When engineers or accountants see certain things occurring, they automatically respond in certain ways. Public relations can too.

With drunk driving, seat belts, productivity, healthcare cost, new product & other campaigns, very often unrealistic expectations of public relations activities are widespread. Decades of research into the relationship between information & behavior change is often unknown or ignored -- such as the studies of Jim Grunig (prr 1/31/83 & t&t 2/7/83). This creates a major opportunity for practitioners.

One reason management is sometimes critical of the field is because practitioners have not established a hierarchy of public relations -- a useful frame of reference for planning, positioning, explaining objectives & getting needed resources allocated to the work. Such a tool can keep expectations realistic by calling attention to the difference in complexity of various types of campaigns.

| 6 LEVELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITY | |
|---|---|
| 1. Awareness | 1-way communication; emphasizes all types of media to reach as large a percentage of target public as possible; primary message strategy is believability, e.g., "you need to know about this." |
| 2. Information | Basically 1-way communication but feedback devices useful to answer questions; media emphasized; primary message strategy is relevance, e.g., "this affects you for these reasons." |
| 3. Education | Still 1-way communication but uses opinion leaders to motivate public to accept the subject as one they can apply to their daily lives; usually involves uncontroversial topics, or one view of an issue presented in a non-debate format; message strategy is memorability. |
| 4. Reinforcement | 2-way communication with accepted leaders & role models enhancing the resolve of people known to be favorable to continue their present attitude or behavior; media less useful, unless targeted to avoid simultaneously reinforcing the opposition; message strategy is shared values. |
| 5. Attitude Change | Major application of 2-Step Flow, using media to raise questions & peer groups to offer social rewards/punishments; primary message strategy is to avoid stiffening resistance, secondary is to offer validation for the switch. |
| 6. Behavior Modification | Uses all available public relations tools to ask for a willing suspension of resistance to change; adds "enforcement" & "engineering" factors to seek congruence between attitudes & actual behavior; message strategy is repetition of the benefits. |

Much more is needed, of course, to produce a complete process. But models like these give us a conceptual framework. Readers' comments are solicited to further develop the process management approach.

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## OPPORTUNITY '85: BRING RIGOR OF PROCESS MANAGEMENT TO BUILDING PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS BY CREATING AN EASILY-APPLIED & SIMPLE-TO-EXPLAIN CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As the new spirit of total competition deepens, the primary response in most areas of endeavor has been the "marketing revolution." For public relations this has generally been positive, with its theme that the three most important publics are "customers, customers & customers." Yet even as organizations trim & shape themselves to meet their customers' needs & values, two old problems surface: 1) how to discipline & motivate the organization so it 2) makes them regular, repeat, loyal customers.

Once the legitimate but somewhat simplistic appeal of marketing wears off, managements everywhere find themselves once again facing the need, the essentiality of building long-term public relationships -- not only with customers but other key publics. Marketing, alas, with all its basic lessons & strengths, is not a panacea. A more holistic model is needed, one that a) takes all elements of modern organizational life into account, b) allows stability thru the stresses of constant change in product/service, environment, demographics, lifestyle, c) provides for the process management of public relationships.

| MODEL OF THE SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION |
|---|
| Begins with, & invests much energy in, a |
| 1. DEFINITIVE MISSION STATEMENT (Values) |
|    - the distilled essence of the organization's reason for being |
|    - implies its USP, positioning, goals, policies. |
| This is carried out by |
| 2. CORPORATE CULTURE (Shared Values) |
|    - demonstrated by role models, heroes |
|    - reinforced by rituals, stories |
|    - the source of teamwork, morale, productivity. |
| This in turn lets the organization speak with One Clear Voice to penetrate the changing & competitive environment by building |
| 3. POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS (Expressed Values) |
|    - more than marketing or communication |
|    - the source of loyalty, credibility, trust. |
| Over time this creates |
| 4. REPUTATION (Understood Values) |
|    - generates latent readiness to like, accept, trust, believe |
|    - a serendipitous, self-powering force that lies at the core of all human interface |
|    - epitomized in the old Squibb motto, "The priceless ingredient of every product is the honor & integrity of its maker." |

Process management means standardized methods -- a process. It implies carrying thru to closure, to finishing, i.e. completing the process since the "product" is valueless without it. In a foundry, for example, castings must be polished. In accounting, figures must be audited. Public relations must be evaluated and give evidence it caused some outcome. The irony is that by institutionalizing the process, practitioners are free to concentrate on outcomes, not process.

ABOUT THIS MODEL    1. It offers an orderly process.

2. Is value-centered. Critical since if an organization doesn't broadcast (& act on) its values, people will fill the vacuum by ascribing values for it -- probably unflattering ones.

3. Describes any organization regardless of age, product or service, etc.

4. Focuses on the organization itself -- a group of people working together over time -- regardless of changes in product or service, management or ownership, environment.

5. Emphasizes basics: constant attention to interaction & communication in order to build relationships.

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**USEFUL TECHNIQUES**

To find out realistically where your organization stands in relation to the model, do a simple comparison.

1. From internal documents, make a list of what the organization stands for.

2. Then conduct some research to discover what the organization is known for among key constituents.

3. Compare the two and you have both an agenda for the public relations dep't & a mandate for management.

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For practitioners, it provides badly needed priorities & division of labor. Note that the internal audience is top priority public ... for until members of the organization share its values & are trained to speak about them in unison -- and behave accordingly -- external relations remain fragile, subject to contradiction. What a waste to spend large budgets telling people how caring you are, only to have them find out differently from contact with your switchboard or sales dep't -- or from an employee gossiping at a cocktail party. While this may always remain a challenge given the vagaries of human nature, an instilled corporate culture at the least provides a proactive defense.

Critics of this kind of model usually suggest it won't work in large organizational settings. Yet even there most interaction is one-on-one: a supervisor to a worker, a clerk to a customer, and so on. Further, examples of the model working successfully are all around us. Consider the Japanese style with its rituals of morning exercises & company songs aimed at creating a value-intensive culture which works toward meeting the needs of customers. And -- truthfully -- how many organizations large or small really have taken the time to create definitive mission statements that are understood & looked to for guidance in daily operations? (See prr 2/14/83 for Johnson & Johnson's reliance on its credo during the Tylenol crisis.)

This model provides a macro view of how organizations function -- & how to keep them healthy. Next step is to determine public relations' role in operations.

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PROCESS MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS MIGHT BE TERMED HOW TO MANAGE YOUR PROGRAM FOR RESULTS    Today results must be behavioral. The object of public relations is stimulating behavior, reinforcing or modifying it. Influencing opinion or attitudes, showing that messages were received -- or even securing positive feedback -- are no longer enough. Public relations needs to give evidence some action occurred.

### 8 WAYS PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTRIBUTES TO THE BOTTOM LINE

| | Process | Principal Activity | Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Awareness & Information | Publicity, promotion, audience targeting | Pave the way for sales, fundraising, stock offerings, et al |
| 2. | Organizational Motivation | Internal relations & communications | Build morale, teamwork, productivity, corporate culture; work toward One Clear Voice outreach |
| 3. | Issue Anticipation | Research; liaison with all publics | Early warning of issues, social-political change, constituency unrest |
| 4. | Opportunity Identification | Interaction with internal & external audiences | Discover new markets, products, methods, allies, positive issues |
| 5. | Crisis Management | Respond to or blanket issues, disasters, attacks; coalition-building | Protect position, retain allies & constituents, keep normal operations going despite battles |
| 6. | Overcoming Executive Isolation | Counseling senior managers about what's really happening; research | Realistic, competitive, enlightened decisions |
| 7. | Change Agentry | O.D., QWL, corporate culture, similar techniques; research | Ease resistance to change, promote smooth transition, reassure affected constituencies |
| 8. | Social Responsibility | Social accountancy, research, mount public interest projects & tie-ins | Create reputation, enhance economic success thru "double bottom line" |

SPECIFYING THE LEVELS OF DIFFICULTY & COMMITMENT IS REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE VARIOUS OBJECTIVES    The rigorous requirements to affect behavior eliminates the luxury of cogitating over everything, of inventing creative new responses every time a situation comes along. It calls for systematized response to organizational needs or -- far superior, a system for proactive anticipation of those needs.