as Protestants and Jews in its European territories. The term was coined by Julián Juderías in his 1914 book *La Leyenda Negra y la Verdad Histórica* [The Black Legend and Historical Truth]. A more pro-Spanish historiographical school (known as the White Legend) emerged as a reaction, especially within Spain, but also in the Americas.

This historical phenomenon has created paradox. On the one hand, government initiatives from the 16th century to the Franco regime in the 20th century were utilized to influence international public opinion; on the other, the delay in the consolidation of democracy until the death of Franco in 1975 was a major obstacle to the development and formalization of the public relations profession.

However, Spain is now one of the countries with the most skilled professionals in proportion to its population—32 universities offer degrees in advertising and public relations. According to data gathered by the Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia [Ministry of Education and Science], over 12,000 students were enrolled in this course in the whole of Spain in 2010. So, although the Spanish system differs from the Anglo-Saxon one, the government has set up public relations as an undergraduate

major, alongside advertising, with a degree that is recognized nationally.

Elena Gutiérrez and Natalia Rodríguez divided the evolution of public relations in Spain into five periods: the first public relations campaigns (1953–1960), the decade of associative efforts (1961–1969), search for the institutionalization of the field (1970–1975), development under the democratic system (1975–1989), and recognition of public relations as strategic value (1990 to the present).

During the first two periods, public relations was consolidated, but primarily as a marketing activity. Excessive economic regulations and fascist protectionism did not allow free development of the profession. In this period, however, the first college in Europe to focus exclusively on public relations education was founded in 1967 at the University of Barcelona.

Because of the new democratic system and, consequently, the introduction of new economic and modernization policies in public administration, the 1975 to 1977 period represented an inflection point. Communications services were in increasing demand. Economic growth was accompanied by increased investment in advertising and other areas, including marketing and noncommercial communications. The public and private sectors needed corporate communication as a managerial function; this could be contracted through agencies or consultancies or created through internal structures with qualified professionals. Demand for this type of service explains international public relations consultancies opening their first offices during the 1980s.

The 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona gave an economic boost, unmatched in the history of Spain, and an associated rise in the profession's status. Two new Spanish associations were created: Association of Public Relations and Communication Consultants (*Asociación de Empresas Consultoras en Relaciones Públicas y Comunicación*, ADECEC) and Association of Communication Directors (*Asociación de Directivos de Comunicación*, DIRCOM). ADECEC was formed in 1991 by representatives of public relations consultancies with the highest revenues. It currently comprises 32 firms and is the Spanish industry's most important employer organization. DIRCOM was founded in 1993 and includes among its goals the consolidation

of communication as a strategic tool for organizational management.

The last ADECEC report in 2009 was conducted by the market research firm Sigma Dos and was based on interviews with 207 public relations practitioners (102 with communications managers at the main Spanish organizations in all industries and 105 with managers and employees of public relations firms). It found the top two activities carried out by most public relations firms were media relations (96%) and corporate communication (90.5%).

The companies further reported that corporate communication (91%) and internal communication (88%) were the most important functions of their communication departments, followed by media relations (86%) and public affairs (84%). Some 68% considered communication to have a strategic role in their operations (87% conducted corporate communication programs), and 89% evaluated the results of these programs.

Presently, there is no national census data as to the number of public relations professionals in Spain; however, about one third of the 400 members of Catalonia's professional association of advertising and public relations are public relations practitioners.

In 2009, public relations firms in Spain earned 4.3 billion euros, and 93% of those firms are foreign controlled. The firms not controlled by foreign firms are among those with the highest revenues, so foreign investment is no guarantee of turnover.

One of the factors providing evidence of the evolution of Spanish society and its influence on the practice of public relations is gender distribution among public relations practitioners: 68% of public relations practitioners are women and 32% men. By contrast, 58% of executive positions are occupied by men and 42% by women. This situation is very similar to that of other countries such as the United States. This, however, is not indicative of an Americanization of the field but, rather, of the fact that Spain has the same trends as other Western societies.

Jordi Xifra

See also Europe, Practice of Public Relations in; Nation Branding; Nation Building; Reputation

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SPEAKERS BUREAUS

A speakers bureau is a public relations tactic that provides individuals representing an organization the opportunity to speak about the organization's interests to other groups. The speakers bureau is composed of a pool of internal speakers that may include executives, employees, or volunteers who are made available upon request to other organizations. The speakers typically are provided without charge to civic and service organizations, business and professional organizations, and schools as a means of promoting the organization or its position on issues. Speakers

bureaus are commonly operated by corporations, industry associations, health care organizations, and nonprofits.

Speakers bureaus have long been a standard tactic of community relations programs. Whereas some organizations have developed speakers bureaus primarily as a reactive response to help them more systematically handle frequent requests for speakers, other speakers bureau programs proactively seek out strategic opportunities to place organizational representatives in front of key constituencies or to position executives as “thought leaders” in high-profile fora.

As a form of direct communication, speakers bureaus offer a number of advantages over mass-mediated public relations tactics. Most important, the speakers bureau is a relationship-building tool. Knowledgeable, personable speakers help to put a human face on the organization and increase its credibility. The public speaking situation allows for interaction with the audience and immediate feedback, and allows the speaker to control the organization's message without filtering from the media. In addition, according to the 1980 publication *The Executive Speechmaker: A Systems Approach*, speakers bureaus demonstrate the organization's accessibility and desire to be a constructive participant in its community and industry.

A successful speakers bureau requires careful selection of participants. Although some organizations recruit participants simply by asking for volunteers, others invite specific individuals based on their credentials, relevant personal experiences, or known speaking skills. Because audiences prefer to hear firsthand accounts from those closest to a situation, the public relations representative may not always be the most appropriate choice for a speaker. CEOs who lack requisite speaking skills or personal warmth may not be good choices either.

A successful speakers bureau also requires adequate training and coaching of participants, research to identify desirable audiences and topics of interest to them, selection of key message points, and development of written scripts and speaking aids, which may include full text of speeches, speech outlines, audiovisual aids, and handouts. A speakers bureau may have several prepared presentation topics and corresponding speakers available to the public at any one time. These might include issue-oriented presentations (e.g., a presentation to announce a

new venture, plant, program, or goal), a presentation designed to solicit donations or volunteers, and presentations adapted to specific groups (e.g., children, homeowners, non-English speakers, or senior citizens). Some shared stock content, such as an overview of the organization's mission, scope and operations, or references to an annual theme or slogan, may serve as unifying elements across the various types of speeches. Speakers bureaus can also be helpful in negatively charged situations to dispel misconceptions, explain organizational actions, gather support for a position, or bring legislative or regulatory roadblocks to light.

An obvious prerequisite for success is that external publics be made aware of the availability of a speakers bureau. The bureau should be promoted to appropriate groups and made accessible through the organization's website. Scheduled presentations should be publicized in appropriate internal and external media. In addition to seeking media coverage of the speech, many organizations multiply the value of speaking opportunities by "repackaging" their executives' speeches for use in op-ed pieces, internal publications, and websites. Finally, presentations should be evaluated through audience surveys or feedback from event organizers. Managing these tasks associated with large, proactive speakers bureaus may require full-time, professional-level staff.

It should be noted that the type of speakers bureau described here and considered to be a public relations tactic is distinct from for-profit talent agencies, which offer speakers for a fee, although some of these entities call themselves "speakers bureaus."

Katherine N. Kinnick

See also Campaign; Promotion; Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Tactics

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SPEECHWRITING

Speechwriting in its simplest form is the process of preparing a speech. It involves analysis of the audience and speaking situation; identification of a topic; development of arguments, appeals, and supporting materials; and ordering those materials in a systematic manner. Speechwriting in most corporate settings is much more complex, however, because the speech is often a statement of the organization's policy or position. Moreover, speeches remain one of the most important forms of communication employed by organizations. They are used to announce major policies and initiatives; restate positions; disseminate information; manage issues, image, and reputation; and persuade stakeholders to support the organization. Senior executives deliver speeches at annual meetings, to groups of employees, and to a wide variety of external stakeholders. Occasionally, CEOs take on celebrity status and may be called on to give speeches about social as well as general business issues to both domestic and international audiences.

The form of speeches prepared for executives vary from manuscripts to more general outlines or simple talking points. Although the nature of the speaking occasion will influence the formality of the speech, many executives favor manuscript speeches over outlines or talking points. Manuscripts allow for more precise language.

Corporate speechwriting usually involves a process of close collaboration of the executive speaker and a speechwriter or ghostwriter, and careful review of the speech by various aspects of departments of the organization. This process of speechwriting and review helps ensure that the speech is a corporate product and that it is fully vetted. Executive speeches are often reviewed by the public relations department, the legal department, and any other major divisions or departments discussed in

the speech. This review process, although useful in ensuring that all statements are accurate and appropriate, sometimes reduces the quality of the messages. Professional speechwriters, for example, often complain that reviews by legal departments translate stirring prose into meaningless legalese. Mike Morrison, former speechwriter for Lee Iacocca, noted that the committee-written speech increasingly tends to be the norm in major corporations. Moreover, committee-written speeches often lack distinctiveness. Speechwriters often recommend, therefore, that these reviews be kept to a minimum.

Speechwriters also recommend that the writer get to know the speaker. This includes understanding the speaker's views on various issues, patterns of language use, pronunciation, interests, and backgrounds so that they may write more effectively in the speaker's voice.

Using a professional writer to prepare a speech for an executive is usually justified on three grounds. First, senior executives often do not have the time to research and prepare a speech. This lack of time is compounded by the fact that executives may give dozens of major speeches each year. Finally, executives rarely have the training or background to prepare a variety of successful addresses, tailored to a wide array of diverse audiences, focusing on a range of different topics. In essence, using a speechwriter improves the probability that an executive speech will have the desired effect. Despite these justifications, speechwriting does raise several ethical questions about honesty and authorship.

Matthew W. Seeger and Timothy L. Sellnow

See also Ghostwriting

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SPIN

Public relations professionals have been called all kinds of names—sandbaggers, flacks, propaganda machines, spin doctors. These labels connote a P. T. Barnum approach to public relations. Such names imply that the industry engages in promoting hype, puffery, and manipulation. The term *spin doctor* continues to be used by the media to associate smoke-and-mirror strategies with public relations professionals.

Whereas some view public relations as a management function that promotes mutually beneficial relationships and encourages positive behavioral change, others advocate that their primary responsibility is to engage in image and reputation management. Still others believe that the public relations function is concerned mainly with media relations and publicity.

The purpose of this entry is to provide an in-depth discussion that offers information from various viewpoints, enabling practitioners to make more clearly defined and educated decisions about how—and why—they plan to practice public relations.

Original Spin Model Introduced

Today, when the term *spin doctor* is used in the same sentence with *public relations*, many professionals get chills up the spine; the chills are immediately followed by feelings of frustration. Many questions regarding the spin doctor paradigm are still left unanswered: (a) From where does this negative stereotype stem? (b) What has caused this misperception to continue? (c) What can the public relations profession do to diminish such inaccuracies? (d) Is this model really becoming acceptable as a mainstream way of doing business among public relations practitioners?

In 1994, Randy Sumpter and James Tankard identified the *spin model* as an alternative approach to other models. After providing a thorough overview of what this model entails, they concluded,

The field of public relations needs to come to terms with the spin doctor phenomenon. A cursory review of some public textbooks suggests little discussion of the role, and, indeed, some rather drastic differences between spin doctoring

and standard public relations activities. Do public relations practitioners want to distance themselves from the spin doctor phenomenon, as Bernays appears to be recommending? Do they want to claim the spin doctors as part of their field? Or do they want to select what is effective from the spin doctor repertoire and incorporate it into the traditional public relations model, while ignoring the rest? The spin doctor conception of truth, and ethics of spin doctors, would also seem to be topics of further discussion. (p. 26)

Something of an ominous, conspiracy-like theory, the public relations spin model still prevails today—nearly two decades after Sumpter and Tankard initially suggested that it existed. One needs only to search the Internet; using the key words “public relations” and “spin doctor” will produce hits in massive numbers (263,000 in September 2012 when searched using Google).

Overview of Public Relations and Its Historical Underpinnings

Reviewing the early 20th century, James E. Grunig (1992) characterized one approach to public relations as the press agency/publicity model—the era when the “public be damned.” Here are the origins of the concept of spin.

Negative Perceptions Based on Historical Activities

There appears to be “bad karma” among practitioners schooled in journalism programs and among journalists who have been ill treated by public relations practitioners. This negativity stems from the history and nature of deceitful, manipulative public relations activities practiced during the early part of the 20th century.

Lack of Clarity Regarding What Public Relations Practitioners Do

Public relations activities are diverse. Some practitioners engage in publicity and promotional activities; they utilize varying propaganda techniques and persuasive methods. This approach determines how many public relations professionals have been depicted on television, in the

newspaper, and in movies. Public relations professionals are responsible for much more, including strategic planning and counseling, fundraising, researching, and developing and maintaining relationships between an organization and its key publics. This is not a cumulative list by any means. And public relations is practiced among a variety of disciplines, ranging from health care, government, entertainment, and travel and tourism to corporate, nonprofit, and financial institutions.

Lack of Consistent Viewpoints Across the Public Relations Profession

Some public relations professionals promote themselves as prominent spin doctors and receive much publicity for it. They attract high-profile celebrity clients who expect them to spin a story to mask or otherwise represent them in a positive manner—despite the fact that their behavior demonstrates otherwise. Many successful public relations professionals publicly seek to deface spin doctor behavior and the term itself.

Lack of Consistent Viewpoints Regarding the Semantics of Spin

Spin has historically been associated with political and governmental campaigns that use propaganda techniques. The term *propaganda* also has a negative connotation.

Varying Degrees of Ideologies Regarding Moral Judgment

There is also the issue of the varying viewpoints about moral judgments and individual ideologies. *Situationalists* reject moral rules and ask if the action (behavior) yields the best possible outcome in the given situation. *Subjectivists* reject moral rules and base moral judgments on personal feelings about the action (behavior) and the setting. *Absolutists* believe that actions (behaviors) are moral, provided they yield positive consequences through moral conformity to moral rules. *Exceptionists* believe that conformity to moral rules is desirable, but exceptions to these rules are often permissible. Therefore, a person's behavior depends on the individual's ideologies about moral judgments.

Varying Degrees of Ideologies Regarding the First Amendment

Another factor that influences a person's behavior is based on the individual's ideologies regarding the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. According to the *absolutist* view, the First Amendment means exactly what it says: "Congress shall make *no* law abridging the freedom of speech." As such, public relations practitioners can say whatever they want, providing it meets the criteria of the First Amendment. Conversely, the *balancing* approach sees the absolutist view as impractical and deems this categorical approach as artificial. Balancers believe that in every case the courts should weigh the individual's interest in free expression against the government's interest in restricting the speech in question. Thus, public relations practitioners need to think carefully about what they say, how they say it, and *who* it will affect.

Varying Ideologies Regarding Social Responsibility

Another factor that influences a person's behavior depends on the individual's ideologies regarding social responsibility. Some practitioners believe that their primary responsibility is to those who financially support the organization. Hence, these practitioners are interested foremost in supporting the bottom line. Others believe that they are responsible to the greater community and society at large—not just those who pays the bills or fees. Here the analysis focuses on profit making as the only responsibility of the organization or being responsible to the communities where it operates. Merely enhancing the bottom line is not always the end-all, be-all primary goal.

Reasons Some Professionals Advocate Spin

- Every issue has two sides; hence, there are two viewpoints.
- Practitioners are responsible for advocating the viewpoint of the organization they represent, based on the fiduciary relationship and commitment between the organization and its stockholders.
- Truth is relative.

- Practitioners are merely utilizing framing and agenda-setting theories.
- Media positioning is one of the primary tasks of a public relations practitioner.
- Spinning has been around for centuries.
- It's really just the word that offends people—not the behavior per se.
- Society should be exposed to a "free marketplace of ideas."
- Spinning supports the absolutist view of the First Amendment.
- Spinning supports the absolutist view of moral judgment: Actions are moral provided they yield positive consequences through moral conformity to moral rules.
- Spinning supports socially responsible behavior.

Reasons Some Professionals Denounce Spin

- Spinning is unethical because it misrepresents and distorts the truth.
- Spinning is a far cry from J. E. Grunig's two-way symmetrical model of public relations, which seeks to develop mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics.
- Spinning is a form of propaganda that, when used deceitfully and manipulatively, does not fairly represent the information.
- The spin model suggests that public relations professionals are nothing more than "journalists-in-residence" and "press agents" whose main goal and obligations are to "earn ink."
- The word *spin* has a negative connotation, and "perception is reality"; hence, some view this negative word and its association with the behavior it represents as characteristic of *all* public relations practitioners.
- The spin model violates the Public Relations Society of America Code of Ethics.
- Spin is not socially responsible behavior.

Implications: What Public Relations Professionals Can Do

The word *spin* will never go away. But actions can be taken to make it less prevalent. Practitioners and academics can educate the general public about what the public relations industry is and the positive contributions it makes in society. Publicity and promotion are viable components of the

communication mix, but they are not the sole functions of public relations.

Lisa T. Fall

See also Barnum, P. T.; Bernays, Edward; Codes of Ethics; Communitarianism; Ethics of Public Relations; Promotion; Propaganda; Public Relations Society of America; Publicity; Sandbagging; Twentieth-Century Trends and Innovations in Public Relations

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SPIRAL OF SILENCE THEORY

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence theory argues that any opinion perceived to be the majority opinion will hold disproportionate weight in influencing others. This effect happens, at least in part, because people who believe their opinion is in the minority are less likely to express their opinion. The failure to express a minority point of view leaves it without an advocate. This leads to a continuing spiral of silence. For example, politicians do not want to be seen as trailing in the polls because if that information were to become ingrained in the public mind it might create a self-reinforcing cycle. The spiral of silence is not limited to political campaigns, but to any issue where a person or group of people need the support of others.

In 1965, Noelle-Neumann monitored public opinion about that fall's federal election in West Germany. Several months before the election, she asked survey respondents two questions. First, she asked them to name the party for which they

intended to vote. Second, she asked them to name the party they believed would win. In early polling, the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats were roughly equal on both questions.

As the election neared, Noelle-Neumann noticed an interesting phenomenon. While the number of people intending to vote for each party held steady, the response to the other question changed. Although people still intended to vote in similar numbers, 2 months prior to the election four of five voters expected that the Christian Democrats would win the election. In the two weeks prior to the election, public opinion began to diverge and the Christian Democrats gained 5% in the polls (as the party for which someone actually intended to vote) and the Social Democrats lost approximately 5%. Actual voting behavior followed the voting behavior perceived and predicted for others, and the Christian Democrats won that election with a 9% advantage. Noelle-Neumann makes five separate assumptions in her theory (1991, p. 260):

1. Society threatens deviant individuals with isolation.
2. Individuals experience fear of isolation continuously.
3. This fear of isolation causes individuals to try to assess the climate of public opinion at all times.
4. The results of this estimate affect behavior in public, especially the open expression or concealment of opinions.
5. This assumption connects the preceding four. Taken together, they are considered responsible for the formation, defense, and alteration of public opinion.

The first assumption indicates that an individual who has an opinion or who takes an action different from that of others will no longer remain part of the "in crowd." In the case of the German elections, people who supported the losing party would fit this profile. The second assumption indicates that most people want to be on the winning side or part of the popular group, and the third indicates that people continuously monitor those around them to gauge their opinions. In 1965, something happened in West Germany that caused people to start believing that the Christian Democrats were going to win the election. There are

many possible explanations that would be very difficult to explore in retrospect—perhaps that party increased its advertising efforts, perhaps a Social Democratic candidate committed a gaffe, or perhaps Christian Democratic supporters became more vocal. It is important to note here that the actual change in public opinion was not real. Rather, people began to perceive that support in the election had changed.

Whatever the reason for the perceived shift in support, this led to the fourth assumption of the theory. When people began to believe that the Christian Democrats would win, those who supported them were emboldened to voice their support publicly. Meanwhile, those who supported the Social Democrats began to tone down their public support. Although they did not initially change their actual voting intentions, they were less likely to speak up at parties, attend rallies, donate money, display signs, or partake in the myriad other activities necessary for a political campaign to be successful. The interconnection of these four assumptions led to the fifth. When people believed that the Social Democrats were losing, they quit publicly supporting them. Eventually, this led to the aforementioned nine-point shift in public opinion that ultimately decided the election.

Two points are important to make here. First, spiral of silence theory does not completely explain public behavior, and examples abound of products that have been marketed as the “rebel” or otherwise atypical choice. Second, the spiral of silence applies well beyond the political realm. Although that classic example from Noelle-Neumann’s work has been used here for the sake of clarity, applicability of the theory has been widely shown.

Criticism of this theory exists. One line of criticism argues that people are more capable of deviating from majority opinion than this theory gives them credit for. In particular, assertiveness, knowledge, and the amount of time one spends interacting with media might influence the degree to which they are swayed by public opinion. Additionally, the argument has been advanced that there is no such thing as a unified public opinion. Those responding to this criticism have argued that public opinion can still exist in subgroups and that some questions still lend themselves to opinion polling, which would reveal a majority opinion. In

spite of those criticisms, this theory continues to inform a significant amount of scholarship.

William Forrest Harlow

See also Public Opinion and Opinion Leaders; Public Relations Field Dynamics; Segmentation of Publics

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SPORTS PUBLIC RELATIONS

Sports public relations is a component of public relations that relies heavily on media relations, publicity, and promotion to foster the brand equity of teams, conferences, types of sports, and specific athletes. As professional, collegiate, and amateur sports functions assume an increasingly important role in society and the world, sports organizations and athletes face increasing scrutiny from media and society. A scan of the news on almost any day reveals events from the sports pages that are now making the Twitter feed, the front page, the business page, and the top of the broadcast instead of being covered only on the sports page.

Sports is big business. Hundreds of thousands of people cram into stadiums, arenas, and race-tracks to watch the sport of their choice. Be it the National Football League, the National Collegiate Athletic Association Final Four Men’s Basketball Championship, or the Masters Golf Tournament, fans are paying increasingly higher ticket prices to watch the Kobe Bryants and Tiger Woods of the

world slam dunk, pass, putt, and race their way to victories and championships. Many of these athletes are millionaires several times over, and they play the role of heroes to the throngs of young and old people who pay premium prices to watch them compete.

In addition to the dollars spent to attend sporting events, there are also millions of dollars spent each year on sports memorabilia—clothing, hats, collectibles, and so forth. David M. Carter and Darren Rovell wrote that sports “has become a massive industry all its own, one estimated to generate spending approaching \$200 billion annually” (2003, p. xix).

The marriage of public relations and sports is a natural one when one considers that sports, like other businesses, demands the expertise of a person trained in public relations theories and skills. Carter and Rovell (2003) stated, “The sports business has become an extremely involved industry that now includes the same elements and applies the same business principles seen throughout the rest of big business” (p. xix). Sports organizations, whether professional, collegiate, or amateur, deal with the same challenges faced by organization and corporation public relations practitioners: media relations, getting key messages to the appropriate target publics, ethics, building alliances with stakeholder groups, image, and crisis management, to name only a few.

Melvin Helitzer (1999) described sports promotion as “make money or else,” an objective at least as important as “win or else.” In a comprehensive description of sports promotion across all levels (high school to professional sports), Helitzer wrote:

A major sports team—college or professional—must be as successful at the bank as they are at the stadium. This has been a mind-boggling development. For over 150 years sports were hobbies. They promoted exercise, fun and, in athletic competition, amateur purity. But in the past 50 years, sports have turned from lily white to professional green. . . . One day, college athletes—like Olympians—may redefine the word *amateur*. (p. 1)

Steven A. Lesnik and Howard Schacter (1997) described the sports public relations job as “one of the youngest and fastest growing segments of the

PR industry” (p. 405). They identified two public relations tactics as crucial for this area: (a) achieve the communications objectives of a sports-related company or organization and (b) support and enhance a sports marketing activity executed by a company or organization.

A business with the power and reach of sports calls for the expertise of persons trained in public relations and crisis communication. Though the job of sports information director or athletic communication has existed at the collegiate level for many years, all types of sports organizations from amateur to Olympic to professional are finding they have a greater need than ever for experienced people to meet the media and plan and implement the strategies needed to publicize and promote athletes and organizations. This job requires a person who understands not just marketing, but also the world of professional and collegiate sports and who is trained in news and sports writing, public relations, media relations, crisis communication, and ethics.

The latter two elements are particularly important but often are challenged in ways unique to sports. The moral integrity and financial security of an organization (and player) can be challenged by a crisis, as was the case for Penn State in the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse scandal. That case also ruined for many the legacy of the icon of college football, Joe Paterno. It was, for instance, a big media event when his statue was removed in 2012 and sent to storage.

But, one of the twists of sports crisis, aside from doping, is the archetype of “boys will be boys.” That latter principle can confuse scandals involving sex and gambling. At first, for instance, as Heath and Sultan (2012) noted, football superstar quarterback Michael Vick was “excused” of participating in dog fighting because “boys will be boys.” Those who excuse such behavior often rationalize it as what people do because they have no ethical boundaries. The assumption is that they can be excused because it is not their fault for behaving in willful and reckless ways since society has long rewarded them for such behaviors. After such excuses failed, Michael Vick was convicted and served time for participating in illegal dog fighting, and thus not finally “excused” because “boys will be boys.”

In 1997, Nicholas Neupauer noted the absence of college courses or programs in the area of sports

information or sports communication. He noted that in the 1960s, college sports information professionals belonged to the American College Public Relations Association (ACPRA). After the realization that a split was needed between the sports promotion people and the college public relations administrators, the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) was founded in 1957. Today, CoSIDA is a vigorous membership association, and it is the premier organization for college sports information and communication professionals.

Neupauer argued in 1997 that the public relations discipline is largely ignoring the emergence of sports information as a public relations specialization:

Token SID classes do pop up from time to time at institutions, appearing in the catalog as “special topics courses.” But only a smattering of schools offers classes on a consistent basis. SID majors, minors, tracks, or concentrations are rare in undergraduate education. Even the PRSA ignored the field. In its “1987 Report of the Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education: A Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education,” the PRSA described the importance of PR specializations in publicity and media relations, community relations, employee relations, consumer relations, financial/shareholder relations, public affairs, fundraising and international public relations. But it overlooked “sports information directing” as a PR specialization worthy of attention in undergraduate education. (p. 35)

Sports are here to stay, and so is its connection with public relations. The question is whether they have a corrupting influence on one another.

Becky McDonald

See also Crisis Communication; Promotion; Publicity

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STAKEHOLDER THEORY

Stakeholder theory provides a theoretical grounding for public relations practitioners to expand their understanding of how individuals, groups, and external organizations impact their organization and how the organization affects its stakeholders. The theory suggests that public relations

success depends upon how organizations manage relationships with stakeholders. Stakeholders, in essence, are the audiences for organizational messages, practices, and policies.

Stakeholder theory is an outgrowth of general systems and resource dependency theories suggesting that organizations must forge links with stakeholders to acquire valuable resources or stakes and reduce uncertainty. One of the central tenets of stakeholder theory is that organizations should attend to the needs of a broader set of stakeholders that reaches beyond stockholders. From a public relations perspective, stakeholder theory seeks to identify and manage the diverse needs, values, and interests of various stakeholders and the potential communication tensions between these groups as well as between the organization and them.

R. Edward Freeman in 1984 was one of the first proponents of stakeholder management. He argued for considering stakeholders as part of the larger strategic planning process. In this case, organizations that develop strong instrumental links including communication channels with stakeholders are likely to hold a competitive advantage over organizations that do not. A key idea in his work is that organizations and stakeholders can and should mutually influence one another in an ongoing process of accommodation based on holding and granting stakes—the resources of mutual dependency. Since organizations are dependent upon stakeholders for resources, these groups have the ability to withhold their resources if they disagree with the organization on important issues.

Much of the research on stakeholder theory discusses how narrowly or broadly organizations should define their stakeholders. Freeman defined *stakeholders* as any individual or group that impacts or is impacted by the actions of organizations. Researchers agree that stakeholders can be located both within and outside the organization. For instance, Robert L. Heath (1997) delineated activist publics, intraindustry players, interindustry players, potential activist publics, customers, employees, legislators, regulators, judiciary, investors, neighbors, and the media as a loss of potential stakeholders. More recently some researchers have argued for nonhuman stakeholders, including wildlife and the environment. Certainly, after environmental disasters such as the *Exxon Valdez* oil

spill off the coast of Alaska in 1989, the 1986 nuclear accident at the Chernobyl power plant in the Ukraine, and BP's Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, one can reasonably argue that these groups are impacted by organizations. However, organizations depending upon their industry or circumstances are going to have different potential stakeholders. For this reason, identifying stakeholders is a key issue for public relations practitioners.

Stakeholder Identification

One of the difficulties associated with stakeholder theory is being able to identify stakeholders. Since organizations are such powerful forces, they arguably have the ability to impact all of society. Public relations professionals are expected to narrow the potential stakeholder possibilities and prioritize key stakeholders for the organization. Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle, and Donna J. Wood (1997) suggested that stakeholder identification is a function of the stakeholder's power to influence the organization, the urgency of their claim, and the legitimacy of the relationship with the organization.

The context in which the organization operates impacts stakeholder identification. For example, Thierry C. Pauchant and Ian I. Mitroff (1992) suggested that during crisis situations the organization may have different stakeholders than in normal business conditions. In addition, the communication needs of those stakeholders may be different depending on the organization's situation. Once organizations identify key stakeholders, they should assess their relationship with each group and then work to build mutually beneficial relationships.

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder analysis is an expansive process that involves the organization examining its operations, structure, history, and role in society. From the perspective of stakeholder theory, organizations must assess the strengths and weaknesses of their key stakeholder relationships. In doing so, public relations personnel should identify issues concerning which stakeholders approve or disapprove of the organization's activities and whether those

issues are important to the stakeholder or not. These communication specialists should then work to understand the underlying business trends in their environment and work to create mutually beneficial relationships with these stakeholder groups over time. Freeman and D. R. Gilbert (1987) suggested four tactics for stakeholder analysis: first, identifying new stakeholders; second, formulating strategies with these stakeholders; third, integrating multiple stakeholder concerns; and fourth, searching for new stakeholder issues and concerns. Although these tactics are useful for public relations professionals, it is important to acknowledge that organizations must often deal with many stakeholders with competing demands and varying levels of power over the organization.

Stakeholder theory suggests that public communication is not about persuasion but rather “diminishing the difference between what it does and what its stakeholders expect it to do” (Heath, 1997, p. 119). Public relations practitioners, then, must be able to negotiate with multiple stakeholders and work to reduce differences with stakeholders when possible. M. B. E. Clarkson (1995) suggested four strategies to deal with stakeholders: reaction, defense, accommodation, and proaction. Proactive responses include anticipating stakeholders’ concerns and working to resolve issues in advance. Accommodation involves working to lessen the gap between the organization and stakeholders while still looking for concessions. Defense strategies involve the organization defending its own position and refusing to do more than is minimally required. Reaction strategies involve fighting against stakeholder issues or withdrawing and ignoring stakeholder issues. These strategies are often used to assess an organization’s level of corporate social responsibility. In these cases, researchers often argue for more proactive strategies to communicating with stakeholders.

In this vein, some research argues for not only negotiating with stakeholders in a proactive manner but also developing reservoirs of goodwill with stakeholders that may benefit the organization long term. Robert R. Ulmer (2001) explained that Malden Mills, a Massachusetts textile manufacturing company, invested in primary stakeholders over time. The company benefited greatly from

these investments after a 1995 fire almost destroyed the organization. This research suggests that organizations can benefit not only from seeking potential needs from stakeholders and resolving tensions between stakeholders, but also by investing in stakeholders that they believe are critical to their business ventures. These investments may not be immediately beneficial for the organization, but over time the organization may reap the rewards when it most needs them. Although stakeholders can be a source of rewards for organizations, they can also create tensions, particularly in terms of potential problems among stakeholder groups.

Multiple Stakeholders

Because stakeholders can be a broad set of individuals or groups, it is important to realize that there can be great diversity in any particular organization’s stakeholder group. As a result, public relations professionals should consider potential conflicts between stakeholder groups. In these cases, organizations may have stakeholders that have competing or contradictory demands on the organization. Robert R. Ulmer and Timothy L. Sellnow argued in 2000 that organizations have the option to interject strategic ambiguity into their stakeholder communication in order to meet the competing demands of stakeholders. However, they cautioned organizations to use strategic ambiguity ethically. They provide two criteria for evaluating the ethicality of strategically ambiguous stakeholder communication. First, they suggest that communication with stakeholders should not privilege some groups over others by introducing biased or incomplete information. Second, communication that emphasizes competing interpretations should be based on information that is available, reasonably complete, and unbiased.

Organizational stakeholders play a key role in any organization’s success. Public relations practitioners are instrumental in addressing stakeholder concerns. As boundary spanners, public relations professionals are often responsible for identifying stakeholders, seeking out potential stakeholder issues, and managing potential tensions between stakeholder groups. Organizations that manage stakeholder issues effectively are likely to hold a competitive advantage over organizations that do

not. As a result, public relations practitioners must take seriously the role of identifying and managing stakeholder issues, particularly given the competitive and dynamic business environment. They also are encouraged to adopt a stakeholder participation or engagement strategy that is dialogic rather than monologic (de Bussey, 2010).

Robert R. Ulmer and Timothy L. Sellnow

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Crisis and Crisis Management; Reflective Management; Resource Dependency Theory; Stakes; Systems Theory

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STAKES

To sustain themselves, Jeffrey Pfeffer wrote in 1981, organizations “require a continuing provision of resources and continuing cycle of transactions with the environment from which these resources are derived” (p. 101). The resources in these transactions can be characterized as the stakes in an ongoing negotiation process between an organization and its environment. According to Robert L. Heath, specifically, “a stake is anything—tangible or intangible, material or immaterial—that one person or group has that is of value to another person or group” (1997, p. 28). Exchanging, granting or withholding such stakes provides a means of influence among organizations and their stakeholders.

Typically, the exchange of stakes is interpreted as a ratio. In other words, did both parties derive approximately equal benefits from the exchange, or did one party acquire a considerable advantage from the transaction? Ideally, stakes are exchanged in a harmonious and collaborative manner that is perceived as just and beneficial to all parties. This harmonious exchange allows for mutual accommodation among organizations and their stakeholders.

From a public relations perspective, organizations engage in strategic issues monitoring and analysis to develop an awareness of essential stakes, their availability, and their possible manipulation by external audiences. In addition to identifying desirable or essential stakes and groups, Heath (1997) wrote that organizational analysis includes consideration of

the willingness of stakeholders to grant or withhold their stakes. How willing are they to exchange them? What can be done to increase the chances they will be granted rather than withheld? What operations or policies increase favorable exchange? (p. 117)

The ability to control critical stakes reflects an organization’s power base. As long as an organization, whether for profit or nonprofit, is dependent on another organization or group to function or thrive, it is dependent on negotiating the exchange of stakes.

In their 1995 article, Thomas Donaldson and Lee E. Preston stated although stakes take many forms, each stake cannot and should not “be equally involved in all processes and decisions” (p. 67) within an organization. The stakes held by organizations and their relevant environments are prioritized according to three general criteria: (1) the perceived value of a given stake, (2) the willingness or ability of groups to grant or withhold those stakes that are perceived to have value, and (3) the scarcity or availability of a resource from multiple sources.

Stakes, whether tangible or intangible, are held on a voluntary or involuntary basis. Tangible stakes that are held on a voluntary basis involve the strategic acquisition or inherent possession of a desirable resource. For example, purchasing stock in a company is a strategic acquisition of a stake in a company. Owning land that is appealing to others for development or mineral rights is an example of a voluntary and tangible stake with value to other groups or organizations that may rise or fall in various circumstances. Tangible and involuntary stakes emerge when the actions of one group or organization have the potential to infringe on the comfort, safety, or values of another group. For example, the construction of a nuclear power plant may be advantageous to a power company and some of its customers. At the same time, however, the plant may put thousands of residents at an increased risk of health problems or, in the case of catastrophic failure, diminish property values and complicate future development in the area.

Tangible stakes can also be exchanged voluntarily or involuntarily within an organization. Employees may voluntarily exchange wages for job security in situations where the organizations face bankruptcy. For example, on several occasions airline companies have received wage concessions from their employees in order to continue operating. Conversely, employees can involuntarily and unwittingly lose their stake in an organization that falls victim to incompetence or unethical management. Enron, for example, left its employees with neither their jobs nor their retirement funds after the company collapsed in the early 2000s due to illegal and unethical behavior by its executives.

Intangible stakes flow largely from social resources. Relationships with media reporters, state and federal regulators, legislators, local government, activist groups, and local citizens, to name a

few, are often influential in the success or failure of an organizational venture. These relationships are increasingly complicated by “virtual platforms for interactivity and information exchange” via social media wrote Brian G. Smith in 2010 (p. 329). The acceptance or success of a proposed action by an organization may depend on how that action is perceived by the public. Hence, each of these relationships influences the outcome.

Government agencies can serve as allies of social activist groups or a concerned public that has a stake in an organization’s activities. Public policy is a stake that can hinder or enhance an organization’s viability. Therefore, if an organization fails to maintain credibility with an influential audience, the organization may eventually face policy changes that are detrimental to its future success. Policy stakes are of ongoing importance to organizations. Organizations that fail to monitor and participate consistently in policy issues may face diminished prosperity due to the emergence of an unfavorable public policy.

Reputation is a determining factor in the exchange of stakes. Groups are most likely to exchange stakes willingly when they perceive a mutual interest between themselves and another relevant group or organization. From an instrumental perspective, “organizations deserve support (giving stakes) rather than opposition (withholding stakes) because they are seen as worthy contributors to a fully functioning society” (Waymer, Canon, & Curry, 2012, p. 17).

Organizations face resistance from both industry competitors and special interest groups as they seek to acquire and exchange stakes. For example, activist groups often function as stake seekers, working to acquire stakes that are valued by targeted organizations in order to fortify their leverage for producing desired change or averting undesirable change. Simultaneously, industry competitors compete to acquire stakes that give them a competitive advantage. Thus, organizations must acquire and exchange stakes amidst a series of organizational relationships (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

Fundamentally, stakes are a vital focus of public relations activities. Public relations specialists seek to influence stakes and the ways in which stakeholders perceive, exchange, or modify stakes and their availability.

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and Matthew W. Seeger*

See also Conflict Resolution; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Power Resource Management Theory; Relationship Management Theory; Reputation Management; Resource Dependency Theory; Stakeholder Theory

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frequencies (how many people responded a certain way) are commonly used in descriptive statistics. For instance, a survey can be used to collect data about the current community perceptions of the organization in terms of environmental responsibility, involvement in the community, and contributions to the community. The survey asks people to rate each of the three factors on a 5-point scale using the options very unfavorable, unfavorable, neutral, favorable, and very favorable. Descriptive statistics would be used to identify how the community members perceive the organization. You could determine (a) what percentage of the community held a favorable, a neutral, or an unfavorable perception of the organization on these three factors; (b) the mean score of the community perceptions for each of the three factors; or (c) how often people rated the organization as (1) very unfavorable, (2) unfavorable, (3) neutral, (4) favorable, and (5) very favorable (frequencies) on each of the three factors. Public relations practitioners are much more likely to use descriptive statistics than inferential statistics.

Inferential statistics allows a researcher to examine possible relationships between two or more variables. Researchers look at analyses of differences and analyses of relationships with inferential statistics. Evaluative research makes use of inferential statistics. Analyses of difference seek to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between two or more sets of data. Statistically significance is the degree of confidence you have that your results can be found in the larger population and not just in your sample. You need to establish that your results are not a result of chance or accident but more likely a true difference between variables. An example would be an organization testing two versions of a message designed to promote a new product. Two separate groups are exposed to each message and their recall of the message assessed. Inferential statistics, such as *t*-test or chi-square, could be used to see if there is a significant difference between recall scores for the two messages. If one message scores significantly higher on recall, you would want to use that message. If the two messages scored the same, you could use either one or both of the messages. Correlation is used to uncover relationships between variables. A correlation indicates if two variables change together in a predictable manner. There is a positive correlation when the value of one variable

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

When using quantitative data, a researcher collects information in the form of numbers. *Statistical analysis* is used to make meaning of those numbers. Statistical analysis can be divided into two broad categories: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics is used to summarize and simplify the data. Formative research frequently uses descriptive statistics to understand the current public relations situation by reporting what has been observed. Means, percentages, and

increases as the value of the other variable increases; for example, ice cream sales tend to increase as the temperature rises. There is a negative correlation when the value of one variable increases while the value of the other variable decreases, and vice versa; for example, sales of new homes tend to drop as the lending interest rate rises. If an organization launches a reputation campaign, it expects a positive correlation between exposure to the reputation messages and stakeholders' evaluations of the organization's reputation. You could collect data to determine if there is a positive correlation between exposure to a reputational message and favorable perceptions of the organization. Again, you would need to determine if the relationship is statistically significant.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Formative Research; Quantitative Research

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STEWARDSHIP OF LARGE ORGANIZATIONS

Stewardship is one of many finely honed principles that public relations practitioners and academics use to understand the quality of relationships between an organization and its various stakeholders and stake seekers. Often the justifiable criticism of public relations is that organizations use public relations to “bend” customers, for instance, to support the interests of the organization. This is particularly important in an era when corporativism is such a global and explosive issue. It asks whether organizations serve society or society serves organizations.

Stewardship challenges organizations to serve society. It is a concept used to constantly assess the quality of relationships. It is a management tool for challenging executives to respond to and

support the interests of the individuals and groups whose lives the organization affects.

In the oldest sense of the word, a *steward* is someone entrusted with managing the interests of others. The term often refers in practice and in law to one individual (a steward) being in charge of land and animals for someone else. The steward is expected to follow the golden rule: Manage the affairs at hand for someone else as the steward would want to have his or her affairs managed by someone else. In this sense, the obligation to be a steward can range from the legal implications of being a steward all the way to merely doing so because it is the ethical or right thing to do. It obligates one entity to treat another's interests as though the interests of the second party are morally important to the first party.

The term has long stood for balancing self-interests so that instead of one interest exploiting another, the stronger or obligated interest serves the other interest. In addition to having implications for legal service, the term is often used in a religious context. In the simplest sense, this application advises that we should love and care for others as we would want to be loved and cared for. In an era where sustainability is a global ethic, stewardship asks that people look to the interests not only of people and resources living today but also those who will be living in the future. We have obligations today to wisely manage resources to ensure their sufficiency in the future.

In 2000, Kathleen S. Kelly faulted the ROPE model of public relations programming for not including stewardship. This acronym refers to stages in public relations programming: research, objective setting, planning and implementing, evaluation. Kelly suggested that ROPE should become ROPES by adding stewardship as the last step in the process, which also makes the model circular not linear. As Kelly (2000) concluded, “stewardship completes the process and furnishes an essential loop back to the beginning of managing relationships” (p. 280). Thus, the concept of stewardship adds positive dimensions to the theory and practice of public relations.

One of the reasons that issues management arose in the 1970s as a means and rationale for the practice was to reorient the thinking of senior managements from a reactive approach to publics and push them toward proactive collaboration.

Stewardship challenges management to think constantly about what can be done to keep and foster existing goodwill rather than allow it to deteriorate to the point where corrective and restorative measures are needed.

As applied, this concept has helped organizations rethink their approach to community relations. The concept of stewardship challenges managements to ask themselves what they can do each day to ensure that if the community could vote, it would vote to keep the business operating there. Stewardship raises the standard of public relations ethics so that managements do not think only about how the community is benefited by the wages and taxes paid by the company. It suggests that instead of merely supporting little league teams for the brand equity of having the company's name on the backs of the children at play, the company would want to ensure that the children have a safe place to enjoy a wholesome experience. The challenge is to add value to the quality of life in the community.

Stewardship has implications for planning. It asks managements to think about the qualities that truly define and sustain relationships with their stakeholders as being truly mutually beneficial. In fundraising, for instance, nonprofit organizations ask that people contribute money to the organization so that the organization in turn can do something worthy for people in various states of need.

Stewardship has implications for communication. If standard elements of the communication relationship focus on understanding, agreement, and satisfaction, the organization can evaluate the extent to which these communication objectives are being achieved. Do people understand what we have to say? Do they agree with what we say? Are they satisfied by what they know and think about our organization, its mission, and contribution to the communities where it operates?

Stewardship has implications for public relations ethics. The most serious indictment against public relations ethics is the tendency to advance the interest of the organization at the expense of its publics. Companies that operate in communities in ways that degrade the quality of life in the community are not engaging in stewardship. If they appear at the edge of town (out of reach of the city taxation) and sell products at a price that runs

local companies out of business, critics reason that the company has not engaged in stewardship.

Stewardship asks management not to ask, "What's in it for me?" but to ask on behalf of the community, "What's in it for us?" As the organization works to foster its public relationships, it needs to learn to build from its base to expand and extend the quality of its relationships to position itself to be seen and known as committed to the interests of others. It is a steward of others' interests.

Robert L. Heath

See also Community Relations; Ethics of Public Relations; Goodwill; Issues Management; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Nonprofit Organizations; Objectives; Philanthropy

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STRAIGHT NEWS

News stories are carefully constructed to enlighten audiences and to uphold journalism's civic function as society's Fourth Estate or "watchdog." Generally, journalists choose one of three presentation forms when constructing news: straight (or hard, spot) news, feature (or soft) news, and editorial or opinion. Each category is distinctive according to purpose and process. Some observers lament, however, that these traditional boundaries are evaporating in the wake of changing economics of the news business, new technologies, and growth of celebrity journalism and citizen journalism published in blogs, websites, and via social media.

Basically, straight news satisfies the public's need to know what happened or was disclosed within the previous 24 hours. These are timely reports of local, national, and international events told with a sense of urgency. In a newspaper, the first page and front section generally run only straight news stories;

issues in debate or events filled with conflict and action. In television and radio news programs, the lead stories usually are straight news. Objectivity, fairness, and balance are hallmarks of straight news. It is intended simply to inform, whereas feature news entertains, and editorials and opinion columns offer analysis and point of view.

As for process, straight news is characteristically defined by universal journalistic conventions. First, the inverted pyramid style is the standard for presenting straight news. This means that the first sentence of a newspaper straight news story is the most important part and the last sentence the least important. The inverted pyramid format is designed to help readers decide early on whether they have the time or inclination to read all the way through to the end. A well-written straight news story enables a reader to stop reading at any time after the first paragraph and still come away with a story's main point.

This preconception influences a reporter's selection of details to include in a straight news story, how points are organized within the story's body, and the tone used to tell the story. Journalists are trained to use the inverted pyramid as a template for writing straight news. Editors confidently may cut stories from the bottom to make room on a page for breaking news. Furthermore, copy editors know to write straightforward subject-verb headlines using traditional, conservative fonts for straight news stories. Creative imagery and clever wordplay generally are reserved for feature story headlines.

Second, straight news also is distinguished by use of a summary lead (or lede). It is the first, fact-packed sentence that identifies the 5 *Ws and H* (who, what, when, where, why, how). Journalism scholar James Carey suggested that all too often news stories fall short when it comes to the *why* and *how* because these story components usually require deeper explanation than space or time, both expensive commodities in journalism, will allow. By contrast, features usually begin with a delayed (or blind) lead in order to pique readers' curiosity. Based on one fact set, here are examples of three varieties of leads:

Editorial/op-ed lead

It's no secret that Americans grow more cynical and politically disengaged with every passing

generation. Another Flag Day has come and gone with little fanfare. Whatever happened to patriotism and citizenship?

Feature (soft) news with delayed (blind) lead

Perhaps Flag Day has become the Rodney Dangerfield of national celebrations. June 14, anniversary of the official adoption of The Stars and Stripes, seems to get no respect.

Straight (hard) news with summary lead

Fewer than 10% of Americans are aware that Flag Day is an official national celebration, according to results of a Temple University poll released today.

Following the lead, a straight news story's body economically itemizes details and supporting information about an issue or event. Marginally relevant details rarely are included in a straight news story. Considered the extreme opposite of creative writing, straight news involves only hard-working words; writing mostly devoid of adjectives and adverbs. Such stories offer short paragraphs (or *grafs*) of one or two clear, concise sentences. In short, journalists writing straight news must remember to explain complex ideas, to use words with which average readers are familiar, and to use simple sentence structure.

Finally, other important straight news characteristics involve presenting at least two sides of a story, using officials or authorities as sources, and including direct quotes. Gaye Tuchman (1980) classified these individually and collectively self-validating, intermeshed traits as a "web of facticity." She explained that reporters gather facts to differentiate what is known and how it is known. In the process of incorporating direct quotes into straight news stories, reporters hope to underscore their impartiality, maintain credibility, and avoid libel lawsuits. Several cultural critics have pointed out, however, that journalistic conventions promote a limited, preferred take on the news by favoring authorities' worldview and by marginalizing working class and minority voices.

Offering a longitudinal perspective on the news business, veteran journalist Jim Lehrer opined that the old rules no longer apply since boundaries

separating straight news, feature news, and editorials have become blurred—negatively affecting journalism’s credibility and increasing audience confusion. For example, once known for their straight news reports, celebrity journalists such as George Stephanopoulos and Cokie Roberts increasingly appear on television news programs as hosts, commentators, or pundits and unabashedly unmask their opinions. Similarly, newsroom convergence with new technologies may mean a reduced number of newswriters and force those remaining to single-handedly manufacture all variety of news products.

Overall, straight news reporters

- use the inverted pyramid style,
- write 5-*Ws-and-H* summary leads,
- avoid injecting their opinion,
- minimize number and complexity of words,
- explore both sides of a story,
- include direct quotes.

Donnalyn Pompper

See also Feature; Framing Theory; News Story; News/Newsworthy; Pyramid Style

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STRAIN

Strain refers to the feelings of some publics that a gap exists between what they perceive exists and what they believe should exist. Awareness of such conditions can lead people to believe that problems exist. Robert L. Heath wrote in 1997, that the birth of an issue begins when an individual or group experiences strain. Strain is necessary for an individual or group to recognize an

issue and become committed to taking a position on it and resolving it.

Strain was introduced into discussions of social movement and activism in 1963 by sociologist Neil Smelser to explain the motives that give individuals the incentive to engage in that kind of collective behavior. If, for instance, people recognize that conditions of homelessness and joblessness exist and believe that they should not, they are experiencing strain. Heath (1997) called strain “a product of problem recognition and outrage” (p. 169). Strain is likely to be part of a larger sense of engagement by activists against some organization. In 1997, Heath included strain as the first of five stages that describe the process of activism: strain (problem recognition), mobilization, confrontation, negotiation, and resolution.

As also discussed by James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt in 1984 as part of the situational theory of publics, strain can be viewed as problem recognition. Heath wrote, “[Any] given day, hundreds of people—a potential constituent audience of public—feel discomfort about various aspects of their lives” (1997, p. 165). Examples of such problems may be loss of a job, home foreclosure, loss of health care benefits, product defects, sexual harassment, chronic illness caused by toxic chemicals, or corporate accounting scandals. Awareness of such conditions may be communicated via the traditional mass media, social media and, of course, by word of mouth.

Interest in concepts such as strain increased during the 1960s in the United States, when social movements were pressing for change in every aspect of American life. That pressure led scholars and public relations practitioners to think more deeply about the dynamics that lead individuals to take collective action. These new forces against industrial and corporate autonomy led to the formation of issues management.

For public relations practitioners, awareness of activist organizations and the issues they address is necessary. A history of corporate and organization activity in the United States is sufficient to remind us that corporations have often suffered severe financial losses and challenges to their legitimacy when their boards were not responsive to or aware of the needs of stakeholder publics. For example, consider the activities of Sea Shepherd, the international conservation society whose mission is to end

the destruction of habitat and slaughter of wildlife in the world's oceans in order to conserve and protect ecosystems and species. Founded in 1977 by Canadian Paul Watson, the group has gained more international exposure recently since Animal Planet began taping programs in 2008 about the organization's battle with Japanese whalers. Sea Shepherd's activities are far from pacifist and include disabling whaling vehicles at harbor, shining laser lights into the eyes of whalers, and destroying drift nets at sea. Watson said he became involved after three countries, including Japan, continued to hunt whales even after the International Whaling Commission issued a moratorium on commercial whaling.

One of the leaders in understanding the dynamics of social movements, Hans Toch (1965) defined a social movement as "an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem they feel they have in common" (p. 5). Concern with the motives of change is the typical focal point addressed by students of social movements. In this vein, in 1968, Smelser defined collective behavior as being purposive, not random. It is socially oriented, goal-driven activity.

One of the functions of the activist group or activist organization is to frame the issue or problem in a new way so it is perceived as urgent by the publics whose action they need to make the movement a success. Often this reframing process results in a sustained social movement that is able to form alliances with like-minded organizations and to garner the funds needed to achieve policy formation or change. Heath (1997) noted that an activist group "takes a vital step toward the establishment of strain once it creates a perspective that, like a new pair of glasses, allows a key public to see its world in a different way" (p. 168).

What types of conditions or problems motivate groups of people to organize and take action about an issue or problem? What conditions motivate these groups of people to seek policy change from government or financial compensation from an organization? The following examples help augment the discussion of strain. Homelessness in the United States became a visible problem in the 1980s. According to statistics supplied by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the number of homeless people doubled from 1984 to 1987.

Data on food and shelter requests by the U.S. Conference of Mayors were first collected in 1986. Since then, the number of requests has increased every year despite the efforts of federal and state government to address them. From Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Manchester, New Hampshire, the problems of the homeless are becoming more visible. Once confined to large cities, homeless populations now are expanding into less urban locations.

Illegal to Be Homeless: The Criminalization of Homelessness in the United States (2003) chronicles attempts made by the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) and other activist groups to address the plight of the homeless. The report was published by the Civil Rights Work Group (CRWG) of the NCH and was based on survey data collected about homelessness and incarceration patterns and practices of local jurisdictions from 42 states. The NCH works with advocates for the homeless nationwide. According to the report, the NCH worked cooperatively with local and statewide coalitions, service providers, advocates, and homeless people to provide the data used in the report.

Smelser's work in 1963 and 1968 used a value-added approach to identify determinants of collective behavior. These are structural conduciveness, strain, the growth of a generalized belief, the need to mobilize people to action, and social control. Activist groups form to inform publics about the seriousness of the problem and to persuade legislative bodies and policymakers that action needs to be taken.

Seeking social change, activists such as the NCH use communication strategies and channels to persuade other people to support their movement. Strategies used by NCH affiliates included challenges to laws and policies seeking to criminalize the homeless; grassroots efforts to raise public awareness of criminalization of the homeless; organizing efforts to challenge antihomeless ordinances; voter registration drives for the homeless; educating and organizing homeless people to fight for their own civil rights; tracking data such as arrests, citations, fines, and harassment of homeless people; and efforts to establish liaisons with providers of housing and support services and members of the legal community.

Part of the challenge facing public relations practitioners is to monitor issues and perform situational and issues analysis. This challenge requires

them to assess the growth in numbers and the depth of incentives to fight. Social media requires development of newer methods of monitoring and assessing stakeholder publics.

Becky McDonald

See also Framing Theory; Issues Management; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Perspectivism Theory; Situational Theory of Publics

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STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLANNING

Strategic business planning (SBP) involves the process of determining policies and procedures (and budgeting for them) designed to accomplish goals and objectives of the organization, which in turn, will normally be closely related to the organization's mission and vision. Strategic business planning can be applied equally to a business, government agency, or nonprofit organization. However, regardless of the type of organization, strategic planning provides the means through which each organization is able to plot its future course of direction and ensure that the appropriate resources are mobilized to enable the strategic goals to be realized. Here, SBP can be seen to represent an overarching

strategic planning function, which may cascade down and set the agenda for planning for each related subfunction including strategic communication and public relations. Equally, in some contexts issues may originate at the functional level and then be escalated up to influence the overall strategic planning agenda.

In analyzing the development of strategic thought in the business context, George S. Day and Robin Wensley identified a chronological sequence in the development of strategy approaches encompassing three broad eras: Long-Range Planning Era (corresponding roughly with the 1960s), Strategic Planning Era (1970s), and Strategic Management Era (1980s).

In examining the different types of planning systems adopted by organizations, Frederick Gluck, Steven Kaufman, and A. Steven Walleck suggested that relatively few organizations other than large, multinational, diversified manufacturing companies have developed full-fledged strategic management systems despite their obvious advantages. They suggested that, in reality, most organizations do not go much beyond long-range planning systems.

Although strategy and strategy making have been conceptualized from a number of different perspectives, undoubtedly the most commonly adopted perspective is the linear-planning perspective of strategy. From this perspective, strategy formulation has normally equated with the process of strategic planning, which has generally been depicted as a rational process directed toward achieving pre-stated organizational goals, and using prescribed tools and techniques to achieve them. This model strategy formulation is typified by the 1987 work of Kenneth R. Andrews who defined strategy as

the pattern of decisions in a company that determines and reveals its objectives, purposes, or goals, produces the principal policies and plans for achieving those goals, and defines the range of business the company is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organisation it intends to be, and the nature of the economic and non economic contribution it intends to make to its shareholder, employees, customers and communities. (p. 51)

Andrews separated the task of strategic decision making (the formulation of strategy) from its

implementation. For Andrews, the implementation of strategy is seen primarily as an administrative function: Once the purpose of the company has been determined, the company's resources can be mobilized to accomplish it.

Similarly, Thomas L. Wheelen and J. David Hunger suggested a four-step process of strategic management that comprises the following elements:

1. *Environmental scanning*: Both internal and external to the organization.
2. *Strategy formulation*: Comprising the development of long-term plans for the management of environmental opportunities and threats, in the light of organizational strengths and weaknesses. This incorporates the definition of the corporate mission, the specification of objectives and the development of strategies and policy guidelines.
3. *Strategy implementation*: Comprising the process by which strategies and policies are put into action through the development of programs, budgets, and procedures.
4. *Evaluation and control*: Performance is measured and evaluated against target in order to take any necessary corrective action and resolve problems.

This view of the separation of strategy formulation from implementation has been challenged by other strategy scholars such as Henry Mintzberg and Andrew Pettigrew, who argued in 1992 that the separation of these elements in the process is not always so readily recognizable in practice. Moreover, formalized strategic planning models have come under increasing criticism on a number of grounds, not the least being the implied assumption of logical rational behavior on the part of those engaged in the planning process (e.g., Eisenhardt & Zabaracki). Perhaps one of the most persistent critics of the linear planning approach to strategy formation has been Mintzberg, who labeled this approach the Design School model of strategy. Here Mintzberg draws the distinction between strategic planning and strategic thinking:

Strategic planning is not strategic thinking. Indeed, strategic planning often spoils strategic thinking, causing managers to confuse real vision with the manipulation of numbers. . . . Strategic

planning, as it has been practiced, has really been strategic programming, the articulation and elaboration of strategies, or visions, that already exist. (1994a, p. 107)

Mintzberg went on to argue that the strategy-making process should be about synthesis—"capturing what the manager learns from all sources . . . and then synthesizing that learning into a vision of the direction that the business should pursue" (1994a, p. 107). Mintzberg distinguished this process from the analytical role of planners, whom he suggests should make their contribution around the strategy planning process and not inside it—supplying the formal analyses or hard data that strategic thinking requires.

Mintzberg's vociferous criticisms of the so-called Design School perspective of strategy making, has been challenged by, among others, Igor Ansoff, who rebutted most of Mintzberg's criticisms of this perspective highlighting, in turn, a number of fundamental flaws in his arguments. Most notably, Ansoff argued that Mintzberg's criticisms of planning were based on an outdated view of how planning systems have evolved since the 1960s. Moreover, Ansoff suggested that Mintzberg's own theories prescribe a world free of explicit strategy formulation and strategic managers. The debate between these two eminent scholars only serves to highlight the still contested nature of our understanding of strategy and strategy-making processes.

Considering public relations' contribution to the business planning process, arguably the main role for public relations can be seen as that of intelligence gathering and issues analysis through the public relations' boundary-spanning role. As Jon White and David M. Dozier suggested in 1992, "when organisations make decisions they do so based on a representation of both the organisation itself and the organisation's environment" (p. 92). Thus, at least in principle, public relations does have a potentially valuable role to play in the process of business planning, bringing different stakeholder perspectives and associated issues to the attention of senior management and thereby helping ensure that management has a balanced view on the likely impact of policy decisions before committing themselves to any particular course of action.

Daniel A. Moss

See also Environmental Scanning; Goals; Issues Management; Mission and Vision Statements; Objectives; Stakeholder Theory

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STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic partnerships are crafted through public relations to foster and facilitate mutually beneficial relationships designed for specific purposes ostensibly beneficial to both parties and their constituencies. Long before relationships became a major public relations research topic, use of strategic partnerships was established practice.

Such partnerships occur, for instance, because a company wants to work on an issue that can best be approached through a strategic partnership with an issue-relevant, well-established, and resourceful non-profit organization. For instance, if a company is trying hard to diversify its workforce, it might create a strategic partnership with a nonprofit organization, such as the Urban League, that seeks to promote job training and placement as part of its mission. Or, a retail building materials company might develop a strategic partnership with an environmentalist group to foster sustainable timber harvesting.

In such partnerships, the company might provide funding for training—equipment and teachers. It might also encourage its skilled employees to serve as instructors. It might provide on-the-job training, internships, and other means for desirable employees to make the transition into the workforce. Both organizations benefit, as does the community and key citizens, who can increase their income and self-esteem. That, some might say, is the essence of public relations.

The 1970s brought many changes to public relations. One of the leaders in the development of a systematic approach to strategic partnerships was Mary Ann Pires, who wrote in 1988,

Interestingly enough, the genesis of the business and interest-group factions is identical: the unique American political system. Among its hallmarks are the rejection of a powerful central state and the concept of individuals and voluntary organizations seeking to affect the political process. (p. 185)

In this sense, strategic partnerships not only require a commitment to proactivity, but also are one of the best ways to put that virtue into practice. Strategic partnerships succeed if the various organizations can replace walls with bridges.

One tradition of activism is that it approaches targeted organizations with an agenda to change the organization. Pressures of that sort can lead to the building of walls to protect the organization against this kind of attack. Organizations do not like criticism. They often turn to public relations to meet (blunt) the challenge. An old saying of public relations practitioners is "When life deals you lemons, learn how to make lemonade." Strategic partnerships are lemonade.

Such partnerships can be sparked from either side of an issue but eventually test both sides'

collaborative abilities. Although the sides may approach a problem with different assumptions, tools, and resources, they can cooperatively search for common ground, a meeting place of principle, and a joining of mission.

Going into strategic partnerships is not easy. Corporate management does not like to acknowledge that others can influence how they plan and operate. Special-interest organizations worry that attaching themselves to companies will lead to their being co-opted. Thus, the relationship has to build beyond friction, difference, and division. To that end, Pires advised (1988, p. 187),

- Strive for long-term relationships.
- Start by listening to what the groups have to say—to their needs, issue concerns, and so forth.
- Don't overpromise.
- Be prepared to give as well as get.
- Treat people decently, respecting confidences.

Dialogue and collaboration are the standard communication relationship. Patience is required. Sharing is a presupposition.

Many approaches to strategic partnerships exist. Today, companies may invite key activists to serve on the board of directors or participate in special decision-making or guidance panels. They may work together to create legislative and regulatory agendas and issue positions. Classic stories exist where a business, such as a company that sells building products, works collaboratively with an environmental group. They work together to set standards of corporate responsibility, join in doing battle in the legislative and regulatory arenas, and monitor the issues together. The activist group may endorse the company as “environmentally friendly,” which may also have marketing and brand equity advantage. Such efforts can have a positive impact for both organizations and the community in which they have an interest. The company can reduce costs and increase profits. The interest group moves steadily toward its mission.

For either side in a strategic partnership, Pires offered sound advice forged on the anvil of experience which is relevant decades later (1988, pp. 193–197):

- Define your objectives.
- Know your issue.

- Build the alliance.
- Maintain flexibility.
- Treat people decently.
- Maintain your contacts.

However positive the idea of strategic partnerships is, one must not be a Pollyanna. They can fail. They can backfire. They can become dysfunctional. Good purpose and sound efforts can trip over personalities. Staging and posturing can offset every positive effort to work together.

Despite their liabilities, senior practitioners are likely to counsel clients on both sides to look for agreement and cooperation to each other's mutual benefit.

Robert L. Heath

See also Activism; Collaborative Decision Making; Co-Optation; Dialogue; Mission and Vision Statements; Mutually Beneficial Relationship; Nonprofit Organizations

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STRATEGIC SILENCE

The term *silence* has many scholarly contexts, and many of those refer to groups or individuals who have involuntarily lost their ability to speak or to have their voices heard. However, some actors elect to remain silent to gain strategic advantage. Barry Brummett (1980, p. 289) defines “political strategic silence” as “the refusal of a public figure to communicate verbally when that refusal (1) violates expectations (2) draws public attributions of fairly predictable meanings, and (3) seems intentional and directed at an audience.” Brummett notes that this silence has its own communicative value and is “relative to what might be said” (p. 290). This implies that an actor could employ silence as

a strategy even when speaking if less is said than might otherwise be. That might include a change of tone, location, or other factors that result in the delivery of a less forceful message.

Strategic silence demands that the rhetor be of sufficient stature that speech would normally be expected. As such, much early work in the field focused on the U.S. presidency. Kurt Ritter, for example, noted that President Johnson made an effective choice to remain relatively silent for a time after the death of President Kennedy since there was little he could say to help a grieving nation. Martin J. Medhurst sharply criticized President Truman for failing more actively to denounce Soviet expansion after World War II. In discussing President Bush's reaction to the 2007 elections in Nigeria, William Forrest Harlow (2011a) attempted to summarize some of the work on strategic silence. Specifically, Harlow (p. 5) noted that "Public rhetoric is called for when external pressure is needed to resolve an unfavorable situation," and that, "Choosing silence can be strategically sound when deliberations are likely to yield a favorable result" (p. 12). Many other scholars have made contributions, and those contributions tend to be case studies of the use of strategic silence by a given president in a particular context.

This work in the U.S. presidency suggests hypotheses for other contexts of silence. If individuals and organizations can choose to remain silent as a better strategic means of advancing their messages, then research should be conducted to determine the role of silence in those contexts. Specifically, several general themes emerge from the existing research:

- The United States can send significant messages without the direct public involvement of the president. Those messages can be sent publically by others or privately by the president. When can heads of other organizations use surrogates or private messages to advance their agendas?
- The United States carries significant weight in international affairs, and sometimes others resent being seen as giving in to an outside power. The public voice of the president makes that perception more likely. What role is played by allowing an audience to be publically perceived as making a free choice?
- The public has a powerful expectation the president will speak in response to crises, particularly in foreign policy. When is speech expected of public figures, and how can they signal that an issue is being settled privately?
- Public messages, even in favorable circumstances, come with real costs. Since multiple audiences watch the addresses of key figures, then a discourse meant to address one audience will frequently be seen by another and have unanticipated consequences.

Significant scholarship has been done on silence, and that has largely focused on those who have been involuntarily unable to lend their voice to a public debate. However, sometimes actors choose to remain silent as a better means of advancing an agenda. Often that silence is confused with being uninvolved in an issue, and that conclusion is difficult to draw without specific knowledge of the situation. More work should be done to determine the contexts in which intentional strategic silence is used and the persuasive impact it has.

William Forrest Harlow

See also Rhetorical Theory; Social Construction of Reality Theory; Strategies

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STRATEGIES

The original meaning of the word *strategy* is derived from the Greek word *strategos*, which referred to a role, namely, that of a general in command of an army. It later came to mean the “art of the general,” comprising the skills necessary to undertake that role.

Although the origins of strategy can be traced back through history, the application of the concept of strategy in a business context is arguably a comparatively recent phenomenon. Cynthia A. Montgomery and Michael E. Porter, for example, regarded the pioneering work in this field as occurring in the 1960s. In their opinion, management thinking was, at that time, oriented toward discrete business functions such as marketing, finance, and production, and there was a pressing need for the development of a more holistic view. The development of a “strategic perspective” was seen as the tool to accomplish this goal.

There are, in fact, almost as many different definitions of strategy as there are writers on the subject. Donald C. Hambrick suggested two main reasons for this lack of consensus: First, strategy is a multidimensional concept; and second, strategy is situational and will consequently tend to vary by industry.

Rather than striving to identify a single comprehensive definition of strategy, which seems likely to remain elusive, various scholars have sought to identify those areas of broad agreement about

what constitutes the basic dimensions of strategy. For example, Henry Mintzberg recognizing the multifaceted nature of strategy, suggested five alternative yet related definitions of strategy, which he termed the *five P's*—strategy as a *plan*, a *ploy*, a *pattern*, a *position*, and a *perspective*. Examining each of these definitions of strategy leads to different implications for the content and the nature of the process of strategic decision making.

Strategy as a plan represents perhaps the most commonly accepted understanding of the term *strategy*. This definition implies that strategy represents “some sort of consciously intended course of action, a guideline (or set of guidelines) to deal with a situation” (Mintzberg, 1991, p.12). As a plan, strategy can be defined in general terms or can relate to a specific course of action. In the latter sense, Mintzberg in 1991 suggested that strategy becomes a ploy—“a specific manoeuvre intended to outwit an opponent or competitor” (p. 13).

As a pattern, strategy encompasses not only the planning aspect of strategy, but also the resulting behavior, in terms of a stream of actions. Here, emphasis is placed on the fact that strategy is “consistency in behavior,” whether or not it is intended. In other words, strategy is inferred from consistency of the organization's actions, which may or may not be consistent with a stated plan.

As a position, strategy is seen as a means of locating an organization in its environment. Mintzberg further stated in 1991 that from this perspective, strategy “becomes the mediating force—or ‘match’—between organisation and environment, that is, between the internal and external context (of the organisation)” (p. 16). Mintzberg also maintained that this definition of strategy can be compatible with either (or all) of the other definitions in that a position can be preselected and aspired to through a plan (or ploy) or it can be reached (perhaps even found) through a pattern of behavior.

If this previous definition sets strategy primarily in its external context, strategy as a perspective looks within the organization and, indeed, within the head of the individual strategist. Under this definition the content of strategy consists not just of a chosen position, but also of an ingrained way of perceiving the world, which is shared by the members of an organization, and is shown through their intentions or by their actions or both. This definition implies above all that strategy is a

concept—an abstraction that exists only in the minds of the interested parties.

Mintzberg emphasized that these various definitions of strategy should not necessarily be seen as alternatives; rather they can be seen as complementary, with each contributing to an overall understanding of the concept of strategy. Strategy as a plan introduces the idea of intention, emphasizing the role of conscious leadership; strategy as a pattern focuses on action, introducing the notion that strategies can emerge; the idea of strategy as a position introduces context, rooting strategy in the situation that the organization finds itself in, encouraging the consideration of competition and cooperation; and perspective emphasizes that strategy may be nothing more than a concept, and focuses attention on the question of how intentions diffuse through a group to become shared as norms and values and how patterns of behavior become deeply ingrained in the group.

A Hierarchy of Strategy Perspectives

A further useful distinction between differing forms of strategy and strategy making is offered by Ellen E. Chaffee who identified three distinct “clusters” of strategy definitions and approaches to strategy: (1) linear strategy, (2) adaptive strategy, and (3) interpretive strategy. Examining each of these three approaches or perspectives, she maintained, reveals something of the contested nature of our understanding of the concept of strategy.

The linear approach emphasizes the planning aspect of strategy. Strategy is seen as a form of methodical, directed, sequential planning that contributes to a rational decision-making process with the overall aim being the achievement of pre-stated goals. The adaptive approach, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of strategy as a means by which organizations seek to respond to the changing nature of their environment.

Like the adaptive approach, the interpretive approach emphasizes the relationship between the organization and its environment. However, the interpretive approach emphasizes the idea of management holding a cognitive map—a worldview that colors how managers interpret the changes facing the organization and the responses they adopt to them. Therefore, strategy in the interpretive model is perhaps best thought of in

terms of a set of orienting frames of reference that inform the way organizational stakeholders understand the organization and its environment.

Chaffee postulated a hierarchy of strategy models, based on the level of sophistication of the different strategy perspectives. At the simplest level, firms may begin with linear strategies, moving on to adaptive approaches, and then ultimately to adopt more sophisticated interpretive approaches to strategy. Moreover, she argued that it is important to integrate each lower level model with models that represent more complex systems because organizations exhibit properties of all levels of complexity. Adaptive and interpretive models that ignore less complex strategy models ignore the foundations on which they must be built if they are to reflect organizational reality. Furthermore, a comprehensive interpretive strategy probably requires some planning, as would fit with a linear strategy, and some organizational change, as would fit with an adaptive strategy; and a viable adaptive strategy may well require some linear planning.

Such arguments emphasize the fact that different approaches to strategy and the process of strategic management may not be as mutually exclusive in real-world conditions as some theorists imply. Indeed, a recurring theme in the strategy literature is the need for the greater consideration of how many of the concepts proposed by strategic theorists can be operationalized.

Levels of Strategy

In addition to these distinctions between these broad perspectives of strategy, management scholars such as Gerry Johnson, Kevan Scholes, and Richard Whittington have pointed to the distinction between different levels of strategy: corporate, business, and functional and operational. Corporate strategies focus on decisions about the broad scope and direction of an organization's development. Business or competitive strategies focus on decisions about how best to compete in the markets in which an organization operates. Functional strategies are concerned with decisions about how each of the separate organizational functions (marketing, production, human resource management, etc.) can in turn contribute to the achievement of higher order strategies.

Emergent and Deliberate Strategies

Mintzberg and James A. Waters questioned whether strategy should be thought of only in terms of an entirely intentional pattern of actions preconceived by management. Rather, they suggested that strategies may sometimes emerge in the form of a pattern in a stream of decisions and actions without any preconceived plan. Thus, Mintzberg and Waters distinguished between deliberate and emergent strategies—the former involving the existence of intentions that are then realized; the latter being where patterns develop in the absence of intentions, or despite them. In practice, however, Mintzberg and Waters acknowledged that it may be unrealistic to expect to find examples of purely emergent or purely deliberate strategies; rather, these two forms of strategy making should be viewed as two extremes along a continuum of real-world strategies. Hence, they acknowledge that, in practice, strategy making may exhibit a combination of deliberate and emergent strategy-making tendencies.

Strategic Role of Public Relations

As Jon White and David M. Dozier have acknowledged, it is comparatively rare to find public relations included in the dominant coalition (the most senior level of decision making), contributing to top management decision making. In part, this lack of representation at the most senior levels within organizations appears to be due to a lack of senior managerial experience and expertise amongst practitioners, but equally in the minds of many senior managers, public relations remains a largely tactical function, contributing to the successful implementation of the organization's overall business strategies, but only at the functional level. Of course, this view may not always be the case, and recognition of the potential importance of strategic communication and public relations to the strategic success of organizations has undoubtedly begun to change, particularly as the importance of corporate reputation has come increasingly to the fore in many industries. Returning to the question of public relations strategy making, there has been a rather one-dimensional view of strategy making within much of the public relations literature—namely a predominantly linear, planning view of strategy

and the strategy-making process. More recently, authors such as Daniel A. Moss and Gary Warnaby and Benita Steyn have begun to offer alternative interpretations of how public relations strategy and strategy making may be conceived and applied in practice, while at the same time acknowledging that planning remains a fundamental foundation on which other more adaptive and interpretive forms of strategic communication and public relations strategy may be developed where appropriate.

Daniel A. Moss

See also Strategic Business Planning

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STYLEBOOK

A stylebook is a handbook, or a manual, used by professionals, academicians, and students, that contains rules and guidelines for how to produce publishable manuscripts. For example, the *Associated Press Stylebook* provides guidelines on the use of words and phrases, punctuation, copyrighted material, captioning photographs, writing newspaper copy for sports and business, and an assortment of other publishing rules.

Many professions use manuals of style, including the print and broadcast industries, publishing, law, and psychology. Stylebooks provide structure to publications, providing continuity of writing style and consistent usage of words, grammar, and citations. They may even prescribe fonts and other features.

In professional public relations contexts, the *Associated Press Stylebook* is perhaps the most valuable text for a practitioner interested in correctly applying the conventions of print publishing. The bulk of the stylebook consists of hundreds of definitions of commonly used words and phrases and how the Associated Press uses the words in publications.

The *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law with Internet Guide and Glossary* points out that the Associated Press's text contains instructions for the use of commonly confused words such as *because* and *since*, instructing writers to "use *because* to denote a specific cause-effect relationship: *He went because he was told. Since* is acceptable in a casual sense. . . . *They went to the game, since they had been given the tickets*" (2011, p. 30, italics in original). The stylebook also explains the Associated Press's idiosyncratic use of words such as *doctor* (a term typically reserved for medical doctors and dentists, and *not* used to refer to professors), *e-mail* (lowercase, with a hyphen), and *World Wide Web* (three words, all capitalized).

For public relations practitioners who produce broadcast copy or prepare messages for radio or television sources, there exists an assortment of broadcast stylebooks, including Robert A. Papper's *Broadcast News Writing Stylebook*. As is the case with the *Associated Press Stylebook*, public relations professionals use broadcast stylebooks to create effective broadcast copy.

Other stylebooks of note to academicians or those interested in publishing in academic journals include the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, *The MLA Style Manual*, and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. All of these texts include lengthy sections on spelling and grammar, how to write well, how to organize manuscripts, proper citation of sources, and how to prepare manuscripts for publication in academic journals. Large agencies, corporations, and other organizations often craft their own stylebooks to increase uniformity of presentation, an important aspect of brand equity.

Michael L. Kent

See also AP Style

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THE SUBALTERN AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The term *subaltern*, literally someone of a subordinate rank in the military or in the general workforce, was brought into political, cultural, and literary scholarly circles by the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci, who called groups of marginalized people the "subaltern classes." These groups were outside the political framework and were not heard in public discourse.

A collective of postcolonial South Asian historians led by Ranajit Guha (1982) drew on the Gramscian term to build a whole genre of historiography called subaltern studies that focuses on

history from the point of view of the subaltern classes as opposed to the mainstream histories of the elite.

In public relations scholarship, the subaltern studies perspective has opened up at least two lines of scholarly inquiry. First, it has exposed the disproportionate emphasis of mainstream public relations theory and practice on the needs of elite publics. Second, it has pointed to the active resistance of publics ignored or marginalized by the dominant discourse.

In highlighting public relations' bias toward some publics, Debashish Munshi and Priya Kurian (2005) suggested that public relations

manages the corporate image through an asymmetric hierarchy of publics: (1) the predominantly Western shareholders; (2) the Western consumer public/the global middle-class consumer; (3) the Western activist public; (4) the vast numbers of Third World workers who produce the goods for consumption by others; and (5) the even greater numbers of Third World citizens too poor to consume. (p. 514)

In a complementary piece, Munshi and Kurian (2007) talked about how public relations practices of corporate social responsibility too often privilege a dominant coalition of corporations, states, and financial institutions by failing to record the voice of the subaltern who deals with the economic, social, and environmental impacts of globalization.

In a critical exploration of the discourse of civil society in public relations literature, Mohan J. Dutta (2005) studied the "democracy promotion" strategies used in the Philippines, Chile, and Nicaragua and showed how these strategies were linked to the neocolonial agenda of expanding Western markets. He argued that the "capitalistic machinery" of civil society "works to exclude the subaltern" (p. 280). As Dutta and Mahuya Pal (2011) concluded, "those marginalized sectors of society who don't matter" to neocolonial agendas "are left out of the discursive space" (p. 214).

At the same time, subaltern studies also points to the potential of resistance from subaltern publics who "seek to transform oppressive global structures through globally-connected networks of global solidarities" (Dutta & Pal, 2010, p. 365).

Drawing on protest movements in different parts of the world, Dutta and Pal (2011) pointed out that it "is in these spaces of resistive practices that alternative imaginations of public relations as a field of engagement that imagines the possibilities of structural transformation . . . can become possible" (p. 205).

If public relations is seen "both as a hegemonic instrument and a tool for resistance" (Edwards, 2011, p. 29), the subaltern studies approach provides an intellectual framework to study not only the ways in which elite publics exercise their dominance in public relations practice but also how subaltern publics resist such dominance through their own narratives. Incorporating the subaltern studies framework in public relations theorizing can especially help bring greater nuance to studies of activist publics. Furthermore, drawing on subaltern perspectives could allow scholars to "look at the processes and practices involved in participation of marginalized subjects in countercultural movements that exist outside the realm of the very public sphere conceptualized by the civil society projects" (Dutta, 2005, p. 286). In sum, subaltern studies perspectives guide public relations researchers and practitioners to new ways of looking at business and society and make them more aware of the need to listen to voices of publics at every level.

Debashish Munshi

See also Empire, Public Relations and; Circuit of Culture; Civil Society; Corporate Social Responsibility; Culture; Socioculture and Public Relations; Third Culture Public Relations Practitioner

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SUBJECTIVE EXPECTED UTILITIES THEORY

Subjective expected utilities (SEU) theory is one of the oldest attempts to explain how people make decisions. The theory is based on the intuitively simple proposition that people make decisions to maximize positive outcomes and minimize negative ones. Persuasion theory pursues insights to understand how people make decisions. The assumption behind this line of inquiry is that once researchers and practitioners know how people make decisions, messages can be used to strategically influence the decisions people make. That premise, for instance, is the basic assumption underlying marketing communication, including promotion and publicity. It also has ethical implications that arise from the fear that practitioners can manipulate attitudes and behaviors.

SEU theory is closely connected to *learning theory* explanations of the process of persuasion. Learning theory reasons that people learn to make rewarding decisions, which are preferred to those with negative consequences. To that end, people acquire information they use to form attitudes and develop motivations that lead toward positive outcomes and away from negative ones. Advocates of learning theory know that people acquire attitudes through learning experiences rather than responding to motives based on innate drives. The assumptions of this theory are

essentially timeless. Philosophy, the predecessor of persuasion theorists, has long argued that people seek positive outcomes and avoid negative ones. The problem, at times, with philosophical analysis of these choices is that people make decisions that are too narrow or shortsighted. Thus, for instance, although a decision might appear to maximize rewards at the moment, it leads to negative consequences for the long run. Consequently, children would rather play than do homework. Play leads to enjoyment, a positive outcome. However, if children only learn to play and do not study and acquire knowledge, they may be cut off from a lifetime of increased enjoyment.

For reasons such as this, SEU theory is alluring in its simplicity but devilishly difficult to use to make predictions that are subjected to careful research and thoughtful applications of strategic communication. For instance, we know that even though television advertising purveys a wide array of appealing products with promises of a nice and enjoyable life, not every viewer buys all of the available products. Therefore, we know intuitively that the fundamental premise of SEU theory is both true and too much of a generalization. People simply don’t opt for all that is presented as positive. They make more complex decisions.

The term *subjective* in the theory suggests that individuals make calculations based on available data of what choices are best. The theory assumes that two individuals may make substantially or marginally different choices based on their individual subjective calculations of outcomes. In this sense, we know that individuals make decisions that are perceived and predicted to be best for them. People like to hold useful attitudes, those that foster satisfying decisions. For this reason, they acquire information and fine-tune the decision they make. They can even try out the decision, such as purchase a product or give to a charity, to see in their own judgment whether the choice is productive. We also know that people can differ substantially in what they find appealing. Some tastes, such as eating hot peppers, have to be acquired and cultivated. But, the underlying premise is that the choices, however cultivated, form attitudes that lead to motivations that have positive consequences.

Part of the *subjective expectation* implied by the theory to explain the formation decisions rests on the way people know and weigh the positive and

negative elements of each decision. The assumption is that each individual acquires functional attitudes that sort decisions into relevance and priority. Thus, not all of the products or services that one sees in television advertising are relevant. Young people see products and services differently than their parents or grandparents do. Life insurance has little appeal to a child, whereas toys and amusement parks are appealing. SEU theory suggests that people sort decisions based on whether even making a decision is relevant because of the positive or negative consequences expected.

Just as *subjective* is a key term, so is *expected*. It is a calculated or estimated outcome. People learn attitudes and make judgments based on some amount of uncertainty. Consumers ask, "If I buy a cleaning product, will it really work?" One of the ethical (and even legal) challenges to product and service advertising focuses on the liability that can be incurred in asserting—often more by implication than by direct claim—that some product or service will lead to positive outcomes and have no negative consequences. First, we know that people often acquire and interpret data to lead to attitudes and motives they want to make. In many instances, it is not the acquisition and interpretation of data that lead to a choice; rather, it is the desire to make a choice motivates the information acquisition and analysis process. Humans are infinitely capable of rationalization where they calculate decisions they want to make rather than necessarily making the most "rational" ones. Regardless of the pathway to the decision, people do subjectively calculate how an attitude or a combination of attitudes will produce desirable outcomes.

One of the frustrating lines of analysis that SEU theory has tackled is understanding how people make decisions among relative positives or relative negatives. The fundamentals of the theory simplistically assume that people avoid the negative and prefer the positive. However, decisions often entail choosing among several positives. For instance, people are likely to encounter a plethora of automobile ads. When the time comes to buy a new automobile (or a used one), what drives that choice? First, we assume that individuals subjectively expect some to be more positive (based on various attitudes as cost, maintenance record, style, color, model, brand, or features) than others. Thus, even though people prefer positive outcomes, they calculate in idiosyncratic ways what is

"best" for them at each decision point. To make such calculations, they often deal with substantial or quite shallow amounts of information. Their decision may reflect well-formed or poorly formed attitudes and reflect substantial or inadequate decision heuristics. Rather than being merely positive or negative, or most positive, the decision is likely to be much more complex or absolutely simple, such as buying by brand or copying a friend's choice. For instance, one person might study the choice for days, whereas another might make the choice on what seems to be a whim—even the pitch of a salesperson. Both believe the choice will lead to positives, but the complexity of the decision is often difficult to unlock through research and frustrating to persons who engage in marketing communication.

Another frustrating line of analysis is the reality that people often have to make decisions based not on variously positive choices but rather on which of several negative choices is least bad. That heuristic can be telling of the differences between some individuals' choices. People who engage in health communication often suggest that people undergo diagnosis and testing, which is uncomfortable, in order to reduce the likelihood of suffering a devastating medical outcome such as severe surgery or death. In making such decisions, people again may turn to the considerations of time and relevance. Is the problem one that will happen far in the future, thus seeming to require no choice today? Is the problem one that will happen to me? For instance, men and women are differentially prone to some cancers. The practice of medical treatment often requires helping individuals to understand and sort through various treatment options. All the options may have negative aspects. The choices leading to cure, one hopes, are subjectively calculated to be the most efficacious with the least negative consequences. First, making such decisions assumes an often complex weighing of relative negatives in terms of treatments—the means to an end. Second, the decisions also may vary by what individual patients see as preferable outcomes—least negative. Thus, SEU theory has sought to help explain how people sort means and outcomes, especially those that are fraught with a disproportion of negative aspects.

SEU has been a powerful and productive line of research and practice. Promotion, publicity, and advertising tend to call attention to the positive

elements of products and services. Promises are made or implied that good outcomes will occur and negative ones will not. This is a compelling logic of applied persuasion that seeks to know and use insights into human decision making, attitude formation, and behavior. Many other theories, such as information integration and reasoned action, have been developed to refine this line of inquiry.

The assumptions of SEU theory have substantial ethical consequences for public relations academics and practitioners. The knowledge that decision processes can be used to design public relations campaigns leads to the argument that scientific persuasion is asymmetrical and inherently unethical. This ethical concern needs to be kept current in academic and practitioner discussions. However, the ability of any campaign to manipulate many, if any at all, and for a long time may be more daunting than imagined, as counter campaigns and the complexities mentioned above complicate the ability of academics and practitioners to solve the puzzle of all of the confounding factors that shape individuals' decisions. Worth noting as well is the fact that SEU is fundamental to human decision making. As such, how can it be achieved and influenced? The answer to that question cannot be reduced to a preference of symmetry versus asymmetry. It is more complicated and fundamental to the human condition than such simplification suggests.

Robert L. Heath

See also Information Integration Theory; Learning Theory; Persuasion Theory; Promotion; Psychological Processing; Publicity; Rhetorical Theory; Risk Communication; Risk Perception; Theory of Reasoned Action; Symmetry

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SURVEY

Surveys are instruments that are used to collect data on a wide range of behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive issues, including respondent perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, values, purchasing practices, and other behavioral intentions. Surveys consist of a series of questions about an issue of interest to the practitioner. Practitioners may use surveys to gauge stakeholders' opinions on an issue relevant to an organization's practices, determine the effectiveness of a campaign, measure the community's perceptions of risks associated with a new production process, or assess an organization's reputation.

Surveys typically involve securing responses from a subset of the population of interest (called a *sample*) to which the practitioners hope to generalize. Surveys are the most popular research methodology in public relations due to their relative ease of construction, administration, tabulation, and analysis. However, practitioners must be careful when constructing survey questions and deciding who should complete the surveys (sampling) and how (self-administered or administered by a trained interviewer). Practitioners must also decide whether their research design is cross-sectional or longitudinal.

As in all research, reliability (providing consistent measures in similar situations) and validity (responses correspond to what they are intended to measure) are concerns. The goal is to have the questions and response options mean the same thing to all respondents. Practitioners need to be able to attribute differences in answers to differences in respondents rather than to possible extraneous factors such as educational level, technical expertise, or interviewer style, which introduce error. Threats to reliability and validity can produce inaccurate results. For this reason, careful attention should be devoted to the words used in the questions and response options and how these are phrased. Technical jargon, ill-defined terms, words with multiple meanings, and loaded ("red flag") words can create problems related to the interpretation of and response to questions and the selection of answer options. When the possibility for misunderstanding exists, precise definitions should be provided.

Other problems occur when questions are too complex and ask for several pieces of information

in a single question. This often occurs when two issues contained in a question are connected by *and*. For example, if respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement “XYZ Corporation is an asset to the community and provides needed employment for the community,” they are being asked to respond to two issues (XYZ Corporation as an asset to community and as employer). Other problems arise when questions are leading and seem to suggest the desired response. For instance, the question “Is school violence the biggest problem facing our public schools today?” seems to suggest that yes is the desired response.

Finally, the method of survey administration may affect the reliability and validity of the results. There are two methods of survey administration. First, surveys may be self-administered through the use of a questionnaire that is mailed and returned, posted and returned via the Internet, or distributed to the desired sample in a particular setting and collected (e.g., distributed and collected at a town hall meeting, an information-giving session for employees). Respondents complete these surveys themselves. Error may arise from their failure to read questions thoroughly, their skimming through answer options, and their difficulty in recording responses. Additionally, there is no guarantee that the desired respondent completed the survey. Second, surveys may be administered by trained interviewers through face-to-face or telephone interviews. This method is more expensive due to the costs of training interviewers and compensating them for their work. However, training interviewers to be consistent in their behaviors increases the uniformity and accuracy of survey completion.

The survey instrument itself consists of a series of questions that may be closed-ended, open-ended, or a combination of both. Closed-ended questions ask respondents to select among the response alternatives provided. Closed questions necessitate anticipating all possible answer options in advance and including them on the instrument. The options must be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Closed-ended questions are useful because they offer greater uniformity of responses and are more easily tabulated. The following is a closed-ended question: “How would you describe your political affiliation? Would you say you are a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?” Additionally, questions using the

popular Likert-type scale response options, which range from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” are closed-ended questions.

Open-ended questions allow more freedom for the participants to respond. However, the responses are much more difficult to interpret. The following is an open-ended question: “What do you feel is the most important issue facing our community today?” The respondent (in the case of a self-administered survey) or interviewer must write down the response to this question. Answers may vary in length from single-word responses to rather lengthy descriptions of numerous issues. Once the data are collected, the responses must be coded (i.e., interpreted and categorized by the researcher) before they can be analyzed. This introduces an extra step and may create error when the researcher interprets the responses differently from what the participants intended, the respondents are not adept at expressing themselves, or the handwriting is illegible.

Sherry J. Holladay

See also Reliability; Sampling; Validity

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SUSTAINABILITY AS A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Sustainability is often regarded as synonymous with corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, some limit it to environmental issues—with CSR concerned with social issues. Some see sustainability as enhancing CSR; others see sustainability as the newer term that incorporates CSR. The latter view is given credence as companies increasingly produce “sustainability” reports—previously termed “CSR” reports—that cover environmental, social, and financial activities. The key differentiating factor is in the understanding that sustainability requires a long-term view, building on the World Commission on Environment and

Development's definition that human activity should be planned to ensure resources are not depleted, allowing future generations to meet their own needs.

What arguably brings sustainability to the fore is that such issues are increasingly global, a global ethic. Environmental issues are rarely contained within narrowly defined geographical or political boundaries—climate change, water quality, and water supply are cases in point. With global communications technology, social issues similarly cannot be kept hidden within national boundaries but are broadcast, critically, to global publics. Closely linked is the fact that competitive advantage through image and reputation is now built through global interconnectedness.

Given the increasing adoption of sustainability initiatives by companies; local, regional and national governments; and the associated demand for sustainability credentials by consumers and investors, surprisingly few public relations scholars have researched or theorized its uptake within the public relations industry. Practitioners, particularly in Europe, consider sustainability and CSR to be amongst the most rapidly emerging areas of importance. Those who have theorized sustainability in terms of public relations have largely done so in connection with issues and crisis management. W. Timothy Coombs argued that sustainability is becoming a key requirement in building and maintaining reputations and that failure to recognize this can result in crisis.

Public relations has a somewhat negative reputation for working for “quick fixes” for client issues, leading Juliet Roper, Eva Collins, and Margalit Toledano to comment that organizations—and public relations practitioners—need to recognize the global nature of environmental risk and responsibility; focus on short-term issues management will be at the expense of longer term sustainability and organizational legitimacy, with sustainability itself becoming an issue to be managed.

Similarly, James E. Grunig and Larissa A. Grunig argued the need to anticipate risks inherent in organizational decision making and that failure in doing so risks long-term unsustainability for client organizations and their stakeholders. They follow Robert L. Heath in arguing that monitoring long-term risk should be a public relations function. Heath maintained that a new

paradigm of public relations should not only be proactive but should focus on adding value to society rather than solely to clients. Public relations can play a major role in facilitating collaboration between business, governments, and society for sustainable policy outcomes. Insights from Ulrich Beck's risk society suggest that if academics and practitioners fail to change in line with growing demands for sustainability the profession will suffer in the long term as other sectors take up the challenge instead.

Juliet Roper

See also Corporate Social Responsibility; Issues Management; Risk Society; Society

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SWEDEN, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

The communication business in Sweden has grown rapidly during the last decade, though the growth has declined in the early 21st century due to a period of recession. Since 1995, the Swedish Public Relations Association (SPRA) has more than doubled its number of members to 4,500, making it the second largest association in Europe and, per capita, one of the largest associations in the world (the population of Sweden is 9 million people).

The incentive to engage in public relations in Sweden is driven primarily, perhaps even exclusively, by the desire to add positively to the organizations' bottom line. They seem less motivated to view and use public relations as a means for building relationships. No evidence whatsoever shows that Swedish enterprises or public bodies have professional communication unless it affects the businesses. It has become more and more obvious to every professional communicator that you either work in-house or as a consultant.

Almost every second year since 1982, the Swedish Public Relations Association has conducted a member survey. In the 2003 survey, the data showed clear tendencies: Internal communication and media relations were the two areas that will grow most during the coming years. Changing processes and ethics are other issues of great importance to association members, as are corporate branding and strategic planning. The intense debate regarding trust and confidence within the business community has further strengthened the focus on information and communication.

The position of the communication departments is strong in Sweden. In listed companies, 73% of the directors of the corporate communication are part of the CEO groups, whereas in public authorities the figure rises to 77%. This means that professional communication is part of the business decisions, and that the competence and skills of leading professional communicators must include business administration, production management, political science, behavior science, and management in general.

In the years 1998 to 2003, the Swedish Public Relations Association arranged a management program called the Communication Executives

Program for top senior professional communicators. Organized in tandem with the Stockholm School of Economics to fulfill the requirements heard from many CEOs both in the private and the public sector, this management program provided all the areas described above to give the professional communicator a better platform to have a seat in the CEO team.

In a telephone survey of 800 Swedish public relations executives by Research International 2000, 99% of respondents in the private and public sectors declared that they considered effective, professional communication a winning concept. The following areas were also considered of importance:

- Creating good relations with stakeholders and publics (88%)
- Advising executives (88%)
- Developing communication strategies (87%)
- Establishing credibility among stakeholders (84%)
- Image creation (83%)
- Crisis management (77%)

This study was the first of its kind in Sweden. The purpose was to obtain a clear picture of the values and attitudes toward professional communication held by the dominant coalitions.

Since 1995, the Swedish Public Relations Association has been a driving force and participant in the monitoring, measuring, and reporting of intangibles and intellectual capital. In 1996, the association published *Return on Communications* and has since been involved in different projects concerning the issue within the European Union, OECD, and Nordic Industrial Fund.

A Professional Communicator Cannot Abdicate From Corporate Branding

For many years, branding questions have been part of the work of the marketing people. Today the corporate brand is a matter of the board of directors. The value of the corporate brand is a main factor in considering mergers and acquisitions and must be maintained as well as other assets or intangibles. It also means that the head of corporate communication should be in charge of this area. A professional communicator cannot

abdicate responsibility. The assignment of a communicator includes maintaining and developing the company's image and reputation. This means having a broad knowledge about the company business and its products and services, as well as an understanding of the business and product processes.

The need for integrated communication has increased as all companies or other organizations have realized that they must take into consideration all the stakeholders—the employees, the customers, the society, and the owners and shareholders. This work is neither new nor hocus-pocus. It is all about professional communication work.

Scrap the Code of Athens?

Ethics has become more and more important, and a committee within the Swedish Public Relations Association is working with professional ethical codes. It is about time to scrap the Code of Athens since professional communicators cannot use the code as a guideline to daily work. The Code of Athens was written in the 1960s and is not applicable to the communication work of today or tomorrow. A member survey shows that members think it is important that the same code be used by both in-house communicators and consultants.

Public Relations Consultancies in Sweden (PRECIS) has developed a new standard, the Stockholm Charter, which has also become the standard of the International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO).

Norms shall create identity and shall be able to communicate. They shall be consistent, reliable, guiding, and inspiring to a professional communicator. The norms shall guide and advise a communicator in different situations that can arise in daily work. This issue was one of the priorities for the Swedish Public Relations Association during 2004.

Professional Communication Enabling Business Creation and Organizational Development

The professional area of communication is represented by professional communicators, many of whom are members of the Swedish Public Relations Association. For a number of years, this area has developed its own discourse with academic support from scholars such as Sven Windahl. The

knowledge and the theories in use have, however, to a great extent been developed by and for the practitioners themselves. As a result, professional communication is rather poorly represented in the academic context, particularly in the educational management programs. It can be assumed that this knowledge accumulation has mainly been following the path of the traditional perspective of the public relations discourse. This may have resulted in managerial measures focused on defensive actions with the objective to preserve and defend present values, in particular the organizational trust capital. This in itself is not negative but may result in decreasing effectiveness of professional communication measures as far as the proactive creation of businesses and influencing organizational change are concerned.

With today's rapidly changing network community, organizations must keep a fast, steady pace in the development of structures, processes, and businesses. All managerial measures must take active part in this, regardless of whether the organization is business oriented. Research has shown that development of organizations tend to be path dependent. Development follows limited perspectives with the effect of unevenly allocating resources. As a result, organizations run a considerable risk of neglecting certain potential areas for development. This may later have negative consequences. This is true for the technology-driven development that dominated the organizational life up to the 1970s, as well as the stock market-driven development of today. Through short-sighted obedience to demands from the stock market, many companies have put themselves in situations where they have aroused unrealistic expectations and thereby jeopardized sustainable growth. It can therefore be assumed that there is a need for knowledge development in order to create the prerequisites for organizational development processes from an optimal system perspective.

Professional communication is not presently used to its full potential as far as participation in the development of businesses and organizations is concerned. It may certainly be advocated that the present focus of most communication measures on preservation of trust capital constitutes a foundation for further development. There are, however, reasons to believe that many organizations need to refine the trust capital further, rather

than just preserving it. Professional communication has great potential for use in organizational and business development.

This program is intended to substantially contribute to the development of knowledge about how communication processes can be managed to enable effective participation in creating business and organizational change.

Since 2000, in cooperation with the Swedish Public Relations Association, the Stockholm School of Economics has conducted educational programs like "Presentation and Communication Skills for Executives." This program has established a dialogue between the school and professional communication executives.

Purpose

The general purpose of this project was divided into the following subpurposes:

- To make an inventory of communication knowledge as it is manifest in the discourse of the practitioners and relate this to the knowledge present in the academic discourse, in particular, organizational theory, social cognition, and sociology.
- To publish suggestions for theories and methodologies that can be applied to the role of communication processes in organizational change and business creation. Results will be published in academic as well as practitioners' contexts.
- To initiate self-reinforcing research and knowledge development processes in this field by participating in the establishment of educational programs, and thereby making the area interesting and available for doctoral students, and creating the prerequisites for a professorship at the Stockholm School of Economics.

Process

In order to meet the overall purpose of generating and establishing new knowledge in this field, sufficient time will be required for a research program of this nature. There is, however, also a need to develop knowledge in the short term. The projected timeframe for the program will be 5 years. All three subpurposes

are expected to be fulfilled within this time frame.

Year 1: In the first year, the program will conduct a large number of interviews and participant observations with professional communicators in order to create an empirical base for extraction of methodologies applied and theories in use in the discourse of practitioners, and relate that knowledge to the academic discourse. Publication of preliminary results will start after 6 months through the publication channels of the Swedish Public Relations Association. Research results will be published quarterly thereafter.

Year 2: During the second year, the academic publishing of results will commence and educational programs in professional communication at the graduate level will be established.

Year 3: In the third year, the knowledge development will open up opportunities for doctoral students to enter the field.

Years 4 and 5: At the end of the program, the accumulated knowledge will have reached the advanced stage of prerequisites for a professorship in this field at the Stockholm School of Economics. Furthermore, the accumulated knowledge will be synthesized into a final publication. Thereby the field will be established in the academic setting.

Margaretha Sjöberg

Note: The author thanks Sven Hamrefors, assistant professor at the Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden, for his contribution to this entry.

See also Brand Equity and Branding; Codes of Ethics; Counseling; Ethics of Public Relations; Europe, Practice of Public Relations in; Internal Communication

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Stockholm School of Economics: <http://www.ifl.se/en/Programs/Senior-Executive-Academy/Presentation-and-Communication-Skills-for-Executives>

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM THEORY

Symbolic interactionism theory offers students and practitioners a way to view communication as a social process, and also a research method framework to investigate that process. The theory is based on the assumption that people behave as they do because of their meaning making—interpretive—actions. The mind, self, and society work together to influence the processes of knowing, thinking, and acting. With historical foundations in the social sciences, symbolic interactionism theory makes three assumptions about the communication process: (1) It is essential to realize that people share meanings for symbols, such as words or pictures, and as they share meaning, they share a rationale for judgment and action. (2) People are created as social/socialized beings through communication. (3) Social or collective action occurs when, and because, people negotiate such meanings with one another.

Historical Foundation

The multidisciplinary development of symbolic interaction changed the way researchers investigate individuals, groups, and society. People are not reduced to being studied as objects or animals, but as beings who communicate through socially created symbols, including richly textured language. People assume roles based on symbols interpreted in their group(s) and interact through these roles. By way of roles, people create ideas of self and mind, and through interaction, society forms.

The beginnings of interactionism theory development are evident in the works of the Scottish moral philosophers during the 1800s. Although these men disagreed on the fundamentals of the human mind, especially important to the emergence of symbolic interaction was their conviction that it is not possible to study individuals without considering human interaction. Their emphasis on communication and on the emotion of sympathy was the foundation for interactionists' view of society and the origin of self.

The ideas of the moral philosophers can be found in the works of William James and John

Dewey, as well as George Herbert Mead, who is often referred to as the most influential scholar of symbolic interactionism theory. Charles Horton Cooley further developed the theory by considering the self from a sociological perspective. He used a critical framework of a group and underscored the role societies play in shaping an individual's motivation. Cooley conceptualized society as existing in the minds of the people within a social unit, making it real to those people. He argued that there are any number of different minds that exist through a melding and sharing of histories, expectations, and experiences.

Mead's (1934) *Mind, Self, and Society* is most relevant to the public relations community. His arguments coincide with those of other pragmatists of the time, but his work was the foundation for symbolic interaction, a unique form of interpretive research.

At the core of Mead's intersubjective thoughts lies his notion of mind. Mead's mind is symbolic. It emerges and develops through interaction with others. According to Mead, our thoughts and identity are in response to, and develop as part of, a social process. The self is an object that develops through awareness; it is determined through the roles other people take, and by interaction with others through symbols, including language. As humans we are able to think, and according to Mead, thinking is a reflective process that develops through our interactions with others and through our recognition of ourselves from the viewpoint of others. Our reflective self is rooted in society, or in a "generalised other" (Prus, 1996, p. 53). This generalized other—a society, a community, a social network, a workplace—are people interacting with each other in a manner made possible through shared symbolic representations.

A student of Mead, Herbert Blumer, coined the term *symbolic interaction* in 1937. Elaborating on Cooley's method of sympathetic introspection, Blumer's main argument was that researchers must have intimate familiarity with the study's participants, and that the only way to achieve intimate familiarity with human group life is to interact with it while it is happening. Equally important to Blumer was the notion that all individual analysis must be examined as reflective or interactive units within a human group. In brief, Blumer contended that (a) humans act based on the meanings held

within themselves; (b) those meanings are a product of human interaction; and (c) the meanings are modified through an interpretive process.

Interpretive researchers, including astute market researchers, study people as part of a group. People are considered as active participants in interaction with one another. The most common research methods are participant observation, observation, focus groups, and open-ended interviews. Life is usually—but not always—studied as it happens. Intersubjectivity is analyzed. Researchers question the meanings people attach to their situations and look at the ways people co-construct their interactions with others. For those who want to address the *how* and *why* of communication efforts, symbolic interactionism theory provides a framework for investigative measures that take into account a more holistic view of an organization and its publics.

Using Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Understanding symbolic interactionism theory is useful in any communication scenario and at any stage of communication planning. Indeed, understanding the basic tenets of the theory can assist anyone who wants to communicate more effectively. The theory is based on three premises: (1) people act toward things on the basis of the meanings they have for them; (2) the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, social interaction; and (3) the meaning is negotiated through an interpretive process.

In contemporary public relations practices, a common goal in organizations is to communicate effectively with various people or groups of people (Kezar, 2001). Symbolic interactionism theory suggests that any individual or group makes meaning through a process that is shaped by other people's meanings and meaning-making processes. That is, people respond to messages differently depending on their life histories, social circumstances, and knowledge, which are informed by other people and society (including the workplace). Important to the public relations scholar and practitioner is the acknowledgement that the sender of messages is an integral participant in the communication process. The messages or signs might be in the form of words, objects, or actions.

According to this theory, whatever their form, people will make meaning through interpreting the

signs and reacting according to the meanings they have created for those signs. As an example, assume that an organization's internal communications professional wants to communicate to employees that the organization values them. Without investigating what *value* means to the employees, the communicator uses his own definition of value, which means an increase in salary. The communicator convinces the organizational leader to make increases to all employee salaries and announces the increase through the organization's intranet. Because the communicator neither talked with the employees nor researched what "valuing employees" means to them and assumed they would all share the same meaning, the communicator can expect that the employees will react in different, and possibly even negative, ways. At a minimum, employees will evaluate the signs (the increase in salary and the announcement). They will do this using their own meaning of value, which will include all of their experiences and history within and outside the organization. How employees react will reflect the meanings they have attached to other such signs from within the organization, or even at a different workplace.

Continuing the example, assume that the employees do not agree that salary equals value. Instead, valuing employees means a simple face-to-face thank you for a job well done from the job supervisor. Without having investigated this meaning, the communicator would not know that her own meaning of value is different from that held by those with whom she wants to communicate.

Symbolic interactionism theory suggests that working to negotiate shared meanings is a process of clarification and identification. Signs can be modified to further negotiate meanings. If there is not an opportunity to do this through dialogue or through other investigative methods, the communicator can attempt to assume the positions of those with whom he wants to communicate. By assuming social positions of others, communicators can better imagine and hence negotiate meaning. The process allows one to identify that one's own assumptions might not be similar to the intended receivers'.

DeNel Rehberg Sedo

See also Co-Creation of Meaning Theory; Constitutive Theory of Language; Identity Theory; Measuring/Measures; Perspectivism Theory; Power, as Social Construction

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SYMMETRY

The concept of symmetry in public relations was first explored by James E. Grunig in an attempt to integrate Lee Thayer's (1968) concepts of synchronic and diachronic communication to the discipline. J. E. Grunig and Todd Hunt extended these concepts into four models of public relations (1984). The models are (1) press agency/publicity, (2) public information, (3) two-way asymmetrical, and (4) two-way symmetrical. Symmetry is the concept upon which the two-way symmetrical model is based.

In public relations, symmetry means balance and implies a moving equilibrium between an organization and a public. Symmetry induces a symbiotic relationship between organization and public; the two are normatively equal partners, interdependently sharing information in order to arrive at mutual understanding, which is the balance implied in the term.

Symmetry is not static—it is a sliding scale in which the balance adjusts and readjusts toward equilibrium. These adjustments and counteradjustments are made when an organization and its public vary approaches along a continuum from accommodation to competition, depending on how strongly each feels about the issue under

discussion. Using negotiation tactics, an organization or public might give up some of what it wants in order to get more of what it wants on another issue or in the future. Symmetry is characterized by collaboration and compromise, as well as by using dialogue to understand all sides of the issue and arrive at enduring, long-term solutions.

Although this depiction of symmetry is theoretical, symmetry also occurs in the practice of public relations. The two-way symmetrical model is based on using social scientific research to understand the values, attitudes, and beliefs of publics. It is a two-way model because the communication is dialogical. The two-way asymmetrical model is also based on using social scientific research to understand publics. Here the models diverge: The symmetrical model uses research for the purpose of understanding publics; the asymmetrical model uses research to understand how the beliefs of publics can be altered to favor the organization. In the asymmetrical model, the balance is in favor of the organization conducting the research—publics can be persuaded to change their beliefs, but the organization does not do anything to change itself. In the symmetrical model, the balance is maintained through dialogue and mutual willingness to adapt to the other side; both publics and organization are willing to discuss, educate, collaborate, and incorporate ideas of the other into their approach. However, using a symmetrical approach does not imply that an organization must accommodate whatever a public wishes or vice versa, but that each must work to understand the merits of the other view. J. E. Grunig (2000) explained, “The concept of symmetry directly implies a balance of the organization's and public's interests. Total accommodation of the public's interests would be as asymmetrical as unbridled advocacy of the organization's interests” (p. 15). There are several benefits of using a symmetrical approach to the public relations function.

Symmetry as Relationship Building and Maintenance

Using a two-way symmetrical approach results in the building, strengthening, and maintenance of relationships with publics. Symmetry is a long-term, dialogical process that seeks to create and maintain relationships with publics. Through

mutual understanding and collaboration, trust and credibility can be built between an organization and publics. Sometimes the publics can persuade the organization on an issue, and sometimes the organization will persuade publics on an issue. This give-and-take is the crux of symmetry.

Establishing symmetrical, pre-need relationships with strategic publics helps the organization in times of decision making and crisis. Publics are less likely to make hasty conclusions when they have a symmetrical relationship with the organization. Symmetrical relationships are more enduring than asymmetrical ones, in which one side will always feel as if it “lost” the issue and will become frustrated, often dissolving the relationship. Furthermore, activist groups are more likely to target organizations that will not discuss their issue than organizations that show a willingness to listen, understand, and to varying extents incorporate their ideas. Even when little common ground can be found, a symmetrical relationship allows the possibility of continued dialogue and inventing options for mutual gain.

Symmetry as a Contributor to Organizational Effectiveness

Although it is a normative model, the symmetrical approach results in real-world satisfactory and beneficial relationships with publics. Building effective relationships with publics (such as government regulators, activist groups, investors, community publics) is crucial to the long-term survival and profitability of an organization. In 2000, J. E. Grunig wrote, “With the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners use research and dialogue to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both their organization and publics” (p. 12). These proactive, symbiotic changes can often save the organization enormous sums of money that would have been spent on legal settlements, regulatory compliance, or damage control if a symmetrical model had not been employed.

A second major way that symmetry contributes to organizational effectiveness is by enhancing the organizational culture in a way that allows open communication inside the company. Research has found that authoritarian cultures use one-way models of communication (press

agency and public information) and two-way asymmetrical communication to persuade employees along the lines that management desires, often resulting in expensive employee turnover.

A symmetrical worldview supports two-way communication inside the organization as well as with external publics. The presuppositions characteristic of the symmetrical worldview are interdependence, an open system, moving equilibrium, equality, autonomy, innovation, decentralization, responsibility, innovation, conflict resolution, and interest group liberalism. Symmetrical internal communication helps to make an organization effective by increasing the satisfaction of employees and allowing long-term relationships with employee publics to be maintained, increasing employee retention rates.

Symmetry Enhances the Responsibility of Public Relations

Every organization has a dominant coalition, including the CEO and top officers, who determine organizational strategy. The ideal situation is for the head of public relations to be a member of the dominant coalition so that the views of publics can be incorporated in strategy. According to research by Shannon A. Bowen in 2009, the use of a symmetrical approach is vital to public relations gaining a seat in the dominant coalition.

Through symmetrical relationships, the public relations function performs a boundary-spanning role. Public relations thereby holds the knowledge of publics outside the organization that other departments do not. Public relations counsel can convey the attitudes, values, and beliefs of a given public to management for consideration in strategic planning. In this manner, publics’ values can be incorporated into organizational policy when possible. This information can earn public relations access to the dominant coalition and increase its responsibility in the organization.

Symmetry Is Inherently Ethical

Scholars such as Jürgen Habermas (1984) and Ron Pearson (1989) asserted that organizations have a moral obligation to engage in dialogue with publics. J. E. and Larissa A. Grunig (1996) espoused the idea that “public relations will be inherently ethical

if it follows the principles of the two-way symmetrical model” (p. 40). Symmetrical public relations provides a means through which publics and organizations can debate the merits of issues and determine the best course of action through discussion, negotiation, and collaboration. When public relations is based on a symmetrical worldview, it performs an idealistic social role. Public relations acts as the grease on the wheels of society, developing mutual understanding through dialogue and informed debate.

Shannon A. Bowen

See also Conflict Resolution; Dialogue; Ethics of Public Relations; Excellence Theory; Habermas, Jürgen, on Public Relations

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SYSTEMS THEORY

Systems theory was developed to understand the dynamics of natural and human phenomena. The system is a basic unit of analysis. Theory addresses the nature of each system as part of its environment that consists of other systems. The key concern of proponents of systems theory is to understand how well or poorly each system functions within its dynamic relationship with other systems.

Most definitions of public relations imply that communication plays a strong role in the interdependence of the public relations practitioner, the organization, and its stakeholders. This interdependence is equated to Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn's *open system* rather than a *closed-system* perspective. Presented in 1966, the open system stems from the 1940s and 1950s and is based on the biological approach of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who emphasized the interconnectedness of all the parts of a body. Each human or social system, like each physical organism, is surrounded by permeable boundaries. Organizations in open systems are dependent on other organizations or groups in their environment. They cannot depend only on internal processes and interaction as in a closed system. Organizations also must interact with other groups in their environments.

In 1986, Gerald Goldhaber described a systems loop, the loop being input from the environment, throughput, and output with feedback coming back on the loop to be reinput into the organization. This feedback represents the effects of other organizations or groups on the organization and leads it to adapt or change to coexist better with its environment. Organizations representative of

closed systems believe they are independent of environmental influences. To succeed and survive, however, in an increasingly turbulent environment that cannot be ignored, organizations are dependent on or have to cope with factors in their environment. Public relations is one of the primary links in sustaining this interdependence, both internally and externally, to the organization.

Factors in the environment that affect an organization also result in decisions that have inescapable consequences for the relationships the organization has with its stakeholders. Relationships exist whether acknowledged or not. That is where public relations contributes to an organization's existence.

The strategic skill used by public relations practitioners to manage these relationships between an organization and its stakeholders is *boundary spanning*. This is the process by which the practitioner scans stakeholders in the organization's environment useful for it to adapt to that environment. Boundary spanners are individuals within the organization who frequently interact with the organization's environment and who gather, select, and relay information from the environment to decision makers of an organization. That interaction with the environment can be on a formal or informal basis. These stakeholders serve in a microsystem with public relations that could be referred to as a *public relations system*.

Many scholars in public relations purport that research and theorizing in public relations is strongly influenced by systems theory and that systems theory could be considered a metatheory for public relations. Systems theory tenets are evident in many studies of public relations and implied in others. It was in 1976 when both Bell and Bell and separately James E. Grunig first incorporated systems theory in public relations. Probably the most extensive development of systems theory in public relations was Larissa A. Grunig's (a.k.a. "Schneider") doctoral dissertation of 1985. She concluded in the structural-functionalist tradition that structure and organizational constraints control the flow of information from within the organization and from it to its external stakeholders. However, functionalism alone is insufficient to justify systems theory as a metatheory in public relations.

Critiques and Responses

Other scholars in public relations also have addressed perceived weaknesses in the extent and possible consequences of systems theory. In his discussion of the pluralist paradigm in public relations, Timothy Coombs said in 1993 that for the pluralist paradigm, where power is equalized in the policy-making process, systems theory failed to address power advantages of corporations. This power advantage is particularly acute in considering public relations assisting an organization to achieve its goals by aligning itself with others in the environment. Public relations remains an advocate for an organization. This viewpoint will be addressed later in the discussion of organizations pursuing their own *self-interests*.

Others also have criticized systems theory when discussing organizational power. Pamela Creedon agreed with L. A. Grunig in that the functionalist perspective implied by systems theory inhibits the examination of the "foundation of institutional values or norms that determine an organization's response changes in its environment" (1993, p. 160). In essence the systems approach emphasizes the need of the organization over the needs of the entire system structure and that there is a sought-after degree of control. Organizational advocacy does not necessarily include mutual understanding, dialogue, or reaching consensus with stakeholders.

These critiques and possible responses essentially can be distilled into Jürgen Habermas's school of interpersonal or intersubjective common interests among interdependent systems, and Niklas Luhmann's school of independent social systems where there is no difference between public and private interests. Habermas's objective is the social integration of society, the breakdown of system boundaries, whereas Luhmann's objective is for innersystemic integration and the maintenance of system boundaries. The Habermas school of thought could be equated somewhat to the critical and ethical perspectives in public relations. In 1990, Ron Pearson examined systems theory and public relations with an ethical view to take functionalism one step further. Functionalism maintains a balance of a system as a whole, to maintain homeostasis with other elements of its environment. Pearson put forward the concept of interdependencies as a way of ethically balancing the connections among stakeholders. This focus

on interdependencies ultimately leads to ethical and power-balanced relationships as the organization attempts to continually maintain and adapt to its environment. It is within this interdependence where both strategic and ethical considerations are present. The major difference in functionalism and systems theory, according to Pearson, is that functionalism usually emphasizes structure, output, and performance in contrast to systems theory, which emphasizes input, throughput, and output. With input, systems theory lends itself more to the interdependence, ethical side of the argument. This type of input should be that which supports change on both sides of the equation, that of the organization and that of the stakeholder(s) in a symmetrical manner. According to Habermas's theories, it is unethical to enter a system representing particular interests or self-interests. Luhmann's theories promote just the opposite view since no perspective for society, as a whole system, exists in actuality.

Interests and Self-Interests

Common interests and *self-interests* have been referred to but not specifically addressed yet. Interests from the conflict resolution literature can be defined as those underlying, broader, and more abstract values that individuals and organizations may have in common. Self-interests, from the public relations literature, are not selfish interests but those interests that have intrinsic value for the survival of an entity (e.g., quality of life, needs of family and friends, and even economic well-being). These self-interests motivate individuals and organizations to act and to change behavior. Taken one step further, *enlightened self-interests* in the long-term assist relationships to be mutually satisfactory. Enlightened self-interests meld the intersubjective and social ends of systems theory thought because positive relationships in the long term means adapting, adjusting, and changing to other stakeholders in the environment. There are inevitable effects in a public relations system of one stakeholder on another. This is inherently ethical because stakeholders have a constraining effect; they have consequences for each other. One of the tenets of the social systems perspective is that organizations and systems fundamentally differ and tend toward independence, yet political and economic system

restraints and the self-governing restraints of a system's interconnectedness lead to a system becoming interdependent. The basic survival of an organization in the long term depends on the relationship of self-interests and enlightened self-interests between it and its stakeholders.

Self-interests are just that—values owned exclusively by an individual organization. Thus, there can never be total consensus among individuals or organizations. It is not so much a matter of finding consensus or common ground or complete resolution of any conflict. It is a matter of settling issues in overlapping areas of self-interests. This is enlightened self-interest. Individual or public trust is not an issue because in the regulated systems of modern society, organizations cannot avoid dealing with other stakeholders. There is a pattern of interdependence, pursuing self-interests of both parties so that both do well. This also relates to mixed motives in public relations where situations and issues are not resolved at the extremes in a pure asymmetrical or symmetrical manner, but there are trade-offs, compromises, and so forth that lead to both parties being mutually satisfied in their self-interests—those self-interests not being identical.

J. E. Grunig's *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management* in 1992 advocated two-way symmetrical communication as an ethical but interpersonal and strategic form of communication. The practice, however, of strategic communication in systems theory would be deemed unethical in Habermasian thought. But strategic communications would be judged highly ethical according to Luhmann where self-interests can overlap; the system self-enforces ethical or reciprocal behavior to coexist in the same system. It allows autonomy and interaction to exist side by side in a complementary manner.

Stakeholder relations or public relations practice in systems theory then becomes a question of conflicts among different stakeholders or systems by means of regulation, law, economics, and self-interests. The objective is sustainability through mutual self-regulation, self-restriction, and adjustment in a society of continuous conflicts and disagreements. This is inevitable because systems, organizations, on down to individuals are separate entities biologically, but also in frames of reference or perspective—again self-interests. The public relations manager acts as a system's representative

in a particular self-interest or enlightened self-interest. Mutual understanding in symmetrical communications becomes a type of awareness where stakeholders understand the self-interests of each other in the relationship—not the type that totally reconciles the different stakeholders, but the type that allows them to complement one another in a sustainable relationship.

Kenneth D. Plowman

See also Publics; Relationship Management Theory; Stakeholder Theory; Symmetry

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T

TACTICS

Tactics are the tools practitioners use to perform strategies formulated by managers, including public relations managers. Usually the most comprehensive part of a communication plan, tactics provide a toolkit with which to carry out the plan and achieve the intended goals. Addressing the application aspect of public relations, tactics allow practitioners to customize their plans to address specific target publics and markets. In sum, tactics are what practitioners do and strategies are how they think. As is true of every profession, public relations requires an understanding and application of a variety of unique tools.

While objectives, goals, and strategies outline what practitioners wish to accomplish with their public relations endeavors, tools are selected to achieve specific objectives and are most often plotted out in outline form in a communication plan. A good analogy is to view tactics as the engineers in the field who carry out the research and planning done by the scientists in their laboratories. Thus, after a solid foundation of research, planning, and identifying goals and objectives, public relations practitioners can enter the execution stage with the implementation of tactics.

Tactics are part of a hierarchy of elements that define the public relations profession. At the top of the pyramid of strategic elements of the profession are the ethical choices, management philosophies, public relations program, and strategic business planning options that drive public relations counseling.

No savvy organization that engages in strategic communication, issues management, and public relations positioning does so by accident or whim. This level of analysis requires careful assessment of the strains and challenges that must be addressed as any organization seeks to build, maintain, and repair mutually beneficial relationships with its stakeholders/stakeseekers. These may be publics interested in issue positions or customers, donors, or beneficiaries interested in the reputation and mission of the organization.

Whether an organization is large or small, it is likely to engage in some or many public relations functions. Functions are the broad headings that in turn group types of activities used to address specific public relations needs. The list of functions is comparatively shorter than a list of tactics and includes employee relations, customer relations, investor relations, student relations, government relations, donor relations, member relations, and such. In large, sophisticated organizations, one or more persons is in charge of one or two specific functions. In smaller organizations, several specific functions are grouped together more tightly, yet nevertheless are likely to be performed.

Strategic business and public relations plans are executed through functions that require the use of various strategic options. Strategies are the choices practitioners make regarding how to accomplish the ends specified in the strategic plan and enacted through functions. Strategies often also focus on desired achievable outcomes. For example, one strategy is to attract attention, another is to inform. A third is to persuade, which entails seeking to create

favorable opinions, changing opinions, or adapting to the opinions that prevail on some matter. Persuasion includes efforts designed toward motivation. Strategies are employed during crisis response. Strategies are the essence of communication. They typically are thought of as independent variables leading to desirable dependent variables that are necessary to create, maintain, and repair mutually beneficial relationships.

The following list of tactics suggests the many tools practitioners have in their professional tool chests that they can use to reach out and work with their customers, audiences, and publics. The list of tactics is quite long but includes the following:

- Media releases
- Lobbying
- Media kits
- News alerts
- Press conferences
- Media availabilities
- Product (service) releases and stories
- Feature releases and stories
- Employee newsletters and other forms of employee communication
- Customer hotlines
- How-to releases and events
- Expert columns (such as those in newspapers that promote real estate, fashion, cooking, automobiles)
- Events
- Road shows/media tours/trade shows/product shows
- Videos, books, booklets, catalogs, pamphlets
- Briefings and backgrounders
- Samples and coupons
- Websites
- Intranet sites
- Position papers
- Placed and commissioned articles

- Sponsored books, editorials
- Negotiation and collaborative decision making
- Newsletters
- Executive comments
- Speakers bureaus
- Social media
- Media drops
- Wire service distributions
- Electronic mailing lists

This long list is more illustrative than definitive. It demonstrates many of the tools that are used by practitioners as they perform their practice. Practitioners are expected to be experts in the use of these tools, based on strategies to accomplish and functions to perform in support of public relations programs.

Practitioners have a number of factors to consider in choosing their tactics, such as development of media materials, media distribution lists and plans for media relations, as well as taking into account internal audiences, event coordination, collateral, partnership opportunities, sponsorship possibilities and, in some cases, even advertising support when available.

Media materials include news releases, fact sheets, biographies, visuals, and story angle lists. If media kits are successfully utilized, these materials are the ones most commonly included in them. Good supplemental tools include B-roll (supplemental video footage), public service announcement (PSA) scripts, pitch letters, media advisories, trend alerts, and media drops.

In developing media lists, the identification of intended targets is essential. Generally, separate lists are customized for trade and consumer audiences. Broadcast, print, and Web-based media are all considered for maximizing message dissemination, whether to reach an international, national, regional, or local market.

Media relations tactics include initial distribution of materials, editorial calendar development, comprehensive follow up, media monitoring, and measurement. Follow up includes fielding media inquiries that may include expert or spokesperson interviews, providing additional information,

editorial contribution to existing articles, feature coverage, op-ed pieces, bylined articles, case studies, and press conferences. Proactive strategies to consider might be media tours, backgrounding sessions, executive interviews, and analyst relations. These days, interactive opportunities are also a necessity and include websites (as both targets and sources of information about your initiative), blast emails, online pressrooms, cyber events, electronic mailing lists, and social media. Additionally, community relations often may take a grassroots approach with local speaking opportunities, sponsorships, lobbying, activist groups, and public service announcements.

For events, both interior and exterior audiences are considered. Events for interior audiences include incentive events, retreats, quarterly meetings, internal galas, press conferences, product launches, and holiday parties. Exterior event possibilities are endless and include trade shows, launch parties, grand openings, ribbon cuttings, shareholder meetings, road shows, guerilla marketing, press conferences, initial public offerings (IPOs), community events, CEO roundtables, educational seminars, and free service giveaways.

Collateral includes marketing or sales pieces, such as brochures, product information sheets, capabilities kits, product displays, video loops, point-of-sale materials, product shots, direct mail pieces, newsletters, annual reports, electronic business cards, electronic files, invitations, event signage, high-resolution logos, trade show throw-away materials, booth graphics, and giveaways. While usually included under media materials development, items such as press kit folders or containers, media drop materials, and video/audio samples are sometimes listed under collateral items, depending on whose role it is to conceptualize and develop these items.

If advertising tactics are considered in a communication plan, it is often in the context of how these placements run in tandem with or can supplement the public relations efforts. Possible advertising outlets include print, radio, television, Web, social media, outdoor, transit, on-site, Yellow Pages, and on-hold telephone recordings.

With so many possibilities to track, timelines are essential in assigning goals for implementing tactics. One can see how the goals, objectives, strategies, targets, and reach all come into play in

real terms with tactics, as they are the approach and tools by which practitioners achieve the other stated objectives.

Scholars and senior practitioners who discuss the activities that define the practice often distinguish between the managerial activities of practitioners and their tactics or technician activities. According to this analysis, persons who are new to the profession tend to spend most of their time engaging in what are called tactician activities rather than managerial decision making. Some persons prefer to remain primarily in the role of tactician, whereas others aspire to move into more managerial activities.

The division between strategy and tactics guided at least to a degree the editorial design of the Public Relations Society of America's two professional publications. One, *The Public Relations Strategist*, features articles that discuss general policy and planning content. An issue might center on the strategies of activists and the challenges they pose to public relations practitioners. Articles in the *Strategist* might present the thoughts on business, the economy, public policy, or public relations planning by leaders in those fields. The journal might look at trends, such as the challenges and advances facing practitioners in specific countries, for instance Russia as it developed more of a financial-commercial business model in place of the old state control economy.

The other publication, called *Public Relations Tactics*, addresses best practices in the design and use of tactics. One long-running feature of *Tactics* was the column by Bill Adams who invited practitioners to "Ask the Professor" questions about specific tactics. These might include the best way to capture the news interest of local reporters. It might feature the best approach for addressing employee concerns during a crisis. An issue might note the characteristics and techniques of effective public relations writing. It could offer advice on events or ways to be assertive during a television show interview. A feature in *Tactics* might single out the advantages and challenges of becoming Accredited Public Relations (APR). The advice in *Tactics* is practical, something practitioners can do each day to strengthen their professional skills.

Further evidence of the strata of skills and challenges of public relations practitioners is the discussion presented in the *Public Relations Professional*

Career Guide, published by the PRSA Foundation in 1993. This publication addressed the typical activities of public relations executives, directors, managers, supervisors, and technicians. All levels perform tactical duties, but the proportion of a day devoted to such duties declined as a person ascended the ladder toward management. The proportion of each day's activities devoted to technical and craft skills declined as the practitioner matured, but at no level of the practice was the individual unlikely to need proficiency in these vital skills of the profession. Tactics define the profession. They are the tools of the trade.

Lisa K. Merkl and Robert L. Heath

See also Accreditation; Functions of Public Relations; Goals; Objectives; Public Relations Society of America; Strategies; Target

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TAGLINE

A tagline, or tag, is a short descriptive phrase used in public relations, advertising, and marketing, to convey a key message. *Tagline* and *slogan* are terms that are often used interchangeably. Taglines are clever words, phrases, or sentences that appear at the end of an advertisement or other communication tool to summarize the message in a crisp and memorable way. If the tagline is repeated from advertisement to advertisement, it is generally called a slogan. The word *slogan* comes from the Gaelic expression for battle cry, and slogans and taglines are the battle cry for a company, nonprofit organization, and brand. Therefore, taglines are either attached to a profit-making institution, nonprofit organization, or a particular brand, which is produced by an organization.

In the case of a particular brand, taglines play an important part in branding strategies and become a unifying theme in a campaign, which is a series of ads or collateral under some kind of thematic umbrella. A tagline summarizes the promise of the brand or how the brand wants to be positioned

in the marketplace. In the case of a tagline for an organization, it becomes incorporated into a corporate identification system, which consists of a tagline, a logo, and an organization's name. In each case, taglines sum up in a short, easily remembered message the theme for an organization's unique positioning in the market or a brand's benefits.

Effective taglines are short, simple, and memorable and differentiate the company or product from its competitors. They are designed to be repeated, provide quick and easy identification of the organization or product, create a lasting impression, and ensure continuity. Frequently, taglines appear at the end of an ad as the final phrase, but they are usually incorporated throughout the materials produced by the organization or brand.

To write an effective tagline, a clear understanding of the organization's or brand's mission, unique characteristics, and competitive differences is needed. Some well-known taglines include L'Oreal's "Because I'm Worth It," De Beers's "A Diamond Is Forever," Nike's "Just Do It," Disneyland's "The Happiest Place on Earth," and Bounty's "The Quicker Picker-upper."

Emma L. Daugherty

See also Advertising; Graphics; Logo

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TALLENTS, SIR STEPHEN

Sir Stephen Tallents (1884–1958) was an important influence on the emergence, shape, and culture of the public relations occupation in the United Kingdom. In his role as career civil servant, he held posts that necessitated some understanding of markets, promotion, and public opinion in the context of imperial Britain. The key appointment in this

legacy was that of Secretary to the Empire Marketing Board (EMB) in 1926. He entered an organization that was largely focused on scientific and economic research, market intelligence, and supply chain management in order to implement imperial preference. Here was his opportunity and incentive to add to the professionalism of public relations.

His education in public relations resulted from his reading and personal growth. According to Scott Anthony (2012), Tallents read work by both Ivy Lee and Ed Bernays, but developed an approach to public relations as social development. As a civil servant, he was outward-looking as is apparent in a radio interview cited in Anthony (2012, p. 15),

Suddenly, about half way through my life, I was called upon to assist in the distribution of ideas. . . . I had no previous experience in that line and looked hopefully round for advice. But I quickly discovered that scarcely any British government department had ever thought about publicity and that most departments were inclined to resent it. I had to go outside for counsel—into the business and advertising worlds; and to quite an extent my colleagues and I had to improve methods of our own.

Tallents's creative streak meant that he interpreted his professional mission broadly as selling the concept of Empire in terms of relationships,

[The purpose of the EMB was to bind the Empire together] by bringing the Empire alive to the minds of its citizens . . . to sell the idea of the Empire as a co-operative venture between living persons interested in each other's work, and in each other's welfare. Our task was not to glorify Empire but to make it live as a society for mutual help, a picture of vivid human interest, as well as of practical promise. (Lee, 1972, p. 51)

Tallents employed many communication techniques, including media relations, poster campaigns, lectures, and special events. However, it was his inspirational "hearts and minds" approach that was long remembered, as well as his political patronage of John Grierson, the Scot who was the acknowledged leader of the British Documentary Film Movement. Tallents commissioned a number of films like *Drifters* (1929) about the herring fishing industry, and others, such as *Canadian Apples*, *Sheep Dipping*, *South African Fruit*.

When the EMB was dismantled for failing to offset the Depression, Tallents was awarded a knighthood for his work and moved to a public relations post at the Post Office. He took his film unit with him and retitled it the GPO Film Unit; they went on to make films on behalf of a number of different ministries for a variety of internal and external communications purposes. "Tallents was appointed as Controller of Public Relations and his work there included 'a programme of public diplomacy'" (Anthony, 2012, p. 101). However, although his public reputation grew and he was awarded the advertising industry's accolade of the Publicity Cup in 1935, only a year later his successor wrote a critical report on the workings of the GPO public relations department. At this very point, Anthony (2012) observed, Tallents moved to the BBC as Controller of Public Relations, where he succeeded in making the BBC more accessible to the public and more responsive to public opinion. However, his efforts in insisting that broadcasters acknowledge sources properly were not entirely appreciated, and his post was abolished and replaced with a lower-level publicity post.

Tallents's interest in and commitment to film was driven by his understanding that technology created new possibilities for communication, but required research and analysis to understand how it affected relational bonds. Tallents's thinking was laid bare in his 1933 pamphlet, *The Projection of England*, where he laid out his idea for a "school for national projection." He pointed out that, prior to technological advances, a country's reputation was dependent on interpersonal communication at international and diplomatic meetings and he argued that,

It is essential for England [sic] as a world power that she should make herself known to her fellows. Peace itself may at any time depend upon a clear understanding abroad of her order, we need to master every means and every art by which we can communicate with other peoples. (p. 40)

Tallents's ideas effectively formed the blueprint of The British Council, which was established in 1934 to promote Britain abroad and harvest goodwill through exchange of persons to achieve various outcomes,

To make the life and thought of the British peoples more widely known abroad and to promote

a mutual interchange of knowledge and ideas with other peoples. To encourage the study and use of the English language . . . To bring other peoples into closer touch with British ideals and practice in education, industry and government to make available to them the benefits of current British contribution to the sciences and technology; and to afford them opportunities of appreciating contemporary British work in literature, the fine arts, drama and music. To co-operate with the self-governing dominions in strengthening the common cultural tradition of the British Commonwealth. (White, 1965, p. 7)

By these efforts, Tallents's ideas shaped an understanding not just of public relations, but also cultural diplomacy and the continuing importance of interpersonal communication in addition to mass communication.

Chronicling Tallents's career, Anthony (2012) noted that he moved from the BBC to the Ministry of Information, where he struggled with the military and security establishments to engage in proactive communications and propaganda. His efforts to develop government communications were subordinated to BBC strategies, and critics suggest that Tallents overestimated BBC news-gathering capacities and neglected news agencies. He moved to the BBC Overseas Service in 1940 and became noted for establishing a range of multicultural contacts, particularly in Latin America, and for building relationships with international audiences.

Contribution to Professionalization

Tallents contributed to the conceptual development of the occupation of public relations, not the least through his contribution to the journal, *Public Administration*. *Public Administration* was an important vehicle for discussion on the development of the new specialist area of public relations. He published many articles in the 1920s and 1930s on the purpose, role, and scope of public relations for its local and central government readership. In 1933, Tallents wrote an article on "Salesmanship in the public service: Scope and technique" in which he argued for the elevation of public relations to professional status.

Publicity should be recognised as a professional job, demanding special training and special capacities

which, incidentally, do not include a flair for personal boosting, but do include in the broadest sense, artistic capacity. (Tallents, 1933, p. 265)

Tallents claimed to be the first person in the United Kingdom to be given the title Public Relations Officer in 1933 and said that the title had been chosen by his superior, Sir Kingsley Wood of the Post Office who had allegedly taken the title from the Report of the *American Telegraph and Telephone Company*. However, L'Etang (2004) reasoned, this claim can be challenged since Sir John Elliot was appointed to Southern Railways in 1924 to what he believed to be "the first public relations appointment in Britain" (p. 55).

Tallents is highly regarded in the United Kingdom for his significance in the evolution of public relations. He was even described somewhat sycophantically as "Sir Many Tallents." He was President of the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) twice—from 1948–49 and 1952–53—and was made a Fellow. The Stephen Tallents Medal was founded in 1984 and is awarded at the discretion of the president of IPR to recognize exceptional achievement in, and contributions to, the development of public relations practice.

Jacquie L'Etang

See also Europe, Practice of Public Relations in; European Social Theory and Public Relations; Propaganda; Public Affairs

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TARGET

The term *target* is used both as a noun and a verb. As a noun, a target consists of specific individuals or groups that an organization wants to reach with its messages. Used that way, it is appropriate to say that adult, 25-years-and-older, female customers of middle income are a target for an integrated communication message about a specific product or service. As a verb, target means to set sights on that group or individual that the organization wants to reach. Used as a verb, it is appropriate for a political campaign advisor to say, “We will target young voters with college educations with X message.”

The term *target* is widely used in marketing, advertising, and public relations. It draws on a military, recreation, or hunting narrative where a shooter aims at a target. The goal is to strategically hit the intended mark. As a preliminary step to some other outcome, an organization might work to get a specific message to a target. A nonprofit organization might do that by using carefully selected channels to reach potential donors or volunteers who are sympathetic to the mission and cause of the organization.

Target is generally defined by goals and objectives, with various tactics used to reach the intended audiences. Practitioners should strategically choose their targets to achieve their desired results, keeping in mind that reaching target audiences also is a way to measure one’s goals and objectives. To evaluate the level of success in a campaign, practitioners measure quantitative outcomes, such as garnering media coverage or generating inquiries, increasing sales, or receiving service requests. Qualitative measures are also employed, including the message and meaning targets use as they refer to the organization’s reputation, the nature of the relationship they have with the organization, or the willingness to agree with an issue position.

Targeting is one way of increasing communication efficiency: putting the right message in front of the right market at the right time. Thus, the source designs a message that is crafted to appeal to the target audience. Then, the source works to get that message through one or more channels that increase the likelihood that the target sees, reads, views, and responds to the message.

Targets feature demographics like age, gender, marital status, income, or religious affiliation. Targets feature psychographics that depend on values, beliefs, lifestyles, and attitudes. A target is also defined by featuring sociographics, such as employment, identifications, affiliations, and cause relatedness.

Targets are determined in a marketing communication context based on the return on investment, commonly referred to simply as ROI that appears to be achievable by getting a specific message to a particular, definable market—group or groups of customers—at a particular time. For instance, if a computer manufacturer has a specific product aimed at college students, those students, as well as the parents of those students, constitute a target market. The company might advertise and use promotions in campus newspapers and magazines to reach students. They might link to websites and social media applications popular with students. They might target reporters whose messages can feature promotional activities and materials in magazines, newspapers, radio, and television frequently used by college students. The company also might target administrators on college campuses. Thus, we think of student customers as primary targets—one that can receive a message directly through media channels—and as secondary targets, one that can be reached through other targeted audiences. These targeted audiences might buy a computer for a student, or they might pass the message to the students that a specific brand of computer is for sale at a special price for college students.

Targets are defined through public relations and marketing research. Sampling techniques are used to segment larger populations into subpopulations based on some demographic, sociographic, or psychographic profile.

Much of what is discussed above focuses on markets and audiences targeted with messages designed to sell products and services. Obviously, employees are a public, but not a market. Activists are a public. A company might target a message on some issue of concern directed to the activists. So, too, the company might target persons and groups who are likely to agree with the company and take its side on an issue. During a crisis, one of the challenges is to prepare clear, informative, and credible messages

that are targeted to a wide array of audiences. The crisis is the central theme, but the target audience may vary and the message needs to be tailored to each audience.

Ultimately, both the intended audience whose behavior a practitioner wishes to somehow influence and the type of media need to be thoroughly considered when going down the checklist of whom to target. The practitioner's answers stem from what it is they want to accomplish and why, which are key considerations in determining how to approach the target. For instance, goals to increase awareness of a product, service, or situation, driving traffic to a corporation or entity, increasing business or sales, educating various publics about important topics or services, and reinforcing brand image are likely the most common goals and objectives. A typical outline of whom to target might then read: current and potential customers, third parties who guide those primary customers, employees who double as influencers as well as customers themselves, potential partner organizations, and the ever-present and crucial media that influence the above.

This last component of securing coverage in targeted media to publicize a cause, initiative, or campaign is critical and where careful selection of media distribution lists becomes key. As touched on already, most public relations plans, after listing their intended targets, include the seemingly generic phrase of "media that influence the above" to complete a campaign's list of targets. This is actually a crucial ingredient in any communication plan that helps define the types of media targets likely to consider coverage.

The identification of intended targets is a key determinant in developing media lists. Generally, separate lists are customized for trade and consumer audiences, with broadcast, print and electronic media all considered for maximizing message dissemination. While trade outlets (most often publications and websites) deal with specific industries, consumer media is mainstream in nature, providing messages appropriate for the "common man." Keeping this in mind, news releases often also need to be customized to reach these various targets. For instance, while the introduction of a new motor oil requires a release to garner mainstream coverage (outside of just paid advertising) that gets the public to buy it, a more strategic approach is to first target

trade audiences through automotive publications, for example, to reach the technicians and mechanics who can influence or recommend what brand their customers use. Similarly, a hospital system may want to tailor various releases to highlight certain information that is pertinent to targets who patronize particular facilities, taking into account demographics, for example socioeconomic status and ethnicity that likely varies depending on the location of the different hospitals. A third example presents itself with community relations, targeting different editions of a major metropolitan newspaper or calling attention to members of a neighborhood or area of town who fall within a community newspaper's delivery area.

In considering targets, it also is important to take into account the types of mediums that most likely appeal to specific groups. Again, age, socioeconomic status, and cultural mores often help determine whether a particular target audience is more prone to respond to television, radio, newspapers, magazines, or electronic outlets.

So, while public relations practitioners initially identify desired target audiences, they most often reach those targets by procuring placement in the media. And, ultimately, measuring impressions and reach helps to evaluate the success of a campaign—success as measured not just by reaching, but also by influencing those target audiences to act in a certain way that helps achieve an organization's goals and objectives.

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See also Advertising; Goals; Impressions; Investor Relations; Marketing; Narrowcasting/Broadcasting; Objectives; Promotion; Publicity; Strategies; Tactics

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TERRORISM AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The events on September 11, 2001, when terrorists hijacked and crashed four U.S. commercial aircraft, resulted in the tragic deaths of thousands of innocent people. However, it was the symbolic nature of this act of terror that was, and remains, highly significant. September 11 was a powerful example of “propaganda of the deed,” which broadcast a message that the militant Islamist organization al-Qaeda was taking its “war” to the United States and the West. According to the propaganda of the deed thesis, the primary aim of the terrorist is to draw attention to their cause by engaging in acts of political violence in order to exploit the mass media as a communication channel. In one sense, it is the crudest form of press agency; the terrorist act by itself is of secondary importance, publicity is everything.

Studies of terrorism, and in particular of terrorism and the media, identify different viewpoints in the debates surrounding terrorism in democratic societies. One position is sometimes labeled the *official* perspective; it stresses terrorism’s criminality and irrationality and tends to be articulated by those who speak for the “state” (e.g., government ministers, conservative politicians, top security experts). Another view is described as the *alternative* perspective; it is articulated by those who dissent from the official view, but who accept that violence is not legitimate within democratic societies (e.g., civil libertarians, critical academics, some journalists, some politicians). The alternative perspective seeks to remind citizens to be vigilant about the way in which the term *terrorism* is used lest it become a semantic tool of powerful state actors. From this standpoint, a distinction is made between *wholesale* terror, produced by state actors, and *retail* terror, produced by small groups, with state-sponsored terror (including by Western democracies) causing the greater number of civilian casualties and societal instability worldwide.

Recent scholarly work on terrorism and public relations tends to frame the debate within the official perspective and also largely restricts the concept of terrorist public relations to propaganda of the

deed. However, some studies investigated other aspects of terrorist public relations. For instance, Robert G. Picard (1989) highlighted the fact that terrorists groups frequently utilize most of the strategies employed by public relations professionals. His research demonstrated that terrorist groups not only use propaganda of the deed, but in fact employ recognizable public relations techniques like press releases, statements, preformulated articles for publications, and background information in the form of press kits, fact sheets, press conferences, interviews, and the provision of visual materials.

Public relations efforts of governments in response to terrorism are an important development since 9/11. There is a great deal of study of the communication activities surrounding U.S. President Bush’s “War on Terror” in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Interestingly, the initial aims of the War on Terror, defeating al-Qaeda and other militant Islamist terrorist groups, quickly changed to advocating regime change in certain countries, in particular Iraq. This shift from targeting terrorist groups to targeting nation-states in the War on Terror involved a significant public relations effort, which was analyzed by several scholarly studies. Juyan Zhang’s (2007) analysis of the metaphors used in U.S. government communications helps reveal its campaign strategy. To take one example, in his State of the Union address in 2002, President Bush declared that “States like these [Iran, Iraq, North Korea], and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.” The metaphor “axis of evil” was designed to make audiences see the world in terms of the World War II struggle between the Allies and the Axis powers (Nazi Germany, Japan, and Italy). However, a strategy based on creating a dichotomy of heroes (the United States and its coalition partners) and villains (Saddam Hussein, al-Qaeda, the Taliban) was a dangerous one. With no Muslim forces actively engaged on the U.S. side, the dichotomy ironically began to resemble the one that al-Qaeda’s public relations efforts wished to emphasize, that of the West versus Islam.

Ian Somerville

See also Archetypes and Rhetorical Theory; Event Management; Propaganda; United States Government and Public Relations; Warfare and Public Relations

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THEORY OF REASONED ACTION

Theory of reasoned action contributes to the understanding of persuasion theory and human motivation by explaining how actions are the product of behavioral intentions to act in one way rather than some other. Persuasion theory is a broad approach to explain the cognitive and behavioral aspects of human choice and behavior. That body of academic thought features the choices people make as voluntary actions that reflect in various ways their behavioral intention. The logic of this aspect of persuasion theory is that persons, through self-persuasion or the influence of others, make choices and act as a reflection of their behavioral intentions.

Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen are credited with the theory of reasoned action as an extension of their information integration theory, which builds on principles and predictions of subjective expected utilities theory. This body of persuasion theory features human behavior and choice as voluntary. Accordingly, behavior is neither the product of drives nor independent of individual volition. As such, this body of theory and research approaches human actions as the product of reasoning where many factors impinge on choices. Consequently, the theory of reasoned action sees human behavior as multifaceted, and therefore not easily manipulated by any single influence. It focuses on people as decision makers and wants to understand the dynamics of such decisions.

The theory of reasoned action postulates that behavioral intention to act one way or another is the result of two factors. The first is an individual's attitude toward the behavior. The second is based on the perception of what the targeted individual thinks important others want them to do. Thus, persons consider what opinion leaders of various kinds consider is the preferred behavior.

As explained by information integration theory, an attitude toward a behavior is the sum of all of any person's beliefs about the behavior and the evaluations (positive or negative) of the behavior. For instance, a person might believe that brushing one's teeth (a) reduces the likelihood of dental decay, (b) brightens one's smile, and (c) cleans one's breath. Thus, the attitude toward the behavior is the product of three beliefs. Next, the theory asks whether the person sees these beliefs as having a positive or negative evaluation. Advertisers and dentists assume that all three beliefs carry positive evaluations. Thus, if they look at the intention of one person, they conclude that they have a positive attitude toward the behavior of brushing teeth. Marketers of toothpaste and toothbrushes see this attitude as positive toward their campaign objectives. Also, dentists who want to reduce damage to teeth as part of a constructive program of dental hygiene also see this attitude toward behavior as supporting their efforts.

The second part of the theory rests on each individual's perceptions of the actions that important others prefer for that person. This means simply that people consider what others think is good or bad behavior as part of their efforts to form intentions to act one way or another. People, through social connections, think about what others think is best, right, or proper. They take such considerations into account when deciding what to do. What's more, not everyone's opinions have the same value to the person making the decision. Parents quickly realize the impact that their children's friends have on decisions. Adolescent claims that “everyone has X, or is doing Y” is important to their children's decision. “What will people think if I do X” suggests the conversational importance of others' preferences as part of various decisions. People want to please, or at least not displease, certain people more than others by what they do. Thoughts of this kind influence the choices they make. These thoughts of what others think, expect,

and prefer are called subjective norms. In conversation and through other means of forming intentions, people learn and refine the subjective norms they use to make choices.

Theorists note that behavioral intentions are a product of seeking positives and avoiding negatives. A negative outcome, based on the example above, is to have tooth decay. Most people, one assumes, do not think of that as a positive health outcome. A positive outcome is brighter teeth or fresher breath. One imagines that yellowed teeth and stale breath are not viewed positively.

In terms of subjective norms, adolescents are likely to view peers as important others. What mom or dad thinks about brushing teeth is less important to their children's perception than the acceptable opinion of their friends. Moreover, fresh breath and whiter teeth are likely to be more salient beliefs than is tooth decay for dating-age individuals. In contrast, business colleagues may see these reasons as positives, but not for romantic rather for business and career reasons.

Thus, this theory helps communicators and marketers to understand what behavioral incentives people hold central to their decisions. If people think positively of fresh breath, dental hygiene, and white teeth, is it manipulative to feature toothpaste and toothbrushes as being able to deliver these positive outcomes? At least it seems ethical if the products actually deliver on the marketers' product feature claims. This theory is an extension of its distant ancestor, learning theory, which postulates that people learn attitudes and behaviors as ways of solving problems needed to seek rewards and avoid negative outcomes.

Publicity and promotion campaigns often draw on the principles of this theory in support of marketing and advertising efforts. Fundraising, for instance, can invite people to support the symphony or feed needy children. If someone does not have a positive attitude toward either charitable outcome, the fundraiser is going to be unsuccessful. Their efforts might be enhanced if they tell the targeted person that some influential opinion leader supports the benefits. For this reason, fundraising may enlist the visible participation of a celebrity. But if the person who is targeted wants to spend that part of their budget on a trip with friends, the campaign is likely to be unsuccessful. For this reason, the theory offers predictions that

are more likely to help segment markets than to offer ways to effect easy and dramatic changes in attitude, belief, and behavior.

Nevertheless, changes in behavioral intentions can and do occur, as explained by the theory. Three options are possible to account for these changes. One is the formation of a positive attitude toward the behavior where previously there was a neutral or negative attitude toward the behavior. One can imagine how a series of messages relevant to needy children might, over time, lead to the formation of an attitude supportive of charitable giving for persons who did not originally have that attitude. They might also become aware of subjective norms they had not known or attended to previously. Also, they may reorient the weights and influences of various important persons to form a new subjective norm. For instance, if many friends voice commitment to supporting needy children, the targeted person might adopt a similar norm. And the person can redefine the complex of relationships between norms, attitudes, and influencers.

Subsequently, this theory matures to a new level called the *theory of planned behavior*. It reasons that one more concept must be added to increase the predictability of the theory. To this end, the theory of planned behavior adds the concept of perceived behavioral control. Simply, this variable is a measure of individuals' perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the target behavior. Similar to the work of other researchers and theorists, this theory postulates that individuals' intentions are coupled to their perceived self-efficacy in accomplishing the action. It is easy to imagine, for instance, someone writing a check for a contribution to serve needy children. Such action does not, in and of itself, require much of a sense of self-efficacy. A more complex and predictive use of this variable is to imagine that the targeted individual likely estimates how much efficacy their contribution has in conjunction with those of others. Simply stated, the theory analyzes how much efficacy the person perceives is necessary to take meaningful action. Can the charitable action be accomplished and will it do any good? For this reason, fundraisers might include in promotional presentations evidence that shows how charitable contributions accomplish a collective goal, such as helping needy children.

The theory of reasoned action offers many options for practitioners and theorists who want

to help explain the dynamics of human volition, the choices people make that are influenced by public relations.

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See also Advertising; Fundraising; Information Integration Theory; Marketing; Persuasion Theory; Subjective Expected Utilities Theory

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THEORY-BASED PRACTICE

Theory-based public relations practice is guided by theoretic generalizations that shed light on the situation at hand; it is thought to be more effective than public relations conducted by intuition or habit, as in the “we do it this way because we have always done it this way” approach. Theory is defined as symbolic generalizations culled from empirical evidence that is interpreted and used to describe, explain, understand, predict, and control phenomena under study or consideration. Theory lends a perspective, or way of looking at some matter, that increases understanding so that professionals know the best course of action to address a situation. Theories stimulate a proliferation of additional theories. Members of a community—such as the public relations profession—formulate and employ different, but preferably interrelated theories. No one theory is the unique province of a particular community, just as there is no one shared worldview from which theory derives. Theories are seldom static; on the contrary, they tend to be dynamic,

ever-changing because the subject of their consideration is never fully understood.

In traditional science, predictions in the form of hypotheses are derived from theory that can be tested. Theory is flexible, and different methodologies and units of analysis are used to test it. Such testing of hypotheses depends on identification of relevant variables and development of models useful to explain relationships between or among these variables. A common result of testing a theory is a revised or new theory that determines refined or new applications for practice. Generalizations—or theories—useful to public relations are influenced by theorizing in many fields, most often the social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, and communication, including rhetoric and persuasion.

Some critics of public relations question whether the field is worthy of scholarship and theory-building efforts, and other critics charge that public relations merely applies theories developed in and by other disciplines. Some supporters of public relations counter that productive theory development is essential for public relations research—or, for that matter, any academic discipline—in order to be called a science.

A useful theory goes beyond description to explain the interrelationships of variables and to predict likely effects and outcomes. In general, theories are broader conceptualizations than models, which delineate or map connections between variables in a theory. For example, the “RACE” acronym—research, action-planning, communication, evaluation—popularly thought to summarize the process of public relations practice, is considered by scholars to be a model rather than a theory. There are also types of theories—“normative” theory is often described as the ideal aspired to in practice, while “positive” theory is prescribed for practical application, and “grounded” theory explains common, everyday occurrences.

An example of a normative theory of public relations is excellence theory, which has been prominent in academic research since its introduction by James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt in *Managing Public Relations* in 1984. Their theory suggests four types or models that describe public relations—press agency/publicity, public information, one-way asymmetric/persuasion, and two-way symmetric—and those who practice the two-way symmetric model for their organizations are more likely to practice

“excellent” public relations. It has proven to be very heuristic, in that it spawned considerable additional research.

An example of positive theory is Cameron and colleagues’ contingency theory (1997), which describes which determinants practitioners use to decide their courses of action during conflict, depending on widely varying attributes of each situation in public relations practice; these responses are thought to range on a continuum at one end from total advocacy on behalf of the organization being represented to total accommodation of the organization’s publics at the other end. Kirk Hallahan’s (2010) conceptualization of publicity as the use of communication to make an entity publicly known, thereby putting the “public” in *public relations*, exemplifies grounded theory.

Scholars in communication-related disciplines like public relations are encouraged to build theories of the “middle range” that yield hypotheses about a limited range of phenomena that can be rigorously tested. These middle-range theories are thought to be superior to speculative “grand” theories (which often are more likely to be models than theories) and to limited, isolated empirical generalizations, such as those concerning effects of fear appeals on attitude change. Likewise, isolated empirical generalizations or “sets of laws” were thought to be inferior by Robert T. Craig and others to conceptually integrated middle-range theories because they lack organizing and heuristic advantages. It seems likely that groups of scientists in a particular community share the same or similar *language* about a theory rather than share identical *interpretations* about a theory. Additionally, because of increasing interdisciplinary discourse, such as that stimulated by postmodernism, deconstruction, critical/cultural, and other influences, it is argued that theory is better conceived as practical, historically situated discourse rather than the more traditional scientific view of theory-as-knowledge.

Paradigms are a system or set of theoretical beliefs. While some suggested excellence theory is a dominant paradigm in public relations, Carl Botan, Maureen Taylor and others have seen it waning in prominence since the early 2000s. In 1992, Elizabeth L. Toth identified the rhetorical, critical, and systems (or excellence) paradigms as the three major ones; 2 decades later, she pointed

to six: crisis communications, critical theory, feminist theory, rhetorical theory, strategic management theory, and tactical communication theories, including campaigns. Other scholars might argue that Mary Ann Ferguson’s 1984 prediction that social responsibility and ethics, social issues and issues management, and especially public relationships would become most productive for theory development in public relations has borne fruit, and that theories originating from research in these areas are clustered into paradigms.

Ferguson based her prediction on an analysis of abstracts of articles published in the first 10 years of *Public Relations Review* where only 4% contributed to theory development. A 2003 analysis by Lynne M. Sallot and colleagues of nearly 750 abstracts and/or articles published in *Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, and its predecessor *Public Relations Research Annual* since their inceptions through the year 2000, found that nearly 20% contributed to theory development in public relations. A replication and extension of that study by researchers at the University of South Carolina analyzed 325 articles published in seven academic journals in 2001–2005, and found that 22% were theory oriented; articles in *Journal of Public Relations Research* accounted for 43% of the theory-oriented articles analyzed, *Public Relations Review* published about a third, while *Journal of Management Communication* contributed only 14%; the four remaining journals studied—*Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Communication*, and *Journal of Applied Communication Research*—contributed even less. Public relationships was the most researched topic (23%), followed by crisis response (11%), while organizational communications and gender/diversity/minority theories accounted for 10% each; contingency theory was the most mentioned primary theory (12%) followed by roles theory (8%), with a total of 29 different theories named in 50 articles, suggesting little coalescence of theory into paradigm.

In a follow-up to two previous studies, a 2010 citation analysis by Yorgo Pasadeos and colleagues of 396 articles published in 2000–2005 in *Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, and those indexed as “public relations”

in *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, found that citations in the field nearly doubled and theory development grew dramatically. In addition to clusters of excellence and contingency theory studies, crisis communications, applied behavioral and organizational theories, issues management, organization–public relationships, critical perspectives, gender issues, power relations, influence strategies and their effects on decision making, postmodern perspectives, and roles theory all had ripened and yielded theory development. New research fronts included international issues, and uses and benefits of new communication and information technologies.

Following Joep P. Cornelissen's (2000) suggestion that a "translation model" of theory application be used by practitioners to interpret, reframe, and adapt theories to practice because scientific knowledge is seldom used unaltered, a 2008 purposive survey of 273 public relations educator-scholars by I-Huei Cheng and Federico De Gregorio found that most agreed that executive summaries of academic research for practitioners should be included in journals, that academic research should study topics relevant to practitioner needs, that academic articles have low readability for most practitioners, and that professional associations should publicize academics' research and accomplishments.

It appears that theory building continues to be linked to practice in public relations, and that practice continues to influence theory building in public relations—at least to some degree, as evidenced by the range of topics covered in Robert L. Heath's revised edition of the *Handbook of Public Relations* and in the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Public Relations*.

Working from the assumption that theory is not an explanation based on supposition or conjecture, but that theory is a way to understand events and to predict research findings supporting the theory, it can be argued that practitioners who question the value of theory in practice have but two choices, as suggested by Ferguson in 1984: they can make decisions in their practice of public relations based on intuition or conjecture—essentially, "flying by the seat of their pants"—or they can make their decisions based on generalizations culled from empirical evidence in a scientific approach to practice.

Lynne M. Sallot

See also Best Practices; Contingency Theory; Crisis Communication; Critical Theory; Excellence Theory; Issues Management; Publicity; Rhetorical Theory

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THIRD CULTURE PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER

Much research has been done on public relations practitioner roles from the organizational perspective with specific focus on the practitioner as communication manager and communication technician. Some of the early research on this topic was conducted by Glen Broom and David Dozier (1986) and Dozier (1992), with certain research focused on gender roles and race as well. But the construct of culture, as such, has not been a significant focus in role research. In a rapidly globalizing world where practitioners are communicating daily across various kinds of cultural differences within and beyond domestic borders, research on the cultural role of the practitioner is a must. According to Nilanjana Bardhan (2011), the role of the practitioner as a third culture builder is a topic that is gaining interest, and Michael Kent and Maureen Taylor (2011) support this view as well. This role, while it remains normative and is yet to be tested empirically, opens up a pathway for future research.

The concept of third culture building comes from intercultural communication, specifically the interpersonal level of communication. It assumes culture and communication are dynamic, dialogic, and socially constructed. According to Fred Casmir (1993), when two individuals from different cultures engage in communication with an open attitude and willingness to learn from and be changed by the encounter, they are able to reach a mutually accomplished sense of third culture. According to Casmir, this "in-between" culture reflects the cultures of both individuals, but is not the same as either of them. Third culture building assumes an intense ethical responsibility toward the cultural Other, and a mutual desire to reach intercultural understanding through communicative negotiation. In public relations work in global contexts, the practitioner needs to cultivate third culture building skills to communicate ethically and dialogically across cultural differences.

Within public relations scholarship, some research paved the way for third culture building as a practitioner role. Anastasia Lyra (1991) and

James E. Grunig, Larissa A. Grunig, Krishnamurthy Sriramesh, Yi-Hui Huang, and Lyra (1995) suggested the cultural interpreter or translator role for practitioners working in international contexts. This role focuses on local practitioners who act as cultural brokers between nonlocal clients and their culturally different publics.

What this role does not account for is the mutuality and change that practitioners are likely to experience when engaging in intercultural communication, whether domestic or international. Stephen Banks (2000), in his social-interpretive approach to multicultural public relations, highlighted mutuality. He postulated that the public relations practitioner can engage in successful intercultural communication by affirming the cultural Other, accepting the constitutive nature of communication, embracing the diversity of possible interpretations, engaging in mutual negotiation of meaning, and remaining open to change (p. 38). Bardhan (2011) merged and enhanced Banks's and Grunig et al.'s work through the lens of third culture building. She developed the point that the key aspect of third culture building is the focus on the Self and the need for all practitioners to be open to the idea that one's cultural identity does and will change through third culture building. The onus for translation should not just be on the cultural Other, but on the Self as well. Mutuality and transcendence of one's own cultural assumptions is essential for successful communication when practitioners work with cultural differences.

The major strength of third culture building is its interpersonal focus. Several public relations scholars argue for more focus on this level of communication, in addition to the macro organizational level, in order to better understand and theorize how public relations communication is accomplished at the micro level of human interaction. Another strength of third culture building is its focus on culture as communication rather than management. According to Carl Botan and Maureen Taylor (2004), a communication focus helps advance the co-creational and dialogic approach to public relations and helps us conceptualize culture as a dynamic phenomenon that is open to change through complex human interaction. By embracing the third culture building mindset, students and practitioners of public relations can

better understand that culture works in a dynamic manner in practice, and appreciate and perform self-reflexivity, empathy, and cultural humility in intercultural and global contexts.

Nilanjana Bardhan

See also Constitutive Theory of Language; Culture; Intercultural Communication Theory; Social Construction of Reality Theory

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THIRD-PARTY ENDORSEMENT

For more than a half-century, public relations practitioners have touted *implied third-party endorsement* effects as a rationale for obtaining exposure for clients in the news and entertainment portions of mass media.

Conventional wisdom in the field argued that media organizations implicitly expressed their approval of organizations, products, services, candidates, or causes whenever they devoted coverage to them. Importantly, no specific recommendation or explicitly positive comments were required. The mere fact that the media covered a particular topic was sufficient justification to suggest an endorsement effect.

Two kinds of implied endorsements are particularly important for public relations professionals: publicity endorsements and product placement endorsements.

Publicity Endorsements

Claims about third-party endorsement effects were invoked most frequently when practitioners and clients compared the relative benefits of publicity (coverage in the editorial portions of the press) to paid advertising. During the middle of the 20th century, mass media researchers generally agreed that the news media were a powerful force that could confer status, legitimacy, and credibility on the topics they covered. In the same vein, research consistently showed that people distrusted advertising and avoided, resisted or counter-argued with claims that appeared as advertising.

Research in the 1980s and 1990s challenged claims about publicity's third-party endorsement effects and the superiority of news versus advertising. More than a dozen experimental tests were published where identical messages were either labeled as news or advertising, or presented in editorial versus advertising formats.

Studies directly comparing groups exposed to one format versus the other suggested a clear preference among participants for information presented in editorial formats. But the results were not consistent when commonly used experimental measures of message impact were analyzed for

topic recognition or recall, message learning, attitude change or behavioral intent.

Kirk Hallahan (1999b) contended that the differences previously attributed to third-party endorsements effects could be explained by (a) people's strong dislike for advertising compared with news and (b) different cognitive processing rules that are invoked based on the content class (news versus advertising) in which a message appears.

Because news values stress the importance of impartiality and balance in coverage, media audiences expect the language and tone of news to avoid excessively laudatory claims, which is why people are more accepting of messages presented as news versus advertising. Journalists are expected to be impartial—to *tell*, not to *sell*. However, if the language used in news is excessively laudatory, the credibility of the source can be compromised. When it sounds like a journalist is a confederate of a product promoter, any advantage associated with publicity versus advertising is diminished dramatically.

Similarly, when a person is highly involved in a topic, Hallahan found that content class made little difference. Indeed, people who are actively seeking information were open to obtaining information from a wide range of sources. Although people understand that the purpose of ads is to show products in a highly favorable light, individuals who are highly involved in seeking information, or in making a judgment disregard the source and pay attention to ads. Audiences know that advertisers are knowledgeable—they must simply be wary about misrepresentations or omitted facts. Some evidence also suggests that today's young people are more open to obtaining information from many sources, and might not be as predisposed to news as prior generations.

Product Placement Endorsements

Product placements represent a separate form of implied media endorsement that gained popularity as organizations seek exposure in the entertainment media.

Product placements involve the conspicuous use of a company's product, facility, or name in television shows, motion pictures, or other entertainment fare. The client's product, logo, or sign is often incidental to the action being depicted.

So branded products are used as props in natural ways that call little attention to the product itself.

One benefit derived from product placements involves additional exposure for the brand or idea. Evidence is inconclusive about whether audiences believe any endorsement is implied. To be most effective, products must be an integral part of the action, such as E.T.'s penchant for Reese's Pieces in the 1982 movie blockbuster *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*.

For many years, automobile companies maintained offices in Hollywood to provide cars free of charge for use in movies and TV productions. Scenes of a star behind the wheel suggested that the featured model of car was exciting and glamorous. However, it is doubtful that viewers actually thought the actor drove the same car in real life. Today client organizations continue to seek product placement opportunities and employ agents in Hollywood to routinely screen scripts for possible promotional opportunities and other product tie-ins.

In the same way, many destination resorts, theme parks, and cruise ship lines encourage production companies to use their sites as settings for movies and TV shows. Many states and larger municipalities also court movie and TV production companies to shoot on location—for both the benefits derived by the local economy and for the potential worldwide exposure. Other organizations—ranging from the U.S. military to various special interest groups—maintain offices in Hollywood that work with producers of entertainment fare so that their activities or issues are incorporated in entertainment shows and presented in a favorable light.

Such placements are important forms of implied media endorsement even though no direct recommendation or promotional message appears. Although many consumers are aware of commercialization of product placements, many others are not—or simply forget later that a commercial “plug” is involved. Meanwhile, vestiges of these powerful images can linger in the audience's memory.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Advertising; Endorsement; Involvement; Publicity

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TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

Trade associations are formal organizations constituted by members of a specific industry, such as chemical manufacturers—for example, the American Chemistry Council or the American Petroleum Institute, formed in 1919 under the guidance of Ivy Lee and others. Today, there are thousands of such associations expected to serve the public interest.

Such associations are not limited to communication functions. In fact, technical, manufacturing, and even marketing policy tend to be central to their missions, but they also have communication missions and teams to put those missions into action. Technically, for instance, they work to define product quality, safety, and application. Their focus is more on public policy and reputational matters than on marketing strategies and pricing per se. Adopting an ethical and proactive mode, associations help member organizations to set operating standards, lobby public policy issues, develop and communicate issue positions, implement standards of corporate responsibility, and cooperate in service of the public interest. One virtue of a sound trade association is its ability to speak for an industry or function with a single voice. Another is to set high, self-imposed, and self-policed standards of operation.

They can, nevertheless, create a joint stonewall of opposition against all threats experienced by members. And they must not set prices or otherwise create a monopoly that breaches antitrust and fair practices legislation.

In the United States in the 20th century, trade associations grew in popularity and power as industries matured to realize that although they could not constrain competition, they were faced with similar challenges like strikes, regulation, legislation, and public criticism. Leaders in the trade

association movement realized the virtue of setting standards of ethical performance and holding members to these standards to reduce the likelihood that their actions led to a legitimacy gap; this was a key mission of the Alcohol Beverage Association and the Meat Packers. Mutual interests led to mutual aid.

Trade associations need transparency to avoid serving as front groups, which includes adopting names that clearly and fairly give interested parties an easy understanding of the interests and purposes of the association. Thus, under the leadership of John Hill, the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) served as an effective trade association. No party could doubt the interest, purposes, mission, and identity of an association with that name. That approach to creating and enacting trade associations was a hallmark of John Hill and his huge firm, Hill & Knowlton.

One of the key contributions by major public relations firms in the 20th century was the creation of trade associations. The objective was to develop such organizations so they could be the voice of an industry. Tobacco became one of Hill & Knowlton's most controversial clients as the agency helped create the Tobacco Industry Research Committee. Controversy centers today on the scientific rebuttal campaign initiated by Hill & Knowlton and the industry in the 1950s, which critics allege kept people from fully knowing what health hazards might be associated with cigarettes. But Hill was unmovable on the question of whether "tobacco" or "cigarettes" would appear in the title.

As one of the leaders in public relations to work for effective trade associations serving the public interest, Hill (1958) was explicit and succinct in his counsel.

A corporation or an industry may find itself faced by unfavorable public opinion because people are unaware of the facts. The way is then open for the corporation to attempt to change the public attitude and to win people to its point of view. On the other hand it may be wise to change an unpopular policy, making a frank acknowledgement of need for change. Such declaration of honest intent will usually meet with public approval. (p. 39)

Robert L. Heath

See also Front Groups; Hill, John Wiley; Lee, Ivy; Legitimacy and Legitimacy Gap; Public Interest

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TRANSPARENCY

The concept of organizational transparency receives considerable attention in management, corporate communications, and public relations literature and practice. New communication technologies, the Internet, social media, activist groups, media, legislation, investors, business analysts, anticorruption organizations like Transparency International, as well as numerous incidents of recent corporate misconduct have all led to increased interest in organizational transparency and put more pressure on the most effective and ethical means for disclosure of information. The concept of transparency is closely related to corporate social responsibility and promotion of ethical business practices in democratic societies and serves as a preventative means against corruption and abuse of power. In practice and theory, it calls for more than the platitude, “be open.”

Transparency is defined as deliberate revealing: making visible and accessible information that is clear, honest, complete, significant and meaningful to stakeholders who participate in defining and becoming informed about those issues that concern and affect them. By providing accurate and timely information, organizations show a willingness to be held accountable and responsible for their decisions and actions, allowing the stakeholders to evaluate them. The opposite of transparency is secrecy, hiding, purposefully concealing or distorting information that is of interest to the publics.

It is the job of public relations to support openness, but at the same time to protect privacy, autonomy, and confidentiality of their organizations. Moreover, the challenge of transparency implies that making so much information available can become daunting for stakeholders to process, analyze, and use. The concept of transparency is

closely linked to the principle of the publics’ right to know about corporate matters, such as events, operations, plans, policies, decisions and activities relevant to the internal and external publics. But the right to know can encourage organizations to engage in data dumps—supplying an overwhelming and unprocessable amount of information.

Openness and disclosure of information are not the same as transparency nor are they sufficient to achieve it. First, stakeholders need to be provided with information that is relevant to satisfying their need and right to know. Second, they should be able to interpret the information to gain more knowledge and understanding, and not merely acquire more information. The goal of transparency is to benefit stakeholders’ decision making, not just manage a corporation’s reputation.

Communication is central to transparency as opposed to dissemination of information. Two-way symmetrical communication and dialogue allow stakeholders to actively participate in knowledge creation and to openly request what they need to know.

The concept of organization–public relationships rests on the underlying significance of transparency in creating and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. Transparent communication leads to increased perceived reliability and organizational credibility, which are the foundations of trust. Trust is the basis of relationships, but also a prerequisite of commitment and cooperation on which depends the success of business operations.

Transparency is not exclusively a public relations concern, but rather a reflective approach to stakeholder engagement. Being open and candid about an organization’s policies and practices reveals potentially vulnerable areas in its relationships with stakeholders. This can prompt insight and opportunity for change and improvement. Organizations that include transparency in their overall strategic management, may gain competitive advantage via this reputation. Including transparency in institutional values implies consistency between organizational behavior and practices as well as consistency in internal and external messages.

Calls for increased transparency can have negative effects. Internally, it may cause increased control and surveillance of employee communication. Increased pressure for transparency can result in

increased focus on managed reputation thus limiting the publics' intrusion and satisfying their need for information by carefully crafted and timed messages.

Instead of shutting down different voices, transparency can foster open discussion and dialogue. It provides an opportunity to hear the voices of smaller groups and gives organizations an opportunity to explain their perspectives. The goal of transparency should not be erasing the differences and disagreements but, rather, opening doors for insight and real change.

Danijela Radić

See also Authenticity on Social Media; Corporate Social Responsibility; Credibility; Dialogue; Ethics of Public Relations; Openness; Symmetry; Trust

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TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE

One of the more ambitious and useful models for promoting social and individual change comes from the work of James Prochaska, Carlo DiClemente, and their colleagues (1983, 1984, 1992, 1997). Through their review of some 200 theoretical approaches and paradigms, Prochaska and others identified a set of principles and concepts common or integral to most change efforts. Therefore, the

resulting “transtheoretical” model is an interdisciplinary amalgamation of many theories and philosophies of change, a distillation of best practices derived from disparate schools of thought and tested in a variety of settings and topics.

Undergirding this model is a set of assumptions. First, change does not occur in a single step, but rather through a series of (often nonlinear) stages that range from an initial state of lack of awareness to an eventual state of compliance. According to the model, individuals move through these stages while engaging in (or being subjected to) one or more processes of change. Transition from one stage to the next occurs as a result of shifts in an individual's “decisional balance,” which often is influenced by communication. As a result, this model is highly relevant to public relations professionals engaged in efforts to influence individuals' cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors in a variety of contexts.

Stages of Change

The transtheoretical model, sometimes referred to as the “stages of change” model, is best known for describing the transition process that individuals undergo when engaging in behavioral change. Through a series of questions in a standard protocol, researchers develop segments that correspond to the various stages in the change process. In the *precontemplation* stage, individuals do not recognize a need to change and often lack awareness of the problem or issue that may be adversely affecting them. Occasionally, individuals in this initial stage are aware of the problem, but are unwilling to discuss it. Denial, rationalization, and fear of admitting failure are common characteristics of individuals in this stage.

In the next stage, *contemplation*, individuals recognize the existence of a problem, but are often waiting for a “magic moment” or simply engaging in wishful thinking. In this stage, which can last for days or years, individuals often think, discuss, and seek information about the problem and its various remedies.

At a certain point, contemplators become increasingly confident about the prospects of change and begin to focus their information search on the best course of action to take. In what is called a *preparation* stage, individuals may set a

timetable for change, start turning away from old behaviors, and prepare for the inevitable adjustment that awaits once they commit to change.

The briefest stage, ironically, is the actual *action* stage, which occurs when an individual actually modifies their life by sacrificing old ways of thinking and behaving in favor of new ones.

Once the individual actually attempts change, one of two things can occur (and often both do). First, the individual engages in *maintenance* of the new behavior, which involves both an internal commitment as well as a resistance to external pressures in the form of peers and family members and unexpected situations that tend to trigger old behaviors. Alternatively, the individual engages in *recycling* and relapses into those old behaviors. Sometimes this happens from the inherent difficulty in the proposed change, or perhaps from the realization that the costs of change (time, money, friends, and prestige) are simply too high.

Each stage can be characterized by differences in an individual's decisional balance, that is the relative importance placed on the *pros* (perceived advantages) and *cons* (perceived disadvantages) of change, and by differences in self-efficacy, that is an individual's degree of confidence that they possess the requisite skill, knowledge, and perseverance to change. In terms of decisional balance, "cons" inevitably exceed "pros" in the precontemplation stage, as the need for changing comfortable behavioral patterns is not even recognized; cons and pros are fairly equivalent in the contemplation stage; and pros must exceed cons for an individual to reach the preparation stage. In terms of self-efficacy, confidence tends to be low in the early stages of change, but must be very high if an individual is to reach the maintenance stage and remain committed to some new behavior.

Applications

The transtheoretical model has numerous applications to public relations campaigns. First, most individuals are in the precontemplation stage for many issues and social problems, and yet many campaigns are designed for individuals in later stages (such as preparation). At best, this discontinuity can result in inefficient and wasted communications; at worst, it can result in boomerang effects and resentment from individuals who are

not psychologically prepared for, or predisposed to change, but are being prodded to do so. Campaigns targeting precontemplators should raise awareness of a problem, trigger some initial consideration of pros and cons of change, and provide testimonials from others who underwent change. Contemplators, on the other hand, typically are not suffering from an awareness deficit, but rather lack of motivation. Communication efforts targeting these individuals should use emotional appeals and tip the decisional balance toward the advantages of change. For individuals in the preparation stage, the most useful information focuses on specific actions to take, specifically strategies for coping with the imminent change. Boosting individuals' self-efficacy is particularly important, as confidence is needed to take the next step of action. Once the new behavior is attempted, campaign messages targeting the segment of those who changed should reinforce the new behavior and educate about ways of preventing recycling. If recycling does occur, campaign messages should focus on ways of restoring self-confidence and motivation, something that often requires interpersonal channels in order to have an impact.

The various mechanisms for conveying the previous campaign messages and achieving the previous effects are described by Prochaska and colleagues as *processes of change*. In the parlance of public relations, these processes constitute strategies for moving individuals from one stage to the next. In general, these processes involve changing the way individuals think or feel about an issue or problem or altering actual behaviors in an attempt to move individuals from one stage to the next. For example, campaign planners can design messages to increase awareness of an issue or problem among precontemplators ("consciousness raising") or to arouse emotions and motivate individuals to change ("dramatic relief"). Alternatively, campaign planners can alter physical environments in attempts to promote new patterns of behavior ("stimulus control") or offer new behavioral practices to replace old ones ("counter conditioning").

The transtheoretical model attracts a great deal of attention from academics and professionals alike, many of whom have applied and tested it in different countries, with different issues and social problems, and with different population segments.

It offers many new avenues for research and program planning to public relations professionals.

Charles T. Salmon and Aileen Webb

See also Best Practices; Psychological Processing; Theory-Based Practice

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TRAVEL AND TOURISM PUBLIC RELATIONS

With travel and tourism continuing among the top three global economic engines, the need for and opportunities in public relations in the travel and tourism industry continue to grow. In 2011, international tourism receipts exceeded \$1 trillion (US) for the first time, up from \$928 billion (US) in 2010. International tourist arrivals were expected to reach the milestone 1 billion mark in 2012, according to the United Nations–affiliated World Tourism Organization (WTO). By comparison, in 1956 when WTO first published statistics, there were 50 million worldwide international arrivals. The sector is directly responsible for 5% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and 6% of total exports, and employs 1 out of every 12 people in advanced and emerging economies. Taking into account additional economic contributions of domestic travel, tourism in general continues to withstand tremendous challenges—such as faltering global economies, terrorism, political

instability, crime, disease, and rising prices due to increased fuel costs—remaining robust in many nations.

Erik Cohen (1972) wrote that, historically, it appears the words *tourist* and *tourism* were derived as a subcategory of traveler, historically separate from categories of travelers, such as warriors, crusaders, or pilgrims. Linked to travels of English gentlemen on tour as part of their education and entertainment, the word *tourist* first appeared in English, with the *Oxford English Dictionary* dating the word *tourist* from 1800 and the word *tourism* from 1811. The word appeared as *touriste* in the French Robert dictionary in 1816 and *tourisme* in 1841, both derived from English.

The travel and tourism industry involves a multilayered, overlapping, and interlocking distribution system of sellers and buyers of travel products. Travel suppliers—which include destination tourism-and-convention entities; hotels, resorts, and others providing accommodations; transportation conveyors, such as cruise lines and ships, airlines, trains, and motor coach operators; sightseeing tour operators and other ground infrastructures, such as local car rental agencies, taxis, attractions, restaurants, duty-free shops, and souvenir retailers—are all travel sellers. All of these sellers are mindful that travel is a highly perishable product with an extremely brief shelf life. When an airplane takes off with empty seats or a hotel's rooms are not filled today, they cannot be sold tomorrow.

At the other end of the travel selling-buying continuum is the traveling public, the ultimate buyers and consumers of travel products. In between are travel wholesalers and consolidators, who buy and package travel products from suppliers and then sell travel packages to retail travel agents or directly to ultimate consumer travelers, and retail travel agents, who buy travel products either directly from suppliers or from travel wholesalers or consolidators and then sell the travel products to ultimate consumer travelers.

Increasingly, travel sellers and buyers conduct business on the World Wide Web, with virtually all sellers hosting their own websites where buyers may purchase airline tickets, accommodations, ground transportation, sightseeing, and meals directly and immediately online. Numerous discounters—from cheapoair.com to Orbitz and Priceline—compete for online buyers. Retail travel agents often can

still beat the online discounters, however, and can be of great assistance when travelers are mapping out complicated itineraries.

The growth of travel and tourism public relations mirrors the industry. Increasing numbers of professional communicators represent and act on behalf of the travel sellers (suppliers, wholesalers, or travel agents) with the goal of building relationships with any of the travel buyers (wholesalers, travel agents, or consumers) in a bid to generate awareness, disseminate information, and attract brand preference and loyalty for the travel products represented. Travel sellers may have public relations representation “in house” or may contract for representation with an independent firm specializing in travel and tourism public relations; it is not uncommon for travel sellers to have both in-house and external independent public relations counsel simultaneously.

Media relations with the travel industry press as well as with the consumer travel press constitute an essential element of travel and tourism public relations. Numerous publications, such as the industry newspaper *Travel Weekly* and industry magazines *Travel Agent*, *Meetings and Conventions*, and *Conference & Incentive Travel*, are widely read by travel sellers and must be serviced regularly with information about travel clients; typically such information is supplied by public relations practitioners. Similarly, the consumer travel media widely read by the traveling public, such as *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Travel+Leisure*, and *Islands*, and travel sections of major consumer newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, are “motivated” by public relations practitioners to “cover” their clients.

A traditional tool used by practitioners in travel and tourism public relations in conducting media relations is the working press trip, or “junket,” where travel journalists either individually or in groups experience the sellers’ travel product as a consumer tourist, however at free or reduced costs arranged by the practitioner. In recent years, many media outlets sharply restricted journalists’ acceptance of free travel and other gifts, to some degree curtailing the effectiveness of press trips in exposing journalists firsthand to travel products. However, many freelance travel writers and travel industry journalists still participate in press trips. Practitioners are well advised to follow the guidelines for media relations issued by the Society of American

Travel Writers (SATW) and may join SATW as associate members to maximize their media relations efforts.

Besides generating publicity in the consumer and trade travel media, public relations techniques increasingly focus on Internet-based communications, including websites, social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, and independent blogs, such as TripAdvisor.com, which can make or break a travel seller’s reputation. Consequently, public relations professionals working in travel and tourism must be search-engine-optimization savvy and must conduct constant online surveillance to monitor the online environment, especially with developments like Google’s purchase of Frommer’s Travel Guides in 2012. Other direct communication tactics may include traditional brochures and newsletters; email listservs; sales promotional items and giveaways; interpersonal and group communication tactics, such as personalized pitches, press trips; “fam” or familiarization tours, and trade shows; photography, film and video production; and special events. Global sports events, such as the Olympics and World Cup soccer tournaments, demand public relations expertise. Often, travel and tourism special events are designed to commemorate a new travel product, such as a celebrity tennis tournament held in conjunction with the opening of a resort, or are meant to increase tourism during a traditionally “low” or “shoulder” season, such as the annual Ernest Hemingway Look-Alike contest designed to boost tourism to Key West, Florida, in the summer, or the annual Pirates Week to increase tourism to the Cayman Islands each fall.

In addition, there are countless industry associations of benefit to travel sellers, such as the American Society of Retail Travel Agents, the Travel Industry Association, the Meeting Planners Association, the American Hotel Association, the International Air Transport Association, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, and the Caribbean Hotel Association, to name only a few. Travel suppliers like resorts, hotels, and airlines may offer free or discounted travel to retail travel agents and meeting planners in “fam” trips, for which practitioners provide publicity in industry media and other support. Some travel industry associations have annual conferences and trade shows for travel sellers and buyers, including consumers, such as the International Adventure Travel & Outdoor Sport Show, where practitioners

may produce and provide support communications ranging from brochures to promotional giveaways. Destination entities, such as the Canadian Tourism Commission and the British Tourist Authority, may sponsor traveling seminars and receptions for retail travel agents, where practitioners may produce and provide support communications ranging from publicity to newsletters and brochures, travel posters, films, and videos.

Other public relations activities may involve assisting with management of wide-ranging issues affecting tourism, such as conservation of natural resources and sociopolitical impacts of tourism; government relations, such as influencing pertinent legislation pending with local and foreign governments; and community relations, such as convincing residents of a local community that tourism revenues can benefit them. In addition to traditional marketing communications activities directed at targeted travel buyers on behalf of travel seller clients, public relations practitioners may be engaged in the internal communications projects to build relationships with a travel-seller's own employees.

Risk and crisis communication management is a critical responsibility in conjunction with travel and tourism public relations and involves managing communications associated with crises ranging from viral infections infecting cruise ship passengers to airplane crashes and hijackings, to terrorists bombing resorts, to thugs mugging sun worshipers on a beach, or any other crises conceivably affecting the tourism and travel entity represented. Ideally, those charged with managing risk and crisis communications in travel and tourism are professionals qualified to counsel travel sellers about best practices in an ever-changing environment.

Lynne M. Sallot

See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Media Relations; Online Public Relations; Promotion; Publicity; Risk Communication; Search Engine Optimization

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TROLLING

The term *trolling* entered public relations practice with the advance of Internet technology, Web 2.0, the explosion of social media and the increasing reliance on computer-mediated communication (CMC) by practitioners. Trolling is described as the posting of provocative, often deliberately misleading and pointless, comments with the intent of provoking others into conflict and/or meaningless discussion. A troll is a CMC user who constructs the identity of a person wishing sincerely to be part of an online community, but whose real intentions are to disrupt normal discussion for the purposes of their own amusement.

The term *trolling* refers to the actual posts and comments (trolls), to a person making such postings (troll, troller), or to the action of posting (to troll). Research offers several insights into the origin of the term. An analogy with fishing suggests that trolling entails luring others, much like fishing where a baited line is dragged behind a boat to provoke a feeding frenzy among fish. The term may also be rooted in mythology and refer to a fictional character that hides in caves and lures in innocent bystanders.

Research on trolling utilizes the term in a variety of ways and often refers to a generally negative online behavior. A troll posting usually consists of intentionally incorrect messages, poor advice and/or apparent contradiction to common knowledge, thereby causing others to correct them and provoking an emotional response. Trolls draw their confidence from a high degree of anonymity and a greater control of self-presentation provided by the Web. This anonymity often leads to the loss of self-awareness and causes individuals to exhibit negative online behavior and act against many socially acceptable norms of communication. Such behavior is manifested through

trolling—posting incendiary comments using abusive language, harsh criticism, personal insults, anger, and hatred.

Trolling presents new challenges for practitioners who include blogging, social media and other types of CMC in their toolbox. Nevertheless, trolling can be managed in several ways. Research suggests that removing or reducing the degree of online anonymity helps normalize extreme behavior both online and offline. One obvious solution for this is to allow only officially registered users to post comments on websites and blogs. This approach became more accessible for many organizations with the introduction of “Facebook comments,” which allowed users to comment using one’s Facebook profile and significantly reduced the likelihood of a website attack by trolls.

The lack of anonymity, however, may weed out legitimate users who want to share sensitive information and wish to remain anonymous. Moderation and gamification may help organizations address this concern. Moderation of websites, blogs, and forums may range from “report abuse” button, to premoderation to postmoderation. Gamification engages online communities to judge whether a particular troll deserves their attention by ranking users’ comments. Thus, when negative comments receive low ranking, they end up at the bottom of the list where they do not attract as much attention and therefore do not disrupt normal online discussion.

Anna Klyueva

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Chat; Social Media; Web 2.0; Website

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TRUST

In *The Philosophy of Money*, Georg Simmel (1978) offered a necessary starting point for the discussion of trust:

Without the general trust that people have in each other, society itself would disintegrate, for very few relationships are based entirely upon what is known with certainty about another person, and very few relationships would endure if trust were not as strong as, or stronger than, rational proof or personal observation. (pp. 178–179)

In his experiments with trust, Harold Garfinkel (1963) viewed “trust as a condition of stable concerted actions” (p. 187) that can be transformed into an “attitude of daily life” (p. 210).

Originally, trust (*fiducia*) was a personal phenomenon that, at least since Peter Lombard (1100–1160) denoted the volitional aspect (*facultas voluntatis*) of medieval Christian faith (*fides*). For Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), who accepted Lombard’s reasoning that man is endowed with both volitional and rational capacities, *facultas voluntatis et rationis*, it is the will that guides reason in the human search for the final meaning of life in acceptance and love of God.

In his work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, German sociologist Ferdinand Toennies (1971), secularized the notion of will and placed it on a societal level: “The scope of social will is the whole of the environmental conditioning of social interaction” (p. 94). Thus trust lost its personal character and became the foundation of social order. Emile Durkheim (1972) adopted this redefinition that shifted trust from a personal to a social fact that “is to be recognised by the power of external coercion which it exercises or is capable of exercising over individuals” (p. 58). This notion, that the underlying reality of trust is “irreducibly sociological” (Lewis & Weigert, 1985, p. 456), is still present in contemporary sociological approaches to trust.

In the second half of the 20th century, it was recognized in economics that trust as a form of social control has an economic value. Economic activities, including “production costs,” create “transaction costs” (Williamson, 1985, pp. 18–19); the costs of running economic activities correspond

to the concept of friction in physics. Trust serves as a lubricant that smoothes transactions and is therefore a cost-saving device. As such, monetarized transaction costs and savings result from the application of trust. Trust thus becomes a commodity: trust and transaction costs are inversely related. Instead of transaction costs, E. L. Khalil (1994) wrote of "organisational costs" as "the cost of distrust and the cost to minimize it" (p. 392). The economic notion of trust as a cost-saving device stands on the sociological foundation of trust as a social control that limits the permissible and available repertoire of human behavior. Based on this principle, Francis Fukuyama (1995) applied the economic notion of trust to sociological theory, paralleling economic (transaction or organizational) costs with social costs: trust in a society is inversely related to the costs associated with monitoring and controlling its members (police, courts, etc.).

In psychology, trust has often been used as a personality variable. Some people are said to be more trusting and trustworthy than others. Erik Erikson (1950/1995) published his theory of trust based on the "eight ages of man" (p. 223) ranging from infancy to maturity. He wrote that children at the age of around one or two years of age, the first developmental stage, develop a sense of trust or mistrust toward the world around them and themselves. This assumption of introjection and projection regulating trust-mistrust polarity and the associated human tensions and anxieties led others to associate trust with prosocial and mistrust with antisocial personality traits: A trusting person evaluates others positively, "as essentially 'good' until proved otherwise" (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950, p. 411), and a mistrusting person evaluates them negatively, as dangerous and hostile.

This primarily affective meaning of trust that developed in psychology was adopted into sociology. Talcott Parsons (1978) wrote of trust as "affectively motivated" (p. 59) and Anthony Giddens (1984) incorporated it into his theory of structuration as "basic trust" (pp. 51–60), a defining property of human ontological security, on which three other forms of trust depend: elementary or interpersonal, abstract or impersonal, and active trust—with each having its own evaluative mechanism that differentiates between "good" and "bad" objects of trust (elementary trust through

kinship—the in-group is good; abstract trust through expert systems—experts are good; and active trust through "a process of mutual narrative and emotional disclosure"—"opening out" is good).

In public relations, trust is an important concept in United States and European views on public relations. James E. Grunig and Linda Hon (1999) defined trust as "one party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party." It is framed with "integrity, the belief that an organization is fair and just," "dependability, the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do," and "competence, the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do" (p. 19). According to Günter Bentele (2003), the European notion of trust more often operates on a societal level as public trust.

Since the 1980s, rapid political, economic, social and technological changes that are accompanied with recurring crises and resulting dissolution of trust in all kinds of institutions brought the notion back into the attention of scholars and practitioners. In January 2003, a coalition of organizations representing 50,000 professional communicators gathered in New Jersey (USA) to address "the need to restore trust in the minds and hearts of the public, employees and other stakeholders." They proposed three concepts to corporate and other leaders in response to crisis of trust: to adopt ethical principles, to pursue transparency and disclosure in everything they do, and make trust a fundamental precept of corporate governance (PR Coalition 2003, p. 2). To enable implementation of the last concept in practice, Katie D. Paine (2003) developed *Guidelines for Measuring Trust in Organizations*. She explains that trust is multilevel, culturally rooted, communication-based, dynamic, and a multidimensional concept. Its dimensions include competence, integrity, dependability/reliability, openness and honesty, vulnerability, concern for employees, identification, control mutuality, satisfaction and commitment. Since 1999, Edelman, a public relations consultancy, publishes *Edelman Trust Barometer*, levels of trust in institutions around the globe.

Dejan Verčič

See also Control; Culture; Ethics of Public Relations; Openness; Transparency

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TWENTIETH-CENTURY TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations has been present at many moments in history. Its antecedents can be traced back to ancient Greece, Rome, and even Egypt. However large a role public relations has historically played, it became central, perhaps vital to society by the 19th century. By the 20th century, public relations was institutionalized across society—and around the world.

Many publicity/promotion and issues moments demonstrate the role and impact of 19th-century U.S. public relations, which laid the foundation for the next century; these included the work by P. T. Barnum and other hucksters, as well as railroad and mining companies. By the end of the century, issues or public affairs work shaped government to serve corporate, industrial interests, as was evident in the Battle of the Currents (in which Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla fought over AC and DC current to determine which should be the dominant mode of electricity generation and distribution). The Civil War in the United States, and other wars in other countries, offered substantial incentives and opportunity for publicity, promotion, image building, reputation management, and issue contests. President Abraham Lincoln used the battle at Antietam as the context in which to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. And much of the secession and confederacy efforts reflect the use of classic public relations, along with the abolition, women's suffrage, and populist movements in the United States and Europe.

Despite the important historic role played by public relations, and the initiation of the use of the term *publicity* and then *public relations* to promote professional services, the role of public relations in service of the government was an important

institutionalizing moment in the 20th century. One of the defining moments was the Creel Committee, created through the Committee on Public Information to advance the U.S. role in World War I. During the First World War, the principles that would become definitive of the processes, strategies, tactics, and tools typical of propaganda were developed and refined by members of that committee. The Creel Committee spawned a generation of practitioners who not only originally thought of themselves as skilled propagandists, but also as “public relations professionals.”

Many of the early professionals drew their influence from social sciences, theories of language, and professional journalism—as well as the growing sense of democracy. An era of passionate inquiry into public opinion and public interest spurred practitioners and academics to dig more deeply to understand the role and impact of publicity. This era gave us practitioners like Theodore Vail, Edward Bernays, Arthur W. Page, and Ivy Lee who pioneered the institutionalization of public relations. Legions of men and women, both in practice and education each made contributions to practice, professional association, curriculum and teaching, and research.

By the middle of the 20th century, public relations was firmly institutionalized in large corporations. Expert communicators were not new to corporations in the United States and Europe, but departments by various names institutionalized the profession into tools for increasing the likelihood of achieving corporate missions and visions. What started as one or two professionals in a department grew into huge departments often diffused throughout major corporations. Training programs were implemented to prepare managers and professionals remote from corporate headquarters, to support public affairs programs. Corporate communications departments ballooned in size, often employing hundreds of professionals and staff personnel.

The same was true of government agencies and trade associations. News reporters and editorialists offered communication services for hire while still working for the media. This practice of serving two masters simultaneously was especially the case, for instance, in financial communication. Government agencies did not employ professionals with the title of propagandist or publicity director,

but they still implemented communication campaigns and employed professional staffs. Out of governmental communication campaigns, arose the communication efforts of the Department of Agriculture to prevent forest fires, and public service messages against pollution and child abuse. Smokey the Bear became an icon, telling campers that only they could prevent forest fires.

Early in the 20th century, trade associations developed to champion special corporate interests like brewers, meat packers, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetic manufacturers. Unions and activist organizations emerged as a response to what Teddy Roosevelt called muckraking journalists and Progressive era activists. Corporations felt the need to defend themselves from journalists and activists. Social changes and new standards of corporate responsibility required businesses, individually and collectively, to address their role in society and their reputations. High-end businesses, such as leading meat packers, used activist concerns about slaughterhouse sanitation to argue for higher standards of performance—often adopted as a means to drive competing meat packers out of business.

Steady development of the mission, scope, and strategic skills brought to bear on many matters motivated the growth and specialization of public relations. For this reason, corporate departments that started with one or two members grew in size. Specialization as well as increased involvement with managerial and operational challenges required specialists as well as generalists. Thus, publicity and promotion grew into media relations and even external communications. For much of the century, the importance of financial communication led a substantial number of practitioners to engage in investor relations. Internal communication partnerships developed, none stronger than those partnerships that brought this discipline into harmony with human resource departments.

Movements toward centralization and decentralization brought specialists and generalists to work within and for a diverse number of divisions. Companies become larger and more complex. Thus, public relations professionals might be asked to support marketing, or marketing might support public relations depending on the nature and evolution of the organization. Every organization evolved differently. Public affairs, issues management, risk

communication, community relations, investor relations, employee relations, government relations, lobbying, and an endless list of functions and specialties were added to the mix. Large companies, even those with a rich pool of talent, often relied on agencies and high-end consultants for specialized counseling and tactics.

Departments, however, never lost the need for talented writers; some even developed their own production facilities. Many large companies created their own print shops, which today are replaced by in-house webmasters. Most companies now have someone from public relations acting as either the webmaster for the company or the chief liaison to the company or internal group assigned that responsibility.

Nonprofit organizations, whether charities or activist groups, also realized the virtue of professional communication. Universities and colleges were not left out of the public relations movement, as sports and recruiting—as well as academic achievement—became important for reputation, image, and revenue generation. As relationships developed various kinds of cross-fertilization occurred across an array of organization types; nonprofit organizations, including universities, created development programs to complement corporate strategic philanthropy. Labor unions and other type of organizations also appreciated the need for public relations practitioners.

Such increased complexities, division of labor, and specialization necessarily became a driving force for institutionalization. As there were specialists in large organizations, correspondingly, agencies began to specialize. Some agencies grew quite large, offering a full range of communication services; other agencies specialized in crisis, politics, fundraising, and most recently, social media.

Government has a sensitive relationship to public relations' institutionalizations. Given the history of government and propaganda, it is likely that a government agency has a press secretary or some other spokesperson title. It might even be a public information officer (PIO). The military utilized briefing officers, officers of rank who give details, but who might not have a specific public relations title.

Another growth area is in lobbying agencies, as well as the increased use of professional public relations personnel and agencies in support of campaigns for public office. In the United States,

the Democratic and the Republican National Committees employ a full cadre of communication professionals, as do various political groups, such as political action committees (PACs) and special interest groups. Nonprofit and political public relations professionals are experts at message positioning, obtaining space in the public sphere, and communication campaign targets and objectives. Modern presidents have a staff of communicators, and a press secretary, whose job involves message design, media relations, crisis communication, issues management, and relationship building.

Professional associations are another instance of institutionalization in public relations practice. One of the earliest groups was the Association for Women in Communications. Other groups emerged. Some endured; some failed. But most evolved over several decades of practice so that today we have several leading professional associations operating in the United States: the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Public Affairs Council (PAC), and Issue Management Council (IMC).

Some professional associations are strictly national while others are international (or have international affiliations). Other professional associations have local state, and/or city affiliations. Both PRSA (with its student branch, the Public Relations Student Society of America) and IABC created student chapters to foster preprofessional development and enculturation.

PRSA developed an educators division dedicated to themes relevant to the teaching and research challenges of university curriculum. Accreditation programs emerged from efforts by the PRSA and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). Accreditation standards were developed and implemented to raise the educational and professional standards for public relations graduates seeking professional careers. Inspired by U.S. models, and joined by professionals in Europe, the institutionalization of public relations went global.

Professional associations are important for institutionalizing best practices, ethics, and fostering research—directly and indirectly. Some organizations are innovation adopters, pushing practitioners to use every new medium that comes along. Other organizations are innovators, funding research and encouraging members to learn more skills. But all

professional associations work to institutionalize the practice through member association and services. Professional associations are also crafted to embrace and empower subgroups, especially by gender or race.

Among the most important aspects of institutionalization is the creation and development of curriculum, degrees, and departments at colleges and universities. At the start of the 20th century, there were only a few communication education programs. Departments of Speech Communication and Communication Studies grew out of English departments, based on the rhetorical heritage reaching back to the golden age of Greece. Journalism programs started with the mission of preparing students to work in print media, as the bastions of fact-based approaches to communication. Both journalism and communication education were based on the substantial undercurrent of democracy that defined communication research throughout much of the 20th century. Mass communication evolved, in part, as a product of the study of propaganda, public opinion formation, and media impact. Each new technology offered challenges and opportunities for teachers, researchers, and practitioners.

Public relations education initially grew out of journalism education, based largely on the tradition that public relations practitioners were often former journalists. For that reason, and perhaps so that future journalists could understand public relations “flacks,” public relations was often a stand-alone course. Public relations was usually taught, reluctantly, by a senior faculty member who wanted to expose students to the “work of the devil.” Slowly in the latter quarter of the century, fully developed curricula began to offer students a concentration, and even an academic major.

Slowly, one course became two, and two became three. Professional associations also played a substantial role in helping to advance curricular innovations, primarily to prepare students for entry-level work. Thus, the journalism–public relations model gave way to standardized curriculum, accredited programs, and eventually graduate study. Graduate public relations programs can now be found in the United States, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, China, and other countries.

Public relations research agendas were often developed by senior practitioners in coordination with junior faculty members at research universities.

Several journals were created, including *Public Relations Review*, *Public Relations Quarterly*, *Public Relations Journal* (supported by the PRSA), and *Communication World* (supported by the IABC). Specialties like investor relations, crisis communication, and risk communication emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Alliances occurred, such as health communication, while publicity and promotion matured into integrated marketing communication; the adoption of new media technologies in the 1990s and 2000s by both agency and practitioner led some to become new media specialists.

In addition to the professional associations, academic associations added public relations divisions, such as Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), International Communication Association (ICA), and the National Communication Association (NCA). Similar innovations happened in other nations.

No profession has greater status than its research arm, which still sees substantial tensions between practitioners and academics. Practitioners often think academics’ research is irrelevant if it is not specific to some functional or tactical aspect of the profession. Academics often believe that practitioners are fixated on push-button tactics, short-term gains, and situational ethics. But, steady progress is made to bring research to bear on best practices. The 20th century witnessed robust efforts to institutionalize public relations. This is a well-trodden path, but where it leads is undetermined.

Robert L. Heath

See also Barnum, P. T.; Battle of the Currents; Crisis Communication; Flack; Histories of Public Relations; Issue Management Council; Nineteenth-Century Trends in Public Relations; Public Relations Education, History of; Public Relations Society of America; Warfare and Public Relations

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 Issue Management Council: <http://issuemanagement.org>
 Public Affairs Council: <http://www.pac.org>
 Public Relations Society of America: <http://www.prsa.org>

TWO-STEP FLOW THEORY

To public relations practitioners, the two-step flow theory of communication highlights the importance of identifying and targeting opinion leaders when disseminating messages to audiences through traditional and new media.

In 1944, sociologists Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard R. Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet published a now iconic paper titled *The People's Choice*, which analyzed voter decision making during President Franklin Roosevelt's 1940 reelection campaign. A major objective of the study was to explore media effects, particularly the emerging technology, television, on political campaign decision making. Study findings suggested that messages did not flow directly from mass media to target audiences, as previously assumed. Rather, media information first reached opinion leaders, who evaluated it and formed opinions that were then conveyed to others in their social circles through interpersonal channels. Only 5% of voters were swayed by direct exposure to media messages, the study found.

Based on the 1940 election campaign study, Elihu Katz and fellow scholar Lazarsfeld developed the two-step flow theory of communication, published in *Personal Influence* in 1955. Research by Katz and Lazarsfeld confirmed that face-to-face interactions with opinion leaders were more influential in shaping others' views than mass media. Herbert Menzel, a pioneer in scientific communication, suggested that target audiences were confused by the flood of information transmitted by media on a daily basis, leading them to turn to knowledgeable peers for assistance in sifting through and interpreting media content. The notion that media messages had minimal direct influence on opinion formation became known as the limited effects paradigm.

By this analysis, opinion leaders became a key concept. Sociologists typically distinguish between two types of opinion leaders: those with formal authority, such as corporate executives and government officials, and those with informal influence over others in their sphere. A 1949 study by American sociologist Robert K. Merton showed that opinion leaders came from various social, economic and educational backgrounds, but shared the common characteristic of specialized interest and expertise

on the topic under discussion. Lazarsfeld and colleagues also found that opinion leaders had greater access to sources of information outside their immediate circles, a disproportionate amount coming from mass media. Thus, opinion leaders did not replace media, but rather functioned as discussion guides and interpreters of media content.

Early work by Lazarsfeld and associates suggests several reasons why personal conversations with opinion leaders exert greater influence over opinion formation than mass media. The informal nature of face-to-face communication, as well as the ability to judge the expertise and trustworthiness of the communicator, can contribute to greater openness on the part of the recipient of communications. At the same time, personal contact provides opinion leaders with the opportunity to adjust to the receiver's personality, counter any resistance, and employ friendly persuasion to achieve the desired response.

Two-step flow studies conducted in the 1940s provided the basis for a number of recent theoretical developments. Communication scholars Hans-Bernd Brosius (1996) and Gabriel Weimann (1994) explained the setting of public agendas as a two-step flow, with influential individuals facilitating the flow of information between mass media and the public. Everett Rogers's 2003 theory of diffusion is also derived in part from the two-step flow concept, with the innovation behavior of near-peers influencing adoption of new ideas by other members of a social system. Although the two-step flow theory was rapidly adopted and continues to be highly influential, critics noted several shortcomings. Individuals can be opinion leaders on some topics, but not on others, as Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, Jr. (2001) pointed out. Otis Baskin, Craig Aronoff, and Dan Lattimore (1997) also criticized the two-step flow theory for being overly simplistic, in that it assumes that the flow of information is unidirectional, linear and limited to two levels: opinion leaders and followers.

In fact, Lazarsfeld envisioned a multiple-step flow, with opinion leaders sharing media information with other influentials, who in turn disseminate the information to attentive followers. Some members of other, less attentive publics may become aware of and interested in the issue as well. Later research confirmed that the delivery of messages from mass media to the public involved a varying number of stages.

The rapid evolution of new communication technologies led to further refinement of the two-step flow model. Political scientists W. Lance Bennett and Jarol B. Manheim (2006) argued that increased access to data on personal preferences, coupled with the emergence of technologies capable of reaching individuals anywhere, resulted in a one-step flow of personalized information delivered directly to audience members—bypassing peer-group interactions and influence.

Conversely, Frank C. S. Liu (2007) suggested that opinion leaders remain influential, but that the flow of information has changed away from traditional mass media and toward online communication networks. Rather than fostering isolation (as Bennett and Manheim asserted), new technologies can increase participation and social interaction according to Liu and others. To the extent that followers share the views of opinion leaders with others in their network, the influence of these leaders remains strong.

In applying the two-step flow theory to campaign planning, the challenge for public relations practitioners continues to be identifying the individuals who are acting as opinion leaders on specific issues and developing targeted messages to reach them, to stimulate the interpersonal and mediated interactions that can lead to attitude and opinion change.

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See also Campaign; Diffusion of Innovations Theory; Social Media

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U

UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty is experienced in the absence of knowing something to be either true or false. People evaluate the clarity, completeness, depth, accuracy, source credibility, applicability, and consistency of the information they receive to manage uncertainty. Uncertainty may be present even when thorough information is available; however, to quell uncertainty situational information that is adequate to some may be inadequate to others. In public relations, understanding, communicating, and managing both organizational and public uncertainty are important considerations in relationship management.

Charles R. Berger and Richard J. Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory assumes people seek to reduce uncertainty about themselves and others in initial encounters. The extent of that drive is affected by how positive, negative, or neutral the state of uncertainty. Uncertainty can be productive in that it often motivates information seeking. Uncertainty increases as the ability to foresee future courses of action or to obtain consistent, thorough information decreases.

Instead of the primarily interpersonal focus of uncertainty reduction theory, William Gudykunst's (1988) work on anxiety-uncertainty management theory extends uncertainty reduction theory by examining message design in intergroup and cross-cultural communication, which enhances its applicability to public relations campaign strategy. It

incorporates both cognitive (uncertainty reduction) and affective (anxiety reduction) dimensions and suggests that the twin processes of uncertainty reduction and anxiety reduction are key mediating variables for adaptation. Ultimately, anxiety may lead to resignation, withdrawal, or fear if no outlets are available to resolve the situation, and it may be productive only if new information allows people to channel that angst in a positive way.

In public relations, organizations must identify the most effective strategies to manage both their own and the publics' uncertainty, as uncertainty may affect trust in the organization and its messages as well as how people seek to manage their uncertainty. These considerations are particularly important during crises. Situational unknowns are often inherent in a crisis context. Given that message completeness is central to uncertainty reduction, in the absence of thorough information publics seek to reduce uncertainty by "filling in the blanks" with other information and may become misinformed or compromise trust in the organization managing the crisis.

For example, during an emerging health crisis, such as SARS or avian flu, health agencies are often faced with unknowns about disease prevention, virulence, and transmission. Without complete information, people may manage their uncertainties by seeking information from other sources, and the health agency loses control of the message. Or, uncertainty may compromise public trust in the agency's ability to manage the crisis and, in turn, motivation to follow prohealth directives, which

may exacerbate the crisis situation and compromise public safety. Thus public relations practitioners—in routine and crisis situations—must be aware of and manage public uncertainty and how it affects information consumption and use while at the same time examine the best strategies to communicate their own uncertainties.

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See also Crisis and Crisis Management; Crisis Communication; Information; Uncertainty Reduction Theory

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UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION THEORY

The concept of uncertainty reduction suggests that individuals are motivated to seek information to reduce uncertainty. The concept has implications for exploring communication as a means for resolving incompatibilities and inconsistencies in human relationships as well as experiences and behaviors in various settings. Through communication, individuals reduce uncertainty that emerges when experiences do not correspond to expectations or when relationships change. This concept can also be applied to public relations, which is primarily concerned with public relationships.

In 1986, Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel posited that message ambiguity is a critical concept and that people select a mode of communication that assists with clarification of ambiguity (i.e., how people seek information about one another in interpersonal communication). Further in 2001, James J. Bradac indicated that a major assumption of uncertainty reduction theory is the human motivation to reduce uncertainty about oneself and others in initial interactions. *Uncertainty* refers to a person's subjective framework of the number of alternative predictions available when thinking about another person's future behavior. A greater number of perceived alternatives produce a greater sense of uncertainty and a stronger drive for uncertainty reduction. Gaining individual knowledge, about human nature and the surrounding world, is aligned with this process, but ultimately the person is moving in the direction of increasing simplicity so that assessed alternatives are reduced.

From the uncertainty reduction perspective, a high level of uncertainty is a stimulus for seeking information as well as an inhibitor of attraction. The theory predicts that lack of knowledge about other people leads to attempts to reduce uncertainty through information seeking. Attraction for others (consistencies in organizational relationships, friendships, romantic interests) is suspended until knowledge about the individual is gained. In the course of human affairs, total uncertainty reduction is impossible because past experiences do not always accurately predict future behaviors. However, each person has a threshold in terms of how much uncertainty one is willing to accept in a relationship. This threshold varies, depending on assessments of the behaviors of others, past experiences, and general tolerance for risk.

Generally, the most widely held uncertainty reduction principle is that increased information seeking corresponds with decreased levels of uncertainty. Intuitively, this seems to make sense, but according to Kathy Kellermann and Rodney A. Reynolds (1990), there is some inconsistency in the research results. The authors indicate, however, that both uncertainty reduction and question asking jointly decrease as the number of conversations increase.

In terms of organizations and public relationships, the concept of environmental uncertainty is often reviewed. Environmental uncertainty can be

viewed in two ways, externally and internally. External uncertainty is primarily concerned with perceptions about the nature of changes in the external environment (i.e., market situations, competitor reviews, regulatory constraints) as well as informational quality. Internal uncertainty, according to J. D. Jorgensen and J. L. Petelle (1992), refers to daily operations and interactions within an organization. This type of uncertainty involves items, such as employee behavior, information load, and job security. The authors argue that the notion of relational uncertainty is critically important in these organizational relationships. For example, the reduction of uncertainty in dyads merits attention, because it may be linked to openness within these relationships. These relationships could be among team members, between a supervisor and his/her subordinate, or between a public relations account executive and a client representative.

Avoiding costs while maximizing benefits is a motive that competes with uncertainty reduction. For example, limited time and energy may prevent information seeking. A person may want to gather information about a particular subject, but they may be facing a barrage of committee work and email messages. Impression management may also play a role. Maintaining a positive image with other employees and the supervisor must be compared with the costs of asking another "dumb" question. The request might suggest that the employee is incompetent. Other employees might have this perception, but impression management may be rooted in that person's insecurities.

The landscape of public relations is not always stable, due to changing conditions in organizational relationships. Priscilla Murphy (2000) argued that organizational/public relationships are, essentially, complex adaptive systems. Many employees interact both locally and globally in their efforts to adapt to various situations. These adaptations form large-scale patterns that affect society. She posits that outcomes are unpredictable because the effects of actions leading to them are nonlinear. In other words, there is not necessarily a proportional relationship between a decision and its eventual outcome. Thus, uncertainty reduction is constantly challenged. Furthermore, coevolution complicates the process. According to Murphy, individual interactions coevolve; they are shaped by a number of variables, such as personal history,

norms, and resources. Each interaction is open-ended and persons need to adjust to continuous, reflexive states. Thus, total reduction of uncertainty is impossible.

Even though total reduction is impossible to achieve, uncertainty in organizational/public relationships can be managed. Robert L. Heath and Christine Diana Gay reviewed the area of risk communication in 1997, which corresponds to how much risk people are willing to assume in their interactions with others. Using the concept of environmental scanning, highly involved persons are more strategic in their choice of information sources. Employees may use mediated (e.g., Internet) and interpersonal sources as part of this scanning process to manage risk and uncertainty. According to Heath and Gay, persons who strongly espouse or oppose a source of risk demonstrate high levels of involvement. If individuals perceive that their self-interest is affected, they prefer authoritative sources (account executives, supervisors) and interpersonal contact to determine what they should know in order to hold appropriate opinions on a risk topic (i.e., crisis/issue situations). The risk and uncertainty concepts are necessarily intertwined. Heath and Gay note that key publics' information seeking is motivated by the desire to reduce uncertainty and limit risks.

According to a 1998 piece by Nicholas DiFonzo and Prashant Bordia, uncertainty can be managed by engaging in collective planning. Management can clarify the values and commitments behind change decisions (rather than preparing vague memos that leave much room for interpretation), identify the people who make these decisions and the timeline on which these decisions is implemented. Managers can also involve staff members in the process of finding solutions for change issues (e.g., a committee to review revised accreditation procedures for the business). This policy can divert the anxiety that feeds the rumor mill and channel this agitated uncertainty into productive work, thus planning for change.

Open discussions in staff meetings can also provide an opportunity for the collective resources of the group to solve potential organizational dilemmas. Thus, internal public relations can be strengthened through such uncertainty management tactics. Even though these suggestions are designed for internal employees of an organization, how the organization

handles change is projected to the external environment. Stakeholders, such as the media, community groups, and clients, learn through various sources (e.g., the media, spokespersons, employees) and adapt their actions accordingly.

As a final note on uncertainty reduction in both external and internal situations, DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) provided the following communication strategies:

1. Announce changes as early as possible for all stakeholders who may be affected.
2. Establish an information timeline.
3. Comment on the inability to provide further information (this is especially important in crisis situations).
4. Try to clarify all decisions and the protocol for such decisions.
5. Engage in actions that facilitate trust (e.g., informing employees first).

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UNITED KINGDOM, PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN

The emergence of professional public relations in the United Kingdom is the outcome of a centuries-old process engaged in previously by the monarchy, the Church, and the state, encompassing propaganda, intelligence, and censorship. Pageantry, special events, pronouncements, and the publication of tracts and pamphlets were the public relations tools of those past days.

Following the Reformation, the powers to persuade previously held by the Crown and the Church shifted to the Parliament. The Post Office, which in earlier times was employed to spy, became the means of externally circulating official policies and internally reporting on public sentiment and response.

Concerned over the years primarily with domestic matters, governmental action was also influenced by international affairs. An early instance of crisis management, for instance, occurred when the establishment took steps to counter the propaganda promulgated in England by the Revolutionaries during the American Revolution in an attempt to harness public opinion. Later, the establishment acted to counter the philosophical and theoretical basis of the French Revolution, fearing its effect on the British populace. During the American Civil War, when both of the warring parties undertook propaganda programs in Britain and in Europe in an attempt to gain popular support, the British government of the day moved to circulate its views.

In the years prior to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, there was in evidence a number of campaigns mounted by various movements of a social or political nature—for example, the suffragettes and the protemperance interests.

On an international level, the authorities were forced to take propagandist action to counter antagonistic programs. Witness the anti-British

campaign mounted in Europe as a result of the inhumane treatment of the old, infirm, women, and children, and the burning of homesteads and invention of concentration camps.

During the late 1800s, the British Civil Service underwent an extensive process of reform that resulted in the strengthening of its nonpartisan nature. At the same time, it also underwent considerable expansion to assume responsibility for developing social programs, such as health, education, and benefits. A number of departments created embryonic information units that adhered to the principle of political impartiality. They were staffed invariably by public servants, and as early as 1906, a central committee was formed to oversee and coordinate the publication and distribution of official reports and the like.

But, as later occurred in the United States, the outbreak of World War I brought about significant changes in this area. A Home Office Press Bureau and a Foreign Office News Department were created, followed shortly by a Neutral Press Committee and a secret unit targeting foreign opinion. Meanwhile, various departments of government were strengthening their in-house information and publicity teams, increasingly employing outsiders from the fields of journalism and advertising to augment the efforts of the career officials.

In 1917, 3 years into the war, Prime Minister Lloyd George ordered the foundation of the Department of Information, which was promoted to a full ministry a year later. At the same time, a separate Department of Enemy Propaganda was also created. (It is worth noting that when the Americans entered the war in 1917, they set up their propaganda organization, the Committee on Public Information, under the leadership of George Creel, a journalist. He described his activities as “a plain publicity proposition . . . the world’s greatest adventure in advertising” [Creel, 1920, p. 4].)

In Britain, immediately following the Armistice in 1918, although the central ministry was disbanded, the various individual departments reshaped their information units (which nevertheless remained reactive rather than proactive in nature).

One of the phenomena of the interwar years (1918–1939) was the emergence of the Special Expert Committee. The Cabinet decided that whereas advertising should be centralized, publicity should remain at the departmental level.

One such committee dealt with government advertising and included representatives of both media owners and agents. Such involvement, however, resulted in a number of the senior advertising figures becoming familiar with the full range of publicity activities, particularly press agencies. One outcome was that a few of the bigger advertising agencies—London Press Exchange, Crawfords, Highams, and Barkers, for instance—formed editorial publicity departments. During the same period, some of the commercial companies appointed individuals or created small departments to handle publicity and external relationships generally—steel, coal, shipping, chemicals, and railways, for example. Meanwhile, a small handful of independent consultants went into business, notably Freddie Lyons, who handled Unilever, and Sir Basil Clark, an ex-government official who set up Editorial Services Limited with a wide range of clients. Also expanding very visibly were the activities of the utilities—gas, electricity, and public services, such as the London Underground.

But of greater significance in the development of the information and publicity function during the interwar period were the programs activated by the Board of Education and the ministries of Housing, Health, and Agriculture, campaigns aimed at promoting the consumption of milk, care of teeth, infant health, and diphtheria inoculation. To these were added the very visible efforts and considerable success of the publicity activities of the Empire Marketing Board, dedicated to promoting British products overseas under the leadership of a career civil servant, Sir Stephen Tallents.

By the outbreak of World War II, in 1939, a number of experienced executives from industry and commerce were serving on the advisory committees of the various government ministries, departments, and agencies, and the titles *public relations officer* and *press officer* were in common usage.

With the onset of hostilities, the Ministry of Information was reinstituted to cover matters and, as might be expected of a nation committed to total war, branches concerned with enemy and neutral propaganda commenced operations. The public relations departments of the various government offices blossomed, as did the units of the various governments in exile.

The professional effect was that, after the war, there existed a network of trained individuals,

many of whom knew each other. Although the Ministry of Information was disbanded, the government departments were retained and even expanded, and a Central Office of Information was created to service them.

Demobilized practitioners began to offer their services, some as independent consultants, and others who were in advertising before returned to their agencies, determined to open departments or create subsidiary companies.

Industry and commerce began to pay increased attention to press relations and public relations matters. A considerable spur to this process was the policy practices of the political party in power—the Socialists—who implemented considerable state controls over business and announced their intention of either nationalizing or referring to the Monopoly Authority a whole raft of industries and individual companies. Those industries slated were the Economic League and Aims of Industry, involving companies in the coal, steel, railway, sugar, insurance, and even the undertaking businesses. Companies under threat included the chemical and pharmaceutical companies, suppliers of industrial gases, the fishing industry, and the leading birth-control concern.

Cooperative action apart, leading corporations realized that they also had to consider their public stance and harness public sentiment, with the result that the hitherto predominantly reactive press departments were transformed gradually into proactive, full-fledged public relations units, often taking on the publicity and general advertising activities of the concern in the process. By 1947, including national and local government officials it was estimated that some 200 professionals were active in the field, broken down roughly equally between the public and private sectors. Public and parliamentary affairs specialists began to emerge, and several members of Parliament joined consultancies, becoming directors of corporations. By 1948, there was a call for a body to be formed to represent publicly the whole area of practice. Believing themselves to be threatened by postwar economies, the most active proponents were the local government public relations practitioners, who took on the heavy administrative load involved in forming an association. At the outset, there existed a degree of dissension between officials and private-sector executives, between so-

called independent consultants and those working for advertising agencies, between those who saw themselves as senior and experienced, and those they viewed as junior (but who saw themselves as the “new wave”).

Tallents, the man considered the pioneer of professional public relations in the United Kingdom, became the first president of the fledgling Institute for Public Relations in 1947, after being persuaded that there was indeed a genuine call for such an organization. In the years immediately following, presidents of accepted note were elected: Roger Wimbush in local government, Alan Hess with the motor industry, Lex Hornsby with the Ministry of Labour, and two independent consultants—Alan Campbell-Johnson, sometimes advisor to Lord Mountbatten, and Maurice Buckmaster, head of the French section of the Special Operations Executive in wartime. In 1958, added to this group was Sir Tom Fife Clark, former director general of the Central Office of Information. As it might have been anticipated, the half-dozen agency-connected units dominated the early years of consultancy expansion, with about five independent consultancies of note also operating. In-house, the leadership came from the aviation, automotive, energy, and airline sectors, with their international approach and expertise setting industry standards of performance.

Editorial publicity and special events figured prominently in the various programs, and home economists, nutritionists, designers, and other specialists were soon brought into play. In the late 1950s and 1960s, it became popular for various sectors to mount cooperative campaigns. Notable among these industries were wool, cotton, steel, glass, cement, retail fashion, man-made fibers, fish, hats, and hairdressing.

In the 1970s and 1980s, with the economic changes that had taken place and the increased competition in the marketplace, cooperative campaigns became less in vogue, with major corporate players preferring to mount their own distinctive programs via either consultancies or strengthened in-house departments. Toward the end of this period and into the 1990s, two developments occurred. First, within the craft sector, specialists began to emerge, covering such areas as high technology and information technology, health care, and pharmaceuticals.

Second, functional specialists were appointed to cover such areas as public relations and crisis and issue management.

Although the international consultancies—mostly American—such as Hill & Knowlton and Burson-Marsteller, had by the mid-1970s opened for business in London, the scene was still dominated by local concerns, only a few of which had gone international, such as Shandwick. The last 2 decades witnessed two trends. First, the ownership of the major consultancies is now in the hands of the major international advertising groups, dominated by the Americans. Second, the field is now broken down into a large grouping of individuals and concerns who consider themselves communications practitioners, and a minority who consider themselves to be corporate affairs professionals concerned with social responsibility programs and community reportage.

Currently, the professional membership of the British Institute of Public Relations stands at 7,500, and 126 firms are members of its Public Relations Consultants Association.

PR Week, the profession's newspaper, estimates that there are upward of 50,000 individual practitioners and 300 consultancy firms active in the field. *PR Week* also puts the annual fee income at 500 million pounds sterling, with the top 10 consultancies billing about half of that figure.

Additionally, the craft now supports a thriving infrastructure of specialist suppliers covering such areas as research, special events, printing, audio and video production, content analysis and evaluation, mailing and distribution, training, and recruitment. In-house and consultancy appointments seem to have peaked; the new areas of growth include health and education, local government, the social services and voluntary sector, the arts, entertainment, and sports.

Presently, a fierce public debate is raging that threatens to embroil the whole industry. In essence, the Blair Labour Administration is currently accused of putting spin before substance. Central to the affair is the political decision to insert a comparatively large number of so-called special advisors on short-term contracts into the administrative apparatus between the ministers and the permanent civil service. The tasks of these political appointees are twofold: first, to monitor that the various departments deliver according to the set

political objectives, and second, to ensure that policies are understood and performance recognized by the electorate. The result has put at risk the delicate balance between official impartiality and partisanship.

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Although seldom straightforwardly identified as such, public relations activities are deeply ingrained in the fabric of government at all levels. In fact, the public relations industry has developed concomitantly with the practice of public relations by government. As government has grown, so has the use of public relations specialists to inform and persuade a diverse and sometimes fractured populace about the work of government.

Government public relations also includes the flow of information and persuasive messages from diverse stakeholders back to government agencies. Whether it is the corporate sector, the nonprofit sector, or foreign entities, the need to communicate to government decision makers has created a thriving public relations industry in Washington, D.C., and across the nation. This two-way flow of information from the government to the governed and back again provides a useful, if somewhat oversimplified heuristic for understanding this highly specialized field of public relations.

Evolution of Federal Government Public Relations

The use by government of public relations is hardly a recent invention; indeed, as William Rivers wrote in 1970, it has been an integral arm of government since the earliest days of the republic. The early efforts in the American colonies to stir up resentment against England, win popular support for the independence movement, and mobilize citizens to action were among the most sophisticated and successful public relations efforts in American history. Historians offer varied accounts of this first public relations campaign. The small band of Revolutionaries instigating unrest in the colonies was adept at building public support for its cause, causing the British authorities to respond that the revolution was simply an elite conspiracy. The Revolutionaries kept the populace informed by using various tactics: widely distributed printed materials authored by Samuel Adams, staging events, such as the Boston Tea Party, or giving impassioned speeches in various colonial assemblies.

The history of the development of the public relations field itself is intertwined with the use of public relations by the government. President Andrew Jackson was the first chief executive to hire a former journalist to help explain his administration to the population.

The first federal government press bureau was established in 1905 by the U.S. Forest Service, a subsidiary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). It was, perhaps, the creation of this office that led the U.S. Congress to pass an amendment regulating the use of public relations experts in the 1913 Appropriations Act for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This amendment was the beginning of a tug-of-war between Congress and the executive branch about the appropriate use of public relations in federal policy formation.

The amendment was in response to a Civil Service Commission help-wanted advertisement for a “publicity man” for the Bureau of Public Roads, then part of the USDA. The amendment stated that appropriated funds could not be used to pay a publicity expert, unless specifically appropriated for that purpose. Known as the Gillett Amendment (38 U.S.C. 3107), this little-known codicil continues to govern the use of public relations in the

federal government today. Although the provision does not prohibit government public relations, it is used to limit some activities and has certainly slowed the use of the term *public relations* in federal government parlance. It may also explain why many government agencies today use such titles as information officers, press officers, public affairs experts, communications specialists, and press secretaries.

A second federal law restricting public relations was passed in 1919. It was designed to limit executive branch lobbying of members of Congress (18 U.S.C. 1913). In 1973, Congress reaffirmed the antilobbying rule in Public Law No. 92-351. This federal law prohibits the use of any appropriation for publicity designed to influence members of Congress in their attitude toward legislation or appropriations.

These restrictions notwithstanding, public relations in government has a long and storied tradition. The early 20th century was a watershed of sorts for the successful practice of public relations by the government. Although the history of public relations in government is best known for its role in building support for war, it has also been used as a tool for social welfare. In 1912, the U.S. Children’s Bureau undertook a 10-year communications campaign to improve child and maternal health. This effort resulted in the successful passage of a key piece of social welfare legislation.

Shortly after the start of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson created the Committee on Public Information. George Creel, the primary architect of public will campaigns before and during World War I, was recruited to cochair the committee and to mobilize public opinion in support of the war, particularly in persuading Americans to buy war bonds and enlist. Subsequent presidents made equally extensive use of public relations to sell the New Deal; tax cuts (as well as tax increases); international military incursions in Germany, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Grenada, and Kuwait (to name only a few); domestic wars on poverty, drugs, and AIDS (also to name only a few); impassioned defenses against charges of impropriety (e.g., Watergate and “Clintongate”); and a host of other domestic and international communications initiatives.

Today, the U.S. government has one of the largest public relations operations in the world, with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management reporting

nearly 15,000 public relations–related jobs. The National Association of Government Communicators estimates that across all levels of government, 40,000 professionals work as communicators. This total represents more than half of the total number of people that the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports as working in the field.

Much of the day-to-day work in government public relations involves the routine dissemination of information collected by the government. For example, the government website FedStats (www.fedstats.gov) provides easy access to statistics and information produced by more than 100 government agencies. In 1966, a public relations program was started to assist citizens in getting information about the government. Christened the Federal Information Center, this program has been funded for over 30 years and now includes a website (www.FirstGov.gov). In 2001, the Federal Information Center reported approximately 30 million contacts between its website and its national call center (GSA, 2002, p. 317, as reported in Lee, 1999).

At the federal level, government communicators are both political appointees and career civil service employees. Political appointees at the federal level generally stay in their positions for approximately 18 months and are often perceived as “political hacks” or dilettantes by the career staff. Career staff, on the other hand, are often perceived as intransigent bureaucrats by the political staff. These relationships effectively form the first barrier to the creation and implementation of effective public relations strategies.

At the USDA, for example, some 150 employees report to the director of communications, a politically appointed position hired by, and reporting directly to, the Secretary of Agriculture. Each of the agencies of the USDA has its own communications staff, reporting to the agency administrator. In general, a typical communications office of a federal agency houses a press office, a community relations office, and an internal communications function.

According to a recent Government Accounting Office (GAO) report, another example is the U.S. State Department, which spends \$1 billion a year on what is called *public diplomacy*, or public relations efforts designed to inform and educate people outside of the United States. The armed forces have

the largest public relations staff in the federal government; their staff is also charged with recruiting functions, in addition to more typical public relations activities. Recent research examined the use of public relations by the armed forces as an essential component of the 2003 war in Iraq. The Pentagon, according to Ray Hiebert (2003) comprehensively planned for a war waged in the media introducing the innovation of reporters embedded with troops during the actual fighting.

The legislative and judicial branches of government also have public relations professionals as part of their operational staffs. The office of a typical member of Congress includes a director of communications and a press secretary, as well as junior-level staff members. Members of Congress use a wide range of public relations tools to promote their own bills and to win reelection; these tools include the traditional ones of staged events and public speaking.

At the state level, the structure of public relations is generally the same, with a combination of political appointees in management jobs staffed by a group of civil servants at the executive level. State agencies also maintain public relations staffs, as do the offices of state legislators. In the state legislative setting, these offices often consist of a single person.

In large cities, the office of the mayor (as chief executive) most likely is staffed by a press secretary or a director of communications, positions that are generally filled by the executive. City agencies, on the other hand, are most likely staffed by career public relations people, mirroring the state and federal systems.

A useful description of government public relations—at all levels—comes from one of the most prolific researchers on the topic, Mordecai Lee, who identified the following broad functions in 1999:

1. The implementation of public policy
2. Assisting the news media in the coverage of government
3. Reporting to the citizens on agency activities
4. Increasing the internal cohesion of the agency
5. Increasing the agency’s sensitivity to its public
6. Mobilization of support for the agency itself

Public Relations to Influence Government

The second major strand of government public relations activities deals with efforts to influence the trajectory and outcome of various social, political, and economic issues in various decision-making arenas. One of the first public relations firms was started in the nation's capital in 1902 as a reaction to the progressive policies of the U.S. government. What started as a two-person firm over 100 years ago has burgeoned into several hundred public relations firms and a legion of lobbyists some 50,000 strong. In 1912, one of the founding practitioners of public relations, Ivy Lee, mounted a campaign on behalf of the private railroad companies to win a rate increase from the Interstate Commerce Commission. Today, the government itself contracts with a large number of public relations firms to conduct a wide range of communications activities.

Although lobbyists specialize by issue, some functions remain constant across the field. These include mining government data for important information; interpreting government actions or plans of action; explaining corporate actions to the government; advocating positions to benefit a company or issue group; using Washington, D.C.-based news media for organizational publicity; and the facilitation of selling products to the government. The rules governing lobbying were written in 1947 and incorporated into the federal Lobbying Act, which, among other things, requires the registration of lobbyists. Informing and educating members of Congress and the executive branch, however, is an activity undertaken by all manner of special interest groups.

Grassroots lobbying is a tactic used by many groups to influence the government. From Common Cause to the Sierra Club to the National Rifle Association, these nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) motivate their members to contact members of Congress and the executive branch on issues important to their constituencies. Grassroots lobbying, although as diverse as the interest groups themselves, uses tactics like organizing fly-ins for their members to spend a day on Capitol Hill; catalyzing letters, phone calls, and emails to members of Congress; and placing stories in the news media. More aggressive influence efforts, often conducted by groups seeking more

substantial degrees of political change, can involve rallies and demonstrations, marches, sit-ins and other dramatic special events designed to capture media attention.

It is clear that the public relations function—both to and from government—is increasing in both scope and size. In the future, some researchers believe that additional skills are needed by public managers to do their work. Expected competencies include more traditional public relations activities and encompass the role of a policy entrepreneur. Additionally, public managers need to prepare for the new media realities of life in the Internet age and a refocusing on public reporting.

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USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

As radio, film, and television became mainstream items in 20th-century American life, researchers

found new topics to study, particularly the way these new media devices and genres fit into the structure or routines of daily life. This outgrowth of the functional paradigm stressed that nature incorporates new parts into existing systems in ways that adjust to and maintain the equilibrium of the systems through repetitive, patterned actions. In essence, this media theory argues that viewers, listeners, and readers select and use various media options and programming to gratify their needs; this view reasons that audiences are active and attentive when media content serves some function they believe to be valuable.

Soon after radio became a standard fixture in American homes, Paul Lazarsfeld's Office of Radio Research sponsored a series of studies to see what radio meant in listeners' lives. The 1942 to 1943 core studies, conducted by Herta Herzog, involved researching who listened to radio soap operas and for what reasons (satisfactions). The studies identified three main gratifications: (1) emotional release, (2) wishful thinking, and (3) advice regarding listeners' own lives. From these self-revealed satisfactions, the term *uses and gratifications* was coined.

This extensive, innovative study of a new media technology and its role as a part of society languished somewhat in research circles until 1959. Then sociologist Elihu Katz, Lazarsfeld's colleague in the 1940s Erie County election studies, again suggested that examination of how the new media were incorporated into the routine of life might begin at the end of the media chain. The new focus was on the users of media forms and technologies rather than beginning with the technologies and forms being introduced into the system and seeking users. In other words, the suggestion was that end users make choices about (uses of) the media and content to satisfy their social and psychological needs (gratifications). He made his observations from 1959 to the 1970s. Katz further explored the uses and gratifications perspective with his colleagues Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch. The threesome's collaborative research resulted in one of the first books about the perspective, *The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research*, published in 1974. The authors summarized the book's main premise: "Studies have shown that audience gratifications can be derived from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and

social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media" (Blumler & Katz, 1974, p. 24).

Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch's book outlined their original five basic assumptions about the uses and gratifications perspective. First, the audience is an active component of the process rather than a passive recipient. This tenet is based on the idea that individuals have reasons to incorporate media as tools to achieve certain goals. Second, individuals must take the initiative to select and incorporate media into their lives—in other words, exert effort, which demonstrates that individuals are inviting that influence into their lives and therefore are determining what they will and will not allow. Third, media are in competition with other sources of gratification for individuals' attention; therefore, individuals place a high enough value on media to include them while excluding or limiting other sources of gratification, such as face-to-face communication. Fourth, the data showed that individuals "are very aware of their motives and choices and are able to explain them" (Blumler & Katz, 1974, p. 17). This reinforces the idea that people are well aware of their part in creating and maintaining media as part of their system. Fifth, the three theorists believed that to fully understand the effects of media, the motives of the audiences (users) must be explored to discover the values the users place on the media and the content. Only through asking media users can the real value be discovered.

These five major tenets of the original research underlying the uses and gratifications perspective are based on the premise that people have free will to see numerous ways in which media may satisfy their needs and so make conscious choices to expose themselves to these influences. Whether they use the media for news, entertainment, background noise, or social status is secondary to the fact that the choice is theirs. The value in this approach is that through individual choice users can control the influence media have on their lives and the amount of influence the media might have in their lives. This approach is a direct contradiction of earlier theories, such as the magic bullet, which emphasized that the media have a direct, uncontrollable, and often powerful effect on its audience members.

Subsequent studies involving the uses and gratifications theory focused on different genres of

media technology, particularly television and the Internet, and identification of specific social and cultural variables that influence people's media use. Denis McQuail, Jay G. Blumler, and J. R. Brown (1972) explored the gratifications of TV quiz shows; James Lull (1990) constructed a typology of the social uses of television; and Richard Kilborn (1992) enumerated reasons for watching television soap operas; in 1994, Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann studied the effect of individuals' moods on media choice; and in 2000, McQuail developed a typology of common reasons for media use.

The uses and gratifications perspective has spawned its own set of criticisms. Patrick Barwise and Andrew Ehrenberg (1988) concluded that media use is often not the totally conscious, selective choice that uses and gratifications theory originally suggested it was. Their conclusion was that media use is often habit bound and set in ritual, such as turning on the television on walking in the room or listening to the radio while in the automobile. They further posited that selectivity was also ritualistic, in that individuals often did not consciously select what was on radio or television, but kept it on because it had become a habit.

McQuail suggested that in addition to the availability of media and individuals' access to media channels, personal circumstances and psychological makeup could also be factors that play a part in individuals' media choices and use. David Morley (1992) continued this line of thought by exploring the idea that subcultural socioeconomic influences play a role in how individuals use media, particularly in the way that people relate their experiences with those of television characters. This expands the narrow focus of uses and gratifications to include the perspective that people use media to identify with characters and scenarios in their surroundings and incorporate those values via cultural codes. This suggests that the media channels and content are not the only powerful elements in users' choices; the individuals' surroundings can also be a powerful influence affecting the media's power. The challenge here is isolating these variables to measure the true strength of the media effects versus environmental influences.

The general nature of the uses and gratifications perspective has led some researchers to dispute that uses and gratifications is a theory at all, and to contend it is more of an umbrella term for

further study to develop specific theories with identifiable variables.

Working with colleagues Karl Rosengren and J. D. Rayburn, Philip Palmgreen (1985) used his work in attitude orientation to develop the expectancy-value theory, which posits that individuals have a group of beliefs and evaluations (attitudes). The beliefs determine what an individual thinks they derive from a medium, and evaluations determine whether that medium provided the gratification sought. For example, if an individual watches a television program because they want to be entertained, they evaluate whether the time spent was worthwhile and make future decisions about more or less viewing, creating what Stephen Littlejohn (2002) calls a cycle of viewing/judging. Palmgreen developed this line of thought into the expectancy-value model of gratifications, demonstrating that uses and gratifications is not a simple linear process, as was first thought, but a complex cycle and network of effects.

Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1989) used the basic assumption of uses and gratifications to explore just how powerful the effects of this approach were. The result was the creation of dependency theory, which posits that users become more dependent on media that seem to meet more of their needs and less dependent on media that meet fewer of their needs. A critical factor here is what importance the user places on different information in their life; for example, die-hard sports fans probably spend more time with ESPN than with the *CBS Evening News*. Another consideration is social circumstances, such as when outside events intrude in an individual's world and create an unstable situation—for example, the 9/11 destruction of the Twin Towers. The rabid sports fan then most likely finds their attention drawn away from ESPN to some type of news coverage. Depending on the severity of the social change, the resulting effect can be the creation of a new dependency, which may or may not create a permanent shift in media use and focus.

Leo Jeffers concluded that future study in uses and gratifications will focus on moving to higher research and theoretical levels, particularly in the area of "linking changes in patterns of uses and gratifications sought with changes in media content patterns and shifts in media organizations" (Jeffers, 1994, p. 260). This commentary sums up

the focus of uses and gratifications research: The emphasis is on discovering patterns in relationship to the changing media scene while incorporating the social-psychological-environmental influences on individuals.

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stems from bringing “to the public facts and ideas of social utility which would not so readily gain acceptance otherwise” (Bernays, 1961, p. 216). In 1973, public relations pioneer Harold Burson replaced “social value” with “corporate social responsibility” and emphasized “the role of public relations in helping corporations fulfill both their business and social obligations” (Burson, 2008, para. 2). In 2002, Burson-Marsteller London promoted its corporate social-responsibility unit as moving public relations to the forefront in addressing social consciousness and recovering from corporate scandals. More recently, news accounts and media research illustrate that public relations continues to help corporations communicate their commitment to socially responsible action.

When public relations practices produce socially useful and responsible behavior, it fulfills a Utilitarian ethic that emphasizes acting in such a way to produce the greatest good for society. Utilitarianism is a consequentialist moral theory that mandates that a person or organization voluntarily choose actions that promote happiness, or in other words, promote the general welfare or the common good. The morality of an act is based on whether the accumulated good resulting from the action outweighs the bad. Modern consequentialists, such as G. E. Moore, define those acts that contain more good than bad as intrinsic goods because all or a part of the action results in an increase of pleasure and decrease of pain. Utilitarianism's greatest strength is that it provides individuals with a practical and democratic, common-sense approach to ethical decision making (Christians, 2007; Scarre, 1996).

This lack of depth and sophistication also represents the theory's greatest weakness because it confuses ethical principles with prosocial outward actions and processes that might obscure underlying foundational and structural moral problems. Writing in 2007, media ethicist Cliff Christians contended that Utilitarianism reinforces the status quo, undermines critical thinking, and relies too much on individual autonomy, neutrality, and detachment. Critics bristle at the idea that acts are not right in and of themselves, but dependent on consequences that, more often than not, elude prediction and measurement.

Despite the theory's many flaws, even critics admit that Utilitarianism has proven remarkably

UTILITARIANISM

In 1923, public relations pioneer Edward Bernays wrote that a public relations counsel's social value

resilient and continues to wield significant influence on Western society. Although Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) is credited with providing the modern conception of the theory, the best-known and most articulate proponent of Utilitarianism is John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). In his 1863 book *Utilitarianism*, Mill identified happiness as the ultimate goal of human existence.

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to promote the reverse of happiness. (Mill, 2002, p. 239)

Mill defined happiness as pleasure or the absence of pain. The rightness of an action is based on the amount of pleasure produced for society by the action. Unlike deontological theories, the focus of utilitarian ethics is on the outcome of one's action, not the act itself. An act is judged right if it produces more good than evil or more pleasure than pain. In this sense, ethics scholar William Frankena (1973) explained that the theory combines the two main concepts of ethics—right and good. The good is defined independently from the right, and the right is defined as that which maximizes the good.

Since happiness is the end purpose, and goal of human existence, producing the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people serves as the moral obligation for humanity. Utilitarianism falls into a larger category of teleology in which maximizing the good is the goal of human action. Philosopher John Rawls (1971), a critic of utilitarianism wrote that on face value alone, teleological theories have merit.

As the leader of England's philosophical radicals, Jeremy Bentham sought to reform England's legal system. He advocated a theory of justice in which right was measured by the effects of an action on the public welfare. For him, the level of punishment should be equivalent to the harm caused by the crime. Bentham even used a mathematical equation to determine which actions produced the most utility. His "hedonic calculus" determined right action by estimating the units of pleasure and pain produced by an action. If one action produced 10 units of pleasure (+10) as opposed to seven units of pain (−7) while another

action produced five units of pleasure (+5) and three units of pain (−3), the first action with three units of pleasure was considered more right than the latter action that produced two units of pleasure (Munro, 1999, pp. 97–104).

Among the philosophical radicals adopting Bentham's utilitarianism was James Mill, whose son would reform Bentham's theories and give them relevance and vitality. At age 3, John Stuart Mill began reading Greek and in his late teens contributed articles to scholarly journals, including Bentham's *Westminster Review*. In his 1863 book, *Utilitarianism*, Mill dismissed Immanuel Kant's rule-based system of ethics, arguing that deducing from rules moral duties without accounting for contradictions is a logical impossibility. What Kant lacked, according to Mill, is proof. Proof came from experience and practice, not natural laws.

Mill (2002) differed from Bentham in that he placed a greater value on higher mental pleasures than bodily pleasures. The quality of pleasures was just as important as the quantity of pleasures. Cultivating the higher faculties opens the door to frustration and discontent and leads to a recognition of one's imperfections. As Mill wrote, "better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied" (p. 242). Happiness demands an interest in the world, nature, history, poetry, and the future. To withdraw inside the gates of one's organization and work solely for personal gain runs counter to happiness. "When people who are tolerably fortunate in their outward lot do not find in life sufficient enjoyment to make it valuable to them, the cause generally is, caring for nobody but themselves" (p. 246).

One's obligation to the general welfare increases in proportion with the benefits one reaps from society. The demands of utility differ depending on the size and scope of the organization. Major corporations, enjoying the benefits of special laws, are obligated to do more for the greater good than smaller firms. Each as a part of society has an obligation to give back. Utilitarianism places a heavy moral burden on multinational corporations, expecting them to benefit all living species. One's moral obligation extends to animal life and the environment.

For Mill, the key to utility was benefiting society according to one's capabilities. Only a few can be public benefactors; the rest must consider the happiness of the people around them. To do this,

one may adopt an act or rule utilitarian approach. The act utilitarian approach analyzes each situation and chooses a course of action that likely brings about the best consequences. Media ethicist Ed Lambeth (1986) noted that act utilitarianism appeals to industries that have no hard and fast rules of ethical conduct. Rule utilitarians make decisions based on moral rules that have shown over time to produce the greatest good. Ethics codes provide a good example of rule utilitarianism. They represent what the profession or discipline through history and experience determined to produce the best results. Honesty is the best policy because it increases trust and improves the effectiveness of communication.

Utilitarianism appeals to public relations practitioners because it obligates one to society without forfeiting one's obligation to a client or employer. As part of society, the organization promotes enlightened self-interests that ultimately benefit the greater good of society. If an organization acts contrary to the public welfare, it must reconcile misdeeds by coming clean and righting wrongs. Serving the greater good of one's organization promotes the greater good of society. Conflicts between the two are resolved through individual moral character and experience.

At first glance, the Public Relations Society of America Member Code of Ethics reflects a deontological point of view, a list of duties that promote professionalism. But they also represent values adopted by leading practitioners because adhering to them produces the most good. In a democratic society, public relations practitioners provide access to the public conversation, both in terms of influencing and being influenced by public opinion. Utilitarianism allows practitioners to manage an organization's reputation and its interests. It allows practitioners to justify selective releases of information to maintain the economic health of the organization and society. Once the moral justification for withholding the information no longer applies, utilitarianism obligates full disclosure of the information and the reason for withholding the information in the first place. If subsequent events produced more good than evil, the action is intrinsically right. Bad results, such as public disapproval and condemnation, expose error, require correction, and provide experience for making good decisions in the future.

Expertise and independence have utility as long as they benefit the greater good. One can never justify their use for selfish reasons. Ethical loyalty is valued because it strengthens family, organization, and community, while the absence of loyalty is rejected for undermining those same institutions. Fairness fits with the utilitarian goal of justice, and requires practitioners to moderate their power so as not to create inequity in society. The emphasis on the majority does not lead to oppression of minorities because those actions ultimately harm the greater good.

The practicality of utilitarianism is that it allows public relations to promote the interests of the few and the many. It allows for practitioners to serve as a moral conscience for the organization while at the same time advocating the organization's self-interests. One can feel comfortable serving the interests of those within one's company, knowing that doing good work for local interests benefits global interests. As one's position and influence increases, one's obligation to the public interest proportionally increases. For utilitarians, where much is given, much is required.

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See also Codes of Ethics; Ethics of Public Relations; Corporate Moral Conscience; Corporate Social Responsibility; Public Interest

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VAIL, THEODORE NEWTON

Theodore Newton Vail (July 16, 1845–April 16, 1920) was a senior executive with the company now known as AT&T at two of the most critical moments in its history:

- From 1878 to 1887, when the telephone began its voyage from fledgling invention to ubiquitous home and office appliance
- From 1907 to 1919, when the company, beset by competitors and despised by its customers, moved from the brink of financial ruin to a de facto monopoly affectionately known as “Ma Bell”

Vail was hired for his experience in managing complex operations, but his real success stemmed from his view of public relations as a critical component of business strategy.

Vail was born in Ohio and raised in Morristown, New Jersey, where his father supervised an uncle’s ironworks. His cousin, Alfred Vail, was a close associate of Samuel F. B. Morse and helped develop the telegraph at the ironworks, devising the dot-and-dash alphabet of Morse code. So it’s not surprising that Theodore Vail was interested in telegraphy as a young man and took a job as a telegraph operator for Western Union in New York City when he was 19. In 1866, his father purchased a farm in Iowa, and young Vail moved with the family. After 2 years of farming and

teaching, he became a night telegraph operator for the Union Pacific Railroad at a supply station in Wyoming territory as the railroad pushed its way west. The following year, he married a cousin from Newark, New Jersey, and they moved to Omaha, Nebraska, where he landed a job as a clerk with the Railway Mail Service. Vail devised a system for presorting mail on railroad cars and attracted the attention of the Railway Mail Superintendent in Washington, D.C., who made him his special assistant in 1873. Vail applied his new system to rail routes across the country, and in 1876 he was promoted to Railway Mail Superintendent himself, becoming the youngest officer in the Railway Mail Service.

That same year, Congress established a commission to devise a better system for paying railroads to transport mail. Vail worked closely with the commission’s chairman, Gardiner Greene Hubbard, who happened to be Alexander Graham Bell’s father-in-law and one of his original backers. Hubbard was impressed with the young postal executive’s energy and creativity. For his part, Vail was fascinated by the telephone, which had just been invented. In February 1878, Hubbard hired Vail as the Bell Telephone Company General Manager. At that point, the Bell Telephone Company was less than 1 year old and controlled by a small group of Boston-based investors. It was assigning franchises in major cities, renting telephone sets to the local operators, and taking an ownership position in their companies. But it was low on cash; its principal assets were the four basic

patents Bell had filed less than 2 years earlier, and it was suing the powerful Western Union Company for infringing them.

Bell and Western Union settled their suit in 1879, basically agreeing to stay out of each other's business. With a patent position that would not expire for 17 years, the company reorganized itself into the American Bell Telephone Company, with Vail as its chief operating officer. By then, the company managed 133,000 telephones, including 55,000 turned over to it by Western Union, and it had a capitalization of over \$7 million.

Vail applied the same management skills to the telephone business that he had to the post office, including a strong sense of public service. His 1883 letter to the presidents of the Bell operating companies demonstrates a focus on customer relations uncharacteristic of the times. He asked them to assess "the tendency of the relationship between the public and the local companies for the past year. . . . Is telephone service as it is now being furnished satisfactory to the public? . . . Where there has been any conflict between the local Exchange and the public, what has been the cause?"

Vail also brought with him a conviction that a single company was the surest way to ensure reliable and ubiquitous service. He began building the Bell System with regional companies providing local service, a long-distance company interconnecting them, and a captive supplier manufacturing all the necessary equipment. In 1885, AT&T was incorporated as American Bell's long-distance subsidiary with Vail as president. Vail reasoned that Bell could maintain a virtual monopoly after the expiration of its patents by limiting access to AT&T's long-distance network to its licensed companies, isolating the independent telephone companies.

But American Bell's Boston investors were impatient to see a return on their capital and refused to fund further expansion. When they passed over Vail and named someone else president, as documented by J. Edward Hyde, Vail resigned. In an unusual parting shot, he wrote, "We have a duty to the public at large to make our service as good as possible and as universal as possible, and [our] earnings should be used not only to reward investors for their investment but also to accomplish these objectives" (Hyde, 1976, p. 23).

In the following years, American Bell milked the business Vail had built, raising rates and allowing service quality to slip. When the Bell patents expired in 1894, its disaffected customers could not wait to give their business to competitors. In 1899, the company's long-distance arm, AT&T, acquired the assets of its parent, American Bell, and became the parent company of the Bell System.

By 1907, AT&T was in sorry financial condition. Financier J. P. Morgan, who had acquired a major stake in the company, asked Vail to return as the company's president. Vail was 62 years old, his wife and only son had recently died, and he had made a fortune in South American transit development. No one would have blamed him if he had chosen to stay on his farm in Lyndonville, Vermont. But some of the original American Bell directors, now quite elderly themselves, took the train to Lyndonville and convinced Vail that the pieces were in place to realize his dream of a single, nationwide telephone system. But they needed him to pull it together and make it work.

Vail accepted the job and bought independent companies by the dozens, folding them into the Bell regional companies. And within 2 years, he even bought control of Bell's old rival, Western Union.

But Vail knew that the public, still reeling from the era of the "robber barons," mistrusted big business and was particularly skeptical about monopolies. He believed good public relations were based on understanding public opinion and helping to educate and shape it. So, according to AT&T's 1908 Annual Report, he undertook a systematic program of public education, working from the principle that "if we don't tell the public the truth about ourselves, somebody else will."

Thus began an unusual series of advertisements designed to sell not products or services but the company itself. The first of these ads, prepared by the N. W. Ayer advertising agency of Philadelphia, appeared in the summer of 1908 and set forth the campaign's objective in its subhead: "A perfect understanding by the public of the management and full scope of the Bell Telephone System can have but one effect, and that a most desirable one—a marked betterment of the services."

On a trip to Denver, Vail discovered that the town's business leaders were well acquainted with their local phone company but knew little of

AT&T and its Bell System. Vail ordered a logo prepared to spell it all out and signed every ad with it. Thus was the Bell seal born.

One of the first ads to appear with the new logo ran in the fall of 1908 under the headline “One Policy. One System. Universal Service.” When one of the agency people worried that the ad’s monopoly overtones might get the company embroiled in the national elections then under way, Vail asked if the ad was truthful. According to a 1936 unpublished memoir of James Drummond Ellsworth, AT&T’s first publicist, Vail said, “Then print it and beat [the politicians] to it” (p. 68).

By promoting the customer benefits of “universal service,” Vail had hit on a way to make a telephone monopoly acceptable to a wary public. He recast the company’s vast reach—its very bigness—as a virtue, giving every Bell telephone user a connection to the wider world. Vail used every available technique, including publicity, pamphlets, speakers bureaus, and even the relatively new medium of moving pictures to tell the Bell System story. In 1912, when most companies preferred to operate in secrecy, Vail established what was probably the first corporate “Public Relations Bureau” to centralize information about the company and to track public opinion. “Take the public into your confidence,” Vail was quoted as saying in Albert Bigelow Paine’s *In One Man’s Life*, “and you win the confidence of the public” (1921, p. 238).

Business philosophy had come a long way since William Vanderbilt’s oft-quoted answer when he was asked if he worked for the public or his shareholders—“The public be damned.”

In January 1913, the U.S. Department of Justice notified AT&T that its string of acquisitions had put it in danger of violating the Sherman Antitrust Act. Since the Interstate Commerce Commission had been investigating its acquisitions for three years, Vail could see the handwriting on the wall. Further, although the company operated in only a third of the country, it serviced 83% of American telephones. So in a daring move, Vail sued for peace. He promised to stop buying independent companies without government approval, offered to sell the company’s 30% interest in Western Union, and agreed to allow the independent telephone companies to interconnect with AT&T’s long-distance network at reasonable fees. In return,

the government closed its investigations and accepted AT&T as a limited national monopoly.

Vail retired as president of AT&T in June 1919 at the age of 74. He died less than a year later. But the business system he built survived for another 65 years, becoming the richest company in the world by the time of its centennial in 1976. The Bell System was dismantled in an antitrust agreement in 1984, but the principles by which Vail conducted business—openness, candor, and customer service—survive in the DNA of numerous companies it spawned.

Dick Martin

See also Page, Arthur W.

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VALIDITY

In general, validity refers to the accuracy of a quantitative research project. Validity is a concern in public relation research any time a survey instrument or sample is used. Use of a survey instrument

raises questions about internal validity, as the accuracy of a research project is influenced by the planning, design, and execution of the project. A number of factors influence internal validity that are controlled through the experimental design. Few public relations research projects are true experiments, so this entry concentrates on the measurement aspect (i.e., surveys) of internal validity. The validity of a survey centers on whether or not you are actually measuring the concept you intended to measure.

An example will help to clarify the ideas related to validity. As part of a revision of an organization's employee communication system, suppose you decide to assess "communication satisfaction" with the various communication vehicles. A survey can be used to measure a variable such as communication satisfaction. But how do you know you are actually measuring the desired variable, in this case communication satisfaction? This is an issue related to internal validity. One check is called face validity. You, as an expert, carefully examine the survey to see if it captures the variable—that the survey reflects how you have defined the variable. A second check is content validity, where a group of experts on the topic review the survey. You could have experts on employee communication review the survey to determine if they think it captures communication satisfaction. A third check is criterion-related validity, in which your survey is proven to be related as anticipated to other established measures. You compare the results of your survey with the results of previously validated scales to see if they are related as predicted. The idea is to determine if the scores on your survey are consistent with the other scales. For instance, communication satisfaction should be positively related to job satisfaction, a variable that has validated measures. You would assess whether the communication satisfaction scores are positively correlated with job satisfaction scores. When two surveys correlate as predicted and correlate positively, this is known as convergence. You can also select a measure for a variable that you believe should correlate negatively with your survey, and this is called divergence. Although time consuming, testing validity is important when you create a new survey that is crucial to your public relations effort. It is better to invest the time and money in validating the

scale than using inaccurate data—collected data that do not truly measure the intended variable.

External validity is the ability to generalize results from your sample to a larger population. Samples are used frequently in public relations research. For instance, you survey a small number of your customers, not all of them, to assess their knowledge of or attitudes toward an organization. External validity requires proper sampling techniques. The key is to use a sampling strategy that helps to ensure a representative sample—that is, the characteristics of your sample are the same as those of the population from which it was drawn. Your sample of customers should be representative of your customer population. If your primary customers are women from 20 to 35 years of age and your sample is mostly men 40 to 50 years of age, the sample is not representative. Refer to the "Sampling" entry for a discussion of proper sampling strategies for external validity.

W. Timothy Coombs

See also Experiment/Experimental Methods; Quantitative Research; Scales; Sampling; Survey

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VIDEO NEWS RELEASE

Video news releases (VNRs), which are electronic versions of written press releases, are an important public relations tactic for private, nonprofit, and governmental organizations. They contain third-party source materials that provide television journalists with story ideas, expert testimony, images, and background information at no cost to the stations. VNR material is used if and when it is deemed credible and newsworthy by television news directors. There is no expressed or implied agreement regarding VNR use, no payment for

use is expected from either party, and television stations are under no obligation to use them. Television journalists use VNRs for the same reason they use press releases: They contain news that may be of interest to their viewers.

The organization that initiates the VNR pays for the production and distribution costs (most often via satellite). The organization that produced the VNR is clearly identified in the satellite feed sent to television stations, and television news directors know the feed is VNR material. VNRs often are packaged with extra video, sound bites, split audio and mixed versions (B-roll), and scripts to facilitate editing, and often contain video footage that could not otherwise be obtained. Few stations use VNRs in their entirety, but rather select segments from the video feed.

The widespread use of VNR material is an effect of free markets. Television stations are increasingly owned by media conglomerates that, like all corporations, are expected to make a profit. News room budgets are shrinking and news holes are large; most stations are increasing their hours of local news coverage while decreasing the number of reporters. Consequently, it would be difficult to produce local news without third-party material.

Legal and Ethical Issues

Despite their usefulness to both the organizations that produce them and the television stations that air them, the controversy surrounding the use of VNRs has not subsided since *TV Guide* published its notorious article, "Fake News," on February 22, 1992, that called for continuous on-air graphics to label the VNR as such. The article contended viewers are led to believe that stories from VNR materials originated with the journalists presenting them, and therefore are fake news, even though they may contain factual and newsworthy information.

Legal controversy about VNRs has stemmed from a misunderstanding of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules. However, the FCC rules about corporate VNR use are very clear: Stations are not obligated to identify the source of the video material when there are no sponsorship issues (payment for placement). The FCC rules state that sponsorship identification is required "when a broadcast station transmits materials for

which money, service or other valuable consideration is paid, promised or accepted" (FCC, 47 CFR 73.1212a). Corporate VNRs are not sponsored content as defined by the FCC. Like print news releases, they are distributed free and without obligation for use. Since no payment is exchanged for the use of VNRs produced by corporate and non-profit clients, there is no legal requirement for labeling unless the topic of the VNR could be considered political or controversial, regardless of how "commercial" the resulting news segment may appear.

There is, however, a greater obligation of disclosure in connection with political program matter, which may apply to VNRs produced by government and other public sector organizations. Section 317 of the Communications Act of 1934 (FCC, CFR 73.1212d) requires identification for "political broadcast matter or discussion of a controversial issue of public importance for which any film, record, talent, script is furnished . . ." Closer examination of government-produced VNRs was spurred by the Karen Ryan offense, which was the release of VNRs from the U.S. government that were presented as news casts. Ryan, who appeared to be a reporter explaining the changes to Medicare resulting from the Medicare Drug Improvement and Modernization Act, was not a journalist, but she owned a public relations firm in Washington, D.C., and was paid to produce about a dozen reports for seven federal agencies between 2003 and 2004. Government-produced VNRs, if aired without disclosure, violate not only the FCC rules but also the law against covert propaganda by the Government Accountability Office.

While there is no legal obligation to label corporate VNRs as such, many feel there is an ethical obligation to do so. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the Radio and Television News Directors Association (RTNDA), and the National Association of Broadcast Communicators (NABC), all have written ethical guidelines that call for information in VNRs to be accurate and reliable and clearly identified. The questions from this point of view are whether journalists have an ethical obligation to viewers, whether or not viewers have a right to know the source of information, and whether or not source disclosure affects viewers. An assumption is that television viewers are harmed

in some way when VNR material is used without disclosing the source. There are mixed research findings about how labeling affects viewers in terms of credibility. A study conducted in 2010 found that news stories from government VNRs that carried attribution were deemed more credible than those without attribution. On the other hand, a different study found that in some cases, labeling decreases the credibility of the news segments from VNRs, especially among viewers who have knowledge about VNRs practices. Since disclosure of source material that does not constitute sponsorship is voluntary, it comes down to the decisions of stations managers and television news directors who know the source of the VNR feed about whether or not to provide labeling to viewers.

Candace White

See also Media Relations; Public Relations Society of America

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VIRAL MARKETING

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association (2007) defines *viral marketing* as the act of “creating entertaining or informative messages that are designed to be passed along in an exponential

fashion, often electronically or by email.” A response to Internet advancements, media clutter, and consumer disenchantment, viral marketing is an actively managed online marketing program designed to reach a large number of people in a short amount of time through both marketing content sharing and consumer content creation. Troy Elias, Stacy Malden, and Tiphane Deas (2009) wrote that although initiated by marketing efforts, viral marketing is designed to ultimately “take on a life of its own” (p. 12).

This form of marketing is based on the notion that something may be viral, or spread like an epidemic, initiated by marketing efforts but distributed through interpersonal interactions of like-minded individuals and connections in a consumer's personal network. Viral marketing's success is based on consumer participation in a marketing initiative followed by the peer-to-peer transmission of socially contagious material. As a word of mouth initiative, marketing literature suggests that viral marketing may represent less messaging uncertainty than other word of mouth efforts, as it emphasizes the distribution of pre-packaged content designed to be forwarded without much alteration (e.g., videos, emails, links, advergames, imagery).

Viral marketing represents a departure from traditional marketing efforts that emphasize product benefits and value propositions. Instead, viral marketing efforts often feature quirky, tongue-in-cheek, emotional, entertaining, or otherwise contagious content that raises awareness for the brand without selling the product or service benefits of the brand. Furthermore, viral marketing emphasizes the contagious nature of content, though marketers also target specific audiences that may be most likely to engage in social transmission. Those who use viral marketing seek the potential of rapid diffusion and mass reach through online tools.

Marketers commonly use “seeding strategies” to instigate the sharing of viral marketing content. Seeding strategies commonly highlighted in marketing literature include seeding emails to customers who have granted the organization permission (termed *permission marketing* by marketing guru Seth Godin), online advertising (e.g., websites, ads), and offline strategies (e.g., using TV ads to direct consumers to a website).

Other efforts to instigate social transmission include street marketing, giveaways, blogs and microblogging, and mass media exposure.

Brian G. Smith

See also Guerilla Marketing; Internet Contagion Theory; Stakeholder Theory; Word of Mouth Marketing

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VIRTUAL WORLD SITES

Virtual world sites (VWSs) are destination sites on the World Wide Web where people congregate for entertainment that involves meeting and interacting with one another. VWSs are used for a variety of other purposes, including organizations' promotional activities.

Participants in a VWS assume an online identity in the form of a computer-generated character or avatar. Rich computer graphics and animation software create a complex social system where avatars engage in social exchanges, activities, and transactions designed to immerse them in the online experience.

VWSs operate similarly to massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), but are not games that emphasize competition or winning. Instead, most VWSs' focus is on self-expression, creativity, interaction, and building relationships. VWSs differ from social networking sites because there is no assumption that participants reveal their real-life identities or seek contacts outside of their virtual experience.

Organizations can employ virtual world sites in online public relations programs by sponsoring a site or by participating in a third-party site operated on the World Wide Web (usually by a for-profit company). The most prominent sponsored VWSs cater to children and preteenagers and feature simple user interfaces, basic games, and cartoon graphics that extend and enhance playing with the toys marketed by the sponsors. Examples include Webkinz.com, Barbie Girl, TyGirlz.com, and Build-a-Bearville.

Many VWSs directed to teenagers and adults actively encourage participation by commercial and other organizations as a critical source of revenue. Such participation can include paid sponsorships of featured components within the site, paid display advertising within the site, and e-commerce sales of branded virtual products for use by avatars or actual merchandise for use by participants in their real lives. (Purchases made by avatars are paid for with credits or script given to participants

as part of a membership or available for purchase using a credit card.)

Second Life is the best known VWS, and numerous organizations have established virtual public spaces in Second Life by purchasing “islands,” renting “store fronts” or erecting edifices. Other VWSs similarly sell street kiosks, billboards, counters in stores, walls in museums or galleries, for example.

Within Second Life’s public spaces, businesses can operate product showrooms and promote their latest products, while religious organizations can conduct worship services and embassies can promote cultural and political understanding about the sponsoring country. Second Life encourages organizations to create private spaces where employees, customers, and other invited guests can come together virtually. Organizations can conduct meetings, create product simulations and tests, train employees, conduct virtual previews or tours, and conduct market research. Access requires authorization.

VWSs strive to create a novel, visually attractive and engaging experience; however, they have not yet reached their full potential as public relations or promotional tools. VWSs remain comparatively unknown, and require participants to learn how to adeptly navigate through the often complex space. They are comparatively expensive to operate and appeal most to larger organizations that can attract a sufficient audience to justify the cost. Organizations also need to think imaginatively and continuously provide reasons for participants to return.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Online Public Relations

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Virtual Worlds Review: <http://www.virtualworldsreview.com/info/categories.shtml>

VOTER AND CONSTITUENT RELATIONS

Elected officials in the United States, from the city council to the presidency, communicate with their constituents. There are two phases to this relationship: the campaign and postelection. Yet for the candidate who is elected, these two phases may overlap: Voters become constituents, who are potentially voters again for the next election. This circular process has resulted in some observers categorizing constituent communication efforts as part of “the permanent campaign,” “the continuous campaign,” or “the invisible campaign.” Once a candidate is put in office, distinctions between a “voter” and a “constituent” blur. Since elected officers are provided some budget for communicating with constituents, it has previously been generally agreed that the incumbent has an exponential advantage: Not only are the communication efforts with constituents rewarded in the polling booth at the next election, but such efforts are subsidized by taxpayers. This playing field is becoming somewhat more level, however, due to technology that allows nonstop access to potential voters and constituents at little to no expense.

For a challenger facing an incumbent officeholder or for a candidate in an open race (where neither candidate is the current officeholder), the only phase of communication that matters is the election campaign itself. If the candidate does not establish and maintain satisfying relationships with voters at this stage, the opportunity to establish an effective constituent relations program will not exist.

Voter Relations

A political campaign is a communications event with important and enduring public policy consequences. How do candidates establish relationships with potential voters? In the 21st century the answer is heavily weighted toward advanced technology while maintaining an old-fashioned grassroots presence.

Every election cycle since the mid-1990s has seen increased use of online and social media tools in campaigns. What began as simply maintaining a website and developing an email contact list has expanded to blogs, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter in campaigns from the mayor's office to the White House. Online interactivity between candidates and potential voters is inexpensive, instantaneous, and creates a direct connection that is highly valued by interested citizens. In the early days of Facebook and Twitter, candidates primarily used them to promote appearances and events. An example is a candidate tweeting an upcoming appearance on CNN or another news outlet. Facebook was regarded as especially effective at announcing a candidate's presence at a forthcoming event and inviting followers to attend. Soon, however Twitter especially, with its 140 character limit, became a popular, highly used medium for communicating issue positions.

At the same time that technology is dramatically changing voter relations, old-fashioned grassroots activities remain relied upon and valued also at all levels of office. Grassroots activities include all types of direct contact with voters: cookouts, door-to-door canvassing, and meetings. They typically rely on personal contact and communication between potential voters and the candidates or their surrogates. It is generally believed that the most persuasive grassroots activity provides personal contact with the actual candidate; surrogates who are directly linked to the candidate (spouse, family member) are the next tier; and anonymous volunteer surrogates follow. All personal contact via grassroots activities is highly regarded as an important element in electoral victory.

Political advertising appears across all broadcast and print media, as well as in outdoor, personal apparel, and prerecorded telephone messages. The amount and style of political advertisements are generally determined by the campaign budget combined with the availability and coverage of a particular medium. Although many Americans maintain that they dislike most political advertising, such ads on television are an important source of information for a majority of voters. For particularly low-budget campaigns, YouTube has become an inexpensive way to advertise. Its effectiveness increases exponentially if the video is picked up by a news broadcast.

Obtaining free news coverage is an important element in most campaigns. Yet due to its unreliability in carrying a desired message to potential voters, it is considered a risky strategy to rely on extensively. Whereas in earlier years underfunded campaigns had to rely more on free media than well-funded ones, social media is again leveling the playing field, particularly in lower levels of campaigns.

Constituent Relations

Once elected, officeholders have a continuing obligation to communicate with the people they are serving. Constituent relations are mutually beneficial to all involved parties. Constituents benefit from information they receive about various issues of governance and public policies, as well as occasional personal assistance from the officeholder. Officeholders benefit from the build-up of goodwill established through ongoing constituent communications efforts. Maintaining strong relationships with constituents is considered a basic staple for getting reelected.

Staples among the tools of constituent relations may be categorized as (1) those conducted within the home district, state, or locale and (2) those conducted within the office itself, often located geographically distant from the constituents. Within the home district or locale, many constituent relations functions are handled by a local office with a staff that operates independently, yet under the direction of the elected officer. This local office provides much personal attention to local constituents and serves as the "home base" for the representative when in town. For U.S. members of Congress and senators, these local offices are often the point of first contact for a constituent seeking assistance from the representative. One of the most important elements of constituent relations is the personal visit to the district, state, or locale by the elected representative; town meetings, drop-in visits, and events that attract constituents to meet with their represented official are often planned during such visits. Many "within home area" activities carry the additional benefit of becoming subject matter for news media attention.

Much constituent relations activity occurs when the elected person is geographically distant from the home area. As with campaign communication, constituent contact and interaction has increased

at all levels due to social media. Sometimes handled by the primary office staff, sometimes by the office holder personally, blogs, websites and email, Facebook, and Twitter are all important elements of constituent relations.

Many public relations personnel are increasingly occupying central staff positions at all levels of public offices as managers of the voter and constituent relations functions.

Ruthann Weaver Lariscy

See also Government Public Relations; Government Relations; Political Public Relations; Social Media

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WARFARE AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

When nations go to war, their citizens go with them. Traditional warfare, which pits one nation's armed forces against another's, requires the commitment of a nation's resources and the sacrifice and support of its population. Democratic nations, in particular, must win the support of their citizens before committing armed forces to battle, and maintain support for the duration of hostilities and beyond. For these reasons, public relations strategies and tactics have long been associated with waging war. As contemporary conflicts spawned unconventional warfare, public relations strategies and tactics evolved as well. However, the field's connection to warfare raises ethical questions regarding the means and ends of public relations in pursuit of war.

Warfare and Public Relations History

The rise of the modern public relations practice throughout the 20th century is intimately connected to warfare. President Woodrow Wilson formed the Committee on Public Information (CPI) during World War I. More commonly known as the Creel Committee, named after its chair, newspaper editor George Creel—the CPI was made up of leading newspaper editors, advertising writers and several figures in the nascent public relations field, including Edward Bernays and Carl Byoir.

The Creel Committee's campaign in support of America's involvement in the war was among the

first public relations efforts to utilize a comprehensive range of communication tactics to achieve its aims, from newspaper articles, editorials, and advertisements warning against enemy spies to the Four-Minute Men, a corps of trained public speakers who blanketed the country with messages in support of the war. In addition to winning widespread financial and emotional support for the war, the Creel Committee's messages reached nearly every corner of the country despite the lack of a national mass media or universal literacy. This success shaped the views of Byoir and Bernays on the role of mass and interpersonal channels to influence publics.

During World War II, the U.S. effort to gain support for the war was directed by the Office of War Information (OWI), which served functions similar to the Creel Committee. The OWI had more media tools, including feature-length motion pictures, newsreels, and radio broadcasts.

After World War II, the U.S. military's public relations activities were centralized in the Department of Defense and by the 1960s over 1,000 members of the armed forces were assigned public information or public affairs duties. Despite this, the Vietnam War was largely seen as both a military and a public relations failure. The U.S. involvement in the war developed slowly, and its aims were more difficult to explain. Furthermore, in previous wars, the military was able to censor newsreel film footage showing American casualties. In Vietnam, such footage was shown on evening newscasts, and the antiwar movement was able to leverage media coverage and direct influence tactics to turn opinion against the war.

Many military professionals believed that if public opinion had not turned against the war, the United States might have prevailed. While it is impossible to ascertain the veracity of this judgment, the perception that media coverage of battle adversely affected public opinion was to influence military public relations policy from that point forward.

Traditional Warfare and Public Relations

Public relations strategies serve three purposes in wartime: to build domestic public support for the war; to communicate U.S. intentions to foreign nations, with the aim of building support among allies and acquiescence among enemies; and to control the flow of information reaching the media and, by extension, the public.

Generally, a country's citizens must be talked into going to war. The government frames use of military force as a matter of national security, and the opposition is characterized as a threat. Prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the U.S. claimed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had developed weapons of mass destruction and supported the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The significance of the decision to go to war guarantees media coverage.

In addition to making a case to a domestic audience, nations must convince allies to join in the effort. The United States ran ads in Muslim countries at the start of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, attempting to reassure those countries that wars were not about religion. Some labeled the effort to explain a country's foreign policy as "public diplomacy." Wars that result in the military occupying another country require the occupying force to secure cooperation and support of the civilian population. These efforts involve a combination of media and community relations. U.S. field commanders developed strategies for monitoring and using social media to address rumors or misinformation and to gain local civilian support.

Once combat started, the military seeks to control the access and flow of information to the media and the public. Military policies after Vietnam severely limited media access. For example, in the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada and the 1991 Persian Gulf War much of the information about the conflicts was gleaned from Defense Department press briefings. While reporters dutifully covered these press conferences, they also chafed at

the restrictions and tacit censorship. The United States adjusted its policies during the 2003 invasion of Iraq when the military "embedded" reporters with combat units. While dramatic images demonstrated the ferocity of war and U.S. troops at work, reporters were still limited in what they could report, lest they lose front-line access.

Like corporations, military planners had to cope with the loss of control over messages engendered by the rise in social media and mobile technology. Foreign news outlets often employed satellite technology to cover information that embedded U.S. reporters were denied. In 2010, the website WikiLeaks released thousands of documents related to the U.S. conduct of the Iraq war. Photos showing U.S. military personnel abusing civilian prisoners and corpses prompted Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to warn U.S. troops about to deploy that their actions would likely be open to citizen reporting.

Unconventional Warfare and Public Relations

During the early part of the 21st century, there was a shift in the kind of wars that nations—or, more frequently, populations—fight. Traditional wars gave way to civil wars that pit ethnic, religious, economic, or racial groups against others in the same country or region. Social media, mobile technology, and the Internet all played a role in accelerating these trends. For public relations strategy, the impact is twofold. First, factions that can control the media in a region influence local opinion about the war and rally one faction to take up arms against another. During the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, Hutu-controlled radio stations demonized the Tutsis, thus spurring even greater bloodshed. The governments of Iran in 2009 and Egypt in 2011 blocked Internet and wireless access to their countries during protests.

Second, the factions in these conflicts attempt to appeal to the media in order to bring international pressure to bear on their opponents. During the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011, citizens used Twitter, Facebook, and text messages to organize rallies and spread news about government resistance to the popular uprisings. International media outlets broadcast these images, and pressure for international intervention increased. In 2012, Libyan rebels ultimately gained support for a no-fly zone, which

helped them overthrow the government, while Syrian rebels were less successful in gaining outside support.

Warfare and Public Relations Ethics

The public relations field's connection to warfare raises some critical ethical questions. To the extent that one views war as immoral, then public relations' involvement in promoting war becomes ethically questionable. These concerns are exacerbated when it is believed that the justifications for war are based on misleading or untruthful information. The line between public relations and propaganda is thin in these instances. For example, the press uncovered a number of inaccuracies in statements made to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Related to this concern is the fact that the military generally enjoys greater freedom to restrict information to which the media—and, by extension, the public—has access. Free and open access to government information by the media has always been a contentious issue. The military can restrict information on the basis of national security, operational secrecy, and the safety of the personnel involved. However, the media contend that sometimes information that is unfavorable or embarrassing to the military and its government is hidden.

Michael F. Smith

See also Bernays, Edward; Four-Minute Men; Military Public Relations; Page, Arthur W.; Propaganda; United States Government and Public Relations

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WEB TRAFFIC

Web traffic is a broad term used to conceptualize the ways to gauge the data shared with, and received from, people visiting a website. Public relations practitioners monitor Web traffic to understand how people are using an organization's website, which pages within the website are most popular with visitors, and whether there are noteworthy problems or preferences among users.

In evaluating website effectiveness, there are numerous ways to measure Web traffic. These include the number of users visiting a site, the number of pages each user accesses within the site, and the average length of a visit to the website. A public relations practitioner may also be interested in which pages are most and least popular, as well as where the traffic came from on the Internet when it arrives at the organization's website. Search engine optimization is one of several methods for helping increase Web traffic.

David Remund

See also Search Engine; Search Engine Optimization; Website

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WEB 2.0

Web 2.0 is the term given to describe the second generation of the World Wide Web that is intended to enhance the ability of people to collaborate and share information online. In contrast to static HTML webpages, Web 2.0 is more dynamic, interactive, and organized to provide Web applications to users. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact with each other through dialogue on social media as creators of user-generated content in virtual communities. This ability is in contrast to websites where users are limited to passive viewing of content that was created for them. Social networking sites, blogs, wikis, photo viewing sites, mashups, widgets and RSS feeds are all examples of Web 2.0 applications. The interactive two-way communication capabilities of Web 2.0 are especially useful in facilitating conversations and fostering relationships between an organization and its publics. As a result, public relations professionals are incorporating Web 2.0 resources into their organization's public relations strategy and planning for more targeted Web communication.

Darcy DiNucci, an information architect, first used the term Web 2.0 in 1999 in her article, "Fragmented Future." She insisted that the first glimmering of Web 2.0 was appearing and predicted that the future of the Web would include channels for interactivity, replacing the screens full of text and graphics that were then commonplace. She also predicted that this functionality would be possible through an array of technological devices, including computer screens, television sets, and cell phones.

Although DiNucci first used the term in 1999, Web 2.0 is associated with the inventiveness of Tim O'Reilly. His firm, O'Reilly Media, featured the term in 2005 at the highly influential Web 2.0 Conference that it hosted with MediaLive. In their opening remarks, O'Reilly along with conference cofounder, John Battelle, outlined their definition of the "Web as Platform," where software applications are built on the Web as opposed to on the desktop. They

maintained that the unique advantage of this shift was the ability of customers to help build businesses.

Web 2.0 websites allow users to do more than just retrieve information. Users are able to increase what was possible in Web 1.0 through more user-interface and software and storage facilities that are available on their browser. This is known as "Network as Platform" computing. Major features of Web 2.0 include user-created websites, social networking sites, self-publishing platforms, social bookmarking and tagging. Most Web 2.0 websites have an "architecture of participation" that encourages users to add to the value of the application as they use it. This is starkly different from the traditional websites that limited visitors to viewing and whose content could only be modified by the sites' administrator.

From the technological point of view, the building blocks of Web 2.0 are innovations introduced over recent years to increase the usability and integration of Web applications. Ajax, XML, Open API, Microformats, Flash/Flex are a few of these advances. Largely based on these building blocks, new applications have developed that allow for easy publishing. However, what really distinguishes these Web 2.0 applications is that they share the same "values." They build on the knowledge and skills of the user, and they even enable the user to build a service so that the application gets better through collaboration.

Melissa W. Graham

See also Social Media; Social Networking

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WEBSITE

A website is a computer-generated document designed for graphic computer interfaces, such as

the World Wide Web (WWW). Websites contain combinations of text, images, animations, color, sound, and video. For public relations professionals, websites offer fruitful public presence and visual representation for organizations.

Since the WWW was introduced in 1993, many technological changes have occurred. Increases in bandwidth, computing power, and speed now allow websites to incorporate video, animations, and complex layouts. Most websites now load quickly, and more than 90% of computer users in the United States have high-speed access, or access to the Internet via smartphones or handheld devices.

The Internet has evolved into much more than websites. Historically, when communication professionals talked about websites, they implicitly meant organizational websites. However, starting about the mid-1990s, the Web underwent a transformation as social media, applications, and increased entertainment content led to new uses of websites. Social media and other tools are still “websites,” but they are also a form of “program.” Network television and movies are now readily available on the Internet, and an assortment of content providers offer everything from games for adults, children, and even cats to play on iPads; they also provide access to syndicated content like live streaming sporting and political events.

Any design that can be created for print or video can be duplicated for the Web, and many websites have emerged as content providers. High-resolution graphics and 3D rendering allow communication professionals to easily create content. Software like Amazon’s Mobi, and a variety of e-readers led to renewed book and magazine interest as exact copies of millions of books, newspapers, and magazines can be read on laptop computers, handheld devices, smartphones, and text readers (e.g., Kindle, which actually uses a version of HTML—defined below—as the basis for its programming language).

Documents created using HTML may contain text, images, tables, video and audio annotations, numbered and bulleted lists, forms, and subroutines that allow Web designers to add special visual effects, such as expanding menus, textboxes or images, pop-up windows, contingent logic (if . . . then), and other special effects (e.g., `onMouseOver . . .`, `onclick . . .`).

The basic programming language for the Web is called HyperText Markup Language or HTML. Hyper media or HyperText was first described in 1977, available on a PC in 1987 (as Apple’s HyperCard), and written as a computer language for the World Wide Web in 1991.

HyperText refers to the ability to create content that connects to other documents by means of links. HyperText allows for the creation of non-linear narratives. Links can be placed on text or images. Links direct users who click on them to new pages, other locations in the same document or frame, or to open content in new windows or frames—a frame refers to a portion of a larger window.

In their purest form (i.e., using universal formatting standards), websites can be read by every computer platform: Mac, PC, Unix, Android, iPad, Kindle, etc. The original logic of the Web was to enable individuals and organizations to create universally accessible content that looks the same on every computer or handheld device. Textual, visual, and other content was designed to scale to fit different computer monitors, substitute colors and typefaces when necessary, and generally offer a universally accessible user experience.

In current practice, Web content is being optimized for handheld devices and smartphones rather than desktop or laptop computers. Websites that require users to experience a site in a particular way are becoming the norm rather than the universality that characterized the Web for its first fifteen years.

Understanding Web Addressing

Web pages are accessed via an electronic addressing system called a Uniform Resource Locator, or URL. A typical URL is *http://www.prsa.org* (note: some servers are case sensitive). The first part of the URL, called the protocol, tells the browser what sort of document to go looking for. In this case, “http” or HyperText transfer protocol. Other protocols include https, for “secure” http; ftp, for file transfer protocol; etc.

The second part of the URL is the name of the server or the domain name. The *www* in a domain name refers to the World Wide Web. Domain names may be registered for a small fee and licensed indefinitely for an additional fee each year. Several types of suffixes at the end of domain

names identify the type of organization and country of origin. Common suffixes include .com (company), .edu (educational), .org (organization), and .gov (government). Most countries, except for the United States, also have country suffixes as part of their URLs. For example, a website in the United Kingdom might be [http://www.\[DomainName\].co.uk](http://www.[DomainName].co.uk). Other designations include .dk for Denmark, .kr for South Korea, .nz for New Zealand.

The final parts of a URL, everything that follows the protocol and the server name, are file names and the path(s) to a specific file. For example, the membership page for PRSA might be www.prsa.org/membership.html. A particular file or page might be located within another directory (or folder), for example, www.prsa.org/services/membership.html. The html at the end of the file name refers to the type of page being displayed—html for HyperText, doc for a MS Word file, pdf for Portable Document Format, etc.

Michael L. Kent

See also Blogs, Vlogs, and Microblogs; Home Page; Search Engine; Social Media; Sockpuppet; Trolling; Web 2.0

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to a wiki page by writing, editing, or deleting content. Hyperlinks within the content of a page link to other pages with related content, and the links between pages create a network of wikis, which is also known as a knowledge network.

In public relations, wikis are commonly used in three ways: (1) monitoring information about an organization or client, (2) creating a knowledge network, and (3) sharing information across a diverse network. Monitoring information for an organization or client involves regular scanning for mentions of an organization, as well as monitoring for issue-specific content. On open wiki sites, users can mention an organization's involvement in an event or topic, or create new wiki pages specific to organizations or clients. Practitioners often monitor the information accuracy on wikis (e.g., what people say on Wikipedia about an organization). Monitoring often leads to practitioners contributing to wikis themselves, by editing or commenting on incorrect information and sharing accurate information. However, many public sites like Wikipedia forbid organizations or people from editing their own pages.

Organizations can use knowledge networks as a method for collaborating on projects with multiple publics. Knowledge network wikis store information in a central location that member users can access. Organizations hosting a knowledge network wiki determine user or visitor access privileges. Full access allows members to create new pages or edit content. Other privileges may be limited to editing particular pages, or commenting.

The website Wikipedia, which launched in 2001, is the most famous public wiki and is used by many as a source of general information. Many communication professionals, including Paul Levinson (2012), have suggested that user-generated knowledge is a significant break in tradition from appointed experts determining the accuracy of information. Wikipedia allows nearly anyone to create new pages, edit content, and delete information.

The rules of access and contribution to every wiki vary. Wikipedia, for example, requires anonymity but maintains a public record of user changes. Because of the ease of access and limited monitoring of such a big informational space, some Wikipedia users have altered pages about public figures, political topics, and controversial events with false, biased, and inaccurate information.

Wiki

A wiki is a collaborative, user-generated webpage that hosts content about specific events or topics. Wiki software enables registered users to contribute

On a professional, private wiki, the identity of contributors is known, and the purpose of posts is to share information of value with the intellectual or professional community served. For example, a public relations agency might employ a wiki to organize and facilitate various client services, especially with geographically dispersed teams. Team members can access the wiki for instructions on how to use specific tools and create agency-styled reports. Instead of a single, geographically bound expert on media monitoring applications, a wiki can disperse such information to other team members.

Adam J. Saffer

See also Credibility; Knowledge Networks; Social Media

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WIRE SERVICE

Wire services are often called *newsgathering agencies*, a term that accurately describes the function of these organizations that disseminate news and feature materials that are prepared and shared by subscribers or media owners. The Associated Press is a U.S.-based, not-for-profit wire service that is member-owned and one of the largest newsgathering organizations in the world. Reuters is an international news agency that is headquartered in Great Britain and is now part of Thomson Reuters; it bills itself as the world's largest international multimedia news agency that provides headline news, world news, business and investing news and a wide range of other news and information. Purported to be the oldest news agency in France is the Agence France-Press, dating back to 1835.

Bureaus of these wire services send news stories and photographs to their subscribers, and wire services may also offer specialized coverage (e.g., sports, financial and feature services). Their broadcast wires offer news in a form appropriate for those media. Supplemental wire service syndicates are formed by the major metropolitan newspapers, which may also offer these services nationwide.

When a story that a public relations practitioner placed in a local medium gets “picked up” by a wire service, it is disseminated to other media regionally, nationally, or worldwide. Of course, public relations practitioners can also send releases directly to wire service bureaus.

In addition to these wire services, the public relations practitioner may elect to pay specialized public relations wire services to send media releases to news media. Such news wires that are available to public relations clients have the advantage of offering simultaneous transmission of news releases to regional and national news media. The public relations practitioner is charged for this service, but public relations news wires operate similarly to other wire service news bureaus by providing journalists with news releases as well as other information that public relations practitioners want sent to the media, for example, photos, graphics, spreadsheets, and audio and video recordings, as well as advisories and invitations to news conferences. Some public relations wire services also supply basic news data banks for storing releases and published stories, which can give a news story a longer shelf life. The public relations news wires services may also track media use, for example, such as a clipping service that provides clients with tear sheets of print media coverage.

Public relations wire services have increased credibility compared to news releases that are sent by public relations practitioners directly to news media because news release copy is checked by the public relations wire services, which value their reputation for reliability among the media they serve. Further, many large circulation newspapers have public relations news wire computer feeds, and this electronic link to a newsroom can be an advantage over mailed news releases, which reporters and editors may never open and which are vulnerable to weekend and holiday delays, or—more commonly today—media releases that public relations practitioners, themselves, send electronically to news media. Thus, many public relations practitioners consider the expense of public relations news wires to be worth the price when broad coverage and convenience are important as well as the increased credibility attributed to several of the public relations wire services.

Marina Vujnovic and Dean Kruckeberg

See also Media Relations; Media Release; News Services; News Story; News/Newsworthy

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WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) defines word of mouth marketing as “giving people a reason to talk about your products and services [toward] mutually beneficial consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-marketer communications” (Word of Mouth Marketing Association, 2007). Marketing scholars argue that word of mouth marketing builds credibility through the interpersonal distribution of messaging by influencing consumer communications and consumer-generated media (CGM), rendering it an inexpensive and effective alternative to traditional marketing efforts.

Word of mouth marketing counters consumer disenchantment of corporate-sponsored, mass-media messages by building on the phenomenon that consumers seek information from family and friends. Through word of mouth, marketers seek to build credibility for products, services, and brands via the unpaid interpersonal diffusion of information that market researchers argue works because it has been passed through “people like me.” The WOMMA lists several types of word of mouth marketing, including buzz marketing, viral marketing, community marketing, and social marketing.

Word of mouth marketing may be compared to the concept of distributed public relations, whereby practitioners rely on stakeholders to fulfill public relations activities by distributing information through their personal networks. Facilitated by topic involvement and interactivity, distribution represents issue alliance between organization and stakeholder, and may be motivated by personal needs to belong to a topical community, which renders the value and extent of organizationally distributed information a key component of the

spread of word of mouth. This social distribution also suggests reconsideration of the concept of the stakeholder—word of mouth may be carried by individuals with little recognized stake in the organization, but whose influence is significant. As such, this new breed of social stakeholders may not be organizationally bound or defined, and their stake may be tied to their own credibility within their online or offline communities rather than on their connection with the organization. This detachment from the organization raises issues of stakeholder empowerment and organizational control over reputation.

Because word of mouth relies on the distribution of personal communication, ethics are an important issue. The WOMMA considers word of mouth marketing as “the most honest form of marketing” and has declared that attempts to “fake word of mouth” or manipulate, deceive, or otherwise dishonestly engage with individuals or their commentary online are unethical and damage brands and corporate reputations (Word of Mouth Marketing Association, 2007). Unethical word of mouth marketing practices include stealth marketing and astroturfing (where marketers hide their involvement in a marketing effort), shilling (paid personal promotion), unsolicited messages, and using fake identities and posing as a customer to promote a product.

Brian G. Smith

See also Guerilla Marketing; Internet Contagion Theory; Stakeholder Theory; Viral Marketing

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WRITING

Among the many tasks performed by public relations practitioners, writing tops the list. Practitioners develop various written pieces—media releases, brochures, promotional materials, business correspondence, and proposals—to communicate information to people inside and outside of the organization. Public relations writing should educate, persuade, or motivate. To accomplish these goals, writers must be functional and write with a purpose while maintaining a creative flair.

Because of the wide variety of writing formats, versatility is an essential skill for public relations writers. They must know which format is the most appropriate for a project and the best way to construct a message that the audience understands.

Using Appropriate Formats

The most common writing formats in public relations are those used in publicity, marketing, advocacy, organizational communication, and business correspondence. Each has a certain style and purpose. To determine the best format to use, three things should be considered before beginning a writing project:

- What is the purpose of the piece?
- Who is the audience?
- What is the message?

The Purpose

Before they start writing, public relations practitioners must decide whether the purpose of the piece is to educate, persuade, or motivate. What is the desired result of the piece? To create awareness, gain support for an issue, or prompt behavior?

Writing that seeks to educate usually consists of straightforward information, whereas writing that aims to persuade or motivate takes on a more emotional tone. For example, the purpose of an article that lets employees know about a new benefit is educational; however, a piece that tries to convince legislators why they should support a bill requires persuasive tactics.

The Audience

The purpose of the piece determines who should receive it, which in turn determines how it should be written. In most cases, a reporter does not want to receive a brochure and a customer does not want to receive a media release. Media formats (e.g., media releases, media advisories, pitch letters) are used in writing for the media. Creative brochures are used when marketing to customers, internal newsletters for informing employees, and businesslike memos when communicating with management.

The Message

More than anything else, the message determines the most appropriate writing format to use. Does the message need to be straightforward or is there creative license? Customers want to read information that reinforces their decision to patronize an organization. This requires the use of persuasive tactics. Such tactics, however, are not appropriate for a media release, which should contain factual, objective information.

Is the message brief or lengthy? How much space is needed to adequately deliver the message? How does it reach the target public? Detailed information aimed at persuading a specific

audience is better suited for a brochure or position paper than a one-page flier. A flier, on the other hand, is more appropriate for announcing the date and time of a special event.

Being Understood

Public relations practitioners who do not write in a way that their audience can understand are wasting their time. If readers find a piece too complicated, they stop reading and do not receive the intended message. To increase the chances that the piece is understood, public relations practitioners need to write simply, using proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and adopt an appropriate style.

Simplicity

Readers get confused by lengthy sentences and long words. Using short words, sentences, and paragraphs helps focus the writer on writing concisely, which enhances the simplicity of a piece. Jargon or clichés not familiar to an audience should be avoided.

There are several formulas used to determine the simplicity of a written piece. These readability studies, such as the Flesch Formula, the Gunning Fog Index, and the Fry Formula, usually involve calculating word syllables and sentence length to determine the grade level at which the piece is written.

Grammar and Spelling

Using improper grammar and misspelling words reflects negatively on a writer. The credibility of the writer is questioned, as well as the credibility of the information presented. In addition, poor grammar and punctuation affect how a sentence is structured, and poor sentence structure leads to difficult reading and confusion. Writers need to ensure that their writing is easy to read. Some common grammatical errors include the following:

- Using inconsistent nouns and pronouns
- Using inconsistent subjects and verbs

- Using faulty parallel structure
- Confusing *that*, *which*, and *who*
- Using run-on sentences or sentence fragments
- Overusing commas
- Misusing colons and semicolons

Public relations practitioners should carefully proofread their writing to avoid errors in grammar and punctuation, as well as spelling. Although a spell checker is a wonderful computer tool, it should never be used as the final check; nothing can take the place of a dictionary.

Style

The format of a written piece determines its style. Media releases focus on facts written in pyramid style, whereas marketing pieces feature more colorful language and a creative structure. How the reader is addressed (in personal terms or as a neutral third party) is another style consideration.

The writing style used by the Associated Press (AP) is followed in the journalism and public relations fields. The *AP Stylebook* provides information on the standard use of capitalization and abbreviations, to name a few. Public relations practitioners who follow these guidelines, especially when writing for the media, enhance their credibility and make it easier for the media to edit public relations copy.

Ann R. Carden

See also AP Style; Persuasion Theory; Pyramid Style; Stylebook

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Z

ZONES OF MEANING

Zones of meaning are the fibers in the fabric of public opinion—the collective opinions of many markets and publics that make up a society. One of the problems perplexing activists, public relations practitioners, and scholars is understanding the nature of public opinion. Early in the 20th century, the term *public opinion* was formalized as a research concept. It was coined to describe broadly what is on the mind of members of a society. What do they know, believe, prefer, dislike, like, aspire toward, value, and use as motives?

Further thinking and empirical investigations of public opinion revealed that a single “public” does not exist, and what we think of as “the public” certainly is not of one mind. For instance, poll data reveal that some people like any president of the United States and others do not. Some people like baseball, and others do not. Some people support activist constraints on business practices, and some do not.

A zone of meaning is the shared knowledge, experience, preferences, motives, opinions held in the mind of some people in society, which may be quite unique to them. One of the ways to think about zones is as the result of experience. People who have lived their life in a dense, hot, and humid jungle share a zone of meaning quite different from people whose experience consists only of the vast regions near the Arctic Circle. Generations differ from one another because they have different zones of meaning, because their experiences are

different. The same can be true for gender, race, and religion, to use a very short list. Labor shares a different zone of meaning from management.

Nevertheless, labor and management may share some zones. For instance, labor and management in the aircraft construction industry have a different zone of meaning than would exist for labor and management in the segment of the electricity-generating industry that uses nuclear fuel to generate power.

People in any society may like or dislike sports, in general or of various kinds. People who like basketball will share a zone of meaning quite different from that of those who enjoy baseball. Players’ names and team histories are part of each unique zone. The rules of the game differ from other games. The dynamics of league play and championships differ. Also, some sports are a part of certain people’s lifestyle, and not part of other people’s.

Surveys of communities reveal that some people within the community know or believe something quite different from the knowledge or beliefs of people who do not live in that community. People who live in a community with a heavy concentration of chemical manufacturing and refining facilities may understand the sirens that alert them to a safety danger. They may know when and how to shelter-in-place in the event such an emergency occurs. People who do not live in that community have less reason and opportunity to share this zone of meaning.

Likewise, in such communities, people who work in the industry are taught shelter-in-place

procedures that are to be followed in a work site in the event an emergency occurs. Visitors to this site are required to learn those measures (come to share a zone of meaning) before they can enter. Plant managers have routine drills and training to ensure that workers and visitors know what the warning siren is and what actions must be taken in the event the siren sounds.

Citizens in the community also need such information, but they are likely to learn it through means other than company training. Industry may use an animal, such as a turtle, to attract attention to the shelter-in-place procedures. When in danger, turtles “shelter in place”; they go inside their shell. Such tools appeal to children. Thus, if a survey is done, it may well reveal that mothers and children know—share the zone—the meaning of the turtle and what to do, even if they do not know the term *shelter-in-place*. Plant personnel may know shelter-in-place but not know about the turtle and its recommendations. Both zones can lead to safety measures, but each is a different zone.

Differences of opinions, knowledge, experience, motives, and such are a fact of life. Not everyone knows all of the same “stuff.” But society cannot function without shared meanings. Thus, zones are like veins of ore (a zone of meaning) in a rock formation throughout which various threads of ore and other materials can be identified. Similar knowledge can help practitioners understand where agreement or disagreement occurs and people whose ideas, knowledge, and experience differs from others’.

Faculty members sitting around a lunch table share zones of meaning about students’ behavior. Despite being from different disciplines, they can share stories about academic excellence and about cheating. They share that zone. However, they may not share much of the zone of meaning that constitutes their respective academic disciplines. Historians undoubtedly know less biology than a distinguished biologist does. These faculty members share views on students, academic

procedures, and administration. That allows them to work together in doing their jobs. When they go back to their offices, they enter quite a different zone of meaning.

The term *zone of meaning* can help academics and practitioners understand the threads of opinions of key publics and markets. This insight can help practitioners understand where agreement and disagreement exist and perhaps why. Gaining such insights into the fabric of public opinion gives practitioners the perspectives they need to work with people based on their unique zones of meaning, zones that may create unity and friction, those that become part of the dialogue that can lead to agreement and the co-creation of meaning.

Robert L. Heath

See also Co-Creation of Meaning Theory; Marketing; Power, Discursive; Power, Symbolic; Precautionary Principle; Publics; Risk Communication; Spiral of Silence Theory

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Appendices

Appendix A: Women Pioneers in Public Relations

Appendix B: Milestones in the History of Public Relations

Appendix C: Public Relations Online Resources

Appendix A

Women Pioneers in Public Relations

In the 21st-century field of public relations, women practitioners are in the gender majority. They hold leadership positions in corporations, agencies, and nonprofits like governments, educational institutions, and social service agencies. They are elected heads of professional public relations associations. However, before the 1980s, this was not the case. The modern practice of public relations between 1900 and the 1970s was mostly an all-male field.

There is generally a lack of historical research on public relations because “most public relations practitioners have toiled in anonymity, no doubt in great part because of the nature of their work, which demands that good practitioners remain behind the scenes . . .” but “women have been especially neglected” (Miller, 1997, p. 252). Some exceptions to this pattern are Miller’s 1997 study of Jane Stewart, Susan Henry’s 1997 research on Doris Fleischman, Karla K. Gower’s 2001 history of women in the *Public Relations Journal* between 1945 and 1972, and Diana Martinelli and Elizabeth L. Toth’s 2010 oral history of Charlotte Klein.

This second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Public Relations* features only in-depth treatments of two 20th-century women public relations pathfinders—Doris Fleischman and Betsy Ann Plank—whose significant stories are well researched and documented. Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to summarize what little is known about 20 other women public relations pathfinders from the 20th century; it adapts 19 biographies done for the first edition of *Encyclopedia of Public Relations*, because unfortunately little else has been found to add to the material background of these women.

Fortunately, the authors of these 20 bios were professors who as a team worked to secure some

history of women public relations pathfinders of the 20th century. Since the publication of the first edition of the encyclopedia, four of the women featured—Betsy A. Plank, Jean Schoonover, Marilyn Laurie, and Carol Hills—have passed away.

Beyond merely reprinting these entries, however, this entry works to contextualize them into a package that features their pioneering efforts, not as a well-coordinated group per se, but as individuals dedicated to a profession and willing to exert their intellect and talent to be influential in a male-dominated profession.

This work is not in any way representative of all of the women pathfinders who practiced public relations in the 20th century. These stories provide only a glimpse of the social history of public relations. The dominant history of public relations focused mostly on corporate communication, whereas a social history depicts public relations at the “grassroots that would be more inclusive of women and minorities” (Lamme & Russell, 2010, p. 285). While this presentation captures something of gender identities of these pathfinders, less evident is how the intricacies of race, class, nationality, religion, education, marital status, and sexual orientation influenced their professional careers.

Providing biographies should avoid the pitfalls of previous histories of public relations that suggest a progressive or periodization approach (Lamme & Russell, p. 286), as if the practice of public relations through time became “more professionalized” or had distinct periods. As advised by Lana Rakow and Diana Nastasia (2008), every effort is made to avoid canonizing these women as “great” women. Our society values individual accomplishments. The women featured here were

“firsts” in many regards; but many other women introduced new practices, paved new avenues for others to follow, or changed the field in indelible ways.

We should push forward from their experiences to ask different historical questions about the collective and diverse experiences of women in public relations (Lamme & Russell, p. 290). Different historical questions provide a new lens through which to examine the feminization of the public relations field. For example, Karen S. Miller (1997) asked that historians find out “how being female affected the ways that women communicators did their jobs” (p. 350). Larissa A. Grunig, Elizabeth L. Toth, and Linda Childers Hon (2001) were interested in how gender influenced the practice of public relations.

Indeed, a second purpose of this essay is to encourage others to seek out rigorously and thoroughly the original papers and accounts of the women noted in this essay. Their stories should not be read as stories of individuals, but as a focus on their contributions to the field of public relations when they did not have 21st-century educational and career opportunities that are now taken for granted.

There is a gendered dimension to this essay. Historical accounts of “great men” do not mention gender, which speaks to the theory that the society in which men and women move accepts masculinity as the unspoken norm. Values of masculinity, such as rationality, competition, individualism, and efficiency (Rakow, 1989, p. 291) are assumed and identified in accounts of men in public relations, whereas women are rarely seen at all in our historical accounts unless it is through these masculine values.

To find 20th-century women public relations pathfinders is difficult because they did not write their own biographies nor did they usually provide archives for others to find. In a way, they were present yet not considered of interest to those who examined public relations history. Perhaps, the feminist values argued by Grunig, Toth, and Hon (2000) for the practice of public relations, such as “cooperation, respect, caring nurturance, interconnection, justice, equity, sensitivity, perceptiveness, intuition, altruism, fairness, morality and commitment” were not values worth noting in historical accounts. Perhaps, it was because women public

relations practitioners were assumed to be of lesser interest. Yet, because we know that the field of public relations experienced a gender transition from an almost all-male practice to a majority female practice, women’s stories should be of interest if not because they were fewer, but because they were pathfinders for other women. This entry attempts to give women in the history of public relations more voice.

Rakow (1989) provided a feminist theoretical framework that suggested analyses that account for gender systems, women’s identities, power relations, social injustice, and social change as a means of building a feminist theory of public relations. These women’s stories could contribute to a feminist theory of public relations by considering how these individual pathfinders reflected on Rakow’s concepts.

How Are Public Relations Practitioners Defined?

Lamme and Russell (2010) defined public relations practitioners as having a common skill set:

those who understood the power of persuasion, who realized the importance of identifying and then engaging publics through messages and channels that would be meaningful to them, and who understood the strategies involved in doing these things effectively, such as choosing between pathos and logos or interpersonal and mass communication. (p. 352)

What Made These Women Pathfinders?

Six of the women profiled—Ann Barkelew, Judith Bogart, Barbara Hunter, Marilyn Laurie, Isobel Parke, and Betsy Plank—were named “legends in public relations” on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA).

However, a general meaning for the word *pathfinder* is that these women contributed something new to the practice of public relations. The biographies presented in this appendix are incomplete without recognizing the conditions that influenced these women. The few interviews included hint at the conditions of their times by providing some social and cultural context. However, other women

included in this essay are only available to us because they had the foresight to include themselves in “Who’s Who” collections.

Many of the women are identified in writings because they achieved a “first” as women. They were first to have corporate executive positions. They were the first women agency heads; they were the first women elected to professional association leadership positions. Their public relations career “firsts” were considered to be breakthroughs in some cases against the glass ceilings of their generation. However, many of their achievements and recognitions came from other women. One is struck by the number of 20th-century all-women organizations. Women public relations pathfinders of the 20th century found leadership opportunities until the 1980s from all-women public relations associations.

Our culture celebrates individuality and the recognition as “first” to accomplish certain things. But, future historians are expected to provide the culture context in which these women advanced. They should be able to identify whether various social factors permitted or were obstacles for these women to achieve “firsts.”

The 20 women highlighted here have been grouped by the type of organizations in which they became pathfinders and leaders. This attempt at a categorization is preliminary because some of their histories showed that they moved between agencies, corporations, and nonprofit organizations.

Agency

Leone Baxter and Clem Whitaker

The California-based husband and wife team of Clem Whitaker (1899–1961) and Leone Baxter (1906–) opened the first professional political campaign management agency in the United States in 1933. Their clients included Earl Warren, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Richard Nixon, and the American Medical Association.

Whitaker and Baxter met while working on a campaign to promote California’s Central Valley Water Project in 1933. Whitaker, a former journalist, was working as a lobbyist when he was hired by supporters of the water project to convince voters to approve the project in an upcoming referendum. Baxter, a 26-year-old widow, was manager of the Redding, California, Chamber of Commerce, which

had a vested interest in passage of the project. Finding they worked well together, the two opened Campaigns, Inc., a public relations agency specializing in political campaigns for candidates and propositions, that same year. They also formed an advertising agency to handle the advertising used in campaigns run by Campaigns, Inc. Three years later, they established the California Feature Service, which sent out a weekly clipsheet of editorials and feature stories to the state’s small daily and weekly newspapers. They formalized their partnership on a personal level by marrying in 1938.

Political campaigning and the hiring of publicists to manage media coverage were not new when Whitaker and Baxter came on the scene. What they brought to the table was the concept of experts managing the entire campaign. In addition to the usual publicity and advertising functions, Whitaker and Baxter provided overall strategy, campaign organization, and even financial supervision. They insisted on having complete control over the entire operation.

California served as a particularly ready market for the kind of services the two provided. Party identity in the state had been undercut by the cross-filing system, which allowed Republicans and Democrats to run in each other’s primaries. In addition, progressive reforms in the first 2 decades of the 20th century granted more power to California citizens through initiatives and referendums. The reforms were intended to break the stronghold of the old party machines, and they did. But by the 1930s, the number of initiatives and referendums in each election meant electors were constantly asked to make decisions about complex issues. Reaching individual voters via the mass media, therefore, became a political necessity in California.

Whitaker and Baxter were experts at using all of the communication media available to them. In a typical campaign, they would use thousands, if not tens of thousands, of leaflets, letters to opinion leaders, advertisements, film trailers, billboards, and posters to promote their client. They were among the first to recognize the value of radio and newsreels to reach voters.

The two enjoyed remarkable success. Between 1933 and 1959, for example, Whitaker and Baxter managed 80 campaigns and won all but six of those. Their success can be credited to the way they approached their business and to their

understanding of the American electorate. According to Whitaker and Baxter, a successful campaign depended on having the best candidate or the best cause. In fact, they were known to refuse candidates whom they did not feel had a chance of winning. According to the pair, there were two kinds of winning candidates: those who were fighting for a cause, because Americans love a good fight, and those who could put on a show, because Americans like to be entertained. Most often, the pair combined the two, presenting a fight in an entertaining way. But they never allowed their clients to wage a defensive fight. Candidates always had to appear to be on the offensive, even if they were not.

Once the couple took on a candidate or an issue, they secluded themselves in their home to work on their overall plan, which included a campaign budget. The most important part of the plan was the theme or appeal that guided the rest of the campaign. The appeal had to be simple, with strong human interest potential. It had to have more “corn than caviar,” a phrase used by the two to illustrate that the theme had to capture what was important to voters in their daily lives. The theme also had to appeal to voters as individuals. Whitaker and Baxter recognized that voters were not just Democrats or Republicans; they were parents, employees, veterans, club members, and churchgoers. The theme, then, had to resonate with voters on a number of different levels. Part of their deliberations was the creation of a hypothetical plan for the opposition, which they would test out to determine the strength of their plan.

Once satisfied with their plan, they would boil the theme down to a slogan. Baxter was apparently the source of most of the slogans created by the pair. For example, for a mayoral recall in which there was no visible opponent, she created “the Faceless Man” to generate in voters’ minds the idea of a sinister and cowardly opposition. When voters were faced with the issue of legalizing gambling, Whitaker and Baxter built their campaign for the opposition on the theme, “Keep the Crime Syndicates Out.”

Believing that the success of a campaign depended in part on grassroots organization to effectively disseminate material, Whitaker and Baxter also relied heavily on the support of allies. Alliances with organizations directly or indirectly affected by the

issue meant that campaign materials reached more people. For example, when campaigning on behalf of teachers for pay raises, Whitaker and Baxter enlisted the support of parent-teacher associations and school construction companies.

One of their first campaigns, and the one that established their reputation, was to defeat Upton Sinclair, the author of *The Jungle*, in his bid for governor of California in 1934. Whitaker and Baxter spent days poring over Sinclair’s writing, finding damaging quotes that could be used against the left-wing author. They then hired an artist to create cartoons portraying typical Americans juxtaposed with quotes from Sinclair that, when taken out of context, appeared to denigrate traditional American values, such as marriage and family. The cartoons, which essentially linked Sinclair to communism, ran in newspapers and appeared on billboards throughout California. Sinclair was soundly defeated in the election.

One of their later campaigns became what sociologist Stuart Ewen called the most underrated public relations campaign in American history. In 1945, California Governor Earl Warren proposed a state-administered health insurance plan. Whitaker and Baxter were hired by the California Medical Association to defeat the plan. They were so successful that, in 1948, when President Truman proposed a similar plan for compulsory health insurance at the national level, the American Medical Association approached them to handle the campaign. It was the first national campaign the two had run, and to facilitate the operation, they moved to Chicago.

From Chicago, Whitaker and Baxter directed an eleven-month campaign to doctors and the public, arguing that the government should be kept out of the doctor-patient relationship and promoting voluntary group insurance plans as an alternative. They used the slogan “The Voluntary Way Is the American Way” to get their point across and to foster the idea that compulsory health insurance was socialized medicine. Connecting Truman’s plan with socialism and suggesting it was un-American meant defeat for the national health insurance plan.

In 1958, Whitaker and Baxter sold Campaigns, Inc., to three junior partners, one of whom was Clem Whitaker, Jr., Whitaker’s son from a previous marriage. They continued as consultants under the

name of Whitaker & Baxter International until 1961, when Whitaker died. After her husband's death, Baxter continued consulting and speaking to groups inside and outside the public relations field. In 1985, she won a Gold Anvil award from the Public Relations Society of America for her achievements and in 1990 was among the first group inducted into the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) College of Fellows.

Phyllis Berlowe

Phyllis Berlowe (1922–2000) was a public relations executive at a time when women were largely absent from upper management in agencies. Born in New York City on December 10, 1922, she was the daughter of Louis, a businessman, and Rose Jatches Berlowe, a homemaker. Her father and several partners owned a beer distributorship that was wiped out during the Great Depression. Following this setback, he remained a salesman in the liquor industry.

Berlowe lived most of her life in New York City. She made the first step toward her career in public relations while attending New York University, where she majored in journalism and marketing. After a time, however, she went off on a tangent for two years pursuing a premedical degree at Hunter College.

On graduating from Hunter College, Berlowe took up her first position as an editorial assistant on the petroleum publications at McGraw Publishing Company in 1953. She left this position in 1955 to become head of the public relations department at Toscony Fabrics. Her agency experience included Theodore R. Sills & Co. (1959–1963), Harshe-Rotman & Druck, Inc. (1963–1965) and later as executive vice president of Edward Gottlieb & Associates (1965–1978) and vice president of Hill & Knowlton (1978–1979).

It was at this point that she was accredited by the PRSA and steadily rose to the positions of vice president of Doremus Public Relations, in charge of the Mindshare division, and president of Padilla Speer.

Berlowe was asked to mentor a client, and thus, she left Padilla Speer in 1986 to establish her own consulting firm, the Berlowe Group. Through the Berlowe Group, Berlowe provided specialized advice in a variety of business areas, including

firm management, crisis management, and marketing strategies. Her expertise lay in understanding existing and emerging trends and connecting clients with the relevant publics through these trends.

Over four decades, Berlowe worked on an array of accounts offering different kinds of products and services aimed at a range of audiences. Her clients included comedienne Phyllis Diller, RT French Company (makers of French Mustard and other products), Armstrong World Industries, and Pfizer, for which she created a major program for Alice Fay. Her global endeavors included working for Russian, French, and Dutch governmental agencies.

Her flair for public relations led her to win the prestigious Silver Anvil from PRSA in 1977 for her “cooking for the blind” program for Thomas Lipton, Inc. She also received the John Hill Award for balancing her conflicting professional and public priorities. Berlowe was also made member of the PRSA College of Fellows in 1990.

She eventually returned as an instructor in public relations and advertising to Hunter College, and other institutions, including New York University and Russell Sage College. She was also the chairperson of the Counselors Academy in 1982, where her monograph on effective budgeting was published.

Berlowe was a member of PRSA, Women Executives in Public Relations, the Publicity Club of New York, American Women in Radio and Television, the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals in Business, and the World Futurist Society. Remarkably, unlike most, she was an active member of all of these societies, serving as mentor, president, or secretary. She was intensely involved in the formation of the PRSA accreditation program.

She broke through the glass ceiling at a time when women were seldom seen in business, let alone in positions of power and authority. Her niece attributed her aunt's success, in part, to a unique ability to bring people out, to get them to talk about themselves. Tough and a good listener, she was able to understand people's positions and strategize to best advantage for them. She was a master at building consensus, handling crises, and resolving conflict. Berlowe died at the age of 77 on February 9, 2000, at Lenox Hill Hospital.

Barbara Way Hunter

Barbara Way Hunter (1927–), founder and former CEO of New York–based Hunter & Associates, Inc. (now Hunter Public Relations, LLC), was a trailblazer for women in public relations who aspire to own their own firm—to be the boss. In the late 1960s, when it was virtually unheard of for a woman to own and head a business, Hunter countered opposition and purchased her own public relations firm. Her actions encouraged other women to do the same in a field then dominated by men.

Hunter was born in 1927 in Westport, New York. After graduating from Cornell University's College of Arts & Sciences with a bachelor's degree in government, she accepted a job as a trade magazine editor. Using her liberal arts background, Hunter quickly progressed to a publicist position for a major food company. In February 1956, she joined the public relations firm of Dudley Anderson Yutzy (D-A-Y) as an account executive. After two of the original D-A-Y partners died in 1969, Hunter and her sister, Jean Schoonover, bought out the remaining partner. Hunter became president of the new firm, which grew 500% in the next 12 years.

D-A-Y was sold to Ogilvy & Mather Public Relations in 1983, and Hunter became vice chairman of the subsidiary of the large advertising agency.

In 1989, Hunter founded Hunter & Associates, a firm specializing in marketing and public relations for food and beverage companies. The firm started with two clients: McIlhenny Company, maker of Tabasco sauce, and Kraft Foods. Eleven years later, when Hunter retired, the firm had added Campbell Soup Company, McCormick & Company, Morgan Stanley, Pepperidge Farm, Pernod Ricard USA, 3M, Sears, and others to its client roster. It also was the number two independent public relations agency in the nation, billing over \$7.8 million in 2000.

Hunter led the firm as CEO until her retirement in December 2000. Senior managers then purchased the firm from Hunter, and—keeping her name and professional commitments and ideologies—renamed it Hunter Public Relations.

According to Hunter, honesty was key to her success. During her 42 years of practicing public relations in an agency setting, she lived by one rule: “Do not overpromise results to your client and

make certain you deliver the promises you do make” (B. W. Hunter, personal communication, November 14, 2002).

Honesty paid off. By not overpromising, she ensured that clients stayed loyal to her firm and referred her to other business associates. She explained, “When you promise an outcome and deliver on those promises, it builds confidence, and from confidence comes a loyal client” (B. W. Hunter, personal communication, November 14, 2002). She was not afraid to admit when she could not accomplish an organization's objective. Summarizing, she said, “Honesty is a large aspect of success.”

Going to great lengths for the client also helped build successful and beneficial relationships for her firm. Hunter elaborated, “If a client knows you will be responsive to their individual needs, they will stay with you. Everyone likes personal attention” (B. W. Hunter, personal communication, November 14, 2002).

Hunter also attributes her success to the creative and interesting approaches she took with her clients and their products. The bottom line, however, is that a public relations firm is only as good as the practitioners it employs. Practitioners must have good judgment and be creative, articulate, and skillful to get their message out to targeted publics.

Hunter's contributions extend to professional and civic organizations, and her achievements are recognized with numerous honors and awards. She is a past president of the PRSA and of the New York chapter of PRSA. She is a member of PRSA's College of Fellows and the recipient of 12 PRSA presidential citations. In 1993, the society honored her with its Gold Anvil Award, its highest individual award. She also is a past recipient of the John Hill Award from the New York chapter. She served as the chairman of the 1998 PRSA national conference in Dallas, Texas, and founded PRSA's Food and Beverage Section in 1992.

A former trustee of the Institute for Public Relations, Hunter also was a board member of the Advertising Women of New York and Women Executives in Public Relations. She received the National Headliner Award from the Association for Women in Communications in 1984, the Matrix Award from New York Women in Communications in 1980, and the Entrepreneurial Woman Award from the Business Owners of New York in 1981.

Hunter was a charter member of the Committee of 200, the professional organization of preeminent women entrepreneurs and corporate leaders; she is also a member of the YWCA Academy of Women Achievers. In 1976, *BusinessWeek* named her one of the 100 Outstanding Women in Business.

Hunter served as a trustee of Cornell University, as well as a member of the advisory councils of Cornell's Colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture and Life Sciences. She is a lifetime member of the Cornell University Council.

Reflecting on her chosen career, Hunter said she watched acceptance of public relations as a profession grow. As formal educational programs are offered and utilized, acceptance by the business community of public relations as a true profession emerged. Also, advancements in computers and technology extend the reach of a practitioner's message. The Internet is an invaluable tool in a profession where immediacy matters.

Looking to the future, Hunter predicts that more emphasis will be placed on ethical practice. She always believed that ethics is an essential aspect of public relations, but in tomorrow's world practitioners have no choice, but to perform ethically. Ethics will be utilized more to communicate what the organization is doing *right*.

Hunter also predicts that public relations practitioners have to pay more attention to social trends. Religion, economy, war, and other factors shape constantly changing trends that create communication gaps. Practitioners have to bridge these gaps to ensure that messages between organizations and their publics flow smoothly and effectively.

Barbara Hunter, who now enjoys retirement in her roles as wife, mother, and grandmother, took great risks in her career, and in turn cleared the path for other women to follow.

Inez Yeargan Kaiser

Inez Yeargan Kaiser (1918–) was born on April 22, 1918, in Kansas City, Missouri. After receiving a bachelor's degree from Kansas Teacher's College in Pittsburg, Kansas, she attended Columbia University in New York for a master's degree; there she majored in home economics and received a certificate in mass communication. The certification in mass communication first exposed Kaiser to public relations.

Prior to finding her place in public relations, she taught for over 20 years in public schools in Evanston, Illinois; Kansas City, Kansas; and Kansas City, Missouri. More specifically, Kaiser taught home economics in the public schools. While working as a home economics instructor, she helped organize the Home Economics Department for the Board of Education and worked with the Red Cross and the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC).

Additionally, she served as chairperson of the Home Economists in Business organization and was cited by *Seventeen* magazine as one of the most outstanding home economics teachers in the country. Kaiser was often recognized for excellence by her colleagues and was selected as Teacher of the Year by the Missouri State Teachers Association. For all of her accolades and recognitions, she was named Business Woman of the Year in Kansas City.

Kaiser was introduced to black readers and communities across America through several columns that she wrote for the black press. The columns, titled "Fashionwise and Otherwise," "Teen Tips," "Kaiser Konsumer Korner," and "Hints for Homemakers," served as precursors for a second career in public relations. Using her columns as a platform and her experience as credibility, Kaiser devoted herself to educating black consumers on issues that she considered important. During the peak of her journalistic endeavors, her most widely read column, "Hints for Homemakers," reached a national audience of over 8 million readers. She was later honored by the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) for her 20 years of achievements in public relations and for providing information to black consumers through the black press. Kaiser also showcased her writing talents in a book titled *Soul Food Cookery* in 1968, which was published by Pittman.

Kaiser used her celebrity status to help black models secure work on Seventh Avenue and was one of the first African American women to cover fashion shows and menswear showings in New York, California, and Paris for the black press. Through her columns and other journalistic activities, Kaiser made black fashion and black beauty more visible and indirectly paved the way for acclaimed models like Tyra Banks, Iman, Naomi Campbell, and Tyson to grace the covers of mainstream magazines and to achieve their supermodel status. In 1980, she also received

the Eartha M. White Women's Achievement Award from the National Business League for being a "pioneer black woman in the fields of public relations, fashions and the food industry."

After retiring as a school teacher in the Kansas City School District during the late 1950s, she decided to use the notoriety gained from the press to become an entrepreneur and open her own public relations agency. Thus, Inez Kaiser and Associates, located in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, was founded in 1961. This venture accorded Kaiser the distinction of becoming the first African American female to establish a public relations firm with national accounts. In that capacity she also became the first black consultant to land a soft drink account, a pharmaceutical account, and a household account. Over the years, her clients included, but are not limited to, J. Walter Thompson, Seven-Up, Sperry and Hutchinson, Continental Baking Company, and Pillsbury. She was one of the first public relations practitioners to merge advertising and public relations when she prepared advertorials for Sterling Drug, Inc., and Sears Roebuck Company.

The agency worked with major corporations, federal agencies, and associations throughout America and community-based groups in Missouri. In addition to her recognition as a public relations pathfinder, Kaiser was a civil rights activist whose agency was hired to consult with the Equal Opportunity Commission in Washington, D.C. In 1972, she founded the National Association of Minority Women in Business, which was headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri. She subsequently coordinated the Department of Commerce's first Conference for Women in Business. Moreover, she became a member of the Women's Chamber of Commerce and the American Marketing Association (AMA) of Kansas City. Her activism continued into the 1990s, when she accused the Missouri Division of Tourism of racial discrimination against businesses owned by people of color. In a news conference on October 6, 1992, held at the NAACP office located in St. Louis, she outlined charges of biases that favored white-owned businesses. Kaiser's agency, Inez Kaiser and Associates, subcontracted for two years to promote African American tourism in Missouri. She received the contract with Glennon and Company, a St. Louis firm that handled tourism advertising and public relations for Missouri. The contract was canceled, and Kaiser complained that

the state was using her ideas, "even though she was told her ideas weren't needed before the contract was canceled" (Penington, 1992, p. 3A). Although Marjorie Beenders, director of the Tourism Division, said Kaiser's contract was canceled not because of her race, but because her specialty was not needed, Kaiser garnered a great deal of publicity over the cancellation.

In 1994, she continued to fight discrimination in the tourism industry when consulted for a newspaper article addressing racial issues encountered by travelers of color. Kaiser suggested that most managers and supervisors were interested in resolving any racially sensitive problems and were very interested in preserving positive images of their hotels.

Because of the roads that she paved for other blacks and her unabashed commitment to public relations, the litany of awards and accolades given to her were quite extensive. She was named Business Woman of the Year in Kansas City and was selected as one of the 100 Most Outstanding Black Business and Professional Women by *Dollars & Sense* magazine. Educational organizations expressed their gratefulness for her efforts by perpetuating her name in several ways. The Kansas City Branch of the American Association of University Women named a scholarship award in her honor during the mid-1970s. One of her highest accolades was an honorary doctorate of law from Lincoln University in 1986. Kaiser was the first African American female to become a member of PRSA. During the early 1990s, the Minority Scholarship in Public Relations was established by Jack Detweiler and Marilyn Kern-Foxworth for the Public Relations Division (PRD) of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). Graduate students of color pursuing degrees in public relations or conducting research in the area of public relations are eligible for the award. Students often are nominated by their professors, or thesis and dissertation committee chairs. The students, domestic and international, selected for this award are given funds to pay for their membership in AEJMC and for membership in the Public Relations Division (PRD) of the organization. Another benefit of the award is the introduction of students of color studying public relations to the activities of both AEJMC and the PRD. The funds are provided by public relations professors and journalism/public

relations/communications schools and departments. During the annual PRD luncheon of the AEJMC held August 12, 1993, in Kansas City, Missouri, the award was named in honor of Inez Yeargan Kaiser. On July 31, 2003, 10 years after the awards were named in her honor, the PRD of AEJMC featured her at the Bill Adams/Edelman Luncheon. By this time over 175 graduate students were recipients of the Inez Kaiser Award.

The International Association of Market Developers (IAMD), during a ceremony held in Chicago on April 19, 1997, recognized Kaiser as a public relations legend. During that same ceremony, she passed the torch in public relations to Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, who received the Torchbearer Award.

As part of a CBS special Fourth of July program on July 4, 1997, titled "What's Right With America," Kaiser was interviewed by Dan Rather and was one of four people profiled as having made a difference in America. Kaiser's major achievements in public relations and her leadership in advancing black business women were accompanied by a collage of pictures that showed her conversing with such luminaries as former presidents Nixon and Ford, both of whom she consulted on issues pertinent to women of color in business.

Kaiser spent her life making the world more inclusive and along the way became a pathfinder and a pioneer. Remarking on her success, Kaiser notes, "I was just a woman who happened to be black and good. Persistence and patience are the biggest things I've learned. Still, I think the thing that keeps me going is my faith in God."

Isobel Parke

Isobel Parke (1926–) is president and senior counsel of Jackson, Jackson, & Wagner, one of the most well-known consulting firms in the United States. Parke stands out in public relations history for her wide breadth of contributions to the field since the 1960s. She helped to increase professionalism of the practice and champion undergraduate public relations education. In particular, she contributed to the development of modern-day strategic environmental communication and coalition building. Her ability to balance her commitments to public relations as a democratic process, to educational issues, and to environmental concerns

makes her a role model for today's young women entering public relations. "Even though we didn't consider ourselves feminists, per se, we wanted equal opportunity," Parke said of women like herself working in public relations 35 years ago, "and we were prepared to work for that" (Parke, personal communication, 2003).

Parke's first foray into the practice of public relations occurred when she was in her early thirties and had the opportunity to help organize and promote the New England Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair in New York. She had met Miriam Jackson and Patrick Jackson through mutual acquaintances and began to work for Jackson, Jackson, & Wagner, which was responsible for organizing and marketing the exhibition. She helped collect objects that represented New England from museums and then promoted the items through the media to attract fair attendees. She learned to work with media through trial and error. (She once sent a *Boston Globe* reporter a promotional photograph in a large, thick, blue paper "mat" frame in response to him requesting a "matte" finished photograph.)

After the Fair, Parke moved with Patrick Jackson and Miriam Jackson, owners and operators of Jackson, Jackson, & Wagner, to a 1735 farmhouse in New Hampshire. They grew their own fruits and vegetables and raised pigs while working for mostly nonprofit organizations. Parke's first client was a financially challenged repertory company. Parke helped the organization increase its audience base, but she also found herself placating creditors and electric companies that wanted to shut down the organization.

In the 1960s, Parke spearheaded Jackson, Jackson, & Wagner's statewide effort to build an environmental coalition to change an article in New Hampshire's constitution that allowed corporations to clear forests for purposes of business development. Parke brought together garden clubs, parent-teacher associations, residents, environmental organizations, and local businesses and politicians. This coalition helped establish state limitations and restrictions on land use, and it became a model for advocacy campaigns for the environment. Parke continues to serve on the coalition to maintain the amendment for open space.

Parke described herself as "the inner wheel" (Parke, personal communication, August 5, 2003) of Jackson, Jackson, & Wagner, a behind-the-scenes

motivator for Patrick Jackson's vision of strategic management. Although most of Parke's initial clients were nonprofit organizations, she began working with corporations who were seeking to better understand citizen groups and environmental advocacy. Parke said, "The first responsibility of public relations is to consider the public good" (Parke, personal communication, August 5, 2003). For almost 40 years, Parke's expertise built on issue anticipation and analysis, community coalition building, strategic planning, and crisis containment. She counseled environmental coalitions on land conservation, health-care organizations on mergers and restructuring, and the private school sector on crisis communication. She explained part of her work philosophy: "It's important to have a holistic grasp of the historical and societal issues before working on public relations solutions" (Parke, personal communication, August 5, 2003).

Parke enhanced professional development for public relations as a management function through her service to the PRSA. Parke is an accredited member and fellow of PRSA, served as a director of PRSA's national board from 1986 to 1987, and served as national board secretary in 1988. She was a founding member of PRSA's Yankee Chapter, which constitutes members from Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. It was these activities in PRSA that led to her passion for public relations education.

In 1986, Parke was appointed PRSA board liaison to the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). She recalled, "At the time I had an 18 year old stepdaughter. I had little confidence in dealing with several thousand teenagers all at once!" However, she agreed to the position and attended her first PRSSA board meeting. The students at the meeting were surprised to see her because professional liaisons rarely attended their meetings. However, Parke wanted to familiarize herself with the students as well as the organization. She recounts the moment when she walked into the board meeting: "Arriving a little late, I walked in and there was a wary silence. They asked, 'Who are you?' I said, 'I'm your board liaison.' After a moment, they brought me a chair and we got to work" (Parke, personal communication, August 5, 2003). For the next two years she helped PRSSA with decisions and strategies for the benefit of its student members.

Parke was a 2002 recipient of the David W. Ferguson Award presented by the PRSA Educators Academy, which honors practitioners who have made significant contributions to advancing the profession through their support of public relations education. She was also a member of PRSA's Educational Affairs Committee (1992–2002), represented PRSA on the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (1997–2003), and is a member of PRSA's Commission on Public Relations Education (1997–present).

Along with this active career in public relations, Parke built a reputation for public service in New Hampshire. She is the first woman president of the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association and president of the Rockingham County Woodland Owners Association. She is a member of several other organizations, including the Rockingham County Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice, the SPACE Board of Directors and Legislation Committee, the Epping Conservation Committee, and the Seacoast Growers Association.

Parke is an award-winning conservationist and for almost 40 years worked to preserve New Hampshire's land and timber industry. She operated and cared for Tributary Farm since first moving there in 1964. The farm was originally 61 acres, but in 1992 Parke and Patrick Jackson purchased over 100 acres adjacent to the property to save the land from possible real estate development. In 2002, the New Hampshire Tree Farm Executive Committee named Parke the New Hampshire Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. To be eligible for the award, Parke had to meet specific objectives within 5 years that were set forth in an action plan written by her. Her objectives included improving the harvesting quality of mixed timber species, encouraging wildlife, and providing recreational enjoyment. Parke makes Tributary Farm an educational experience for college students who come to work and for kindergarten children who come to explore. She also frequently testifies before the New Hampshire legislature on a variety of forestry issues, such as licenses and use of wood-burning plants. She has won the John Hoar Award by the Rockingham County Woodland Owners Association and the Kendall Norcott Award, the highest recognition from the New Hampshire Timberland Owners

Association. Finally, Parke is president-elect for the Granite State Woodland Institute. She said, "With ownership of land comes the responsibility of good stewardship for the next generation" (Parke, personal communication, August 5, 2003).

Born in a country village called Sturminster Marshall in Dorset, England, Parke received her high school degree in Boston from the Winsor School. She returned to England for her master's in modern history from Oxford University. After graduation, she worked for 12 years as manager of education programs at Moor Park College, an experimental adult education college. She was married to Patrick Jackson from 1974 to 1994 and remained an integral partner in his life and work until his death in March 2001. Parke said that she gave Jackson "the partnership he needed to establish for our profession the vision and the challenge of behavioral public relations" (Parke, personal communication, August 5, 2003).

Corporate

Ann Barkelew

Ann Barkelew (1935–) established a reputation for being one of the best public relations professionals in the field. Barkelew retired from her position as senior partner and founding general manager of Fleishman-Hillard Inc., an international communications agency, in 2001. She is now a senior counselor for the agency, providing expertise to Fleishman-Hillard worldwide on special projects.

Barkelew was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, on March 21, 1935, to Alexander Hamilton, an engineer, and Ruth Welsh Hamilton, a teacher. At the age of 12, she moved with her family to Jefferson City, Missouri. Barkelew recalls that her mother always worked, from the time Ann was little. She characterized her as an "incredible person" (Barkelew, personal communication, October 20, 2003). Active and involved, Barkelew's mother served as a strong role model for working women. Her father's political career helped Barkelew embrace a life of service, encouraging her to not stand idly by, but to jump in and take an active role in her community. A Girl Scout throughout her public school years, Barkelew credits this experience as very important in shaping her personality.

Barkelew had one brother, William Warren Hamilton, who died in 1984.

Barkelew graduated from Central Missouri State University with a bachelor's degree in 1957. After graduating, she taught English and journalism in high schools in California and Missouri until she entered a master's program in 1965. She finished her master's degree in 1966, taking a year's leave of absence from her regular job to complete this advanced degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Her master's thesis, which organized a program of public relations for the Santa Barbara schools, so impressed administrators that she was invited to work in the district's central office to implement the public relations program. Although Barkelew acknowledges that she never wished to be an administrator, this assignment allowed her to test her management skills and propelled her into a very successful public relations career.

She worked in community relations for the Santa Barbara schools from 1966 to 1971. From 1972 until 1981, she was the chief public information officer for the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Barkelew characterized the Compton, California, teachers' strike as the first big strike in a series of strikes in the 1970s, which created great challenges for her and for California public education. Rather than deal with strikes once they began, Barkelew encouraged administrators to work to avert strikes. This was during a period of severe enrollment decline and the closing of more than 100 secondary schools in Los Angeles County. Barkelew's formula for using communication to manage these crises included honest communication with teachers about the school district's finances. She believed in keeping school employees informed because she saw them as the most important group in the school system.

She entered the field of corporate public relations in 1981, when Munsingwear tapped her to help manage a major plant closing in Minnesota, followed by plant closings around the country. She joined Munsingwear Inc. as the vice president of corporate relations in order to build a corporate communications department. What was supposed to be a six-month leave of absence from Los Angeles County turned into a permanent move to Minnesota, a state she says she quickly came to love.

She joined Dayton Hudson as the vice president of corporate public relations in 1982 and played a

major role in avoiding a hostile takeover threat to the corporation in 1987. Barkelew holds the distinction of being the first woman to be named a member of the Dayton Hudson Management Committee.

In 1984, Barkelew joined the Board of Directors of the Children's Theatre of Minneapolis. After just two weeks on the board, Barkelew and the board of directors faced an issue that would tear the artistic community apart. Just before the Theatre's Spring Show opened, John Clark Donahue, the theatre's artistic director, was accused of sexually abusing young boys. Known for her ability to work and succeed in a crisis, Barkelew quickly convened a public relations committee to handle the situation. She and other board members met with parents, children, and donors to work through the crisis. An interim executive committee, which Barkelew chaired, helped oversee the theatre during this difficult time. The situation was successfully managed, and today the theatre is one of the strongest regional theaters in America. In 2003, it was the first children's theatre to receive a regional Tony Award. Barkelew served as chairman of the theatre's board of directors and remained on the children's theatre board for 14 years.

Barkelew retired from Dayton Hudson (now known as Target Corp.) in 1994, but clients kept contacting her, and true retirement has never really been possible. Within less than a month of leaving Dayton Hudson, Barkelew had three significant clients, and in addition to her consulting work, she served on several boards of directors.

From 1995 to 1996, Barkelew was a senior counselor, offering advice to corporations in the Twin Cities and often working with Patrick (Pat) Jackson of Jackson, Jackson & Wagner. Although Barkelew was never a big supporter of public relations agencies, Fleishman-Hillard CEO, John Graham convinced her to join his firm by offering her the opportunity to create the kind of agency office she would have hired when she was in corporate America. She became the first general manager of Fleishman-Hillard in Minneapolis-St. Paul when the office opened on July 1, 1996.

Barkelew, an Accredited Public Relations Practitioner (1973), was also involved in the advancement of the field, working to establish common accreditation standards and codes of ethics for the public relations profession. As president of the

National School Public Relations Association, in 1980 she cofounded a coordinating body for professional societies in the field called the North American Public Relations Council. Barkelew is a member of PRSA and has in the past cochaired its National Committee on the Future of Public Relations. She was elected to PRSA's College of Fellows in 1990 and served as its chair in 1992.

In September 2003, she was presented with the Arthur B. Page Society's Distinguished Service Award. This award recognizes a person whose contributions over the years in service to the profession have strengthened the role of public relations in our society. She is a member of the board of directors of the Arthur W. Page Society and is a former member of the PR Seminar and the Wisemen.

Barkelew has received many other awards:

1984—President's Award, National School Public Relations Association

1985—One of 85 Outstanding Women in Business (*BusinessWeek's* "85 in '85")

1993—Vernon C. Schranz Lecturer Award, Ball State University

1993—National Honor Roll of Women in Public Relations, Northern Illinois University

1995—National Public Relations Achievement Award, Ball State University

1995—Learning and Liberty Award, National School Public Relations Association

1995—Voted by international peers as "PR News Public Relations Professional of the Year"

1997—Public Relations Hall of Fame, Rowan University

1999—One of City Business's 25 Most Influential Women in Business in Minnesota

2001—Fleishman-Hillard Lifetime Achievement Award

What also makes Barkelew exceptional are her public relations efforts in day-to-day work. She prefers answering her own telephone calls and does not leave work without returning every press call that she receives that day ("Corporate PR Heads," 1993).

Barkelew credits her tremendous success in public relations to one thing: teamwork. "I love working with teams. I love leading things. Working together, we can make great things happen" (Barkelew, personal communication, 2003). Barkelew says she always had an advisory council wherever she worked and made sure she pulled people from all areas of the businesses in which she worked. "Teams," she notes, "can accomplish great things" (Barkelew, personal communication, October 20, 2003).

Dorothy Gregg

Dorothy Gregg (1920–1997), PhD, was the first woman appointed a corporate officer at Celanese Corporation and was the first vice president of the National Council of Women in the United States.

Gregg was vice president of communication at Celanese for eight years, from 1975 to 1983, and was a senior consultant to Ruder, Finn & Rotman from 1983 to 1987, when she left to open her own firm. Prior to joining Celanese, she was assistant to the director of public relations at U.S. Steel Corporation, a pioneering position she held for 16 years.

Gregg was a public relations consultant since 1954, and her contributions to the field were highlighted by numerous awards. Her exceptional leadership skills and achievements were well recognized statewide and nationwide. She was a 1962 recipient of the New York State Woman Award, given by the New York Department of Commerce. In 1968, she received the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs Top Hat Award, the American Advertising Federation's National Advertising Woman of the Year Award, and the Advertising Woman of the Year Award in New York City. In 1969, she was the recipient of Governor Rockefeller's Certificate of Honor.

A distinguished female executive herself, Gregg was dedicated to advancing the role of women in public relations and marketing communication. As an expression of her concern for women, she chaired the Committee on Women in Public Relations, supervised the Association for Women in Communication, and was director of the American Woman's Association and the Advertising Women of New York. She was also a member of the board of governors of the International Women's Forum and the New York Women's Forum.

Other national honorary organizations where she was a member include Gamma Alpha Chi, Phi Beta Kappa, Pi Sigma Alpha, and Theta Sigma Phi.

Gregg began her career as an educator. She had been an assistant professor in Columbia University's Economics Department and on the faculty of Barnard College, the New School of Social Research, Pace College, and the University of Texas.

A graduate of the University of Texas with a B.A. and M.A. degrees in economics, Gregg earned her Ph.D. in the same discipline from Columbia University.

Denny Griswold

Denny Griswold (1908–2001), cofounder and editor of *PR News*, was a dynamic force who facilitated the spread of public relations throughout the world during the second half of the 20th century.

She is credited with having a profound influence on winning management recognition for public relations. She said, "I early on felt that unless management gave public relations its support and understood it, public relations couldn't get anywhere" (S. A. Serini, interview with Denny Griswold, June 21, 1994). *PR News* was founded in part to address that concern. During her tenure on the editorial staffs of *Forbes* and then *Business Week*, she met many industrialists. "I was appalled at how little they knew about public relations . . . and I became motivated and almost obsessed with the need for public relations" (S. A. Serini, interview with Denny Griswold, June 21, 1994).

Griswold championed the importance of public relations among top management and the growing number of public relations practitioners, ultimately defining the field as a management function. She developed the following definition of public relations for *Webster's Dictionary* in the late 1940s:

Public relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. (J. Fox, interview with Denny Griswold, May 21, 1992)

A tireless advocate for the profession, she liberally distributed business cards with that definition

as well as large green buttons emblazoned with a phrase she coined, "PRoud to be in PR."

Griswold's understanding of public relations developed early in her career. She began working for the media, but quickly made the transition to public relations. Her experience in the offices of early public relations pioneers, Benjamin Sonnenberg and Edward Bernays, as well as her advertising promotion background at J. Walter Thompson and Conde Nast, prepared her well. By the time she met and married Glenn Griswold, editor and publisher of *Business Week*, she was ready for a new venture.

The Griswolds left the magazine business to form a public relations agency to provide counsel to large industrial accounts. Mr. Griswold brought his vast experience and connections with American industrialists, and she brought the public relations acumen.

There was very little written about the practice of public relations at the time, and the Griswolds recognized that as a weakness in the field. They founded *PR News*, the first public relations weekly in the world, in 1944, and Mrs. Griswold served as editor for nearly 50 years. *PR News* filled an important void in the developing field of public relations, providing not only news and information, but the first case studies as well.

During World War II, Mrs. Griswold arranged to send *PR News* to public information officers overseas. It kept them informed about and connected to the growing field of public relations, which they entered in large numbers when the war ended. That was also the beginning of the spread of *PR News* into international markets. By the end of the 20th century, it had subscribers in over 90 countries and was instrumental in spreading the practice of public relations globally. She said, "We are developing a profession that will contribute to international relations, and bring to us the peace and harmony that we are all seeking" (N. Carlson, interview with Denny Griswold, November 11, 1986).

Also in response to the paucity of public relations literature, the Griswolds coauthored a 634-page handbook, *Your Public Relations*, which was used in classrooms as well as by working professionals. It was published in 1948, 2 years before Mr. Griswold died of cancer.

In addition to building the literature in the field, the Griswolds also worked to build important social networks to facilitate the growth and understanding

of public relations. They held many social gatherings at their New York townhouse on East 80th Street. Some of the most powerful and influential people of the decade—industry CEOs, diplomats, senior executive officers, heads of public relations and advertising agencies, prominent public relations practitioners, and thinkers of all genres—gathered, conversed, and built relationships there. "I love giving parties and our parties are quite famous," Mrs. Griswold said (S. A. Serini, interview with Denny Griswold, June 21, 1994).

Mrs. Griswold was a driving force in building important professional organizations. She was instrumental in founding Women Executives in Public Relations in the 1950s, and was credited with facilitating the development of public relations organizations abroad as well. She claimed responsibility for proposing the idea of holding a meeting of top public relations executives in conjunction with the annual Congress of American Industry, sponsored by the National Association of Manufacturers, to which CEOs were invited to discuss issues and problems of business. That meeting evolved into what is known today as the annual PR Seminar.

She traveled extensively, promoting public relations and *PR News* at conferences and important gatherings throughout the world. She was an active member of numerous professional organizations, including the PRSA, the International Public Relations Association, Women Executives in Public Relations, and the Newsletter Association.

Mrs. Griswold is a recipient of the highest award presented to an individual by the PRSA, the Gold Anvil. During her lifetime, she received over 130 honors for her contributions to public relations from organizations around the world, including Women in Communications, International Women's Forum, the International PR Association, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the National Association of Manufacturers. She was also one of the first women to be named to the Northern Illinois University Honor Roll of Women in Public Relations in 1993.

She was a strong voice for the important role that social responsibility plays in doing business, and was herself actively involved in a wide variety of service activities. She gave generously of her time and talent and served on numerous boards

and advisory committees, including the USO (United Service Organizations), the Camp Fire Girls of America, the Institute of International Education, the Joint Council on Economic Education, Pace College, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Following her death, the Women Executives in Public Relations Foundation instituted an annual award in her name, the Denny Griswold Award for Social Responsibility.

She held two degrees, a bachelor of arts from Hunter College and a master of arts from Radcliffe, and she started work on a doctorate at Columbia University. "I like to learn," she said, "and I feel like I've wasted a day if I haven't learned something" (S. A. Serini, interview with Denny Griswold, June 21, 1994).

Although she refused to call herself a feminist, her commitment to an egalitarian workplace was unequivocal. She broke through the glass ceiling long before women had entered the workplace in significant numbers, and she helped other women do the same. Women Executives in Public Relations stands as but one example of that effort.

After the death of her first husband, Mrs. Griswold married investment manager J. Langdon Sullivan. She retained Griswold as her professional name.

In an interview recorded before she died, she was asked how she would like to be remembered. Here is what she said:

I would like them to remember me as a force that . . . can be credited to some extent for having spread the practice of Public Relations throughout the world. . . . And I think that I would like to be recognized as having persuaded top management that there was something besides the bottom line to doing business—and that was to recognize their social responsibility. (S. A. Serini, interview with Denny Griswold, June 21, 1994)

Caroline Hood

Caroline Hood (married name Carlin) (1909–1981) was the first woman vice president of Rockefeller Center, Inc., a 21-building development in Manhattan, where she managed public relations programs, community events, and corporate advertising from 1934 to 1973. Hood was also the first woman to be elected to the board of directors

of the New York Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Radio City Music Hall.

Hood began her work at Rockefeller Center as a "Flying Ambassadors" traveling thousands of miles annually to publicize and promote the new multi-building project (PR Newswire, 1981), although a 1951 article on women in public relations reported that Caroline Hood began selling souvenirs to tourists in the basement of Rockefeller Center and then suggested offering tours of the Center's gardens to the public ("Women in Public Relations," 1951, p. 6).

Some of her accomplishments include the annual search for the famous Rockefeller Center Christmas tree; receptions for the world's great—"from the Dionne quintuplets to Haile Selassie to Princess Margaret; the celebration for the liberation of Paris in 1944 to the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremonies" (Carolyn Hood, *PR Newswire*, 1981, p. 1).

In 1972, Hood received the Distinguished Service Award from the New York Chapter of the PRSA, the first woman so honored. The New York Chapter of Theta Sigma Pi, a national journalism sorority, named her the outstanding woman in journalism and communication.

Hood was a past president of Women Executives in Public Relations and of Advertising Women in New York.

In 1959, she served on a 16-member advisory panel for the United States Information Agency in Washington, D.C., and in 1963 served on the New York State Women's Council. In 1964, the Republican Women in Business and Professions honored her as "the outstanding woman in public relations." Her career highlights are housed at the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College.

Hood studied at Columbia University and the New School. She was married to John Hayward Carlin.

Lee K. Jaffe

Lee K. Jaffe, APR, Fellow PRSA, and award-winning government public relations practitioner, served as director of public relations for The Port of New York Authority from 1944 until 1965, during the revitalization of Manhattan's financial district and the planning and early construction of the World Trade Center. She is credited with suggesting

that the World Trade Center be the tallest building in the world and, by the time she retired, she was said to be earning the highest salary in the country for someone at her level.

Born Lillian Kreiselman in Treveskyn, Pennsylvania, and schooled in Ohio, Jaffe moved to Wichita, Kansas, with her family after graduating from high school. There she soon began working for U.S. Senator Henry J. Allen. Allen also was born in Pennsylvania, but moved to Kansas with his family at the age of 2. He was a reporter turned newspaper publisher who served first as the governor of Kansas from 1919 to 1923, and later as the publicity director for the Republican National Committee before being appointed to fill a U.S. Senate seat from 1929 to 1930.

When Allen lost his bid for that seat, he set Jaffe up as the Washington correspondent for his flagship newspaper, the *Wichita (Kansas) Beacon*, where her first story was the 1932 Veterans' Bonus March, a demonstration by 12,000 to 15,000 veterans calling for their World War I service benefits. She also wrote for the *Binghamton (New York) Press* and *The Northwestern Miller* trade journals before joining the Domestic Division of the Office of War Information. Later she worked for the New York Metropolitan Region of the Office of Price Administration, the wartime agency charged with price regulation and rationing; there she served first as an information officer and then as the regional radio director. She married Isidore Jaffe on December 22, 1933, and they lived in Great Neck, Long Island.

In 1944, Austin J. Tobin, a longtime Port Authority attorney who had become executive director two years earlier, hired Jaffe to help promote the agency's image during a time when the wartime lack of money and materials kept it from fulfilling its own mission. Founded on April 30, 1921, The Port of New York Authority was the first agency of its kind in the Western Hemisphere with a bi-state district, and it surrounded the Statue of Liberty (in 1972 the name changed to The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey). Over the years, it was responsible for the planning, building, policing, and administering of systems and structures relating to transportation, from bridges and tunnels to airports and a rail line—which later became the Port Authority Trans-Hudson lines (PATH)—as well as other commercial entities in

the port jurisdiction. Thus, the Port Authority eventually came to oversee the building of the World Trade Center, which was originally conceived in the 1940s as a global import/export business center in downtown Manhattan.

With the backing of David Rockefeller and his Downtown-Lower Manhattan Development Association, then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and the Port Authority, among others, the first plans for the center were unveiled in 1961. But a year earlier, according to historian Angus Kress Gillespie, Jaffe wrote a memo suggesting that the center be the tallest in the world. As it turned out, the final set of plans presented to the public in 1964 revealed two towers, each of which would be the tallest in the world upon completion—only to be upstaged by the Sears Tower in Chicago a month before the Center's dedication on April 4, 1973.

Jaffe reported directly to Tobin. Known professionally as Lee K. Jaffe, much of her subsequent success could be attributed to her own ideas concerning government public relations. In January 1950 Jaffe published an article in *Public Relations Journal*, the trade magazine of the PRSA, in which she emphasized the importance of public relations in city government as a nonpolitical function and one that represented "one single, assigned and authoritative news source" (Jaffe, 1950, p. 4) for the media and the general public. Additionally, she stressed the policy-level function of her role as the director of public relations for the Port Authority, her refusal to bury bad news or to block media access to Port Authority management, and her practice of responding promptly to inquiries and on-site visit requests. Indeed, Jaffe testified in a 1960 U.S. House Judiciary investigation into Port Authority finances that \$2,609 worth of meals spent on herself, her assistant, and the media at New York International Airport's Golden Door restaurant over a period of two and one-half years was part of the job when conducting press tours or sponsoring other Port Authority media events.

Jaffe joined PRSA in May 1950. In 1951 she was elected president of the Government Public Relations Association, which consisted of state and city practitioners. In 1955 she published another article in *Public Relations Journal* exploring the place of government public relations in the post-Korean War world. Reminding readers of the 1913 federal legislation prohibiting the funding of publicists

with congressional monies unless the funding was “specifically appropriated for that purpose,” Jaffe pointed out that the top annual salary among federal civil service information specialists during the previous year was \$12,690, whereas the 1955–1956 budget for the United States Information Agency was \$85 million. She observed,

The Washington “propaganda machine” of World War I has been traded in from administration to administration for newer and more powerful models. There is room for some traffic direction, if not control to keep the contraptions [the many information offices] from running wild and crashing head-on. (Jaffe, 1955, pp. 78–79)

Better organization could foster improved relations with the public, she said, and it would “increase the dignity and self-respect of public relations personnel” (Jaffe, 1955, p. 79). Ultimately, though, Jaffe wrote, “Government must first do a job that people can think well of, and then intelligently and deftly call attention to it” (Jaffe, 1955, p. 141).

In February 1956, Jaffe and the Port Authority received the Best Government Public Relations Award from PRSA. In May of that year, she was one of three speakers at the Southern Public Relations Conference in New Orleans, during which she emphasized the importance of government listening to the public, being open and honest with it, and complying with the public’s desires as much as possible. In October 1956, Jaffe served on a panel, “Women in Public Relations,” at the ninth PRSA Conference in Milwaukee. In 1958, she and *PR News* editor Denny Griswold were the only two women representing PRSA at the First World Congress of Public Relations in Brussels.

In 1965 Jaffe became the first woman to receive PRSA’s Gold Anvil Award for lifetime achievement. In May of that year, she retired from the Port Authority after 21 years of service and, with a salary of \$35,000, as the highest paid person at that level of government relations. In 1989, Jaffe was one of 26 inductees into PRSA’s inaugural class of the College of Fellows, along with other Golden Anvil winners Leone Baxter; Edward L. Bernays; John F. Budd, Jr.; Chester Burger; Harold Burson; Allen H. Center, PhD; W. Howard Chase; Kalman B. Druck; Dan J. Forrestal; Lawrence G. Foster;

James F. Fox; Ralph E. Frede; Denny Griswold; George Hammond; Rex F. Harlow, PhD; Carl F. Hawver, PhD; Patrick Jackson; Philip Lesly; Ed Lipscomb; Donald B. McCammond; Hale Nelson; Betsy Ann Plank; J. Handly Wright; Frank W. Wylie; and Kenneth Youel.

In the October/November 1994 issue of the *Public Relations Journal*, some of the past Gold Anvil recipients were asked to comment on the future of the public relations field. True to form, Jaffe emphasized that “integrity is the key to the proper practice of public relations” and that public relations practitioners should make it a priority not only to weigh in on policy decisions, but also to put themselves in the shoes of those who are affected by those policies.

Throughout her career, Jaffe was a member of a number of professional and community groups, including the Aviation Writers Association, the Foreign Press Association, the Women’s City Club, and the Women’s National Press Club. She served on the board of the American Public Relations Association, the Government Public Relations Association, the New York chapter of PRSA, and the Greater New York Safety Councils. Additionally, the American Public Relations Association recognized Jaffe in 1950, 1951, and 1957 for her work in government, as did the Government Public Relations Association in 1955 and 1956. In June 1955, *Charm*, a magazine for working women, selected Jaffe to spotlight the achievements of the 1,328,747 working women in New York. In 1958, *PR News* honored Jaffe with its Annual Achievement Award.

Marilyn Laurie

Marilyn Laurie (1939–2010) was the first woman to hold senior leadership positions for American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T), one of the first corporations in the United States to recognize its social responsibility obligations through the work of the first AT&T public relations leader, Arthur Page. Laurie was senior vice president of public relations and employee information and in 1997 held the position of executive vice president-brand strategy and marketing communications for the telecommunications giant. She was a member of the company’s Management Executive Committee. Her responsibilities included

“managing one of the world’s best known brands and counseling AT&T’s chairman on managing the communications and corporate reputation for the company’s 300,000 employees” (AT&T’s Marilyn Laurie, *PR Newswire*, 1995).

Retired from AT&T in 1998, Laurie worked for AT&T since 1971, as speech writer, vice president of Bell Laboratories, and senior vice president of global communications. She served as a trustee of the AT&T Foundation and headed Laurie Consulting in New York.

Prior to 1971, Laurie was a nationally recognized environmentalist. She was one of the originators of Earth Day in 1970 and cofounder of the Environmental Action Committee. She wrote for *The New York Times* environmental section on environmental issues.

She was an officer of the PR Seminar. She was the female member of the Arthur Page Society Hall of Fame.

Laurie was on the board of directors of the New York City Ballet. She worked for the fund for New York City Public Relations Education and the New York City Partnership.

For her professional achievements and dedication to civic service, Laurie was recognized by the Women’s Campaign of the American Jewish Committee with the 1995 Human Relations Award. She was elected to the YMCA Academy of Women Achievers; she received a Women in Communications Matrix Award, the Tribute to Women in International Industry Award and the Women’s Equity Action League Award.

Laurie graduated from Barnard College and received an MBA from Pace University.

Laurie took responsibility in 1993 for an offensive cartoon that appeared in a company employee magazine. To the employees of AT&T she said: There’s no excuse for it, and we have sincerely apologized for publishing such insulting materials. We also have taken a number of steps in response, including ceasing to publish the magazine (“Text of Letter of Apology,” 1993).

Jean Way Schoonover

Jean Way Schoonover (1920–2012) was president of D-A-Y, Dudley-Anderson-Yutzy, the first major public relations firm in the New York City to be owned and managed by women.

Dudley-Anderson-Yutzy Public Relations, traces its history to its founding by Pendleton Dudley in 1909. Schoonover and her sister, Barbara Hunter, purchased the firm from the original partners in 1970. It was acquired by Ogilvy & Mather in 1983.

Schoonover grew up in Westport on Lake Champlain, New York. She graduated with a BA from Cornell University in 1941, majoring in English and Education. Her first jobs were as an English teacher and librarian at Castleton Union School, in Hudson, New York, from 1941 to 1943.

Schoonover moved to New York City in 1943 in hopes of getting a job as a newspaper reporter. She worked as a ticket seller at Penn Station until she was finally hired as a reporter for *Food Field Reporter*, a biweekly trade paper for food industry executives. Schoonover interviewed Clarence Birdseye, who had sold his frozen food business to General Foods. Her story was noticed by George Anderson, partner at D-A-Y, who hired Schoonover as an account executive in 1949.

Schoonover and her sister Barbara Hunter purchased D-A-Y when it was ranked about 15th among national public relations companies. They incorporated the company, with Schoonover as president and Hunter as executive vice president. When Schoonover signed the first paychecks, she discovered that the men executives were making \$25,000 a year, while she and Hunter were making \$18,000. Later, Schoonover became chairman and CEO and Hunter became president of D-A-Y.

D-A-Y had the first home economics department and test kitchen in the agency business, with a staff of home economists developing recipes for food and wine accounts. Clients included Ac’cent International, Florida Citrus Commission, Gelantine, Nestle Co. SuCrest Corporate, Taylor Wine Co., United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association, and the Wash’n Dri, and Canaan Products, Inc (Dudley-Anderson-Yutzy Public Relations, 1971).

Under her leadership, D-A-Y won a number of PRSA Silver Anvil awards. D-A-Y handled the publicity, on a budget of \$25,000, for the Bicentennial reenactment of the capture from the British of Fort Ticonderoga.

D-A-Y pulled off the public relations triumph of 1983 with the 100th birthday party for the Brooklyn Bridge. Over two million New Yorkers and tourists came out for the eight-block-long parade

and 1,200 journalists reported on the story around the world (Hartman, 1983).

D-A-Y Helped the Tuna Research Foundation after a botulism incident occurred, containing the crisis that could have destroyed sales, with counsel on acting responsibly and making changes to maintain customer confidence and product loyalty.

D-A-Y clients received help with the women's market through programs on Women as Economic Equals, in cooperation with *Ladies' Home Journal* and a credit card company. D-A-Y helped AT&T with a conference titled Women in the Workforce.

In 1983, upon selling D-A-Y to Ogilvy & Mather, Schoonover managed D-A-Y, eventually folded into O&M public relations offices, with offices in New York, Washington, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, and Los Angeles. Schoonover became vice chairman in 1988 of the Ogilvy & Mather Public Relations Group and a senior vice president of Ogilvy & Mather United States.

Schoonover retired in 1990. After her retirement, she spent her time in pro bono activities and served on the Board of Director of Bliss, Gouverneur & Associates, a New York public relations firm.

Schoonover volunteered her leadership as president of the YMCA of the City of New York, 1994–1998. She was president of the Women Executives in Public Relations, New York City, 1979–1980; and, president of the Public Relations Society of New York in 1979. In 1987–1989, she was a member and vice chair of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS). Her role was to report to commanding officers and the Department of Defense about military base conditions for women. She was on the Cornell University Board of Trustees from 1975–1980. She helped the International Women's Forum publicize "Why Women Lead" by Dr. Judy Rosner, featured in the 1990 issue of *Harvard Business Review*.

Schoonover spoke to various groups, including a *Vital Speeches* selection, "Why Corporate America Fears Women," presented in 1974 to a seminar for life insurance executives.

Schoonover received many awards for her achievements: the Advertising Woman of the Year Award, 1972; the Matrix Award from Women in Communications, 1976; *Business Week's* top 100 Corporate Women; the International Association of Women Business Owners Leadership

Award; the National Association of Women Business owners Entrepreneurial Woman Award; the National Headliner Award in Communications Inc., 1984; the Big WEAL Award, Women's Equity Action League, 1985; and, the Achievement Award from the League of Women Voters of New York City, 1997.

Service to the Profession

Alice L. Beeman

Alice L. Beeman (1919–2003) was named in 1974 the first woman president of a national public relations association, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), a position she held until 1978.

CASE represented a merger from the American College Public Relations Association and the American Alumni Council and a shift in emphasis from college publicity to a focus on fundraising and development. Today, CASE is the professional organization for those who work in alumni relations, communications, and development.

Beeman began her communication career as a reporter for the University of Texas News Service. Also, she held university relations positions at Vanderbilt University and the University of Michigan. During her 22 years at Michigan, she established a new university publications office and served as director of the Office of Publications ("A Legendary Loss," 2003). She was General Director of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in Washington, D.C., from 1969 to 1974.

Beeman was president in 1975 of the American College of Public Relations Association and president of the AAUW Michigan chapter from 1955 to 1957.

She received her BJ in 1941 from the University of Texas; her LLD at Central Methodist College and LHD from Anderson-Broadbudd College, 1973 and Boston University, 1978.

CASE honored Beeman by naming in her honor its annual research awards, recognizing outstanding theses, dissertations, and published scholarship on communications and education.

Upon her passing, former CASE President, Peter McE. Buchanan reported Beeman's observation about the people of advancement in which she said: "To the degree that we convey our faith in education

to others, we will be successful in our work of educational advancement" ("A Legendary Loss," 2003).

Judith Bogart

Judith Bogart (Meredith) (1936–), a public relations consultant in 1983 became the second woman president of the PRSA. She commented on the fact that her presidency would be followed by a third woman president, Barbara Hunter: "It's good—gets us out of feeling we *should* have a woman. This way, we're breaking precedent. Now sex can play less of a part, even if no more women take posts in the *next* 10 years" ("Judith Bogart: Giving Something Back," 1983).

Bogart's career in nonprofit public relations was atypical of PRSA's choice in national leaders; however, Bogart pointed out that hospital public relations had much in common with corporate public relations. "Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati for example, one of the top 25 employers in Cincinnati in 1983, had an \$80 million budget" (Judith Bogart, 1983, p. 36).

After completing an undergraduate degree at Baldwin-Wallace College, Bogart began her professional public relations career for the Girl Scout Council in Great Cincinnati than in Arlington, Virginia for the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital, and later for the Great Rivers Council in Cincinnati. She was regional account executive for Education Funds, Inc., and director of community relations for the Cincinnati Human Relations Council.

Bogart was vice president of the Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati from 1977 to 1985. From 1985 to 1988, she was executive vice president of Diversified Communication Inc., Cincinnati. She purchased the Southwest Ohio office of Diversified Communications, changing its name in 1989 to Judith Bogart Associates, Cincinnati. From 1991 to 1996, she was director of public relations for Sive/Young & Rubicam, Cincinnati.

Bogart was named Career Woman of Achievement, YWCA, 1983; Fellow, PRSA in 1990; member and 1982 national headliner of Women in Communications; and president of the North American Public Relations Council in 1989. In 1995, she was on the Board of Governors of the Bankers Club and on the Board of Directors of the Institute for Community Capacity Building.

Bogart was winner of the Paul Lund national PRSA award for community service in 1999. In addition to the Girl Scouts of America, her career civic activities include service on Cincinnati's International Visitors Board, the Uptown Task Force Executive Committee, Xavier University's Community Relations Advisory Board and Northern Kentucky University and Western Kentucky University communication and journalism school advisory boards.

Carol Hills

Carol Hills (1924–2012) was a pioneer counselor and educator at the College of Communication at Boston University. Hills was one of the first female professors at Boston University. She taught from 1953 to 1970 in Boston University's Air Force Information Officers Training Program. She developed and taught a course on public relations at the U.S. Navy War College in Rhode Island. Hills held several offices in the PRSA. She chaired the Education Committee in 1960. She was a PRSSA Founding Committee member in 1987. She served on the PRSA Accreditation Board in the 1980s.

E. Roxie Howlett

E. Roxie Howlett, Fellow, PRSA, M.S. C.H.E., head of Howlett & Gaines Public Relations of Portland, Oregon, has been a leader in public service to society in the field of public relations, receiving the PRSA's Paul M. Lund Public Service Award in 1992. Lund challenged the field of public relations to change the human condition by becoming agents of understanding between institutions and society. Howlett illustrated this ideal through "exemplary dedication to the community of the San Francisco Bay area on a volunteer as well as professional basis" ("To Business Desk," *PR Newswire*, 1985).

Howlett volunteered her services to such organizations as the American Lung Association of San Francisco, the Commonwealth Club of California, the Assistance League of San Mateo County, the National Assistance League, and the San Francisco School of the Arts Foundation.

Howlett heads Howlett & Gaines in Portland, Oregon. Prior to the move to Oregon, Howlett and Gaines was located in the San Francisco

area from 1968 to 1989. Before she formed her own agency, from 1962 to 1968 Howlett was western manager, Home and Fashion Division for Infoplan, the public relations arm of McCann-Erickson, Inc., the first nonowner to run the San Francisco office of Infoplan.

Howlett worked as an account representative for Lee & Associates Public Relations, Los Angeles, California (1958–1968); was assistant food editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, and was director of Women's Programs, KPOJ radio, Portland, Oregon.

Howlett was a leader in the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), serving on the IPRA Council and coordinating IPRA interests with the PRSA International Section. In 1991, she reviewed the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Relations, Public Relations Diploma, creating regulations and a syllabus for the Professional Diploma in Public Relations.

Howlett held many leadership positions in the local, state and national levels of the PRSA, receiving national presidential citations for "meritorious service to the PRSA Counselors Section."

Howlett was the first woman president, in 1983, of the Public Relations Round Table of San Francisco, formed in 1939 and said to be the oldest public relations organization in the United States.

She was one of the first female members of the Commonwealth Club of California, a leading public affairs forum and the oldest and largest such forum with more than 20,000 members in the United States. Howlett served as secretary and Board of Governors member for the Commonwealth Club, helping receive visiting U.S. presidents, vice presidents, congressional leaders, world political personalities, authors, researchers and environmentalists.

Howlett's other professional activities included leadership roles in the American Home Economics Association; the Oregon Home Economics Association; the Oregon State University, College of Home Economics and Education Alumni Association; Kappa Omicron Nu; the International Federation for Home Economics; the California Home Economics Association; and the San Jose State University Public Relations Degree Advisory Board.

Other community service activities included Volunteers of America, Oregon, Inc., the American Lung Association of Oregon; the American Lung Association of California, where she was the

second woman to serve as its president in 1984–1985; and the national American Lung Association.

Howlett received a master of science degree from the University of California at Los Angeles, and a bachelor's of science from Oregon State University. She studied with Rex Harlow, Stanford University Professor Emeritus and a founder of public relations. In 1981, she was the first woman to receive the PRSA Rex Harlow Award.

Ruth Eileen Blower Kassewitz

Ruth Eileen Blower Kassewitz (1928–) began her professional public relations career armed with a bachelor of science degree in Journalism Management from Ohio State University in 1951. In that year, she started as a copywriter in charge of print advertising for the Ohio Fuel Gas Company, Columbus, Ohio. She continued to work in advertising as an account secretary for the Merritt Owens Agency, Kansas City, Kansas, and in 1956–1959 was an account executive for Grant Advertising, Inc., Miami, Florida.

Kassewitz's first public relations position came in 1968 as director of public relations for an architecture and engineering firm, Spillis/Candela Partners. In 1969, she became director of communications for the Metro-Dade County Department of Housing and Urban Development. In this position, she organized public information programs in urban renewal communities, helping impoverished citizens to communicate and participate in government's earliest community involvement initiatives.

With the passage in 1972 of the Florida Government-in-the-Sunshine Law, Metro-Dade County appointed Kassewitz to establish the first office of public information. As communications officer, Kassewitz launched a public relations campaign to inform the voters of the services represented by the county's \$550 million Decade of Progress bond issue. The campaign won a PRSA Silver Anvil Award in 1973.

Kassewitz ran a successful public information campaign for Metro Dade County's \$70 million water bond issue in 1974. The campaign won first place in the WICI (Women in Communications, Inc.) Clarion Awards.

During Kassewitz's 7 years as communication director, she built up her department from 1.5 to 13 staff persons to serve the public information

needs of the county manager, all county departments, and citizen advisory boards. Kasewitz accomplished this using an "internal agency" budgeting model so that the net impact on the county budget remained at 1.5 persons.

From 1978 to 1991, Kasewitz was administrator for public relations at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center. She created the campaign "One of the Nation's Best," helping increase the county hospitals' private patient admissions. This campaign won the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA) Golden Image Award. Kasewitz retired in 1990.

Kasewitz's public service and leadership in professional organizations includes serving as the first woman president in 1993–1994 of the Rotary Club of Miami, Inc. Rotary, founded in 1905, began accepting women into its membership only in 1987.

Kasewitz was Miami president of Women in Communication in 1962 and president of the Mental Health Association in 1982. She was president in 1963 of the Dade/Miami Lung Association and of the University of Miami Women's Guild in 1973–1974. She served on PRSA's national board of directors from 1974 to 1976 and was the South Florida PRSA Chapter president in 1969.

Now a public service/public relations consultant in Coral Gables, Kasewitz received the Miami PRSA Lifetime Achievement Award in 1975. Among her other awards are Woman of the Year from the University of Miami School of Medicine; the PRSA Paul M. Lund Community Service Award in 1993; the Distinguished Rotarian of the Year award, 1996; and Rotarian of the Year, International District award, 1999.

Amelia Lobsenz

Amelia Lobsenz (1922–1992) was the first woman president in 1996 of the IPRA (International Public Relations Association), and its fifth American president. Lobsenz was chairman and CEO of Lobsenz-Stevens, Inc., a public relations firm in New York City with annual billings of \$3.7 million and such clients as Clairol, Pitney Bowes, Bristol Myers Squibb, Procter and Gamble, and Mitsubishi Motors.

She was Director of International Affairs of Pinnacle Worldwide, a network of public relations firms in 20 countries.

Born in Greensboro, North Carolina, Lobsenz graduated from Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia. In the mid-1940s, she began her 40-year career as a freelance writer and book author. She worked for Edward Gottlieb & Associates before beginning her own firm Lobsenz PR in 1956. Her firm merged with Lobsenz-Stevens in 1975.

Lobsenz was a lecturer and writer whose articles appeared in *Ladies Home Journal*, *Reader's Digest*, *Family Circle*, and *Woman's Day*.

In her IPRA leadership role, Lobsenz developed a drug abuse education program, using a children's board game, to teach children about the realities of drug abuse in a nonthreatening environment.

William Corbett, 1990 president of IPRA, said of Lobsenz: "Amelia gave boundless energy and enthusiasm to the profession and she was always there to volunteer . . . she never stopped pushing." ("Amelia Lobsenz, Leading PR Woman Dies," 1992).

Lobsenz was a member of the Board of Governors of the National Women's Economic Alliance, the organization of business leaders who promote career opportunities for women; and was on the Board of the National Media Conference. She served on the PRSA national board in 1980–81 and received six PRSA presidential citations.

Lobsenz was honored in 1986 by PR societies in London, Paris, Milan, Frankfurt, Vienna and Tokyo. She received the Orleans, France Medal of Honor.

Pat Penney

In 1966, Patrician Penney Bennett (known professionally as Pat Penney) (1926–1998) became the first woman to chair the PRSA Counselor's Academy and she was the only woman to lead PRSA's first special interest group during the group's first two decades of existence.

At the 1965 Denver PRSA conference, Penney was nominated to become vice chair of the fledgling, 5-year-old group. She was then designated to become chair the following year. Male chauvinism so pervaded the practice at the time that a Detroit counselor rose to block Penney's nomination because she was a woman. Following a raucous discussion, the assembled members voted down the challenge. Penney's nomination was a milestone event in women's efforts to acquire more prominence in the field.

Penney served in 1965 as the first woman president of PRSA's Los Angeles chapter. She later became PRSA's national secretary in 1969.

A 1948 journalism graduate of the University of Kansas, Penney began her public relations career in the publicity department of Jerry Fairbanks Production in Hollywood and later became account director of the Harry Bennett agency and manager of corporate accounts for Communications Counselors, a subsidiary of McCann-Erickson.

She became a business partner with Harry Bennett, whom she married, and was president of Penney & Bennett, Inc., in Los Angeles from 1960 to 1973. The firm was a leading consultant in the emerging field of investor relations. Its prestigious client list included Prudential Insurance Company and Union Bank of California.

Following a brief stint as vice president of corporate relations in Summit Health, Ltd., in 1976 Penney opened her own firm, Pat Penney Public Relations, which she operated until the time of her death. Clients included her former employer, Summit Health, and leading Los Angeles institutions, consulting firms, charities, and philanthropic organizations.

Penney was active in and received awards from a variety of professional, business, and civic groups. From 1974 to 1988, she taught public relations part-time at the University of Southern California School of Journalism (now Annenberg School of Communications), where a public relations scholarship is established in her memory.

Rea W. Smith

Rea W. Smith (1918–1981), APR, served the PRSA for 23 years, first as assistant to Shirley D. Smith, PRSA executive director and her husband, and then as vice president of administration in 1960 and as the first woman executive vice president from 1975 to 1980.

In 1980, Smith became executive director of the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education (now called the Public Relations Foundation) until her death in 1981.

Her pioneering staff work for the national office of PRSA included staff executive for judicial and grievance matters, for legal affairs, for committees on the development of PRSA's Code of Ethics, and for the Accreditation Boards, following the initiation

of Accreditation in 1962. She authored the organizational plan for establishing the International Accreditation Council, adopted in 1975 (Rea Smith, APR, 1981).

Smith was born in Jamestown, New York. She began her career in public relations in the early 1940s. She was a TV talk show moderator and in Memphis, Tennessee, was one of the first women to produce political TV broadcasts. From 1946 to 1957, she and her husband partnered in a Memphis public relations firm, Shirley D. Smith & Associates.

Smith wrote many articles dealing with public relations and the PRSA. She was treasurer (1971–1973) and board member (1977–1978) of the Women Executives in Public Relations.

Elizabeth L. Toth

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Appendix B

Milestones in the History of Public Relations

Because public relations did not just begin at any point in history, scholars and practitioners have chronicled some of the most important and identifiable moments in the history that led up to the start of public relations by that name. As indicated in the entry titled “Antecedents of Modern Public Relations,” the practice as we know it today is part of a living legacy. The key moments indicate those communicative events that preceded and fostered today’s public relations. This history indicates the enduring efforts of some person or organization to communicate with others. At times, the efforts of public relations are geared to serve the larger interest of the community. At other times they are narrowly applied to serve the interest of some leader or organization. The following list is illustrative; please note that it is not exhaustive. Nevertheless, it demonstrates how public relations, for better or worse, is a vital part of the enduring fabric of human society in its many facets.

Many of the moments mentioned in the timeline below are either featured entries in this encyclopedia or important parts of such entries. This timeline should encourage the reader to learn more about these moments and think of them as stepping-stones in the stream that is the history of public relations.

1800 BC—In Sumeria, a farm bulletin telling farmers how to grow crops is one of the earliest examples of mass distribution of educational materials.

100 BC—A signal of the rise in importance of public opinion, the Romans coin the phrase *Vox populi; vox Dei*, “the voice of the people is the voice of God.”

52 BC—Julius Caesar sends reports, including “Caesar’s Gallic Wars,” to the Romans in preparation for his crossing the Rubicon River to invade Italy in 49 BC.

AD 1215—Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, mobilizes a disgruntled group of barons who confront King John with ultimatums that eventually mature into the Magna Carta.

AD 1315—John Wycliffe calls for reforms by the Catholic Church, including the publication of the Bible into the vernacular.

1500s—In the wake of the invention of printing with movable type by Johann Gutenberg in 1446, handbills and broadsides are used to promote various causes.

1517—Martin Luther starts the Reformation when he nails 95 theses proclaiming wrongdoings of the Roman Catholic Church to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany.

1622—Pope Gregory XV creates the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (College for Propagating the Faith), an effort by the Roman Catholic Church to retain followers and solicit converts in the aftermath of the Reformation. This was the origin of the term *propaganda*.

1641—Harvard College launches first systematic fundraising effort in the United States, sending students door-to-door to raise money.

1748—The first news release to solicit press coverage is sent by King’s College (now Columbia University) in New York.

1773—Sixty colonists dressed as Mohawk Indians demonstrate rising dissatisfaction with British tax policies by staging the Boston Tea Party, dumping 342 chests of tea valued at 10,000 pounds into Boston Harbor.

1787—The Federalist Papers, a series of 85 pamphlets that were also reprinted as articles in newspapers, were produced to generate support for the formal creation of the United States and passage of its Constitution.

1807—Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, combined *public* with *relations* in a statement about the obligation of government to the governed.

1829—Amos Kendall serves as the first presidential press secretary as a member of Andrew Jackson's "kitchen cabinet." In 1829, he was appointed fourth auditor of the Treasury, in addition to writing speeches, state papers, and news releases, conducting opinion polls, and developing the administration's own newspaper.

1840s—P. T. Barnum becomes the first press agent, promoting local appearances by his touring circus.

1850s—American railroads use publicity, advertising, and printed materials to attract tourists and settlers to the American West.

1882—Attorney Dorman Eaton first uses the term *public relations*, referring to an organization's role in service to the public welfare, in an address to Yale Law School graduates on "The Public Relations and Duties of the Legal Profession."

1888—Mutual Life Insurance Company creates a "species of literary bureau" to coordinate advertising and publicity.

1889—The first corporate public relations department is established by Westinghouse. Westinghouse ultimately prevailed in the ensuing "battle of the currents" to promote the benefits of alternating current (AC) versus the direct current (DC) invented earlier by Thomas Edison and the General Electric Company.

1895—Ford Motor Company pioneers press product previews for product promotion.

1896—The use of modern publicity in political campaigns begins with the presidential election

between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan when both candidates establish campaign headquarters in Chicago.

1897—General Electric creates a publicity department.

1900—The first public relations firm, Publicity Bureau of Boston, is established by George Michaelis, Herbert Small, and Thomas O. Marvin.

1902—H. S. Adams's article, "What Is Publicity?" is published in the *American Review*. It is believed to be the first magazine article about public relations.

1903—Ford Motor Company uses auto races for product promotion; Chicago Edison, under the direction of President Samuel Insull, does the same via an external magazine.

1906—Ivy Ledbetter Lee is hired to represent the coal industry in the anthracite coal miners' strike. Lee issues his "Declaration of Principles," considered the birth of modern public relations counseling.

1909—Chicago Edison uses films for product promotion; Pendleton Dudley opens his public relations agency on Wall Street, a firm (Dudley-Anderson-Yutzy) that was sold to Ogilvy & Mather in 1983.

1912—Chicago Edison uses stuffers inserted in customer bills for promotional purposes.

1914—The "Ludlow (Colorado) Massacre." State militia kill 20 people—striking Colorado Fuel and Iron Company miners, along with their wives and children—a tragedy that helped establish the value of corporate public relations. Ivy Lee represented Colorado Fuel and Iron owner J. D. Rockefeller's interests. No perpetrators are convicted, but many miners and union leaders are fired and blackballed.

1917—The Committee on Public Information, a government agency headed by George Creel (also known as the Creel Committee), promotes public support of American involvement in World War I; Former Atlanta journalist Edward Clarke and ex-madam Bessie Tyler form the Southern Publicity Association to promote World War I fund drives. After the war, they built up membership in the Ku Klux Klan by offering a \$10 induction fee to Klansmen for every new member they signed up.

1923—Edward L. Bernays publishes *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, the first book on professional public relations, and teaches the first public relations course at New York University.

1927—Arthur W. Page is named vice president of public relations at AT&T, accepting the job on the condition that he is allowed to be involved in policy making. Page would distinguish himself as the leading corporate practitioner of the century by emphasizing the importance of cooperation with the public and of disclosure about corporate activities; John W. Hill founds Hill & Knowlton.

1929—Edward Bernays stages two major public relations events as marches: the “Torches of Freedom” March in New York to promote smoking for women, and the “Golden Jubilee of Light” in Dearborn, Michigan, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the invention of the electric light bulb.

1931—Paul Garrett becomes the first public relations director at General Motors, inspiring other large corporations to make similar appointments.

1933—Campaigns, Inc., the first political campaign firm, is founded by husband and wife Clem Whitaker and Leone Baxter in California; President Franklin Delano Roosevelt uses his famous “fireside chats” to instill confidence in the American people; Edward Bernays develops the “Green Ball” campaign for Lucky Strike cigarettes, urging women to (1) wear green clothing as a fashion statement and (2) smoke Lucky Strikes, as the green packaging would mesh with their outfit.

1936—The first widespread use of public opinion polling, with companies conducting selected consumer interviews. Small-sample Crossley, Gallup, and Elmo Roper polls predict Franklin D. Roosevelt’s presidential victory over Alf Landon, while the 2 million–ballot *Literary Digest* poll predicts a Landon victory, proving that proper sampling is more important than sample size.

1939—Rex Harlow of Stanford University becomes the first full-time public relations educator.

1941—The first noncommercial opinion research agency, The National Opinion Research Center, is established.

1942—The Office of War Information, headed by Elmer Davis, promotes public support of and involvement in World War II.

1945—The Advertising Council (formerly the War Advertising Council) is reorganized to create information campaigns on behalf of various social causes; the United States government announces via press release that an American plane dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

1948—The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is founded.

1950—The PRSA Code of Professional Standards is adopted.

1953—The United States Information Agency (USIA) is created by President Dwight Eisenhower to disseminate news and cultural information abroad.

1955—The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) is founded.

1957—Anne Williams Wheaton is appointed associate press secretary to President Eisenhower, the first time a woman holds that position.

1960—In opposition to his earlier prosmoking campaigns, Edward Bernays leads an effort to inform the public about the dangers of smoking.

1963—John Marston’s four-step management process for public relations, RACE—research, action, communication, evaluation—is published in his book *The Nature of Public Relations*.

1965—PRSA accreditation is established.

1970—The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) is founded.

1973—Carl Byoir and Associates becomes the first of several large public relations firms to become a subsidiary of an advertising company (Hill & Knowlton).

1980—Inez Kaiser becomes the first African American female to open a national public relations firm, Inez Kaiser & Associates.

1982—Six people in a Chicago suburb die of cyanide poisoning from Tylenol capsules they ingested, causing a public relations crisis for McNeil Laboratories and Johnson & Johnson.

1989—The *Exxon Valdez* grounds at Bligh Reef, rupturing 8 of its 11 cargo tanks and spewing some 10.8 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound. Although the spill is ranked 34th on a list of the world's largest oil spills over the previous 2 decades, the environmental damage makes the accident one of the largest public relations crises in United States history.

1993—A Seattle television station reports that a local couple found a syringe in a can of Diet Pepsi, inspiring a host of similar reports across the United States. Pepsi responds by working closely with the Food and Drug Administration to rule out product tampering as the cause. Throwing open their doors to the press, they demonstrate the impossibility of placing an object in a can, and the nationwide “scare” is determined to be a hoax.

1998—The Council of Public Relations Firms is founded.

1999—Anheuser-Busch unveils a public-service campaign against driving under the influence of alcohol.

2000—The PRSA Code of Ethics is revised as a list of “inspirational guidelines.”

2002—The PRSA promulgates Universal Accreditation as the standard for practice.

Source: Adapted from *A Short Timeline of Key People and Events in Public Relations History*, <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~hallahan/hprhist.htm>; PRHistory.com, <http://www.camdencc.edu/breve/teachlc/archive/humanities/prhistory/timeline/second.htm>; Institute of Public Relations, <http://www.instituteforpr.com/pdf/HistoryofPublic%20Relation--Institute.pdf>; Pioneers in Public Relations, <http://facstaff.buffalostate.edu/smithrd/PR/pioneers.htm>.

Appendix C

Public Relations Online Resources

*American Society of Association Executives
(now The Center for Association Leadership)*
World's leading membership organization for the
association management profession.
www.asaenet.org

Arthur W. Page Society
This professional association brings together
senior public relations and corporate communica-
tions executives and public relations faculty
members who seek to enrich and strengthen their
profession. It is particularly focused on strength-
ening the management policy role of chief public
relations officers.
www.awpagesociety.com

*Association for Education in Journalism and
Mass Communication (AEJMC)*
The Public Relations Division of AEJMC orga-
nizes the presentation of academic papers com-
petitively selected to advance public relations
scholarship. It also works to set standards for the
teaching of public relations. It is an association
sponsor of the *Journal of Public Relations
Research*.
www.aejmc.org; www.aejmc.net/PR

*Asociación Mexicana de Profesionales de
Relaciones Públicas (PRORP) (Mexico)*
Association of Professionals in Mexico and a
member of Global Alliance.
www.prorp.org.mx

Canadian Public Relations Society
Professional organization with 1,700 members
across Canada.
www.cprs.ca

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations
Public relations professional membership associa-
tion in Europe.
www.cipr.co.uk

*Commission on Public Relations Education
(CPRE)*
Organized in 1975, this organization brings
together educators and practitioners who repre-
sent 15 professional societies in public relations.
This organization's mission is to be the authorita-
tive voice working to set standards for strength-
ening public relations education.
www.compred.org

Communications Roundtable
Association of public relations, marketing, graph-
ics, advertising, training, information technology,
and other communications organizations.
www.roundtable.org

Council of Public Relations Firms
Information source for members regarding the
public relations industry.
www.prfirms.org

Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management

Organization network of the International Public Relations Association.

www.globalliancepr.org

Holmes Report

Source of news, knowledge, and career information for public relations professionals.

www.holmesreport.com

The Institute for PR

Promotes and encourages academic and professional excellence.

www.instituteforpr.com

International Association of Business Communicators

Products, services, activities, and networking opportunities to help people and organizations achieve excellence in public relations, employee communication, marketing communication, public affairs, and other forms of communication.

www.iabc.com

International Communication Association (ICA)

The Public Relations Division of ICA organizes the annual presentation of academic papers on major topics relevant to the advancement of the understanding and practice of public relations.

www.icaheadq.org; www.icapr.org

International Public Relations Association

Provides professional development and personal networking opportunities for worldwide membership in association with and links to national organizations in the following countries, each of which has one or more national associations: Africa (APRA), Australia (PRIA), Austria (PRVA), Bangladesh (BPRA), Belgium (BGPR), Brazil (ABRP), Canada (CPRS), China (CIPRA), Croatia (HUOJ), Cuba (National Committee of Public Relations from the Cuban Association of Social

Communicators), Denmark (DACP and BPRV), Estonia (EPRA), Finland (ProCom: Finnish Association of Communications Professionals), France (SYNTEC Public Relations Consultants Organisation; Information Press & Communication), Germany (CPRA; DPRG), Greece (Hellenic Association of Advertising-Communications Agencies), Hong Kong, China (Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association), Hungary (Hungarian Public Relations Association), Iceland (Public Relations Association of Iceland), India (PRCAI), Indonesia (PERHUMAS), IPRA-Gulf Chapter (Gulf Cooperation Countries: Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, United Arab Emirates), Ireland (Public Relations Consultants Association of Ireland; PRII), Israel (Israel Public Relations Association), Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK), Latvia (Latvian Public Relations Association), Luxembourg (National Association of Public Relations of Luxembourg), Malaysia (Institute of Public Relations Malaysia), Netherlands (Logeion, Association for Communication; VPRA), New Zealand (Public Relations Institute of New Zealand; PRINZ), Norway (The Norwegian Communication Association); Poland (Polish Public Relations Association; Polish Public Relations Consultancies Association) Puerto Rico (Association of Public Relations Professionals of Puerto Rico), Republic of Korea (KPRA), Russian Federation (RPRA), Serbia (Public Relations Society of Serbia), Singapore (Institute of Public Relations of Singapore), Slovak Republic (Association of Public Relations of the Slovak Republic), Slovenia (Public Relations Society of Slovenia), South Africa (PRISA), Spain (DIRECOM; Association of Public Relations Consultancies), Swaziland (SPRA), Sweden (PRECIS; Swedish Public Relations Association). It also links with the European Public Relations Confederation (CERP) and European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA), both of which are headquartered in Belgium.

www.ipra.org

I-PR Discussion List

Online community of public relations professionals.

www.marketingwonk.com/lists/ipr

National Communication Association (NCA)

The Public Relations Division of NCA supports the annual presentation of scholarly papers on public relations. It also features outstanding articles and books by the PRIDE Award winners.

www.natcom.org; ncaprdivision.wordpress.com

National Investor Relations Institute

Advances the practice of investor relations and the professional competency and stature of its members.

www.niri.org

Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations

This center was created in honor of Betsy Plank at her alma mater, the University of Alabama, to specialize in discussion, research, and outreach to advance the leadership abilities of professionals and academics dedicated to the practice of public relations.

plankcenter.ua.edu

PR Academy

An online course for prospective public relations practitioners.

www.learnpr.com

PR Bytes

A moderated forum for public relations professionals to discuss public relations/communications issues as they relate to the Internet.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/prbytes>

PR University

An online program for practitioners and academics to monitor innovations in the practice.

bulldog@bulldogreporter.com

PR Week

The first weekly magazine to offer worldwide coverage of the public relations business.

www.prweek.com

Public Affairs Council

Professional Washington, D.C.-based association for senior public affairs practitioners in large businesses and nonprofits.

pac.org

Public Relations Consultants Association

Information about public relations consultants in the United Kingdom.

www.prca.org.uk

Public Relations Links

Links compiled by Kirk Hallahan, Fellow PRSA, at Colorado State University.

<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~hallahan/j13pr.htm>

Public Relations Society of America

The world's largest professional organization for public relations practitioners.

www.prsa.org

Public Relations Society of America Educators Academy

This academy is a division of the Public Relations Society of America especially dedicated to fostering collaborative efforts among academics and professionals dedicated to advance public relations education.

www.prsa.org/network/communities/educatorsacademy

Public Relations Student Society of America

Cultivates mutually advantageous relationships between students and professional public relations practitioners.

www.prssa.org

Ragan Report

Online publication of advice for entry level and senior practitioners.

www.ragan.com

Technology Events Information

List of important and influential technology-related gatherings worldwide.

www.catchpole.com/internetpr/events.cfm

Young PR Pros

An online forum for those new to the public relations field.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/youngprpros>

Workinpr.com

Recruiting and career site specifically for the public relations industry, offering credible industry research, career resources, and public relations tools.

www.workinpr.com

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