

TEXT OF PROPOSED OFFICIAL PRSA DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations helps our complex, pluralistic society to reach decisions and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions. It serves to bring private and public policies into harmony.

Public relations serves a wide variety of institutions in society such as business, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations, [schools, religious organizations,] foundations, hospitals and universities. To achieve their goals, these institutions must develop effective relationships with many different audiences or publics such as employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders and other institutions, and with society at large.

The managements of institutions need to understand the attitudes and values of their various publics in order to achieve institutional goals. The goals themselves are shaped by the external environment. The public relations practitioner acts as a counselor to management, and as a mediator, helping to translate private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action.

As a management function, public relations encompasses the following:

¶Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues which might impact, for good or ill, the operations and plans of the organization.

¶Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communications, taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.

¶Researching, conducting and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and communications to achieve informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing, financial, fundraising, employee, community or government relations and other programs.

¶Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy.

¶Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities -- in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.

¶Examples of the knowledge that may be required in the professional practice of public relations include communications arts, psychology, social psychology, sociology, political science, economics and the principles of management. Technical knowledge and skills are required for opinion research, public issues analysis, media relations, direct mail, institutional advertising, publications, movie/video productions, special events, [lobbying,] speeches and presentations.

In helping to define and implement policy, the public relations practitioner utilizes a variety of professional [research, counseling &] communications skills and plays an integrative role both within the organization and between the organization and the external environment.

¶Comments: 1) "Communication" is used in the plural; the meanings intended seem to require the singular. 2) Some clauses seem too narrow or omit important elements; enlarging amendments we'd propose appear in brackets.

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EFFECTS OF COLOR BECOMING BETTER KNOWN  
THRU RESEARCH WHICH CAN BENEFIT PUBLIC RELATIONS;  
"PASSIVE PINK" MAY BE ABLE TO STOP GRAFFITI

As practitioners become better versed in graphic & visual techniques, they are discovering the powerful effect of color on response to printed & video messages. But there's more. Color affects behavior, say some scientists. Violent children placed in a pink room have calmed and even fallen asleep within 10 minutes, reports a NYTimes article. 1,500 hospitals & correctional institutions are sufficiently convinced to paint one room "passive pink." Several municipalities are experimenting with passive pink to stop graffiti. Some football coaches are reportedly trying the color in visitors' dressing rooms, hoping to debilitate opponents.

Discredited by Victorian quacks, the field of color psychology has been renamed photobiology and is being rejuvenated. Still controversial, it's reaching beyond the psychological to include physiological effects. Several experiments show that different colors affect blood pressure, pulse & respiration rates as well as brain activity & biorhythms. As a result, colors are being used to treat some diseases. Baths of blue light have replaced blood transfusions as the standard treatment for premature babies with neonatal jaundice. Because the blue lights irritate nurses working in these wards, gold lamps have been installed to sooth them.

Color therapists disagree as to how & why color affects people. Faber Birren, color consultant for industry & author of many books on the subject, believes its effects are psychological. Color sets a mood; the mood affects health because half of human diseases have a psychosomatic component, he explains. Alexander Schauss, dir of American Institute for Biosocial Research, believes color has a direct physiological impact. "The electromagnetic energy of color interacts in some still unknown way with the pituitary & pineal glands and the hypothalamus, deep in the brain. These organs regulate the endocrine system,

PRSA PROPOSES UNIFORM DESCRIPTION  
(NOT DEFINITION) OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Pres. Joe Awad is concerned that, with the field gaining greatly increased visibility, there is no standard definition. This was cited as a major problem by the Lesly Report two years ago (pr 11/24/80). Awad appointed a prestigious committee to write a definition, chaired by Elias Buchwald.

As a first step, the group prepared what Awad terms "a meaningful description of what public relations does today in its present state of evolution." It is not yet the concise definition the Lesly Report calls for. PRSA's governing Assembly will be asked to make it official Saturday in San Francisco. Sister professional societies have been asked to co-sponsor, as they did the Report.

Awad told pr he's had only 4 or 5 calls about it, all favorable. What do you think? Full text appears on page 4.

which controls many basic body functions & emotional responses, such as aggression."

Either way, its significance as a pr technique to influence behavior is important. Color schemes used in offices, factories, restaurants, meeting rooms, even products, certainly in communication vehicles, can be chosen to help stimulate a desired response. (For more info, read any of Birren's many books. His most recent, published May '82, is Light, Color & Environment, Van Nostrand Reinhold.)

Red increases appetite and table turnover in restaurants. Ultraviolet reduces cavities & spurs children's IQ's. Blue swells the ratio of female chin-chilla babies to males. In the Soviet Union ultraviolet lamps are used in schoolrooms because "children grow faster than usual, work ability and grades are improved and catarrhal infections are fewer," explains Birren.

OFFICE PRODUCTIVITY DEPENDS ON INTERNAL RELATIONS, NOT JUST TECHNOLOGY, STUDY SHOWS; 9 KEY FINDINGS AFFECT WORKPLACE & PRACTITIONERS

Will word processing, electronic mail & other new office technology increase productivity? As usual, the human

factor is the key variable. If internal relations are poor, morale is harmed and any potential increase negated. A survey by Group Attitudes Corp for Verbatim Corp offers insights to office workers' perceptions of new technology in the workplace.

It shows 1) top mgmt doesn't give office workers enough say in the selection of automated equipment. Respondents feel 2) they & their immediate supervisors are seldom consulted when decisions are made to upgrade, replace or purchase new equipment. Top mgmt & dep't heads have the most influence on selection of equipment, they feel, despite their lack of familiarity with the operation of the system or the needs of the user. Office workers also say 3) they want to be consulted on the design of work space & adjustment of work schedules.

Opportunities -- or barriers -- to increasing productivity by office workers are the same for workers in all parts of the organization, including management. This is spelled out in detail in prr's special report: Improving Productivity: A Public Relations Opportunity. 100 pgs, \$20 from prr office.

Other findings: 4) 87.3% want to participate in discussion groups about new equipment; 5) 78.3% want to attend

sales presentations by equipment vendors; 6) 64.1% want to pass along ideas to mgmt via a suggestion box; 7) 68.2% feel extended use could result in health problems, such as eye & back strain from inadequate lighting & poor furniture design; 8) tho 9 of 10 have some form of training, a substantial percentage either feel it is unsatisfactory or think continuing education would be helpful; 9) 65.9% insist that new office technologies, such as word processing, may alter the female stereotype of office workers. Because it is largely viewed as a technical function (53.3%), many think word processing is an acceptable career choice for men, too.

J.K. GALBRAITH AGAIN SHOWS POWER OF A PHRASE. Even when heavily biased, like his current pitch letter for a political group: "I'm not persuaded by telling me our incentive system is wrong -- that the rich are not working because they are not getting enough income and that the poor are not working because they are getting too much."

KERRY KING RETIRES FROM TEXACO, JOINS MANNING, SELVAGE & LEE; REFLECTS ON 43 YEARS OF PRACTICE

Retiring today as svp at Texaco, he reflects for prr readers on the profession he has followed since 1939:

What public relations is: "Most elements of presentday society are in confrontation. Public relations professionals are the peacemakers."

The major threat: "Today's CEO wants to deal with a single executive who can handle public, civic, consumer & governmental affairs. In the past 15 years, our province has been challenged by other disciplines: sociologists, lawyers, planners & so-called public policy experts. More & more they are being chosen to take over the reins for activities that have, until now, been handled by public relations practitioners."

Why lawyers are effective: "Their training creates discipline in thinking & thought progression; they approach situations logically & present their "case" in disciplined, convincing terms."

What practitioners can do: "We need to devote a lot of attention to where public relations is going ... being enlarged from the old communicator/corporate image PR Parasol to the Oversized Public Affairs Bumbershoot. We must evolve from the neophyte stages of being basic tools of communications to the high professional level of issue-oriented experts who can help influence -- not manipulate -- public policy as it affects our client or company."

The future of pr: "The future is super ... there's no question in my mind about it. Yes, society's elements are in confrontation. And that makes news. We're moving toward a resurgence of patriotism & nationalism. We're going to have greater competition, lessened affluence, greater unrest and contention. These are conditions under which the broad-scale practice of public relations will thrive and grow. Conflict is good for our business ... and I think we're going to have a lot of it."

Retirement for the practitioner credited with being the highest placed in corporate management (and earning the largest salary) means only a change of environment. Nov. 15 King joins Manning, Selvage & Lee (NYC) as sr. consultant. He says half his time will be devoted to MS&L, half to his own firm, King/Associates, and a third to skiing, fishing & sailing -- totaling a typical 32-hr day.

7 RULES FOR GETTING YOUR SIDE ACROSS

1. Simplify the issue.
2. Present it in the public's self-interest.
3. Be candid.
4. Show balance.
5. Get a head start -- act before the problem becomes acute.
6. Use all the techniques, not just one -- public relations, advertising, lobbying, etc.
7. Know who your target is -- and that's not as simple as it seems.

Ogilvy & Mather, which compiled these guidelines, concludes from its experience that most successful issue campaigns are aimed at the general public via television. Several ad agencies tout this view -- but then, they have a special interest in costly tv campaigns. The jury's not in yet -- but O&M's guidelines are a useful tool for practitioners.