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A Comparison of Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation Theory with Current Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation Practices in the Field

Catherine B. Ahles and **Courtney C. Bosworth**
Florida International University

A recent study of public relations campaigns winning the Silver Anvil has revealed that although PR practitioners are measuring behavior change, the ultimate test of a campaign's outcome, many campaigns do not systematically measure how that outcome was produced.

The in-depth study of 33 campaigns winning Silver Anvils – the nation's highest award for campaign excellence – looked at 121 campaign variables. It found that 87% of campaigns measured behavior change; 75% measured the number of people who received messages; and 67% measured the number of people who understood the messages placed.

However, measurement of opinion change and attitude change – the precursors of behavior change – was extremely low. Only 18% of campaigns cited measurement of opinion change and only 24% of campaigns cited measurement of attitude change.

"Clearly, the profession is measuring the 'bottom line,'" says Catherine B. Ahles, APR, Fellow PRSA. "But knowing *ho*w you achieved the bottom line is equally as important."

Ahles, who is associate professor for advertising and public relations at Florida International University, cites specific campaign measurement standards set by the Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation. Those standards advocate for the measurement of awareness and comprehension; recall and retention; attitude and preference; and behavior.

The study, entitled "A Comparison of Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation Theory with Current Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation Practices in the Field," is part of ongoing research on public relations campaign excellence based upon Silver Anvil campaigns. It also identifies the campaign objectives most frequently identified in Silver Anvil campaigns, as well as the most frequently used research methods and communications tactics. professor at Florida International University.

The Problems and Practices of Highly Effective Public Relations Practitioners: An Analysis of Employers' Perspectives and Current Performance Evaluation Standards

Catherine B. Ahles and **Rosanna M. Fiske**
Florida International University and Communiqué Group Public Relations

Despite budget constraints and shrinking staff numbers, employers hiring new public relations professionals expect more than ever from them — especially human relations and business skills typically not taught at universities.

In a recent study, 93% of practitioners cited "reliability" as the top qualification in job candidates. The other top 10 qualifications were a combination of human relations and work habit skills, with only one professional skill — writing — making the list. More than 85% of the professionals surveyed considered writing an extremely important skill.

"Writing is basic to the job and vital for success. It's the one professional element that I look for in a candidate above many others," said Leslie J. Backus, director of communications for the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Other qualifications rounding out the top 10 list were: putting thought and care into assignments, honesty, open communication, trustworthiness, attendance at work, completion of assignments on time, dedication to the project, willingness to accept assignments, and "teamwork" attitude.

"The work habit and human relations skills are the pillars of basic professionalism, which I deem as extremely important," said Deborah Charnes Vallejo, managing director of Manning Selvage & Lee in San Antonio. "With respect to most professional skills — not including 'writing' — if the candidate has the aptitude, he/she can learn how to research and how to use office equipment."

The study is part of ongoing research called "The Problems and Practices of Highly Effective Public Relations Practitioners: An Analysis of Employers' Perspectives and Current Performance Evaluation Standards."

Applying Relationship Measurements To Measure the Effectiveness of the In-House Public Relations Function

Kimberly Amendola
University of South Florida

A study focusing on the relationship between a non-profit, government organization's public relations practitioners and its employees was conducted in the southeast United States. A graduate student conducted this study during the fall of 2002.

Public relations practitioners and scholars constantly struggle with measuring the value for public relations within organizations, as these departments tend to be the most misunderstood because it is difficult to place a dollar amount on their usefulness. Relationship management between an organization and its publics has been deemed one of the most important functions within public relations. Subsequently, relationship surveys have proved to be an effective measurement tool used to assess the relationship between an organization and its publics.

However, most often relationships are measured between organizations and their external publics, such as stockholders and customers. Relationships between an organization and its internal (employee) publics are measured less commonly. Public relations practitioners and scholars regard the internal public as an organization's most important public; however, it is also the most forgotten. Interestingly, little literature has been published regarding the measurement of the relationship between an organization's public relations practitioners and the organization's internal publics.

In this study, surveys were administered to over 400 employees via an Intranet system. Over 49% of the employees responded. The survey measured employees' perception of relationship factors such as trust and commitment. In general, the research found employees perceived their relationship with their organization's public relations practitioners to be strong, whereby they exhibit a great amount of trust, satisfaction, and commitment.

Based on the results, this study supports the need for strong relationships to exist between public relations practitioners and their internal publics and supports the use of relationship measurements to determine how effectively in-house public relations functions render services to in-house clients.

The Forgotten Symphonies:
Selling the Lake Charles Symphony Without Selling Out the Art of Music

Leonard J. Barchak
McNeese State University

Research conducted by a Lake Charles, Louisiana university professor suggests that symphony managers need to shape their musical offerings to suit four distinct groups of patrons.

"If your field of dreams is classical music, the crowds may not come even if you build an arena for playing this music," Dr. Leonard Barchak told scholars at the conference.

"Audience growth depends on symphony managers understanding the classical music experience through the ears of current and potentially new audiences," Barchak said. Professor and coordinator of the public relations program at McNeese State University, Lake Charles, Louisiana, Dr. Barchak's findings are based on a multifaceted study for the Lake Charles Symphony Orchestra.

"Like symphonies around the world, the Lake Charles Symphony was concerned that while holding its graying audience, it was not attracting minorities and younger members," Barchak said.

He found that the citizens of Lake Charles wanted to or might be acculturated to participate in four "different" symphonic types, each dependent on audience pre-existing subjective belief patterns. He names these patterns or audience types as *The Aristocracy of Good Taste*, *The Educated but Unvaccinated*, *The Joy of Music*, and *Waiting in the Wings*.

For *The Aristocracy of Good Taste* the symphony experience is a chance to be in one's element, Barchak said. They are conversant with the music and know how to distinguish it from other arts like ballet and chorale. They are the most likely symphony patrons and boosters. "It is most interesting that this type cannot be explained by any combination of simple categories such as education, income, sex, employment, or race," Barchak added.

Barchak's second grouping of potential customers, *The Educated but Unvaccinated*, "will probably only attend the symphony if it will help their children get ahead in life," he said. "They feel the symphony experience is not for them, even though they may have received advanced formal education."

Barchak said he chose the label to counter a still widely accepted myth for symphony orchestras that audiences can be dragooned to attend with hard-sell marketing techniques. Inoculation is presumed to follow after several performances, and the vaccinated are expected to willingly return.

Barchak's third type, named after Leonard Bernstein's *The Joy of Music*, groups "all who love and enjoy music for its own sake," he said. He noted that members of this group included a girl as young as 9 and a man as old as 67.

The fourth group, named *Waiting in the Wing*, has little or no experience with classical music. "This is a group that tends to view the symphony experience as another route to social integration and advancement," Barchak said.

Barchak's research uses a sophisticated technique that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research. Known as Q-Methodology, this research approach was developed more than 68 years ago by British psychologist and physicist William Stephenson. Barchak is one of a very few of the 350 researchers worldwide who apply the approach to public relations.

Barchak also analyzed the history of performing-arts audience development since 1945 and the organizational and economic structure of the Lake Charles Symphony. He demonstrated how his typology of potential audience members could be used to enhance a symphony development plan called SELL, an acronym for Strategy to Encourage Lifelong Learning. Barchak's study also outlined at least 16 additional areas of study to assist future symphony growth and survival.

The Principles of Authentic Communication:
A Practical Model for Implementing Dialogic Public Relations Programs

Bojinka Bishop
Ohio University

A new communication model, a set of ten Principles of Authentic Communication, was found in a recent survey to correlate with successful public relations programs.

Bojinka Bishop, Assistant Professor who holds the Sloan Professorship in Public Relations at Ohio University, developed the model based on 20 years of public relations practice and tested it in a national survey. The study found that the respondents who reported higher use of the Principles of Authentic Communication reported more success in their communication programs.

The Principles of Authentic Communication state that communication be: truthful, fundamental, comprehensive, relevant to the receiver, clear, timely, consistent, accessible, receptive to feedback, and show care. Those showing the highest correlations to success were timely, relevant, fundamental, and accessible.

None of the Principles of Authentic Communication is particularly new to communication practice, many have been addressed previously in the public relations literature. What *is* new is identifying them as a set, testing for their use and effectiveness, and finding they are linked to successful communication.

The Principles are presented as an implementation model for dialogic public relations, that is, the kind of communication in which organizations engage in relational, two-way communication. They are also intended to be applied in a variety of public relations activities – mass media, interactive media, collateral materials, group and one-on-one communication.

The study consisted of a survey mailed to 960 large water utilities in the United States and was supported by the College of Communication at Ohio University with the cooperation of the American Water Works Association.

Student Use of Technology: A Preliminary Investigation

Brigitta R. Brunner and **Bradford L. Yates**
Auburn University and State University of West Georgia

Researchers at Auburn University, Auburn, Ala. and the State University of West Georgia, Carrollton, Ga. have found that little difference exists between students' use of e-mail and face-to-face communication with instructors.

Students enrolled in public relations and mass communication courses taught at two medium-sized universities participated in a survey that examined student e-mail use and factors that impact it. A total of 284 students completed the survey.

The findings of this study suggest that student use of e-mail was similar to student use of face-to-face communication. For example, students typically contacted the instructor to ask a question about an assignment; over 70% used e-mail to do so, while 59.5% chose face-to-face communication. Students tended to use e-mail (50.0%) and face-to-face communication (48.9%) equally when asking questions about a quiz or test. In fact the researchers found that more students used e-mail to clarify an issue for class (56.7%) rather than visiting the instructor in his/her office (42.3%).

This study also looks at the implications of these findings, and makes suggestions for future research.

Measuring the Impact of Effective Communication on Corporate Culture

Nadia K. Bush
University of South Alabama

The paper is based on a thesis suggesting understanding an organization's culture can make a difference between success and failure in today's organizations. Upper level management can often perceive the organization's culture completely differently than their employees. Organizations develop cultures effortlessly. Managers can access cultures by appraising individual employees, understanding subcultures and aligning the culture with the organization's strategic goals.

This paper reports on an evaluation of the impact of effective communication on corporate culture in an organization with facilities in five states spread across three time zones. Methodologies incorporated in the study's research design include a mixture of qualitative (personal interviews and participant observation) plus quantitative (a self-administered survey of employees). Results show a significant correlation between effective communication and corporate culture.

The study's principal quantitative measuring instrument is a 63-item, Likert-type scale survey measuring employee thoughts and opinions on a variety of questions related to communication and corporate culture. The researcher used a variety of techniques to stimulate a phenomenally high response rate of 87% of the organization's employees.

Rediscovering What PR Managers Do: Rethinking the Measurement of Managerial Behaviour in the Public Relations Context

Barbara J. DeSanto and **Danny Moss**
University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Manchester Metropolitan University

A great deal has been written in the last 30 years about the tasks and responsibilities of public relations managers, primarily from the perspective of what tasks and responsibilities practitioners report doing to concepts and models of what they should be doing.

This study takes a different approach to defining the nature of public relations work – first, by asking managerial-level practitioners how they spend their time (what they actually do), and second, by putting that narrative in the context of two weeks of each practitioner's daily calendar or diary.

The researchers conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with 31 senior-level practitioners in the United States and the United Kingdom, asking them what they did and how they spent their time in terms of important elements and processes of the managerial work they performed. This qualitative approach had been recommended by a number of roles researchers, including Broom, Dozier, and J. Grunig, but had never been conducted before.

The framework and research perspective of these interviews provided another new dimension as the researchers used the management literature about managers' roles and work patterns as a basis for exploring public relations managerial roles and duties. This gives researchers and practitioners an "outside-in" look at the public relations function, rather than the traditional "inside-out" look provided by most previous public relations roles research. An important element of using this approach is that it examines public relations managers in the same framework as other managers, such as operations and human resources, thus adding more management-level credibility to public relations as a function on a par with other accepted managerial functions.

The study's findings represent the initial phase of data interpretation according to themes and/or categories drawn primarily from the management literature of Mintzberg, Hales, and Stewart. From the calendars/diaries, the researchers were able to construct an overall picture of the breakdown of management-level practitioners' time and duties across self-defined "typical" work weeks. Major preliminary findings include that US and UK practitioners spend the majority of their time on two core activities: 60% spend time in a variety of internal and external meetings with another 20% of their time is taken up with administrative work, including running their respective departments and managing staff within them. The content of the time spent in meetings will require more in-depth analysis of the meetings themselves, which is contained in the transcripts of the interviews.

The most significant difference found between UK and US managerial-level practitioners was the amount of time devoted to writing and/or craft activity. US practitioners reported they spent about 11% of their time in writing/craft activities, while 6% of UK practitioners reported doing this type of work. Again, further analysis of the transcripts should yield information to explain these differences.

Despite these differences, however, the interviewees revealed remarkably similar patterns of work in terms of the main categories and activities and also in terms of practitioners' time spent in these activities.

From a public relations perspective, these preliminary findings seem to broadly confirm those of other studies such as Dozier and Broom (1995), Toth et al (1998) and Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002).

The researchers suggest that this exploratory research points the way forward in developing a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of managerial work in the public relations context – "what public relations managers do" – as well as how they work in terms of the allocation of their time among activities. By employing the type of in-depth qualitative investigative techniques that management scholars have used to make sense of managerial work, it should be possible to construct a much clearer picture of what it means to be a manager in the public relations context.

Rethinking the Land-Grant University Agricultural Communications Office

LaRae M. Donnellan and **Florita S. Montgomery**
Florida A&M University and West Virginia University

Agricultural communicators at land-grant universities could regain their place on program-development teams if the Cooperative Extension System fully implements its planning paradigm called "issues programming."

Challenges include resistance by communicators and their employers, lack of resources, and lack of training in marketing and public relations.

These are some of the conclusions from a literature review and e-mail survey conducted by Dr. LaRae M. Donnellan, professor of public relations at Florida A&M University, and Dr. Florita S. Montgomery, Extension associate professor and communications specialist at West Virginia University.

"Issues programming depends on interdisciplinary teams to identify needs and problems; set priorities; and plan, design, implement and evaluate programs," Montgomery said. "It involves the same steps found in the 'program marketing model' promoted by ACE [Agricultural Communicators in Education, the professional society of land-grant agricultural communicators]."

Land-grant communicators traditionally create products – such as publications, videos or

Web sites – to support educational programs developed by others. “This is what James Grunig and Todd Hunt call a ‘public information’ role,” Donnellan said.

In the 1950s, ACE received a seven-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to establish the National Project in Agricultural Communications. NPAC sought to improve land-grant outreach by training interdisciplinary teams to understand and reach clients. Consequently, agricultural communicators added consulting, teaching and research to their production duties.

“This worked for awhile,” said Montgomery. “Many agricultural communicators sought advanced degrees and obtained faculty positions. In the ‘70s and ‘80s, ‘consulting communicators’ were part of program-planning teams.”

Many strides made by NPAC have faded, Donnellan said. The number of faculty positions in agricultural communications offices dropped significantly over the last two decades. Cutbacks in budgets and staffs, coupled with new technologies, have forced agricultural communicators to perform multiple production roles and to do marketing and public relations, often without adequate training.

Donnellan and Montgomery conclude that the role of agricultural communicators at land-grant universities could move toward what Grunig and Hunt call the “two-way symmetrical model,” if issues programming is adopted. The ultimate beneficiaries of issues programming would be the publics of land-grant educational programs.

Green Labeling and Consumer Products:
A History of Policy, Regulation and Usage, 1990-2000

Nancy Engelhardt
Elon University

“Green Labeling and Consumer Products: A History of Policy, Regulation and Usage, 1990-2000,” presented by Nancy Engelhardt, Ph.D., traces the development of federal eco-labeling regulations, from the recommendations laid out by the Attorneys General Task Force in their Green Reports to the current FTC guidelines. The research focuses on governmental agencies that were involved in regulating the use of these labels, non-governmental organizations that were vocal about the use of eco-labels, and industry groups that played a major role in the establishment of environmental labeling policy.

As environmental claims grew during the 1990s, so did the use of vague and misleading claims to entice consumers. This misrepresentation of claims created skepticism by consumers and frustration for environmental organizations, governments, and marketers and led to the eventual actions by the federal government to provide guidance.

“Although only a small number of cases have been brought by the FTC since the early 1990s, the guides are considered effective in limiting the use of misleading claims,” Engelhardt said. “Because the guides promote open trade and do not strictly regulate labeling claims, the FTC guides have been hailed as the standard for international trade labeling claims as the FTC worked closely with international organizations in the development of international standards.”

Young Adult Voter Turnout: Implications for Campaign Consultants

Suzanne Sparks FitzGerald and **Lawrence P. Lhulier, Jr.**
Rowan University

In Young Adult Voter Turnout, FitzGerald and Lhulier examined campaign consultant communication strategies, young adult perceptions of American elections, and the impact of recent societal developments on young adult voter-turnout.

This research responded to a Nov. 2002 CNN/Gallup poll that suggested adults aged 18 to 29 represented only 6% of the electorate in the 2002 Midterm election. With young adults comprising close to 20% of the population, this under-representation could have serious consequences for both election outcomes and the priority of young Americans' concerns on the legislative agenda.

Even small increases in expected young adult-voter turnout could radically change campaign organizers' approach to legislative issues. Young adult representation deficits could also have consequences for the future of the American electoral system. Research suggests that low turnout continues as current non-voters mature.

Fitzgerald and Lhulier's research explores the effect of the following five areas on voter-turnout:

1. Party identification
2. Campaign messaging strategies
3. Information channel use
4. Special interest group dynamics
5. Advances in polling data collection and analysis

The dynamics of these five areas demonstrate the influence of consultant strategic approaches. Findings suggest that the campaign process grew out of the demand for information about current legislative issues. Opponents used campaigns to establish office-holder accountability and representative voter turnout. Communities became mobilized through common interest. However, lack of professional standards and lack of consideration for the long-term affect of campaign messaging has impacted short-term representation. Narrowly focused mobilization strategies, deceptive messaging and short-term opinion management have resulted in unrepresentative election outcomes. These practices threaten the integrity of the electoral process.

The Agency of Public Relations: An Application in Internal Communication

Derina R. Holtzhausen
University of South Florida

A contract that clearly states key performance areas, agreement on role performance, communication training and awareness, and the availability of a budget are some of the prerequisites for successful internal communication practice.

These were some of the findings of a research study into the relationship between communication practitioners responsible for internal communication and their managers or principals.

The findings resulted from an analysis of four focus groups, each from a different division of the largest financial services organization in Africa. One focus group was from a predominantly English-speaking region, one from a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking region, one from the risk management division, and one from the life insurance division. The participants in the study were internal communication practitioners (known as communication champions), who had to be elected democratically to perform this role.

The study found that managers played an important role in facilitating internal communication. Where managers supported the process, internal communication flourished. This led to morale building in the direct work environment, improved relationships between colleagues, and a climate of open and honest communication.

When managers did not support internal communication practices, communication practitioners were often emotionally manipulated by threats, anger, intimidation and

victimization. Managers would also withhold strategic information, abdicate their communication responsibility and make frivolous demands on practitioners.

Other strategies managers followed to prevent communication practitioners from doing their work were to withhold their support, isolate the practitioners, give them little opportunity to do their work, and exclude them from management meetings.

However, these negative strategies were the very reasons why communication practitioners became successful. Although manager attitudes led to much workplace conflict, successful practitioners were prepared to take risks and were not afraid to antagonize their managers if they felt their actions were to the benefit of the organization. These practitioners were entrepreneurial and had the ability to build relationships within their workplaces. They were often driven by a need for love and recognition.

Communication practitioners accrued many benefits from their work, such as personal growth, increased loyalty to the organization and feelings of satisfaction with improved *esprit de corp*. Trust was both a prerequisite and an outcome of successful internal communication practice.

The theoretical basis for the study was the concept of agency theory. Economic agency theory holds a very negative view of agents, i.e. people contracted to act on behalf of principals. From this perspective agents are opportunistic, seek self-interest and misrepresent information. This understanding of organizational agents led to employment practices like employee contracts, layers of supervision, and performance measurements.

Management agency theory on the other hand argues that positive behavior of agents would benefit the organization. These positive behaviors would be entrepreneurship, risk-taking and relationship building. The need for achievement, love and respect would lead agents to act responsibly.

The study found that when managers held views consistent with economic agency theory, communication practitioners had a hard time facilitating internal communication. This was primarily due to the view that communication was equal to talking; talking was a waste of time; time cost money; therefore communication was a waste of money. In this kind of environment communication practitioners found it difficult to fulfill their communication responsibilities because of goal conflict between themselves and their managers.

Where managers held the views consistent with management agency theory they valued the entrepreneurial and risk-taking behavior of their communication practitioners and encouraged their relationship building activities. This led to personal growth and high levels of job satisfaction in practitioners.

The study exposed the conflict inherent in the principal-agent, i.e. the manager who is the principal of the communication practitioner but who is also an agent appointed under a contract. The principal-agents in this study displayed self-serving behavior by inhibiting communication practices that could benefit the true principals, i.e. those people who have a financial stake in the organization.

The research suggested communication practitioners should view the shareholders of the organization as their main principals, which might sometimes mean they have to act in opposition to the views of the principal-agent. The decisions of communication practitioners should always be driven by what is in the best interest of the common good of the organization, even if this might lead to conflict with the principal-agent.

Frame Analysis as a Practical Measurement Tool for PR Practitioners

Dennis Jeffers
Central Michigan University

By paying attention to current events in a "systematic" manner, public relations practitioners are engaging in the most basic form of public relations measurement—scanning and evaluating the environment in which their client or company operates, says one public relations educator.

According to Dennis W. Jeffers, a professor at Central Michigan University, practitioners who actively scan the current events environment in a way that helps them articulate and describe the characteristics of contemporary social, political and economic issues are engaging in a "best practice of public relations."

Jeffers argues that it is not enough to merely be "aware" of social, political and economic issues. Rather, he believes that the accomplished PR practitioner can not only articulate which social, political and economic issues are relevant, but also can identify the origin of the issue and its importance, as well as its degree of frequency and proximity.

Jeffers believes that once the PR practitioner has reached the complete articulation stage, he or she can then develop strategic public relations plans to use within the articulated framework to achieve specific public relations objectives.

Further, he believes that it is at this second stage that specific social science research methods can be utilized in an evaluation of any plan.

"In other words, you need to start any programmatic or measurement process by making sure you are dealing with the right issues," says Jeffers.

His paper, titled "Frame Analysis as a Practical Measurement Tool for PR Practitioners," describes how he combines the thinking of other public relations educators—most notably, Hugh Culbertson of Ohio University—with other communication researchers who focus on "frame analysis" as a communication research tool.

Crisis Communication and Public Relations: Nike's Response to Labor Violations in Asia

Ali Kanso and **Richard Alan Nelson**
The University of Texas at San Antonio and Louisiana State University

"Every social movement needs a villain. For almost a decade, Nike has served that role for activists opposed to the company's labor practices."

That's the view of two prominent faculty experts whose research findings on Nike were recently presented at the conference.

Nike continues to face charges that its contracted workers are paid less than the applicable minimum wage, required to work overtime, subject to physical, verbal and sexual abuse and exposed to toxic chemicals.

According to Dr. Ali Kanso at the University of Texas-San Antonio and Dr. Richard Alan Nelson at Louisiana State University, Nike's management changed their own behavior to emphasize greater social responsibility and also used an aggressive public relations campaign to tell others their story.

As a result, Nike has largely been successful in blunting the negative impact the company suffered from earlier news reports. Nike's public statements, ads and letters all have claimed that workers are paid in accordance with local labor laws and on average receive double the minimum wage plus free meals and health care.

Nike's public relations efforts had several strengths. First, the company used a knowledgeable spokesperson to deal with the media. Second, Nike implemented a Code of Conduct to fight labor abuses. Third, the company offered factory tours to members of the media, opinion leaders, and college students and professors to view and evaluate the labor conditions for themselves. Fourth, Nike emphasized its economic contributions to Asian countries in providing employment and generating significant foreign assets.

In retrospect, Kanso and Nelson said Nike's campaign has contained most of the worst damage but could have been more effective had the labor abuses been addressed sooner. Once the first violation was exposed, the company should have implemented a plan to patrol any labor abuses. Nike's hesitance to react made its efforts seem forced and insincere.

Nike faces new challenges because of communication efforts. Marc Kasky, who has managed a foundation that preserves San Francisco's Ft. Mason, decided to sue Nike after reading an article in the *New York Times* about the company's contract factories, arguing that Nike deliberately issued misleading statements. The California Supreme Court in *Kasky v. Nike* agreed that Kasky has a right to sue, since "Communications are subject to government regulation if they are made by a commercial speaker, such as an officer of a company, intended for a commercial audience and contain representations of fact that are commercial in nature." Thus the court ruled that Nike could be held liable, regardless of the nature of its public relations communications, for "deceptive advertising" if it makes misleading public statements about its operations and conduct because, the court concluded, the purpose of the company's public relations activities is to "maintain sales and profits."

The case has now been accepted for review by the U.S. Supreme Court. According to Kanso and Nelson, the forthcoming decision should help settle an important issue for many business communicators, not just Nike.

A host of organizations, including the Public Relations Society of America, the Institute for Public Relations, the Council of Public Relations Firms, and the Public Affairs Council, have joined Nike in arguing against the decision—warning it has the potential to blur traditional distinctions between advertising and public relations activities, as well as limit definitions of "commercial free speech" as protected by the First Amendment. However, Jack O'Dwyer, publisher of a number of public relations publications, warns they are on "the wrong side" of the Nike commercial speech lawsuit. "Instead of siding with Nike, which refuses to defend the truthfulness of its statements about labor practices abroad," he said, "the PR groups should be demanding that accuracy be served."

Integrating Organizational Justice Into the Relationship Management Theory

Hyo-Sook Kim
University of Maryland

One research direction that is needed but has not been exploited in relationship studies is research on the antecedents of relationships. The antecedents of relationships are the first stage of the relationship framework, for they are what cause specific relationships between an organization and its publics to develop.

The purpose of this study is to integrate a possible antecedent into employee-organization relationship research. I explored the influence of organizational justice on employee-organization relationship outcomes. Organizational justice is a recently developed but widely used concept in organizational studies to refer to the extent to which people perceive organizational events as being fair. Much empirical support exists for the influence of perceptions of fairness on employees' satisfaction, commitment, and trust, which are three of the dimensions of

relationships in public relations research. This suggests that there are close linkages between organizational justice and relationship dimensions.

My interest in incorporating the theory of organizational justice into public relations research stems from the fact that the theory allows studying organizational phenomena from the perspective of employees' rather than employers. Also, the theory is based on a symmetrical worldview, which best represents the value public relations holds for society. This study departs from previous relationship studies in that it is the first endeavor to develop concrete employee-organization relationship antecedent dimensions. This study contributes to the body of knowledge in public relations by introducing the organizational justice theory into relationship study and by exploring how the theory can be integrated into the employee-organization relationship dimensions.

What Have You Done For Me Lately? Adding P.R. To Public Affairs At State DOTs

Diana L. Knott
Ohio University

State governments often spend lots of money on both research and communication activities; however, the public who supports them often doesn't hear about the innovations stemming from research investments.

A preliminary study by an Ohio University public relations professor has found that many state Department of Transportation (DOT) research administrators recognize the importance of promotions to generate taxpayer goodwill and, as such, have dedicated communications and marketing plans and budgets. However, DOT public affairs employees, who have the media contacts and communication backgrounds to reach state residents, are not always involved in the research dissemination process.

Reasons for this internal disconnect are unclear, but it is known that DOT communicators are busy fulfilling such public information responsibilities as issuing routine releases regarding construction projects, public meetings and road conditions, as well as working on internal and external department publications and representing their DOT bosses, who are political appointees. As a result, good stories—and good public relations opportunities—are being lost.

These preliminary results indicate that changes in internal communication procedures could help enhance external promotions, which ultimately could help get new technologies into use sooner and help strengthen the public's perception of DOTs. It is likely that other state and federal government agencies also are missing proactive promotional opportunities because of limited or hierarchical reporting lines.

In addition, a government agency's multiple, independent promotional activities can result not only in missed message opportunities but, perhaps worse, in mixed messages. Therefore, government agencies should consider the strategies of corporate America and develop comprehensive promotional planning that allows for consistent spokespersons, key messages and reinforcement of overall "brand" across varied departments.

The preliminary results of this study stem from a nationwide survey of state DOT research office administrators that is now under way. It is part of a larger promotional study that includes a statewide survey of Ohio residents and an Ohio DOT (ODOT) communication audit. Sponsored by the ODOT, Ohio University, and West Virginia University's Mid-Atlantic Universities Transportation Center, the research will ultimately result in a promotional plan "template" suitable for adaptation by DOTs across the country.

Public Relations and Pressure Groups in a Converging World

Rachel Kovacs
University of Hartford

Rachel Kovacs, an assistant professor at the University of Hartford, has completed a new study of public relations and the role that pressure groups in the United Kingdom have played in broadcasters' accountability for programming and policies. The study, entitled *Public Relations and Pressure Groups in a Converging World*, tracks the strategies and impact of six British activist groups (Voice of the Listener and Viewer [VLV], Consumers' Association [CA], Campaign for Quality Television [CQT], the Deaf Broadcasting Council [DBC], National Viewers and Listeners Association [NVALA], and the National Consumer Council [NCC]) between 1997-2002.

The results of the study suggest that through catalyzing tangible changes in broadcasting and increasing public awareness and debate about industry issues, such groups contribute to a growing "broadcasting public sphere." It also suggests that those groups that successfully build relationships with each other and with their targets are more likely to achieve their goals over time. Groups that fail to do so may win short-term concessions but are not as viable as other groups over time.

The term "public sphere," popularized by the contemporary German scholar Jurgen Habermas in 1989, refers to an invisible but crucial space in democracies where citizens meet to discuss issues of importance and thus help society function smoothly. This study coins the term "broadcasting public sphere," which is used in two interdependent ways. The first refers to how extensively television and radio programming is both accessible to its audiences and helps citizens become more issue sensitive and politically and socially active in their democracies. The second public sphere is the behind-the-scenes arena where public relations is used by activists to build relationships, generate off-air debate about broadcasting policy, programming, and decision-making, and bring about change by means of media advocacy and other strategies. This second sphere, the subject of Kovacs' study, is one that affects what happens on the air and vice versa.

The principal method of investigation was in-depth interviews with activists, broadcasters, regulators, policy makers, academics, and others interested professionals. Additional data were obtained through electronic databases, library research, and various unobtrusive measures. Changes between the time of the original and follow-up studies were evaluated in a context of major industry changes, including channel proliferation, new technologies, structures and patterns of media ownership, and digital convergence.

Changing industry variables deeply affected viewers and listeners. They also influenced the public relations strategies with which pressure groups targeted their various publics. In part, increased Internet penetration and converged electronic communication prompted major shift by activists to Web use and increased lobbying in Europe and globally.

Nevertheless, certain strategies were consistently used by activists over time. Among these interdependent approaches were strategic relationship building, media advocacy, and media education. These were complemented by coalition building and research.
Activists preferred loose, ad hoc alliances to coalitions because the former allowed them more autonomy and were less likely to lead to cooptation or absorption by targets.

Although all six groups studied had equal freedom to exert pressure on their targets with maximum effect, several of the groups had a greater impact than others. The single most significant predictor of pressure group success was success in forming strategic relationships with other groups, with influential individuals, and with target publics. Those groups with good

relationships were more likely to collaborate around shared interests through loose alliances, coalitions, and joint research. They were also called upon more often to offer written consultation or oral testimony to Parliament or other important political bodies in the U.K. or E.U. and/or to be invited to targets' events.

The most effective groups, rank ordered, were the Voice of the Listener and Viewer (VLV), Campaign for Quality Television, and Deaf Broadcasting Council. VLV most clearly and successfully combined relationship building with media education/media advocacy. These groups were followed in effectiveness by the National Consumer Council (NCC) and Consumers Association (CA), the consumer groups, for whom broadcasting was a small but increasingly important part of their agenda. The least effective group was the National Listeners and Viewers Association, a very conservative body that focused solely on issues of taste and decency but lagged behind the other groups in relationship building.

Identification, Validation and Measurement of Variables Used to Index the Propensity for Demands For 'Cash for Editorial' By Countries' Major Consumer News Media to Indigenous Information Subsidies Providers

Dean Kruckeberg and **Katerina Tsetsura**
University of Northern Iowa and Purdue University

This paper describes the evolutionary process from which resulted the identification, validation and measurement of variables that will be used to develop a global scale to score countries annually on the pervasiveness and extent of consumer news media extortion of information subsidies providers.

The paper's description of the concepts, data sets and other sources, as well as its description of the researchers' development of, rationale for and defense of the variables and measurement methodology, will be instructive to public relations researchers studying a range of public relations ethics research questions.

The scale that resulted from the identification of variables and the determination of the best research methodology will provide a useful quantitative index of media practice within specific countries. However, this paper does not report on the final indexing of the countries, but rather describes how the variables were identified, operationalized and validated and how the measurement formula was developed. The paper describes the options the researchers had available in measuring media corruption and provides justification for the variables and measurement methodology that the researchers ultimately accepted.

The resulting scale—measured yearly or biennially as a continuing longitudinal study—will provide benchmark data for a long-term trend analysis from which countries can compare their major consumer news media's demands for "cash for editorial" to indigenous information subsidies providers. Through this scale, public relations practitioners, media and governments will have a means to detect the severity of this problem and will be able to know the levels of "demand for 'cash for editorial' by consumer news media to information subsidies providers" in their countries compared to that of other nations throughout the world.

Image and Issue Control:
Measuring the Agenda-Setting Influence of News Releases in the Online Environment

Margot Lamme and **Andrew Williams**
University of Florida

Preliminary results of a study focusing on the last two months of the Florida 2002 gubernatorial campaign reveal that some strong relationships exist between the online content of candidate news releases and online newspaper coverage. The study, conducted by researchers at the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications, may suggest that the effective use of the Web could give political PR practitioners an edge in influencing news coverage.

For example, of the 57 education-related news releases posted during the time of the study, 34 (or 60%) came from incumbent candidate Governor Jeb Bush and 23 (or 40%) came from his opponent Bill McBride, who sought to identify himself as the education candidate. The online coverage closely corresponded, with Bush as the focus of 85 out of 144 education stories (or 59%) and McBride featured in 59 (or 41%).

Although it is not yet clear that the releases caused the coverage, it appears that the Bush campaign may have been able to shape its messages and harness the Web as a political PR tool more effectively than the McBride campaign.

Researchers examined the 77 news releases posted on the official Web sites of the Jeb Bush and Bill McBride campaigns between Labor Day and Election Day and the 654 candidate-related stories posted on the official sites of five key metropolitan area newspapers in Florida: Miami, Orlando, Jacksonville, Tampa/St. Petersburg, and Tallahassee.

The Hero Should Never Die: An Analysis of the Rhetoric and
Media Coverage Surrounding the Death of Dale Earnhardt

Becky McDonald
Ball State University

"At some point in time all humans die." So begins Donovan Ochs' Consolatory Rhetoric: Grief, Symbol, and Ritual in the Greco-Roman Era. Ochs continues: "Each person's death has both impact and consequences, to a lesser or greater degree, depending on who the person was and the circumstances surrounding the death."

Yet, human nature permits us to expect some to be more than mere mortal, to view the death of some, more so than others, as being unthinkable. So was the situation surrounding the death of the 7-time Winston Cup Champion, Dale Earnhardt. Racing experts proclaimed that the accident didn't look "that bad" and that Earnhardt had walked away from far more dramatic crashes. *Time* labeled it an "unspectacular crash." Though racing is an acknowledged dangerous sport, and despite the three previous deaths of drivers within a year, no one anticipated the death of one so experienced and revered as "The Intimidator." One national news anchor, in an hour-long tribute to Earnhardt, noted his death was "the death of the poor man's dream." *Time's* subtitle to the cover picture of Earnhardt argued "How a racing legend embodied the passions and perils of NASCAR." And *Sports Illustrated*, who might be expected to pay tribute to Earnhardt, went so far as to claim that the fatal crash "devastated the world of NASCAR." The extended national media coverage, the depth and breadth of fan grief, and the continuing rituals resulting from that grief merit attention.

Ochs argues that "when a death threatens a community, a powerful form of rhetoric is needed to eliminate that threat." We argue that the racing community, and NASCAR in

particular, was threatened by the death of Dale Earnhardt. Furthermore we argue that the rhetoric surrounding the accident and subsequent death 1) transformed the image of Earnhardt from "bad boy" to fallen hero, 2) caused NASCAR to publicly react in a manner it had not previously experienced, and 3) united the racing community.

The analysis examines extensive media coverage and fan reaction from the announcement of Earnhardt's death through the beginning of the 2002 racing season at the Daytona International Speedway for the Daytona 500, the site of Earnhardt's death and the one-year anniversary. Consequently, the analysis is still in progress. Specifically, we analyze how the rhetoric transforms Earnhardt's image, forces scrutiny on NASCAR practices, impacted the 2001 racing season and NASCAR racing since then.

Social Reports as a Measure of Effectiveness of the Public Relations Function and Relationship Quality Assessment in Colombian Organizations

Juan-Carlos Molleda and **Ana-María Suárez**
University of Florida and Universidad de Medellín, Colombia

Colombian and U.S. organizations publish social reports to document their actions and philosophy of corporate citizenship. Since the 1970s in Colombia and late '90s in the United States, social reports have become a precise measure of the bottom line for public relations.

The National Association of Colombian Industrialists (ANDI) published the first precise guidelines and performance indicators in 1985. The second edition of the *"The Manual of Social Balance"* was published by ANDI with the participation and sponsorship of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Junior Chamber of Colombia, Antioquia Chapter, in 2001.

In the United States, Dow Chemical Co. took the lead in 1999, producing a social report focusing on workplace ethics and community responsibility. ExxonMobil, the world's largest gas and oil corporation, issued its first social report this year.

Colombian public relations professionals use social reports to document all their professional activities and actions and to guide their strategic plans. "Social reports determine the development of public relations plans and programs because each activity that we execute need to be focused on the annual plans and goals of the organization's social policies," said Berenice García, public relations chief of the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia.

According to the ANDI/ILO manual, social reports consist of "the establishment of goals, performance indicators, evaluation parameters, and, most importantly, the definition of corporate social policies."

The concepts of corporate citizenship and sustainable development permeate social reports including environmental, human resources, workplace safety, community projects and communication's indicators of performance. In 2002, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), a consortium of over 300 global organizations and an extension of the U.S.-based Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES), developed social reporting standards. CERES also developed environmental reporting guidelines.

The Role of Colombian Public Relations Professionals as Agents of Social Transformation: How the Country's Crisis forces Professionals to go Beyond Communication with Organizational Publics

Juan-Carlos Molleda and **Ana-María Suárez**
University of Florida and Universidad de Medellín, Colombia

** Top Three Paper*

A study of Colombian public relations practitioners found that university education and years of experience translate into a social advising role in organizations. Professionals with this background are responsible for social policy that deals with community and government involvement as well as ethics and social responsibility advisement.

The aspects that characterized the social role of public relations professionals in Colombia were corporate ethics and social responsibility, employee and community well-being, and harmonious interaction with local and national governments.

Colombian professionals considered themselves agents of social transformation in society and part of the social conscience of their organizations.

"There are times I feel that directors of my organization are so preoccupied over the proper functioning of their business that, at times, they lose connection with their surroundings…I feel that the fundamental role we accomplish at this moment is to be able to connect the actors pursuing similar objectives in our community, and to connect our organization with its publics by establishing harmonic relationships," said a focus group participant in Bogotá.

Colombian public relations professionals agreed that the responsibility for social welfare has been transferred in part from the government to the private sector and non-governmental organizations. They believe that every sector in society, including government, must take action and work together for the improvement of communities. Colombian organizations face challenges when assuming greater responsibility for social well-being.

The study was conducted between July and November of 2002 by professors Juan-Carlos Molleda from the University of Florida and Ana-María Suárez from the University of Medellín, Colombia. Both educational institutions sponsored the research project. The Colombian Center of Public Relations and Organizational Communication supported the field work.

This investigation was conducted with three focus groups and a self-administered survey (166 participants, 30% response rate, +/- 4 sampling error) of Colombian practitioners who are registered members of a national public relations association in three of the largest Colombian cities: Bogotá, Cali, and Medellín. Three 90-minute focus groups were also conducted.

Alternative Methods to Measuring PR Success: Celebrating Rhetorical Approaches

Michele A. Najor
Wayne State University

Public relations practice and education increasingly emphasizes evaluation and assessment. Similarly, organizations in their attempts to justify use of resources are increasingly demanding measurable results from program managers and campaign directors. Simply stated, public relations activities must be justified through outcome measures. Consequently, educators are devoting more attention to the methods for measuring the relative success of a campaign. For years, students have learned to evaluate a campaign based on the traditional measures of newspaper clippings, opinion polls, membership, and fundraising. These methods are useful for

examining many traditional corporate-based public relations programs. Such approaches are quasi-scientific and can be easily replicated.

These traditional measures are less useful, however, when applied to community-based public relations efforts designed to change perceptions and attitudes, and create a sense of community over time. These sorts of campaigns effect public relations at a very different level, often relying on more process-oriented strategies such as creating mutually beneficial relationships, shared control, and trust. Moreover, they fail to capture the dynamic nature of communication and the process aspects of public relations.

These useful albeit limited traditional methods of measurement were advanced when the practice of public relations was defined largely by Edward Bernays' belief that practitioners could and should engineer consent. Contemporary critics have charged that this view of the practice is linear, self-interested and disregards the importance of relationship-building as a primary function of public relations.

This paper argues that traditional evaluations of campaigns are no longer sufficient in measuring the dynamic and diverse nature of public relations and public opinion. Traditional, static measurements are inconsistent with the current model of public relations which emphasizes relationship-building.

Measuring the Impact and Role of Public Relations Efforts in an Organization to Address Community Relations Needs

Bonita Dostal Neff
Valparaiso University

An organization facing rapid technological changes under new leadership sought academic research to clarify complex decisions. Senior-level undergraduate students enrolled in a Public Relations Research Seminar at Valparaiso University under the direction of Dr. Bonita Neff assisted a nonprofit broadcasting client by interviewing the station's subscribers. The research results updated the board of directors and the station's staff continually via e-mail. The ongoing input of research results (raw data, tables, data descriptions) moved the discussion toward new topics while reassessing short-term high-risk decisions and identifying long-term high-need decisions. The public relations research provided the evidence needed to integrate complex ideas and to move the discussion away from the isolated anecdotal comment to the more multifaceted responses from the station's community. The cost-effective use of academic resources made the research project feasible.

Legal Fantasies: The Arguments Against Public Relations Licensing

Michael G. Parkinson and **L. Marie Parkinson**
Texas Tech University

** Top Three Paper*

According to a paper presented at the conference, the First Amendment does not restrict the option of licensing all public relations practitioners.

Michael Parkinson and L. Marie Parkinson wrote the paper that was selected as the top paper in the Communication Sciences Division. Michael Parkinson is an attorney and professor of public relations who is accredited by the Public Relations Society of America. Marie Parkinson is also an attorney. Together the two authors have nearly 40 years legal experience.

Michael Parkinson said, "We wrote the paper because we had heard many others argue that the First Amendment would somehow prevent licensing of public relations practitioners." "We just wanted to be sure that if those in public relations do not want licensure they do so for the right reasons and not because they mistakenly believe it would be illegal," he added.

The authors note that the practice of public relations is licensed in several other countries and that licensure has the potential to improve professionalism without damaging free expression. They then describe several arguments that have been advanced by people who oppose licensure. These arguments include the fear that licensing would eliminate many older and experienced practitioners and a fear of malpractice suits. The real focus of the paper was a response to arguments that licensure would violate the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The paper included specific examples of laws that have been ruled constitutional that regulate the media used by public relations practitioners. It also described specific laws that require registration of those in specific areas of public relations practice. One section uses the federal Foreign Agent Registration Act to show that public relations practice can be both legally defined and regulated.

The paper concludes with a description of attorney licensing and possible rules for licensing public relations practitioners. In this section the authors show how the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution would permit licensing public relations practitioners. According to Parkinson, "A rule requiring that a practitioner secure a public relations license before asking to be paid for services would not violate any existing federal law." Such a rule could create an effective system for licensing public relations practitioners without any threat to their freedom of speech.

Communication Management in an Academic Library Setting

Barbara K. Petersen, Marcia L. Watson, and **Kimberly B. Amendola**
University of South Florida

Dr. Barbara K. Petersen, Associate Professor, and M.A. students Marcia L. Watson and Kimberly B. Amendola integrated theoretical work in public relations and communication management with the viewpoint gained from the body of knowledge in library and information science to explore an academic setting that contained differing, and often conflicting organizational cultures.

The researchers were confronted with a situation where a large public university in the southeastern U.S., conceived as a teaching institution in the 1950s, achieved its goal some 40 years later to become a top-tier Research I university, thus necessitating a comparable change in the mission of the university's academic library. Though such a change would involve multiple components over several years, the preliminary work in the present research study determined that the critical starting point needed to be excellent communication with the library's key external and internal publics.

The South Florida researchers conducted survey research using two parallel survey instruments to identify existing working relationships between research faculty and professional librarians. Responses indicated that both groups agreed academic research was very important, and that the academic library was essential to meet faculty research needs. However, librarians perceived stronger interactions with faculty than faculty did with librarians. And, both groups perceived that they did not communicate very well with one another.

Overall, the data in this study demonstrated only a weak to moderate level working relationship between the university's research faculty and its professional librarians. Accordingly, for the academic library to achieve its desired "research library" status, the

researchers concluded that professional librarians would need to undergo a paradigm shift in their operations. Thus, library management must strengthen communication both internally and externally to build stronger relationships with research faculty through coalition building and a commitment to faculty research needs.

Teaching Public Relations During a Crisis: The Terrorist Attacks on the United States

Gayle Pohl
University of Northern Iowa

Teaching public relations in an undergraduate program requires the use of case studies and current events as examples. Dr. Gayle Pohl, Associate Professor at the University of Northern Iowa, conducted a study designed to give students real life examples of public relations in action.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 provided a perfect case study in crisis communication/public relations. To bring the world into the classroom, lectures and discussions about the events and the aftermath were designed. Students responded in-class to the events and then were asked if and how these national events related to public relations. After a series of discussions, students were asked to develop a public relations crisis plan for the United States.

To measure student reactions to the national events, classroom discussions, and exercises, each student was asked to complete an open-ended survey. Responses to the surveys are quoted throughout this paper to describe the classroom environment and responses to class discussions and the development of the crisis public relations plan. Sixteen surveys (out of 22) were completed and returned.

This paper discusses student reactions to the terrorist attacks and classroom discussions and exercises used to highlight effective strategies and tactics to create a crisis public relations plan.

An Examination into the Intersection of Rumor, Ambiguity, Interest and Time in Crisis Communications: A Step Toward a Theoretical Approach

Robert S. Pritchard and **Betsy Hatch**
Ball State University

Researchers at Ball State University recently completed a study on leadership communications in the first four hours following the terrorist attack on American on September 11, 2001 and found that overall, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's messages were felt to be more timely and less ambiguous than President George W. Bush's messages.

Using an adaptation of a semantic differential technique, the study found that Giuliani's messages were felt to be slightly more credible, affective and polished than Bush's messages. The study also showed that the sender's logic or reasoning (rationality) and credibility were more significant to listeners than the emotional appeal (affectivity) and the congruity, grace and polish (artistry) of the message.

While looking for a more theoretical approach to crisis communications, the researchers happened upon a 1947 work by Gordon Allport and Leo Postman, two psychology professors at Harvard University. *The Psychology of Rumor* describes an experimental investigation into what Allport and Postman term the rumor principle. Through their investigation they were able to develop a formula for the intensity of rumors.

The formula, written as $r \sim i \times a$, holds that the amount of rumor in circulation (intensity) (r) will vary with the importance (i) one has in a specific or topical proposition for belief times

the ambiguity of the evidence pertaining to or lack of news about an event (a). Allport and Postman's equation is multiplicative, therefore, if either importance or ambiguity can be reduced to zero, the intensity of the rumor will also be reduced to zero.

To this, the researchers add time (t) as a factor as many other researchers and practitioners acknowledge that speed is of the essence in successfully handling communications in a crisis. The faster information is released, the less intense the rumor, thus the revised equation would be written r ~ i x a x t.

The researchers noted that information in the early hours of a crisis share most of the same characteristics of a rumor. Using the events of September 11, 2001 as the backdrop, the researchers set out to test their adaptation of Allport and Postman's equation. On 9/11, there was no question of *interest* and *time* was easily measured. What then of *ambiguity?*

The design of the study started with a construct of ambiguity using terms selected from Raymond G. Smith's *Message Measurement Inventory*. A disciple of Charles Osgood, the father of semantic differentiation who identified the dimensions of connotative meaning, Smith developed sixty "message descriptors" organized into the four categories of rationality, affectivity, credibility and artistry. From this list, the researchers selected 26 "message descriptors" that directly related to the concept of "ambiguity."

These 26 "message descriptors" were rated by students in two Ball State University public relations classes using a six-point "semantic aspect scale" developed by Dolf Zillman, a leading researcher in the effects of media content.

Because of the small sample size, it is difficult to broadly apply the results of this study. Nonetheless, the researchers feel this equation has great potential to aid in a comprehensive understanding of how information is used and perceived in the initial hours of a crisis. They also feel this study will increase our understanding of how message construction affects communication in a crisis and represents the first step toward a theoretical approach to crisis communication.

Public Justification of Moral Choices: Using Bok's Test of Publicity to Evaluate Moral Reasoning in Public Relations

Brad L. Rawlins, Thomas H. Grover, and **Kevin Stoker**
Brigham Young University

Gary* was tired of working for others and decided to use his experience in journalism and public relations to start his own PR firm. While struggling to find clients, he was approached by an organization offering a steady account. He turned it down because it conflicted with his personal and religious beliefs.

"I had no clients. When I look back I think I should have been so much more worried about my family eating than I was," he said. But, "we didn't feel comfortable doing that. Back in those days when those accounts would have helped a great deal, I felt good about the fact that we stayed true to what we felt."

Mary*, director of public relations for a bank, says it is important for her to be ethical in her job. When asked how she knows if she is being ethical, she said: "I just go with what you've got instinct in. You know things [you] are not supposed to do and supposed to do. But you know that anyway. … I just go with what I feel is right and with what I feel is wrong."

Reliance on instincts and gut feelings to resolve moral dilemmas was a common response from 31 practitioners interviewed by a Brigham Young University research team. However, most ethical philosophers suggest that justifying ethical decisions require more than the application of subjective feelings.

Using a test for public justification of ethical dilemmas formulated by Sissela Bok, a noted Harvard philosopher, the research team analyzed in-depth interviews conducted over a 2-year span with practitioners across the U. S. and from various backgrounds, work experience, and job positions. Individual statements of how a practitioner came up with a solution to an ethical problem were analyzed according to Bok's test. Of the 125 statements meeting the above criteria, 26% were expressed as doing what's right according to moral instinct or feelings.

The first step of Bok's test is to consider all alternatives that would minimize harm that would not be considered morally questionable. She says actions such as concealing information or not being completely honest require additional moral justification. The second step requires considering the moral reason or principle behind the action. The final step checks the reasonability of the first two steps by testing it against "how a public of reasonable persons would respond to such arguments." This step is known as the test of publicity.

Bok identifies three levels of publicity in this test. The first level is to consult one's conscience about the decision. This level is different from gut instinct because it requires a dialogue in with one's "better self." The key to the test of publicity is to discuss the reasoning of your decision with another, if it is within yourself.

"I think through the problem considering what I have been taught by parents and other influentials," was typical of this kind of statement. Only 8% of the analyzed statements mentioned thinking of the problem through their conscience.

The second level is to seek input from expert or trusted sources such as co-workers, friends, or professional/organizational codes. This dialogue overcomes the personal bias of the first step but is vulnerable to professional or organizational bias.

John* said making a decision was a combination of personal inclination and guidance from respected supervisors. "Obviously, peer conversation, understanding how peers have dealt with similar issues in the past" is helpful he said. Aside from gut feelings, peer consultation was the most popular statement (22%) to dealing with an ethical dilemma. In most cases, practitioners discussed the problem with their colleagues or supervisors. In some cases, family and mentors were consulted. Another 13% of the statements mentioned organizational and professional codes.

The third level, Bok's greatest test of publicity, is to consult in person with people affected by the decision or to conduct a hypothetical conversation if it is impossible or impractical to discuss the issue with those persons. This step takes into consideration points of view and self-interests unique from your own.

In addition to including peers and supervisors, Robert* includes clients in the discussion when applicable. "Anything related to an ethical issue, then it's going to include that caliber of people," he said. Only 9% of the statements were coded as an appeal to the third level of publicity. Of those, about half were hypothetical discussions with the affected publics and the other half mentioned getting actual feedback from the stakeholders.

The research team, composed of professors Brad L. Rawlins and Kevin Stoker, and undergraduate student Thomas Grover, acknowledge that the results of this research can't be generalized to all practitioners because of the limited sample used in the research method. They plan to conduct more quantitative and descriptive research on this subject in the next year.

* All names have been changed to protect the identities of the research participants.

The Public Relations Practice: Designing Culturally Appropriate Health Campaigns Addressing Latinos/Latinas in the United States

Wanda Reyes
The Pennsylvania State University

The Latino population in the United States comes from different geographical regions. Therefore, it would be incorrect to homogenize this population within a single category; although these individuals have commonalities, they have differences as well. Limited information has been collected regarding the practice of public relations to specifically address the needs and health problems of Latinos/Latinas living in the United States. This essay is a reflection of the experience of authors from different research areas, which may be useful in the development of culturally appropriate public relations health campaigns for Latinos/Latinas. First, the importance of conducting culturally appropriate research is addressed. Second, cultural characteristics, such as country of origin, family values, gender roles, simpatía and respeto, fatalism, food consumption, religious beliefs, health care behavior, language, second culture acquisition and socio-economic-status are discussed as they should be considered when designing public relations strategies aimed at Latinos/Latinas in the United States. Third, recommendations of suitable approaches when addressing the health needs of Latinos/Latinas are made. Finally, high priority areas for future research are identified. The components of this essay may be viewed as a conceptual framework to developing culturally appropriate health campaigns among Latinos/Latinas in the United States.

Measurement and Evaluation Methods of PRSSA Bateman Winners: Best Practices, Experiential Learning, or What?

Cathy Rogers
Loyola University

A study of the top three winners since 1999 of the nation's most prestigious public relations campaign competition for students shows that public relations undergraduates adhere to research and evaluation standards set by the industry and the academy.

Rogers analyzed the student campaigns conducted for the National Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, solobiz.com, VISA U.S.A. and Contiki Holidays as part of the annual Bateman Case Study Competition sponsored by the Public Relations Student Society of America. Students from California State University at Long Beach, Loyola University New Orleans, The University of Florida, The University of Georgia, and The University of South Carolina created the winning entries that were the focus of this study.

Based on best practices criteria compiled from scholarly and professional articles, Rogers' analysis showed that at least half of the 12 winners since 1996 demonstrated formative and evaluative research methods that constitute "best practice" in public relations. Her study was based on the 10-page summaries which Bateman teams are required to submit with extensive appendices of collateral material used the support the students' execution of their strategies. In these summaries, the students demonstrated triangulated methodologies to answer appropriate research questions, and they measured their success based on precise, outcome-oriented objectives.

Rogers concluded that this 1999-2001 sample of Bateman winners are the "new wave of public relations practitioners" whom scholar David M. Dozier predicted in 1985 could enrich the "practitioner community…with heretofore misunderstood and under-used social science research tool?"

Rogers' study also examined whether the Bateman competition might fit the service or experiential learning model.

Behavior: Brazilians Are Demanding Respect for Their Consumer Rights

Rosana de Oliveira Freitas Sacchet, Maria Shuler, Pedro Armando Volkmann, and **Dimas Bragagnolo**
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

This paper presents Cross Sectional marketing research using the AIO scale – Activities, Interests, Opinions - to investigate the lifestyles of the consumers who claim their financial rights and look for consumer support offices. This research was carried out in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2002, with the objective of getting to know better this sensible consumer who complains and demands his rights; a growing segment in Brazil. This public has been adopting a new behavior in Brazilian consuming relations, motivated by the Brazilian Code of Consumer Defense and Protection.

Cluster Analysis identified three profiles: 1) The "Moderate or Restraint," 37% of the sample 2) The "Bon Vivant," 12% of the sample, and 3) The "Consumerist," 17% of the sample. The denomination of each of the groups was inspired by the characteristics in terms of behavior of the consumer observed in this research. The methodological procedure used in this research was a *Cross-Sectional* one. This research was carried out in two stages: (a) qualitative and (b) quantitative, using the following tools, respectively: deep interview and questionnaire.

a) Qualitative Phase: Deep Interview

The target population of the qualitative phase was composed of consumers of financial products who have already contacted a consumer support office to claim their rights in Porto Alegre, as well as expert lawyers in consumer rights, who are in touch with the studied public daily.

The interviewees were invited to participate according to the judgment of the researcher.

Ten consumers of financial products who fitted the target public of this study and two expert lawyers in consumer rights participated in the in-depth interview, which was carried out during March 2001 by the researcher itself.

The data were analyzed qualitatively, based on the information and conclusions observed. The result of this analysis is the questionnaire used in the quantitative phase.

b) Quantitative Phase: Questionnaire

The target population of the quantitative phase was composed by consumers of financial products that looked for a consumer support office in Porto Alegre. All consumers that went to Proconsumer, the Association for Financial Rights of the Consumer, between September and October 2001 were invited to answer the questionnaire indistinctly, aiming at obtaining a sample by convenience. The adopted procedure for collecting the data resulted in 142 answered questionnaires, 13 of them were excluded because of problems when filling them out, adjusting the size of the sample to 129 cases. The sample was tested and considered qualified as being an acceptable size for the proposed statistical calculations.

Choosing Proconsumer for the collection of information for the research was due to the profile of this institution; it is the only consumer rights office in Porto Alegre that deals exclusively with financial rights of the consumer.

The collected data were submitted to an analysis based on the averages and the mode for the development of a generalized description about the social-demographic profile for the characterization of the sample. Afterward, we selected only the variables AIO, related to the activities, interests and opinions in order to verify specifically the existence of subgroups, or

classes, with similar behaviors in lifestyle. For that objective, the Cluster Analysis was used. This research identified the profile and lifestyle of the customers who claim their financial rights in consumer support offices in Porto Alegre, associating socio-demographic characteristics to the variables AIO (activities, interests and opinions), in order to develop a description of this growing segment of the market in Brazil.

Three different profiles were identified through Cluster analysis among the complainers of financial rights:

1) The "Moderate or Restraint," 37% of the sample, debt with banks, 3° grade complete, liberal professional, earns until R$ 1800,00, married with no children. Goes to the parks, to the theater, gets information reading journals and watching TV, feels the budget deficient but doesn't agree, even disagree, that they buy what is needed and later think how to pay the bills.
2) The "Bon Vivant," 12% of the sample, debt with banks, 3° grade incomplete, liberal professional, earns more than R$ 900,00, married with one child. Travels with family/friends, plays sports, surfs the Internet, reads journals and magazines. Honors the compromise as often as possible, believes that financial problems are something temporary, and disagree that they buy what they need and think later how to pay the bills.
3) The "Consumerist," 17% of the sample, debt with the credit card, 3° grade incomplete, public servant, gains until R$ 900,00, married, two children. Goes shopping frequently and to restaurants, uses Internet and magazines, feels that the budget is deficient and agrees that they buy what is needed and then thinks how to pay the bills.

Chartered Semiconductor Manufacturing
A Case Study in Leadership in the Communications Process

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Chartered Semiconductor Manufacturing and Brigham Young University

Chartered Semiconductor Manufacturing, like many other growing companies, is concerned with delivering the right messages through the clutter of competing communication messages about its products. Chartered is one of the world's top three silicon foundries, manufacturing semiconductor chips designed by companies like Agilent, Intel, Ericsson, and Broadcom to be used in electronic products. Chartered's centralized leadership team is based in Singapore, but its messages are developed by a small team based in the United States.

The purpose of this case study was to explore how this multinational company develops its messages and to better understand the role that company leadership plays in the process of message development, and acceptance and promotion of these messages.. This study departs from previous studies in that it focuses on a relatively young company in a relatively young, but emerging industry. Chartered was founded in 1987, the same year that the foundry industry for outsourced chip manufacturing originated.

Three theoretical concepts were used to frame this study. First, Chartered's leadership was analyzed by looking at the organization's structure, considering it from a scientific approach. For the purposes of this study, it was important to understand the structure of the organization and evaluate the tasks, communications and authority relationships within the company. Structure also was examined to compare it to some of the organizational attributes of companies in Dozier, Grunig and Grunig's Excellence Study (1995). Finally, this study used the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory. LMX theory centers around the interactions between leaders and followers.

Interviews and a survey were used to gather information. The follow-up interviews after the survey encouraged a focus on a small setting like one company. They tested conclusions drawn from the survey on Chartered's leadership and its message development process.

Data indicated that Chartered exhibits a largely authoritarian, hierarchical structure. It is unclear whether a dominant coalition exists, but the structure does limit the effectiveness of communications making executive buy-in and proliferation of the messages difficult. With unclear data about the dominant coalition, it appears communications people are not represented in a dominant coalition, impacting the strategic value and the effectiveness of the company's communications teams. Geographical, customer, and industry concerns all pose challenges to the company's messaging process, which is made more complicated by the structure of the organization.

Overall, the data suggested an organizational structure that limits the effectiveness of the company's message development and message proliferation processes, and relationship issues that put investor relations in a better position than the marketing team to serve the organization.

There was some evidence that there is some participation in decision-making at the vice president-level and higher. By having a predominantly authoritarian structure, this degree of participation can affect communication because messages may not be embraced and proliferated by the company's highest-ranking officers. Data suggested that leader-follower relationships also can have an effect. This study resulted in findings that the two departments in question have a large impact on the company's messages, and a strategic, high-quality relationship makes a noticeable difference in the effectiveness of those messages.

The Paradoxes in Public Relations: How the Evolution of the Field Has Inhibited Its Progress

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But one must not think ill of the paradox, for the paradox is the passion of thought, and the thinker without the paradox is like the lover without passion: a mediocre fellow. (Kierkegaard, 1985, p. 37)

For the 19th century Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, paradox meant unresolved contradictions. In the last 15 years, business scholars have devoted more and more research to the exploration of these unresolved contradictions in organizations. These unresolved contradictions also have plagued public relations academics and practitioners, who have struggled for years to define public relations. The field ostensibly has progressed from focusing on one-way propaganda and publicity to emphasizing relationships and mutual benefits. However, media placements and persuasive media campaigns continue to dominate the field. One need just look at the training sessions at the national Public Relations Society of America annual meeting to know that the field remains focused on mass persuasion techniques.

This emphasis on "public" communication in the public relations field is not necessarily good or bad. But it can directly conflict with the "relations" aspect of public relations. The paradox for public relations arises from the inherent conflict between public—mass persuasion and communication—and relations—interpersonal and individual interaction. This paper argues that the paradox created by a field committed to using mass strategies for group persuasion at the same time desiring relationships with individual stakeholders is the very key to progress and success in the field. The challenge for public relations is its tendency to focus on the positive when its future success may rely on the negative elements that seem contradictory and counter to the more acceptable positives. By confronting the negatives in the paradox, public relations may find answers to questions and moral dilemmas that have plagued the field since its inception.

Philosophers have wrestled with the concept of paradox for hundreds of years. The paradoxes of organizational life also have been around for a long time but recent "technological change, global competition, and workforce diversity" have served to multiply the contradictions and ironies in organizational. For organizations to compete in the changing environment, they must become adept at interpreting and responding to change and then communicating their responses to an increasingly fickle and skeptical public. But such is paradoxes facing public relations. To relate with the public, public relations practitioners may take actions that undermine their relationship with management. As an ethnographic study of a public relations department found, the very expertise and skills for which practitioners were hired made it difficult for them to perform the task they were hired to do.

Paradoxes create tensions that exist simultaneously. Thus, organizations seek flexibility and control at the same time. They promote accountability and independence. They promote new ideas while desperately hanging on to tradition. Handy noted the paradoxical nature of the S curve, which invariably means for every up cycle, there will be a down period. The irony is that as an organization harvests success, it sows the seeds for failure. But organizations rarely re-engineer during an "up" period. Actors also tend to choose the positive aspect of the paradox, hoping it is true by itself. This may eliminate cognitive dissonance, but it leads to temporary positive effects that ultimately increase tensions and magnify the problem. Watzlawik, Weakland, and Fisch identified that change that offers temporary solutions as first-order change in which change occurs within a system that remains unchanged. Second-order change occurs when change transforms the system. Lewis noted that that second-order change embraces negatives and contradictions, finding solutions in contraries and opposites. "Second-order change is thus change of change….."

For example, public relations has institutionalized first-order change with its adoption of strategic communication techniques embodied in the RACE formula—Research, Action Planning, Communication, and Evaluation. The RACE formula produces several paradoxes, especially at the outset. One is supposed to look at the organizational mission, culture, etc. and then move to external forces influencing the organization. But what if the public relations problem faced by the organization arose as a result of the mission, culture and values of the organization? Does one design a campaign to deal with corporate leadership and culture that may have created the public relations problem in the first place? Instead of addressing these problems, public relations seeks temporary solutions through communication campaigns destined to ultimately fail because the core practices that created them are still in place.

To solve the paradox, a possible solution is to add two new phases to what would then be known as the RERACE formula. As in its earlier form, the formula begins with Research and is then followed by Evaluation and Re-engineering. If the organization's culture, membership, or management is the source of public relations problems, the practitioners identifies the issues hindering progress and then recommends a plan for re-engineering the constitutional problems before Action Planning and Communication. Any strategic plan that does not include changes in the system itself will lead to temporary improvement followed by greater tension and miscommunication. The recent crises plaguing Firestone and Ford offer excellent examples of cultural flaws existing over the course of several years that result in more extreme public relations crises.

As public relations evolves to deal with the dramatic changes in individuals, technology, and society, it will confront more and more paradoxes. For public relations practice to meet the demands of an increasingly paradoxical environment, practitioners and scholars must be willing to adopt second-order thinking. They must confront paradoxes, accept the existence of contrary elements occurring simultaneously, and look for solutions in the contraries. The outcome of this

self-reflection may require more than cosmetic changes; it may require a wholesale transformation of what is now known as public relations.

Surviving the Attack on America: The American Red Cross and September 11, 2001

Heather Terry
University of South Alabama

The research reported in this paper used crisis communication theories, agenda setting theory, and the Six Principles of Public Relations of Arthur W. Page as the theoretical background for the study. The purpose of this research was to examine the events of September 11, 2001 through the eyes of the southern chapter Public Information Officers of the American Red Cross. The study also measured how the non-profit organization handled – through the use of public relations –its accompanying the Liberty Fund crisis.

The study's principal measuring instrument consisted of a Likert-type scale survey with 12 closed-ended questions plus two-open-ended questions, all pertaining to the events of September 11, 2001 and the Liberty Fund. The study found the events of September 11, 2001 were beyond Public Information Officers "worst case scenario" crisis preparations, although the officers felt they were trained and prepared to handle the crisis.

Public Information Officers surveyed agreed the events of September 11, 2001 have changed how the American Red Cross communicates. Most PIOs believe charitable donations to the Red Cross have decreased as a result of the Liberty Fund crisis. These public relations people also agree, if viewing Liberty Fund donors as customers, the Red Cross listened to the customer.

Responses to the study's two open-ended questions suggested those surveyed thought the small, southern chapters handled the events of the Liberty Fund effectively, but do not give the National Headquarters of the American Red Cross high marks for their public relations participation during this crisis.

Public Relations and the New Golden Age of Spain:
A Confluence of Democracy, Economic Development and the Media

Donn James Tilson and **Pilar Saura Pérez**
University of Miami and Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Thanks to a healthy democracy with political stability, economic development, and a dynamic media, the public relations sector is flourishing in Spain according to a newly released study by researchers at the University of Miami and Complutense University in Madrid.

The public relations profession - consultancies, corporate and institutions of higher education in particular - has matured considerably since its inception in the mid-1950s, and its growth has paralleled political, economic, and media developments in Spain says Dr. Donn Tilson, UM School of Communication associate professor and Pilar Saura, Complutense University School of Information Science doctoral student.

Spain's GDP grew more than 11% from 1999 to 2001 and on a per capita basis is 80% that of the four leading Western European countries. They note that as national and European business opportunities have increased, both for Spanish and non-Spanish companies in the wake of a post-Franco return to democracy in 1975, public relations consultancies have followed such clients as counsel. For example, the Association of Consulting Companies in Public Relations and Communication (Spanish initials, ADECEC), which represents the largest national and

multinational public relations firms and 65% of the consultancy billings in Spain, reports that its total membership billings for 2000 increased 30.7% over the previous year to 9.713 million pesetas. Client lists run the gamut from Spanish companies (El Corte Inglés, Telefónica) to U.S. interests (IBM, Coca-Cola) to British (Unilever, PLC). Moreover, the total number of employees in ADECEC firms has grown from 370 in 1997 to 745 in 2000. An association representing corporate public relations managers- Asociación Directivos de la Comunicación (ADC DirCom) - notes in a study of 283 of the largest revenue-producing companies in Spain that 75.5% have a department of communication with 40.6% of the department heads reporting directly to top management. The vast majority of communication directors - 89.2% - say that media relations is a primary function of the department. Various laws to eliminate state media monopolies and censorship have spurred the growth of the industry. Ten national daily newspapers - instead of five at the outset of democracy - now vie for readership with quality financial dailies and regional papers. Radio and television stations have multiplied exponentially - today, there are some 208 AM and 715 FM stations and more than 224 television stations with programming in Spanish and regional languages (Galician, Basque, or Catalan- Valenciana); five TV stations are national networks, including two public stations and one pay-TV station.

Public relations higher education has developed coincidentally with the emergence of professional practice. As many as 20,000 students are currently majoring in communication at 10 public and 9 private universities, which offer undergraduate - and in some cases graduate - degree programs in advertising/public relations or organizational communication. Consultancies note the growing number on staff of public relations graduates from universities, technical and private colleges, and public relations schools.

Legal Affairs: A Specialty of Public Relations an Independent Research Study on the Emerging Field of Legal Affairs

Jeanne Valois
University of Florida

Public relations has emerged on the forefront of the latest in legal practices; a specialization that has been dubbed “legal affairs.” Competition for business has continued to multiply, while the client’s lack of loyalty has all but waned. Consequently, law firms, and individual lawyers alike, have resorted to the use of public relations tactics to increase the potential for a prosperous practice. As a result of the discipline’s rapid emergence, the need for a broader understanding of public relations’ use in the legal arena is imperative.

In response to this dire need, a survey was created to explore the use of PR practices in law firms. The population for the study was drawn from the managing partners at law firms throughout the state of Florida. The study revealed significant findings for agencies and educators alike.

Seventy-five percent of law firms do not employ an in-house PR practitioner. Half of in-house practitioners acquired their skills while working for their firm. Two-thirds of the respondents stated that the in-house practitioner’s main duty is to promote the firm and its partners. There is a slight correlation between the hiring of an outside practitioner and firm size, although firms of all sizes report outsourcing. These outside specialists were primarily responsible for preparing PR strategies and gaining publicity for a law firm’s clients. Ninety percent stated they are most likely to hire a PR specialist for help in cases involving corporate clients and white-collar crimes. None of the firms had hired a PR intern. Until law firms discover the importance of having an in-house practitioner, they are unlikely to see the benefits of hiring a PR student as an intern.

Public Relations in Interdisciplinary Workgroups

Pedro Armando Furtado Volkmann, Maria Shuler, Rosana de Oliveira Freitas Sacchet, and **Dimas Bragagnolo**
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

This paper focuses the application of the public relations in managing different ideas and concepts in an Interdisciplinary workgroup. The job of a public relations professional in these kinds of organization is how to manage different beliefs and style of life.

To know more about it, a qualitative research with an exploratory approach was done, through documental and bibliographic surveys, case studies and semi-structured interviews.

First, the paper focuses on aspects that are the basis of public relations. Afterward, it offers suggestions for understanding the same word or concept. This adjustment is the most important thing in the beginning of the groups. It will allow people work together easily.

Different values, ethics, and abilities in relationship base these kinds of meetings. Public relations activities help to maintain the relation in high level of professionalism and friendship in these groups.

Finally, this paper shows different ways to do public relations and the role that everyone in these groups have in supporting professionals of public relations for doing their job. Public relations is two-way; everybody is responsible for results.

Exploring The Role of Public Relations Management in Organizational Uncertainty

Marcia L. Watson
University of South Florida

** Top Three Paper*

Uncertainty exists when details of situations are ambiguous, complex, unpredictable, or probabilistic; when information is unavailable or inconsistent; and when people feel insecure in their own state of knowledge or the state of knowledge in general.

The effects of uncertainty on an organization have been relatively undertheorized within public relations. To close the gap, Marcia Watson, an M.A. student at the University of South Florida, blends theories pertaining to uncertainty with the outcomes of in-depth interviews with five managers and five employees in a financial services organization. The aim was to determine *what* uncertainty exists within an organization, *how* managers communicate within this uncertainty, and *what* the outcomes are of uncertainty. This provided an opportunity to apply interdisciplinary research to organizational public relations.

The results indicated that uncertainty was multi-layered. The researcher found that the four most common workplace uncertainty variables were organizational change, unclear policies, job insecurity, and the external environment. Additionally, communication was determined to be the key instrument in handling uncertainty. This study identified that organizational leaders need to support employees by providing timely and accurate information, working to clarify goals, and including employees in decision-making. This awareness is imperative to organizations because the ability to manage information to decrease or limit uncertainty is a tactical resource that gives organizations a strategic advantage over competitors. It is the amount of uncertainty an organization can handle and how well they manage it that determines success.

In conclusion, this study merged the findings with public relations practice by making a theoretical link to the importance of formalized and strategic public relations functions to assist organizations in limiting uncertainty among employees.

Doing Everything Wrong: Trent Lott's Public Relations Nightmare

Andrew Paul Williams and **Kaye D. Trammell**
University of Florida

In a case study that examines the recent downfall of Republican majority leader Trent Lott, researchers at the University of Florida found that this public relations nightmare provides both practitioners and educators with further insights into crisis communications.

Just one month after the historic 2002 Republican sweep of the mid-term elections, Mississippi Senator Trent Lott landed himself in the middle of a crisis that proved to irrevocable damaging to his career. In a speech that was intended to honor retiring South Carolina Senator Thurmond at his 100th birthday party, Sen. Lott made the following ill-fated, broad compliment: "I want to say this about my state: When Strom Thurmond ran for president, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either."

Much to the dismay of the media, his colleagues, and numerous political observers, Lott appeared to have essentially aligned himself with a racist group that had vehemently opposed integration. The gaff was bad enough, but he also had a voting record that usually opposed civil rights legislation, and Lott was also plagued by the media's resurrecting similar insensitive and offensive comments he made in the 1980s.

Once it became apparent that the outcry against him was not only not going away but also increasing, Lott attempted to directly address the issue by issuing a statement and characterizing his remarks saying that "a poor choice of words conveyed to some the impression that I embraced the discarded policies of the past. Nothing could be further from the truth, and I apologize to anyone who was offended by my statement."

This half-hearted and vague mea culpa did not fly with the media, and both Democratic and Republican leaders continue to berate Lott; calling for an official censure or his resignation. In fact, even President George W. Bush spoke out against Lott's politically incorrect comment—a comment that could possibly undermine the GOP's recent strategies to position itself as a party of tolerance and inclusion.

Ultimately, Lott was unable to turn around public opinion and resigned his post. This study highlights the impact that the Internet and the 24-hour cable news stations had on this public relations crisis and reinforces the need for an individual or organization, when faced with a crisis, to fully apologize and claim responsibility, instead of attempting to tell the media and the public to how to think.

Do Organizational Reporting Relationships Matter in Public Relations?
A Study Examining the Impact on the Ethical Bottom-Line

Donald K. Wright
University of South Alabama

This research paper focuses upon the importance of organizational reporting relationships in public relations especially as they pertain to recent corporate scandals involving companies such as Enron, WorldCom, Arthur Andersen and Global Crossing. Theoretical aspects of the paper point out public relations scholars and practitioners have agreed for some time the most effective practice of the field takes place when an organization's public relations function plays a dominant role in decision making. This suggestion was first made half a century ago by Scott Cutlip and Allen Center and has been revisited frequently by a number of scholars, most notably James Grunig.

Even though many scholars have advocated the most effective organizations are the ones where public relations plays a significant role in organizational decision making, this paper points out public relations actually is involved in senior-level, CEO-related decision making only about half of the time.

The study included a survey of some of the nation's most senior-level corporate public relations professionals – members of the Arthur W. Page Society and their direct reports. Results show 83% believe the recent corporate scandals have had an impact in terms of the importance of the public relations and communications function in their own companies. An equal number of respondents agree these scandals have had an impact in terms of having public relations and communications play a more significant role on organizational decision-making within their companies. A very large majority (93%) suggest the presence of a senior level chief public relations officer reporting to the CEO could have made a difference in how organizations facing scandals handled themselves during their times of crisis.

Integrating Relationship Measurement Approaches In Public Relations: An Exploratory Study

Youngmin Yoon
Syracuse University

The developing literature in organization-public relationships identifies two distinctive lines of research. The first line of research concentrates on the perceptions of parties in a relationship. Usually, the researchers in this group conjecture the robustness of the relationship based on one party's perception of the relationship, using survey research methods. The second group of researchers believes that relational research should define and assess relationships "as phenomena distinct from the perceptions held by parties in the relationships." They criticize that most of relational research focuses on the perceptions of parties involved in instead of relationships themselves. They contend that that there must be a third party observation made. This study attempts to integrate these two lines of research by examining the organization-public relationship through both relational parties' perceptions as well as a third party observation. Specifically, it examines two things. First, it investigates if combining the two prior approaches, that is, measuring the organization-public relationship both through the participants' perceptions and a third party's observation, would advance how to assess organization-public relationship. Second, although there has been significant progress in developing and testing a survey instrument to measure the perceptions, little has been done in developing measures for third party observations. Therefore, this study tests third party measures that may be complementary with the one-party measures of organization-public relationships.

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