

Call anytime you'd like more information.' Most stories were about 3 sentences long & listed a subject matter expert & number to call for more info" -- not the pr dep't. (See prr 9/19/94 on information mapping)

- 7. **Met 1-on-1 in the communities.** "Our state vp met with legislators. We met with key leaders. We'd bring the informal employee leader, have lunch or dinner together, talk & listen. We listened more than we talked -- that was key."
- 8. **Established a database** listing who had spoken to whom, when, about what & the feedback received. "At any time we could see where people were on an issue. What their hot buttons were & how we could tie our issues in with the things they cared about. Without this database we would have addressed them talking about the things **we thought** they cared about."
- 9. When the legislative session began, "We had a group of people that we kept constantly informed -- sometimes daily. What we didn't want to do was ask them for help unless we absolutely needed it. The biggest help they were providing us was feedback on what they were hearing, what people were saying about the legislation. In some cases we found people weren't saying anything, which brought us back to reality. It's easy to think everyone wakes up in the morning thinking about our issues. But most people could care less about any issues but their own. That kept bringing us back to reality -- that we don't have to go out with this press release because people really don't care."
- 10. Toward the end of the legislative session, OLS were asked to help. Some to make phone calls. Some brought in for brief training in lobbying who then met with legislators from their areas.

**RESULTS** "Unfortunately the legislation didn't pass. But the process was incredibly valuable. We saw it as an ongoing way to communicate & listen to our key constituents." Downsizing took its toll & the "formalized program went by the wayside." In '88, Wyoming had 8 pr people on staff. Now there's 1 person responsible for adv'g, comty afrs, pr, employee com'ns, exec support, product publicity & media rels. The benefit of one person being responsible for everything is "she deals with the same core group of people continually & has established an excellent relationship with them. She knows them all."

"Now we're trying to figure out the best way to strategically do constituency relations with our community affairs managers. We have local markets teams in our larger states that are re-energizing & getting to know the communities, the people, the informal & formal leaders. We've got a new pr leadership team that understands the importance of developing these relationships. We're getting back into it."

**TO RUN A CONSTITUENCY RELATIONS PROGRAM, HAMMACK RECOMMENDS:**

1. "Get top level support for it because it's a lot of work."
2. "Establish a good database."
3. "Have patience. There is not an immediate result. It takes faith, patience & commitment. If you stick with it, you won't believe the results. It's a long term effort that really pays off."

## PHIL LESLY, "ONE OF THE GIANTS OF OUR FIELD," DEAD AT 78

He succumbed to leukemia Monday, April 28, at his winter home in Florida.

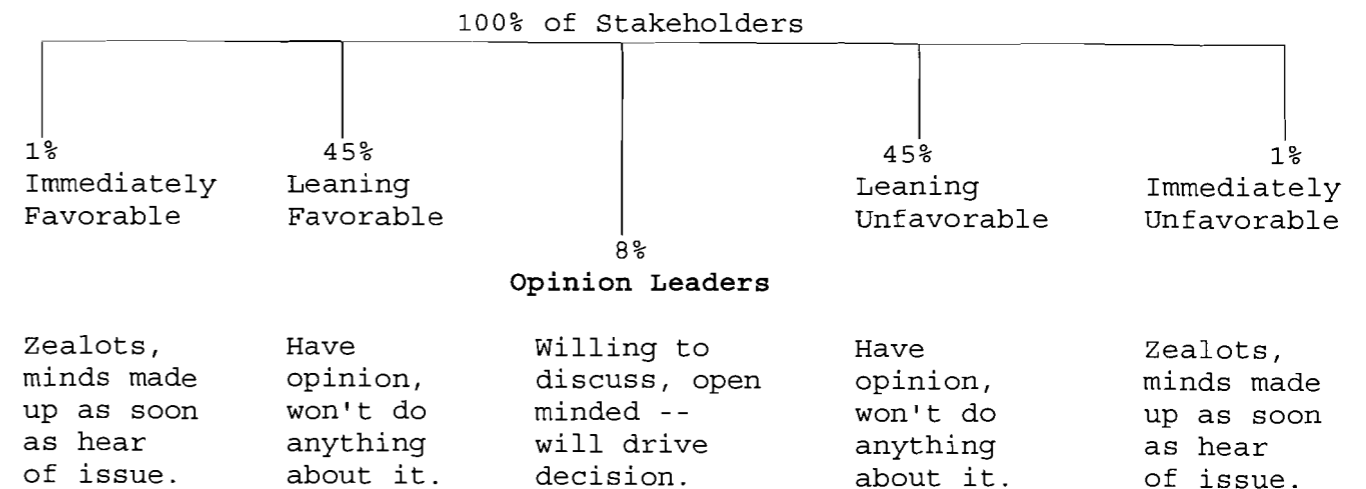
- "With the death of Philip Lesly, the public relations profession -- I think that is what he would want our field called -- loses one of its great thinkers & advocates. He took pride in being a 'public relations man.' He was offended when people referred to the 'pr field' without spelling out the words 'public relations.' Altho he liked simple phrases to describe what public relations is, he defined its domain very broadly. Anyone knows that who has examined his impressive contribution to the field, *Lesly's Handbook of Public Relations & Communications*.

"We at pr reporter have been thankful for his rich -- & sometimes controversial -- thoughts in his bi-monthly managing the human climate. He had a way of putting current trends in perspective. For example, he recently advocated characterizing our stage of the economy as 'the intelligence age,' saying, 'information merely feeds judgment, imagination, creativity & disciplined thinking.'

"Philip Lesly went beyond information & knowledge to the final stage of attaining wisdom." -- Otto Lerbinger

**LESLY'S PARADIGM** A major aid to practice, he developed this model using data on issues stored at Nat'l Opinion Research Ctr, U. of Chicago. It first appeared in prr a decade ago -- and is as relevant today as then.

### HOW PEOPLE TODAY TYPICALLY RESPOND TO ISSUES



**OFTEN CONTROVERSIAL**

18 years ago, Lesly's managing the human climate became a regular supplement to prr. The final one, ironically, appears at its usual time with this issue. While his clarity & thoughtful prose were constant, many did not always agree with what he wrote. As Lesly explained to prr (8/29/94):

"I don't think there's any purpose in adhering to conventional wisdom & entrenched platitudes. If you try to modulate what you say so no one is ever upset, you'll rarely say anything that your readers feel is worth paying to read. *Politically correct* advocates believe that the road to Utopia is by preventing anyone from having any critical thoughts about anyone or anything. But the truth always has to prevail in the end."

**HIS CONTRIBUTION AS SEEN BY EMINENT PRACTITIONERS**

- "He was a sensitive, literate critic of standard practice -- in one sense a rebel against conformity. I knew him for 40 years. He always opted for higher & higher standards. He was in many ways almost a professional critic of some of the normal customs of our profession. He had great faith in the future of it. Believed we could always do better than we were doing.

"His writing was 'superb.' He also was a fundamental believer in the Bill of Rights, in the fact that the interests of the individual are at least as important, perhaps more important than the interests of the state. He was a great believer in individualism.

"I worked with him during the growth of PRSA. We served on committees together -- usually around the advancement of professionalism. He was impatient with the attention given to communications techniques -- which seem so dominant in today's world. Despite his pessimism sometimes, he had an unbounded faith in the capacity of all of us to do better & serve a more useful place in the world." -- Howard Chase

- "Very few people can match Phil's lifetime contributions to the field. He was certainly in recent years the principle theologian of public relations -- the wiseman, the philosopher. That's what I treasure him for. He was thinking while the rest of us were pounding word processors. He will be missed. Nobody has written as wisely over a range of issues in the field as he has." -- Ed Block
- "Phil Lesly was one of the giants of our field, a stern & vocal critic of shoddy practice, a provocative champion of public relations at its principled best. Throughout his distinguished career, he challenged all of us. The profession will miss his courageous voice." -- Betsy Plank
- "Phil Lesly was a man of ideas, integrity. He always knew that the problem of public relations was what was being said rather than the mechanics of how it would be said. He adhered to his high principles all thru his life." -- Chet Burger

- "Phil Lesly was unique...a vigorous voice for the values of public relations, one that was too often the lone dissenter worrying about our tendency to applaud mediocrity. He was a crusader against efforts to quantify a calling rooted in the unpredictable and best practiced with spontaneity & imagination.

"Astutely perceptive, Phil hated hypocrisy & pretense and had the temerity to say so. His observations on the human condition set an intellectual standard for public relations that we struggle even now to measure up to. A fierce individualist, a world class curmudgeon, he was one of our staunchest champions, although sometimes unappreciated such as the messenger is blamed for the message. We were richer for his being and poorer, now, for his loss." -- John Budd

**PIONEER CONSTITUENCY RELATIONS PROGRAM UNDERGOING REVIVAL**

In the 1980s, US West began an internal & external constituency relations program. As one application, company in '88 used it to help pass legislation in Wyoming. Grassroots effort identified opinion leaders internally among employees & externally in communities. Result was a 2-way communications effort (both listening & speaking) that built solid relationships.

**THE PROCESS**

1. Identified the *informal* leaders within the company. "Rather than choosing the supervisor in each group or the union steward, we did some interviews asking, 'When you sit around the coffee shop or the break room, whom do you listen to or ask what they think?'" Steve Hammack, dir, strategic com'ns (Denver), told prr.
2. Established 2-way communications with them. "Anytime we would make an announcement internally, we'd give the info to the informal opinion leaders the day before -- sometimes by fax, or phone. For 2 reasons: 1) to make certain they were informed & 2) to improve their credibility with their peers & co-workers. So when co-workers said, 'Hey, what do you know about this?' they always had more info or had it first hand."
3. "We listened to them about what's going on, what they need to know, what they hear. We didn't tell them to do anything. We just listened & provided them with information. We were building credibility."
4. Repeated this process externally. "Rather than going directly to elected officials, we talked to employees, people in the communities to discover informal community leaders." Sometimes it was the elected official, sometimes the hairdresser or barber.
5. Started talking & listening to these external OLs. Sometimes local employees talked with them, giving info, asking what they're hearing about certain issues.
6. Also communicated via a Kiplinger-style newsletter. Sent out about twice/month with updates on what's going on, what's coming up, what's happening & why. "It was 1 page, 1 side, no prepositions, just quick & to the point. It said, 'We recognize how busy you are, you don't have time to read a 4-pg glossy newsletter. This includes phone numbers.'