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Campaign Design and Management

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The role of strategic planning in public relations is rooted in today's understanding of the profession, an understanding that can move a practitioner beyond being simply a wordsmith or organizational mouthpiece and into a seat at the management table. Practitioners skilled in strategic planning are sought out to help build relationships and solve problems.

This chapter focuses first on some definitions dealing with projects versus campaigns and then on two types of campaigns, proactive or reactive. This chapter goes beyond projects, the tasks associated with public relations, such as writing effective news releases, creating an interactive Web site, or orchestrating a knock-'em-dead special event. Such tasks are important, but they are only the tools of the trade. A campaign is a systematic framework that underlies many projects. It offers a planned and comprehensive interaction with an organization's environment. For example, a campaign to reduce underage drinking on campus may have a series of associated tactical projects such as a brochure, public presentation, displays, a television program, and student ambassadors offering face-to-face information. Consciously or not, organizations undertake campaigns every time they attempt to build a new client base, increase membership, raise funds, generate support for positions and policies, respond to criticism, react to crises, or otherwise seek to influence their environment. In short, campaigns are strategy, the problem-solving and relationship-building function of organizations that creates messages to be carried by the tactics.

Public relations campaigns may be proactive, initiating a focus on the opportunities before the organization, or reactive, responding to problems or crises. Either way, campaigns are in a carefully implemented planning process that is part of the management function of an organization. This is a four-phase process that (1) begins with formative research, (2) focuses on strategic decisions, (3) creates and implements a range of communication tactics, and (4) concludes with evaluative research. Some see this as a cyclical process, though perhaps a spiral would be a better metaphor. Strategic planning for public relations involves a series of information gathering, decision making, implementation, and evaluation, leading to another set of information gathering, decision making, implementation, and evaluation, and so on.

Background: What Is a Strategic Public Relations Campaign?

Developing as it has out of journalism, public relations is rooted in the communication of messages: messages about organizations—more specifically, directed messages intended to generate good will, understanding, and support for the organization. Many veteran practitioners made the transition from journalism to public relations rather seamlessly, generally by applying what they had learned in journalism to public relations. It was a simple transfer process. Past job descriptions for public relations often read as a sort of journalist-in-residence, with the most common tasks of the practitioner being to generate news releases, edit internal publications, give speeches, organize displays, and perhaps produce organizational videos. This is the role of a communication technician, a specialist in the tasks associated with public relations and
still the role of most entry-level newcomers to public relations. The distinguishing characteristic of technicians is the level of autonomy; they generally do not make their own decisions but rather implement the decisions of others, and they seldom are asked for advice beyond their specialty skill.

Public relations' role has evolved as organizational needs expanded beyond mere dissemination and as the knowledge base expanded to draw on organizational communication, persuasion, relationship building, and problem solving. Lean times caused many businesses and organizations to hold public relations accountable for its impact on the bottom line: product sales, enrollment, fund-raising, attendance, membership, and so on. Like other organizational players, public relations was expected to know its role well, perform effectively and efficiently, and document its success.

Meanwhile, books and articles were being written positioning public relations as part of the management function within organizations. Insight was being drawn from the academic disciplines of business, sociology, and psychology. More than simply an organizational mouthpiece, public relations practitioners were becoming seen as counselors and advocates appreciated for their insight and management ability and considered for a seat at the table and a voice among the decision makers. Tactical managers make decisions on specific and practical day-to-day issues: news release versus news conference, brochure or Web page, four color or spot color. Strategic managers make more nuanced high-level decisions concerning trends, policies, and organizational structure. They determine what issues to deal with, gauge the crisis readiness of the organization, and prepare other executives for media interviews. Strategic managers develop the message, then let the tactical managers decide how best to handle dissemination.

Today, people preparing for careers in public relations have two complementary goals: to master an entry-level skill in order to obtain a job as a communication technician and to begin developing insights and amassing experiences that will move them toward the role of a communication manager. It is no longer enough merely to know how to write effectively, though this certainly is important. It's not enough even to be able to creatively package messages and tactics, though this too is necessary to position an organization or client vis-a-vis the competition. Creativity and excellent writing need to be directed, for without a clear focus, creativity risks becoming mere novelty and writing devolves into wordiness. Careful crafting and creative presentation of messages need to flow from a clear and methodical process of planning. Public relations practitioners must know what is important to their organizations, how public relations fits into the organizational response to problems and opportunities, and who the important publics are. They need to know what to do, why it is important, and how to evaluate its effectiveness. We call this process strategic communication.

The job of strategic communication planning calls for four specific skills: (1) understanding the why, what, and how of research and planning; (2) being able to make strategic decisions by setting goals and objectives; (3) knowing how to creatively and effectively implement those decisions and carry the organization's message to its publics; and (4) completing the process by measuring the outcomes and evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

Theory Base: Learning From Other Disciplines

Applying theory to a topic such as campaign management is perhaps a misleading venture, because there is no single source for the theoretical underpinnings. Public relations draws quite naturally from theoretical understandings in both interpersonal communication and mass media. For example, Aristotle's rhetorical concepts of ethos, logos, and pathos give a foundation for organizational choices for message sources and the logical/emotional content of messages. Paul Lazarsfeld's (1944) theory of the two-step flow of communication, later evolved into a multistep flow, provides a base for an organization's efforts to employ both interpersonal communication and mass media in their persuasive campaigns.

The theory of agenda setting, associated with Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972), offers insight into how organizations can tap into the issues on which the media focus. Two other concepts are associated with agenda setting. Framing, the rhetorical packaging of a message to affect meaning and interpretation, is attributed to Erving Goffman (1974), who drew on earlier work on framing in economics. Priming, the role that media-presented information plays in establishing standards for audiences to make political and social judgments, draws on the political science research of Shanto Iyengar, Mark Peters, and Donald Kinder (1982).

Another source of theoretical concepts for public relations is organizational management. From organizational sociology, for example, W. H. Evan (1976) drew the concept of linkages, patterns of relationships that exist between an organization and its various publics, and James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) adapted these into their process for managing public relations.

From classical rhetoric, Keith Michael Hearit (1994) drew on the concept of apologia—the formal and public defense of one's positions and actions—as offering organizations a strategic opportunity, particularly in times of crisis. William Benoit (1995) advanced the theory of image restoration on the premise that criticism offers an opportunity to rebuild a positive reputation.

Social psychology is another fertile theoretical base for public relations. One framework for analyzing publics is found in Abraham Maslow's (1968) theory of human motivation, commonly called the hierarchy of needs based on
the concept of prepotency (the order in which human needs must be met). Meanwhile, the study of psychological type, developed out of the work of Carl Jung by Isabel Myers and Catharine Briggs (Myers, 1987; Myers & Myers, 1980) and the derivative work of David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates (1984), provides a framework for developing persuasive messages based on the psychological predispositions and temperaments.

From the study of business and marketing comes the concept of positioning, the development of a perception about an organization and its products, messages, and so on. Al Ries and Jack Trout (1987) explained that positioning is not what is done to a product but rather what is done to the mind of a person hearing about the product. The pattern of awareness-acceptance-action in public relations objectives neatly parallels the AIDA pattern (attention, interest, desire, action), which has been part of the theoretical base of advertising since the 1920s (Lipstein, 1985).

Education also has provided a theoretical source for public relations, such as measures of readability, including the Fog Index associated with Robert Gunning (1952), which assists public relations writers in presenting messages that are understandable to readers.

Methods: The Four-Stage Planning Process

There are perhaps as many different approaches to strategic planning for public relations campaigns as there are practitioners. However, the planning process generally involves a four-stage approach, which has become common within the profession. Most contemporary textbooks dealing with public relations encourage a four-phase process. Some use acronyms to outline the process. For example, John Marston (1963) in The Nature of Public Relations outlined the RACE (research, action, communication, evaluation) acronym. In Public Relations Cases, Jerry Hendrix (2003 and previous editions) used the acronym ROPE (research, objectives, programming, evaluation). In Public Relations Campaign Strategies, Robert Kendall (1999) offered RAISE (research, adaptation, implementation strategy, evaluation) as another formula. Most public relations textbooks, however, simply refer to a four-stage process without constraining it into an acronym. In Strategic Planning for Public Relations, Smith (2009) offers the model of four phases subdivided into nine steps, the process echoed below in this chapter.

Marketing communication books similarly present a step-by-step process, though with little consistency about the number of steps involved and less reliance on acronyms. In his cross-over text Social Marketing, Philip Kotler and his colleagues (Kotler, Roberto, & Lee, 2002) identify eight steps in four general stages that focus on (1) analysis of the environment, (2) identification of audiences and objectives, (3) development of a strategic approach, and (4) development of the implementation plan.

Drawing on the common four-stage process, here is an outline of an approach to strategic planning for public relations campaigns. Essentially, it involves tactics growing out of strategic planning, with the entire process bracketed by preliminary analysis and concluding evaluation.

Phase 1: Formative Research
- Step 1: Analyzing the situation
- Step 2: Analyzing the organization
- Step 3: Analyzing the publics

Phase 2: Strategy
- Step 4: Establishing goals and objectives
- Step 5: Formulating action and response strategies
- Step 6: Developing the message strategy

Phase 3: Tactics
- Step 7: Selecting communication tactics
- Step 8: Implementing the strategic plan

Phase 4: Evaluative research
- Step 9: Evaluating the strategic plan

The success of these steps is deliberate, and they need to be taken in sequence. After identifying a problem, it is tempting to skip ahead to seeking solutions, but leaping over research and analysis can result in unwarranted assumptions and false steps.

Phase 1: Formative Research

During the first phase, attention is on gathering information and analyzing the situation. The planner draws on existing information available to the organization and creates a research program to obtain additional needed information. Fran Matera and Ray Artigue (2000) call this strategic research. The systematic gathering of information about both issues and publics that affect organizations, particularly those organizations that are engaged in a two-way communication relationship with their publics. They also identify tactical research, which helps guide communication projects and activities that are implemented within the campaign.

Step 1: Analyzing the Situation

The first part of strategic research involves a careful analysis of the situation. This involves a process Aguilar (1967) called environmental scanning. Howard Chase (1977) called it issues management. Whatever the name, the concept had been around since the days of Ivy Lee. Specific formulations vary, but here is a synthesis of the issues management process: (1) identifying issues that may affect an organization, (2) researching each of those issues, (3) considering options in responding to each issue, (4) developing an action plan for the best option, (5) implementing the plan, and (6) evaluating the effectiveness of the response.

Such analysis plays a particularly important role in crisis management. According to the Institute for Crisis Management, only 14% of organizational crises burst
suddenly onto the scene. Rather, 86% are smoldering situations: white-collar crime, labor disputes, mismanagement, environmental problems, defects and recalls, class-action lawsuits, and similar activities that can be anticipated and thus handled through effective issues management.

**Step 2: Analyzing the Organization**

The second step in the planning process involves a careful and candid look at three aspects of the organization: (1) its internal environment (mission, performance, and resources), (2) its public perception (the organization’s visibility and reputation), and (3) its external environment (competitors and opponents, as well as supporters). The SWOT analysis credited to Albert Humphrey of Stanford University provides a useful format for organizational analysis, with its focus on the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

**Step 3: Analyzing the Publics**

Key publics that interact with the organization on the issue at hand are the focus of this step, which includes an analysis of each in terms of its wants, interests, needs, and expectations about the issue; its relationship to the organization; its level of involvement with various media; and various social, economic, political, cultural, and technological trends that may affect the public. This step revolves around John Dewey’s (1927) classic definition of a public as a grouping of people who share a common interest vis-à-vis an organization, recognize its significances, and set out to do something about it. Publics may be internal to an organization (such as employees or volunteers) or external (such as customers or donors). They may serve to support and sustain an organization, or they can be negative forces against it. Opinion leaders and intercessory publics also play a role in this stage of organizational analysis.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) provided a framework for analyzing publics according to their stage of development: latent, aware, and active publics and nonpublics, based on their level of conscious involvement with an organization over a particular situation. Smith (2003) adds the concept of apathetic publics, those that know but don’t care about a situation.

**Phase 2: Strategy**

The second phase of the planning process presents the decision-making stage of campaign development. It is here that direction is set, options and alternatives are considered, and messages are created.

**Step 4: Establishing Goals and Objectives**

Ever since Edward Bernays (1955) talked about “engineering consent” in the 1940s, public relations has been associated with strategic action toward public influence. This step focuses on the ultimate position being sought for the organization and its product or service. In a classic application of management-by-objectives to public relations, Norman Nager and T. Harrell Allin (1984) used the analogy of transportation: Goals provide direction, while objectives pinpoint the destination. Within campaign development, serious attention is given to the identification of goals (general statements rooted in the organization’s mission of what the campaign seeks to achieve) and objectives (specific statements that are rooted in the goals, addressed to a specific public, linked to research, and focused on impact that is explicit, measurable, and time definite). Objectives generally are presented in a hierarchical triad that addresses the desired impact on knowledge/awareness, attitude/acceptance, and action.

**Step 5: Formulating Action and Response Strategies**

In every public relations situation, the organization has a range of options on what to do and say. The “doing” part first involves decisions about being proactive or reactive. Proactive strategies focus on the organization’s performance and efforts to improve or adapt to new conditions. Organizations connect with their publics through audience participation and engage their colleagues through alliances and coalitions. Activism is another proactive strategy that allows organizations to engage supporters in advancing a cause. Finally, organizations engage the news media, particularly by exploiting the newsworthiness of information and events associated with the organization.

Reactive strategies often draw on the concepts of apology, reputation, and image. Options include offensive responses such as attacks or threats, as well as defensive responses such as denial, excuse, and justification. Also in this category are diversionary responses such as disassociation and relabeling and vocal commiseration such as expressing condolence, regret, or apology. Responsive strategies also involve rectifying behavior such as investigation and corrective action.

**Step 6: Developing the Message Strategy**

This step deals with various decisions about the message: identification of persuasive sources who will present the organization’s message with credibility and charisma; the message content, tone, and style; verbal and nonverbal cues; and related issues.

Of particular importance to this step is the selection of an appropriate spokesperson. Research identifies three characteristics of a persuasive message source as a person with credibility (based on audience perceptions of expertise, honesty, competence, and status), charisma (based on likability, presumed familiarity by the audience, and similarity to the audience), and control (the degree of authority
or power the message source has over the audience). A related question is the relationship of the spokesperson to the organization—celebrity, typical consumer, organizational official, professional colleague, and so on.

**Phase 3: Tactics**

The third phase of the planning process deals with tactics, the visible elements of the campaign. Tactics are what the audiences see, the communication vehicles that carry the organization's message and allow the organization to interact with its publics.

**Step 7: Selecting Communication Tactics**

This inventory deals with the various communication options. Specifically, the planner considers four categories: (1) face-to-face communication and opportunities for personal involvement, using venues such as speeches, seminars, demonstrations, and special events; (2) organizational media involving communication vehicles such as brochures, newsletters, direct mail, Web sites, CDs and DVDs, and other media through which the message content, packaging, and dissemination are controlled by the organization; (3) news media such as newspapers, magazines, news services, radio, television, and online news outlets, through which the organization works with journalists and media gatekeepers to present its message; and (4) advertising and promotional media, another form of controlled media, often with a hefty price tag, involving outlets such as print and broadcast advertising, Web-based promotion, and out-of-home advertising and organization-directed promotional items such as clothing, consumer items, and accessories. While all these tools can be used by any organization, not every tool is appropriate for each campaign, and it is in this step that the repertoire is considered, options are analyzed, and tactical choices are made.

**Step 8: Implementing the Strategic Plan**

This step focuses on the administration of the tactics identified in the previous step and on managing them into an effective public relations campaign. It involves the development of schedules and the assignment of accountability for tasks. This step includes full budgets that account for personnel (with the fair-market value of pro bono work as well as the involvement of people on the organizational payroll), along with costs of material, media buys, equipment and facilities, and administrative expenses.

**Phase 4: Evaluation**

The final phase rounds out the process with a focus on evaluation and assessment.

**Step 9: Evaluating the Strategic Plan**

While formal evaluation cannot be undertaken until the campaign is under way (via progress reports) or completed (final evaluation report), plans for such evaluation are made before implementing the campaign tactics. Generally, this planning involves returning to the goals and objectives articulated in Step 4 and applying them to each of the tactics identified in Step 7. Each tactic is measured and analyzed in light of the expected outcome articulated through the objectives.

Research design for evaluation includes both before-after studies and after-only studies, though the former are generally more useful because they provide a basis of comparison. Research methodologies can begin with judgmental assessments (informal personal observations) and measurement of communication outputs (message production, distribution, and cost). But more useful are evaluations based on the campaign objectives: awareness measures such as message exposure, readiness, and recall; acceptance measures such as audience feedback and benchmark studies; and action measures such as audience participation and direct observation of impact, such as voting or attendance figures.

**Application: How Strategic Campaigns Work**

In the past, public relations existed rather autonomously from other functions in most organizations, whether corporate or nonprofit. Public relations purists considered “marketing” a four-letter word; some academics and some practitioners railed against comincing the two disciplines. As a part of marketing, advertising enjoyed large budgets, which necessitated a high level of accountability. Fewer eyes watched the smaller numbers in public relations. But through strategic communication, public relations has become part of a coordinated plan of action rooted in the organization’s mission and focused on its bottom line. Such planning comprehensively uses all the communication tools available, from publicity to advertising and beyond, to present the strategic message.

Tom Harris (1993) called integrated communication an outside-in process that begins with an understanding of the consumer publics, with public relations as particularly effective in building brand equity. Helen Ostrowski (1999) of Porter Novelli found marketing-oriented public relations at the root of public relations. After all, it was the founding father Edward Bernays who engineered a debauched march in New York City’s Easter Parade aimed at making smoking acceptable for women so his client, Lucky Strike, could sell cigarettes to a new market.

Examples of strategic campaigns can be seen all around. It is a common feature in the offerings of agencies providing the standard range of public relations services. Other places where integrated strategic campaigns can
commonly be found are in marketing communication, public health and social marketing campaigns, diplomacy and international relations, constituent relations, and ecumenical or interreligious affairs. Public relations itself is sometimes known by alternative names, often linked to auxiliary areas such as media relations or employee communication; businesses call the function corporate communications.

A process of research-based strategic planning is necessary for effective management of all the various subcategories of public relations, including community relations, special events planning and promotion, political campaigns, nonprofit events, and fund-raising and development (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001). Similarly, we can add other elements of strategic public relations that rely on a base of research and strategic planning: public affairs, issues management, crisis communication, public information, consumer and customer relations, lobbying, investor relations, and so on. Some new specialties include litigation public relations, risk communication, and reputation management.

New names are emerging to reflect the emerging multidisciplinary approach, which sometimes is called strategic communication or integrated communication. Regardless of the label, we look to public relations for leadership and insight in the practice of strategic communication, because most of the related fields and specialties have adopted the set of skills and approaches that public relations has developed over the past 75 years or so (Botan, 1997; Botan & Soto, 1998). Meanwhile, public relations is beginning to more consciously borrow techniques and practices associated with other disciplines, particularly marketing and one of its primary communication tools, advertising.

Strategic planning for communication, based on this integrated model, occurs globally. Philip Kitchen and Don Schultz (1999) reported that the concept is gaining acceptability not only in the United States but also in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and India. The author has had personal contact with public relations professors in Russia and Japan, communication doctoral students in Turkey and Hong Kong, and the Azerbaijan Public Relations Association expressing interest in this strategic planning model. Leading public relations agencies in Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, Brazil, and Egypt offer integrated communication services. Companies such as Saturn, Xerox, Motorola, Hewlett-Packard, and Federal Express have been extolled as examples of companies that have effectively integrated their strategic communication.

Case Studies: Real-World Examples of Strategic Campaigns

Some of the most successful corporations integrate into their public relations campaigns a blend of publicity and advertising to present a clear and consistent message to their publics. For example, when McDonald’s introduced its McLean sandwich, it used publicity and other public relations tactics to create awareness through the media and then followed them up with advertising messages. It was publicity that enabled Goodyear to sell 150,000 new Aquatred tires before the first advertisements ran, and it was publicity that led Pfizer to sell $250 million of Viagra and gain a 90% market share before any consumer advertising began. Crayola Crayons generated $23 million in sales based on a $35,000 publicity campaign built around a Crayola Hall of Fame.

Nonprofit organizations also have successfully used integrated communication approaches. One study suggested that nonprofit organizations are particularly open to the coordinated use of public relations and marketing communication techniques (Nemec, 1999). For example, the American Cancer Society used an integrated approach for its campaign for sun block. Similar efforts have been adopted by social campaigns dealing with bicycle safety, teen smoking, animal rights, birth control, utility deregulation, and AIDS research.

Integrated campaigns often begin with publicity, followed by advertising. Al Ries and Laura Ries (2002) noted this in The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR: “The purpose of advertising is not to build a brand, but to defend a brand once the brand has been built by other means, primarily public relations or third-party endorsements” (p. xiv). “Advertising cannot start a fire. It can only fan a fire after it has been started” (p. xx). They provided an overview of organizations that have achieved success with this format: Wal-Mart became the world’s largest retailer with little advertising; Starbucks spent less than $10 million in advertising during its first 10 years; Harry Potter books soared to previously unheard of sales without any appreciable advertising. The Art of War surged onto the best-seller list when Tony Soprano told his psychiatrist in The Sopranos TV series that he liked the book.

Comparisons: Public Relations in Different Cultures

Public relations campaigns are created and implemented throughout the world, often with similar approaches. However, effective campaigns also take into account the cultural environment of both the organization and the publics. Thus, public relations planners must be aware of and sensitive to cultural issues, not only how cultures differ but also how those differences affect public relations strategic planning. It is important to keep in mind that public relations practice has largely been rooted in Western culture, practiced by Western-oriented organizations, and intended for Western audiences in Western environments. Yet public relations can be applied to non-Western situations but often with cultural accommodation.
Public relations planning also takes into account cultural approaches based on the oral tradition of non-Western cultures. Metaphor, analogies, and storytelling, for example, are part of an oral tradition more appreciated in Arab, Asian, and Native American cultures than in Western/American society. This is true also of Hispanic culture even in the United States, true also for various geographic/demographic differences in the United States. Thus, public relations directed toward such audiences will employ more strategic use of story, linguistic symbols, and allusion to events and persons relevant to those publics. A campaign aimed at Native American communities, for example, might reflect the cultural appreciation for family, nature, and heritage. Likewise a campaign developed for use in Hispanic communities will take into account the rich diversity within Hispanic America.

Consider an example within an Arab cultural setting. Ali Kanso, Abdul Karim Sinno, and William Adams (2001) noted that public relations campaigns in Arab culture need to take into account the indirect, often symbolic aspect of Arab communication style, the high-context nature of Arab communication that imbeds meaning not only in common language codes but also in interpersonal relationships. The nature of language also is important; English is a practical code useful in transferring information, while Arabic is a more artistic code that fosters the creation of a social experience. They also noted important social differences. For example, Arabs share a common nationality amid many different countries, whereas Americans have a common country but many different nationalities. Americans tend to treat religion as a more private matter than Arabs; America is more youth oriented, whereas Arab cultures give more value to age and wisdom.

A second example is an Asian public relations situation involving a crisis. Amon Haruta and Kirk Hallahan (2004) studied similar Japanese and American airline air crashes that occurred only 10 days apart, each resulting in hundreds of deaths. Japan Air Lines handled its crisis in typical Asian fashion, within a culture that values formal rules, the importance of reputation, the speedy delivery of bad news to the media, the desirability of social harmony, the avoidance (even shamefulness) of litigation, and the importance of public apology. Japanese culture also presumes male organizational leaders who accept responsibility, are visible in crisis situations, and take decisive action. Each of these is vastly different from the typical American response to crisis. Delta Airlines, on the other hand, operated within an American framework, in which CEOs are reluctant to be part of bad news, where litigation is presumed and thus organizations try to remain tight-lipped, where responsibility is avoided and apologies are anathema, and where action is tentative at best.

The third example stems from the 2007 Cherokee citizenship vote that ended in a decision to recognize Cherokee blood as a key element in eligibility for status as a tribal citizen. The decision thus removed citizenship for the Freedmen, descendants of pre–Civil War slaves whom the federal government had forced into Cherokee citizenship a century ago. Content analysis of media coverage (Smith, 2007) showed that journalists framed the story in different ways—most as a civil rights issue oppressing black Indians, some as a self-determination issue for a sovereign Indian nation, a few as the inevitable result of former federal policy that 100 years ago arbitrarily mixed two distinct and disenfranchised groups. Both the Cherokee and the Freedmen mounted public relations campaigns to give their perspectives on what became the focus of international news coverage. Though pointedly different, each campaign included messages that sought to present historical information in a context to explain contemporary events.

Future Directions

The emerging relationship between public relations and marketing on which integrated communication is founded can be uneasy at times. At the management table, the marketing side has accepted the partnership with public relations, though perhaps still in a subsidiary role. Robert Gray (1998) reported a British survey that public relations is no longer peripheral but rather “one of the most important elements of the marketing mix” (p. 24). The survey by Countrywide Porter Novelli, one of the largest public relations firms in the United Kingdom, reported that 92% of marketing directors believe that public relations is integral to business objectives, 58% said that it is of equal importance with advertising, and 66% expected public relations spending to increase. Philip Kitchen and his associates called this integrated strategic model the major communications development of the last decade of the 20th century (Kitchen, Brignell, Li, & Spickett Jones, 2004).

On the other hand, when the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication suggested integrating public relations and advertising into a shared curriculum reflecting practices in both fields, the Educational Affairs Committee of the Public Relations Society of America quickly opposed such a blending. Nevertheless, the biggest growth area in public relations education is in schools that blend public relations and advertising/marketing communication. A study by two practitioners-turned-academics—Debra Miller, a former PRSA president, and Patricia Rose, the former president of the Miami Advertising Federation—reported that practitioners embrace an integration that leaves the educational community with mixed feelings. They said that practitioners accept integrated communication as both a necessity and a reflection of real-world practice (Miller & Rose, 1994).

More ominously, some unwanted links between public relations and marketing are emerging that give pause. At root is the historic legal reality that the government can place some limits on advertising messages, restrictions that some
are now eyeing as potentially being applied to news- and publicity-oriented communication by organizations. Writing in the Journal of Advertising, Kathy Fitzpatrick (2005) noted several legal challenges to integrated communication, in which, because of the blending of commercial speech and political expression, more potential has been created for courts to regulate corporate messages. This is happening both in the states and at the federal level. While the U.S. Supreme Court has not yet specifically addressed the question of whether and/or how to apply advertising limits to organizational public relations, some lower-court rulings could serve as precedents.

A pertinent example is a significant case, *Kasky v. Nike, Inc.* (2002). The consumer activist Marc Kasky sued Nike under false-advertising provisions over its public defense against charges of using child sweatshop labor. A trial court ruled in favor of Nike, which had presented a First Amendment defense, and an appeals court affirmed that decision. But the California Supreme Court overturned those decisions and upheld Kasky’s claim that Nike had engaged in “commercial speech” (a legal euphemism for advertising), which enjoys fewer First Amendment protections than other forms of speech (including public relations messaging). This ruling came despite the fact that the company had done no advertising but instead had used traditional public relations practices—news releases, Web site, speeches, and letters to the editor—to defend against the child-labor charges. In essence, the court said that Nike had mixed commercial and political speech, and thus could be held to the narrower regulatory standards allowed for commercial speech. An out-of-court settlement in 2003 ended the 5-year legal battle but did not settle the legal question of where public relations ends and marketing begins.

Fitzpatrick (2005) concluded that “perhaps the most important finding is that public relations expression is not fully protected under the First Amendment as both conventional wisdom and some scholarly studies have suggested” (p. 99). Conversely, she also concluded that

not all public relations communication will be automatically categorized as commercial if a company integrates its communication functions. The Supreme Court has made it clear that corporations enjoy the right to engage in fully protected speech in the political arena. (p. 99)

The future of integrated strategic communication, then, is likely to include greater care on the part of organizations in framing messages that clearly separate the commercial from the noncommercial elements, as well as more potential lawsuits dealing with the balance.

**Conclusion**

Both the design and management of public relations campaigns are strategic functions that underlie the potential success of the tactical and task-focused projects associated with them. Well-planned and well-managed campaigns provide the ground bed and structural framework for the public relations activities of every type of organization. Effective campaigns are rooted in knowledge gained through research on the issue, organization, and publics. They are designed to meet particular goals and objectives and to implement carefully crafted action steps and messages that further the organization’s mission. They involve a range of tactics that allow the organization to interact with its publics and present its messages. And finally, effective public relations campaigns are evaluated against the intended impact that was sought by the organization for each public.

**References and Further Readings**


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