

- Well, one thinks, aren't the last 3 parts of pr? Of course. But in the world of pr buzz words, how many clients (or practitioners) can quickly differentiate these topics?
- OK, that's so, but how does Schenkein then define pr? Does it fall back to old media relations?

## ESTABLISHING A BRAND

Not at all. Bob Schenkein says he's establishing a brand that stands for these 4 capabilities. It begins with a **Vision Statement** that leaps the mainly-publicity hurdle, but leaves those concerned with media inside:

*"Our broad vision of public relations goes well beyond an excellent reputation in media relations to include marketing com'ns, brand building & workplace culture...."*

The statement then specifically defines pr as: "The com'ns function that...

1. "identifies appropriate key messages & delivers these messages thru highly credible 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to influence behavior
2. "establishes & maintains beneficial relationships between an org'n & the various audiences on whom its success or failure depends
3. "captures & interprets information for management & makes strategic recommendations to support organizational goals"

## DESCRIBING THE CORE COMPETENCIES

The other 3 core competencies are then briefly described, using the current jargon but in a non-jargony, straightforward way. Whatever language clients may be looking for is covered. The definition of workplace culture demonstrates the other side of practice from media relations:

*"Workplace culture embodies a company's shared beliefs, values, policies, unwritten rules & traditions. Taken together, the various aspects of a corporate culture encompass the behavioral norms & expectations both within & on behalf of that org'n. Schenkein's People Performance Division helps companies create, shape & sustain a workplace culture that maximizes individual & business performance"*

The firm has a technology division but feels it "supports & transgresses all core competencies" since it is "integral to all com'ns functions." (Full text from [prr](#))

## WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

**HONORS.** NSPRA's Presidents Award, its highest, to Kathy Leslie, exec admin of comty involvement, Beaverton (Ore) School Dist. Former nat'l pres of NSPRA, she has authored several pub'ns, counseled districts across the nation & teaches pr at 2 Portland colleges.

IABC Research Fdn's Lifetime Friend Award to Barbara Puffer, Puffer PR Strategies, Promotion & Publishing, (Guilford, Ct) for leadership in advancing its work in research, education & professional development.



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## FORGOTTEN HISTORICAL CASE SHOWS EARLY PR WAS GLOBAL: THE STRUGGLE OVER HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE CONGO

"The horror, the horror" says the dying Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's classic novella *Heart of Darkness*. What he was describing was the genesis of an international pr battle waged from 1885 to 1910 – the complete subjugation & forced slavery of the Congolese by King Leopold II of Belgium. Earlier, Leopold had made a pr coup by getting world recognition for his *personal* ownership – not his country's – of this large colony, many times the size of little Belgium.

### CAUSE OF THE PR CAMPAIGNS

What drove the king was Belgium's lack of colonies in the Age of Colonialism. And greed – for the Congo had numerous resources worth billions, most notably during his ownership rubber trees. But the residents wanted to work their farms & continue their centuries-old pattern of village life in this lush setting. To get the rubber out, the harshest & most inhumane methods were used. Uncountable millions died – or were killed for failing to make their quota of rubber gathering. Kurtz was right.

### HOW LITTLE HAS CHANGED

1. **A whistle-blower started it.** He was a black US historian-lawyer-minister, son of a slave, with the fitting name of George Washington Williams. While his findings were widely published, he was ignored. Leopold got famed explorer Henry Stanley & a rich American friend of presidents to rebut Williams. He claimed everything he was doing was to help the Africans "without wanting a franc for myself"
2. **False front org'ns & other unethical tactics were used.** Leopold appointed a Commission for the Protection of the Natives, then filled it with those who were ignorant of affairs or would follow his lead. He was caught bribing reporters – and got support in the US by bribing famous capitalists with concessions in the Congo. He gave 3,000 artifacts to the Museum of Natural History, knowing J.P. Morgan was on its board
3. **Opinion leaders everywhere were enlisted by a worldwide org'n,** Congo Reform Ass'n, to oppose Leopold. They arranged gov't & media attacks in US, UK, Germany & Belgium itself, held large rallies, used church pulpits & a full compliment of modern pr devices. Scores of prominent citizens joined the crusade. The instigator was an obscure shipping clerk, E.D. Morel, whose outrage at unexpectedly discovering in his work what Leopold was doing turned him into one of the great pacifists & campaign organizers of history. Public pressure, in the name of human rights, became powerful

### ANOTHER PR CONTRIBUTION TO HUMANITY

Tho this was the start of a movement that led to such events as the end of Apartheid in South Africa, Congolese & others continued in forced labor for decades – for the needs of World War I, by a head tax that made them work & other means just as cruel



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but "legal," which slavery was not. Leopold was beaten at last – but rescued from infamy when world pity turned to "poor little Belgium" as it was invaded by Germany in 1914. The truth came out later, of course. (The whole story of these amazing, opposing pr campaigns in *King Leopold's Ghost* by Adam Hochschild, Houghton Mifflin, 1999)

## **DRUG PROMOTION STUDY FINDS INTERNET'S PERSONALIZED APPEALS MORE EFFECTIVE & FAR CHEAPER THAN ADS**

Study by Cyber Dialogue underscores a point pr has known all along: **stakeholder communications are more effective than advertising appeals**. The NYC "Internet customer rels mgmt company" conducted 2700 in-depth interviews in '99. The mission was to find the return on investment for 3 kinds of appeals: print ads, tv ads & Internet.

### **INTERNET MOST COST EFFECTIVE**

Thaddeus Grimes-Gruczka, vp of CD's Health Practice, reports, "We asked (respondents) which ads had moved them to ask an M.D. for a prescription" and which "bucket" those ads came from: print, tv or Internet. The amounts spent to drive a single specific drug request by a consumer differ greatly across the 3 media – **a dramatic difference in online vs. offline cost effectiveness**:

- \$220 per specific drug request for print ads
- \$197 for tv ads
- \$14 for the Internet

The data underscore the necessity of a coherent, comprehensive role for the Internet in the overall business plan. "Businesses cannot afford to underestimate the impact of the Internet on health consumer behavior." Whether other subjects have the same drawing power & interest as drugs remains to be tested – but this study may provide a benchmark.

### **MEDIUM LENDS ITSELF TO RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**

"The medium has particular action-inducing & motivating characteristics:" a) it's interactive, b) allows more time, c) is able to instantly connect the user to other data sources. Furthermore, the Net is a relationship-building tool.

"**Online health sessions are usually 35 minutes** – compare that with 30 seconds for a tv spot. Internet users have a better opportunity to build relationships, not only with doctors but with other patients" thru chat rooms. Other findings:

- Until Net use becomes universal, traditional print & tv remain larger drivers. Of consumers requesting a specific drug from their physician, the Internet spurred 2% to do so, as compared to 5% influenced by print ads, 8% by tv. **Internet's advantage is cost per request**
- But the Net is catching up. Projections are **33.5 million adults will seek health info online** this year
- Of 89.5 million Americans who take prescriptions, **31% are currently online**
- 44% of online users report staying plugged in to **seek more information** about a drug posted on the Web

- 72% of those who heard about a certain drug & **wanted to learn more went online** to get info, while 42% asked a doctor, & 17% called 800 numbers – hitherto the information staple of the prescription drug industry

**CONCLUSION** "The data do not say throw away your print & tv advertising budget – those remain important for brand building." But invest in the Net & build the tool into your overall strategy. Pharmaceuticals (& other industries) under-invest in the Internet, he feels.

## **S-M-A-R-T PR PARADIGM ALLOWS PR MGRS TO EFFECTIVELY MOVE RELATIONSHIPS FROM ONE PHASE TO A MORE SATISFYING ONE**

Stephen Bruning & John Ledingham ([prr 5/8](#)) use S-M-A-R-T method in their growing body of relationship research & in counseling org'ns. Here are the phases:

- Scan:** **Conduct a relationship audit** to determine current perceptions, evaluations, behaviors & needs of client/key public members. Engaging in a dialogue (via focus groups, survey research) helps develop appropriate activities
- Map:** **Use the results to map a strategy** that has relationships as the focus. Evaluations & co-orientation analysis lead to programs & initiatives that reinforce loyalty. Target key publics for relationship enhancement programs, align strategies with mission & vision statements
- Act:** **Act on the mapped strategy in a limited way** by conducting a field test/pilot study to assess the initial effectiveness & adjust accordingly. Use a sample of targeted key public members to ascertain appropriateness & effectiveness of initiatives
- Rollout:** After plan has been revised, implement the strategy to key public members. Practitioners will want to coordinate action & com'n, develop a system to respond quickly to issues
- Track:** **Demonstrate how initiatives positively influence** key public members' knowledge, perceptions, evaluations, behaviors. Develop system that allows better understanding of who receives pr com'n, what it does to the receiver, & what the receiver does with the message. Monitoring allows practitioners to intervene where relationships are faltering or stagnating

"Moreover, shifting to relationship management focuses the measurement of pr success or failure on specific organization-public relationships, rather than measuring general perceptions that exist across different publics at various stages," says Bruning. "Identifying the relationship phases in an evolving organization-public relationship is a step toward developing a program in which truly two-way symmetrical pr is possible." (More from Bruning @ 614/236-6323)

## **SEMANTICS & BUZZ WORDS REMAIN A PR ISSUE; DENVER FIRM FINDS ITS SOLUTION IN CORE COMPETENCY MODEL**

"Public Relations, Marketing Communications, Brand Building, Workplace Culture" reads the letterhead of Schenkein (its full name). Instead of calling itself Schenkein PR or whatever, the firm describes itself as "a Denver-based firm specializing in" these 4 areas.