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Vignette:

The Edison, New Jersey, Pipeline Explosion Revisited

Let's return to the vignette we introduced at the beginning of Chapter 1. That vignette gives us the opportunity to apply much of what we have learned since Chapter 1.

The vignette in Chapter 1 focused on a pipeline explosion in Edison, New Jersey. We promised that we would return to that case and tell you how the crisis was managed. Promise kept! The vignette sets up the discussion of strategic public relations planning to build relationships, the theme of this chapter.

Soon after the explosion occurred, the mayor of Edison blamed the pipeline company Texas Eastern Transmission (TETCO), a subsidiary of Duke Energy (formerly Panhandle Eastern Transmission). A public recognized a problem and sought someone to blame for the problem. Publics were cognitively involved with the problem; they saw it as related to their self-interests. The mayor saw the explosion in his political self-interest. He wanted to protect the interests of his constituents.

The crisis was detected by the apartment dwellers, who heard and felt the explosion. (Luckily, no one was seriously injured.) The crisis attracted network news attention in New York City. Company pipeline crews noted a problem and began immediate crisis mode actions. TETCO management in Houston was alerted. It marshaled its forces and flew to Edison.

The crisis response team consisted of crisis response experts and senior management, including the vice president of public affairs. When

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did you know...

Going through a phrase
Frequently used meaningless phrases found on 16,000 resumes examined by ResumeDoctor.com:

Communications skills	12%
Team player	7.2%
Organizational skills	5.5%
Interpersonal skills	4.8%
Driven	4.3%

Source: ResumeDoctor.com By Nick Gullerotti

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Bronze Anvil Awards

Presenting The Best In PR Tactics

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Successful Response to Community Relations Crisis

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the crisis response team arrived in Edison, they were confronted with angry citizens, angry officials—the start of a public that was looking to form and take action against the company. To them and others, the explosion scene resembled a battlefield with damaged buildings, burned-out automobiles with melted headlights that had a comical “teary” look, and a crater 120 feet wide

Vignette:

continued The Edison, New Jersey, Pipeline Explosion Revisited

and 60 feet deep. The explosion displaced 2,000 people. Many were without more clothing than they had grabbed as they fled their apartments.

By the time the crisis response team arrived in Edison, it had formulated its specific crisis response, which focused on three priorities. Each priority was designed to demonstrate that TETCO was a good company that wanted a mutually beneficial relationship with members of the community where it operates, a key to building community relationships:

- Priority 1:** Care for victims. A fund of \$7 to \$10 million was allocated to assist the victims. \$5,000 was given to families whose apartments were burned, and \$1,000 was given to other families as needed. In addition, \$350 per person, per week was paid to cover living expenses, and the company covered temporary housing costs for 2 months. Teams were assigned to assist victims and work with local officials.
- Priority 2:** Assist and cooperate with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the federal agency that oversees pipeline safety. Investigation revealed that third parties had damaged the pipeline when they buried parts of a pickup. The NTSB quickly concluded that TETCO was not liable for the fire.
- Priority 3:** Restore the pipeline into service. It is a major transportation line for providing natural gas to users in the Northeast.

To accomplish these three priorities, TETCO knew that it had to build (rebuild) a relationship with the mayor, community members, and other elected officials (including those at the federal level) to solve this problem, restore people's lives as well as could be done, and put the pipeline back into service. The company wanted to use public relations to achieve a mutually beneficial relationship (collaborative decision making).

It began to implement its plan within 12 hours of the explosion and half a continent away from corporate headquarters. One of the first steps was to begin to contact local community groups. One of these was the local branch of United Way. Since the company had no reputation with this particular group, its leaders were encouraged to contact the head of United Way in Houston. She spoke highly of the corporate good citizenship of the company. That report laid a foundation of trust with key groups in Edison. In this way, TETCO used one mutually beneficial relationship to create, maintain, or repair the relationship with the citizens of Edison.

In the days that followed, the team fielded hundreds of media inquiries. The media swarmed to the site because the fire was visible from New York City, it was close to major media centers, and it was a dramatic human interest event. As everything seemed to be moving toward normal and the pipeline neared going into operation, the local mayor called on a county judge to impose a restraining order that prevented

the company from putting the pipeline into operation. The company knew it would win a court battle. The NTSB ruled that it was not responsible for the explosion and the county judge could not impose such a rule in a federal matter. But if a big company crushes a small-town mayor, the company loses as it seeks to win.

Thus, the company opted for a communication win instead of a legal win. It went to the media with facts about how it had assisted victims, even though the company was not liable. It applied principles of narrative theory and told a story of a

good company being opposed by a bad mayor—one motivated by political gain. This story shifted (redefined) the anger of the community from the company to the mayor, who was playing politics. This evaluation led the mayor to negotiate a series of steps that led to a media event. At that event, the mayor and a senior TETCO official cooperated in giving the order and taking the actions to put the restored pipeline back into service. A good company had communicated effectively to achieve a mutually beneficial relationship with its key markets, audiences, and publics.

Today's public relations requires planning and strategic thinking. The public relations plan of an organization must fit with and support its strategic business plan. This is true regardless of whether the organization building public relations is a business, a nonprofit, or a governmental agency.

Public relations planning is no different from other kinds of planning. It requires research, planning, taking action, and evaluation. Chapter 4 discussed research. This chapter focuses attention on how research is incorporated into planning to formulate the actions that need to be taken. Chapter 6 will describe how to take action. Chapter 7 will explain how to evaluate the success of the plan and its implementation.

Planning and Strategic Thinking

Practitioners learn to think in terms of a formula of steps. Research. Plan. Implement the plan. Evaluate the plan. Refine the plan. Implement the plan, and so forth. These steps capture the essence of the strategic thinking public relations managers use to make their organization or unit more effective. Public relations practitioners increase their effectiveness by helping to develop the organizational plan and by using public relations planning to enhance the total organization.

Effective management along with effective public relations requires two levels of planning. First, the organization must have a plan to accomplish its mission and vision. Each department, as well, must have a plan to accomplish the objectives needed to assist the total organization in its efforts to be effective. Thus, a public relations department has a master plan. To foster appropriate relationships with each of its markets, audiences, and publics (MAPs), it should also have a plan.

TETCO had a community relations plan, one needed to create and maintain (even repair) relationships between the organization and the citizens in communities where it operates. Once the explosion occurred, that community relations plan and even its overall crisis response plan became the framework for developing, implementing, and evaluating the specific plan that would be used to restore its relationship with the citizens of Edison, New Jersey. It used that plan to accomplish the corporate plan of restoring the operation of its pipeline.

In most cases, an organization does not succeed by accident. Leaders of successful organizations think strategically; they act purposefully. Strategic organizations formulate plans to guide their actions in a specific direction; they know where they are going and how to get there. Successful public relations practitioners must have a strategic focus as well.

Imagine you want to drive from Chicago, Illinois, to Columbus, Ohio. You could get in a car and begin driving southeast, taking any road that sent you in the desired direction. That is not a strategic approach, although it might be fun and might eventually lead you to your destination. To be strategic, you could conduct research. For your research, you might buy detailed maps or use an Internet map, plot the quickest route, and locate places to stop to eat and to buy gas. You might use the Web to check on road construction. That would be a strategic approach.

Public relations entails building relationships with MAPs. To help set the tone for discussing strategic planning, you need to consider the planning challenges that are central to the following cases. One case asks you to consider what plan you would develop to achieve the objective of creating market interest through publicity for a new toy called "Tickle Me Elmo." Another raises the question of how to attract an audience to information relevant to breast cancer. The last focuses on a public that can affect how an industry, shrimpers, operates. Mature public relations practitioners think in terms of MAPs.

► Attracting a Market for Tickle Me Elmo

Imagine for a moment that you work in the public relations department for a national toy company. A new toy is being introduced for the holiday. The marketing plan is to sell at least 400,000 units. It is a *Sesame Street* "muppet." The public relations plan calls for publicity efforts to increase awareness of the toy. Your boss asks you to handle the campaign and wants a plan in 2 days. What do you do?

Here is an actual answer to that question. A toy company sought to attract attention of its key market—persons who purchase toys for children. Publicity campaigns are often used to attract the attention of a market to a product designed to appeal to that market. This particular publicity campaign launched a new toy so effectively that demand outstripped supply. The most sought-after toy during that holiday season was "Tickle Me Elmo," produced by Tyco Toys, Inc. This *Sesame Street* muppet was predicted to sell

400,000 units. Freeman Public Relations, Inc., wanted to give the product a boost, with the objective of achieving or exceeding this sales objective. Using a strategy similar to that employed to promote the “Cabbage Patch” dolls several years before, Freeman sent a Tickle Me Elmo to TV talk show host Rosie O’Donnell for her 1-year-old son. Then, the company sent 200 more Elmos to her. She used them on air as rewards for members of the audience who said the word “wall.” Her guests that day were actor Tom Hanks, comedian Dom DeLuise, singer Willie Nelson, and Cliffy Clinkscales, an 11-year-old basketball whiz. The guests were charming and played with the dolls. This publicity effort increased sales. Store clerks were inundated with requests for Elmo. Parents worked hard to buy one so as not to disappoint their children. This most sought-after toy surpassed the 400,000 initial business plan projection and sold over 1,000,000 units. The rhetorical objective was to attract favorable attention and to provide the market with information about a new toy. The toy company wanted to sustain its relationship with its key market, leading both to be mutually satisfied. Toy buyers are a market. They do not need to be convinced to buy toys. They are targets to be motivated to buy specific toys. Thus, the rhetorical challenge is to attract their attention to a specific toy and demonstrate how it appeals to the wants of the market.

► Attracting an Audience of Potential Breast Cancer Victims

Each person is a potential victim of various diseases and illnesses. For this reason, people are the targets of messages created by many members of the medical community. They are an audience waiting to be intercepted by one of these messages. For various reasons, people look for health-related information. They might ask their physicians or contact a society, such as the American Cancer Society, to obtain information. They might read magazine articles, hear television programs, and talk with friends and relatives. They search the Web for information. Each person is a potential market who needs or wants medical services. They are a potential public; they might become issue oriented on some topic, seeking to influence public policy. They may need medical services.

Your boss walks into your office and asks you to consider the publicity plan to increase women’s awareness of breast cancer information. Your organization also wants to be seen as a continuing source of information, and you want to partner with a corporation that sees breast cancer as part of its customer relations program. Your job assignment is to create a publicity plan to be launched on the Web to attract an audience of women.



Publicity: Got to Have an Elmo

SOURCE: Copyright © Getty Images.

Here is an actual response to that public relations plan. The “iVillage” Web site is devoted to many women’s topics, such as birth control, depression, potty training, work, and recipes. At one time, this site featured a list of facts:

- An estimated 178,700 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in 1998.
- Approximately 43,500 deaths will occur in women from breast cancer in 1998.
- One in eight women will get breast cancer in their lifetime.
- Breast cancer risk increases with age, and every woman is at risk.
- Every 11 minutes, a woman dies of breast cancer.
- Seventy-eight percent of women with breast cancer are over 50 years of age.
- Approximately 1,600 cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed in men in 1998, and 400 of those men will die.
- More than 1.6 million women who have had breast cancer are still alive in the United States.
- Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women between the ages of 15 and 54 and the second cause of cancer death in women 55 to 74.
- Sixty-two percent of Black women diagnosed with breast cancer experience a 5-year survival rate, while 79% of White women experience 5-year survival.
- The first sign of breast cancer usually shows up on a woman’s mammogram before it can be felt or any other symptoms are present.
- Risks for breast cancer include a family history, atypical hyperplasia, delaying pregnancy until after age 30 or never becoming pregnant, early menstruation (before age 12), late menopause (after age 55), current use or use in the last 10 years of oral contraceptives, and daily consumption of alcohol.
- Early detection of breast cancer, through monthly breast self-exam and particularly yearly mammography after age 40, offers the best chance for survival.
- Ninety percent of women who find and treat breast cancer early will be cancer free after 5 years.
- Over 80% of breast lumps are not cancerous, but benign, such as fibrocystic breast disease.
- Estrogen replacement therapy (ERT) helps reduce the risk of breast cancer for the first 10 years of treatment; after 10 years of ERT, a woman’s risk of breast cancer increases 43%.
- You are never too young to develop breast cancer. Breast self-exam should begin by the age of 20.

Web sites such as this may be sponsored by women’s groups or by companies that sell women’s products, such as Avon and Gillette. They may be created as a service by cancer research and treatment facilities, such as M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, or national associations, such as the American Cancer Society. Information provided can help women to make informed decisions.

It can alert them to the problem and various solutions (gain attention). It can cocreate meaning. It can lead them to collaborative decisions. One additional feature is the links that such sites provide to facilitate a person's efforts to acquire information. These companies, societies, associations, help groups, and institutes seek mutually beneficial relationships with audiences whom they work to reach.

Avon uses the tagline "The Company for Women" in its corporate reputation branding effort. At its home Web page, it features the breast cancer crusade as part of its strategic philanthropy. To build a mutually beneficial relationship with its primary market, women, it demonstrates its commitment to women and women's health. Avon created the Avon Worldwide Fund for Women's Health and has raised millions of dollars for the cause of international women's health. Under its section on corporate responsibility, Gillette features women's cancer programs.

The Web site of the American Cancer Society (ACS) provides information to answer the following questions:

- Who gets breast cancer?
- How has the occurrence of breast cancer changed over time?
- Who survives breast cancer?
- Who is at risk of developing breast cancer?
- What are the signs and symptoms of breast cancer?
- How is breast cancer treated?
- Can breast cancer be prevented?
- What are the current disease control strategies for breast cancer?
- What research is currently being done on breast cancer?
- What resources are available in your community?
- What is the ACS doing about breast cancer?

The ACS home page features medical updates and news you can use. A key objective of this effort is to attract an audience to the information that women can use to save their lives. Accomplishing this objective is a first step toward the objective of reducing the death toll of women (and men) to breast cancer. All of these organizations are worthy of a Web Watcher.



Relationship Building Through Aligned Interests

SOURCE: Copyright © Rod Rolle/Getty Images.

► Responding to a Public Concerned About Ridley Turtles

You work for a government agency in Texas. Its mission is to protect wildlife while also supporting commercial activities that entail the wise management of natural resources. Your boss has reminded you of this public relations plan, one that calls for your agency to build relationships between activists seeking to protect animals and commercial activities, such as shrimp harvesting. The Texas Gulf Coast region prides itself on its seafood. Shrimpers and turtle advocates are on a collision course. What is your public relations plan to deal with these publics?

Over the past two decades, a running battle has occurred between persons who engage in the shrimp-harvesting business and activists who are concerned that traditional harvesting methods lead to unnecessary drowning of Ridley turtles. (As a Web Watcher, search for “Ridley turtles,” and look for the home page of an organization called HEART.) Shrimp are harvested in open waters using large boats that drag nets behind them. These nets skim just above the seabed (mud, sand, or coral). Shrimp are scooped into the nets. Those nets also catch turtles. Turtles, unlike fish or shrimp, need to breathe air from above the water surface periodically. If they get caught in the nets, they are likely not to get to the surface and breathe before they suffocate. To prevent this ecological tragedy, activists have pressured the government to require shrimpers to use turtle-excluder devices (TEDs) in the nets. TEDs are openings in the nets that allow turtles to leave the nets as they rise toward the surface. TEDs also allow some shrimp to escape. If shrimp escape, shrimpers have to use more time and fuel to fill their nets. It costs them more to operate when they use the TEDs. This increased operating cost lowers their profit. Thus, they oppose these devices. The groups who have pressured the shrimpers have moved to seek boycotts of produce that is not harvested in an ecologically responsible manner. One such group, called HEART, has used billboard ads and encouraged restaurants to use only shrimp that are harvested in an environmentally responsible manner; it supplies information and opinions at its home page. Collaborative decision making has been difficult to achieve between the shrimpers—the industry—and this public. The concern of the industry is that the sympathy for the cause of the public can lead to even greater restrictions on their harvesting methods and may result in boycotts that reduce the size of their market. If you were a public relations counselor for the shrimp-harvesting industry, what would you do? What would you do if you represented the seafood restaurant industry? How would you map this public, along with its corresponding markets and audiences? Note that persons who oppose the traditional harvesting methods differ from a market. They are a public because they are concerned about an issue. They take action on that issue, which could affect the market or public policy that influences the operations of the seafood industry.

These three cases were intended to heighten your appreciation of strategy. Moreover, the cases illustrate the links between formative research and planning. The information collected through research is used to plan the public relations action.

Understanding the situation and MAPs allows a practitioner to decide what must be done to address the problem or utilize the opportunity.

Planning: The Basics

Planning requires situational assessment, setting objectives, deciding on how to achieve those objectives, implementing the plan, and seeing whether it works. There are three basic elements to planning: objectives, project management documents, and budgets. This section explains the value of each to overall public relations efforts.

► Types of Objectives

There are a variety of ways of categorizing objectives. (Box 5.1 presents the 12-category objective system proposed by McGuire, 1989.)

- Being exposed to a message
- Attending to a message
- Liking or becoming interested in a message
- Comprehending the message
- Acquiring the skills to use the information and evaluation contained in the message
- Yielding to the message
- Storing the message content in memory
- Recalling the message content from memory
- Deciding on the basis of the information retrieved
- Behaving in a manner that is based on the information
- Reinforcing behavior that leads to positive outcomes
- Consolidating behaviors that are positive so that they become routine and repeated

These 12 stages explain how individuals make decisions. Knowledge of these stages helps practitioners make strategic decisions as they supply the information people need and want. This model demonstrates why MAPs consist of people who are at various stages in their decision processes.

McGuire's work helps practitioners to divide objectives into three basic categories: knowledge, attitude, and behavior. Knowledge focuses on MAPs learning new information. Knowledge ranges from simple awareness to understanding a message (comprehension) to remembering specific information in a message (Coombs, 2005). McGuire's exposure, attention, liking, comprehending, and acquiring skills all relate to knowledge. Acquiring a skill reflects learning information. You are unlikely to learn information if you cannot understand it, do not like it, pay it no attention, or are never exposed to it.

(Text continues on page 148)

BOX 5.1 MCGUIRE'S 12 STEPS OF OPINION FORMATION AND BEHAVIOR

McGuire (1989) identified 12 possible objectives. You would match the type of objective to the needs of the situation and MAPs. McGuire's work helps to avoid the mistake of assuming that all MAPs are of one mind. That approach to public relations may be too general to strategically support our efforts—especially those to be more focused in the target we select to reach and the message we design to accomplish our goals. Consider McGuire's developmental stages of the thought and action persons go through as they are influenced, or influence themselves, through the acquisition of information and opinion.

Knowing this sequence can help public relations practitioners analyze the place in the sequence where they find various members of MAPs at any moment in time. Using the stages of this sequence, practitioners can estimate the kinds of information and opinion that can be used to influence the targets of their campaigns. This model also makes practitioners realize that they must listen to and appreciate their target because they must understand what it wants in the way of information and influence.

1. *Exposure to communication.* One of the realities of message impact is that people must be exposed to a message several times before they become aware of it and think about it. Each individual is subjected to hundreds or thousands of messages each day. People pick and chose between these messages. They pay attention to some. Most they ignore. One of the challenges facing the practitioner is to increase the likelihood that key MAPs will become aware of the messages. One of the strategies of public relations is to provide information in strategic ways so that their MAPs can obtain it. The first stage is to gain people's attention.

2. *Attending to the message.* To attend to a message means that the person pauses from doing something else and gives partial or full attention to it. One classic assumption is that messages have greater likelihood of gaining attention if they relate to the self-interest of the person or to some altruistic interest the person has. Markets and publics may already have a self-interest that motivates them to attend to the message.

Practitioners may need to design each message to appeal to the self-interest of audiences to stimulate them to attend to it. Self-interest increases the likelihood people will pay attention to a message. Let's review some key points on this topic. The example of people agreeing to volunteer illustrates many of the points.

- A public relations practitioner can predict that people will find something attention gaining simply because it is novel or otherwise visually, aurally, or conceptually attractive or markedly unattractive or interesting. A message or action may gain attention because it is distinct, appeals to emotions, is repeated, or is thought to be useful.

You decide to volunteer for the Special Olympics. Their brochures contained stories about participants. The emotions in the stories about how the program changed participants' lives caught your attention.

- Attention is likely to result when people become involved with some topic or action. Involvement may occur because of an individual's *personality traits*. People who have different personalities find that events, messages, issues, choices, products, or services appeal to them with different degrees of interest.

- Involvement can occur when an individual finds *connections* or *relevance* between an event, choice, product, service, or issue and experiences he or she has had. Attention is greater if the person sees the topic as being relevant to his or her self-interest. You have a strong interest in sports, so the Special Olympics were consistent with your self-interests.

- Involvement may result because a situation, event, or message *threatens* or *confirms the self-concept* of the individual. You see yourself as a helping person, and coaching in the Special Olympics will confirm that self-concept.

- Some issue, product, choice, service, or event can create involvement because it has *consequences* for the person's future. You plan on coaching in the future, so working with the Special Olympics will build toward that goal.

- A message or other stimulus gains attention because people think the information it contains is useful. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) argued that people want information that helps them form useful opinions—attitudes and beliefs. An opinion is useful if it leads to decisions and actions that are rewarding and avoids those that are not rewarding. For this reason, people who are involved with an issue, product choice, choice among services, and some social need are more likely to have well-formed opinions relevant to the choices they need to make. Involvement increases people's ability to remember or recall relevant facts. They seek and share information with other people during conversations on those topics that are related to their self-interest. They are more likely to talk about, listen to messages about, read about, or televise topics related to their self-interests.

3. *Liking, becoming interested in some topic, issue, event, product, service, or opinion choice.* Liking is created when something seems rewarding. People are attracted to some topic, product, service, person, or organization because its benefits outweigh its costs. It is pleasing. It satisfies needs or wants—or at least seems to be satisfying. Some people who learned about the proposed location of Disney's "America" theme park, which was to be located in Haymarket, Virginia, part of historic Prince William County, were offended by the idea. They were interested in the issue because they disliked the harm it would do to their community.

4. *Comprehending the message.* Over time, people obtain information and opinions that help them to believe they understand an issue or topic. To that extent, they feel that they comprehend the information and the choices that it helps them to make. They become more comfortable with a product or service as they think they understand it. They seek and retain information that helps them understand a product, service, or issue.

5. *Skill acquisition.* As people acquire skills, they learn how to do something. They even learn how to think about something. One of humans' life skills is to make decisions. Parents let children decide which flavor of ice cream they want. Later in life, they are more prepared, for instance, to decide which make of automobile they want to purchase.

6. *Yielding to the message or other stimuli.* As people become more informed, they may change an existing attitude or create a new one. Yielding is the stage in this process, McGuire concluded, at which people create or change their attitudes.

7. *Memory storage of content or agreement.* If people find information and opinions important to them, they will likely store those items in their memory so they can recall them when they need them. For instance, persons might hear an entertainment news item about their favorite music group coming to town for a concert. That information is stored to be retrieved. If individuals learn information that persuades them that a product seems to have favorable traits, they store that information to use during their shopping.

What increases the likelihood that people will remember messages? Familiarity is one factor. Novelty is a second. A third factor is the importance of the information. A fourth factor is the degree to which the information is associated with markedly positive or negative stimuli. People recall information by categories, such as things to eat/not eat and automobiles to like/dislike. If people rehearse their thoughts, they are more likely to remember them. For this reason, if you think to yourself, "I need to remember this cold remedy or tell someone the name of the remedy," you are more likely to remember it. Retention is increased if people take actions that are relevant to the idea to be recalled. If people try a product, such as taste a soft drink, they might be more likely to recall that experience when they have the chance to choose that product later. The same could be predicted for a service that they have the opportunity to try during a trade show. For instance, at a trade show, potential customers might play with a computer program. That experience could lock into their memory and affect a subsequent purchase.

8. *Information search and retrieval.* Once the information is stored, people have to be able to *recall* it as they need it. As we stand in front of a rack holding several products, such as cold remedies, can we remember which

one has the trait that we learned through advertising or public relations messages? Which rock band is coming to town? When is it coming? Where can fans get tickets?

9. *Deciding on the basis of the information retrieved.* A decision can result either because persons recall the information they stored to make a specific decision or because of the information they recall that is relevant to the decision. We know that recall can be imprecise. We also know that after making a decision, we may recall something that would have affected our decision if we had remembered it before we made the decision.

10. *Behaving in accord with the decision.* Based on what they learn and recall, people can proceed to make their choice. They buy one product or service in preference to its competitors. They vote for one candidate and not for others. They decide to seek the treatment of a physician or a dentist, instead of not obtaining medical or dental treatment.

The theory of reasoned action can help practitioners understand how people chose one behavior as opposed to alternative ones (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). It builds on the theory of information integration, which reasons that people's actions or behaviors are based on their attitudes toward the behaviors *and* their opinions of what persons important to them would want them to do.

This last factor is a subjective norm: people's sense of what they think others want them to think or do. If they have a positive attitude toward a behavior, they want to take that action. But if people whom they respect don't want them to take the action, they have a quandary. As a matter of behavioral intention, people's actions result from a balanced choice between what they want to do and what they think others want them to do. If both parts of the equation agree, then the choice is easy. If the parts conflict, then people can experience a little and even substantial dissonance. Practitioners are wise to recognize these two parts of people's preferences and behavior. Communication and relationship building should recognize the potential conflict.

11. *Reinforcing desired acts.* If people find that a choice (of a product, for instance) satisfies their needs or wants, they prefer it again. Public relations practitioners are wise to predict that people will do or believe that which has satisfied them in the past. If people try something and like it, they are likely to try it again. If they have disliked something, they are likely to not prefer it in the future.

12. *Postbehavior consolidating.* McGuire recognized that people become predictable because they find increased reason—consolidate their behavior—to continue to prefer and to do that which they have found repeatedly rewarding.

An attitude is an evaluation, an expression of preferences—a like or dislike. That means it has positive, neutral, or negative valence. It can be held in different degrees of strength. Attitudes express preferences. When people yield, they are changing their attitudes. The Walt Disney Company once tried to build a theme park on part of a historic Civil War battlefield in Virginia. In opposition to the plan, protesters voiced their outrage and boycotted against Disney. Some persons were indifferent (neutral) to the plan, Disney, or both. Those who liked Disney probably did not take part in the boycott over the Civil War battlefield. The protesters held negative attitudes that motivated them to act. To guide behavior, an attitude needs to be stored in our memories, be recalled when relevant, and be used when making a decision.

Knowledge, what people believe, shapes their attitudes, which, in turn, influence behavior. Of course, people are not always that orderly or predictable. Sometimes they form attitudes without much knowledge and engage in behaviors counter to their attitudes. This set of circumstances warns us about the difficulty of setting and accomplishing objectives. Behavior change is the most difficult objective, followed by attitude change, and then knowledge gain. It is relatively easy to get people to learn new information. However, people will resist changing their attitudes and behaviors.

Research helps a practitioner to understand where MAPs are in the progression of objectives. Practitioners, for instance, might need to get information to audiences to create awareness and motivate them to be aware of some matter. Practitioners can supply information that helps customers to comprehend some issue, to be motivated to act, or to consolidate their decisions. For people who are considering traveling to a theme park, practitioners might help them to comprehend the fun they can have. Practitioners might motivate those who are about to make the choice. Practitioners might supply information to help people consolidate their decisions. A practitioner might, for instance, as a customer relations gesture, give them a souvenir and a brochure to remind them of the fun they had.

Similarly, practitioners should recognize that people who are only becoming aware of an issue are different from those who have taken public stands on that issue. One audience is beginning to learn about an issue, while the other public is looking for reinforcement to justify continuing to oppose a company's activities. For these reasons, practitioners think in terms of MAPs. They realize that people are different in their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Research can help to put people into categories based on similarities, but there are always categories.

CHALLENGE BOX

Consider a product, a service, and a policy issue. Using McGuire's model, identify which stage you have achieved with each. Think of messages that you might use as a practitioner to attract an audience to become a market and then move that market to repeated behavior. Why do some people become aware of an issue—thus becoming an audience and a potential public for that issue? Why do some people become deeply involved in that issue, whereas others do not? If a parent had a child killed in a DWI (driving while intoxicated) car accident, use this model to explain his or her commitment to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), a national campaign to reduce such accidents.

Writing Objectives

Public relations actions look to create some sort of change in the rhetorical situation. Your motivation for engaging in public relations is to facilitate a change that will in some way benefit the organization and its stakeholders. Objectives are central to any public relations effort because they establish the measure of success or failure. To be more precise, we mean *outcome objectives*. The outcome objective establishes the conditions that must be met for the public relations action to be considered a success—to determine whether the desired changes were achieved. A proper outcome objective is measurable and specific (Coombs, 2005). You cannot have an objective if you cannot measure it, because there would be no means to evaluate it. Chapter 7 will expand on the topic of evaluation.

To be specific, an objective must include the desired amount of change and the target MAP for the change. Without having a target amount of change, you have no measure of success or failure. Let us consider a few examples. Objectives that simply say “to increase awareness of the organization” or to “collect blood” are too vague. One could argue that any awareness or any blood collected would constitute success. A proper objective would indicate the precise amount of change, such as “To increase awareness of the organization by 15%” or “To collect 20 pints of blood.”

Even our revised objectives remain vague because they do not specify the target MAP for the change. We have researched the MAPs, so we know whom we should target. This should be placed in the objective because it will influence the message design, the topic of Chapter 6. By specifying the target, we know who should be receiving the messages and who should be experiencing the change (whom we will target during evaluation). The earlier objectives could be revised as follows: “To increase awareness of the organization by 15% among potential customers” and “To collect 20 pints of blood from new donors in the community.” This discussion of objectives reflects a larger concept in management known as *management by objective* (MBO). MBO will be explained later in this chapter. MBO is based on the organization trying to attain specific objectives (Hallahan, 2005). These public relations plans need to fit and help to achieve the larger organizational goals.

We must keep one additional point in mind when we use objectives that seek an increase or decrease. To know whether something increased or decreased, you must measure it before and after your public relations effort. Assessing the knowledge, attitude, or behavior before the public relations action provides what is called a *benchmark*. A benchmark is a starting point against which you compare later results (Stacks, 2005). It is much like the way parents track the height of their children as they grow. Your measure after the public relations action can then be compared to the benchmark to see whether the desired increase or decrease was achieved. In the case from Chapter 4, Barberton Citizens Hospital created a benchmark when its survey found that only 51% of the citizens favored selling the park land to the hospital.

► Program Management Documents

Public relations planning needs to consider the planning terminology used in many organizations. A public relations action can be a program; a long-term effort; or a

project, a temporary, organized effort that creates a unique product or service (Hallahan, 2005; Martin & Tate, 1997). A project has a specific time frame for completion, is composed of a series of related tasks or events that must be coordinated, and seeks to accomplish a specific objective (Davidson, 2000). Whether a program or a project, to be an effective project, a public relations action requires documents that outline the planning process, what are called *program management documents*. Many professions use project management ideas, including public relations, advertising, marketing, construction, and architecture. The planning documents detail the tasks to be completed, who is assigned to complete the tasks (staffing), and the time it will take to complete the tasks (the calendar).

The first step in developing a planning document is to identify all the tasks necessary to complete your public relations action—achieve your objective(s). A list of all the tasks necessary to complete the public relations action is known as the *work breakdown structure*. The second step is to identify how much time each task will take. The third step is to identify the chronological order of the tasks and which tasks are dependent on other tasks. Once you have the tasks, time, and sequence, you are ready to determine how much time the project/public relations action will take to complete (Davidson, 2000). One mistake novices make is to simply add up all the time of the tasks. Box 5.2 illustrates a project time calculation. The seasoned planner knows some tasks can be completed simultaneously (done at the same time), while others are sequential (you must complete one before starting another). Once you determine which tasks are simultaneous and which are sequential, you can calculate the time the project will take. Box 5.2 shows the difference between careful calculation and simply adding up all the tasks. One other piece of advice: Build in time for external contingencies, factors beyond your control that might slow you down. Weather problems, equipment breakdowns, or missed delivery times can create delays. Over time, you will learn how to see potential delays and work them into your program planning.

BOX 5.2 TASKS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Terry is the editor for his organization's quarterly newsletter. Each edition contains 8 to 10 stories. Key tasks are collecting information for the stories, writing the stories, getting approval of the stories, deciding the layout for news stories, printing the newsletter, and distributing the newsletter. Terry has two other people in the department who help to research and write the stories. Below are the main tasks and time:

<i>Task</i>	<i>Time</i>
Research and writing a story	5 days (× 10 stories)
Approval of stories	6 days
Layout	2 days
Printing the newsletter	3 days (includes shipping)
Distributing the newsletter	1 day

If we simply added up all the days, it would be 62 days. However, 3 stories can be researched and written simultaneously. With 10 stories, the time for researching and writing would be 20 days. The remaining tasks must be done in sequence. This would take 12 days. Terry can plan on the newsletter project taking as little as 32 days.

Public relations departments vary in how they construct planning documents. One option is a simple matrix. A matrix or grid lists the central issues along the top of the document and the components of the plan (i.e., strategies, situation, etc.) down the left-hand side of the page. This will create a series of squares or quadrants. Each quadrant is filled in with the objectives, messages, strategies, and tactics relevant to the issues. Your list of central issues will vary from project to project. The matrix is useful as a checklist. It helps you understand whether key points have been covered and to see what tactics have been developed for each quadrant. On a recent project, one coauthor helped to develop a planning matrix for a public hearing. The matrix listed the key issues in the policy discussion across the top, and the left-hand side listed the key message themes needed to for the hearing. The quadrants were filled with the names of people delivering testimony on the theme and the general content of their messages.

A variation of the grid is to use the matrix as a list of questions that need to be answered. Your plan involved answering each of these key questions. Turney (2004) has provided a list of 10 questions for a strategic public relations plan: (1) Who are the organization's key target audiences? (2) Why is this audience important to the organization? (3) What view does the organization want this audience to have of it? (4) What is the audience's current view of the organization? (5) What issues and appeals are important to this audience? (6) Which media does this audience use and trust the most? (7) How does this audience's current view of the organization differ from the desired one? (8) What message themes will have the greatest impact on this audience? (9) What are the best ways of reaching this audience? (10) Who will serve as the organization's primary contact for working with this audience?

Common tools for creating planning documents are Gantt Charts and PERT Charts. While old standards, both are still widely used because they allow for tracking of tasks, time, and staffing all in one (Davidson, 2000). Both are visual representations of the tasks and times. The charts will have the tasks listed on the left side and the time running on the bottom. Computer software, such as "Microsoft Project" or "Primavera Project Planner," can be used to develop either type of chart. Organizations may have preferences, so learn which planning tool your organization uses. The charts are modified as the project progresses to show what has been accomplished and when. Both allow people to easily see where a project is, how long it has taken, what needs to be done, and how much time is left. The weakness of the Gantt and PERT Charts is that they do not display specific tactics and messages for the key tasks.

► Budgets

The planning documents will help you calculate the budget. The tasks will help you to identify costs such as personnel (e.g., hiring a graphic designer), commodities

(e.g., paper, envelopes, etc.), and services (e.g., having a brochure professionally printed). Organizations differ in how budgets are developed and monies allocated. The key skill is being able to identify all potential costs accurately. Forgetting about a costly item or underestimating costs will cause you to go over budget. You must learn the costs associated with various tasks if you are to create effective budgets.

Public Relations and Strategic Planning

Public relations is a means, not an end. It serves organizations by helping them to achieve their strategic plans. A strategic plan is a means by which they accomplish their missions or visions. Organizations are more likely to realize their missions and visions if they are good and can communicate effectively to build mutually beneficial relationships (see Box 5.3 on “Mission and Vision Statements”). Public relations can help an organization achieve its mission and vision. To do so, each public relations department or agency should state its own mission and vision statement. How public relations serves an organization reflects the mission to which it is dedicated.

BOX 5.3 MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

An organization needs to know where it is going. In this boxed feature, we present the mission statements of three organizations: ChevronTexaco Corporation (business), Greenpeace (nonprofit), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (government agency), which is a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Consider these mission and vision statements, and think of how they influence what is said and done by employees, members, supporters, and other stakeholders and stakeholders.

Three Mission and Vision Statements

Mission and vision statements express how the executives want to position their organization in regard to its environment: its competitors, marketplace, public policy arena, stakeholders, stakeholders, and community standards of corporate responsibility. Executives ask, “What is the mission of our organization that makes it unique, differentiates it from other organizations, and gives us a clear idea of where the organization is going?” Hunger and Wheelen (1993), academic experts on strategic planning, observed, “The corporate *mission* is the purpose or reason for the corporation’s existence” (p. 14). Compare the following statements for a business, a nonprofit, and a government agency.

1. *ChevronTexaco Corporation*: Chevron/Texaco Corporation, one of the world's largest integrated petroleum companies, takes pride not only in its products and services but also in the way it conducts its worldwide operations. The company's principles and values are embodied in "The ChevronTexaco Way," which provides an integrated framework for its strategies and goals. The company's mission and vision statements are part of "The ChevronTexaco Way."

"Developing vital energy resources around the globe"

"A global enterprise highly competitive across all energy sectors, the newly formed company brings together a wealth of talents, shared values and a strong commitment to developing vital energy resources around the globe."

"ChevronTexaco aims to set the standard not only for goals achieved but for how we achieve them. As important as our financial and operating performance is—our goal is to be No. 1 among our competitors in total stockholder return—our underlying values, more than anything, define who we are."

"The ChevronTexaco Way: Our vision is to be the global energy company most admired for its people, partnership and performance."

2. *Greenpeace*:

"Greenpeace is an independent, campaigning organisation that uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and force solutions for a green and peaceful future. Greenpeace's goal is to ensure the ability of the Earth to nurture life in all its diversity."

3. *Natural Resources Conservation Service* (a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture):

MISSION—To provide leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment.

VISION—Harmony between people and the land

Note: You might compare the Greenpeace mission statement with that stated by the World Wildlife Fund, which is featured in Chapter 3. WWF thinks of itself as a research and collaborative decision-making organization. The mission of Greenpeace commits it to confrontation and highly visible challenges to protect the environment and human health.

A properly stated mission defines the unique purpose that sets a business or other organization apart from others of its type. The mission identifies the scope of the organization's operations by which it obtains and uses revenue and builds mutually beneficial relationships. The mission is the theme that runs throughout the planning and operations of the organization.

Mission statements should translate into objectives. Objectives are standards by which the organization's activities can be empirically assessed. The statement is most serviceable when members of the organization can measure how well strategies serve to accomplish the mission. The mission statement captures key attitudes of the organization, such as those regarding growth, innovation, and quality.

Public relations efforts grow out of two kinds of strategic planning. One is the strategic planning, often called *strategic business planning*, that is created by the executives of the organization. This plan is formulated and implemented so that the entire organization can achieve its mission. In support of the strategic business plan, each department in the organization needs to develop its unique plan, which it implements to help the entire organization to be successful.

This second kind of strategic-planning process occurs at the department or unit level. For this reason, public relations plans—in general and for each specific project—are created, budgeted, and implemented by the public relations department (perhaps in conjunction with an external agency).

As do the organizations that it serves, public relations operates in two broad contexts: the marketplace and the public policy arena. In the marketplace, each organization competes for dollars from customers, followers, or donors. The public policy arena consists of legislative, regulatory, and judicial decision makers. In the public policy arena, legislative bodies create laws that are implemented by regulators in the executive branch of government and enforced by the courts.

In market competition, each organization must obtain in an ethical manner the income it needs to accomplish its mission. An organization's ability to conduct its market activities may be affected by public policy. For this reason, organizations may strategically seek to change public policy in order to accomplish their missions. In these ways, executives of each organization work to protect and promote the interest of the organization and the persons who are affected by it.

Does the quality of relationships the organization creates and maintains affect its ability to survive and thrive? Today's public relations is founded on the principles of building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships. It requires a strong commitment to fostering the interactive relationship between organizations and their MAPs. Relationship building is inherently a two-way process. It consists of giving and getting stakes in exchange. It is committed to communicating with stakeholders based on what they believe, what they want to know, and what they expect from the relationship. It promotes wise and ethical actions based on openness that builds trust. Public relations can help the organization to be good—to meet standards of corporate responsibility—and to communicate effectively.

This rhetorical approach to public relations is committed to the principle that all of what the organization does and says has communicative impact. People experience and make sense of an organization and its management, reputation, products, services, and ethics by what it does and says. What the organization does and says is its "voice" (Heath, 1994). Public relations professionals can help the organization to speak in a clear, coherent, and consistent voice in all that it does and says.

Voice means that all of the statements—advertising, marketing, public relations—tailor information, evaluations, and conclusions to meet the needs, interests, concerns, and opinions of each MAP. Communication needs to be integrated. For instance, messages shared with investor analysts need to express the same theme and content that is used in dialogue with employees, regulators, activists, other members of an industry, and consumers.

A rhetorical approach to public relations demonstrates that statements are true through all actions by the organization—all of the experiences people have with it. Wise and ethical organizations demonstrate their commitment to quality relationships by all that they do and say. For instance, through product advertising, publicity, and promotion, they say, “Trust us when we tell you about the quality and price of our products; they will satisfy you.”

That approach to strategic planning is good business. Quality relationships increase the willingness of key MAPs to reward rather than punish organizations. Stakeholders want to grant their stakes to organizations that please them. If displeased, they will withhold them or give them to another organization. Thus, quality relationships can have market advantage. The logic of organizational strategic planning—and public relations—is simple: Stakeholders prefer to give their stakes to those stakeholders that do most to achieve a balance of mutual interests. Organizations must compete against one another for resources. They seek favors. They work to increase and manage their markets or please their donors or other constituents. They work to attract investors, contributors, and donors. They want to avoid unproductive and dysfunctional media, governmental, and activist relations.

For these reasons, as a public relations practitioner, you should learn to think in terms of *return on investment* (ROI). To achieve ROI, you need to add value to the efforts of your client—to help the organization to accomplish its mission by generating and wisely managing its resources. ROI means that an organization’s efforts should generate more revenue than they cost. This logic also applies to public relations.

If public relations functions properly, it helps the organization listen in order to learn what needs to be known to create beneficial relationships. Then, it offers solutions—strategic responses to the needs, interests, and concerns of MAPs. In that way, public relations justifies its budget and earns its keep. Practitioners do so by knowing and becoming expert in implementing strategic responses to rhetorical problems facing their client organizations. Today’s public relations practitioners learn to make a difference in bottom-line performance. To do so, they recognize and solve rhetorical problems that work against the creation and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships.

WEB WATCHER: STRATEGISTS, INC.

We have presented a discussion of planning in this chapter. Now it is time to go and see how public relations practitioners talk about and conduct planning. Strategists, Inc., is a public relations consulting firm that prides itself on planning. Visit the following section of their Web site: <http://www.strategistsinc.com/services-strategic-planning.htm>. Look under the headings “strategic planning” and “plan writing.” See how they define these concepts and look at examples that summarize their work in strategic planning and plan writing. You will get a feel for how organizations bring to life the planning concepts in this chapter.

► Management by Objective: Planning by Setting Goals

Management by objective (MBO) continues to be a popular method for creating and implementing organizational strategies. The logic of MBO is this: In light of what others are doing and thinking, what factors are at play that can help or harm your organization's efforts to achieve its mission? Achieving that goal requires situational analysis. What needs to be done and said to make or keep the organization (your department, campaign, or job) effective? That question grows out of objective setting and strategic implementation of the means to accomplish that objective. What do you need to do or say to accomplish your (and the organization's) objectives to satisfactorily take advantage of opportunities and avoid or minimize threats? That is the essence of MBO: thinking strategically. That logic asks that you develop your plans—within ethical guidelines—to accomplish (or help others accomplish) what needs to be done to move the organization in the desired direction.

MBO is a nice logic that applies feedback—evaluation/assessment—to determine how well the strategies, as implemented, achieve their objectives. It is consistent with our earlier discussion of objectives in the public relations action. Evaluation measures whether the plan as implemented has achieved the objectives needed to help the organization to accomplish what it must and desires to do. Feedback is implemented through evaluative research. It requires knowing what the organization wants to achieve and setting measures to determine whether it was successful.

This process builds in stages. Each stage is likely to exist and impinge on the organization's success whether it is planned or more accidental, or coincidental:

- *Rhetorical situation*: circumstances surrounding the organization that will affect its ability to achieve what it desires. It must know, consider, and adapt to its situation if it is to achieve its mission.
- *Objectives* (mission and vision): the goals the organization seeks to accomplish in its efforts to achieve its mission.
- *Plan*: the means by which the organization strategically intends to accomplish its objectives. The plan includes message development options and actions.
- *Implementation*: strategic options that are chosen and budgeted to be used as the means for putting the plan into operation.
- *Feedback/evaluation*: hard and soft evidence used to determine the extent to which the strategic options as implemented are accomplishing what they must and should for the organization to achieve its mission, in light of the situation.

Now, the effort of the organization might end with evaluation—especially if it is favorable. That could be shortsighted, even disastrous, for at least two reasons. One, the situation around the organization constantly changes, including the strategic planning, implementation, and assessment of other organizations, as well as dynamic change on the part of MAPs. The success and failure of other organizations in their strategic efforts can be a factor in what your client organization needs to plan, implement, and accomplish.

Second, plans succeed to various degrees. Sometimes they accomplish more than expected. Sometimes they achieve success with less effort than anticipated. Sometimes they fall short of expectations. The logic of MBO is that feedback evaluation is a stage in an ongoing effort. The organization should seek constant change by building on its success.

Based on how well the plan accomplished its objective, in light of the situation, the plan can be refined, objectives reshaped, and implementation continued or modified. In this manner, MBO is a dynamic mode of thinking and acting.

- *Feedback/evaluation* (as situational analysis): continual listening to the market and sociopolitical arenas, as well as stakeholders or stakeseekers who impinge on the organization.
- *Objectives redefined/revised*: refining objectives in light of continual situational assessment and the organization's ability to design and implement a feasible strategic plan.
- *Plan redefined/revised*: refining the means for achieving objectives, in light of situational changes and success in implementing key plans.
- *Implementation redefined/revised*: refining means for putting the plan into play.
- *Feedback/evaluation*: continued listening to the situational factors to which the organization needs to respond.

This analysis forms a spiral of ongoing, adaptive strategic planning, implementation, and assessment.

Conclusion

Strategic thinking grows out of the analysis of the kinds of relationships that are necessary for the organization to achieve its mission. Savvy public relations experts learn to use relationships to define goals and strategies. Planning activities for a successful team effort are derived from discovering an opportunity or threat: formative research. That logic is basic to the discovery and analysis of the rhetorical problem facing the organization. In the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, TETCO did not just react, even in a crisis. Management carefully considered the situation, MAPs, and relationships before responding. The response was strategic and designed to restore mutually beneficial relationships in the community in which it operated.

Your formative research informs your planning process. In planning, you are developing measurable objectives, creating a plan, and developing a budget. An effective objective demands that you quantify your results and specify your target MAPs. Your plan requires you to identify all tasks that need to be completed and the sequencing of the tasks. Your budget needs to list all possible costs you might encounter. Proper planning is the most effective way to prepare a public relations action. Planning creates focus and seeks to eliminate surprises such as last-minute tasks that need to be completed or budget items that were overlooked. Your planning documents tell you what needs to be done and how much it will cost.

Making a Difference



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I'm sure just about everyone in our profession has encountered the vexing question (usually accompanied by a quizzical look): "So . . . public relations is more than press releases?" This is when I contemplate going into teaching—but then remember experience is the best teacher of all.

Of course much of our time as public relations professionals is spent parsing our words, making sure the nuance is just so, and ensuring every fact is absolutely correct. Just as much time is spent with journalists, advocates, community leaders, employees, analysts and a host of other constituents to ensure we are truly listening and creating the kind of dialogues in which we can successfully tell our stories. Our craft is one of well-articulated persuasion.

But what I've loved most about what we do is the power to make a difference. And that difference doesn't come just through words or deeds alone, but truly understanding our audiences and the world they live in to gain the insights necessary to drive creative ideas that truly have an impact. Ideas that create awareness of a problem or issue. Ideas that shift attitudes. Ideas that alter behavior. Ideas that change minds.

Making a difference isn't about altruistic platitudes or idealistic programs. It's about creating a more favorable environment in which an organization's idea, service or issue can take seed and flourish and where we can see measurable progress. Creating that environment depends on solid strategic planning—based in research—with results you can measure.

What has been particularly rewarding is to see how well organizations are employing public relations—and how sophisticated it's become since I started in the profession. Gillette, for example, now uses public relations in advance of all other disciplines before major new product launches, because the company has found it can create the receptivity it needs for its marketing and sales. As a result, public relations often leads the way in finding new insights that inform not only the public relations program, but the marketing program as well. For example, when the company was getting ready to launch a new shaving product for women, Sensor, it planned to use the same

In addition, you can track tasks and costs as the public relations project progresses. You will know whether you are on schedule and on budget or if corrections are necessary. In the third season of NBC's *The Apprentice*, a team leader simply started

high-tech, high-performance approach that worked so well in launching the men's product. However, research for the public relations program into women's attitudes toward shaving discovered that women blame themselves when they fumble the job, whereas men blame the product—creating an entirely new strategy and messaging for the women's program. By the way, I never fail to get knowing nods from women whenever I talk about this case history.

Some of the most fervent believers in public relations are marketers—and small wonder, when you consider that public relations is every bit as rigorous a discipline as marketing. In many ways, marketers are the new converts to public relations, as they've seen its power in shaping markets, increasing user acceptance and building loyalty (to name just a few virtues). Public relations has always been part and parcel of the corporate firmament in helping with financial markets or managing issues. But businesses and governments alike have also become just as savvy as their marketing counterparts, and today public relations programs carried out by these groups look an awful lot like marketing programs: intensive research to understand audiences, testing of messages and ideas, and then measuring impact after the campaign has been launched. It wasn't until the National Institutes of Health found out in testing that consumers couldn't make sense of this medical

problem called "cholesterol" unless they could quantify it somehow: hence, the "know your number" campaign that galvanized public attention to this life-threatening condition and led the way to better testing and treatment. Likewise, when the State of Florida decided to spend its tobacco settlement monies on educating teens about the dangers of smoking, it took extensive research into kids' psyches to realize the way to reach them *wasn't* through telling them how bad smoking was for them—it would be by appealing to kids' sense of being manipulated by the tobacco industry. Thus was born the Truth campaign, recognized globally for its success in lowering teenage smoking.

Obviously, the biggest difference we make is as individuals in the lives of those we touch—professionally and personally. But because our profession is built on understanding what makes people tick—how they think, what they believe and what they *could* think or believe in the future—we have tremendous power in shaping how our society accepts change, the true dynamic of public relations.

Did someone say we're more than press releases? Happily, all it takes is one experience with a successful public relations campaign, and that vexing question turns to: "Tell me how we can measure what we're doing." But that's a reflection for another day!

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a project without planning. It turns out that he bought items he did not need and did not have the money to buy items the team did need. He did not consider the tasks or budget until it was too late. He admitted his mistake and was "fired" by

Donald Trump. There is reality to this reality show. Failure to plan can result in practitioners losing accounts and/or jobs. Planning sets the stage for action (Chapter 6) and is critical to evaluation (Chapter 7). Planning is the glue that binds together the elements of the public relations process.

Ethical Quandary: Building Ethics Into Planning

Explain at least three ethical reasons that you would use when advising a client or an organization's executive management who wants to exploit or correct a damaged relationship. Let's imagine that the client knows that a competitor is not meeting customers' or donors' expectations (a damaged relationship opportunity). Or you might imagine that a client's product or service is not as good "as advertised" but the client wants a promotional campaign to deny or divert attention from that fact (a damaged relationship threat). Or you might imagine that a consumer reporter has made allegations about a product or service (even a fund-raising tactic or the use of charitable contributions) that you believe to be untrue (a crisis based on a threat to a relationship). Ethical decisions can be based on high moral principle—doing what is right—and on pragmatics—what works is good. Would you build your case on either of these principles? What three points would you make to guide the selection of public relations responses to the rhetorical problem? How are these three points connected to the strategic responses you would advise making to solve the rhetorical problem?

Summary Questions

1. Define *mission* and *vision*. Explain why these statements are best when they contain outcomes that can be measured.
2. How is return on investment (ROI) a part of strategic business planning and of strategic public relations planning?
3. How is planning related to strategy?
4. What are the characteristics of an effective objective?
5. What are the three basic types of objectives?
6. How do objectives relate to benchmarking?
7. What are program management documents?
8. What are the steps in creating a planning document?
9. What are the two kinds of strategic planning?
10. What is management by objective (MBO)?



Exercises

1. Find a Web site for a business, governmental agency, or nonprofit organization. Look to see whether the organization states its mission statement. If you were the public relations officer for the organization, what plan would you recommend to increase awareness, to inform, to persuade, to listen, and to engage in collaborative decision making so that the organization could achieve its mission and vision?
2. Develop a public relations plan to help increase the visibility of your Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter. If you are on a campus that has no chapter, develop a plan to convince faculty members and administrators that a chapter should be established on the campus. To achieve your plan, do you need to research the Web site of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and PRSSA to determine what requirements need to be met to create or promote your chapter? To whom should you listen to learn more about the challenges to creating or increasing awareness for your chapter?

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