

The Evolution of Public Relations: Case Studies from Countries in Transition Third Edition

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Editors**

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Introduction

Public relations is one of the world's fastest growing professions and areas of study, despite global differences in its practice and teaching. There is general agreement that case studies of communications campaigns are a most effective teaching and learning technique for both students and practitioners regardless of where in the world they are studying or practicing.

The first edition of this casebook was compiled in 1998 for use in a workshop directed by the editors for university professors in the Baltic States and Russia on how to teach public relations. A year later, and with some additional cases, The Institute for Public Relations published the book.

A second edition was published in 2004. By then, the academic discipline and professional practice of public relations had burgeoned in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former USSR. African nations had become both the originators and the focus of intense public relations campaigns. Asian countries had achieved high levels of sophistication in their use of public relations. In the Middle East and elsewhere, new universities were preparing students for careers in public relations, and older, established schools had added courses to meet demand.

Today, significant cultural, social, political and economic differences between countries remain. And these differences shape the way public relations is practiced globally. Most of the published texts and readily available case studies in the field continue to rely heavily upon Western experience, largely from the United States and Western Europe. Professors, students and, we suspect, practitioners need examples and models with which they and their countries can identify. We also have found that Western practitioners need examples to help with the global nuances that often mean the difference between success and failure.

In the Introduction to the first edition we said, "Public relations in one country is not necessarily public relations in another." That is still true 10 years later and so, we think, the casebook warrants further updating.

As the new submissions arrived, we were gratified to find that if there is a common theme today in these cases from around the world, it is social responsibility. Public relations practitioners and the corporations and organizations they represent are showing increasing concern for the well-being of the communities in which they exist. They are seeking ways to give back. We hope that trend continues to grow for it bodes well for the world's, as well as the profession's, future.

We have added a new section to this edition: *Case Briefs*. As the profession and its study develop globally, so do organizations to serve the profession. One of the most respected of these is the Public Relations Institute of South Africa (PRISA). It, like most such societies, has a formal program to recognize excellence. We include two award-

winning entries from PRISA's 2007 *PRISM Awards for Excellence in Public Relations and Communication*. We think practitioners, professors and students will benefit from seeing how firms summarize their activities on behalf of clients in the pursuit of professional recognition. We thank PRISA and the two firms for permission to reprint, and we hope we can include more of these brief case studies in future editions.

**Branding Is Power:
The Trademark City Gazientep Project**

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Executive Summary

The Trademark City Gaziantep Project won the Grand Award in the Turkish Public Relations Association's (TUHID) 4th Annual Golden Compass Awards in 2005. The project also won first place in the World Chambers Competition 2005 in South Africa. The campaign has been created and implemented by Gaziantep Chamber of Industry.

Gaziantep is among the 81 cities in Turkey and is located in South East Anatolia. The "Trademark City Gaziantep" strives to make the region outstanding as an alternative to Marmara and Mediterranean Regions by drawing attention to the investment climate in Gaziantep.

As indicated by Nejat Kocer, the president of Gaziantep Chamber of Industry (GCI), "we are living at a time where cities compete and every city puts forward their own values...The 'Trademark City Gaziantep Project' is Gaziantep's vision and target project—an important project towards the future."(Trademark City Gaziantep Project, p.1).

There are many advantages of becoming a trademark. When a company becomes a trademark, it may increase its revenues and through the increase of its revenues, they may make new investments, after which the employment rate could increase and in the end it could be possible to have a strong and sound economic structure. Cities and countries are as strong as the trademarks they possess. With these facts guiding its actions, the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry started the "Trademark City Gaziantep" at the beginning of 2003. GCI prepared the project with an integrated structure. It informed the related target audiences and institutions about the project in Gaziantep and in Turkey through various informational and promotional activities. The Gaziantep Chamber of Industry provided consultancy services about branding to its members and tried to ensure the easy adoption of the project. Through lobbying activities, it tried to change the perception of quality of the products produced in the city and worked to draw investments to the city. It ensured the sense of belonging by means of the logo that it registered on behalf of the city.

The executer of the project is Gaziantep Chamber of Industry (GCI). It initiated the project as a duty to its members and as a social responsibility towards its city. GCI has realized this project with a team that has been set up within its own organizational structure and it had partnered with several institutions as well.

During the implementation, a number of national seminars, symposiums and congresses regarding branding had been organized. The project was based on a strategy of differentiation. Controlled and uncontrolled media, lobbying, special events and effective communication principles were very strategically used in the project. Seven cities in Turkey that used the project as a model started activities in the same direction.

The project had many positive outcomes and was successful in drawing attention not only to Gaziantep, but also to the branding of Turkey through continuous, efficient, consistent and planned activities.

Problem Statement

Turkey is still a developing country and because it was not able to overcome its structural problems, it also could not completely ensure its economic transformation either. While it is trying to solve problems that have been on the agenda for many years, it has to keep pace and compete in an environment where globalization is experienced with great speed.

The city of Gaziantep has become one of the most important production centers with its production capacity, export potential, sectoral diversity and industrialism over the past 20 years. That was a good picture initially: large scale production companies built by powerful finances were giving an advantage to companies both in domestic and foreign markets as well. However, as companies in international competition were making large profits by their branded products, the companies in Gaziantep found only a place in the market with very low prices. As a result of free trade in the world, competition has fallen to an unbelievable low level for Gaziantep.

The period of just producing as you wish and assuming you could sell everything you produced was no more. GCI, aware of this situation, wanted to lead the competition. The way to lead the competition, they believed, was ‘differentiation.’ According to GCI, companies in Gaziantep had to be players in this new market place and the solution it created was to emphasize ‘branding’ and creating a need for branding.

The goal was to create a city rich in brands through an integrated approach.

Situation Analysis

History of Gaziantep

The location of Gaziantep has a strategic influence on its history. The region is located between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean where the first civilizations emerged. Its being in the crossroad from the South and Mediterranean to the East, North and West gave direction to civilization history and to modern time. Gaziantep has been the residential and frequently visited area for the communities of people since the pre-historic ages. The fact that the Silk Road passes through the region has helped the city continuously maintain its importance and liveliness.

In the history of Gaziantep, the Independence War and the struggle in this war called “Antep Defense” has a very important place. The people of Antep defended the territory they lived in and earned for their city the title of “ghazi.” Likewise, this struggling characteristic when it is transferred from one generation to another has played

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a dominant role within all the fields of life, particularly in the field of economy. Gaziantep has transferred this strength to the production and investment processes today and it ensured the emergence of the struggling “entrepreneurship spirit” and an “example industry model” in Turkey.

Economic structure of Gaziantep

Gaziantep has created an industrialization model which is specific to itself through its production culture extending from the past to the modern days. It is the most important industry center of Anatolia and has become a city of 24-hour production with investment increasing particularly within the last two decades. There is no state investment in Gaziantep and this fact has triggered the entrepreneurship spirit in the city.

Today Gaziantep, with 24 million square meters of four organized industry zones, a free zone, nearly 5,000 industry plants and employment power for 120,000 people, has become a city that sells thousands of goods to 104 countries in the world and reaches \$1.5 billion in exports in a region of Turkey where the facilities are scarce.

The fact that Gaziantep produces “intermediate goods” means the existing production potential cannot be protected in the future. The production costs of their regions, mainly in China and Far East and Southeast Asia, have become a threat to Gaziantep's economy.

What Gaziantep needs to do is to compete against the countries that gain advantage through low production costs with quality, trademarked products. Showing that being a trademark was necessary and the vision to be presented in this direction would actually be an investment for the future of Gaziantep.

Gaziantep Chamber of Industry

(GCI) is a semi-official vocational organization and has an autonomous management. There are nearly 2,000 members of GCI who have the potential of \$2.5 billion of export and employment potential for 120,000 people. GCI is among the first 10 chambers in Turkey within the scope of the “Project on Development of Turkish Chambers” under Euro chambers. GCI has been continuing its services for four years under ISO 9000 quality assurance and has become one of the top 10 chambers which have been “accredited” in Turkey during the supervisions performed among 350 chambers by England Union of Chambers and Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) in 2003.

Goals and Objectives

The following vision statement has been put forward by Gaziantep Chamber of Industry with the “Trademark City Gaziantep” project.

Vision

To provide a structure for Gaziantep that will ensure more added value than the production of intermediate goods and increase competitive power through mobilizing the potential of entrepreneurs and large production power and make it sustainable.

Target audience

The campaign has two different target groups that are divided as internal and external target audiences, target audiences “inside Gaziantep” and “outside Gaziantep.”

The target audiences inside Gaziantep

By implementing the branding process in the city, the goal is to provide products produced in Gaziantep with “added value” within and outside the country. The target groups are the industrialists and companies in Gaziantep. The promise of the project to the industrialists of Gaziantep is “to create higher added value.”

The target audiences outside Gaziantep

By drawing attention to the advantages of making investments in Gaziantep, the purpose is to invite national and international investors ‘to make investments in Gaziantep.’ The goal is to make Gaziantep an international investment center. The project also aims to create the perception in the national and international markets that ‘products of Gaziantep are of quality.’ The promise of the project to investors and consumers outside Gaziantep is ‘easy and profitable investment, quality products and high gain.’

Stakeholders

- Industrialists and their employees
- GCI management and its personnel

Influencers

- Official authorities
- Other vocational institutions
- Non-governmental organizations
- Universities
- Opinion leaders
- International business leaders
- Media
- Gaziantep citizens

Goals

- To make the city a ‘trademark rich city’ in the near future by both providing guidance to the local investors of Gaziantep and attracting new investors from outside to the city on national and international scale,
- To create new national trademarks,
- To influence the neighboring cities positively,
- To be a model for the development of the country and region.

Business objectives

- To change Gaziantep’s perception towards the concept of trademarks,
- To increase the trademark and patent applications,
- To achieve \$5 billion of exports in five years,
- To create 50 new national brands in five years,
- To create 100 new national trademarks in 10 years,
- To attract national and international investors to the city,
- To create \$1 billion of foreign investment in five years and \$5 billion of foreign investment in 10 years,
- To create employment for 150,000 people in five years,
- To ensure cooperation with the public sector,
- To perform activities to prevent unfair competition among the companies and to increase cooperation and power,
- To integrate the various activities and their communication processes,
- To enhance the prestige of Gaziantep Chamber of Industry among its members and in the public,
- To differentiate Gaziantep Chamber of Industry among the other chambers both in Turkey and worldwide.

Communication objectives

- To create awareness of Gaziantep trademarks in the public,
- To create belongingness among citizens of Gaziantep to their city,
- To increase awareness and interest in branding among Gaziantep companies,
- To bring the developments and activities in the city to the national agenda,
- To make sure that the project is carried out in an integrated way,
- To emphasize the contribution of Gaziantep to ‘quality,’
- To position GCI as an institution working for the quality of products/services in line with the global standards,
- To emphasize the contribution of Gaziantep to Turkey and to the people,
- To emphasize the privileges/uniqueness of Gaziantep companies,
- To position the project as a new model within the process of national development,
- To create cooperation internationally and joint working platforms within the framework of the project.

Expected behavioral changes

- To motivate the companies in Gaziantep with activities related to branding,
- To make sure that the people in Gaziantep will give support to the branding project and feel a sense of belonging,
- To increase the contribution of the companies to the branding pool,
- To increase the city cooperation and unity of power,
- To position Gaziantep as a trademark city in national terms,
- To position Gaziantep as an industrial city where everything is produced with quality and meets international standards,
- To increase the support of Gaziantep through legal arrangements,
- To increase the number of visitors coming to Gaziantep,
- To increase the foreign capital investments,
- To increase the interest of foreigners.

Tactics and Techniques

Main message:

‘Trademark City Gaziantep’

Supporting messages:

- ‘Cities and countries are as rich as the trademarks they possess.’
- ‘We are proud of our history, we are working for our future, we trust our people, and we produce for Turkey.’
- ‘Branding adds value to production.’
- ‘Branding is power.’

Tactics are grouped into five broad categories: informational activities, consultancy, awareness creating activities, promotional activities and lobbying.

Informational activities

The purpose of informational activities was to provide information to the members of GCI and the public on the project. Various tactics were used to achieve this goal.

Panel: Panel of Branding: Branding Stories and ‘Best Case Practices’- Niyazi Onen (Dardanel), Suleyman Orakcioglu (Damat-Tween), Orhan Ozokur (Ulker), Rustu Bozkurt (*Dunya* Newspaper) and Osman Arolat (*Dunya* Newspaper) participated in the panel regarding branding, best case practices and the trademark city which was organized at the beginning of 2003. The participants shared the importance of branding, their branding stories, knowledge and experience.

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Guide Book: Differentiation Guide-

A guidebook targeting the industrialists of Gaziantep to increase branding awareness and to provide guidance during the implementation was published and distributed to the members of GCI and institutions.

Trademark City Gaziantep CD-

The CD describing the trademark city project and Gaziantep was prepared in English and in Turkish and 5,000 copies were distributed.

Web site www.markasehir.com-

A project promotion site which included the trademark city project and detailed information on branding was prepared. It enabled communication and exchange of information among the members and created a comprehensive information source to people and institutions.

Email Group markasehir yahoo groups-

An email group was formed where interactive information sharing on branding was made possible. The members of the group are presidents of chambers, associations, NGOs and businessmen. Through this interactive platform, knowledge and experience of companies and people was shared.

Presentations at Congresses-

In the 2nd Industry Congress, organized by the Istanbul Chamber of Industry, a presentation was given under the title of “Successful Regional Development Examples: Gaziantep Experience.” In the 3rd Industry Congress, organized by the Istanbul Chamber of Industry, a booth was established where the “chamber” and the “Trademark City Project” was promoted. At the booth, brochures, books and CDs were distributed to the participants of the congress.

Printed Materials-

For the promotion of the project, 10,000 brochures, 1,000 large posters, 20 roll-up banners, 10,000 stickers bearing the logo of “Trademark City Gaziantep” were prepared.

Print Advertisements-

For the promotion of the project, advertisements were given first locally, then regional and finally nationally. Print advertisements were carried out periodically since the beginning of the project. The fundamental criterion in selecting the media outlet for advertisements was the target audience.

Consultancy activities

The purpose of consultancy activities was to provide information and knowledge that would be needed by people and institutions for a successful branding process.

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Consultancy activities focused on promotion, information providing and awareness-raising activities.

Toll-free Trademark Consultancy Phone Line 0 800 536 05 06-

In order to meet the information and consultancy needs of companies on branding and to forward the demands to relevant institutions and agencies, a toll-free trademark consultancy line was established under GCI.

GCI Trademark Patent Office-

An information office was established in order to provide consultation to the companies of Gaziantep regarding trademark registry transactions. The office, launched through the protocol signed with the Turkish Patent Institute (TPI), had the distinctive feature of being the first and only office established by the TPI in this regard. The office distributed published materials related to relevant legislation provisions.

GCI Investment Guidance Desk-

A service was launched where entrepreneurs who looking to make investments could be informed about current investments and sectors with investment opportunities. These activities were carried out by expert personnel within the organizational structure of GCI. These investment consultancy services were provided free of charge to entrepreneurs.

Awareness creating activities

The purpose of awareness activities was to increase the commitment, trust and belief of companies for the branding process and to keep their interest in the project at the highest level.

Trademark City Gaziantep Logo-

In order to identify the project with a concrete visual symbol and to increase the ownership concept in the city, the “Trademark City Gaziantep” logo was prepared. The logo was certified by the Turkish Patent Institute (TPI). In this regard, the Gaziantep logo was the only certified logo belonging to a city.

Trademark Management Symposium-

With the cooperation of the Turkish Chamber of Mechanical Engineers (TCAE), a symposium was organized in April 2005. Important trademark experts and academics of Turkey participated in the symposium and six papers were presented on the trademark city concept.

Panel “Creating a Giant Trademark”-

With the cooperation of *Marketing Turkiye* magazine, a panel on the branding process was organized within the framework of the MOTOKS 2003 fair activities.

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Trademark City Pool-

With the participation of companies supporting the project, an advertisement pool was created by taking a standard participation fee (\$1,000). There were 86 companies who participated in the first phase of this pool and 115 companies in the second phase. Through this, the overall promotion of the city was performed.

“Branding Is Power” Meeting-

A meeting with the title of “Branding is Power” was organized in cooperation with the biggest media group of Turkey, Dogan Yayin Holding. Important journalists, the president of the Turkish Association of Advertising Agencies and holding company representatives participated in the meeting which was organized within the framework of European seminars in Anatolia.

Promotional activities

The purpose of promotional activities was to communicate the project and the content of the project to the relevant persons and institutions in a continuous, consistent, timely and accurate way.

Newspaper and Magazine Advertisements-

With the funds accumulated in the Trademark City Pool, advertisements explaining the project and serving the purpose of the project were placed in regional and local newspapers and magazines.

Special-themed Journals-

For promoting the project and supporting the achievement of the project objectives, special supplements were prepared under the title of “Trademark City Gaziantep” with the highest circulation newspapers in Turkey, namely, the *Milliyet* newspaper, the *Hurriyet* newspaper and the *Aksam* newspaper.

Press Releases-

In order to raise awareness about branding among the companies of Gaziantep and to provide information to the investors during the project, news releases were regularly sent to the national and local media outlets.

Media Gatherings-

Special meetings were organized with the media personnel who were invited to Gaziantep. They were provided with information about the project and the supporting promotion of the project.

TV Programs-

Special programs were broadcasted on national television channels to promote the project to the national audience and to achieve the objectives set out in the project.

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Lobbying

The purpose of lobbying was to establish positive relations with the public, private sector and non-governmental organizations and the media in order to achieve the objectives set out in the project.

Memberships to Non-Governmental Organizations-

In order to achieve project objectives, it was ensured that GCI members would undertake duties in local and national non-governmental organizations.

Establishment of City Council-

GCI took a leading role in the establishment of City Council to protect the interests of the city within and outside the country and to facilitate the achievement of project objectives.

Visits to the Capital-

For the elimination of barriers for the development of the city Gaziantep, periodical visits were arranged to create pressure on the political parties and the government.

Research Reports-

Detailed research reports were prepared on the problems of Gaziantep's economy and were sent to relevant institutions.

Media Relations-

In order for the project objectives to be met and for the protection of the interests of the city, establishing good media relations was of great importance. Media visits were made and activities were organized in the city to ensure public opinion support via the media.

Results

The evaluative research in the project reveals that several output and outcome measures were achieved:

Increase in the number of trademark registrations

With this project, an increase was achieved in trademark registry transactions in Gaziantep. When the project was launched in 2003, the number of registries was almost four times more than the previous year. In 2004, an increase of 50 percent was attained compared to the previous year.

Increase in branding investments in Gaziantep

Significant achievements have been realized in the process of increasing trademark investments and trademark numbers. Since the beginning of the project in 2003, 18 Gaziantep companies have carried out national advertisement activities. Before

the project, the total annual advertisement expenditures of Gaziantep companies were less than \$5 million.

Increase in new investments

During the project, the advantages of making investments in Gaziantep were brought to the agenda and entrepreneurs were led to investing. In 2003 and 2004, the investment increase rate was 40 percent on a numerical basis, an increase of 110 percent in terms of the number of new investments. The total amount of investments made within the period of two and a half years reached \$2 billion.

Increase in exports

Having \$600 million of exports annually before the project, Gaziantep reached \$1.2 billion at the end of the first year of the project and \$1.8 billion exports in 2004.

Increase in employment

The investments that started with the project also increased the need for a human workforce in the city. When significant unemployment was being experienced throughout the country, in Gaziantep, almost 30,000 additional employment opportunities were created. The number employed in industrial jobs before the project was 94,000. The number reached to 102,000 in 2003 and 120,000 in 2004.

Media coverage and reach

Promotional activities carried out during the project resulted in media coverage in 41 national and 126 local/regional newspapers in a total area of 13.051 square columns. The project has reached a total of 7,819,717 people. A total of 1 hour and 22 minutes of television news and 95 minutes of special programming have been broadcasted in 10 nationwide television channels over the two years.

Feedback to branding project

A total of 41 leading public officials and businessmen in the city have joined the project email group in order to develop new ideas on branding and to ensure information sharing. A total of 344 messages on branding have been sent to the group within two and a half years.

Italian industry zone

As part of the activities carried out in line with the project objective of attracting foreign investors to Gaziantep, the contacts with the Italian Ministry of Industry brought positive results. Led by the Italian Minister of Industry, Adolfo Urso, 100 Italian businessmen came to Gaziantep for observations. Following the visit of the Gaziantep delegation to Italy, it was agreed that an industrial zone in Gaziantep would be established and cooperation for the know-how in the Gaziantep Techno city would be made.

Location determination for the border trade center

An agreement was signed with the Syrian government for the establishment of a border trade center between Syria and Gaziantep.

Opening of Syrian consulate in Gaziantep

In order to improve commercial relations between Gaziantep and Aleppo, the Syrian government opened an Aleppo consulate in Gaziantep.

Provision of natural gas to Gaziantep

In order to make investments in Gaziantep more attractive, natural gas, which was originally planned to be brought to the city in the year 2008, was launched in the year 2004 through the initiatives undertaken by GCI.

Fifth organized industry zone

In order to increase the investment areas in Gaziantep, in addition to the existing four industry zones, an area for the fifth organized industry zone was determined and allocation operations were started.

Technology center and techno city establishment

In order to develop university-industry cooperation and to provide consultancy to investors on branding, research and development, the technology development center was established within Gaziantep University, in cooperation with GCI. Furthermore, a protocol was signed among the relevant institutions for the establishment of a Techno City.

Increase in the number of GCI members and GCI revenues

Due to increasing investments with the project and the positive changes in the point of view of non-member companies to GCI, significant increases were attained in the membership. When the project was launched, the number of members was 1,500 and this number has grown to 2,000 over two and a half years. Together with an increasing number of members, GCI's revenues also increased and budget revenues that were realized as \$400,000 at the end of 2002 rose to \$1.8 million at the end of 2004.

Increase in funds received from the EU

The investment, research, development and technology needs that began with the branding process increased the interest of companies on EU funds. Since 2003, five separate EU funded projects were carried out in Gaziantep, two of them being GCI projects.

Vocational educational opportunities increased

The growing need for qualified personnel from companies who are more conscious about branding gave rise to new investments. Through cooperation with public institutions and using international funds, educational institutions providing vocational education in different subjects at the secondary and higher education levels were opened.

Gaziantep logo utilization protocol

A protocol was signed with 86 companies that wished to use on their products and packaging the Trademark City Gaziantep logo registered by the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry.

Awards

The impressive results achieved by GCI with the ‘Trademark City Gaziantep Project’ gained GCI one of the most prestigious awards in Turkey. The Turkish Public Relations Association (TUHID) awarded GCI the ‘Grand Award’ in the ‘Golden Compass Public Relations Awards’ in 2005. Also the ‘Trademark City Gaziantep Project’ won first place in the World Chambers Competition in South Africa. It placed first in the ‘Best Unconventional Project’ category of 2005 World Chambers Competition, organized by the World Chamber Federation and the International Chamber of Commerce.

GCI-USA Information Office has been opened

A GCI-USA Information Office has been established under the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry in order to carry out informational activities and to provide consultancy in the commercial, social, cultural and tourism relations of the industrialists of Gaziantep with the USA.

Trade Investment Center for Turkey office is being established

The Trade Investment Center (TIC) office whose headquarters is in Rotterdam decided to open an office in Gaziantep.

Italian Investment Desk

The Italian Investment Desk has been established under the body of GCI to provide support to Italian businessmen considering investing in Gaziantep and vice versa.

Interest of foreigners to Gaziantep increased

Since the start of the project, significant progress has been achieved in relations with Italy, Netherlands, Germany, Syria and Iraq. These countries became priority trade partners for Gaziantep.

Other: Emotional gain and motivation created in the city

‘The Trademark City Gaziantep Project’ has provided prestige to the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry at the local, regional and national level. The social responsibility aspect of the project increased the expectations from GCI to the highest level and provided GCI with active involvement in decision-making processes. Other emotional gains of the project were trust of the citizens and belief of member companies that GCI will accomplish its duties and have a role in positive changes. Motivated industrialists/businessmen shortened their decision-making processes in trademark and other business investments.

Budget

The budget allocated by GCI for two years for the ‘Trademark City Gaziantep Project’ was \$100,000. In addition to this support, the ‘Trademark City Gaziantep Project’ was supported by the contributions of 86 companies. As discussed previously, a common advertisement pool was created under the name of ‘trademark city pool’ for the financing of the project. The cost of participation in the pool was determined as \$1,000 per company or per trademark. With the participation of 86 companies, an additional resource of \$86,000 was gathered.

Conclusions and Discussion

‘The Trademark City Gaziantep Project’ in terms of content and execution possesses characteristics that can be implemented by any country, any city and any chamber of commerce/business. The concept of branding is of importance not only for Gaziantep or Turkey, but also for all developing countries. Therefore, it is possible to say that this project may be implemented in many different countries in the world by their chambers of industry. There have been other city branding projects in the world carried out, but this project is unique in the sense that the branding process included not only Gaziantep, but also all companies within the city as well, and increased the overall motivation in the city.

Trademark City Gaziantep was an integrated project. It affected many different layers of the community in terms of its implementation and its results, and reached a very wide stakeholder group with this aspect. The project also has a long-term vision. The activities in the project support one another in an integrated fashion.

It also had a positive influence on future projects of the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry. At the end of the project, the personnel of the chamber of industry started working in a wide range of subjects and used their accumulated knowledge and experience in many areas.

‘The Trademark City Gaziantep Project’ was the successful implementation of a vision which was successfully communicated and supported. The strategy that guided the project stemmed from focusing on the existing situation and the unique characteristics of the culture. The concept of a trademark city is the “expansion” of a city that did not want to stay in its boundaries.

TEACHING NOTE

Synopsis: The case story tells the branding efforts of a city, Gaziantep located in South East Anatolia of Turkey, initiated by its chamber of industry. The case is a proactive one which was planned and executed by taking into consideration first the economic environment of Turkey and the city and then the international economic environment of today. The goal of the Chamber of Industry was to make the city ‘a

trademark rich city' in the near future. Gaziantep, a very important city with a historical, cultural, economic and commercial infrastructure, had to be positioned as an alternative to Marmara or Mediterranean Regions by creating a positive investment climate in the city. As indicated in the research, there are striking differences in regions in terms of economic development; Gaziantep, a city with potential, needed to show that it could compete as well with other regions. The many positive outcomes of the case demonstrate that it was a successful case which used multiple communication outlets in a timely and long-term fashion.

Case usage and objectives:

- To demonstrate to students how careful strategic planning of communication activities has a positive impact on business objectives;
- To sensitize students to the issues and dynamics of different cultures and environments and to enable them to find similarities with their own;
- To engage students in strategy-building in response to a proactive situation and make them familiar with various communication methods.

Teaching method and alternative assignments

Prior to the analysis of this case in class, the students should be given a reading list on integrated marketing communications, branding, and country and city branding topics. The students will discuss those in class and the teacher will be the facilitator of this discussion. The class could be divided into two groups. One group could focus on theoretical aspects of branding and city branding, and the other half of the class could provide case studies of city and country branding.

Because the case is an international case, the students would also be required to learn about the country of Turkey in general. The students should also study the U.S. Chamber of Commerce through its web site or other online sources; the chambers of commerce of all students' countries' can be studied as well.

The teacher will start a discussion of the case with the problem statement and research done about the problem. Then students in groups could identify and present the goals and objectives, target audiences, action steps and results of the case.

The overall case discussion could take six class hours. The students would be expected to answer the following case questions:

Case questions

1. Where is Gaziantep located? What is its history?
2. Do you know any examples of country branding and city branding efforts in the USA or elsewhere?
3. Was the research carried out by the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry satisfactory? Summarize the research done and indicate what additional research methods you would use if you had been the planner of the campaign.

4. Can city branding programs stem from reactive needs? Discuss and give examples.
5. Comment on the business objectives and communication objectives of the case. What is the difference between them and is there a way you could group the objectives?
6. Recall the tactics of the case. Prepare a two-year time-table for the different tactics used in the campaign.
7. Is there a difference between stakeholders and target audiences? Comment on influencers of the case as well.
8. Write a letter to the members of the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry from the Chamber's President to promote the project.
9. What kind of effective communication principles are used in this case study?
10. What fund-generating activities could Gaziantep Chamber of Industry have used?
11. Are the evaluation methods used in the case satisfactory? Differentiate between output and outcome measures. If you had been writing the case yourself, how would you present the evaluation?

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**Ericek Village Development Project:
A Joint Venture of Metro Group, Metro Cash & Carry and the
Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion
for Reforestation and Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA)**

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Executive Summary

Ericcek Village Rural Development Project for the Prevention of Erosion has been carried out for a period of three years beginning in 2003 with the cooperation of METRO Group, METRO Cash & Carry and The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats Association (TEMA). It is a good example of economic development projects conducted in poor regions.

METRO Group, which has adopted social responsibility as an institutional policy, helped revive the economic life of Ericcek, one of Turkey's mountain villages in Bursa Province, where the destructive effect of erosion has caused social and economic stagnation.

As a result of the activities in the village within the scope of project, the average annual income per capita increased from \$400 USD in 2003 to \$700 USD, hopefully stopping migration from the village. In addition to reclaiming wide areas suitable for agriculture by building terraces, the severe irrigation problem of the village will be solved with the construction of the irrigation pool. The quality and yield of products increased as a result of all these efforts and METRO Cash & Carry stores provided a market for the village's improved products.

Problem Statement

There are huge differences in the levels of local development in Turkey, which has 81 provinces, 850 districts and more than 35,000 villages. Economic development is concentrated in certain regions of the country. Although Turkey has a superior level of agricultural production, not all regions enjoy this advantage due to lack of coordination.

The social and economic life in the village of Ericcek had stagnated due to the destructive effect of erosion. Agriculture was being carried out under very difficult conditions on the Ericcek soils because fertile top layer of had been washed away by erosion. Animal husbandry and agriculture had nearly come to a halt in the village as well.

Background of the Problem/Research Done

A METRO Cash & Carry store had opened near Ericcek village in 1993. METRO Group is an international retailing company that has operated in Turkey since 1990. According to its communications office in Turkey, METRO has 290,000 employees from 150 nations working in 2,400 outlets in 31 countries in Europe, Africa and Asia. In Turkey METRO operates METRO Cash & Carry, self-service wholesale stores; Real, self service supermarkets; and Media Markt, consumer electronics retailers.

METRO Group is sensitive to social and economic problems in the communities in which it operates and supports work on environmental projects as a significant part of the company's social responsibility efforts.

The TEMA Foundation was founded on 11 September 1992 by two Turkish businessmen. Its primary goal is to raise public awareness about the dangers of desertification resulting from widespread soil erosion. Its work involves informing and lobbying governments, national representatives, political parties, educational institutions, official and private organizations, and the media. The Foundation operates with 13 different departments. It has volunteers to support its projects and accepts donations to fund activities.

METRO Group and METRO Cash & Carry jointly decided to support the rural development project started by TEMA in 2003. Of the seven provinces in the TEMA project, Ericek village, belonging to Buyukorhan district of the Bursa province, was chosen by METRO because of its proximity to its store. A closer working relationship could be achieved with Ericek village in this way and also activities that would be carried out could be easily monitored. The know-how made up through the global experiences of METRO Group was provided to the people of Ericek village, who had serious deficiencies in critical matters such as training, production and marketing. The project carried out in this one village, would set a model for the rest of Turkey.

The main source of income of the Ericek village is agriculture. The citizens of the village grow aniseed, barley, wheat, almonds, strawberries, walnuts and grapes and also engage in animal husbandry.

Some facts and figure about the village are as follows

1. Population: 510
2. Number of Houses: 80
3. Altitude: 700 m
4. Distance from the Province and District center: 100-17 km
5. Dry agriculture areas: 2955 decares
6. Irrigable agriculture areas: 500 decares
7. Forest Areas: 6525 decares
8. Range areas: None
9. Number of cattle: 200
10. Number of sheep: 350
11. Schools: 1

Goals and Objectives

Target groups

- The inhabitants of Ericek village

Stakeholders

- Bursa Province Agricultural Directorate
- Bursa Province National Education Directorate
- Politicians
- Non-governmental Organizations
- National and International Media
- METRO Group sales divisions and customers
- TEMA Foundation and its employees
- General consumers
- The employees of METRO Group and METRO C&C
- Local authorities
- Neighboring villages

Desired outcomes

- To ensure effective combating of erosion,
- To protect the natural resources,
- To develop modern agriculture and orcharding in the region,
- To develop animal husbandry in the region and cultivate the growing of pasture plants,
- To organize training courses in agriculture, animal husbandry and other complimentary subjects to cultivate knowledge,
- To sell fruits and vegetables produced in Ericek Village at METRO C&C stores,
- To contribute to the social and economical betterment of the rural population,
- To underline the importance placed by the METRO Group and METRO C&C brands on social responsibility projects,
- To increase the welfare of the population,
- To prevent migration from villages to big cities,
- To ensure that the 3,000 employees working in the METRO Group in Turkey feel proud about their company and the brand.
- To increase the project awareness in the community by 35 percent.

Public relations messages are formulated to also include the following objectives

- Increase the awareness of the METRO Group brand and the number of people who believe that METRO Group is a responsible company that displays a strong sensitivity to socio-economic issues,
- Strengthen the relations with the potential target groups in Bursa,
- Increase the awareness of the project and its targets significantly with the aim of attracting attention to the environmental consciousness of METRO Group,
- Establish METRO as one of the top international companies instituting economic revitalization.

Tactics and Techniques

Tactics and techniques used in the project included internal communications, media relations, lobbying, special events, training, advertising, and other promotional materials.

Agriculture and water operations

TEMA Foundation accomplished the treatment of sub-layer soil in 240 acres of land, and built 5.5 kilometers long terraces and a two kilometers long field road. Working intensely to enlarge the irrigated agricultural areas as well, the TEMA Foundation drilled 400 meters long drainage canals in two regions. Additionally, an irrigation pool was constructed so that irrigation of the sown fields could be accomplished. After soil improvement, the TEMA Foundation planted 5,603 fruit saplings on a plot of 272 acres in the village of Ericek. The appearance of a total 470 decares of earth was altered.

At the drainage canals, two concrete screens were built to ensure impermeability. An irrigation pond was built so sowed land would be irrigable. New sources for finding water were explored to solve the difficulties of accessing water in the mountain village.

METRO Group also helped solve the irrigation problem in the village. Officials of METRO Group visited government leaders regarding the issue. The construction of the irrigation pool in the village of Ericek was added to the 2007 budget. This development was quite significant in terms of continuity of the project. The preliminary studies for the building of Ericek Pond were completed.

Animal husbandry

To ensure Ericek village develops not only in terms of agriculture, but also in stock farming, 20 Holstein stock cattle were purchased and distributed to 20 families. An additional six tons of pasture seed was planted in the soil improvement areas to provide animal feed.

Trainings

Taking the initiative for helping the people of Ericek to engage in the production of high quality products in European standards, METRO Group has trained the villagers on issues such as product varieties; new, modern production techniques; and production awareness. Intensive training courses were held on topics such as cultivation of pasture plants, beekeeping, development of barn husbandry and orcharding with the technical staff of the project and Bursa Province Agriculture Directorate. The courses spanned a total of 90 hours and 53 of the village citizens were given certificates upon completion of these courses. Also, project heads gave courses on one-to-one basis to villagers on those subjects. Courses held in collaboration with the Bursa Province National Education Directorate had the objective of developing handicrafts and carpet weaving skills of women.

Internal communication and the web

E-bulletins and memos were sent to METRO Group employees announcing projects and keeping them regularly informed about the progress of the project.

A comprehensive web site was created publicizing the project and ensuring its reach to a wider audience at: www.metroericek.info/.

Media relations

Relations with the national and local media were established to promote the project. Press conferences were organized. Media tours were arranged for visits to Ericek Village. Press releases were sent out regularly. Special news in the print media and special interviews in the visual media with METRO Group representative for Turkey were done. The web has covered the project as well.

In 2007 New Year gift packages were sent to media people to publicize the Ericek Village Development Project. The gift packages were comprised of the first produce of the year including walnuts and almonds produced in Ericek Village as well as brochures promoting Ericek Village.

Special events and activities

At the METRO Gastro Convention 2007 organized by METRO Cash & Carry, a stand was set up for Ericek Village. Almonds produced at Ericek Village were offered to the visitors of the fair and information on the project was provided.

At all METRO Cash & Carry stores in Turkey, posters containing information on the project were hung and small brochures were handed out. Also posters were displayed in Bursa at Real Hypermarkets that belong to the METRO Group companies.

The proceeds from linen bags sold at METRO Cash & Carry wholesale stores were transferred through TEMA Foundation to the projects carried out at Ericek village. This not only helped raised funds, but also increased public awareness.

Lobbying

With the objective of finding a solution to Ericek Village's ongoing irrigation problem, a visit was paid to Justice and Development Party Group Vice President Faruk Celik and Justice and Development Party Parliament Member for Bursa Altan Karapasaoglu. As a result of the meeting, it was stated that the irrigation pond would be included in the 2007 budget. At the press conference held in Bursa on 3 February 2007, a formal announcement was made to the public that the construction of the pond would be commenced.

Budget

Total investment made for the project is 110.185 USD. The details of the budget in USD are as follows:

	Project Budget	Village Contribution	Governorship Contribution
Building of sloping terraces	27.604	1.785	
Procuring water for irrigation	15.480	1.608	
Procuring and planting fruit saplings	12.384	2.857	9.245
Procuring and planting of pasture plants	12.699	2.185	
Animal husbandry	26.786	8.929	
Trainings	858		
Other	14.374		

Governorship contribution is local funding.

Results

Public relations

The public relations success of the project is evaluated in terms of two criteria. One criterion is the evaluation of the total national and local media coverage about the project. The second one is awareness about the project. For that, 'Project Awareness Research' has been carried out in Bursa district. Since the beginning of the project in 2003, METRO Group created and carried out public relations events and tried to publicize the developments about the project.

Media coverage as a result of press conference, media tours to Ericcek village, press releases sent during the project, exclusive interviews and other resulted in 112 clippings.

According to the results of the awareness research conducted in Bursa district, 76 percent of the people interviewed are aware of this project.

The project also affected positively the reputation of the METRO Group and they can be summarized as follows:

- Letters of congratulations from bureaucrats and ministries came in support of the project,
- Congratulation messages appeared in the visual and print media coverage,
- METRO Group has been perceived among pioneering corporations in corporate social responsibility projects,
- Ericcek village and its residents enjoyed both pleasure and honor from this project carried out with TEMA Foundation,

- Ericcek villagers showed their gratitude to the project team members and expressed how it changed their lives positively. For example, a group of villagers attended the Turkish Public Relations Golden Compass Awards ceremony and they have articulated what the project meant to them in front of the audience.

The project received the ‘Grand Award’ of the Turkish Public Relations Association’s (TUHID) ‘6th Golden Compass Public Relations Awards’ in 2007, competing among 116 entries.

Environmental and educational results

As a result of the “Ericcek Village Rural Development Project for the Prevention of Erosion,” large areas were made available to agriculture.

With the procurement of irrigation water, income producing activities began in strawberry, potato, pasture plant planting and orcharding.

Because of the work done to develop animal husbandry, the need for quality rough fodder was satisfied from within the village. Pasture plants like vetch and trefoil seed were produced and brought to the limelight as products bringing commercial gain. From 6 tons of pasture plants sowed on 470 decares of land in year 2004, 176 tons of rough fodder and 1.65 tons of vetch seed were obtained in 2005. From 570 decares of land which was sowed in the fall of 2005, 220 tons of rough fodder and 1.60 tons of vetch seed were obtained on the harvest season of 2005.

In addition to one-to-one-education, 90-hour group education courses were offered by the Bursa Province Agriculture Directorate and Buyukorhan Community Education Center. Nine farmers attended the beekeeping course, 19 farmers attended the orcharding course, and 25 farmers attended the animal husbandry and pasture plant course and received certificates.

Conclusion and Discussion

The Ericcek Village Rural Development Project aims at sustainable economic development. All operations carried out within the scope of the project are evaluated long term. With the beginning of wet agriculture practices in Ericcek village, controlled agricultural organization will be started. Within the framework of controlled agriculture practices, the producers of the village will be given education which will enable them to carry out production at European standards. After the education, initiative will be taken to have the farmers receive Eurepgap Certificates. Producers having Eurepgap certificates will have opportunities to export agricultural products to European countries.

Also plans are made to market the fruits and vegetables produced in Ericcek village at METRO Cash & Carry stores. The groundbreaking ceremony for the irrigation pond will take place in the near future.

TEACHING NOTES

Case objectives

- To gain understanding how international corporations operate in local markets and manage their communication;
- To introduce students to the concept of corporate social responsibility and sustainable development;
- To motivate students to think beyond their cultural boundaries.

Teaching method and alternative assignments

Reading-

The students can be given additional readings package on topics such as of lobbying, corporate social responsibility, international and intercultural public relations, and non profit organizations and/or review their previous material on this topic

Discussion/Debate-

The class will be divided into two groups where the topic ‘social responsibility is a public relations tool,’ will be discussed, both pro and con.

Rewriting of the Case-

The students will analyze the Metro Group (http://www.metro-group.com.tr/servlet/PB/menu/1000080_12_ePRJ-METRODE-MAINPAGE/index.html) and TEMA (http://www.metro-group.com.tr/servlet/PB/menu/1000080_12_ePRJ-METRODE-MAINPAGE/index.html) web sites to gain a thorough understanding of them. Also the web site of TEMA Foundation will be studied to gain familiarity with a local NGO related to the environment and to learn the scope of its work and projects.

The students will do a presentation of 20 minutes in class. If the class size is big, then groups of five maximum will work on the case and present as a group. On the basis of problem statement explained in the case, the students will write:

1. A RESEARCH section detailing what primary and secondary research methods can be used to go more deeply into the problem.
2. GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES (informational, attitude, behavior etc...).
3. STRATEGIC TACTICS/TECHNIQUES packaged with respect to either objectives or target audiences.
4. EVALUATION: If the case had been implemented by them, how would they evaluate their success?

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Case questions for classroom discussion and/or student presentations:

1. Detail the problems of Ericek village. Are there similar problems in your country? If so, would the methods used in this case be effective?
2. Discuss why corporations carry out social responsibility projects and try to promote it to the public as well? Do you think this is appropriate? Explain your answer.
3. Are the tactics used in media relations acceptable? Do you think that gift packages such as the New Year's ones with products of Ericek village should be sent to media? What additional tactics would you recommend?
4. Imagine you are the newly appointed Public Relations Director of METRO Group. If environment is one of your responsibility areas, what would be the other projects you would think of to carry in the near future?
5. How could this social responsibility campaign be related to employees of METRO Group? Think of volunteerism and integrate how the employees could take part in the project.
6. What are the aspects of sustainability in this project?
7. Write a news release for the METRO Gastro Convention 2007 explained in the case.
8. Discuss the effects of social responsibility on reputation.
9. Discuss how public relations messages may vary when the subject matter contains highly specialized and/or scientific information such as the physical projects undertaken in this case.
10. Should public relations messages be altered to reach target audiences that may have disparate levels of literacy and/or specialized knowledge? If so, how can this be done?

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Retrieved, March 31 2008



Ericek Village, 2002 (Before)



Ericek Village, November 2006 (After)



Agricultural and Water Operations



Agriculture and Animal Husbandry



Trainings



Web



Press Conference



Media Tour to Ericcek Village



Brochure



Gift to Media People from Ericcek Products



METRO Gastro Convention 2007



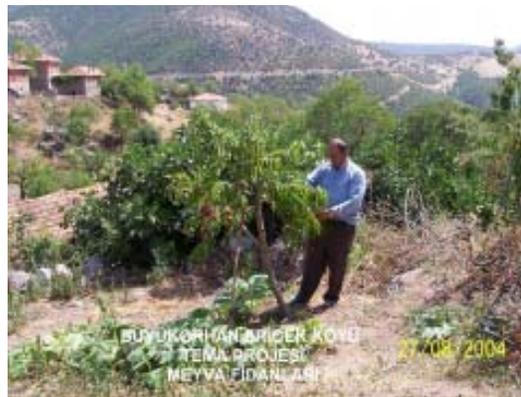
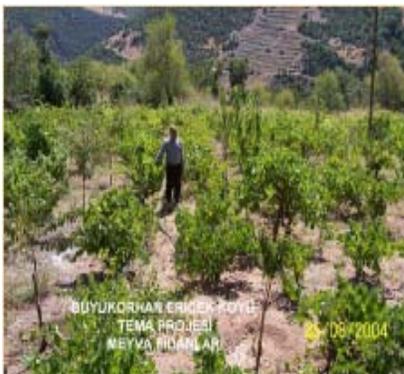
Lobby Activities



119 bin dolara köyü canlandırdık şimdi su için Ankara'ya gideceğiz



Media Coverage

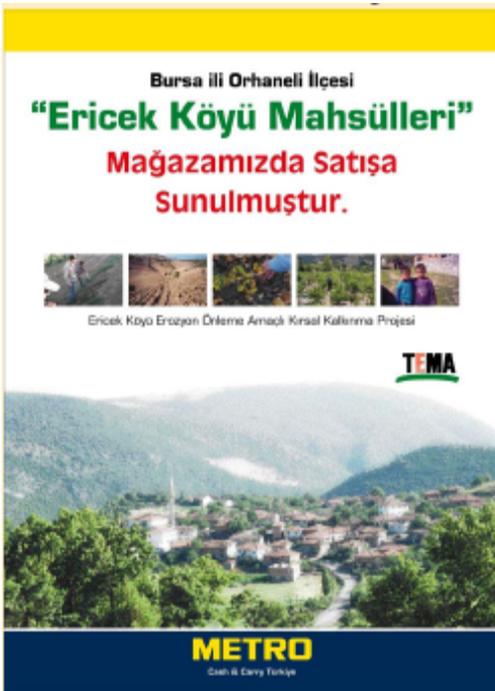




Award Ceremony of Golden Compass
Public Relations Awards



Billboards
at Bursa



Poster about Product Sale

**The Role of Strategic Public Relations
in an Organization's Change Process:
A Case Study of Estonian Energy Company**

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Executive Summary

This case study analyzes how strategically planned public relations changed an organization's image and helped that organization develop better relationships in a new type of society. An important question raised is how journalists, as social opinion leaders, will change their attitude and how this change influences future steps of an organization.

Problem Statement

The Estonian Energy (EE) Company was quite stable at the beginning of the transition process and during the changes in Estonian society in the early 1990s. EE continued in a Soviet style of organization and remained a totally closed and autocratic organization at the same time society was opening up. Changes in Estonian Energy didn't start until 1998 when the company's owner, the Estonian state, 'woke up' and discovered this Soviet style organization was not compatible with a new society re-oriented to democratic values and following market economy principles.

The situation within EE was bad – Soviet style values and norms were rooted deeply in peoples' minds and their first reactions to changes were painful. The image of the organization in society was very poor. This reaction was justified, considering that the organization had no sense of social responsibility, and this was reflected in its actions.

In 1998, EE came under new management and conflict arose with workers' union leaders because changes started by the new management team were not acceptable or understandable to the union leaders or the Russian-speaking workers in general.

The problems were particularly acute in Narva in the northeast part of Estonia where 99.9 percent of workers were Russians. This area was generally considered to be culturally, ethnographically and socially distinct from the rest of Estonia. There, the workers accepted the union approach and maintained a distance from the real situation in Estonia. This meant that in EE, Estonian-style (language) managers (both, old and new management) were not accepted and were not as popular as the Russian-speaking workers' union leaders.

The union's argument in this conflict was that workers in the energy sector in Estonia should retain the same privileges enjoyed in communist times and company leaders must preserve a Soviet-style corporate culture and working environment as in the 'old days'. Many workers in Narva power plants still have the illusion that they bring 'culture and light' to Estonia (Tampere 2003). This is the biggest source of conflict between Estonians and Russians today. Estonians are very proud of their long, ethnic, traditional culture and people coming to Estonia for communist ideological reason were 'aliens' who couldn't or wouldn't understand the local context. The biggest push from the workers' union side was resistance to market economy principles. For a long time EE's old management led the organization independently, with some influences from the new changing society, but still in secrecy and a closed style.

Background

Estonian Energy Company history (Pre-1998)

Estonian Energy is a state-owned company with long communist past engaged today in the production, sale and transmission of electric and thermal power. The main raw material for energy production – oil shale – is extracted from mines owned by the company. Estonian Energy is also involved in the construction and maintenance of energy systems.

EE started the transformation process in 1998, approximately 10 years after Estonia regained its independence. Due to the total changes occurring in Estonian society at the beginning of the 90s, EE remained like a small state inside the Estonian state. The company was big, its strategic and electrical lines were still physically connected to and dependent on Russia, and the Estonian government was too young and weak to control all the sub-systems in society. EE was a psychologically closed and secret system (Tampere 2003) and EE was a company of historically strategic importance for the totalitarian regime: one of the priorities of the Soviet Union from Lenin's time was electrification of the whole Soviet Union, which was to enhance the well-being of a communist society. Lenin's idea of electrification throughout the Soviet Union was an ideological pillar of communist society and represented Soviet society's development level and concept of comfort (Lenin 1970a: 380). Therefore communist society favoured all energy companies. They were given more privileges and employees received higher salaries and other benefits. At the same time, control over these companies was stricter, and the whole organization had to propagate the ideology of the Communist Party. EE was loyal to the regime and promoted a totalitarian asymmetrical world-view (Tampere 2003) within the company. Most of the specialists and leaders were under the control of the KGB, and everything was kept totally secret inside the company (Tampere 2003). EE was also corrupt: company leaders received gifts from their workers, leaders' family members had good positions in the company structure and informal relationships dominated. The most important factors in getting a good job or promotion was not professionalism but relationships with leaders or support at the state level, such as a relative with a good position in the Communist Party structure (Tampere 2003). As was typical for a communist regime, these informal relationships were more important and powerful than formal relationships.

The author has analyzed the Estonian Energy stakeholder system with the help of a Freeman (1984) map. Two different stakeholder systems are presented. Figure 1 shows the Soviet style past before 1998 and, Figure 2 illustrates changes after 1998. Bold dotted lines present rational existing relations which are not strategically managed and the stakeholder group is not important or primary for organization; thin dotted lines present possible communication risks and intangible relations; solid lines show relations that are strategically important for the organization and are valuable in top managers opinion; no line – no communication and no relations.

During the first stakeholder system (from communist era to 1998) in EE (Figure

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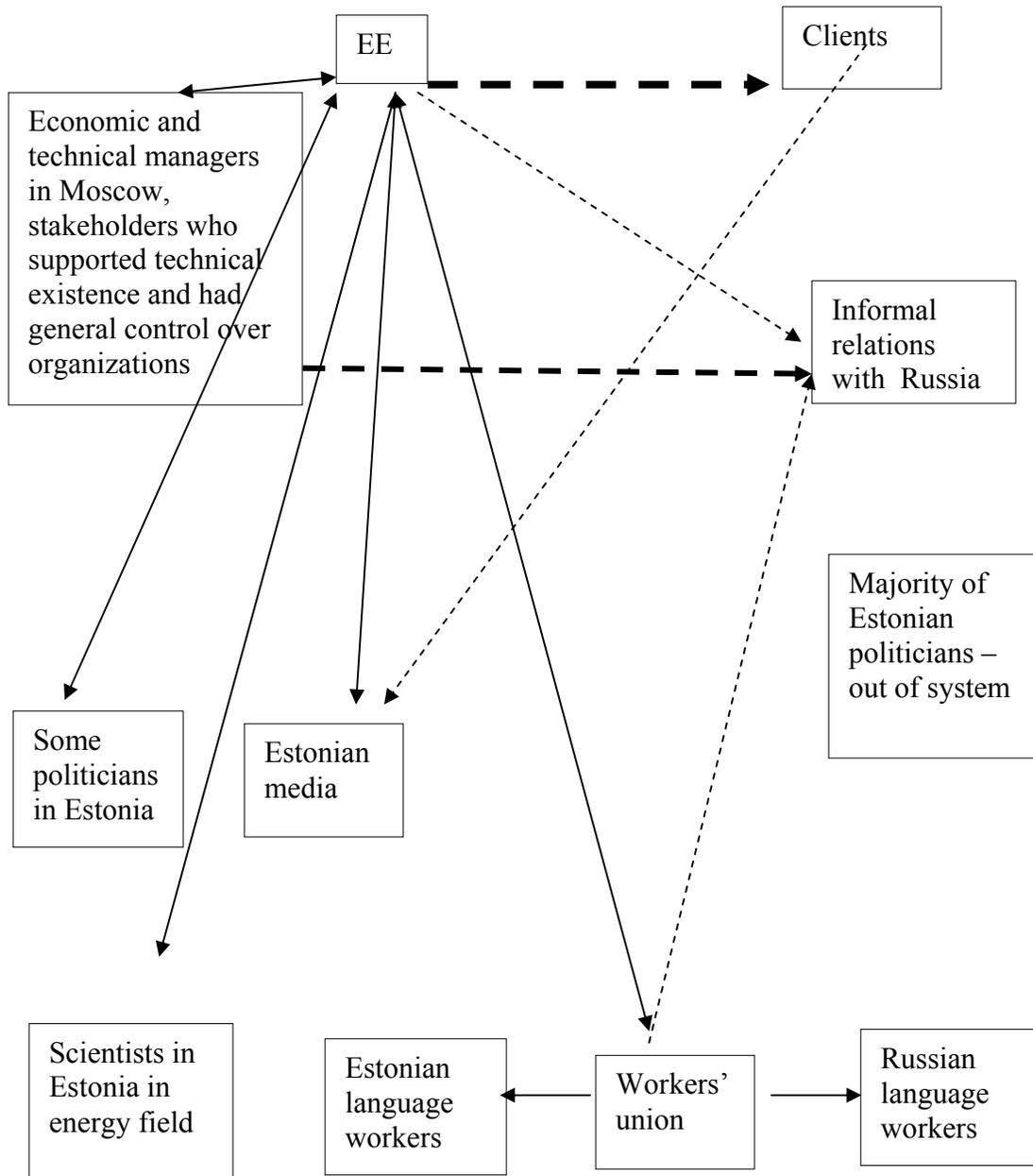
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1), we can see that EE had unofficial connections with Moscow. Relationships with clients were quite active and relationships with the Estonian media were quite active, too. EE essentially played a passive observer role, and attended only to its job in the energy field.

Figure1: Estonian Energy Company stakeholder system before year 1998



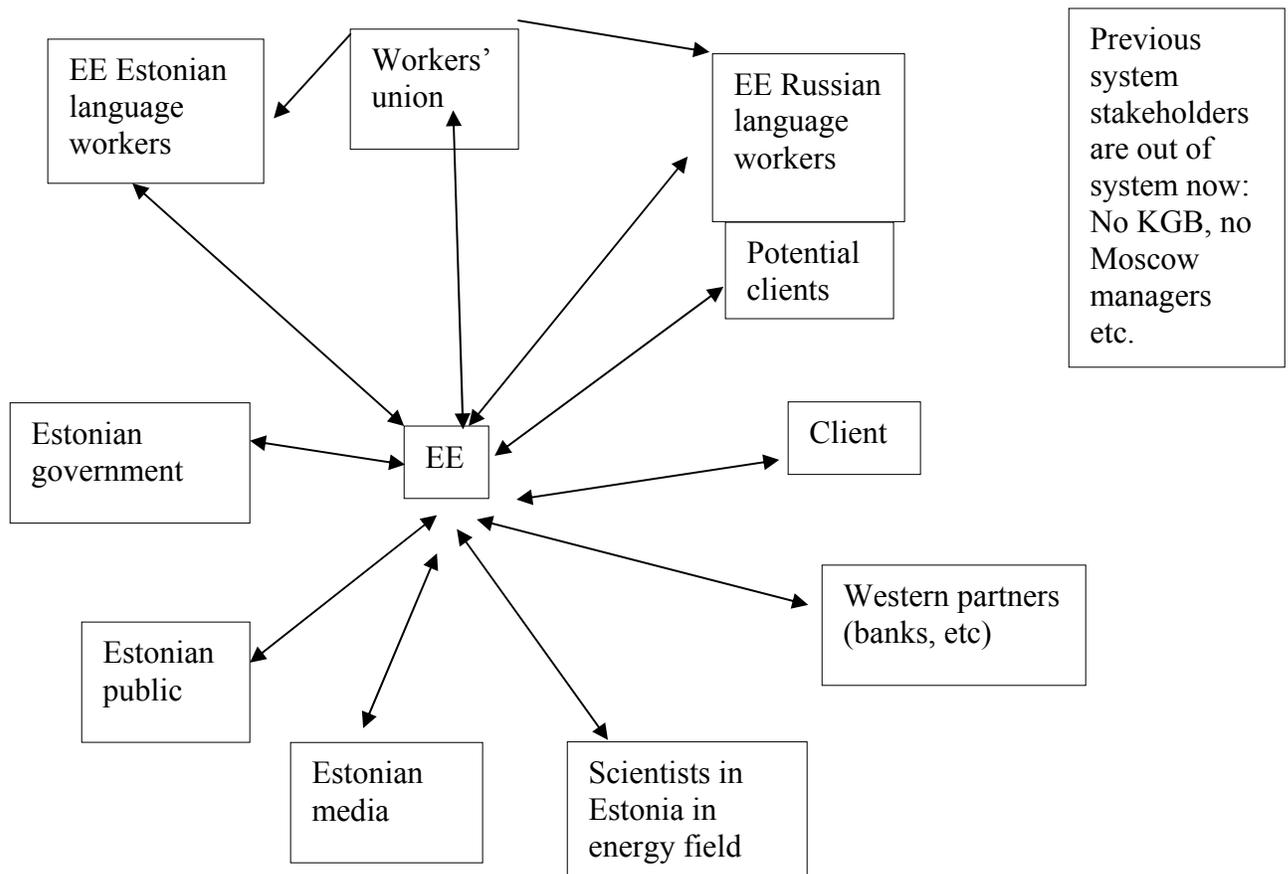
After the re-independence of Estonia at the beginning of the 1990s, Moscow officially lost direct control over EE. However, Russia continued spreading propaganda and tried to influence processes in Estonia indirectly via the workers' unions. Workers' unions were politically controlled organizations and were used as propaganda instruments. Lenin said: "workers' unions are educational organizations, like schools for studying communist ideology" (Lenin 1970b: 2). In the 'new' political situation in Estonia after re-independence, the workers' unions in EE had a monopoly on information and directed unofficial opposition inside the organization. This was possible because in Narva the unions played a dominant role in disseminating information. Their ability to assume this role was made easy by the fact that the official communication function in the EE organization did not work. In Estonian society in general, the Russian-speaking population had access to more information sources. However, Russian-language media interpreted processes in their own way, so in the Russian-language public sphere there was a lot of speculation and inadequate information or misinformation. Workers' union spokespersons in EE manipulated information and constructed their own picture of the situation in Estonia in general and about decisions and leadership in the Estonian Energy Company in particular. This was mixed communist-style propaganda with elements of a communist world-view in democratic forms: propaganda, manipulation, information management, and communication management.

One of the reasons the Estonian government decided to change the management of EE and arranged a powerful management shift in 1998 was, in the author's opinion, because EE management had preserved its closed system. The management change was really a 'last minute' move to take this strategically important company under Estonian government control.

With changes in the organization in 1998, EE changed its stakeholder system totally (Figure 2). The declaration regarding clients is important to mention, because here we can find the 'deep language' syndrome. EE's rhetoric at the time of the introduction of new management in 1998 stated that the "client is the most important stakeholder," and "our goals are good client service," etc. In reality, everything was still in the old style practiced historically in Soviet companies, no client information, no client service system, difficulties with billing, lots of bureaucracy, etc. These conditions are interesting because they had continued late into the first transition period and when the organization had already become a stock company, had accepted market economy principles, and had new management and, supposedly, a new ideology. The management team's rhetoric was new but its practices remained old, and caused problems in the general change process.

An active relationship with Estonian politicians was also established during the 1998 change process. Lobby work and personal influence were key ingredients employed by the new management group.

Figure 2: EE Stakeholders After 1998 Management Change



The changes in Estonian Energy (Post-1998)

Changes in EE started in February 1998. The first step was naturally to change leaders. When the new management team started, one of its ideas was to include a public relations and communication manager in the management team. During the old management period, EE had a press officer and editors of a monthly magazine, but there were no strategic or tactical plans. The press officer worked on a case-by-case basis, mostly reactively. His position was not strategic in the organization's management. His job was only to sell news and information to media channels. Editors worked on a specialist energy magazine, and they did not have any knowledge of communication management and public relations.

The new PR & communication team started in May 1998. Their opportunities and access in the company were not restricted – the PR manager was a member of the management group and had the freedom to build up a new and effective communication and relationship system and establish an effective PR team. It was believed that, with the help of PR strategies, tactics and techniques, the organization could achieve success and change faster and more effectively.

Today the Estonian Energy Company is a sophisticated system with the Narva oil shale power plants, the Iru Thermal Power Plant, wind generators and restored hydro power plants operating together. EE is interconnected with the power systems of Russia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, and errors in one system affect others in terms of control, technology, environmental protection, etc. In 1998, the implementation of a new dispatch control and data acquisition system started, aimed at modernizing control systems. With a view to reducing pollution, stacks of the Narva power plants would be equipped with electrostatic precipitators to trap flue gases and ash; nature-friendly substations, well suited to the environment, would be built; an ash field water treatment plant was to be completed at the Baltic Power Plant in early 1999, etc.

Eesti Energia AS (Ltd) is now a 100 percent state-owned, vertically integrated public limited company, engaged in power production, transmission, distribution and sales as well as other power-related services with economic activity mainly in the territory of the Republic of Estonia. It was officially established on 1 April 1998 on the base of the 'old style' state enterprise Eesti Energia and its subsidiaries. Eesti Energia AS group's turnover in the financial year 2000/2001 was more than 5 billion EEK (slightly more than 500 million USD at current exchange rates) and it had almost 15 billion EEK worth of assets and about 10,000 employees.

Goals and Objectives

At a philosophical level, in 1998 EE's goal was to design a new, effective and strategically well-planned organization according to management theories. Including the public relations function in this process was a logical step. The author had the opportunity to take part in this project and observe the EE change process from May 1998 to May 1999.

In public relations practice, the major goals of EE in 1998 were the following (according to EE communication strategy 1998):

- Build up a communication system for the company,
- Integrate workers into the new management group,
- Integrate Russian-language workers in particular into the whole communication system of the company,
- Start a new corporate culture project & new corporate design project,
- Build up a communication system to connect with the public and with opinion leaders in Estonian society,
- Focus all actions on different stakeholders instead of on an anonymous public,
- Create an open and democratic style at all levels and in all situations in EE.

Strategic Tactics and Techniques

In order to realize the goals for practical PR it was important to define the

situation that the organization wanted to reach as a result of its conscious and well-planned communication management. At the same time the PR team planned changes at all levels of the organization. It seemed cheapest and most effective to try to change all aspects in a radical way at the same time. At the beginning of the PR project in EE, it was necessary to find some framework from which to proceed considering that PR had never been practised in EE and there was no knowledge of communication management in EE.

Finally, all these PR goals supported the transformation of the organization to a democratic one with clear business goals and a sense of social responsibility.

Using the European public relations Four-Aspect Model

To realize the goals the PR team had worked out in 1998, it was necessary to do research in the PR field and find out the best practices from throughout the world. Changes were needed and results had to be achieved quickly. To benchmark EE, the new PR team analyzed numerous case studies in the USA and Europe. They found that the American model was too naive for the real situation in Estonia, but good practical examples were found in Scandinavia and Germany. The Estonian Energy Company PR team benchmarked their colleagues' experience and started their job. Independently they put into practice an approach similar to one reached at a theoretical level in 2002 in EBOK (European Body of Knowledge Project in Public Relations) research by Betteke van Ruler and Dejan Vercic. The result of the EBOK research project was the Bled Manifesto (Van Ruler & Vercic 2002) and four descriptive characteristics of European public relations: reflective, managerial, operational and educational.

The managerial aspect involves maintaining a relationship/managing communication processes with the public in order to gain public trust and/or mutual understanding. This function has to do with organizational strategies. In EE this managerial aspect was implemented to build up and maintain a relationship/manage communication processes with company workers and the public.

Before the strategic communication/relationship plan was designed and implemented, EE conducted a communication audit in three parts: questionnaires and interviews inside the company and public opinion analysis of media content. The research results provided helpful knowledge for making decisions and acting effectively and quickly in the PR and communication management fields. The audit showed that the biggest problem in communication management inside the company was the fact that real communication managers (workers' unions) were not interested in effective communication and they wanted to manipulate information and control managers and workers. The result was that workers did not trust the organization's leaders (neither the 'old' nor 'new' management team) and they did not understand the manager's decisions.

There were trust problems also with opinion leaders in Estonian society. The roots of this problem lay in history – some politicians favored the 'old' managers, some supported the 'new' managers and both groups voiced their opinions in the mass media.

There were trust problems also with clients. The main reason was the quality of electrical services: old lines, power plants needing investments, high price etc. Considering this key information, it was possible to build up a communication strategy for interior and public communication.

The reflective aspect (Van Ruler & Vercic 2002) makes it possible to talk about the organization as a part of society, so that the organization can become socially responsible. This function has to do with organizational values and norms, and can be seen as a developing function of public relations, as part of the discussion on socially responsible behavior of organizations. This aspect was very important in EE's case – EE was a closed and secret system and there were no values and norms in the enduring 'old management era' acceptable to a democratic society. There were four public communication goals in EE after management reform in 1998: to start a new corporate culture and corporate design project; to build up a communication system with the public via the media because all Estonian citizens were clients of EE due to its monopoly in the country's Estonian energy market on that time; to start to work with different stakeholders and especially with opinion leaders; and to build open and democratic communication traditions at all levels and in all situations in EE.

The new PR team, together with management, started to establish a new value system – a work group was formed and brainstorming exercises were carried out over a period of several months. As a result, new values and norms were formulated, and the foundation for new company behavior was created. But a problem in implementing the new value system occurred. The first stage included the presentation of the new value system at the headquarters, and the Chairman of the Board implemented it personally. Then a book was published and distributed in the company, and heads of the substructures introduced the book to employees. The book was also translated into Russian. However, people could not change quickly; it took one year to gain acceptance of the new norms and for people to start to adopt the new style. But the conflict of different values lasted for a long time; employees were caught between the attitudes and norms of the new employers and those of the old ones.

The bilingual company newspaper, as well as the special Russian-language radio programme at the Narva power station, helped to promote new values and norms. The new radio program was started by the new PR team in 1998 in an effort to edit and manage propaganda from the workers' unions in power plant collectives and to balance the information workers got from the workers' union.

The second aspect also involved a process of justifying EE's activities to the public. The public formulates its attitudes and opinions only on the basis of the behavior of an organization. At first, numerous mistakes were made in changes in payment methods, a rise in electricity prices, the closing of client service centres, etc. It was also necessary to prove to politicians that the old EE would change for the better due to the hard work of the new leaders. A media communication concept was prepared. In

addition, a model of crisis communication was prepared, and a special newspaper for opinion leaders was published. This newspaper was sent to politicians, the government, people connected with energy, journalists, scientists, etc. Also a customer newspaper was published.

In connection with the first two aspects, the implementation of a third aspect, the educational aspect, was inevitable. The Bled Manifesto authors said that the role of the educational aspect was to help members of organizations become communicatively competent in order to respond to societal demands. This function has to do with the behavior of the members of an organization. (Van Ruler & Vercic 2002) The implementation of this aspect was especially important because the first two aspects are not as effective if not supported by the third – educational - aspect. It was important to monitor the behaviour and communication of the organization, and to train the organization to communicate correctly, fairly and clearly, in the same way we teach children to behave properly.

In EE the situation was improved by preparing an integrated information system (both for inner and public use), and people were trained to communicate accordingly. In addition to written information channels, there were also training techniques, and special training sessions conducted. At first, the training on public presentation was given to all those who served as public spokespersons. Crisis simulations were started on the second level, because uncontrolled and spontaneous communication is likely to occur in a situation of crisis that might result in unpredictable situations and reactions by the public. It was also important to determine the process of distributing information– it had to be clear who would present the organization to the public, when, and regarding what subjects. The question of informal communication also had to be resolved: employees should talk positively about their organization outside of work.

The establishment of the ‘inner marketing system’ - the motivation of employees - was also relevant, but this aspect remained rather modest. In the author’s opinion there were some critical aspects of the new management team – they tried to depart radically from the old management philosophy and tried to demolish all that might reflect the ‘old days’.

It is peculiar to the EE case that a move was made from the strategic level to the practical (to the operational level according to Van Ruler and Vercic (2002): To execute action plans. This function has to do merely with execution. It is not supported as a view by public relations, but mentioned as a common role. The communication management tactical plan for one year was prepared by EE for the implementation of this aspect, and this was also the planning point for financial matters. An action plan, a detailed plan and technical solutions were prepared for each activity – both for the public and for inner communication.

The budget in 1999 for PR activities was approximately 1.5 million EEK – less

than 100,000 USD.

Results Achieved

Positive results and small costs simultaneously created synergy in all four PR models used. They were practical, realistic and brought quick internal results and acceptance of public relations within EE.

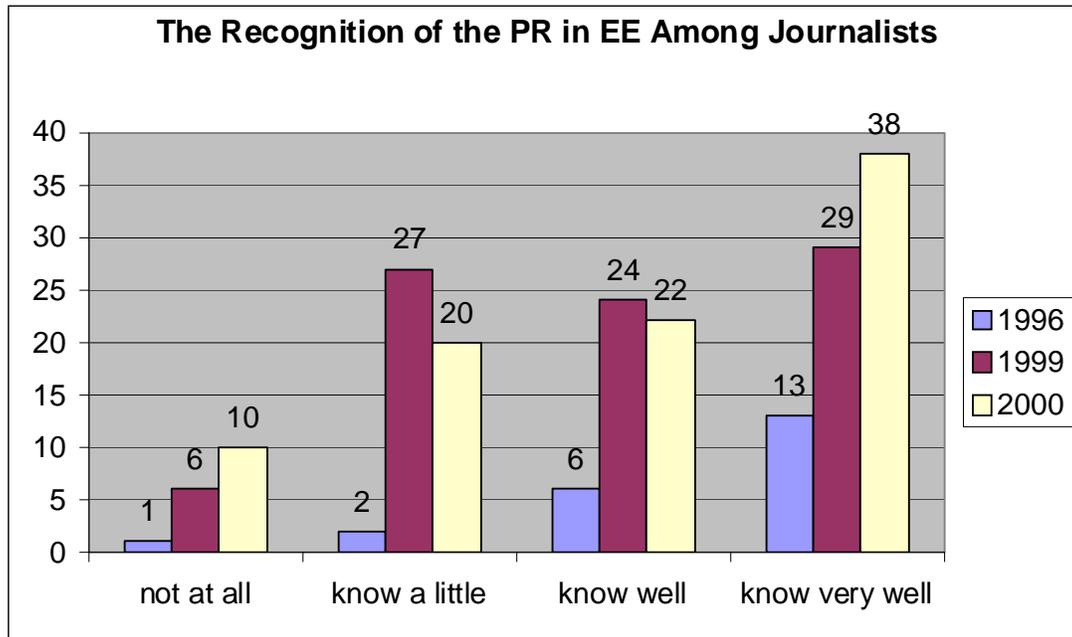
In client relations EE was not as successful. The reasons that client relations developed less effectively and why there were problems in the client-company stakeholder system were numerous. Firstly, EE's new management group declared a client-centred orientation, but practically they had no power to realize this aspect very quickly or effectively. Secondly, managers were enthusiastic and educated but their worldview was still Soviet and monopolistic: they believed that an organization's most important actions were technical (power stations, electric lines and other energy needs) and that the questions of how and for whom they were working were not yet important. They already had their clients who had no choice because EE had a monopoly in the energy field at that time. Faced with the complexity of the problem, EE's new PR team had no opportunity to build up good relationships with clients. The author's opinion is that by using the pedagogical role (Tampere 2008) in client-company relationships and stakeholder systems, it is easier to establish good relationships, because clients need to be educated about market economy rules and routines and a company like EE was unknown to them and distant from their everyday lives. Clients' experiences from the Soviet period were quite good: there were no classic client services in this relationship and the company's dominant (dictatorial) role in this situation was acceptable to clients because the price of electricity was low and there were no problems. In addition, client self-esteem was poor – Soviet ideology said that all was good in the Soviet Union and any personal experience in conflict with this ideology was not open to discussion. In the new society, clients did not understand why prices were high, why service quality was bad etc. These tendencies were similar to what Bourdieu called 'cultural comfort zones' - characteristic ways of acting learned through social experience (Bourdieu 1990). In the author's opinion, taking a pedagogical approach to public relations practice in client-organization stakeholder systems would be successful because the causes of conflicts and bad relationships are lack of knowledge and different personal social experiences.

Journalists' opinions of PR in EE

The opinion of journalists, as one important stakeholder group in an organization's PR practice, was measured twice, in 1999 and again in 2000, after the changes that established strategic communication and PR functions. Some earlier data from 1996 and 1998 on the image of EE's public relations among journalists were also used. One hundred eighty six journalists participated in the questionnaire in 1996, 160 journalists took part in the questionnaire in 1999, and 225 journalists responded to the 2000 questionnaire.

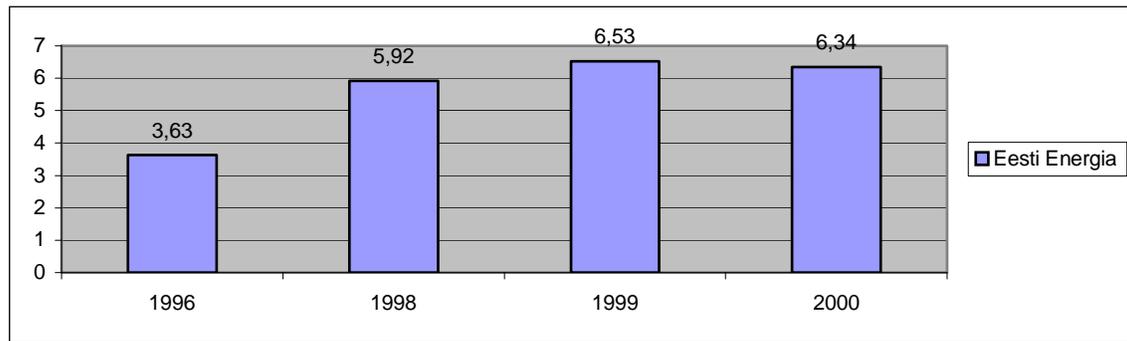
The results of the survey prove that the public relations activity of EE was well known among journalists in 2000, much higher than in 1999 (Figure 3). Fifty two percent of the journalists (the previous year it was 44 percent) were aware of EE's PR activity. The number increased especially among the journalists who responded 'know very well'. This tendency shows that a year of systematic work in the implementation of a public relations function is enough to achieve results. The recognition is considerably greater in comparison with the survey in 1996, which vividly illustrates the increase in effective operation of the public relations function in the organization.

Figure 3: The recognition of PR activity in EE among journalists (percent of journalists)



When EE's public relations work was ranked on a 10-point scale, marked improvements were shown over 1996. (Figure 4). Above average scores were given by news office employees, as well as by economics journalists, and journalists from Tallinn, the capital. Below average scores were given by newspaper journalists and journalists working outside of Tallinn.

Figure 4: Average rating for PR in EE (journalists' opinion on a 10-point scale)

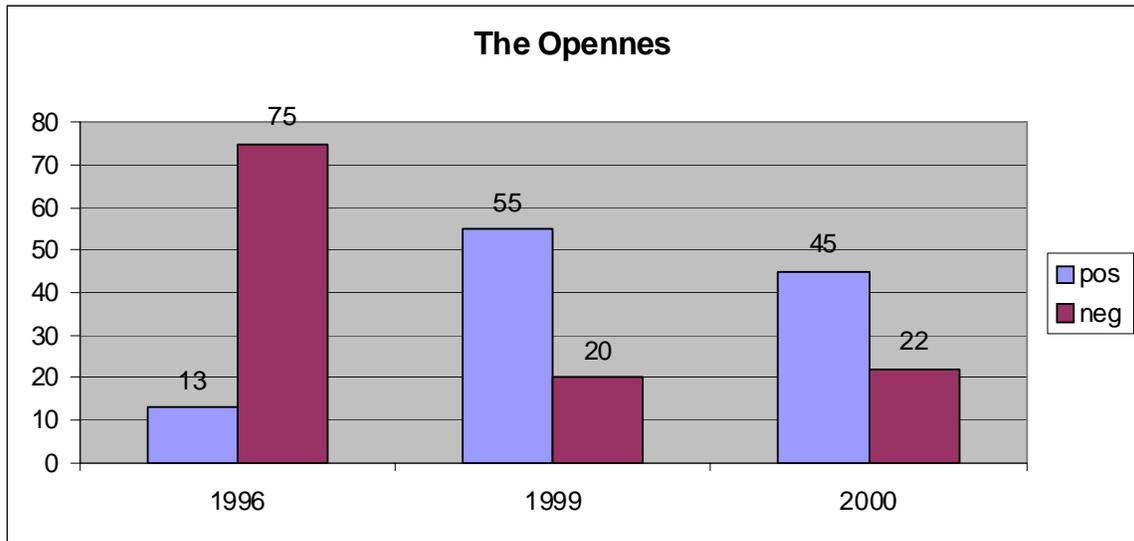


As we can see, the highest average rating was given in the years during and after the big reform in the company's PR (1999) and implementation of the European four-aspect module, when the organization was deeply involved in the management of its communication. There were no big changes in assessments during 2000 (in comparison with the year 1999). This is explained by the fact that the press officer was the same in EE, and work was systematic and stable.

Also very positive responses were given to questions about the ability of public relations officers in EE, about whether the EE press officer was available to journalists 24 hours a day, and whether the communication of the organization in various crisis situations (power cuts mostly) had been well handled. Again, higher points were given by people from news offices, by economics journalists and by daily newspaper and TV journalists in Tallinn. Availability was considered poor by newspaper journalists and journalists outside Tallinn. But in comparison with the previous year, the average dropped a bit, which could indicate that the public relations work, which commenced with enthusiasm, had become routine. In the year 1999 the difference was really noticeable in comparison with other years, and this was also reflected in the assessments of journalists. But the public relations work was not seen as being as innovative by journalists in 2000, and, therefore perhaps, not as note worthy.

Ratings of the speed of informing and openness also dropped. Again, journalists from Tallinn and working for broadcast outlets were more satisfied and those working outside the capital were not as satisfied with the speed of information.

Figure 5: The openness of information in EE (journalists' opinion percentage)



Comparison with the study implemented in 1996 shows major changes in ratings regarding increasing the effectiveness of communication in the organization. The openness of the organization is included here, and it was rated highly by journalists.

The rating of reliability of EE rose in 1999 after the introduction of new and fair principles of communication in the organization. Although the rating of reliability declined (in comparison with the year 1999), the rating was still quite good in comparison with 1996. Again, most critical were journalists not living in Tallinn. And again, economics and broadcast journalists gave higher ratings. The decline in the rating of reliability in 2000 probably resulted from the fact that EE was active in the privatization process of the energy sector during that time, and this process resulted in contradictions and different solutions, and this, in turn, probably reduced the reliability of EE for some time.

Figure 6: The reliability of the information sent by EE to journalists (journalists' opinion percentage)

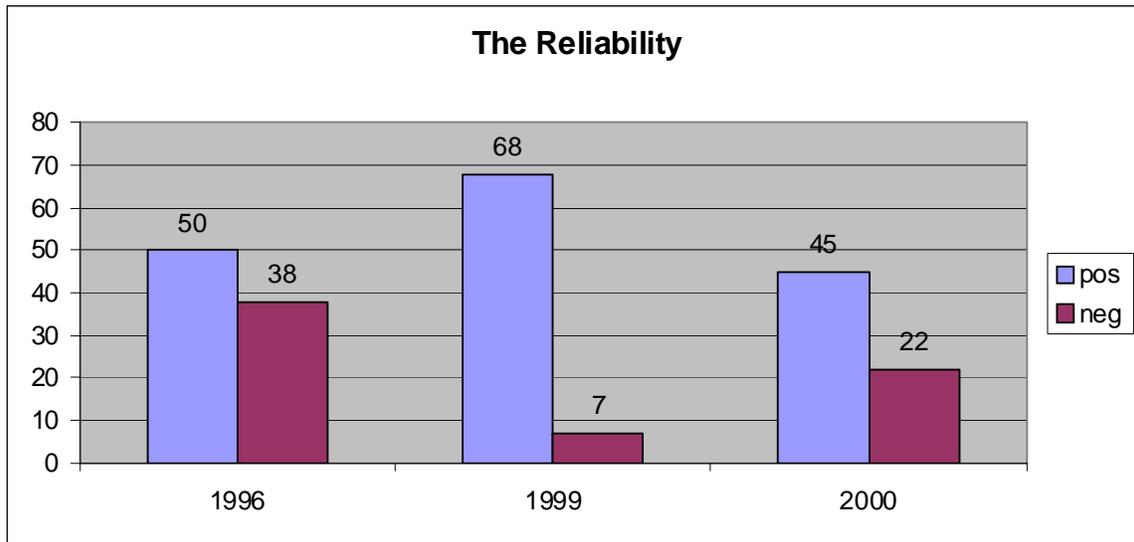
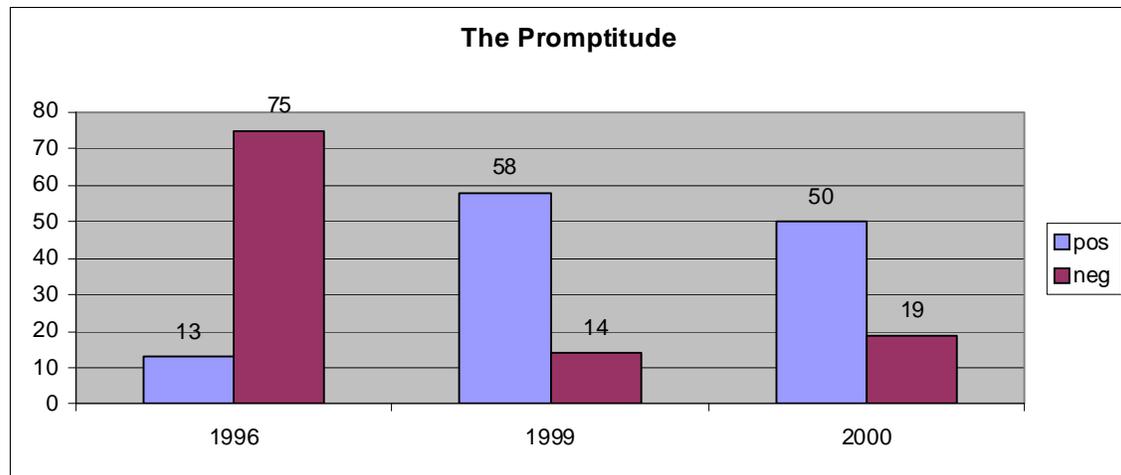


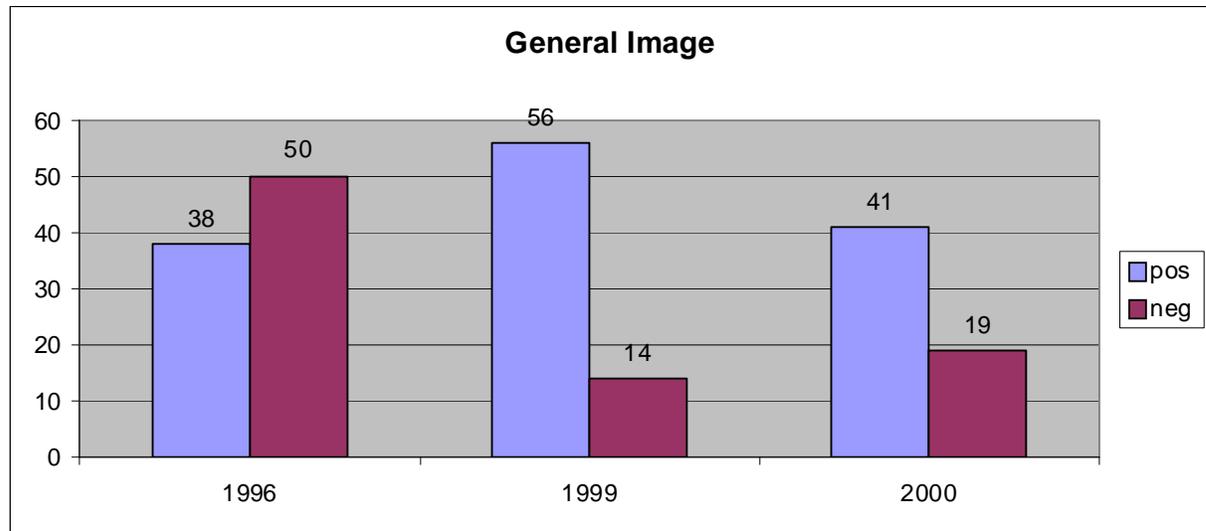
Figure 7: The promptness of the information sent by EE to journalists (journalists' opinion percentage)



It turns out that the general rating of the overall image of the enterprise also declined. This was probably caused by hectic political and commercial interests due to the privatization of EE. And again, image was more highly rated by economics journalists, by journalists working in broadcast news offices and those living in Tallinn. Below average ratings were given by journalists working for newspapers and by those

working outside Tallinn.

Figure 8: General image of EE among journalists (journalists' opinion percentage)



It is significant that after one year's hard public relations work that there was a significant increase in the positive image of EE among journalists. This again proves that it is very important to involve professional communication management in the changes of an organization. Results in 2000 are a little lower, because the new management team made some unpopular public decisions such as price increases.

Conclusion

The case of EE clearly shows that it is very important for an organization to involve communication management and public relations in the change process. The four-dimension model involved in the strategic planning of EE, according to Van Ruler and Vercic, is a quick and effective device for change and for supporting the activities of an organization. Each of the four dimensions has its particular background, strategies and methods, and its particular relationship with other organizational functions. (Van Ruler and Vercic 2002). The establishment of the public relations concept in EE proves that quick and aggressive communication was the best tool for opening and changing the secret organizations coming out of a post-communist society. It is also important to follow certain theoretical aspects or generalizations, for example, in this case the established four aspects of European public relations outlined within the Bled Manifesto. It is important to define the communication style of an organization from the start, in order to avoid individual, and perhaps flawed, attempts to correct problems as they occur.

TEACHING NOTES

- A strong understanding about the theory of PR roles is necessary – students have to learn to understand this very specific system of 4+1 roles of PR, and also to generalize these roles on a strategic level and in an integrated way.
- The role of communication audits in this process is also important – it would be useful to learn how to do communication audits, and how to use communication audits' results in integrating PR and communication planning processes.
- In the EE case, the fact that all these roles were activated simultaneously was significant. Why? How did it contribute to success? If practitioners activate these roles one by one in the process might effectiveness be lower?
- The role and position of a PR department is also important. A PR department can be successful and active if and only if it has enough rights and responsibility, and if it is on the strategic level of organizational hierarchy. Do you agree? Why? A PR department has to have the courage to take risks, act quickly and operatively. Do you agree? Why?

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Executive Summary

The communication campaign “Tell me a story too...” was developed to improve the image of deaf people in Lithuania, to raise awareness of Lithuanian Sign Language and its necessity, and to promote its usage in the families of deaf children.

The campaign used two strategic blocks of communication. First, it executed intensive media relations to disseminate factual and reliable information nationally. Second, it used communication with an emotional appeal, positioning deaf people as successful and happy members of society and presenting the silent request of deaf children for parents to communicate with them too using sign language.

Successfully chosen messages and third party endorsement allowed the campaign to gain maximum media coverage and to reach its target audience.

Problem Statement

The communication campaign developed and implemented by the Center for Lithuanian Sign Language and Saatchi & Saatchi was the first attempt in Lithuania to increase awareness about Lithuanian Sign Language and the necessity of its usage. This case is an example of how tools and techniques of public relations can be used in the realm of national development and how effective communication can raise the issues of a specific group to the level of national discussion. For those who study public relations the case will show how to reach specific audiences and how to change negative attitudes in an environment where no specialized media channels are available.

Background

Lithuania is one of the former Soviet Union countries, located in Northeastern Europe. It has common borders with Latvia, Belarus, Poland and Russia. With a population of 3.4 million people, Lithuania is the largest and most populated of the Baltic States. (“Country Profile Lithuania,” BBC News UK edition, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/Europe/country_profiles/1106095.stm)

More than 80 percent of the Lithuanian population is ethnically Lithuanian and speaks the Lithuanian language, a language of the Baltic language group which is also the official state language. Several sizable minorities exist, such as Russians, Poles and Belarusians, and they may speak their native language at least some of the time. (“Country Profile,” Advantage Lithuania, <http://www.lda.lt>)

Lithuania regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1990. In the years following independence, the country has been building a new state order based on the principles of democracy. To bring about economic growth and become an efficient state, Lithuania had to make numerous reforms and changes. Financial, social care, health care, education, privatization and other reforms have begun since the fall of the Soviet Union. Many of those are still in progress.

Today Lithuania has one of the fastest growing economies in Central and Eastern Europe and has already been invited to become a member of the European Union. The country's industrial base includes electronics, chemicals, machine tooling, metal processing, construction materials, food processing and light industry, including the manufacture of textiles, clothing, furniture and household appliances. ("Country Profile, Advantage Lithuania, <http://www.lda.lt>)

Strategic communication and public relations as they are understood in Western societies began to emerge in Lithuania after the fall of the Soviet Union. Along with the growth of the economy and private sector, public relations became a part of corporate culture and the marketing mix. While the spread of public relations has not been ubiquitous throughout the country, nonetheless departments of public relations operate today in bigger organizations and governmental institutions, numerous PR agencies provide multipurpose services of PR and it is expected that the practice of public relations will expand and improve.

Because polls in Lithuania show that the mass media is an institution the population most relies on, media relations have been the most important PR tool to reach major audiences. However, an increasing flow of information in recent years forces PR practitioners to look for other techniques to reach their audiences.

Lithuania's media market consists of four national television networks, 10 radio networks and 44 regional television and radio networks. Public broadcaster Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT) operates two national TV channels and two national radio networks. There are seven national daily newspapers and an even larger number of regional and local newspapers. Specialized media are primarily dedicated to women's interests, health care and family issues.

The problem with which this case deals is the implementation of civil rights of the handicapped in Lithuania, particularly with the right of the deaf to use, to have access to, to learn and to receive education in their native language. The main task of the campaign was to reach and to change the attitudes of a relatively small part of the population: families of deaf children and those who work with them. Since there was no specialized media available, in order to reach the target audience the campaign design had to include either direct contact with members of the population or to make the problems of the deaf people an issue of national importance. The campaign included both.

Lithuanian Sign Language (LSL) was recognized as the native language of the deaf in Lithuania in 1996. However, years after it gained this official status, the deaf community and those who work in this field have claimed that the right of the deaf to receive education and information in LSL has not been fully implemented. Indeed, LSL had never been officially considered as the most important means for communication of the deaf in Lithuania. Just after 1996 LSL started to be used in schools, public TV stations started to translate several programs and interpretation services started to be

offered at social care and community centers. However, the system of LSL training is still developing: current teachers in the schools for deaf children have only rare chances to improve their LSL knowledge since an LSL study program was started just in 2002. Also, the network of interpretation services is not sufficiently equipped: because training in LSL had not been available, interpreters usually came from the families of deaf people, and there is not a sufficient number. Parents of the deaf children did not have the opportunity to learn LSL to communicate with their own children.

Regardless of the positive changes in the system of social care and improving conditions of civil rights for the deaf, the infrastructure ensuring the right of the deaf to their native language in education was not sufficient enough.

In the fall of 2002, the Center for Lithuanian Sign Language (CLSL) took action to improve LSL usage and training. With the support of the European Community, CLSL established LSL training courses for the hearing parents of deaf children. The purpose of this project was to implement the right of deaf children to grow, learn and communicate with their own parents as well as to prompt the parents to learn and use LSL and thus to improve the performance of deaf children in school, social life and careers.

According to the data provided by the CLSL, 90 percent of deaf children live in hearing families. As parents did not have the opportunity to learn LSL, these children had limited possibilities to learn and to communicate with their closest family members in their own language. Deaf children could not start articulating language as the means of transmitting symbolic meaning and thinking until kindergarten or even until elementary school.

Usually children learn language and develop linguistic thinking at the age of six or seven, imitating their parents or others close to them. Scientists have proved that language is one of the most important building blocks of a child's development. Through language we learn to know the world. Because spoken language cannot be heard by deaf children, and the majority of parents in Lithuania did not know LSL, these children were missing the most important period in their development: they could not learn any language and were missing the opportunity for quality relation with their parents. ("Lietuvos Kurciuju Problemos," Kurcias Vaikas Seimoje, 1999) Despite the official recognition of LSL and the obvious necessity for its use, the initiative to promote LSL usage encountered some skepticism, perhaps because of an earlier predominant paradigm that proclaimed that sign language is not a necessary means of communication for the deaf because they can learn lip reading and use spoken language, thus becoming almost like hearing people.

The task given to Saatchi & Saatchi, the PR agency, was to persuade the target audiences of the necessity of LSL in the environment of deaf children and to urge parents to learn LSL. A long-term goal was to improve the image of the deaf community and LSL in society, thus improving integration of the deaf into society.

Prior to the planning of the campaign, research was done. The main goals of the research were:

- To detect the key audiences,
- To learn about the level of awareness and necessity of LSL, and about attitudes and misperceptions of target audiences about the deaf community and LSL,
- To detect communication media with the potential to reach target audiences.

The research included interviews, focus groups and media research. The results showed that the target audiences were:

- The deaf community,
- Hearing parents of the children,
- Teachers of deaf children,
- Hearing society,
- Media (both a channel for communication and a target audience).

During the interviews and focus groups, attitudes and misperceptions about LSL and the deaf community were detected. The main misperception about LSL was that all target groups considered LSL an insufficient mean of communication, something that cannot be used like spoken language and with linguistic limitations. Also, LSL was seen as an obstacle for the integration of deaf into the society: as an obviously different mean of communication, it set deaf people apart and formed a closed community. The majority of hearing people said that LSL was aesthetically not attractive. Awareness of LSL necessity was low among all the target groups.

Goals and Objectives

The main goals of the campaign were to change attitudes and to gain awareness among the target audiences that:

- LSL is equal in quality as a means of communication to spoken language, and
- LSL is an inseparable part of a deaf child's development and a necessary condition for further education and integration.

In the long run it had been expected that the campaign communication would improve overall perception of the deaf community and LSL.

The measurable goal set for the communication campaign was to improve attendance at LSL training courses for the parents of the deaf children.

The objectives set for the campaign were:

- To inform target audiences that LSL is the native language of the deaf in Lithuania, and to present it as an aesthetically attractive and equal quality language to the spoken word. Prevailing negative attitudes would be changed and positive images of LSL would be built, sympathies of the population would be

- gained and parents would be induced to learn and to teach their children to speak LSL.
- To communicate the importance of LSL for the deaf child and deaf community as an issue of national importance. This would build the motivation of parents to attend LSL classes.
 - To present the deaf community as progressive and successful by changing prevailing attitudes that deaf people form a closed community, speak a strange language and hardly integrate into the society. This would improve the overall image of the deaf and LSL.

Strategic Tactics and Techniques

The communication campaign used information which had to be transmitted using different types of communication:

- Information about LSL,
- Information about the necessity of LSL and arguments for its usage,
- Information about the deaf community,
- Information about the “Tell Me a Story Too” program, its organizers and their expertise.

The communication campaign included media relations, cooperation with different institutions, strong third-party endorsement and an emotional appeal with the campaign slogan “Tell me a story too...”

The first part of the communication strategy involved media relations. Because the research revealed that the national media did not pay enough attention to the issues of the deaf and specialized media of this community did not have enough outreach and were not trusted, the campaign included intensive media relations on the national level. In order to change the attitudes of parents, the plan was to make this particular problem of the deaf an issue of national discussion and thus attract the attention of target audiences. The plan included a number of tactical steps, using primarily press conferences, press releases and interview opportunities.

The first step was to raise the interest of media and their audiences about deafness and the deaf community. A press release about the increasing number of deaf in Lithuania was distributed to the national and regional media outlets. The press release gave the numbers of the deaf over the past 20 years and presented the scope and spread of deafness in the country and around the world. Even though the increase in the deaf population was not very big, the media reacted instantly. This gained additional media attention.

A second press release informed media and their audiences about the rights of deaf people to learn and use their native language and how these rights were being violated in the process of a deaf child’s development, education and access to

information. This press release had sensational appeal to the media because it used third-party endorsement from UNICEF and the Lithuanian Deaf Association. The goal of this release was to increase media attention and to build the demand for a solution for deaf children.

Following the second press release, a press conference was organized. The speakers at this conference presented the problematic situation of LSL and the development of deaf children in more detail. Also, they presented the solution: LSL courses for parents of the deaf children would start in a couple of months. This press conference gained media attention and media coverage on both national and regional levels. The articles discussed the problems of deaf children and informed parents about upcoming courses where they could learn LSL.

Following this press conference, a number of press releases were issued to maintain media attention and coverage. These press releases informed media and their audiences about the development of the LSL training program, statistics about deaf children and violation of their rights, sensational news about research findings about LSL and the upcoming publishing date of an LSL dictionary.

Along with press releases distributed to all media outlets, Saatchi & Saatchi pitched exclusive information to the national newspapers and magazines about real people and success stories in the community of deaf people. The articles portrayed young, handsome and happy teachers of LSL, young men who have chosen the profession of LSL researcher, a deaf artist and the success story of a deaf businessman. This “soft” information was planned to improve the image of the deaf community and to build sympathies among the target audiences.

The second part of the communication plan was built on the notion of emotional appeal and its effectiveness to gain audience attention. The overall communication campaign carried the slogan “Tell me a story too...,” which implied silent supplication of a little deaf child to his parent to tell him a story. Along these lines it implied that these children want to be treated as hearing ones, but they are not. On this level the campaign included cooperation with the Children’s Theatre, where several performances had been translated into LSL. These events were positioned in the media as a gift for a deaf child and gained media attention and were widely described in the media.

The last step of this campaign was the performance of deaf teenagers on the professional theater stage. To gain maximum attention, Saatchi & Saatchi proposed to make the play a collaboration between professional actors and deaf children. In cooperation with the Vilnius Doll Theatre in the capital of Lithuania, an independent director, playwright and group of deaf teenagers developed the play, which told the story of the city and a lonely man living in it. The story communicated the fear of isolation and neglect. Deaf teenagers were actors in this play and LSL was presented here as the dance and the means of communication. To adapt the play for broader audiences than the deaf

community, it used a voice-over storyteller. However, all the visuals emphasized the beauty and flexibility of LSL. The uniqueness of this event attracted desirable attention from media and the ideas of the play were carried on the major media outlets.

The budget allocated to this campaign was 4,500 Euro. However, many events attracted funding from other sources. Also, cooperation with strategic partners such as Vilnius Doll Theatre did not require expenditures.

Results Achieved

The campaign “Tell me a story too...” was started in the fall of 2002 and lasted until the end of the year. However, the results of it are still visible: the media keeps the issues of the deaf and the discussion alive.

Media relations resulted in maximum attention from media representatives and assured maximum media coverage on the issues of the deaf children and the problems of their development in their families and school. LSL was widely covered in the print press, on TV and on radio talk shows.

In addition to planned new stories in the mass media, media relations gave rise to long-lasting public discussion on the usage of the sign language. This topic was presented in discussion and argument shows on both national TV and radio. Also, TV channels presented a couple of feature films presenting the life of deaf people. This could also be considered as a response to the issues of deafness raised to the level of national discussion during the campaign.

Following the campaign, the LSL courses for the parents of deaf children, organized by CLSL, were well attended.

Conclusion

The communication campaign developed and implemented by the Center for Lithuanian Sign Language and Saatchi & Saatchi was the first attempt in Lithuania to increase awareness about Lithuanian Sign Language and the necessity of its usage. This case is an example of how tools and techniques of public relations can be used in the realm of national development and how effective communication can bring the issues of a specific interest group to the level of national discussion.

The keys to the success of this communication plan were detected during research, which found major misperceptions about Lithuanian Sign Language and associations related to deaf people. Therefore, the messages specifically addressed particular attitudes, offering strong arguments and third party endorsements. These messages were supported with “soft” communication, attractively presenting and visualizing LSL and deaf people so that the audiences could form their own impressions

about deafness and sign language. The emotional appeal of the campaign made the information more believable.

TEACHING NOTE

Overview

The case of the Lithuanian Sign Language communication campaign offers students the opportunity to explore specific aspects of public relations in a developing, post-socialistic country, where mass media outlets are trusted by society. Also, it shows how to make communication effective by detecting audience attitudes and misperceptions, making messages newsworthy, and using third-party endorsements and emotional appeal.

Questions for Discussion

The case can be discussed from many different angles. Possible successful approaches could include the following:

1. *Focus on the use of public relations techniques to raise and advance development issues.*

This approach will allow broadening the range of PR applications. Also, it can lead to a discussion of communication tactics changing prevailing attitudes and traditions.

2. *Focus on research.*

This perspective will allow analysis of the importance of audience research in public relations. How did the research findings affect the main messages of the campaign and how did they shape media outlets chosen? Why did this campaign not use the approach of audience segmentation? This can lead to discussion of the benefits of audience segmentation and why in some instances communication with a “general” public makes communication more effective.

3. *Focus on why the campaign succeeded.*

This discussion on the keys to a successful communication plan can bring additional suggestions and creative ideas as to how this particular campaign could have produced better results.

4. *Focus on why national media outlets picked up the topic.*

Discuss the issues of media relations and ways to make messages newsworthy.

5. *Focus on the use of third party advocates.*

Why were these particular communication partners chosen? How did third party endorsement support pro-active communication and pre-empt attacks?

6. *Focus on the specific character of PR in post-Soviet countries.*

How did the Soviet suppression of freedom of speech affect today's landscape of mass media in these countries? Why do people of these countries choose to trust in mass media over other institutions of the state? This will show how differently people use media in different countries.

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**Hokuetsu Paper Mills:
Defending Its Independence from a Hostile Takeover**

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Executive Summary

On July 23, 2006, Oji Paper, the largest paper mill company in Japan and the 7th largest in the world, announced that it would launch an unsolicited takeover bid (TOB) for 50.1 percent of Hokuetsu Paper Mills, the sixth largest paper mill company in Japan with its key facilities in the Niigata region on the northern shore of Japan. This was an epoch-making event for Japan as it was the first hostile takeover bid attempt by one of Japan's oldest and most traditional companies against another listed company. At the suggestion of the law firm retained for the defense, Hokuetsu Paper asked a communication advisory firm, Media Gain, to join the defense task force comprised of Hokuetsu management, lawyers and financial advisors.

Historical research, extensive interviews with management, and industry analysis identified Hokuetsu Paper's following key messages. 1) Hokuetsu would continue to be independent because it is the best way to preserve its well-focused technical and management strength; 2) Hokuetsu Paper's independence and continued presence in Niigata was essential to the prosperity of the local community; and 3) In an industry with two giants, having a strong third force like Hokuetsu is essential to the healthy development of the industry.

Through media relations and employee relations efforts and management communication with local government and its business circle, Hokuetsu Paper successfully secured the support from shareholders in Niigata as well as other institutional investors and individual shareholders to resist the takeover.

Problem Statement

Oji Paper's price offer for Hokuetsu Paper's share was about 35 percent higher than the trading price prior to the announcement. In a simplistic "shareholder value model," this was a price that deserved consideration, and any argument against this price could be overcome if Oji Paper raised its tender offer price. Backed by Nomura Securities, the largest security house in Japan, Oji Paper had ample funds to win this deal. Hokuetsu Paper management, which built its strength upon an independent spirit and strong bonds with employees and the local community, believed that its strength would be lost if it became a part of a larger organization. It also feared that, if merged with Oji Paper, many of its employees would eventually lose their jobs if Oji Paper re-shuffled its operations that were located in various parts of the country. For Hokuetsu Paper, clarification of the importance of remaining independent and successful communication to, and persuasion of, shareholders were essential for survival.

Background

Hokuetsu Paper Mills, Ltd. was founded in 1907 as a paperboard manufacturer in Niigata, on the northern shore of Japan some 160 miles north of Tokyo. In 1958, the company moved its headquarters function to Tokyo, but legal registration still remained

in Niigata. Today the company has two plants in Niigata and two plants in Kanto, greater Tokyo region. The company was the first in Japan to build a coating paper machine that combined the manufacturing of paper and coating material into a single machine. Hokuetsu's profit margin is among the highest in the industry and it is also known for high efficiency of its production facilities (Katsura, 2006). In 1964, Hokuetsu's Nagaoka plant was severely damaged when a major earthquake hit the Niigata region killing 26 people and destroying about 8,600 houses. The incident, through efforts to recover from damage, nurtured a strong sense of cooperation among Hokuetsu Paper employees and management and the local community, leading to high worker morale. Although Hokuetsu Paper was not large enough to compete with Oji Paper, the company had a clear focus on the manufacturing of coated paper and the advantage of plant locations close to Tokyo.

Oji Paper Co., Ltd. was founded in 1849 by Eiichi Shibusawa – modern Japan's greatest entrepreneur – who gave birth to many companies in various industries including banking, railways, cement, beer, insurance and paper, as well as the Tokyo Stock Exchange. He did so without forming a private conglomerate, building the foundation for the growth of Japanese economy. Many of these companies, including Oji Paper, still play a major role in Japan's business circles today. Nippon Paper was a part of Oji Paper until 1949, when the Japanese government ordered divestiture under the command of the post World War II U.S. occupation forces. Because of its long history and multiple acquisitions of smaller companies, Oji Paper had 20 paper mills around the country, some of which were very old, but away from the major Japanese markets – namely Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka – because in the past it was economical to build a plant in the area where wood products such as pine and cedar were obtained. In the late 1990s, Oji Paper found that it needed to restructure its production facilities to maintain its competitiveness. Oji had planned to build a plant in China in the coastal region of Jiangsu province and filed an application to the Chinese government in 2004. The application was finally approved in July 2006, two years after it was originally anticipated. In short, Oji Paper was under pressure to move quickly to maintain and improve its competitiveness.

Japan, long known for cross shareholding among zaibatsu (industrial conglomerates), and strong control by major banks through finance, had drastically changed its landscape since the economic bubble that burst in the early 1990s and lasted into the 21st century. Under pressure to comply with Bank for International Settlement (BIS) regulations on capital-adequacy ratio, coupled with increasing bad loans due to declining real estate prices, Japan's major banks gave up their role as the cornerstone of zaibatsu. Corporate restructuring and rescue, once orchestrated by major banks to settle within zaibatsu, were left in the hands of the free market.

First, foreign investment funds, such as Cargill, Cerberus, Ripplewood, Lone Star, W. L. & Ross and Carlyle, entered the market and filled the zaibatsu void, purchasing failed banks and companies. Domestic private equity funds also started businesses. In 2003, the Japanese government established the Industrial Revitalization Corporation of

Japan (IRCJ) as a five-year time-limited organization to handle entangled restructuring cases with legal authority. IRCJ purchased stakes and company loans from shareholders and lenders, released unnecessary assets and businesses, replaced management when necessary and sold companies in the market as a clean, revitalized entity.

At the turn of the 21st century, so-called Murakami Fund (MAC), a domestic fund managed by Yoshiaki Murakami, a former Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) bureaucrat, initiated the first hostile takeover bid in Japan. Over the years, MAC made multiple hostile takeover bids. Although none of the hostile takeover bids were successful, MAC yielded good returns by selling shares of target companies until several key MAC management were arrested for insider trading in June 2006. Although Murakami Fund was seen as a war-child of the economic bubble bust, taking advantage of a paradigm shift in economy, it also had contributed to a change in Japanese business culture. Because of Murakami's high profile as a former elite bureaucrat and his controversial investment activities, the major Japanese media consistently followed his activities. Following Murakami's initial attempt, several entities, including U.S. activist fund Steel Partners, rapidly grew web portal company Livedoor, and discount merchandiser Don Quijote tried a hostile TOB, all of which failed in the end but created a lot of media coverage. Consequently, terms such as "corporate value" and "takeover bid" suddenly became topics of household conversation.

In Japan, because of the country's location away from Europe and the Americas and the relatively high transportation cost of paper compared to its price, the paper market had long been purely domestic, in which only domestic manufacturers competed for market shares. But the recent emergence of China as both a market and production base had changed the global landscape of the paper industry. Since 2003, two European paper companies and one Singapore paper company have built large paper mills in China. These new plants, located in China's coastal region, started providing products not only to China but also overseas. As such, Japan's paper market was exposed to foreign competition for the first time. The import of paper to Japan doubled between 2000 and 2005, making up about 8 percent of its domestic consumption. Oji Paper, and its major competitor, Nippon Paper Group Inc., grew by consolidation and acquisition to become the world's seventh and ninth largest paper companies, respectively. Hokuetsu Paper Mills, although the sixth largest in the country, is only about one-eighth of those companies in terms of sales. Rising fuel costs and increasing price pressure from overseas had fueled further debate on consolidation in the industry.

In Japan, where the headquarters of most Tokyo Stock Exchange-listed companies are located in Tokyo, it is not uncommon for top executives of major companies to know each other through the various functions of trade and economic organizations. Hokuetsu's President & CEO, Masaaki Miwa, had long been acquainted with Oji Paper's Chairman, Shoichiro Suzuki. In February 2006, when Suzuki was still President of Oji Paper, Suzuki and Miwa agreed to start discussion about an alliance between the two companies. The discussion by their senior executives continued from

March until May, but failed to come to any agreement as Oji insisted on a merger while Hokuetsu indicated its intention to stay independent. At about the same time, the discussion between Hokuetsu and Mitsubishi Corporation on a potential business alliance, including capital infusion by Mitsubishi, was started. Mitsubishi Corporation is the largest trading company in Japan with annual sales exceeding JPY 20 trillion (approximately \$180 billion U.S.), expanding its business from domestic and cross border trading to investments in a wide array of industries around the globe.

Timeline of events

- *July 3:* Oji's Chairman Suzuki and President Shinoda visited Hokuetsu to once again propose a merger, which Hokuetsu's Miwa instantly refused.
- *July 19:* Hokuetsu announced the introduction of takeover defense measures (the so-called "poison pill strategy").
- *July 21:* Hokuetsu announced the private allocation of its shares to Mitsubishi Corporation to finance its new production facilities, which, if paid in by August 7, would give Mitsubishi Corporation 24.44 percent of Hokuetsu's voting power.
- *July 23:* Oji Paper announced that (1) its management had proposed a merger with Hokuetsu Paper to Hokuetsu management on July 3; (2) Oji's board of directors approved its merger proposal plan with Hokuetsu; and (3) Oji had decided to merge with Hokuetsu under the condition that Hokuetsu withdraw its planned private allocation of shares to Mitsubishi Corporation.
- *July 24:* Hokuetsu held a news conference and announced that (1) Oji's said merger proposal on July 3 was nothing more than an informal inquiry and (2) Hokuetsu did not plan to cancel the private allocation of shares to Mitsubishi Corporation.
- *August 1:* Oji announced a tender offer for 50.1 percent of Hokuetsu shares at JPY 800 a share, with a modification clause that if Hokuetsu's private stock allocation to Mitsubishi Corporation was suspended, the offer price would be raised to JPY 860 a share. The duration of the offer was between August 2 and September 4.
- *August 3:* Nippon Paper Group Inc. announced that Oji's move disturbed the industry and that it planned to purchase up to 10 percent of Hokuetsu shares in the stock market.
- *August 7:* Mitsubishi Corporation made payment for Hokuetsu shares, thus completing the private allocation of shares.
- *August 8:* Nippon Paper Group Inc. announced that it had acquired 8.85 percent of Hokuetsu shares.
- *August 8:* Hokuetsu's "Independent Committee" recommended to the board to invoke an anti-takeover measure against Oji.
- *August 10:* Hokuetsu's President & CEO Miwa visited Niigata.
- *August 17:* Oji's President Shinoda visited Niigata.

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- *August 29*: Oji announced that its takeover bid effort is likely to be unsuccessful.
- *September 5*: Oji announced the failure of its takeover bid.

Communication advisory

Prior to the introduction of the takeover defense measure in mid-July, Ushijima & Partners, the law firm advising Hokuetsu, suggested that management retain Media Gain, a corporate communication advisory firm, to advise on communication strategy. In addition to advising foreign companies' market entry into Japan, Media Gain had been engaged in numerous mergers and acquisitions and restructuring cases, including the acquisition of banks by foreign investment funds and restructuring of companies involving IRCJ. Shin Ushijima, the representative partner of the law firm believed that strong communication would be essential in the battle.

Research

That the battle was a time-constrained one did not mean research could be neglected. Rather, the intensity of the battle made research even more important. The communication team needed to understand the language of the lawyers and financiers. The strengths and weaknesses of Hokuetsu Paper and Oji Paper had to be grasped. Any pitfall, whether managerial, legal or financial, needed to be anticipated. There was no luxury of "trial and error." The feedback cycle was only for fine tuning and the adjustment to new events. Without strong and appropriate messages from day one, there would be no "day two" in this battle.

Extensive research was conducted by examining past newspaper and magazine articles to see how Hokuetsu Paper and Oji Paper were portrayed in the media and what problems they might have experienced. Interviews of Hokuetsu Paper's key executives were conducted to probe beyond reported facts, including the content of discussion with Oji Paper executives, their relationship with other companies in the industry including Oji Paper, Hokuetsu Paper's history, employee, future plan, and their determination to defend the company. Their personal characters were also observed to help determine communication strategy and their role sharing. Multiple discussions were held with lawyers and financial advisors to identify all possible actions and reactions foreseeable for both Hokuetsu Paper and Oji Paper. In addition to the actions by Hokuetsu Paper and Oji Paper, potential issues with the Tokyo Stock Exchange; Security Exchange Commission; Fair Trade Commission; Ministry of Economy; Trade and Industry; Mitsubishi Corporation, and financial institutions also were discussed with lawyers and financial advisors. Other information regarding the industry, Oji and government regulations were also gathered from various sources. In doing so, extra care was taken not to reveal the client, as any such revelation might lead to serious insider trading charges.

Goals and Objectives

Hokuetsu Paper's campaign goals were:

- To prepare top management with an appropriate communication strategy throughout the deal;
- To ensure that shareholders and other stakeholders of the company were well informed; and
- To ensure that journalists understood the meaning of actions taken, whether by Hokuetsu Paper or by Oji Paper.

Media Gain set the following communication objectives:

- To inform journalists properly about the structure and legal implication of the measures taken by Hokuetsu Paper, as well as Oji Paper;
- To inform shareholders about the strength of Hokuetsu Paper and how it could be further strengthened; and
- To keep Niigata community well informed about Hokuetsu's commitment to the community and the determination to stay independent.

Publics

Although there were many affected publics, the following publics were identified by Hokuetsu Paper and Media Gain as key audiences:

- Shareholders;
- Local government and business circles of Niigata;
- Business reporters of key media;
- (Employees were identified as a key public, but it was decided that communication with them were to be handled by the managers of Hokuetsu under the orchestration of human resource department).

Message strategy

After the initial research and multiple discussions with key personnel, key messages were determined. In doing so, the following considerations were made:

- Was the message acceptable to the Niigata community?
- Did the message make sense to other players in the industry?
- Could the message accommodate modification of the story line in response to Oji Paper's potential actions?

The key messages were determined to be:

- Hokuetsu would continue to be independent because it is the best way to preserve its well-focused technical and management strength.
- Hokuetsu Paper's independence and continued presence in Niigata was essential to the prosperity of the local community.
- In an industry with two giants, having a strong third force like Hokuetsu is essential to the healthy development of the industry.

Once the key messages were determined, it was made sure that every communication, whether to media, employees, vendors and customers or community, carried the same message.

Dominant coalition

Media Gain's communication team members participated in daily meetings held at the law firm. Other members included lawyers, financial advisors and Hokuetsu's top and senior management, totaling more than 20 members. The meetings were held once or twice a day, and when things were slow, telephone conferences were held instead. The meetings were usually held in person, with all the parties present, to ensure that everyone shared the same information and to minimize miscommunication within the takeover defense team.

Media relations

In Japan, because of its small land area and dense population, interest in national events and trends are relatively high. As a result, although there are one or more regional newspapers in each of the 47 prefectures, national newspapers (four general and one economic) dominate the market, with total subscription of about 27 million copies per day. Regional papers depend heavily on two major wire services for national news coverage. In television, the national networks still dominate the market, with local affiliate stations producing only a fraction of Japanese programming.

The following were identified as key media outlets for this campaign:

- General newspapers: Yomiuri Shimbun, Asahi Shimbun and Mainichi Shimbun.
- Business newspaper: Nihon Keizai Shimbun.
- Regional newspapers: The Niigata Nippo (where Hokuetsu's main plant is located), Hokkaido Shimbun (where Oji's main plant is located) and Tokyo Shimbun.
- Business magazine: Nikkei Business.
- Television: NHK (public television network – equivalent to BBC), and TV Tokyo (affiliate of Nihon Keizai Shimbun and is strong on business reporting).
- Wire services: Kyodo News and Jiji Press.

However, it was decided that, until August 7, when Mitsubishi Corporation's payment for the private allocation of shares were scheduled to be made, media relations' activities were to be low-key, without any effort to conduct media briefings or interviews. The only exception was an interview with a weekly business magazine, Nikkei Business, which appeared in a two-page Q&A interview section in the July 31 issue. This medium was selected for two reasons. First, the section of the magazine contained only Q & A, meaning that the quotes were not to be used to fit in "their" story. Second, the section was long enough to allow a detailed explanation.

Press releases regarding the introduction of anti-takeover measures and the board resolution for the private allocation of shares to Mitsubishi Corporation were distributed

to the press because disclosure of such information was required by Japanese regulation. Hokuetsu Paper also held a press conference on July 24 with President Miwa present in response to Oji Paper's announcement of its takeover bid on the previous day. Hokuetsu Paper responded to inquiries from media, but only to the extent that they were disclosed in the press releases and the press conference. This was to avoid making unnecessary noise until the private allocation of shares was complete.

Briefings to key journalists began in the evening of August 7. Up to September 12, 28 briefings were held by Media Gain staff with 13 media outlets. All of the 12 target media were briefed. Reuters was also briefed as they had requested information. In the initial stage, the briefings focused on the legal and financial structures of the private allocation of shares, anti-takeover measures and Hokuetsu's core competencies.

On August 9, Hokuetsu Paper President Miwa held a press conference and announced its growth strategy plan. On August 10, Hokuetsu Paper invited (travel cost not provided by Hokuetsu Paper) media to see its Niigata plant. President Miwa guided the tour of the plant, and noted the plant's competence and further improvement of its productivity by the introduction of new machinery at the end of 2008. All five national newspapers, all six national television networks, four wire services and local media sent reporters to participate in this event.

Community relations

Prior to the media plant tour on August 10, President Miwa visited the Mayor of Niigata city, the President of Niigata Chamber of Commerce, and the President of Daishi Bank, one of the two regional banks in Niigata to seek their support for Hokuetsu. Daishi Bank was also Hokuetsu's major shareholder holding 2 percent stake. President Kojima of Daishi Bank told Miwa that the bank will support Hokuetsu Paper. On August 11, Miwa visited Hokuetsu Bank, the other regional bank in Niigata that also owned 2 percent of Hokuetsu Paper shares. That bank also indicated its intention to support Hokuetsu Paper.

Photo opportunity

Hokuetsu's middle management discussed how they could support the company, and came up with an idea of sending a letter to Oji Paper management expressing their support for the current management and opposition to the proposed merger with Oji Paper. The original plan was to mail the letter. In the meantime, it was reported that the President of Oji Paper was planning to visit Niigata to seek support from the local government, regional banks and local business circles for their takeover bid for Hokuetsu Paper. Media Gain advised Hokuetsu Paper's middle management group to hand the letter directly to Oji's President in Niigata instead of sending it by mail. On August 17, Oji Paper President Shinoda visited Niigata. When Shinoda was about to leave the Niigata prefecture government building, five representatives of Hokuetsu Paper management approached him. They tried to hand the letter to Shinoda saying, "This is the thoughts and passions of Hokuetsu employees. Please accept it." Shinoda refused to

receive the letter and left in his car. As local community's reaction to Oji Paper's takeover bid was seen as crucial, there were many reporters and TV camera crews following Shinoda in Niigata. Each of six national television networks, NHK, NNN, JNN, FNN, ANN and TXN repeatedly aired on its national news programs, the scene when Shinoda refused to receive the letter from Hokuetsu middle management.

Results Achieved

On August 29, six days before the tender deadline, Oji Paper President Shinoda announced that Oji did not expect to secure enough shareholder support to win the bid. Six days later, Oji Paper officially announced that they had failed to acquire the tender necessary to complete the takeover. In the end, the number of Hokuetsu Paper shares tendered to Oji Paper was only 5.33 percent, far below the intended 50.1 percent.

The private allocation of stock was completed as planned on August 7 as Mitsubishi Corporation paid in for the stock. The allocation gave Mitsubishi Corporation 24.44 percent of Hokuetsu Paper's voting rights. The Niigata community supported the continued independence of Hokuetsu Paper. Two Niigata's regional banks refused to tender the Hokuetsu Paper shares they owned when Oji Paper's Shinoda visited them. The Governor of Niigata, when Shinoda visited him, showed his concern over the loss of employment in the community. The second largest paper company in the country, Nippon Paper Group, purchased about 6.3 percent of Hokuetsu Paper shares during the takeover bid period. Combined with the shares previously held, Nippon Paper Group owned 8.85 percent of Hokuetsu Paper shares. Although it was Nippon Paper's business decision based on its own merit to prevent Oji Paper from acquiring Hokuetsu Paper, in effect the move helped Hokuetsu stay independent.

After all, Hokuetsu successfully defended itself from the hostile takeover, securing support from its shareholders and community. On September 12, Hokuetsu Paper and Nippon Paper Group jointly announced that the companies had signed an agreement and started discussion to form a strategic alliance by the end of November 2006. On October 27, Hokuetsu Paper and Daio Paper, the third largest paper company in Japan, signed a technical alliance agreement to mutually share technology and enhance competitive advantages. On September 19, Oji Paper announced a "scrap and build" plan for one of its plants, with JPY 50 billion (approximately \$450 million) investment replacing old production lines.

Cultural context

During a press conference on August 29, Oji Paper President Shinoda said, "Should I call it a compromise between East and West? We started out Japanese style and in the end took Western style. There was a contradiction." Here Shinoda seemed to imply that things might have been different if he had used a Western style, i.e., not give Hokuetsu Paper the time to think and respond to Oji Paper's merger proposal before initiating a takeover bid. When Shinoda and Suzuki met with Hokuetsu Paper's Miwa,

they spoke of Oji Paper's intention to merge with Hokuetsu Paper. Fearful of being accused of "breaking harmony," Oji Paper gave Hokuetsu Paper an advance notice with three weeks to respond to its merger proposal. Because it was not an official declaration of takeover bid based on a board resolution, Hokuetsu was able to take various measures including introduction of anti-takeover measures and finalization of private allocation of shares to Mitsubishi Corporation. As a Hokuetsu Paper's shareholder holding over 3 percent stake, Oji could have filed a law suit seeking suspension of the private allocation of shares, but did not do so. On the contrary, Oji Paper failed to act "Japanese style" in dealing with employees and local community. It was on August 17 that Shinoda visited Niigata, a week after Miwa's visit there. On August 21, Oji Paper posted a full page advertisement on Niigata Nippo, a local newspaper in Niigata, telling Hokuetsu's employees that their employment would remain secure. This advertisement appeared four days after Hokuetsu's employees watched TV news programs showing Shinoda's refusal to receive a letter from Hokuetsu's middle management. These actions were all too late to show respect for harmony.

Conclusion, Discussion and Further Consideration

Because of the financial and legal nature of the takeover bid, it is hard to determine how much impact communication activity had on the outcome. However, throughout the case, Hokuetsu Paper's communication strategy seemed to have worked well. As Oji Paper's Shinoda admitted, there was an inconsistency in Oji Paper's strategy and it nonetheless helped Hokuetsu Paper's communication strategy to be effective.

Summary

Hokuetsu Paper successfully defended its independence from Oji Paper's hostile takeover bid by clearly delivering the message to its shareholders and stakeholders that its independence is crucial to the prosperity of the community and the industry. In the process, the cultural context – the concept of harmony – played an important role, both for Hokuetsu Paper and Oji Paper. As more and more business activities operate under global norm, it becomes even more important to take cultural context into consideration in order to successfully communicate the meaning of these activities to publics. This case provides a clear example in which cultural consideration and legal-financial decisions must be wisely blended.

TEACHING NOTES

Looking beyond the current case, how would Hokuetsu Paper's communication have changed if:

1. Oji Paper had announced a takeover bid officially on July 3? Notice there would not have been Mitsubishi Corporation's involvement as it would be illegal to privately allocate shares during a takeover bid period.
2. Oji Paper approached the local community before Hokuetsu did?

3. Oji Paper actively approached Hokuetsu Paper employees from the very beginning?

The case also provided us a reference point to simulate other situations.

1. If a company/client plans a hostile/friendly takeover in Japan, how should a communication strategy be prepared?
2. If a company/client plans a cross-border takeover, how should the communication strategy be prepared?
3. If a company/client's takeover defense seemed unsuccessful, how should the communication strategy be modified? In doing so, what aspect of the takeover should be paid attention to?
4. If a similar situation arises in other countries in Asia such as China and Korea, where relationship, face and harmony are regarded as important factors, how would this case be applied?

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**Australia's "Together We Do Better" Campaign:
Diversifying Mental Health Benefits for Local Communities**

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Executive Summary

Australia, both a continent and a country, straddles an Eastern geography and a Western cultural sensibility. Situated adjacent to the Pacific's Asian rim, Australia began the 20th century making its first tentative steps toward nationhood on January 1, 1901. The emerging Australia fostered a common desire among its initial alliance of six states for political independence, European identity and a strong link to Great Britain as a member of the Commonwealth. A century later, contemporary Australia faces the challenge of reconciling its colonial history with the more ancient past of its indigenous populations and the immediate recent past of its robust, and vastly diverse, immigrant communities.

From newly emergent nations to their more established predecessors, making communities work better within multicultural frameworks is becoming a priority issue. Increased globalization of economic systems and media, as well as the enhanced mobility of people across national borders, point to a potentially new strategic role for public relations practitioners when communicating across cultures.

In Australia's state of Victoria, the "Together We Do Better" campaign offers a unique approach to promoting social connectedness, one that links better community relations with positive mental health outcomes. By partnering with an extensive network of state service agencies and local media, the "Together We Do Better" campaign aims to effect change at grassroots, programmatic levels. Launched in 1999 by Melbourne-based VicHealth, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, this campaign just entered its second phase in 2003 and is growing in reputation throughout the region as a model for building stronger communities through information and service.

Problem Statement

The "Together We Do Better Campaign" launched its first phase in 1999 as the mental health promotion initiative of the multifaceted Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, or VicHealth, based in Melbourne, Australia. Established in 1987 to encourage better health for Victorians, VicHealth faced the new challenge in 1999 of how to promote good habits for mental health and well-being. Educating publics that mental health meant more than mental illness or disease was only part of the problem. The program's ultimate goal was developing a communications campaign that would also change the environment and create a long-lasting program. With limited resources and a program imperative to reach out to such special populations as those in rural, elderly and aboriginal communities, the "Together We Do Better" campaign had to move beyond billboards and ads to policies that improved lives and environments in measurable ways.

Background of the Problem and the Country

Australia, both a continent and a country, straddles an Eastern geography adjacent to the Pacific Asian rim and a Western cultural sensibility. Credited with being the oldest

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continent in the world geographically, Australia was first home to Aboriginal people, who are believed to have migrated to this continent anywhere between 50,000 and 60,000 years ago (Microsoft Encarta, Population). Remaining virtually isolated from outside cultures for centuries, Australia was the last colonial conquest of the British Empire. In 1788, British Captain Arthur Phillip established the first English penal colony at Sydney Cove (now the site of the modern-day city of Sydney), thereby allowing the first permanent European community to take root (Microsoft Encarta, Ethnic Groups). During the 19th century, spurred by discoveries of new gold deposits on the continent and the establishment of thriving commercial centers around coastal areas, Australia developed a newly emerging sense of nationhood around a resilient group of British colonies. These colonies formed a federated government in January 1901, and today the Commonwealth of Australia comprises six states and two territories, with 91 percent of the total population concentrated in cities and urban centers (Microsoft Encarta, Population). A “federal parliamentary democracy,” Australia has its own federal government while recognizing the British sovereign as its “head of state” (Senevirante).

However, Australia began to forge its own unique cultural identity, fueled partly by an influx throughout the 20th century of immigrants from European countries, such as Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and Greece, as well as later new arrivals from Asian countries such as China, India, the Philippines and New Zealand (Windsor). At the same time, burgeoning European settlements took a dramatic toll on the Aboriginal population, diminishing an estimated 1 million residents in 1788 to roughly 93,000 by 1901 through disease, brutality and cultural assimilation (Feeding the Flames). A century later, one of the challenges contemporary Australia faces is the task of reconciling its colonial past and vastly diverse immigrant communities with the more ancient histories of its indigenous populations. Today, two groups comprise the descendants of the region’s original population: Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people (Microsoft Encarta, Ethnic Groups).

National drives for “racial reconciliation” have been integrated into Australia’s political discourse for many years, bringing focus to some of the challenges inherent in enhancing social and political equity for indigenous Australians. During the 1990s, though, many of these issues rose to new, international levels of scrutiny as Australia prepared to host the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney. Legal agreements dividing mining industry royalties and land titles between indigenous groups and Australia’s federal government came under renewed scrutiny during the mid-1990s. Fearing detrimental changes, some Aboriginal leaders began raising the possibilities of coordinating “massive protests” to coincide with the world audiences expected to celebrate the Olympic Games (Senevirante). To counter charges that the concerns of Aboriginal populations were being ignored, the Federal government responded by announcing new policies focusing on the achievement of “equity in Aboriginal health, housing and employment,” a move that engendered some renewed skepticism and debate (Windsor).

As the time of the prestigious games grew closer, with protests almost certain, some issues began to crystallize. Research and statistics cited in the media showed dramatic differences between Australia's white and black citizens, highlighting increased probabilities for unemployment, higher rates of disease and illness and fewer educational opportunities within Aboriginal communities (Feeding the Flame). By the time the Olympic Games opened in mid - September 2000, well-orchestrated marches and protests wove themselves into the patterns of international athletic competition. Against this national backdrop of racial tension, VicHealth's local campaign to promote better mental health for all Victorians was already underway, incorporating diversity messages that showed how "social connections" and "freedom from discrimination" contributed positively to mental well-being.

In 2001, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared mental health as the main theme for its "World Health Day," putting a global spotlight upon a concern shared by many countries, from newly emergent nations to their more established predecessors. Expanding the definition of mental health beyond just mental disorders, the WHO brought into sharp focus the influences of "all aspects of the emotional, intellectual and spiritual life of a population" upon good mental health values (VicHealth web site). Calling attention to the "Global Burden of Disease," WHO studies noted that fully half of 10 major "causes of disability are related to mental disorders" (VicHealth Annual Report). But on a larger scale, this WHO focus alerted nations to the social consequences of such negative mental health issues as conflict, isolation and poverty, calling attention to the special needs of minorities, women and the elderly. Increased globalization of economic systems and media, as well as the enhanced mobility of people across more national borders, pointed to a potentially new strategic role for public relations practitioners when communicating across cultures.

In Australia's state of Victoria, the "Together We Do Better" campaign offered a unique approach to promoting better mental health through social tolerance, one that quantitatively measured shifts in attitudes and awareness.

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, or VicHealth, was created in 1987, developed around what was then quite a revolutionary concept, according to Ms. Jackie Van Vugt, the agency's director of communications and marketing. A statutory agency with its own Board of Governors, VicHealth was incorporated under the Tobacco Act of 1987 banning the promotion of cigarettes and related products. However, in addition to promoting better health awareness among Australia's citizens, this agency was also designed to minimize the harmful impact of this new restrictive law on community groups, primarily in sports and arts areas, who relied heavily upon tobacco revenues for sponsorships and program support. Initially, part of the tax revenues from tobacco product sales were "dedicated" to a "buyout" arrangement that allowed VicHealth agency funds to buy longstanding sponsorship arrangements. But this arrangement changed over the years, as more recent legal rulings determined that the collection of taxes more properly belonged under federal, not state, auspices. As a result, the sales tax revenues no

longer go directly to VicHealth, but are apportioned from the federal level to the state treasury and then to the agency. But according to Van Vugt, just as the funding has become more challenging over the years, so has the agency's mission:

In the beginning, the regional business of the agency was health promotion messages about stopping smoking, but not exclusively, and that meant messages on billboards and in ads and the like. Part of the evolution of this agency over time has been to move away from billboard advertising and sponsorship of sporting events and that part of it, to health promotion on other levels. So we're not just about promotion of health messages. We are now looking at a whole range of activities, including the investment in research, direct intervention at the community level and work that changes the environment in measurable ways.

(Van Vugt)

An example of this transition would be the agency's funding of activities that might lead to the creation of a nonsmoking policy for members of sports clubs, as opposed to only underwriting specific sports games and competitions.

Administratively, VicHealth activities and programs are overseen by a Board of Governors of 12 to 16 members, drawn largely from government, education and business leadership positions. In addition, the Board extends its network of experts through five board-appointed advisory panels covering such areas as research, sports/recreation and workforce development. A chief operating officer, Dr. Rob Moodie, currently oversees the day-to-day administrative agency tasks carried out through six departments, one of which is Communications and Marketing.

VicHealth's campaign is now in its second phase and is growing in reputation throughout the region as a model for building stronger communities through information and service.

Goals and Objectives of the Campaign

VicHealth's main goal is to improve the health of Victoria's population by promoting strategies for physical, mental and social well-being. (VicHealth web site) The "Together We Do Better" campaign focuses on strategies to improve mental health and well-being; its singular message is that positive, social connections are the key to good mental health. As an analogy, VicHealth seeks to promote the prevention of mental "ill health" through the adoption of good social habits in the same way that health organizations urge the prevention of physical disease through the improvement of diet and exercise routines. And because the ultimate goal is to change behaviors and create a shift in social attitudes and behaviors, the "Together We Do Better" campaign has a long horizon ahead of it before it can claim success.

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The “Together We Do Better” campaign zeroed in on three themes for its first phase (1999-2002) efforts:

- Social connectedness;
- Valuing diversity and ensuring freedom from discrimination and violence;
- Economic participation.

These themes formed a triad of key ideas that the “Together We Do Better” campaign would emphasize in all of its three promotional activities to its key stakeholder groups:

- Decision makers and opinion leaders;
- The general public;
- Affected groups and individuals in their target groups.

The last stakeholder group of “targeted populations,” affected groups and individuals, surfaced as a result of the agency’s extensive research prior to the campaign and its evaluation of both short-term and long-term objectives. Consequently, VicHealth identified five groups as ones on whom the burden of disease and disability, among other factors, would be greatest, and to whom the agency could most successfully direct limited resources to win significant gains. These five groups were:

1. Rural communities
2. Young people
3. Older women and men
4. Koori communities
5. New arrivals to Australia, especially those coming from areas of ethnic conflict

As VicHealth’s communications director noted in a one-page campaign activity sheet, key messages needed to engage all of VicHealth’s publics at the grassroots level. To do this, the “Together We Do Better efforts all coalesced on one central aim: “to get everyone thinking, talking and even doing something about the personal and social benefits of participation—of belonging to a community and of being accepted, respected and included” (Van Vugt).

From this general goal, the campaign identified four objectives for each program activity, promotion message and ad:

1. Encourage discussion on community participation and the community’s capacity and responsibility to facilitate it on all levels
2. Increase general understanding of the benefits of participation
3. Examine existing disincentives to participation -- including individual, organization and structural contexts-- and then model solutions
4. Broaden and strengthen collaboration between organizations and individuals to promote and advocate improved participation

In stage one of VicHealth’s strategic planning for the 21st century, the agency fundamentally changed the way it approached health promotion, shifting its emphasis to creating, sustaining and supporting a statewide network of organizations throughout the

state which could become the sites for implementing the campaign's messages. Outreach to VicHealth's alliance of programs and funded projects created a natural base: whether the organizations were targeting sports, arts, health or education as their primary mission, all were invited to promote the key message that positive involvement led to mentally healthy outcomes. Then, the communication and marketing team provided ads and news release templates and encouraged member organizations to proactively share their successes with their area media. Also, the team planned launches or special events in various areas of the state to help draw media attention to activities. A slide presentation reiterating the reasons for the campaign and incorporating its key messages was useful in helping spread the "Together We Do Better" message to forums, conferences, meetings and similar events.

By making the strong connection, supported by research, that improving social contexts can enhance mental and physical health, the "Together We Do Better" campaign offered tangible ways that people could overcome fears and prejudices and improve their communities. Ultimately, after repeated years of exposure to VicHealth's new messages and programs, campaign planners expect that the success of the "Together We Do Better" campaign would be reflected in lower costs for treatment of such mental health-related conditions as depression, and in a decreased level of reported violence against its targeted populations.

Strategic Tactics and Techniques

VicHealth's "Together We Do Better" campaign is a media-rich, multi-platform effort. Strategic tactics focus on promoting messages and creating policies for change through partnerships established between VicHealth and local agencies and community groups throughout the state.

In its 2001-02 annual report, VicHealth reported a total funding budget of \$21,115,982, representing an investment in 461 projects and underwriting of activities for 366 sporting clubs (VicHealth Annual Report). Since the "Together We Do Better" campaign crosses many of the agency's program areas, a separate campaign budget is difficult to determine. However, VicHealth reported investing 18.06 percent of total grants funds into promoting mental health and well-being, the program area under which the "Together We Do Better" campaign falls, noting that this was the "third highest investment" the agency made, behind tobacco control and physical activity. (VicHealth Annual Report) Another measure of the campaign's resources is to look at the staff assigned directly to promotional activities for the agency. Besides the director, the communications and marketing team has only three other members: coordinators of media, events and publications.

Extensive research, including literature reviews of dominant trends in mental health and health promotion and regional population surveys, provided strong, theoretical bases for the agency's ensuing campaign. For example, an early project two years after

the official start of the “Together We Do Better” campaign was a VicHealth-funded survey of Victorians’ attitudes to bullying. Using a combination of telephone surveys and in-depth interviews, the study polled Victorians about their ideas about bullying, and their experiences with these behaviors. As a result, the agency discovered that while the bullying experience was widespread--nine out of 10 respondents reported experiencing bullying to some degree--the vast majority of those polled did not believe bullying had a place in society. VicHealth recognized this as an opportunity to create messages about how communities could minimize bullying and illustrate the connections between bullying and ill health outcomes, such as stress, anger, intimidation and even violence. The wide release of the study’s results to media throughout the state generated publicity about both the topic of “bullying” and the VicHealth mission.

VicHealth’s communication and marketing team set a broad agenda and developed the key messages that would guide the statewide initiative. Techniques included print ads, billboards, news articles, radio and TV public service announcements, annual reports and a dedicated web site.

In one series of print ads and billboards, the message begins with a question that challenges the readers to engage with others while challenging their own potentials. One ad, for example, asks “Can I learn an alien language?” Accompanying a picture of an older man and younger boys involved in a conversation is copy that targets the key messages of empowerment, belonging and well-being:

With a shared purpose our differences shrink away. And the thrill of achieving something together is just the start of the story. Taking part with others, or making someone else welcome, is the best medicine on earth. It’s the one language everybody understands.

Finally, at the bottom of the ad, the campaign’s signature tag line, “Together We Do Better,” appears in a prominent type font, followed by a “call-to-action” inviting participation and providing the address for the campaign’s web site. Similarly, a series of 30-second radio ads focuses on latent barriers prohibiting involvement such as a fear of taking risks or of potential embarrassment. After a quick acknowledgement of the challenge, the announcer informs listeners that positive social networks yield positive health benefits. As with the print materials, the broadcast messages invite listeners to get involved by going to the campaign’s web site.

An important element in the campaign materials is the web site dedicated to the “Together We Do Better” effort, which is prominently linked to the VicHealth home page. With the campaign site, viewers get to see again in succession the same images that are featured in its public service advertising. Additionally, a “connections” link offers names and contacts for specific clubs, organizations and centers where individuals can get involved, while the “case studies” link provides profiles of successful programs in the state. Though integral to its efforts now, the web site was a bit of an afterthought, created

after the campaign started when staff became deluged with calls and inquiries as media coverage grew.

Results Achieved

VicHealth completed the first stage of the “Together We Do Better” campaign in 2002. The campaign’s success was measured by two general indicators: state program activity and assessment of the broader awareness of the VicHealth program. The campaign measured its local and state impact by tracking publicity hits about campaign messages and programs and through awareness surveys of targeted publics. Successful cases were highlighted on VicHealth’s web site and in annual reports, and the agency’s annual awards program honoring “outstanding achievements in health promotion” each December allows it to single out stellar programs. With its small staff, the agency has devised an inventive way to keep information flowing about what programs in mental health and well-being are taking hold, and which ones need more encouragement. Four times a year, VicHealth’s funded partner organizations throughout the state are invited to its headquarters in Melbourne for program “show and tell” sessions that allow them to share their successes. At that same time, the agency’s marketing and communication staff offers media training sessions, encouraging more reaching out to local media.

From 1999 through 2001, the “Together We Do Better” campaign reported funding 28 activities, including research that targeted its key publics.

Funded activities included a women’s circus, a recreation program for multicultural youth, an indoor walking group targeting older people and a Koori leadership and enterprise learning project.

The “Together We Do Better” campaign is gaining a reputation as a model for other regions interested in starting or improving a broad-based approach to promoting mental health and well-being. VicHealth Director Dr. Rob Moodie attended the 2002 International Network of Health Promotion Foundations in Bangkok, Thailand, facilitating that country’s recent establishment of a health promotion foundation based upon the VicHealth model. Melbourne was also chosen as the site for the 2004 World Health Promotion Conference.

The second stage of the campaign, launched in 2003, is shaped by a planning document, “Strategic Directions 2003-2006,” that outlines four more years of activities and programs. Building upon its past success, the agency has identified goals and objectives for the second three years of its initiatives. These include:

- Increase the evidence base for promoting mental health;
- Develop the skill base and resources of communities, organizations and individuals to sustain mental health promotion activity;
- Consolidate mental health promotion within policies across a range of sectors;
- Increase the broader community understanding of the importance of obtaining and

maintaining mental health (VicHealth Strategic Directions).

Conclusion

“Together We Do Better” is a successful campaign that offers a good model for public relations practitioners working in any arena who want to partner with local community agencies and use innovative methods to quantify increased awareness and improved attitudes. Research about the practice of public relations in Australia is limited, but one study (Singh and Smyth) outlines a key challenge facing the profession in the 21st century, the need to position the practice as a “strategic” instead of a “support” function. The VicHealth campaign can be seen as part of the leading edge in the emergence of strategic public relations practice in Australia.

Mental health and well-being will loom as a major issue for both emerging countries and more established societies, although the challenges are unique for each. Poverty and lack of economic opportunity for citizens negatively affect access to healthcare of all kinds. (Walsh and Johnson, Tsey, Whiteside, Deemal and Gibson) At the same time, research strongly suggests that well-developed societies are no better off in fostering good mental health (McNatt), as increased levels of stress and depression are seen as factors diminishing the economic advantages of wealthy nations.

At the same time that mental health wellness is gaining more prominence as a top issue, the field of health promotion continues to refine its techniques. Practitioners balance the need for information about disease with a renewed imperative to aggressively promote prevention strategies. (Cole and Wyn, Cahill, Holdsworth, Rowling, and Carson)

As information sources increase, so do the opportunities to communicate information effectively to publics from all backgrounds. Diversity approaches and tactics that speak to multicultural audiences in their own contexts can be made part of campaigns (Carstarphen and Wells), and there are successful health promotion strategies targeted at hard-to-access populations. (Fine and Demakis, Clarke, and Walsh and Johnson) However, VicHealth’s “Together We Do Better” campaign has pioneered the work that many organizations are still learning how to do. Chief among innovations in health promotion is its commitment to redefine the message about mental health issues to include an emphasis on preventive strategies and wellness goals. Another important component is the agency’s recognition that while targeted approaches to special populations are important, the key message about social connectedness must include majority audiences as well, so that they will support the messages about inclusion in meaningful ways.

From newly emergent nations to their more established predecessors, making communities work better culturally within diverse frameworks is becoming a priority issue. (Chua, Wel and Tilburg) VicHealth’s “Together We Do Better Campaign” offers a

model for improved relations in all communities through the promotion of better mental health empowerment strategies.

TEACHING NOTE

Purpose of the Case Study

1. To give students an understanding of a comprehensive promotional campaign run by a nonprofit agency, particularly highlighting a situation where programming efforts must work in concert with local, national and international governing bodies.
2. To invite students to consider the impact of targeted messages promoting social connectedness upon communities.
3. To highlight innovative accomplishments in mental health promotion, where the message has expanded from disease and treatment, to lifestyle modification and proactive intervention.
4. To encourage students to consider more strategically how messages can be communicated to diverse publics within large communities

Suggestions for Teaching the Case in Class Sessions

In a session prior to their review of this case, students should have an opportunity to consider the differences between disseminating health information about a disease or crisis and information about health and well-being. Engage students in a discussion about a current medical health issue/crisis that may be in the news, such as the SARS epidemic, mad cow disease, flu outbreaks and so on. Next, once they've identified with a crisis topic, invite them to discuss what kind of messages they would create for their publics if they were in charge of the public relations campaign. Some responses should include information and facts about the seriousness of the crisis, steps to take if concerned and availability of treatments.

Next, invite the students to apply the same process to preventing a physical condition, such as obesity. What messages would they create, and how would these differ from their "crisis" messages? Some responses might point out that while the issue may be important, it would be hard to communicate the same level of urgency with this. Also, they may bring up the role of positive, encouraging messages that can encourage people to change lifestyles. At the same time, they should be able to consider how much more challenging it would be to point the public to specific, not-for-profit solutions on a grassroots level.

Finally, for both of these hypothetical campaigns, they should be encouraged to discuss the following: media that would be best suited for reaching their publics and the special challenges involved in identifying and reaching minority publics.

Prior to the next class session, encourage students to do their own research about mental health issues. A prime source would be the World Health Organization's web site, or some of the articles listed in the bibliography for this case. The goal would be to get students to become conversant with some definitions and concepts about mental health and well-being, as well as with what researchers have discovered are the contributing factors to mental "ill health."

In class, invite students to share their findings and information so that the class has a common body of knowledge about the subject. Then, in teams, invite them to link what they've learned about potential cause of mental "ill health" to possible at-risk populations on their campus. They should be encouraged to think about targeted populations that fit their contexts, as VicHealth has done. Some possibilities might include:

- Ethnic minorities, particularly if there have been recent tensions
- Gender groups who might be isolated (such as homosexual)
- Returning students who might feel "disconnected" from their younger classmates
- First time students from small communities who might be facing new challenges away from home
- Commuter students.

Finally, invite the groups to summarize their ideas and suggest specific tactics. Encourage them to come up with actual "tag-lines" along with suggestions about specific media they would use. What kind of communications plan would they develop?

Questions for Discussion of the Case

Students should be able to place the challenges faced by the "Together We Do Better" campaign in a localized context, suggesting reasons why this effort could have relevance to all kinds of communities. To sum up, a few suggestion questions can help them crystallize their understanding of the issues and the case:

1. What are the critical issues addressed in this case?
2. Who are the main stakeholders and why?
3. Why did "targeted populations" have to become central to the success of the overall campaign?
4. What were the key messages?
5. How were various media used and why?
6. What is the difference between promoting health issues versus promoting health initiatives? How does this distinction relate to the work VicHealth has done?

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**Sewing up a Torn Image: Hill & Knowlton Responds to a
Crisis in the Garment Industry**

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Executive Summary

Responding to allegations made on “Hard Copy,” a tabloid news show on U.S. television, a Taiwanese garment manufacturer turned to Hill & Knowlton’s international division to help solve a big problem--false accusations and the possible loss of key accounts. The television show claimed that companies in Nicaragua’s free trade zone were abusing and harming workers. Major U.S. clothing buyers responded quickly by asking the garment maker to provide volumes of information about its own treatment of workers. The company’s owner wanted and needed public relations help to ensure social responsibility and the retention of clients. Otherwise, jobs would be lost and the company might suffer unrecoverable losses.

Hill & Knowlton needed to explore the situation to ensure that the Taiwanese garment manufacturer was indeed conducting business in a socially responsible way. Not only did Hill & Knowlton determine that the company did not abuse or harm employees, but it learned that the garment manufacturer was dealing with political forces in a volatile environment.

The agency, in a five-day period, reacted quickly by assessing the situation, establishing goals and objectives, defining key publics and making recommendations that were implemented. All its objectives were achieved.

The Problem

“Hard Copy,” a tabloid television show with wide viewership in the United States, aired a story that ran for three days from Nov. 11 to Nov. 13, 1997. The investigative team from “Hard Copy,” working with an activist group called the National Labor Committee, made a series of damaging allegations against the companies in Nicaragua’s state-owned Las Mercedes Free Trade Zone. Some of the charges included underpaying workers, employing children and forcing employees to work up to 13 hours a day, seven days a week. The broadcast also claimed that workers were not paid for overtime; were verbally, physically, and sexually abused by supervisors and managers; were exposed to dangerous chemicals; and were housed in deplorable conditions.

The report also said that solvents, dyes and bleach were allowed to drain freely into open areas and containment barrels were allowed to rust. “Hard Copy” depicted the free trade zone as an area resembling a prison with electrical fences and armed guards. The broadcast recommended that viewers avoid purchasing goods or products manufactured in Nicaragua and urged them to write their elected representatives to oppose department stores that might buy goods from Nicaragua.

The “Hard Copy” reports generated immediate media coverage by other U.S. news organizations, particularly in the Hispanic community. Two of the largest television stations in the Los Angeles market that target Latinos, KMEX and KVEA, ran stories about the alleged working conditions in the Nicaraguan free trade zone.

This issue had first surfaced about a year earlier when Witness for Peace, a religious group based in Washington, D.C., sponsored an eight-city U.S. tour of six Nicaraguan apparel workers to publicize their working conditions. In an Oct. 7, 1996 article in *Women's Wear Daily*, Cesar Zamora, a commercial counselor with the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington, is quoted as saying, "We have had problems with the Taiwanese."

In 1997, the apparel industry came under a much-publicized attack when Charles Kernaghan, president of the National Labor Committee, accused Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. of using low-paid Honduran workers to produce the Kathie Lee Gifford clothing line. The National Labor Committee appears to be an advocacy group promoting the interests of labor in the United States. Its board of directors is comprised mostly of clergy, academics and U.S. labor representatives, including individuals from the AFL-CIO and the Union of Needletrades, Industrial & Textile Employees.

Background

After more than a decade of civil conflict and state control of its economy, Nicaragua now is free from Communist rule. The country is no longer under the influence of Cuba, the U.S.S.R. and former President Daniel Ortega. In 1990, the first democratic president, Violetta Chamorro, was elected. Her administration was business driven and realized Nicaragua's limited production capabilities. As leader of one of the most impoverished countries in the world, she developed economic policies to revitalize the country by calling for foreign investors. Hence, the government re-designated a region south of the capital, Managua, as a free trade zone where companies could produce and export goods. Other countries, such as Korea and Mexico, have done the same in an effort to stimulate their own economies.

Back in 1976, the Las Mercedes Free Trade Zone in Nicaragua was first opened with eight companies and 3,000 employees. The Sandiistas shut down the free trade zone in 1979, converting it into a prison where inmates produced boots under the Pronto brand name until 1989. In 1991, President Chamorro reopened the free trade zone in an attempt to stimulate the stagnant economy. The government invited investors to establish businesses in the free trade zone. Investors were given special considerations, including tax breaks and 100 percent foreign ownership of plants in Nicaragua. *NicaNews*, a Nicaraguan newspaper, quoted Gilberto Wong, manager of the free trade zone, as saying, "the move attracted foreign investment and created employment opportunities for work-starved Nicaraguans" (Nov. 17-30, 1997; p. 6). Seventeen entrepreneurs from Taiwan, Canada, Italy and the United States set up their companies in the free trade zone, totaling over \$50 million in investments. Most represented the garment industry and generated about 18,000 jobs. The firms supply clothing to many major U.S. retailers, including Montgomery Ward and Polo Ralph Lauren. *Women's Wear Daily* reported that the U.S.

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Customs Service valued the country's apparel imports at \$10.7 million in 1993 and that Nicaragua exported \$67 million worth of apparel in 1995.

One of the companies in the free trade zone targeted by the National Labor Committee was a Taiwanese manufacturer that produces denim and denim products. The company has three facilities in Nicaragua and employs 3,600 workers, mostly women from Nicaragua. About 130 of the women are from Taiwan. Most managers are Taiwanese men and the supervisors are mainly Taiwanese women. As one of the largest producers of denim in the world, the company was contacted immediately following the "Hard Copy" broadcast by some of its largest clients: Wal-Mart, JCPenney and Kinart. These and other U.S. businesses generate about \$150 million in sales for the Taiwanese garment manufacturer. Buyers from the U.S. retailers pulled their orders until the garment maker responded to the allegations made by "Hard Copy."

Understandably, apparel buyers, continuously under scrutiny to address sweatshop allegations, want to be assured that suppliers do not exploit workers. With more than 6,000 suppliers, JCPenney Co. outlines its policies in a legal compliance program booklet for suppliers. JCPenney suppliers and their contractors are required to maintain the same level of legal compliance and ethical business practices in all activities as JCPenney. Excerpts from the booklet are as follows:

"JCPenney's purchase contracts explicitly require our suppliers to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including those of the United States and those of any foreign country in which the merchandise is manufactured or from which it is exported. Our contracts also require all suppliers to impose the same obligation on their contractors....

Based on these expectations, if we receive notice from the U.S. Department of Labor or any state or foreign government labor authority that a factory being used by a JCPenney supplier has violated applicable labor laws, we will direct the immediate suspensions of all shipments of merchandise to JCPenney from the factory....

As soon as JCPenney discovers or learns of a potential or alleged legal violation by a supplier or its contractors, we will notify the supplier, fully investigate the situation, and, if we determine that the allegations are supported by credible evidence, take corrective action. If the supplier does not cooperate in the investigation, the result will be the termination of our relationship with the supplier."

Therefore, the garment manufacturer received detailed requests from its concerned clients. Buyers wanted the names of the factories and their general managers; descriptions of the legal compliance policies, programs, and procedures; roster of the workers for each factory, including birth dates of workers, wages, hours worked, and overtime payment; and the results of inspections or investigations by Nicaraguan labor

authorities, U.S. Embassy officials, free trade zone officials or any outside mandatory enforcement agency. One such request came from JC Penney on Nov. 14. The garment manufacturer had one week to respond with satisfactory answers or ties could be forever severed with the company.

The owner of the company immediately contacted Hill & Knowlton to help resolve this problem. Hill & Knowlton is the second largest public relations agency in the world, with 48 offices in 28 countries. The Hispanic group in the international division of Hill & Knowlton in Los Angeles was given the assignment. Alan Elias, senior managing director, and Miguel Medina, senior consultant, headed the account team.

Goals and Objectives

Hill & Knowlton set goals to ensure the success of the program. They were the following:

- To determine if the company was conducting its business according to Nicaraguan law;
- To ensure that employees were treated fairly;
- To ensure that employees were working under safe conditions;
- To ensure that the company is conducting business in a socially responsible way;
- To provide accurate, detailed information in a timely manner to buyers of the company's products;
- To survey the political environment in Nicaragua and enlist the support of Nicaraguan officials.

Hill & Knowlton set the following objectives:

- To retain the garment manufacturer's current clients;
- To provide the company's clients with full disclosure of information;
- To save the jobs of the company's employees;
- To reinforce existing policies to the employees;
- To increase the level of communication between supervisors and workers.

Hill & Knowlton targeted three key publics for this effort. They included the following:

1. Employees of the Taiwanese garment manufacturer, including managers, supervisors and factory workers
2. Buyers of the company's products, especially those who were concerned because of the allegations made on "Hard Copy"
3. Officials of the Nicaraguan government

Strategic Tactics and Techniques

The first tactic was research. Hill & Knowlton first needed to explore the situation in order to determine a course of action. The account team gathered information from the “Hard Copy” report and became apprised of the political situation in Nicaragua. They found there were two different political interests there. One group seemed to be comprised of the new government of Nicaragua and the new press, and the other of the Sandinistas, the Sandiista press and the National Labor Committee. Officials with the Nicaraguan government felt that forces were trying to deter the development of Nicaragua because jobs were being lost in the United States and given to Nicaraguans. Mexico was under fire much in the same way when the United States lost 6,000 jobs when Levi Strauss moved to Mexico.

The agency questioned the General Consul of Nicaragua in Los Angeles who provided insight. Hill & Knowlton also phoned the Nicaraguan Secretary of Labor and Manager of the Free Trade Zone for information about the situation.

The Hill & Knowlton team set some research goals for the senior consultant’s trip to Nicaragua: to assess the situation thoroughly by reviewing company records, inspecting the sites, interviewing workers, visiting with inspection officials and meeting with supervisors and managers. After consulting with Elias, Medina would make recommendations and plan a course of action.

On Nov. 15, 1997, Medina traveled to Nicaragua and began his investigation. When he arrived on Sunday, Medina decided to tour the garment manufacturer’s facilities because “Hard Copy” reported employees were working seven days a week. Born and raised in Mexico City, Medina found this “Hard Copy” allegation unusual. Sharing the same heritage, he knew that Sundays were held sacred by most in his culture. Therefore, he was not surprised to find no employees, except for a security guard, working that day.

During his stay in Nicaragua, Medina talked with managers and workers. He found that most employees work a Monday through Friday schedule. Occasionally, they work on Saturday and seldom, if ever, work on a Sunday. Employee time sheets and other records supported the oral reports and also reflected that the company paid overtime to all factory workers.

In Nicaragua, the minimum wage set by the government for the textile industry is 500 cordovas a month. After reviewing the records of hours worked and payment received, he found no worker earning under 550 cordovas. In fact, most earned two to three times that amount-- money that can go far in the Nicaraguan economy. Employees were rewarded for producing more than expected and were paid overtime, according to standards set by Nicaraguan law, if they worked more than nine hours and 35 minutes a day or 48 hours per week.

Moreover, he found a 29-page internal guide for all workers, approved by the Nicaraguan government that outlined the obligations and rights of the workers. All workers received the document. Policies in the document addressed breaks, vacations, overtime, working conditions, health and safety issues, obligations and rights of the employees and of management, and disciplinary actions.

Medina discovered that, indeed, the free trade zone area was fenced as had been described on “Hard Copy.” The location was once used as a jail by the Sandinistas, and later the buildings were converted into factories in an attempt to use existing resources. Unlike prison walls, the fence resembled the kind used around a tennis court.

Medina inspected the hazardous materials area where the denim was dyed and washed. On each machine, he found posted procedures for safety. The instructions outlined how to handle the materials and operate the machine safely.

When inspecting the drum storage area, he found about 25 drums clustered together without any particular order. A few were rusted since they were outside, exposed to the frequent rains in Nicaragua.

Employees in the washing and dying area were questioned about their use of goggles, gloves and protective vests. All used goggles and the protective vest, but a few reported not using the gloves because they did not like doing so.

Hill & Knowlton found that the garment manufacturer had passed all safety inspections by the Nicaraguan government. The last inspection was dated Oct. 20, 1997, by the General Inspector of Labor.

When Medina visited the facilities on Monday when most of the workers were present, he made random selections of employees who looked particularly young. Although he had reviewed all employment sheets and found no workers under 18, he wanted to investigate the matter firsthand in case information was falsified. Each of the workers provided birth certificates. Only two were 19 years old. Of the 3,600 workers, only about 45 were 18 years old. Records showed no one under 18 was ever employed at any of the factories.

He met with women from the three facilities to investigate charges of sexual and behavioral misconduct. None of the women reported any such behavior. A few had been inspected by a woman guard during random checks to deter stealing. (Company merchandise was found to be sold illegally in the local markets of Nicaragua; therefore, the company randomly checked employees for smuggling garments out of the factory.)

Hill & Knowlton determined from its research that the garment manufacturer was abiding by Nicaraguan law and was respectful of employees. Primary and secondary research revealed that employees were treated well and policies were followed in almost

all cases. Therefore, the company's U.S. buyers had to be informed of these positive facts in a timely manner. If not, the company would lose its major accounts and thus employees would lose their jobs.

Medina held a meeting with the company manager, the three facility managers, factory supervisors and the company's Nicaraguan attorney to discuss recommendations. Hill & Knowlton recommended increased interpersonal communication between supervisors and workers and the use of direct media.

Hill & Knowlton recommended the following actions, which were implemented: The rusted barrels were replaced by new ones and the storage area was moved inside. Drums were organized by date, and when filled, they were deposed immediately according to government regulations.

Employees had to be made to use all protective gear, including gloves. If they did not adhere to the policy, they had to lose their jobs. Therefore, all were instructed by their supervisors to follow health regulations and use the protective gear. The Hill & Knowlton team, supervised by Elias, developed written guidelines that were distributed to all workers, and the agency produced a poster that was prominently placed in the factories. Materials were produced in both Spanish and Chinese. Copy from the "Safety and Health Protection on the Job" poster is as follows:

It is the Responsibility of the Company to:

- Provide work and workplaces that are safe for our employees.
- Follow all laws and company policies governing job safety and health.
- Have an effective injury prevention program for our employees.
- Make our employees aware of any hazards they may face on the job and keep records showing that each employee has been trained in the hazards unique to each job assignment.
- Provide employees working with any hazardous or caustic chemicals proper safety equipment.
- Work to correct any hazardous condition that we know may result in injury to employees.
- Display this poster so everyone on the job can be aware of basic rights and responsibilities.

The Company Will Not:

- Permit an employee to be exposed to harmful substances without providing adequate protection.
- Allow an untrained employee to perform hazardous work.

Employees Have Certain Rights in Workplace Safety & Health:

- As an employee you have a right to file a complaint with management to request an inspection of your workplace if conditions there are unsafe or unhealthful.
- An employee may not be fired or punished in any way for filing a complaint about unsafe or unhealthful working conditions.

Employee Responsibilities:

- To keep the workplace and your co-workers safe, you should immediately tell your manager about any hazard that could result in an injury or illness to people on the job.

Even though no problems surfaced in these areas, Hill & Knowlton developed employee handouts about sexual harassment, safety and health procedures, wage policies and age requirements. Posters were developed and placed in strategic locations around the factories. In turn, managers met with supervisors to review these policies, and supervisors formally met with their workers. Hill & Knowlton also developed an age verification form to further ensure employee compliance with age requirements.

In addition, Hill & Knowlton advised the client to ensure that all working standards set by the United States be followed, even if they were not required by the Nicaraguan government. Therefore, the company put in place a stringent approach to policy making.

Media also met with Gilberto Wong, manager of the free trade zone. Since the owner of the garment manufacturing company wanted the government to deal with the media, Medina met with Wong and provided him with the Hill & Knowlton findings. He also helped him prepare press statements. On Nov. 18, Wong gave interviews to the press, and the other side of the story was told in the Nicaraguan media.

A two-inch thick report prepared by the Hill & Knowlton account team was forwarded to each of the retail buyers who was a client of the manufacturer. The report included a two-page summary sheet, a question-and-answer allegation response sheet (Exhibit 1) and all supporting data for in-depth analysis.

Results Achieved

Hill & Knowlton analyzed the press coverage. In Nicaragua, coverage in the new press was favorable. The Sandiista press made little attempt to cover the story. There were few follow-up reports in the U.S. media.

Two companies, Wal-Mart and Kids International Corp., sent representatives to the factories for their own inspections. In fact, Wal-Mart gave the factories ratings of 92 and 80 on its visits. A score of 70 is considered satisfactory.

No orders were lost, and business for the Taiwanese garment manufacturer continued as usual. Moreover, no jobs were lost. In a country with unemployment rates upward of 40 percent and where 100 workers apply for just one job opening, Nicaragua needs employment opportunities for its people.

In five days, Hill & Knowlton was able to assess a volatile situation and make recommendations that strengthened existing policies by reinforcing communication channels. The achievement of the objectives meant that business was not lost and jobs were saved.

Exhibit 1

Response to Hard Copy Allegations

The following are our responses to the allegations made by Hard Copy. While we recognize that their report did not center on any specific company, we want to make it abundantly clear that with regards to our company's operations, all of the allegations are completely without merit.

Allegation: "Workers in these factories are paid a base wage of 15 cents per hour, which is said to be below subsistence level."

Fact: Minimum wage in Nicaragua for textile workers is \$500 pesos/month. The minimum wage paid to newly hired, untrained workers at our company is \$550 pesos, with the average employee of ours earning approximately \$1200 pesos per month.

Allegation: "Workers, in some cases, are as young as 15."

Fact: Our company has a strict minimum age policy, which requires all hires to show proof (most Nicaraguans use birth certificates) that they are at least 18 years of age. In addition, all hires are required to sign an affidavit (enclosed) further verifying their age. If, at any time, an underage worker is discovered, employment is immediately terminated.

Allegation: "Workers are forced to work as many as 13 hours a day, seven days a week."

Fact: The standard workday is 9 hours thirty-five minutes/day, Monday through Friday. If, on occasion, the production schedule is heavy, workers are asked to work overtime--for which they are compensated at two times their regular, hourly salary.

Allegation: "Workers are denied overtime pay."

Fact: This is absolutely false. All employees working more than 9 hours and thirty-five minutes in a single day, or 48 hours in a week, are paid overtime at a rate of two-times their regular, hourly salary. ****Documentation attached****

Allegation: "Workers are verbally, physically and sexually abused by their supervisors."

Fact: Absolutely false. Our company has a strong anti-harassment policy, which we enforce. The policy -- attached -- informs workers to report such behavior to a manager, without fear of reprisal.

Allegation: "Workers are exposed to dangerous chemicals."

Fact: All employees, whose job involves working with the chemicals necessary for our factory production, are a) provided safety gear (including gloves, goggles, masks and aprons) and b) are provided training in the safe handling and use of these chemicals.

Allegation: "The Free Trade Zone uses barbed wire fences and armed guards to keep the workers in and visitors out."

Fact: The government of Nicaragua, in working to protect the investments of the Free Trade Zone as well as to protect its workers, set up fences around the zone. Our employees have identification badges and must pass by guards--just as large American and other international companies do in securing their facilities. Our employees are free to leave the Zone during their lunch breaks, if they so choose.

Allegation: "Bleach, solvents and dyes are washed into outdoor, open pits."

Fact: Our company strictly meets and exceeds all Nicaraguan environmental laws. All chemicals used in our production are disposed of properly, with our employees trained in the use of those chemicals. **A copy of our workplace safety policy is attached for your review.**

Allegation: "Empty, rusted barrels of chemicals are stored in the open and not in controlled areas."

Fact: As stated above, our company strictly meets or exceeds all Nicaraguan environmental safety laws. Furthermore, we do not store any dangerous chemicals in non-controlled areas.

Allegation: "The workers' housing conditions are substandard."

Fact: We pay our employees wages that are, on average, far above the minimum wage for textile workers and other industries in Nicaragua. Just as is the case in the United States and other democratic countries around the world, it is up to the individual employee to make his or her own decisions regarding housing.

**Against the Grain: Zambia's Hunger Crisis and the
Controversy over Genetically Modified Food**

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Executive Summary

On the verge of a severe hunger crisis during August 2002, countries in sub-Saharan Africa had to confront a major policy choice: whether or not to accept genetically modified (GM) food aid. Initially, several were reluctant but eventually decided in favor. One country – Zambia – resolutely held out against. The controversy revolved around several key dimensions, most notably the possibility of unknown risk to human health and the environment and fear of adverse economic impact from loss of export markets to Europe, which had banned imports of GM food. Opponents also charged that the United States was using developing nations as a dumping ground for surplus GM maize.

Zambia became something of a flash point for an already polarized debate. The arguments pro and con contained subtleties that went well beyond simple summaries, and the narrative for this case illustrates both the range of perspectives and the confusing nature of the issue, which has caused doubt about providing GM food aid even in the minds of members of the scientific community. Rather than approach the situation from the perspective of a single organization, this case takes a policy analysis approach to understanding the multiple interests at odds over the issue. It reviews the thinking and actions by many of the major players – government, industry, the agricultural community, scientists both for and against, consumers and the international aid community – and their interactions with one another. The case illustrates some of the problems with communicating complex scientific information publicly under the pressure of having to make decisions absent a complete understanding of the impact of either the science itself or the decisions in progress.

Among all of the stakeholders analyzed, several already are engaged in or plan to develop educational or awareness programs supporting their viewpoints. One stakeholder category, pro- GM scientists, now recognizes more clearly the kind of role scientists can play in creating awareness of *both* the benefits and the risks, not only of genetic engineering but of the full range of technologies that comprise biotechnology. Prompted in large part by the events described herein, what is emerging for the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia is the beginning of a program that, in effect, is a comprehensive public relations plan tailored to what people know, think and do.

Problem Statement

Facing the worst drought in 60 years and the worst famine in 20 (Masci, 2002), several nations in southern Africa have been trying to stave off mass starvation while a potential solution to the hunger crisis embroiled them in controversy. For one of those countries, Zambia, thousands of tons of food aid in the form of genetically modified (GM) corn from the U.S. were offered and shipped late in 2002, only to sit undistributed to those in greatest need. Government officials feared the unintentional spread of GM plantings that might further threaten Zambian food exports to Europe, which had a ban on importing GM food. While neighboring Zimbabwe and Malawi placed a condition on

accepting such food aid – that the GM maize could be accepted and distributed provided it was first milled so that the kernels could no longer be used as seed – Zambia held its ground rejecting the corn shipments, citing uncertainties about the safety of the product for human health.

The problem extends beyond the surface debate about the science of whether GM food is safe to the role of a sovereign developing nation caught in a trade conflict between the U.S. and the European Union. It isn't only the health and environmental effects of GM food that are in question; the relationship between a small nation at risk and the powers of the developed world also is a concern.

How the Zambian government communicated during this crisis and the parallel communication efforts by international relief organizations, internal government agencies, international economic bodies, the agricultural industries, small farmers at home, NGOs and other stakeholder groups provides insight into communication and policy-making under pressure. Rather than examining the problem from the point of view of a single organization, this case takes a multi-stakeholder approach. What follows is an account of the strain among many interests that was built over a long period of time. Given the limitations of the case format, this narrative will not attempt to describe the strong feelings triggered by those desperate to relieve the stress of constant hunger and poverty and the diplomatic clashes of making economic policy from competing perspectives. But it is a significant backdrop against which to consider how to resolve this complex economic and cultural problem.

The approach used in this case is a continuing analysis of current policy on an issue that is still not resolved. It affords an opportunity to consider in depth the GM food question, a lightning rod for several other interrelated issues alluded to above, and also to consider the social, political, economic and cultural context. In the current situation, organizations representing different interests have made decisions with varying outcomes, both good and bad. Rather than focusing on a single organization, the following sections integrate some of the thinking from a range of these interests.

Background

The context

One of sub-Saharan Africa's most urbanized countries, Zambia is still emerging from a colonial legacy of mismanagement and a weak political structure in the years since achieving independence from Great Britain in 1964. (Smyth) Corruption has remained prevalent despite free elections and new political leadership. (United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks) Life expectancy is about age 35, and the literacy rate is about two-thirds of the residents. (United States Department of State [Background Note](#)) The agriculture sector counted for 85 percent of total employment in 2000, with ample prospects to increase agricultural output. But weak transportation infrastructure into the rural areas and flawed choices in economic management, including

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which crops to plant, meant that drought and flooding in various parts of the country, poor harvests and depletion of strategic grain reserves inevitably would lead to problems achieving food security nationwide. In recent years the country also has accepted an influx of refugees escaping civil strife in Angola and the Congo.

In combination, these factors led to a potentially severe hunger crisis. At the height of the crisis, in 2002, between 2.5 and 3 million Zambians were at risk out of a total population of 10 million. The situation was further complicated by the devastating impact of AIDS affecting the most productive age groups, adults in their prime physical capability for working their farms. On top of that, debate grew over which form of economic assistance might best provide relief, i.e., direct food aid, money, trade or some combination of these approaches.

When the crisis first began to unfold, the environment for planting and advancing the use of genetically modified (GM) crops was not good. Thanks to illiteracy in the rural areas, lack of interest and a lack of significant investment or dialogue on scientific research and development, there was little public awareness of biotechnology, whether agricultural or otherwise. (Chinsembu & Kambikambi, 2001) Little opportunity existed for communication among scientists, government and the public on matters of food and environmental safety.

This situation presented a unique combination of communication challenges. Crisis by nature dictates a heightened awareness of salient issues. Part of the debate and the dialectical sequence of events revolved not only around technological capabilities and outcomes but also what one writer called “the right to culturally acceptable and safe food.” (McEwan, 2003) Power issues between urban and rural stakeholders, and between the developed and the developing world, also deepened.

Pratt (2003) discussed in depth the precedence in Africa of communal over individual loyalties. Consensus, common good and mutuality of interests are additional values, with an opportunity for all stakeholders to become involved in communication “for social well-being and self-improvement.” (p. 453) These ideas establish some of the context in which the GM food conflict has developed.

What happened

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) had been closely monitoring the food shortage situation in southern Africa since December 2001. Up to 14.4 million people in six countries – Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe – would need some form of humanitarian food aid through the following year’s harvest. Early in 2002, USAID pledged it would deliver nearly 500,000 metric tons of food aid valued at more than \$276 million, making the U.S. government the largest donor to the United Nations’ World Food Program (WFP) efforts in southern Africa.

Matters came to a head during the summer of 2002 when these nations expressed reluctance to accept genetically modified maize as food aid. Eventually most agreed to permit it provided the kernels first were milled so that they would be unsowable. Only Zambia held out resolutely against it in any form.

Not that agricultural biotechnology was completely forbidden within the country. At the University of Zambia (UNZA) in Lusaka, some researchers already were studying plant biotech. In 2000, Zambia had participated in the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nairobi, where 64 governments and the European Community had signed the Cartagena Protocol for Biosafety. Representatives recognized the potential of biotechnology to boost agricultural production yet at the same time found sufficient cause for concern that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) could enter the environment and upset the natural ecological balance. The Cartagena Protocol established disclosure standards for exporters and permitted nations to reject shipments of GM food from other signatories on the basis of the precautionary principle. (Myers, 2000) Briefly, this principle allows taking action to prevent harm to human health and the environment even if scientific evidence about cause and effect is inconclusive. African countries pleaded desperately with developed nations to give priority to helping them build capacity so they could implement the Cartagena Protocol. The U.S. did not sign this agreement.

Research

In 2001, Panos, a research institute that seeks to stimulate informed debate about development among different social groups, organized focus group discussions together with the Zambia National Farmers' Union (ZNFU). (Madihlaba, 2003) One of the oldest and largest associations in the country, ZNFU seeks unity to enable the 150,000-plus farmers it represents, both small-scale and commercial, to determine and drive change. Although the organization aims for utilitarian policies that reflect the greatest good for the largest number of members, the thinking in the focus groups was clearly divided on the GM food issue. Small-scale farmers wanted more information about agricultural biotechnology, while commercial producers opposed GM crops for fear of losing existing non-GM exports to Europe.

During the 2001 Annual Congress, ZNFU mandated formation of the ZNFU GMO Committee to represent these diverse viewpoints. At the committee's first meeting, members still did not reach consensus and decided first to explore levels of understanding of the full membership. Concurrently, the committee looked into biotechnology and biosafety policy from other countries in the region including the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

In January 2002, ZNFU began its in-depth study (Gregory & Simwanda, 2002) with meetings in various parts of the country. Representatives of different ZNFU stakeholder groups participated, expressing their views on the benefits and risks associated with adoption of GM crops in Zambia. Meetings sought to clarify issues and to correct misunderstandings. In addition, the meetings involved personnel from

government ministries, departments and research institutions, as well as from private companies, parastatals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), district farmers' associations and the ZNFU secretariat. The outside consultants who conducted these meetings for ZNFU also visited with local representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the European Union (EU) and USAID.

A month later, the consultants presented a summary of the issues that had arisen during the previous separate meetings at a half-day workshop in Lusaka. Here, too, both stakeholders' representatives and the international development community attended and most had been consulted during the preceding series of meetings. To form the basis for a position on biotechnology, the consultants presented recommendations that the full ZNFU adopted unanimously. The intent was for ZNFU to use these recommendations during discussions with the Zambian government as the National Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy was under development.

Since all members believed the level of awareness of both the potential benefits and risks associated with GM crops was low, an awareness campaign was a key recommendation. (Gregory & Simwanda, 2002) This would provide information to all stakeholders as an improved basis for decision-making. ZNFU should seek funding from the international development community to support this effort. Small-scale farmers should be involved in every step and ZNFU's magazine, the *Zambian Farmer*, should be used as an educational tool. Public participation was considered a guiding principle throughout the consultants' report, with the National Biosafety Authority required to make information available to the public regarding research, development, use and commercialization of GMOs or related products. A public comment period would be required as well.

Interestingly, the consultants advised that further national stakeholders' consultations should be canceled. Their reasoning was that the structure did not produce the intended results because participants had little knowledge about the issue. A better structure, they felt, would be under the auspices of the ZNFU committee, which should eventually become a representative pressure group.

The problem heats up

As the food shortage worsened in Zambia, Vice President Enock Kavindele convened an open meeting in June with the WFP, to which he invited 10 tribal chiefs. This conference overwhelmingly rejected GM food aid. (Ho, 2002a)

The government called for a national consultation on whether the country should accept GM food aid. Citizens participated in meetings, and in interactive radio and television programs. Both residents and Zambians who lived outside the country wrote letters on the issue to newspaper editors. This deliberation led next to a government-sponsored public debate on August 12. (Lewanika, 2003; Bohannon, 2002) Zambian scientists themselves were deeply divided. Two pro-GM scientists from UNZA, Dr. Luke

Mumba and Dr. Fastone Goma, complained of being left out of the planning committee for this debate. (Madihlaba, 2003)

A few days later, the Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre and the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (2002) issued a report recommending no introduction of GM maize into Zambia. Bernadette Lubozhya, the report's researcher who was an agro-scientist herself, supported maintaining the government's initial position, yet also recommended wide public discussion of the National Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy that was under consideration. She also recommended immediate steps to build capacity to test agricultural products and detect introduction of GMOs.

Relief shipments already had arrived in the country by this time and were stored in warehouses awaiting distribution.

But on August 16, Zambia's President Levy Mwanawasa stopped distribution of GM food already in the country. (Ho, 2002b) The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was coming up soon in Johannesburg, South Africa, and this action would set off considerable drama between developed and developing countries. USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios visited Zambia en route to WSSD; Mwanawasa reaffirmed to him that Zambia would not accept GM food aid. (Lazaroff, 2002)

Between August 26 and September 4, at the WSSD, the U.S. government pledged \$100 million over the next 10 years to support agricultural biotech in the developing world. (Masood, 2003) Heinz Imhof, chair of Syngenta, a Swiss plant science firm, announced that his company would not file for patent protection of its biotech inventions in least-developed countries, and the World Bank said it would open "an official dialogue on the place of biotech in economic development for poorer nations." (Glassman, 2002) Despite these offers from countries of the north, Natsios expressed exasperation when it came to the Greens for "instigating Zambia's decision... 'I have never seen such disinformation and intellectual dishonesty'," he was quoted as saying. News reports said Greenpeace International, Friends of the Earth and other organizations actively lobbied Zambia and other African countries. (Glassman, 2002)

While the main WSSD meeting was going on, PELUM (Participatory Ecological Land- Use Management) held a Small Farmers' Convergence. In another concurrent event, the health ministers from 10 southern African countries heard an address by the World Health Organization's head, Gro Harlem Brundtland. (Lazaroff, 2002) On August 27, 126 groups that were critical of GM food aid signed a letter charging the U.S. with using coercive techniques to introduce GM crops into African nations and dumping grain there that was not wanted elsewhere. (Lazaroff, 2002) On August 28, Natsios was especially pointed with his remarks. In an interview with a U.S. State Department staff writer, he charged that small advocacy groups from other developed nations (not the U.S.) "have launched a campaign of disinformation" regarding GM food risks. (Fuller,

2002; Lazaroff, 2002) To counter that offensive, he invited Zambia to send a delegation of its own scientists to visit the U.S. on a “fact-finding” mission.

Point/Counterpoint

Zambia’s Minister of Agriculture, Mundia Sikatana, told Dr. Mae Wan Ho, a scientist from the United Kingdom’s Institute for Science in Society, that he saw coverage of the hunger crisis on American television news that showed old film clips of emaciated Ethiopians and Somalians, not Zambians. Sikatana claimed that no Zambians had died from starvation. (Ho, 2002a) Following completion of the report by the team of scientists based on this tour, President Mwanawasa reaffirmed his rejection of GM maize. The scientists’ account acknowledged both the advantages of the technology and studies on GM food safety that they deemed inconclusive, sufficiently so to warrant their recommendation supporting rejection as a precautionary measure. (Consumer Unity & Trust Society, 2002)

That fall, the tug of war between supporters and opponents of GMO food aid continued unabated. During a workshop on agrobiotechnology and food security in South Central Africa at the University of Zambia in Lusaka, participants considered prospects for outreach to a range of stakeholders under the sponsorship of *Biotechnology and Development Monitor*, a journal published in the Netherlands (Netherlands). A UN World Food Program meeting in Rome considered but did not adopt a policy recommended by Barcelona-based activist group, Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN), in a paper entitled “No to GM food aid.” (Jere, 2002)

Consumer International (CI), a network of consumer groups in 115 countries, also held a Bio-technology and Food Security Conference, but several prominent aid bodies – FAO, USAID, WHO, and the EU – were conspicuous by their absence. Dr. Jocelyn Webster, executive director of the industry booster organization AfricaBio, held a press conference in which, according to one report, she chastised CI’s Michael Hansen and ISIS’s Dr. Ho. The latter had supported Zambia’s position against GMOs. (per Ho, 2002b) Yet the government-owned *Times of Zambia* (“Anti-GMO scientists...” 2002) reported that scientists on both sides of the issue contended each other’s arguments were misleading consumers. AfricaBio said the workshop was one-sided and global campaigners against biotech were giving out wrong information. To counter that, the group invited members of the Zambia Consumers Association to visit South Africa at Bio’s expense to see what biotech is. On the other side, the South African Seed Organization maintained that the information packet for conference delegates contained materials biased against GMOs, charging that conference organizers were neither transparent nor balanced and had excluded supporters from attending. CI Africa insisted, however, that both sides had had a chance to speak and indeed, did speak. Zambia’s Minister of Agriculture, Sikatana, reiterated government concerns the county could lose its European market if it introduced GM.

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The European Union cemented its policy on GMOs, requiring all food or feed products containing more than .9 percent genetically modified ingredients to be labeled. (“EU reaches agreement...,” 2002) And Zambia’s President Mwanawasa made a final decision not to allow GM food aid, as Agriculture Minister Sikatana announced at a news conference that the country wanted its own scientists to explore the safety of transgenic foods. (Carroll, 2002; Bate, 2002; Shacinda, 2002) He ordered the team of scientists who had visited the U.S. to make their GMO report public. (ZNBC Radio 2, 2002)

The national moratorium was not totally effective, however. In an isolated incident, WFP workers distributed GMO maize from the U.S., and there were reports of hungry villagers looting some of the stocks held in storage. (Manski & Cella, 2002) Some government representatives said these reports were not accurate. (J. Mlutula, personal communication, November 11, 2003)

By this time, the U.S. had identified sources of unmodified sorghum and wheat as alternatives to GM maize, and other food sources also were tapped to alleviate the worst shortages. (“US to give hungry...,” 2002; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2003) The bigger problem was to resolve the logistics of distribution to the parts of the country in greatest need. Access, not availability, was the greater challenge, thanks to the country’s inadequate transportation infrastructure.

The picture improved somewhat for the 2003 harvest. Thanks to plentiful rains in part of the country, a bumper crop of grain helped Zambia and its neighbors produce about two-thirds of the food they needed. But devastation from AIDS, poor infrastructure and the dependency on rain continued to make farming difficult at best. (Polgreen, 2003) All of these problems require long-term help to enable the country’s people to feed themselves.

As debate about GM food aid continued, USAID’s Natsios charged that Europeans were spreading misinformation about biotechnology. (Masood, 2003; Fuller, 2002) The agency moved forward with a grant of \$15 million to provide support for policy-making and research in biosafety in Asia, East and West Africa. (Masood, 2003)

In May 2003, an international Biodevastation meeting gathered in St. Louis, one of the first times a gathering was concerned with “how genetic engineering is used to crush people of color” (Fitz, 2003) and to expand resistance among those who believe the technology is dangerous. On the industry’s side, in June the U.S. hosted a Ministerial Conference and Expo on Agricultural Science and Technology in Sacramento, CA. This gathering of more than 150 ministers representing more than 100 countries was intended to offer policymakers in developing countries a smorgasbord of information for farmers and consumers, from state-of-the-art biotechnology to more traditional methods of increasing agricultural productivity.

Journalists' visit provokes more questions

Seven African journalists visited the U.S. for an overview of ag biotech. As reported by *The Times of Zambia* ("Bio-technology: The American view," 2003), they were examining the pros and cons as expressed by both supporters and opponents, and with an eye to the concerns Zambia had raised about the safety for human health and the environment. They realized debate gravitated to the extremes: it's the next great boon, or every new development is a potential "Frankensteinfood."

Michael Rodemeyer, executive director of the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology (an organization that seeks a neutral stance) told them that polarizing the debate is confusing to the public and in effect stalls the potential market. He advised the journalists to re-focus their discussion in more practical directions. Several other experts expressed support along different lines. Oxford University's Professor Richard Dawkins, a leading British scientist, dismissed fears as irrational, saying that new crops are no different from those derived from centuries-old selective breeding techniques. USAID's Dr. Josette Lewis told the group that the U.S. government would not force biotech maize or other crops on African countries. At stops at Monsanto's headquarters in St. Louis, MO, and the National Corn Growers Association, the journalists saw T-shirts made from corn and techniques to help control damaging insect pests. A middle ground came from the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which saw benefits from biotech crops but wanted tougher regulation to ensure safety.

The bottom line was convincing in one way – the *Times* reported, "biotech is here to stay" – but still uncertain in another. The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service's Scott Angle noted that most of the GM maize produced in the U.S. for internal use is intended for animal feed. He was unsure what type was sent to Zambia. "We don't know what we don't know," he said. ("Bio-technology: The American view," 2003)

Where things stand now

In August 2003, Zambia participated in a meeting of the Southern African Development Community, joining 13 other nations in adopting common guidelines to regulate GMOs and other biotech products, including GM crops and food. This conference determined that the region should develop mutual policy and regulatory systems based on either the Cartagena Protocol, which was scheduled to take effect in September, or the African Model Law on Biosafety. ("South African countries agree..." 2003) The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation pledged \$4 million to research GM technologies in Africa, part of the foundation's \$25 million project to counter malnutrition (Masood, 2003). At the time of this writing, the next major gathering of significance to the case is an All-Africa Conference: Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa By 2020, scheduled for April 2004 and sponsored by the International Food Policy Research Institute.

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Goals, Objectives, and Publics

At the policy level, the Zambian government seeks to relieve hunger through aid, trade and agricultural development of crops that it deems safe, sustainable and desired by local communities, while protecting crops grown for export to the widest possible market. Communication messages to opinion leaders reinforce the desire to respect and be respected by international trade and relief resources.

The U.S. government, industry, food aid distributors and industry supporters seek hunger relief as well as acceptance of GM foods and biotechnology processes. These interests would like to see an increase in awareness and use of biotechnology as a key component in overall strategy to create food security throughout Africa. Industry's goals also include neutralizing perpetual criticism, often seen as not based on sound science.

One fairly extensive list of publics comes from the Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, run by the Overseas Development Institute, an independent British think tank. The organizations identified may or may not want to see Zambia eventually accept GM food per se, but they generally accept that the technology is coming, like it or not. In that vein, some are suggesting that the appropriate questions to ask concern how to adapt the technology to the country's (or the region's) growing conditions and its unique needs and capabilities as well as how to ensure safety and health. In this list, Patrick Kalifungwa is Zambia's Minister of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources. Acronyms and organizations not referred to elsewhere in this case study are: SC, Save the Children; INESOR, Institute of Economic and Social Research (multi-disciplinary research wing at the University of Zambia); FANRPAN, Food and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, active in eight SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries; DFID, Department for International Development in the United Kingdom; UNAIDS, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. HODI is an NGO that works with local groups in poor communities to strengthen socio-economic capacity and assist with relief efforts including disaster responses and food shortages. According to information at <http://www.Reliefweb.int>, failure by some agencies in the southern part of Zambia to train community members in relief efforts led to food stocks rotting, including GM maize.

The Forum identified these target publics:

- Parliament: via MP Kalifungwa
- Government departments: especially VP's office (Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit); Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Health; Food Reserve Agency
- Monitoring networks: Famine Early Warning System Network; Vulnerability Assessment Committee
- Consortia
- Private sector: e.g. through Food Reserve Agency
- International NGOs: e.g. Oxfam; SC; Care; Concern; Action Aid; Family Health International and through the Forum for International NGOs

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- Civil society and local NGOs: e.g. HODI; Programme Against Malnutrition
- Research organizations: e.g. UNZA (especially FANRPAN country node in the Department of Agricultural Economics), INESOR
- Donors: e.g. DFID; EU; USAID; World Bank
- UN/Humanitarian agencies: e.g. WFP; FAO; UNAIDS
- Farmers: e.g. through Agricultural Consultative Forum (Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, 2003)

Farmers can be segmented further by whether they are small-scale or commercial and whether they are members of any agricultural organizations, for example, the ZNFU or the Zambian Export Growers Association.

To this list of publics should be added the following:

- The Zambian Office of the President
- The Zambian population – in particular, those who are or have been at risk for food security in any given year
- Private companies, mostly multi-national, that produce GM foods
- Industry trade organizations both in-country and regionally, among them A Harvest Biotechnology Foundation International (AHBFI), AfricaBio, The African Biotechnology Stakeholders Foundation (ABSF), and, most recently, the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia (BOSZ)

As a gatekeeper public, the news media also should be targeted, with distinctions between state-owned and independent outlets, in-country and international media including online formats. These are discussed further in the next section on strategies.

How best to move these diverse and often conflicting groups through the decisions that will lead to resolving the problem often involves bringing as many of them together for discussion and dialogue as possible. Although some decisions were required on the spot during the height of the crisis in 2002, for mid- and long-range planning the choice about accepting or rejecting GM food ultimately is one for national policy, in conjunction with the national development program. (Essegbey, 2003) Hence, the large number of meetings that have been held to date, several of which are noted in this case.

Strategic Tactics and Techniques

The strategies reviewed here were reported either by the organizations themselves on their own web sites or by the news media, both in-country and outside. Before reviewing individual organizations, this section first looks at the media as carriers of information and then at how the media portrayed some of the rhetoric in the debate.

Role of news media in reporting agricultural news and information

Note that the government owns the *Times of Zambia* and the *Daily Mail*; both widely circulated newspapers, as well as the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC). Other important media are an independent newspaper, the *Post*; a handful of private commercial and community radio stations; satellite services that broadcast international television news, and an increasing number of online media including web versions of those already named. According to the International Journalists' Network, government practices toward independent media still reflect a high degree of control, harassment and censorship.

According to the UK Department for International Development, both print and electronic media play important roles in disseminating agricultural information to farmers. Radio programs for farmers emphasize practical knowledge to produce quality crops for both home consumption and for sale, including marketing advice. In particular, when the radio programs are allowed to operate freely, there is ample time for feedback and discussion about food security issues, which could be incorporated into community decision- and policy-making. (Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, 2003) Other organizations are assisting rural residents, especially women, to form small groups or listening circles to learn how to use the medium of radio for a variety of purposes, from education and information to grassroots organizing for community needs.

Use of rhetoric during the crisis

Heath (1992) explained the use of rhetoric from a public relations perspective as a tool of self-interest on the part of both organizations and individuals for the purpose of negotiating relationships. Rhetoric can be seen as a dialogue, aiming to adjust people to ideas and ideas to people. It can explain the dynamics among a situation, audiences, messages, sources, channels and the environment for public opinion. Although it deals with truth, the facts of a situation nevertheless may be interpreted with regard to both their accuracy and their meaning.

But when the focus is on the message sender rather than the receiver, problems can result if an organization assumes its publics will view the situation the same way the organization does once those publics have the same facts for review. Outright lying also may cloud the picture when conflicting groups try to resolve differences of opinion.

This happened often as the U.S. shipped tons of GM maize to Zambia and its neighbors. The war of words became quite pointed. On several occasions, USAID Administrator Natsios said advocacy groups were spreading disinformation about food biotech. But he said specifically that these groups were not NGOs: "The NGOs have released statements supporting the food distributions," he said. "They have been distributing food from the United States all around the world – CARE, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services – for seven years now. They know it's GMO food." (Fuller, 2002)

In addition to *disinformation*, Natsios said trade-related concerns by Zambian officials stemmed from *misinformation* originating from the EU. Although Zambia feared loss of exports to Europe if it accepted GM food aid, Natsios noted that the EU does accept seven varieties of GM corn from the U.S. already. (Fuller, 2002)

One American academic, Jason Lott, affiliated at the time with the bioethics department at Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, South Africa, researched a theory that purported the WFP and USAID were fronts for industry in the U.S. This theory alleged first that the private companies in the U.S. wanted to get rid of surplus produce under government auspices, and second that the African governments bought into the first assumption to deflect attention from their own management problems. Presumably, the first part of this supposition started with fringe groups in the EU, an outgrowth of high mistrust of GM foods. (duVenage, 2002) These most likely were the groups whose members Natsios was referring to and who staged protests at policy meetings to try to exert an influence on government policy.

The rhetoric from the U.S. peaked at its sharpest in Fall 2002 when Tony Hall, the U.S. ambassador to the UN's food agencies, said, "People that deny food to their people, that are in fact starving people to death, should be held responsible...for the highest crimes against humanity in the highest courts in the world." ("US calls food aid refusal...", 2002)

The following winter, Dr. Luke Mumba, dean of natural resources at the University of Zambia, and several other biotech defenders visited London and Brussels under the auspices of industry-funded lobbying organizations EuropaBio and CropGen. As reported by *New Scientist* (Coghlan, 2003), the group traced Zambia's fear of GM foods to concerns voiced by the British Medical Association, which carried considerable weight in Zambia because of strong historical ties to Britain. Earlier, the BMA had expressed doubt about health and environmental risks in producing and eating GM food products. But Dr. Mumba himself had shifted his stance, away from concern that GM foods carried risks greater than those of traditional non-GM foods, to focus instead on the caliber of the guidance scientific experts offered policy makers in government. In an op-ed for Zambia's independent newspaper, *The Post*, he previously had written:

All of us who consider ourselves to be experts in biotechnology must accept that we have not done enough to guide our policy makers on the subject. Each time we are afforded a forum we are invariably issuing contradictory statements on GM maize and biotechnology in general. Little wonder that our government is to date undecided on whether or not to accept maize aid from the US. (Mumba, 2002)

The BMA did intend to review its policy to determine whether it needed to be updated. Pro-biotech leaders noted several other medical societies that voiced confidence in the safety of GM foods.

U.S. Government/USAID

The U.S. Agency for International Development is the largest donor to Zambia and the other countries of southern Africa through the UN's World Food Program. On an on-going basis, USAID seeks to increase citizen participation in democracy and governing by enhancing opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process. One aim is to make government more accountable and public decisions more accessible and effective. The agency supports a stronger role for privately owned media as well as free and fair elections. (United States Agency for International Development, 2002)

Relevant to this case, USAID operates FEWS Net, the Famine Early Warning System Network. Local food security reporters monitor conditions that might place segments of a population at risk and provide regular assessments to decision makers so they can commit resources to avert or alleviate the effects of famine. Data are collected and transmitted via satellite to report on slow-onset disasters such as drought. Other information requires human interpretation for problems created by people, such as conflicts that prevent relief providers from having access to those who are at risk.

FEWS Net also provides timely information to the news media and the public, with the intent of strengthening accountability, involving civil society, and developing sustainability. Regular reports, warnings and other alerts are all posted on the web, available to those who have computer access, in addition to hard copy distribution. As a broad goal, FEWS Net seeks to "build partnerships based on trust, professionalism and open communication." One of the tactics it uses to accomplish this is wording its announcements and alerts in "clear nontechnical jargon [emphasis added] that can be widely understood within the user community." (Famine Early Warning System Information Network, 2002)

NGOs in Zambia

The Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa (2003) reports that NGOs in Zambia typically work independently rather than coordinating their efforts either among themselves or with the government. Nor do they see much chance of influencing government policy. The result often may be conflict or duplication of effort. Nevertheless, in their advocacy role on behalf of the poor, NGOs do have a favorable track record promoting local crops that are sustainable and drought-resistant, for example, cassava and sorghum.

Government of the Republic of Zambia

President Mwanawasa led the process and the announcements about the decision to reject GM food aid. Media owned by the government reflected that choice and according to the UK's *Guardian Unlimited* (Carroll), minimized the risk of famine. "Several warehouses storing GM maize have been looted but ministers favoring its distribution have stayed silent, apparently intimidated after the president threatened to arrest an opposition deputy who said constituents had starved. Refusing GM food was

popular with the urban elite which saw the issue as a test of national strength, while the hungry villages which wanted it lacked political muscle, one diplomat said.” (Carroll)

Despite the differences in how outside media perceived and reported on the government’s motivations, there are signs of wrestling with both the process and the outcome. Before, during and after the peak crisis period, ministers of several agencies participated in high level international and regional policy meetings. Late in 2002, President Mwanawasa required the team of scientists who had visited the U.S. to make their report public, with the intent both to show transparency and to convey potential dangers of GM maize. (ZNBC Radio 2, 2002) By spring 2003 the country had completed development of a draft National Biotechnology and Bio-Safety Policy; part of its five-year plan calls for enacting legislation to govern research, development, and utilization of GMOs.

Industry’s response – the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia (BOSZ)

Concerned that government policies against accepting GM food aid were preventing efforts to rejuvenate Zambia’s agriculture, leading scientists including a team from the University of Zambia formed the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia. Only one member of Parliament participated in the launching ceremony in April 2003, in spite of the ministry of science and technology having participated in the preparations for the event. Nevertheless, a number of the scientists who attended were optimistic that their planned awareness campaign eventually would persuade the president and other policy makers to shift to a more favorable stance toward ag biotech.

Dr. Luke Mumba, dean of natural resources at UNZA and interim BOSZ chairman, said, “Our priority is to mount an aggressive awareness and educational campaign that will bring all stakeholders on board to discuss all the issues relating to the technology. This is the only way the Zambian public including the government can make an informed choice regarding biotechnology.” (Hanyona, Gogo & Bosire, 2003) The intent would be to generate interest and awareness for training, research and infrastructure and to clarify that genetic engineering is only one part of biotechnology, according to Mumba.

The campaign also can be expected to reach out to “the common man in Zambia,” explaining all aspects of biotechnology. Mumba sees biotech as a landmark opportunity to improve the country’s socio-economic status. (“Body to popularise...,” 2003) At the same time, the campaign will point out not only the benefits but the risks as well. Biotech would be part of a mix of both “old and new environment-friendly technologies” showing a commitment to sustainable development

At this writing, the campaign strategies have yet to be developed. BOSZ has, however, identified several objectives, among them:

- To provide a forum for sharing and exchanging experiences and practices in

biotechnology with a view to strengthening its application for increased food security, health and improvement, poverty alleviation, industrialization and environmental conservation in Zambia;

- To improve public understanding of biotechnology through provision of accurate and balanced information particularly to producers, consumers, media and policy makers to ensure that biotechnology is proportionately represented at all levels of society;
- To create capacity for information generation, dissemination and wise use of biotechnology. (Forwarded by C. Davies, from C. Kakunta, personal communication, October 16, 2003)

BOSZ already has begun to participate in meetings both within the region and beyond. As of October 2003, the organization had a full-time secretariat and was working toward establishing communications facilities.

Much attention will be directed to improving public understanding. Both Hon. Emerson Mutenda, the lone MP attending the launch meeting, and representatives of the Africa Biotechnology Stakeholders Forum (ABSF) placed a high priority on getting “accurate and balanced information on the benefits and dangers of biotechnology” to parliamentarians. (Hanyona, Gogo & Bosire, 2003) Most Africans have little awareness or understanding of biotechnology, creating a void that leads to sensationalism and distortion when the news media report on the gridlock between the U.S. and the EU on the issue. Inability to decide – for lack of either information and knowledge or the capacity to evaluate and monitor applications of biotechnology within the country – creates further controversies and stresses for the Zambian public. As Prof. Wanjiru Mwatha of Kenyatta University’s botany department, Kenya, observed “there has been no scientific proof that genetic maize is more harmful than non-genetic maize.” (Hanyona, Gogo & Bosire, 2003)

Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

It is difficult to attribute specific results to specific communication actions, some of which are too recent to gauge their impact. Nevertheless, the Zambian government has adjusted some of its policies regarding regulation and development of biotechnology as its representatives have learned more about the requirements for protecting biosafety and biodiversity. These are key concerns among both critics and supporters of industry.

Although the crisis situation has been slightly alleviated, at least temporarily – a result of shipments of alternatives to GM maize (i.e., wheat, and non-GM maize), successful distribution effort by relief organizations, a better harvest than last year enabling a higher percentage of the population to receive food and a bit of luck with slightly better weather and climate conditions – the USAID’s FEWS Net warned that Zambia’s food crisis is likely to continue for a third year in certain parts of the country. If Zambia’s government continues to inform itself and is responsive to the varying interests

of affected stakeholders, there may be an improvement not only in reducing the severity of the hunger problem but also in increased dialogue on scientific policy and involvement of small farmers with the government policymaking processes.

The United Nations Development Program spells out three areas of advocacy in Zambia to improve links among opinion leaders and enablers – traditional leaders, civil society, academic researchers, government at both the central and local levels, and political leaders. (United Nations Development Program, 2003) To be effective, the UN recommends, advocacy first should focus on clear and simple communication that answers questions of what the problem is, what needs to be done and who can do it. Second, the policy community should share and debate ideas, and lobbying should be targeted to those who have the power to make the changes sought without overloading them. Third and ultimately, the UN explains, the goal is to reduce poverty and hunger:

The needless confrontation of consumers against the use of transgenic crop technology in Europe and elsewhere might have been avoided had more people received a better education in biological science. This educational gap -- which has resulted in a growing and worrisome ignorance about the challenges and complexities of agricultural and food systems -- needs to be addressed without delay. Privileged societies have the luxury of adopting a very low-risk position on the GM crops issue, even if this action later turns out to be unnecessary. But the vast majority of humankind does not have such a luxury, and certainly not the hungry victims of wars, natural disasters, and economic crises. (p. 139)

In the section above that discusses rhetoric, some of the limits of this approach as a tool of persuasion should be apparent. If any side becomes so entrenched in its position that it becomes incapable of hearing accurately what the other sides are saying, there may be little room for mutual adjustment. A way around it is to assess how each party sizes up both its own views of an issue and how its publics size up the same issue. This co-orientation (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) draws on the two-way symmetrical model of public relations to analyze public-organizational relationships. As the parties orient to each other, they assess knowledge about each other and related issues, attitudes or feelings they may share about an issue, and actions they take that affect each other regarding common situations. The accuracy of their perceptions of each other and how the parties view the issue is the first step toward overcoming gaps and eventually achieving understanding and agreement.

For example, when the delegation of Zambian scientists visited the U.S. in 2003 to learn about the full scope of biotechnology, their report surprised industry supporters by nevertheless holding firm on the recommendation to reject GM food aid. One of the lessons this outcome suggests is that it takes more than information alone to change perceptions and attitudes. An understanding of local contexts and history is key as well, and in this case, a look particularly at the role food plays in a culture's life.

Determining the most valid policies for Zambia's needs will take a mix of informational/educational programming together with continued efforts at building relationships that generate understanding among the diverse perspectives. Awareness by itself is not enough; it needs to be accompanied by recognition of both the benefits and risks of GM food, seen as but one of many steps to help the nation and the continent achieve food security. And this needs to be considered in the context of political arguments offered by NGOs on the power relationships between the developed and the developing world.

Government and the new Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia should look to other industry support organizations in Africa, among them A Harvest Biotech Foundation International (AHBFI), ABSF and AfricaBio, for examples of the kinds of promotional and educational activities they might undertake themselves. Interpersonal communication and use of online technology are likely to be key strategies.

Dr. Florence Wambugu, a prominent Kenyan scientist, founded AHBFI (A Harvest Biotech Foundation International) to help alleviate hunger, poverty and malnutrition in Africa by promoting sustainable agricultural development especially in rural areas, and by increasing ag yields and income through biotech activities. The organization works not only on improved media coverage but on influencing government policies, forming a pan-African network, supporting regional biotech organizations, assisting grass roots organizations and international outreach. Tools AHBFI uses include its web site, a newsletter and a newspaper, all available in both hard copy and online, to share information that will help farmers, policy makers and other publics make better decisions.

In sum, opponents of GM food aid to Zambia argue that developed countries in the North – who speak from the comfort of an abundance of food – should provide aid in the form of either monetary aid or non-GM food, especially purchased from local sources. (James, 2002) Supporters such as Norman Borlaug (2003), known as the father of the Green Revolution that has been so effective in India and Asia, argue that starvation, not carefully thought-out applications of biotechnology, is the enemy of world health and prosperity. With the exception of some fringe activist organizations, there appears to be willingness among proponents of all viewpoints along the continuum to learn more about the issue over the long term. Values, such as respect by wealthier nations of the developing world's needs, rights of local citizens to their own natural resources, and the cultural role food plays in a given society are among the discussion points to explore. The technology no doubt will have an effect on local biodiversity, knowledge and sustainability. Whether that effect is positive or negative remains to be seen.

TEACHING NOTE

The concept for this case has evolved through my own teaching experiences. The public relations challenges of food and agricultural biotechnology readily lend themselves to analysis from the perspective of multiple organizational interests: corporations, government, researchers, food producers and distributors, consumers, activists/advocacy organizations/NGOs, international trade and the news media.

Because food biotech is a “hot issue,” with frequent new developments, it seems better to approach the case study as a forward-looking scenario rather than a look back at a campaign or program that has a relatively clear ending. The advantage of this approach is to stimulate students in their own original thinking and problem-solving, rather than relying solely on what other organizations have done in the past.

Questions for Discussion

1. Regardless of which side of this issue you are on, who are the specific stakeholders and publics involved? What distinction can you make between a stakeholder and a public?
2. From the perspective of each individual group you identified, which of the other groups are key to helping any of them achieve their own objectives? Which ones are key to building some kind of working consensus on the issue?
3. What are some of the cultural differences between the developed and the developing world regarding decision-making? What about sources, preparation, and labeling of food? Risk communication? How do these differences affect the way each stakeholder tries to craft its messages?
4. What forms of communication have each of the main stakeholder categories used to convey their views? Which formats or media might they use in the future that would be more effective in terms of their goals? In terms of reaching a consensus? Have there been any missed opportunities?
5. What rhetorical structure has each group used in its attempt to persuade others to its viewpoint? Which of these structures do you think is most effective? Why?
6. What is the difference between misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda? How can you prove that a message in reality represents any of these? (For a clear, brief definition, see <http://www.bartleby.com>.)
7. Are there any indications of “groupthink” or decision by committee, which may or may not necessarily result in the greatest good for the greatest number of people at risk? What role could public relations advisors play to help clarify the problem and a full range of alternative solutions?
8. Think about how the news media in different parts of the world – including online – have reported on the events in Zambia. If you were exposed to the media in only certain parts of the world, or to media that represented only one perspective (for example, government-owned, or industry-sponsored, or activist), how would that affect what different publics think about both the issues and the organizations involved?

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9. How should public relations advisors help their organizations craft messages for the media as distinct from their other stakeholders? Does the news media adequately and accurately report on science issues? How do they present matters that one side or another claims are uncertain as to their effect on human health and the environment?

Activity: Compile a journal of the following key terms and their definitions from different sources, both in favor of and against the use of modified products. Use the web to find different interpretations. Add to this list other significant terms as you come across them.

- (a) biotechnology
- (b) genetic modification
- (c) genetic engineering
- (d) conventional breeding
- (e) African Model Law on Biosafety
- (f) Cartagena Protocol
- (g) precautionary principle
- (h) famine
- (i) food aid
- (j) biosafety
- (k) biodiversity
- (l) organic farming
- (m) sustainable agriculture
- (n) sustainable development

Three-Part Learning Approach

One way to organize a class and ensure participation by all students is to create a three-part learning program. In Part I, students will inventory their initial knowledge and attitudes through messages posted in the discussion area of a classroom intranet such as Blackboard or WebCT. Next, they will self-select (or the instructor may assign them) one of the organizational interests listed above, on whose behalf they will role-play the top communication advisor or public relations counseling firm. Working in teams for those interests, students will pick an actual organization to study in depth, from online news and information resources or any other materials they may be able to obtain. Continuing the online discussion, they share briefings with the other teams about their respective organizations and begin to enact the communication behaviors and message styles as they discover them from their research.

In Part II, representatives from each team participate in an in-class panel discussion, moderated by the instructor or an invited guest expert. The moderator presents a “what if” scenario adapted from current news developments and will ask how each team would respond or handle the situation. Participants must be knowledgeable about their

organizations' interests to answer "in character" – as well as to recommend other strategies and responses they think might be more effective.

In Part III, after time to debrief from the face-to-face dialogue, teams prepare a mini-campaign for their respective organizations, proposing messages, strategies and tactics, and recommended methods to evaluate the effectiveness of these communications in the event they are implemented.

Zambia's rejection of genetically modified maize as food aid emerged from one of the teams in a public relations cases class I taught at American University in Fall 2002. The crisis reached a peak near the end of the semester and remained in the news as the U.S. and the European Union clashed over GM food trade policy and the precautionary principle. As of December 2003, some initial moves toward resolution were taking place and a fledgling biotechnology trade organization has formed in Zambia, with the goal of helping the nation build its capacity in all of the sectors of this industry as well as biosafety, not just GM food.

Sample Instructions for Online Discussion

Stage 1- Inventory

As we begin our study of the debate about food and biotechnology – and the public relations implications about Zambia and why they've rejected shipments of genetically modified corn to help relieve their hunger crisis – consider what you already know, if anything, about this subject. Post a message specifically to *this* thread (i.e., "Getting started"). Write your own opinion, regardless of which stakeholder interest ("agency") you will represent in the near future.

If you're not sure where to start, some of the points you may want to address are:

1. Can you think of any food and ag products that have genetically modified ingredients? What are they? How do you know this?
2. How similar or different do you think (or know) biotech is from conventional genetics and breeding?
3. Does that similarity or difference make you think or feel any particular way?
4. Do you know anyone who cares about food and ag biotech, from *any* perspective? (i.e., from industry's point or view, or critics, or unsure consumers, or any other perspective)
5. Who is in charge of assuring the safety of the products of food and ag biotech? Who do you think *should* be in charge? Is it the same or different in countries other than the U.S.?
6. What are the possible benefits of using different biotechnologies in food and agriculture? What are the possible downsides? How do you know?
7. And just what *is* biotechnology, anyway? What difference, if any, is there between the terms "biotechnology," "genetically engineered," and "genetically modified"? Does it make any difference what we call it? Why?

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You don't have to address all of these questions. They're listed simply to "trigger" your own awareness of what you do know and how you acquired that knowledge. After you've posted your own "original" message, please 1) check back often to see what your classmates have written, and 2) respond to *at least one* other posting. Be aware that at this point, some of what you may *think* you know in reality may turn out to be either inaccurate or a misperception. So don't be afraid to ask questions or to be skeptical.

Stage 2 - Discovery

For our second online discussion, get acquainted with your client's perspective on the various issues of food and ag biotech. Each "agency" team is starting out with a choice of organizations whose focus represents one of the stakeholders in the debate. Find out from those organizations' web sites and from searching on Lexis-Nexis what their positions are on food biotech and also what their communication style is like. Choose one of these organizations that you will represent for the duration of our study. You may act either as the "agency of record" or the in-house public relations department.

From now on, your "voice" will be on behalf of your client(s) and their leaders, even if they have a different "take" from the opinions and knowledge you personally indicated during our first discussion.

In the subject line of your message, please identify your client by name. Then write a summary of the client's (1) overall mission, (2) its policy toward food and ag biotech, or genetically modified food, etc., and (3) how the organization typically communicates.

Regarding number three, address whether the client seems to be the kind that welcomes public and media inquiries or clams up, whether it seems to be arrogant and powerful or willing to listen and negotiate, etc. Which model(s) of public relations does it appear to practice, based on what you can glean from news reports? How much effort does the client seem willing to invest in developing effective relationships with its constituents?

In addition to posting your own client's position, take advantage of this online dialogue format to respond to other postings, to seek clarification or to express a contrasting point of view. To qualify for a grade, you are required to answer at least two other postings by members of the class. Ask questions, get clarification of anything you don't understand or that piques your curiosity. We are still in an information-gathering or "discovery" stage, so we won't get into an active debate just yet – although some elements will be obvious.

Stage 3 - Perceptions

Your teams should now begin to interact regularly with your colleagues, just as the actual people and organizations do in the real world. In this third online discussion,

consider how your organization views any of the *other* roles. For example, if you represent a company, who are your allies? Who are your challengers? If you represent an activist organization, whose science, if any, do you trust? If you're a producer, who might it be beneficial to form a coalition with?

Start creating relationships and begin to think about what kinds of future strategies might help you advance your respective organizational missions. You may write in the voice of your team as public relations counsel or the head of your organization or its in-house public relations office, as you see fit.

For clarity, every time you post, please include a "tagline" as the very first line to identify your organization or "generic" role, for example:

--- Consumers

In our opinion, this policy is good (or bad) because... etc. ---

Again, to qualify for a grade, you are required to respond to at least two other messages in a way that reflects your interaction with others, not simply saying something simplistic like "me too."

Stage 4 - Acting Out

Now that you have at least a rough idea of what each organization is about, what each thinks is important and what your opinions are of each other, think strategically. What messages are most important for you to convey, and to whom? How should you do this?

For example, some of you may wish to take a proactive stance and issue a statement for the news media. Some of you may wish to join forces and organize a protest. You may be asked by the news media to respond to an interview. And so on. Go ahead and "do" (or say) the kinds of things you think your organization has been doing or likely *would* do. Respond to one another as everything unfolds. You're the PR counsel so you can do or recommend that your organization continue to communicate in its usual manner or you can recommend a different approach if you think it would be more effective.

Sample Scenario for Face-to-Face Discussion/ Debate/Problem-Solving Research on AIDS and GM Plants Supported by Major Philanthropist... but Will it Help Get Food to Zambians who are Ill NOW?

[Background for the *entire* class]

Today's science fiction may be tomorrow's promise. Suppose...

GeneZ, a fictitious company that develops biotech food and medical products in the U.S., has been working with farmers who are field testing corn (maize) that has been modified to produce *monoclonal antibodies*. These antibodies are a kind of highly specialized organism that targets a particular kind of cell for a particular purpose and nothing else. In this hypothetical case, the antibodies will produce a vaccine that prevents HIV/AIDS. Both children and adults in at-risk communities will be able to eat specially produced corn and corn-based products the same way they eat regular corn, with the added benefit of preventing this disease.

GeneZ and its contract farmers have benefited from studies conducted by pro-industry scientists at a leading research university. Today – Friday – they are ready to announce a breakthrough in the technology and clinical trials that will make it ready for use in six weeks, just in time for a shipment of humanitarian and medical aid to Zambia and several other developing countries in Africa whose workforce has been ravaged by the disease. The U.S. government has reviewed the test results and deemed them safe. A major charitable foundation plans to announce a major philanthropic donation to support further development of the pharmaceutical corn and is looking to one of the humanitarian relief organizations to assist in its distribution throughout southern Africa.

However, international trade partners, including many who are leaders in European government, have some doubts and want the corn producers to give them a seat at the table for all upcoming decisions about regulation, marketing and distribution. From their perspective, they're concerned about gene drift and possible "contamination" of non-GM corn fields. Over the weekend, a prominent activist group is planning to stage a raid of several acres of GeneZ's corn that have been part of the field tests.

For purposes of this panel, assume that the "designer" corn will be available initially through participating firms working strictly in conjunction with government agencies. An enormous sum of money is riding on the outcome of this new technology launch, as is trust and credibility depending on how different publics perceive the organizations involved. Each stakeholder should take communication action(s) that defends your position and tries to persuade the other publics of the merits of your position.

[Additional background information for the *named stakeholder team only*, with questions to be posed by the moderator during the panel discussion]

Industry and Pro-Industry Scientists:

Scientists who have developed this technology believe the "edible AIDS vaccine" could be eaten directly by humans as food, thus eliminating the need to purify the vaccine as well as hazards that are associated with shots. GeneZ has asked for help in developing a public education campaign targeted to health and humanitarian agencies about the new kind of corn. Many in the agricultural industries think their role for such "plant-made

pharmaceuticals” should encompass both product safety, tight production control and protection of the interests of the food and pharmaceutical industries. At the same time, you don’t want to run the risk of negative public perception as has happened with other products of food and agricultural biotechnology. Some of your researchers have even suggested that if the university is going to spend any money at all, it should be to keep the technology secret, despite the fact that the product itself will be offered on the market.

1. How would you handle this internal dilemma at the same time that *some* information about the “designer” corn’s availability is on the verge of becoming public knowledge?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of public communication about this breakthrough?

Developing Countries:

Assume that virtually all of the children in the part of your population that has been experiencing severe malnutrition (due to famine brought on by prolonged drought) also are carriers of HIV/AIDS. How do you weigh the health and longevity elements in deciding whether to accept this new technology?

1. In what parts of your country do the affected populations live – urban or rural?
2. How do you know what their condition is and what they want or need? How do you get information to them – through which formal and informal media?
3. Do you have any literacy issues to contend with, or lack of media technology? What about the educational level needed to understand and support science?
4. Given your economic and cultural context, that’s different from the U.S., what do you have to do to explain complex issues and science in a way that makes sense to your own citizens?

U.S. Government:

The “edible vaccine” can help children and adults who are suffering from poor health, in both industrialized and developing countries. Through the regulatory process, you and the FDA require producers to go through a required notification and permitting process that identifies the regulated product and keeps it contained and confined. Beyond that, what kinds of communication strategies will you need to undertake to build consumer confidence, to help different publics understand and accept this medical kind of food product? Will your strategies be any different for publics at home vs. abroad?

European Government:

Several of your members have some doubts about the plant-made pharmaceutical corn and want the U.S. corn producers to give your members a seat at the table for upcoming decisions about regulation and marketing viz. exports. They’re concerned about gene drift and possible contamination of non-GM corn fields.

Given other food safety crises such as Mad Cow disease and widespread distrust of GM food, how do you think European consumers will feel about a plant-made pharmaceutical that can significantly help a major public health problem? How will you find out? And based on what you learn, what will you do? Will you support or oppose efforts by the U.S. to distribute the “edible vaccine” to developing countries? How will you communicate your decisions, and to whom?

Activists/Advocacy Organizations/NGOs:

You insist that environmental assessments aren’t always conducted before GM organisms are released, and those that *are* conducted often are inadequate. Your activities planned for this weekend are as much to demand changes in the decision-making process as anything else – while the government has its application and permitting processes for those who want to produce these plant-manufactured pharmaceuticals, it isn’t widely known and “transparent,” i.e., widely communicated and understood. There isn’t any clear system yet for public involvement regarding “plant-made pharmaceuticals.” You fear that even if biotech crops haven’t been used for food yet, they eventually will end up in the food supply. “Don’t give us another ‘Starlink’” is your rallying cry. What was Starlink, in the first place?

1. Will there be new, rigorous, industry-wide controls?
2. How will we *know*?

Relief Organizations:

You are very concerned about the life-threatening cyclical relationship between inadequate or poor quality food and a weakened immune system, compromised by the AIDS virus. Especially in rural areas, the people in this particular developing country have a short life expectancy (about age 33-35), much shorter than even a decade or so ago. Public education programs are a high priority for you.

1. What difference, if any, does it make to you that this AIDS breakthrough is in the form of a genetically modified crop?
2. What steps do you take to encourage that humanitarian relief groups include the people who are affected by HIV/AIDS in decisions about health relief programs?
3. What do you do about the different needs of children of different ages?

Major Charitable Foundations:

You plan to announce a major philanthropic donation to support further development of the pharmaceutical corn. There are several kinds of support you can underwrite – the scientific research itself both in the U.S. and/or involving university researchers in a particular developing country, large-scale production of this plant-made pharmaceutical, or development of a country’s internal healthcare delivery system.

1. Who will you seek further information from to help you make your decisions?

2. Who might you enlist support from to avoid the kind of criticism you've received in the past like when you contributed major funds for research on GM food?
3. With whom are most of your communications? What is your main message?

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European Government and Aid

European Union

<http://www.eurunion.org>

Department for International Development

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>

United Nations

World Food Programme

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Government of Zambia

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**Maximizing Media Relations
For Effective Program Execution:
UNICEF in Nigeria**

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Executive Summary

High mortality rates, illness and nutritional deficiencies threaten the survival of Nigerian children. Child labor, child trafficking and harmful traditional cultural and religious practices such as female genital mutilation and sharia endanger their freedom and rights. In 2000, advocacy and communication efforts on behalf of protecting children's rights were at low ebb in the country.

In response, UNICEF forged an effective partnership with the media for children's rights. Foreign journalists were invited for field visits and dialogues. Media packages were developed for the media houses. In partnership with NGOs, media programs were organized. Children Special Day programs and materials were distributed. The federal government's information policy makers/managers were invited to workshops.

The media campaign was successful in bringing children's rights to the public's attention because of the response of both the Nigerian and foreign journalists to UNICEF's program. The result was positive reports in the media locally and internationally on UNICEF's activities, advocacy and support for the protection of children's rights. The support of the federal government for children also increased.

Problem Statement

Public relations practitioners communicate with all relevant internal and external publics to develop positive relationships and to create consistency between organizational goals and societal expectations. They develop, execute and evaluate organizational programs that promote the exchange of influence and understanding among an organization's parts and publics. The roles of public relations include effective communication to stakeholders of an organization to stimulate their interest and positive contribution to the organization's success. The focus of public relations practitioners is getting their message to more opinion leaders, raising awareness of their activities and increasing the positive and productive contribution of the stakeholders. The media is a frequently used means of communicating with relevant publics for an effective PR campaign.

The mass media puts people in touch with the world beyond their immediate experience and shape people's perceptions and beliefs particularly in relation to events

and topics with which people have little direct contact. While providing simplified and edited versions of the happenings in our complex and dynamic world, the media gives people a feeling of participation and understanding. (Baskins, Aronoff and Lattimore, p. 197)

When practitioners build relationships of confidence and trust with journalists and other media practitioners, many mutually beneficial interactions can result. Media coverage can have significant positive or negative impacts on every aspect of an organization's operations. Public confidence and public support are often determined by the treatment an issue or organization receives in the media. It is impossible to wage a successful public relations campaign without successful media relations. (Baskins, Aronoff and Luttimore, p. 196-197)

For effective media relations, the public relations practitioner must understand how the media functions and how reporters work. Insights into journalists' views of public relations and work habits of journalists and other media practitioners are essential. (Baskin, Aronoff and Lattimore, p. 197-198)

A successful public relations campaign requires that the appropriate media are chosen after thorough media and audience research has been carried out.

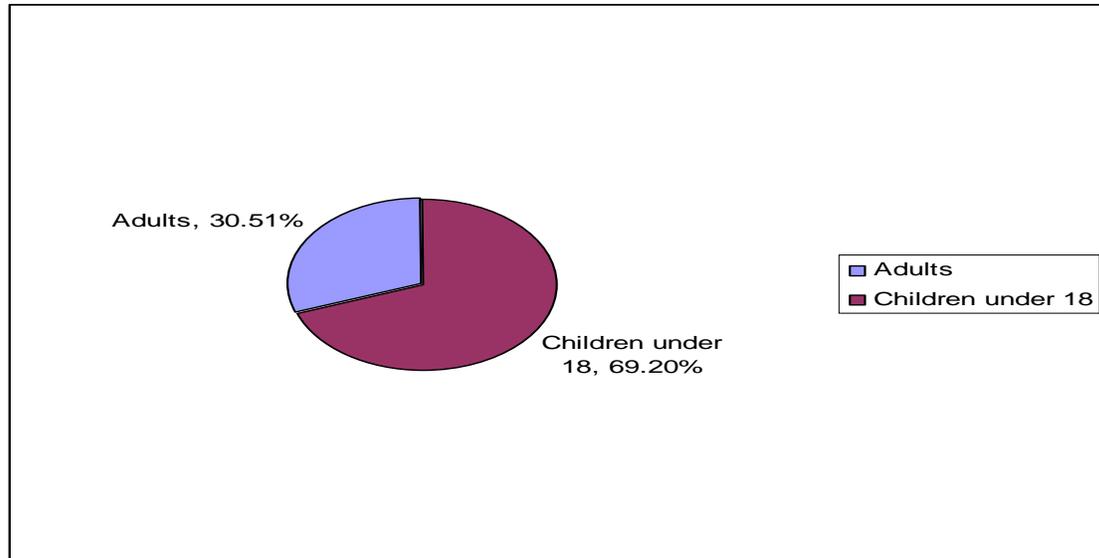
And that certainly is true for UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) in Nigeria. UNICEF's Media Alliance for Children in Nigeria was an attempt to effectively use partnerships with media to create awareness and advocacy and to stimulate actions that would meet the needs and protect the rights of children.

Background

Nigeria is a multilingual and multicultural country. There are 705 languages/dialects within an area of 923,768.68 square kilometers, although English is the major language of communication. The country's population is 113.9 million, and children account for 69.2 percent of the population (78.8 million). (www.unicef.org)

Nigeria's Population

Total population	113,862,000 (113.9 million)	
Population of under 5 years old	19,683,000 (19.7 million)	17.3%
Population of under 18 years old	59,108,000 (59.1 million)	51.9%
Annual births	4,628,000(4.6 million)	



Advocacy and communication efforts for the protection of children's right are at low ebb in Nigeria. There is need for advocacy support for reducing child labor and ending child trafficking and harmful cultural and religious practices such as female genital mutilation.

Child survival is threatened by illness and nutritional deficiencies. Common diseases such as malaria, acute respiratory infections (ARI) and diarrhea account for the largest numbers of deaths of children, but other major threats to child survival come from vaccine preventable diseases (VPD) such as measles, diphtheria, polio, pertusis and tetanus. Inappropriate infant and child feeding practices, inadequate food intake and micronutrient deficiencies also are major determinants of illness and mortality. HIV/AIDS also is a significant threat to life of young children and adolescents. (National Planning Commission, p. 40)

Child trafficking in the West and Central African sub-regions increases each year. Thousands of children are removed from parental protection and trafficked across countries including Nigeria, Benin, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Togo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger to be used as objects of economic transactions and deployed into forced labor. (UNICEF, 2001)

Millions of Nigerian children between the ages 5 and 12 are active in one form of economic labor or another, and almost one-quarter between the ages of 5 and 11 work in hazardous circumstances. Several million children are engaged in the worst forms of labor on farms and plantations, in private homes, on the street and in commercial sexual exploitation. They work in conditions that cripple their bodies and minds, stunt their growth and shorten their lives. The work is so demanding that those lucky enough to attend school after a day's toil are too tired to learn.

At the top of the list of contributors to these forms of child endangerment is poverty, which ensures that children and their parents are easily susceptible to economic incentives offered by child traffickers. Other factors include lack of educational, training or vocational opportunities for the population in Nigeria. (UNICEF, 2001)

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a not-for-profit organization, is the only United Nations organization dedicated exclusively to children. It works with other United Nations agencies, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide community-based services in primary health care, nutrition, basic education and safe water and sanitation to the developing world. It aims to reduce the terrible toll the lack of such services takes on the world's youngest citizens. (UNICEF, 1997)

UNICEF was created by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children in the aftermath of World War II in Europe. In October 1953, the organization (then known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) became a permanent part of the United Nations system with a broadened role: to respond to the long-term needs of children living in developing countries. Its name was shortened to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 1997) but it retained the original acronym of UNICEF.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989. To improve the quality of life of children worldwide, enhance their dignity, protect their inalienable rights and ultimately mobilize and focus global attention on their physical, mental, moral and spiritual development, UNICEF organized a world summit for children September 29-30, 1990 at UN headquarters in New York. Seventy-one heads of state and government, including Nigeria, attended and signed a Declaration and Plan of Action which identified specific programs that impact directly on children. (Child Development Department, 1997)

UNICEF today is the leading advocate for children's rights, active in 158 countries and territories around the world. It has five field offices in Nigeria—Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Kadun and Bauchi—and one liaison office in Lagos, the capital. These offices are strategically located in the country for effective program implementation. In the year 2000, major UNICEF activities in Nigeria included intensified efforts to control the spread of HIV/AIDS, eradicate the polio virus and eliminate vitamin A deficiency. There also was a Roll Back Malaria Summit where a consensus was reached to pursue a strategy of wide-spread use of insecticide-treated nets to control the malaria vector mosquitoes. A program to eradicate the guinea worm and a new initiative to make the school environment friendlier to children also were launched. (UNICEF, 2001)

While the global campaign to eradicate polio has had far reaching impact on several nations worldwide, Nigeria is one of 30 countries where transmission of the virus

is still reported. UNICEF has therefore given top priority to the National Programme on Immunization and the goal of eradicating polio from Nigeria in collaboration with the government, other UN agencies, Rotary, other non-governmental organizations and bilateral donors including Japan, the USA and the UK.

Efforts to reduce micronutrient deficiency resulted in the setting of new standards for industrial fortification of food items with vitamin A, a measure that now has the backing of the legislature. (UNICEF, 2001)

Significant progress also was made toward reducing the impact of malaria, another killer disease to which children are most vulnerable. Nigeria initiated the African Roll Back Malaria Summit held in Abuja in April 2000 with the support of the World Health Organization and UNICEF. (UNICEF, 2001)

There also has been progress towards the eradication of guinea worm, with the number of cases reduced to fewer than 8,000 in 2000. Sustaining the success recorded in the year 2000 is likely to make possible the total elimination of the disease by 2005. (UNICEF, 2001)

UNICEF also intensified work aimed at protecting the rights of children. Annual special events such as Day of the African Child, National Children's Day and Labor Day provided opportunities to push for an improvement of children's rights. Trafficking of children in the West African region was one of the key issues for which legislation and a judicial framework to curb the trend was sought.

Another significant gain was the decision of two states to pass legislation forbidding female genital mutilation. A child-friendly school initiative was launched with the aim of improving the learning environment for children. A complementary informal education program was developed to provide educational opportunities for millions of girls and boys denied early education because of poverty or cultural constraints. UNICEF initiated dialogue with the authorities in those states where the traditional religious custom of sharia is practiced to ensure that international conventions signed by Nigeria on the rights of children are respected. (UNICEF, 2001)

All the programs could be effectively implemented using a media campaign, the Media Alliance for Children, to affect changes in the attitude and behavior of stakeholders in actualizing the needs and rights of children.

Goals and Objectives of the Campaign

The goal of the Media Alliance for Children campaign was to create awareness and advocacy, and to stimulate action of the stakeholders to meet the needs and rights of children in Nigeria.

Objectives of the campaign were to:

- Make the Nigerian media aware of the needs and rights of children and to enable them to disseminate information to the public;
- Increase advocacy for the needs and rights of children;
- Make the public aware of the needs and rights of children;
- Stimulate stakeholder support for the actualization of the needs and rights of children;
- Win the support of the government/government's information policy makers for the program. (Odedele, p. 1)

Strategies Tactics and Techniques

Tactics and techniques focused on:

- Organizing workshops for local journalists;
- Organizing tours for foreign journalists;
- Staging special events;
- Packaging programs for the country's media houses;
- Partnering with NGO(s) to organize media events;
- Organizing workshops for the government information officers. (Odedele, p. 2)

The campaign forged effective media partnerships in the year 2000 through sensitization workshops and information sessions on children's and women's rights. These included a workshop for 45 members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists and the Nigerian Association of Women Journalists in the North-East. A sensitization session with photo journalists and another with disc jockeys were hosted by UNICEF to forge a strategic alliance with these media representatives in awareness creation, advocacy and action stimulation efforts on behalf of the needs and rights of children.

Assistance was given to a team of 12 US editors who visited Nigeria, while two special dialogue sessions and field visits were held with other international media representatives. Most international correspondents now see UNICEF Nigeria as a reliable source of current and objective information on children and women. Media packages were developed and distributed. The "Progress of Nations" and "The State of the World's Children" reports were especially successful; over 400 stories around these publications were carried in the print and electronic media. In partnership with the NGO African Children's Broadcasting Network, "a children in broadcasting summit" was organized as a forerunner to the proposed World Summit of Children's Broadcasting in March 2001. This was followed by training workshops for producers of children's programming for CSD (Children Special Day). An ongoing BBC Hausa (one of the three major Nigerian language radio services) research project conducted in the 19 Northern States also provided an avenue for wide distribution of CSD information and materials.

Twelve Abuja-based media executives and 16 press secretaries of federal ministries were sensitized on the Global Partnership for Children. And the International Children's

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Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) provided an opportunity for broadcasting networks to demonstrate their strong collaboration in the advancement of children's rights. At least 70 broadcast stations transmitted programs that were produced or involved children on that day. One of these programs was an interview of Nigeria's Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, by children. (Odedele, p. 3)

Results Achieved

The response of Nigerian journalists to the workshops was impressive, and media publication of stories on the needs and rights of children increased. More than 400 stories were published in 2000 in both the print and electronic media. Foreign journalists sought out UNICEF for current and objective information on children. Some also accepted invitations to visit. Media packages for 10 special events were developed and more than 40 program packages were developed.

Children Special Day Program (CSDP) information and materials were widely distributed in the country, and 70 broadcast stations transmitted programs that were produced by, presented by or involved children on the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB). (Odedele, p. 4)

Conclusion

Public relations is a planned, sustained effort to maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. This public relations principle was demonstrated in the planning of the UNICEF campaign. The goal was well defined, clearly spelled out and properly implemented. There was strict adherence to the achievement of the campaign's objectives. The strategic tactics and techniques were well designed due to thorough research of the situation. Functional evaluation methods were used to monitor the effectiveness of the campaign. All of these factors contributed to the success of the campaign.

TEACHING NOTE

Purpose of the Case Study

- To make students aware that effective communication with stakeholders, government and other publics is the bottom line for many not-for-profit organizations;
- To make students appreciate the importance of research in any public relations campaign;
- To make students appreciate the dynamism of the mass media and how to use it in achieving public relations campaign's goals;
- To demonstrate to students how to cultivate and maintain good relationships with the media and how to use the mass media in a public relations campaign;
- To teach students the importance of goal setting, definition of objectives, effective

planning and monitoring in a public relations campaign.

Identifying the Problem

UNICEF identified a need to increase communication about and advocacy for children's needs and rights in Nigeria.

Identifying the Critical Issues

The following issues must be addressed if the campaign is to succeed:

- Making the media aware of the UNICEF program so they can, in turn, disseminate information to the public;
- Increasing advocacy for the needs and rights of children;
- Stimulating stakeholder support for the actualization of the needs and rights of children;
- Attracting and gaining international support;
- Winning the support of the government.

Teaching the Case

One week prior

Distribute the case at least one class session before you intend to discuss it in class. Tell the students that you intend to focus on several matters during the discussion:

- The importance of research in a public relations campaign;
- The dynamism of the mass media in researching audiences;
- How to use the mass media in achieving a public relations campaign's goals;
- Different ways to use the mass media in a public relations campaign;
- Cultivating and maintaining good relationships with the media;
- How organizational policies affect public relations programs;
- The importance of goal setting, defining objectives, effective planning and monitoring in a public relations campaign.

First 30 minutes of class

Spend the first five to 10 minutes of the class session briefly recapping the facts of the case. Then for the next 20 minutes, have the students identify the following:

- The stakeholders in this case and their interests;
- The strategic tactics and techniques used in the campaign;
- Research methodology used to develop the plan;
- Methods of evaluation used to determine results;
- The reasons for the success of the program;
- What might have made the program even more successful?

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Ask the students for their communication plan. What would they have done if they had been the UNICEF communication officers?

In their planning, ask the student to take into account the following:

- Strategic Communication Objectives: What are the organization's strategic operational objectives and how can we link them directly to our communication objectives?
- Audience Analysis: Who are we most concerned about reaching? Why do we want to communicate with them? What outcome do we hope for when we reach them?
- Message Construction: What do we want to say to each of these audiences? Will our messages differ from one set of stakeholders to another? How simple or complex should the message be?
- Medium Selection: How should we reach the stakeholders? Should we consider electronic means? How about print? Should we deliver our message through the press? How should we try to communicate directly with one or more of the stakeholder groups?
- Measurement of Outcomes: How will we know if we have succeeded? What criteria should be used to determine success? If we are not successful, what should we consider changing first: medium, message, audience or objective?

Last 15 minutes of class

Conclude the discussion. The key is to let students speak freely, but to guide their comments towards the issues facing the organization.

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**Petrobras: Building an Image of Leadership in a Critical and
Culturally Adverse Environment**

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Executive Summary

As organizations expand into international markets, communications and public relations professionals require strong skills in developing and coordinating successful campaigns in multi-cultural, multi-national environments. While it is true that many products can be successfully marketed in a foreign country without significant modification, PR campaigns rarely enjoy this luxury and must be adapted to the cultural realities of each country if they are to be successful. This case study provides an actual example of how Petróleo Brasileiro S.A. (Petrobras), Brazil's largest oil and gas company, created culturally sensitive PR strategies following its acquisition of Perez Companc S.A. (PECOM), Argentina's second largest oil and gas company.

This case highlights some key issues in international public relations, particularly as they apply to organizations that expand into foreign markets via acquisition. Legal and regulatory issues aside, if a company is to succeed in a foreign country it must be accepted by the local community and strategic stakeholders. When a large foreign organization acquires a national company in a strategic industry like energy, interesting challenges arise and PR professionals must develop culturally sensitive strategies in order to obtain the public's 'permission to operate'. This case describes cultural issues that Petrobras faced after its Argentine acquisition and analyzes the need to understand not only the local perceptions of products and services, but also of national identity and its impact on the brand within a foreign country. Secondly, the case provides details on the specific PR strategies Petrobras created to overcome these challenges and achieve organizational objectives.

Problem Statement

Traditional theory on strategic management is based on creating a competitive advantage by offering superior products and services. While this continues to be an important component of strategy, in today's global environment, additional factors are important when an organization expands into a foreign country via acquisition. While marketing is responsible for managing the product/service strategy, it is up to PR professionals to create the favorable perceptions among the organization's key stakeholders that will enable the business to succeed in a foreign country.

International acquisitions often occur during a financial crisis, when the target company's market value is depressed. While this makes economic sense (buy when the price is low), these are precisely the times when local communities are most sensitive and insecure to a "foreign invasion".

Petrobras found this true when, in 2002, it acquired the #2 oil and gas company in Argentina, Perez Companc S.A. (PECOM). At the time, the Brazilian economy was rapidly expanding and Brazil had just gained some "bragging rights" on the continent by winning the Soccer World Cup finals. Argentina, on the other hand, was suffering from a severe and culturally embarrassing economic and financial crisis.

The two major PR problems Petrobras faced following acquisition of PECOM were:

1. How to overcome strong cultural resistance towards the idea of a foreign company, and even worse a Brazilian company, acquiring a controlling interest in an important Argentine company in a strategic industry.
2. How to favorably differentiate and position the Petrobras brand in Argentina when the host country's cultural perceptions were unfavorable towards a Brazilian company's products and culture?

Background

Argentinean cultural perceptions

Anyone living in South America is familiar with the rivalry between Brazil and Argentina. While geographic neighbors, each country has very distinct history and cultural roots. Brazil and Argentina are by far the two largest economies in South America (#1 and #2 respectively) and are natural competitors. (Exhibit 1)

Petrobras realized the need to understand its host country's cultural perceptions before defining its PR strategies and it invested in PR research. The results of the research were as follows:

- Surveys demonstrated strong anxiety over the future of the country and the fear of future privatization and of foreign organizations taking control of Argentina's companies and resources in a time of weakness.
- In focus groups, Argentinean consumers described Brazilians primarily in unfavorable terms.
- Market research showed unfavorable perceptions towards Brazilian products and companies including:
 - Poor perceptions of Brazilian products
 - Unfavorable perceptions of Brazilian industry whose product and service standards were considered inferior. In the fuel sector, one of Petrobras' main product lines, the situation was even worse given a past problem with Brazilian fuels. Since the 1980's, Brazilian law has required all automotive gasoline produced in Brazil to include a certain percentage of ethanol. This mixture of gas and ethanol is cheaper, promotes investments in alternative energy and performs well in Brazil where the motors are calibrated to operate with this mixture. In the past, when Argentineans crossed the border and purchased Brazilian gasoline, their motors did not perform well with the mixture and the perception of inferior Brazilian gasoline was created
 - The "high tech" capabilities and technological sophistication of all Latin American oil companies was considered inferior to those of non-Latin companies

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The Argentinean economic crisis of 1999 – 2002

In the 1990's Argentina was heralded as a success story in economic management. Foreign investors poured billions of dollars into the country, inflation rates were lower than those in the U.S., and the economy was one of fastest growing in Latin America. Argentina was the darling of international financial lending, strictly adhering to International Monetary Fund (IMF) advice. Interestingly, at the same time, Brazil was suffering very high inflation and stagnant economic growth.

But in 2001 the Argentine economy reached its breaking point. Peter Katel of Time Magazine provides an explanation. Several factors contributed to the Argentine economic crisis.

The first was the fact that the Argentinean peso had been legally pegged to the dollar, on a one-to-one basis, a decade earlier by Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo. Cavallo hoped the move would end hyperinflation, but what that meant in practice was that when Brazil devalued its currency in 1999, foreign investors and buyers found their dollars could buy more in Brazil than in Argentina. So Argentina's foreign investment and exports dried up — buyers of Argentine beef or wheat or anything else the country produced could get more for the same price in other countries, particularly in neighboring Brazil.

The second factor was the impact of extensive borrowing done by the Argentine government to finance high fiscal deficits that sent domestic interest rates up. The more the government borrowed, the more expensive credit became for businesses and that forced many companies to close.

As the crisis developed, the government announced that its foreign debt could not be paid back and billions of dollars in government spending would be cut. This translated to government employees receiving a salary reduction of 13 percent (Pastor and Wise 2001). While at the same time unemployment skyrocketed to nearly 20 percent (Stiglitz 2002). In one year Buenos Aires fell from being the most expensive city in Latin America to the cheapest city (Latin Trade 2003). Argentina's economic crisis affected every level of Argentine society and created an air of uncertainty for the future of Argentina. Public resentment towards most institutions was pervasive.

Petrobras - the company

With a presence in 26 countries including Angola, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Ecuador, the United States, England, Japan, Mexico, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, and others, Petrobras had positioned itself as a major international energy company, strengthening its international performance and recognition. Petrobras is currently ranked as the world's sixth largest energy company with a market value of \$242.7B (Exhibit 2)

The history of Petrobras in Argentina

By the end of the 1980's, Petrobras had started to take part in bidding processes in the newly-opened Argentine market of exploration and production. On November 27, 1993 Petrobras Argentina SA (Par) was created with the goal of developing exploration, production, transportation, industrialization and distribution of oil and its byproducts, as well as the services connected to the various segments of this industry.

Then in 2002, business activities in the country increased significantly with the acquisition of 58.62 percent of PECOM, which represented an investment of approximately US\$ 1.2B. As a result, Petrobras became the second largest oil producer in Argentina, drilling over 10 percent of the national production. It also acquired a 6 percent interest in the production of natural gas.

The need for a new positioning strategy in Argentina

By the end of 2002, significant events had taken place which called for the development of a new positioning strategy in Argentina. First was the acquisition of PECOM which dramatically expanded Petrobras' presence in the Argentine market. The other was the decision to enter the domestic retail market with Petrobras' own service station network. (Up to then, fuel distribution was done under an existing Argentinean brand)

A SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) analysis performed by Petrobras in 2003 provides insights on the need for a new positioning strategy.

Strengths:

- The arrival of new foreign investments during a period of crisis and the perception that this would create new jobs;
- Entry of a successful global company bringing superior high technology, product quality and customer service;
- Investments specifically targeted to improve a weak point in the Argentinean energy supply chain, the service station network.

Weaknesses:

- Poor reputation of Brazilian products in general and Brazilian fuels in specific;
- Strong public sensitivity to the purchase of domestic companies by foreign companies (aggravated by the fact that PECOM was seen as a national icon);
- Poor perception of the technology of all Latin American oil and gas producers;
- Ill feelings towards the Brazilian origins of a company with a significant stake in Argentina's energy supply;
- Deterioration of PECOM assets and the perception of possible problems regarding the quality of its products and services.

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Opportunities:

- To position Petrobras among the most important players in the Argentinean oil and gas industry;
- To consolidate the positive elements of both organizations and create the image of an integrated global energy company while preserving the prestige of PECOM and adding the strengths of Petrobras;
- To establish strong relationships with the different audiences by means of culturally sensitive PR campaigns.

Threats:

- Limited differentiation opportunities in a commoditized market where consumers don't perceive much difference between brands and, therefore, tend to make purchasing decisions based on price;
- Being viewed as just a continuation of the status quo, nothing new;
- Losing the valued characteristics of the PECOM brand;
- The arrival of new players in the market;
- Organizational image becoming politicized due to the fact that Petrobras is a Brazilian state-owned company;
- A developed and mature market with solid existing competitors with a long history in Argentina.

Goals and Objectives

With the above in mind, the goals set by Petrobras in terms of communications were:

1. Install a strong communications department "in-country" to ensure greater proximity to and deeper understanding of local issues and perceptions.
2. Win the Hearts and Minds of the Local Community – reduce or eliminate the existing suspicions and concerns local audiences have towards foreign ownership in the energy sector.
 - a. To establish itself as a company which is interested in developing and growing side by side with Argentina, and one which came along to invest in, and remain in the country.
 - b. To gain the respect of its employees, so that they become brand promoters.
3. Reposition the Petrobras brand to overcome cultural perceptions and enhance Petrobras' image as a global leader in the energy industry.
 - a. To successfully establish itself in the country as one of the leading oil companies in the world: a leader in technology, quality, services, social responsibility and care for the environment.
 - b. To create a differential for the brand so that people will choose Petrobras Service Stations, its products and services.
 - c. To crystallize the image of a company that prioritizes the human dimension, values ethics and transparency, and that knows that its most important asset are its people.

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Strategies and Tactics

What were the strategies and tactics developed in order to achieve the goal of ensuring a deeper understanding of local issues and rapid response to the PR challenges in Argentina?

Rather than try to use the Brazilian based communications department to manage the Argentinean operations, Petrobras decided to replicate their Brazilian structure and have a dedicated department “in-country.” The Communications Department, whose director reports directly to the Manager of the Petrobras Group in Argentina, was divided into five management areas. Each area had instructions to conduct research to gain a stronger understanding of the local issues, both business and cultural, facing the organization.

The five areas are:

- **Planning, Managing and Branding:** responsible for surveying the communication needs of the different business and functional units of the company and proposing the strategy, monitoring, via management indicators, the outcomes of the actions implemented for the different audiences, and managing the overall brand system of the company (corporate brand and product brands).
- **Advertising and Sponsoring:** responsible for the development and coordination of advertising campaigns and the corresponding media planning. This area is also responsible for the development of policies for sponsoring both cultural and sporting events, as well as for the organization of related events.
- **Institutional Relations:** responsible for the development and coordination of programs, projects and events related to audiences of corporate interest (government officers, ambassadors, businessmen, NGOs, key customers, industry chambers and associations, and top staff). This management area includes the Corporate Social Responsibility area, which develops the different programs for social and environmental issues.
- **Press Relations:** responsible for the relationship with all mass media, and for the publications and communications inherent to the company’s activity and strategy in the community.
- **Internal Communication and Media:** responsible for creating internal communication policies and implementing them, i.e. for designing strategies that ensure that information is released to the employees. In addition, this area is responsible for coordinating and editing the Company’s physical media (magazines, brochures, leaflets, posters) and digital media (mainly Internet and Intranet).

What were the strategies and tactics Petrobras created in order to achieve the goal of reducing or eliminating the existing suspicions and concerns local audiences have towards foreign ownership in the energy sector? (Exhibit 3)

Campaign 1:

Communicating Petrobras' commitment to Argentina (budget US\$ 1.3M)

Amid the context of crisis and adverse public opinion towards foreign acquisitions, Petrobras needed to demonstrate and communicate its long-term commitment to the country. Communication actions focused intensively on advertising, the press and opinion leaders and focused both on an emotional message to demonstrate solidarity and shared hope for a better future and more concrete messages to communicate plans to invest heavily in the country.

As a first step, it was defined that a clearly emotional communication would be used. The contents would neither refer to the nature nor to the business of the company, as the intention was to "break the ice" with the Argentineans and to be with them in the critical period the country was going through (we understand, we care, we are here to participate and help). The slogan "A New Energy" was developed to tap into the desire to believe in a better future. As an umbrella message, it triggers some characteristics associated with image, such as strength, dynamism, novelty and leadership. It was time to fill this "new energy" that was being established in the country with meaning. Therefore, the claim of the advertising campaign was that "the energy is within us", and where there is energy there are no limits", with statements about energy that were a metaphor for the company and that established a parallel with people's energy and aspirations.

A TV commercial included a song by Mercedes Sosa, one of the most beloved Argentinean singers and an icon of Argentinean music, as well as other personalized scenes highlighting important Argentinean cultural references. It is important to mention that the people in the commercial were not actors but ordinary Argentinean people, which strengthened the feeling of closeness and inclusion the campaign wanted to achieve. The high point of this search for closeness with the market was the commercial "Models" in which Petrobras is introduced as "energy for everyone" and there is an association between car models and types of people: "brand new", "trucks", "convertibles", "classical", and others.

Campaign 2:

Showcase high visibility, high impact investments in the country (budget US\$ 1.2M)

Another action performed to reinforce Petrobras' commitment to the country was to showcase its heavy investments in the country. Petrobras wanted to highlight investments in an area of the value chain that had high visibility and impact on everyday consumers so it selected the service station network, which had suffered neglect over the previous years and was in a dismal state. Petrobras opened new service stations and converted many others to reflect a modern design with focus on quality and service. At each opening, institutional events were held with the attendance of top executives and celebrities such as young Argentinean artists, athletes and other emerging leaders representing the country's new energy. These symbolic events made the opening events

attractive and strengthened the impact for the press. The events caused a particularly strong impact in the provinces where local celebrities are a far less common sight.

Campaign 3:

Corporate sponsorship of local artists, school programs and other important social and cultural activities that had suffered severe cutbacks during the financial crisis (budget US\$ 1.6M)

Part of the concern about foreign ownership relates to one of the consequences of globalization, a threat to one's local identity. In an attempt to reduce this anxiety, Petrobras decided to sponsor numerous local cultural activities and events. A strong policy of sponsoring sports and musical events was implemented. Not only were events sponsored, but in many cases, the company invited underprivileged groups to attend for free, generating goodwill and media coverage.

In sports, an agreement was signed to sponsor one of Argentina's more traditional soccer teams, "Racing," thereby associating the brand to an Argentine passion and providing additional merchandising and advertising opportunities in stadiums. The team's uniforms were the colors of the Argentine flag and this sponsorship secured significant media visibility. In addition, the company sponsored tennis, polo, road touring and other tournaments.

The Music and Energy Program was created to support local musical artists and promote cultural events. The program consisted of promoting concerts with local pop artists to generate a bond between the audience/community and the Petrobras brand through sensations, emotions and entertainment. This provided the brand with a fresh look, as it was the first company in the industry to be involved in this type of activity. It also projected an image of trust and demonstrated willingness of the company to truly be part of the country and its culture. The artists were selected for their youth, dynamism, liveliness and strong identification with the Latin and Argentine culture.

As a final strategy to demonstrate Petrobras' commitment to a diverse segment of the Argentine population, the company also sponsored numerous cultural and social programs in many local schools and communities throughout Argentina. These programs included dance, theater, music and lectures.

What were the strategies and tactics Petrobras created in order to achieve the goal of repositioning the Petrobras brand to overcome cultural perceptions and enhance its image as a global leader in the energy industry? (Exhibit 4)

As work was being done to reduce Argentineans' concerns about foreign ownership, Petrobras understood that it also needed to develop PR strategies that would enable it to compete effectively against established competitors. These strategies would need to go beyond the purely emotional messages and provide content which appealed to rationality and conveyed, first of all, leadership in technology and quality, and, secondly,

a commitment to environmental protection and social responsibility. Petrobras needed to develop a positioning strategy that would differentiate its brand and it chose to do this based on two dimensions, product quality and technological leadership as one, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) as the other.

Campaign 1:

The “ADENTRO” Campaign (Inside Petrobras) to communicate existing achievements in Quality and Technology (budget US\$ 0.9M)

The “Adentro” campaign (Exhibit 4) was planned for the main mass media. It consisted of a TV spot and four printed and radio advertisements. The communication themes covered in the campaign include:

- Leadership in Deepwater: Petrobras is the global leader in deepwater oil production and its history is marked by important achievements in this area. The campaign included images of one of the company’s offshore deepwater platforms and highlighted Petrobras’ international recognition in this important and technologically challenging area of oil exploration and drilling.
- CENPES: CENPES (Centro de Pesquisas e Desenvolvimento) is the research and development center located in Rio de Janeiro. This is the largest R&D complex in South America and consists of 137 laboratories and 28 functional units and all of Petrobras’ technological research and development activities are carried out there. CENPES receives 1 percent of the annual gross turnover and has outstanding, internationally recognized professionals. The campaign also showed images of CENPES’ technicians at work, and the printed ads included information about its technological achievements.
- Formula 1: Petrobras is the official fuel supplier of the ATT–Williams Formula 1 team, the car racing category with the world’s highest technology. The campaign used images and data that focused on this collaboration, showing, for example, the competition cars sponsored by the company and implies that ATT-Williams selects only the best fuel for its Formula 1 racing.

Campaign 2:

Sponsoring the HONDA RACING TEAM (budget US\$ 1.0M)

While the Formula 1 sponsorship focused on fuel quality, Petrobras also sponsored the Honda Racing Team (Petrobras’ TC 2000 Honda Racing Team), a car racing category which is strongly associated with leading automotive technology.

Campaign 3:

PODIUM, Petrobras launches a superior product into the market (budget US\$ 1.6M)

In 2004 with great fanfare, Petrobras announced the launching of its new premium fuel, Podium. For this launch, the campaign’s claim was that it was “the automotive launch of the year.” The product established new market parameters since it was the first gasoline to exceed the 100-octane barrier, a fact that immediately reflected favorably on Petrobras’ advanced research and developmental capabilities as well as its access to

leading manufacturing technology. The campaign employed a multi-target, cross-media communication strategy that was designed to overcome previous unfavorable perceptions of Petrobras' capabilities to deliver leading edge quality and technology to the market.

Multiple campaigns to elevate awareness of Petrobras' strong commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR)

“The purpose of a company, its reason to be, the greatness of its justification as a complex, dynamic social creation that is filled with potential, is shown by the authentic services the company can provide to the society where it belongs and to which it owes its reason to exist. Recognition and legitimacy will be obtained from that task and from the efficiency and effectiveness shown in its purpose.”

-Rogue A. Grunuaer, RSE Magazine, SES Foundation

One of Petrobras' strengths is that it is acknowledged worldwide and most noticeably in Brazil, as a company concerned with the community, the environment and the people. Corporate Social Responsibility involves a change in culture, a new management method. It emerges as a necessary condition for facing the complex challenges posed by globalization. Petrobras understands that its goal is not a choice, but a requisite for sustainability which guarantees that the company will grow with social legitimacy and recognition. Thus, according to Petrobras, being a socially responsible company means it has to complement its economic goals with the fomenting of active policies meant to create ethical, human, social and environmental values within a context of debate and communication with its different target audiences.

Some of the campaigns developed include:

1. Support for selected secondary schools and universities
2. Sponsorship of the AATA (Argentine Association of Wheelchair Tennis) (budget US\$ 42,000). The choice of AATA was based on several reasons. First it is directed towards the development of people with special needs and therefore fosters social integration, and secondly, it is an institution which strengthens the association of the brand with the type of values supported by Petrobras.
3. Creation of a new Foundation called Crear Vale la Pena (Creating is Worthwhile) (budget US\$ 53,000). This foundation's main goal is to work with young people through art, which is used as an individual and collective projection, a force for change and an engine for improving social life. This type of action contributes to the goal of improving the level of social inclusion and integration, generating “energy and opportunities for everybody.”

Results Achieved

Did the strategies and tactics described in the previous section achieve their desired results? In regards to reducing concerns towards foreign ownership and

improving perceptions of Brazilian organizations, research from TNS Gallup conducted after the above campaigns showed that Petrobras had a 50 percent favorability rating, second among all energy companies operating in Argentina (Repsol, Argentina's #1 energy company had a 70 percent rating). In the same survey, when asked which energy companies Argentineans would like to remain in the country, Petrobras came in second place. (Exhibit 5)

In qualitative research, respondents were asked to categorize their feelings towards Petrobras as if it were a person. Prior to the PR strategies described above, the respondents answered using the terms "liar," "opportunistic" and "unable to take a strong stand on issues". Afterwards, in 2003, a more representative description was: "Not older than 40, friendly, charming and future looking".

In the March 2004 issue of Apertura Magazine, a leading business magazine with national coverage, a survey was published which ranked the 100 companies with the best image in the country. In this ranking, Petrobras achieved a TOP TEN position: it ranked 7th and is the company which advanced the most in terms of ranking, moving up from 47th position in 2003 to the 7th position in 2004. The qualities that ranked highest were: quality of management (5/100), honesty and ethics (6/100) and best institutional communication and advertising (7/100).

Other market research surveys carried out indicate an interesting turn regarding how the company was perceived at the end of 2002.

- Initially, Petrobras was perceived as a small company. Within the fuel market, it was compared to Rhasa, a small local player. Today, it is perceived as one of the big players (top-of-mind, brand recall). Its good image and the excellent service given at its stations are highlighted qualities.
- Formerly it was mostly associated with Brazil and as a consequence, it was considered a mediocre industry player and there was concern over foreign ownership. Today Petrobras is perceived as a global company, a strong, reliable, serious company that has a sound presence and is integrated into the country and its future. The large capital investments made in the country made Argentineans trust it.
- Today, Petrobras portrays an international, global image, as opposed to the competitive Brazilian image it portrayed in the beginning.

In regards to successfully repositioning the brand, market research conducted by Cicmas Strategy Group showed favorable perceptions about qualities linked to Petrobras' general image.

The most important perceptions of Petrobras were:

- Strong growth: clear permanent achievement, launching increasingly better products with a strong advertising support (91 percent according to it).
- Reliable and supportive.

- Progressive, innovative and highly competitive.
- Petrobras leads in brand recall in its category.
- Podium is a leading brand, which is markedly different from the competition and adds value to the corporate brand.
- In the current oil company rankings by all Argentines, Petrobras is 3rd, after Shell and YPF, Argentina's largest and home-owned company. But for its customers, Petrobras is 2nd, after Shell.
- The projection is that in two years Petrobras will be competing for the 1st position very close to Shell and YPF.

Conclusions and Implications

The Petrobras case demonstrates the importance of understanding the cultural perceptions of your audiences. While this is true even when operating in your home country, the challenges are magnified when operating in a foreign country. Globalization may be irreversible, but the concerns and cultural perceptions of the host country remain important factors in developing successful PR strategies.

When Petrobras entered the Argentinean market by acquiring a local company, it came with the unfavorable cultural perceptions held by the local community of its home country (Brazil). These perceptions included a strong resistance to foreign ownership, poor perceptions of the company and its products and suspicion of Petrobras' long term intentions in the country. While the case describes some of the strategies employed by Petrobras to overcome these perceptions, the conclusion is clear: cultural perceptions are important and PR professionals must make the required investment necessary to understand the often subtle cultural feelings and perceptions that exist in the host country. By authentically demonstrating commitment to the country and its culture, unfavorable perceptions and suspicions can be overcome with culturally sensitive PR strategies.

The Petrobras case further demonstrates the role culture plays in influencing the image of an organization. In the home market, the organization's image is based on a number of factors including the characteristics of the products and services, the management, and the relationship with strategic stakeholders. In the context of operating in a foreign country, 'national identity' is an additional factor and may even be the predominate factor.

The research clearly showed that the Petrobras image in Argentina was more closely associated to cultural perceptions of Brazil (primarily unfavorable) than from actual experiences with the company. By first engaging their audiences to gain trust, and then consistently communicating the actual characteristics of the organization (globally successful, technology leader, committed to a better and sustainable future), Petrobras was able to invert the process and begin developing an image based more and more on its actual characteristics. The implication for PR professionals in a foreign country is this: in the absence of actual and meaningful experience with your company, foreign

audiences will rely on their established cultural perceptions of your country. PR professionals must first understand the culturally based perceptions of their national identity and then actively engage audiences so that new perceptions based more on reality prevail.

Most organizational professionals (those in legal, finance, operations) are not experienced in analyzing culture's impact on organizational performance. Since cultural misunderstandings can undermine otherwise sound strategy, it is imperative that PR specialists with experience in cultural issues work closely with others in the organization. In a similar vein, it is equally important that PR professionals get outside of the organization and interact closely with their foreign audiences.

When Petrobras expanded into Argentina, it not only conducted extensive research on cultural perceptions, but it established an "in-country" communications department so that PR professionals were closer to local audiences.

Coordination also requires thinking about strategic sequencing. Petrobras' Podium campaign, for example, which highlights Petrobras' technological achievements, would not have been effective as a positioning strategy had the concerns of foreign ownership and commitment to the country not already been successfully addressed. The implications for PR professionals are significant. PR professionals must participate from the beginning in the organization's strategic development process, otherwise, strategic sequencing will not be coordinated and the effectiveness of some of the organizations strategies severely diminished. In difficult multicultural environments, it is a common need for PR to work the 'trust issue' well before other branding strategies can be successfully performed.

The final conclusion involves the important role corporate social responsibility (CSR) plays in overcoming cultural barriers and differentiating brand. Fair or not, in light of cultural suspicions, foreign companies are carefully scrutinized by the public. In today's environment, when nothing remains secret, organizations operating in foreign countries must hold themselves to the highest standards of corporate responsibility. In countries where legal protections for consumers and the environment are less advanced, being recognized as having strong corporate social responsibility is even more crucial and can provide significant benefits to the organization's image and standing in the community.

TEACHING DISCUSSION

1. Assume your PR firm has been hired by another country's largest state-owned energy company to provide support during their acquisition of one of your country's traditional oil and gas companies. Identify the key PR issues that the

- acquiring company would confront. Which of these issues would be based on rational perceptions and which would be based on subjective cultural perceptions?
2. Analyze the PR strategies developed by Petrobras to overcome resistance to foreign ownership in Argentina. What other ideas can you come up with that could help overcome nationalistic resistance to a foreign acquisition? Would the strategies that Petrobras implemented in Argentina work in your home country? Explain
 3. Provide your thoughts on the concept of strategic sequencing. Using the list of PR issues defined in question #1, or in another example from your class or group, discuss your views on the best sequence of PR strategies. Which strategies would need to be implemented early on before others would have a chance for success?
 4. Describe some of the characteristics you think are important for a successful international PR professional.

Group activity

1. Develop a SWOT Analysis for your company or client and then use the analysis to formulate a new strategic positioning for the organization.
2. Search the Internet and find a good example of a company that demonstrates strong cultural sensitivity. Explain your choice.

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**Transparencia: The Importance of Neutrality
Providing Objective Information in a Difficult Political
Situation**

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Executive Summary

Transparencia is the Peruvian electoral watchdog organization that played a pivotal role during the controversial 2000 presidential elections in Peru and continues to be a key non-governmental organization (NGO) today. Using effective communication strategies, Transparencia accomplished what it planned at the beginning of its public relations campaign: to demonstrate that the 2000 electoral process was neither fair nor free – a statement that was widely accepted by an important number of Peruvians (not only influential opinion makers, but also millions of common citizens) and the international community. The campaign was characterized by 1) strong interpersonal communication that built a 19,000-person volunteer network; 2) media relations that worked to by-pass government-influenced media; 3) the use of social science research methods (polls and media content analyses) to present objective information and gain organizational legitimacy; 4) relationship building with international and Peruvian opinion leaders. Working in cooperation with other international nonprofit organizations interested in free elections, this nongovernmental organization set the stage for Peru to have free elections in the 21st Century.

Problem Statement

At the end of 1999, after almost ten years in power, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori decided to run for a third term - an unconstitutional initiative that heated up an already unstable political arena. Since his reelection to a second term in 1995, there had been discussion about his intention – in coordination with his powerful intelligence advisor Vladimiro Montesinos and the Army – to run for a third term. To achieve the objective, Fujimori and his allies used all they had built: a majority in the Congress, controlled judicial institutions, a politicized Army, an extended intelligence agency, and a group of loyal technocrats, along with media, politicians, and businessmen who owed them favors. One of the most controversial steps towards that end was the removal by a Parliament (dominated by representatives who supported Fujimori) of independent judges in the Constitutional Court, the board that would decide whether Fujimori's third candidacy was in accordance with the Constitution.

At the other side of the political spectrum, small and weak opposition political parties tried unsuccessfully to create an alternative to Fujimori's plans. Acting within the political system from seats in the Congress or in municipalities, the opposition's political options were not a serious threat for Fujimori's and Montesinos' ambitions. At that time, there had been serious allegations about Montesinos taking advantage of his position for illegal activities such as drug and weapon trafficking, so Fujimori's remaining in power was obviously beneficial for him.

Once initiated, it was clear that the government did not intend to organize an impartial, fair electoral process. The challenge for Transparencia was to work to reinstate democratic election practices without directly opposing Fujimori. The NGO had to communicate a clear message: the 2000 electoral process was neither free nor fair -- a

message that eventually allowed Peruvians to get democracy back after the scandalous fall of an authoritarian regime.¹

Background

General

Peru is an Andean country with a population of about 28 million, located in western South America. Famous for being the home of one of the most important pre-Columbian civilizations, the Inca, this former Spanish colony has had unstable political situations since its independence in 1821. In recent history, the country has suffered internal armed conflict due to domestic terrorism and the misbehavior of the military that caused almost 70,000 deaths, as reported in 2003 by the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Current economic situation

In 2007, the Peruvian economy remained healthy, with a GDP growth of 8.2 percent, as noted by the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC). According to official projections provided by the Peruvian Ministry of Economy, in 2008 the GDP will be about US \$120 billion (exchange rate as of January 2008), with a GDP per capita of US \$4,052. Despite this good macroeconomic performance, poverty continues to be the main challenge for policy makers: 48.6 percent of the population is impoverished, with higher rates in the Andean highlands' rural areas.

PR in Peru

In Peru the public relations field is generally informal and most practitioners do not have professional training. There are several consulting firms specializing in media relations (called strategic communications) but the term public relations is not commonly used.

Despite some efforts to empower the profession -- which included an act to create the National Association of Professional Public Relations Practitioners (or Colegio Profesional de Relacionistas Públicos del Perú) -- there is not a strong tradition of public relations academic programs. Public relations officers are usually retired journalists who have developed a network in the media, or professionals with a degree in social communication or communication sciences, as the profession is called in Peru. In fact, there is only one public relations master's degree program in Peru. It is at Universidad de San Martín de Porres (USMP). Indeed, the headquarters of the Latin American Association of University Degrees in Public Relations (ALACURP) is located at the USMP campus. No undergraduate public relations program exists in the country. Recently, the Universidad de Lima started a Diploma in Corporate Communication, with a curriculum that includes some courses similar to those required for a public relations degree in the United States.

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One of the movements gaining some credence among Latin American public relations practitioners is the “Latin American School of Public Relations” (Molleda, 2000). This school of thought focuses on social responsibility, especially in societies that are demanding more justice and equality. Practitioners adhering to this approach to public relations serve as social change agents in developing democracies. This case is a good illustration of public relations being used to further such democratic ideals.

Media

Probably the most interesting contemporary feature about Peruvian media is the rising ownership concentration, similar to media ownership trends globally. There are a few media conglomerates that are growing in multimedia, with print media starting broadcasting stations or vice versa, and with both using more technology.

The two most important conglomerates are RPP and *El Comercio*. RPP started as a news radio network and now owns at least six music stations with every style of music for a wide range of audiences. Additionally, RPP has started publishing some books and journals. Still, its key value is its reputation for being the fastest and widely listened to source of information.

Founded in 1839, *El Comercio* is the oldest Peruvian daily newspaper. With an award-winning staff of respected journalists, it is acknowledged to be the most influential newspaper and has the largest readership among elites. It is equivalent to the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, but slightly more conservative. Currently, the Corporation owns three dailies for different audiences, including *El Comercio* itself, and a wide range of publications and media-related businesses, including an advertising firm. *El Comercio* manages Plural TV, a firm that owns a cable network (*Canal N*) and also has an important stake in America TV, one of the largest TV networks and the most reliable television information source.

Contemporary Peruvian politics

In 1980, after 12 years of military rule and with a recently issued constitution, Peruvians elected Fernando Belaunde as president, starting a new democratic era. Belaunde’s performance was plagued with an economic crisis, social unrest and the birth and growth of the rebel group, the Shining Path. After this disappointment, the Social Democrat option lead by Alan Garcia from the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) defeated the leftist Alfonso Barrantes. Garcia’s administration not only did not solve all the problems left by his predecessors but made the situation even worse, due to a mix of economic and administrative mismanagement, corruption allegations, and poor performance fighting the Shining Path and a new terrorist movement, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). Furthermore, it was during Garcia’s term when news spread about paramilitary groups funded by the government, as well as human rights violations cases regarding prisoners in state-managed jails.

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Fujimori on stage

The 1980s, thus, caused a deep loss of legitimacy that made the emergence of independent candidates possible. When in 1990 Alberto Fujimori started his very poorly run campaign, nobody imagined that a difficult time for democracy was beginning. Fujimori proceeded to the election run-off with renowned Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, and got the informal support from both the APRA (Garcia's party) and the left, saying that despite the terrible economic situation, he would not apply shock policies, as those openly announced by Vargas Llosa. Once in office, Fujimori not only used Vargas Llosa's platform but also hired some of his key economic advisors.

Later in his first term, it was obvious that Fujimori was not interested in maintaining democratic procedures and practices. He became a close ally of the Army. And his controversial intelligence advisor Montesinos started playing a low-profile, but key role in the administration. This was more evident after the 1992 Fujimori coup. The night of Sunday April 5th, 1992, Fujimori announced the closing and reorganization of the Congress and the Supreme Court, starting the so-called "Government for the National Reconstruction." Some months later, after OAS pressure, he accepted the call for new elections for a Constitutional Congress. The new 1993 Constitution, created by a constitutional assembly with a majority of Fujimori's group, was approved despite serious fraud allegations during the 1993 plebiscite. At the same time, the party that brought Fujimori to office was relegated to a minor role.

Since the 1979 Constitution, voting is mandatory in Peru – a requirement that remains in the 1993 Constitution. If a citizen does not vote, he or she must pay a penalty in order to reinstate paperwork with government agencies or even banking operations. Absenteeism from the polls is usually around 20 percent, due to lack of updated citizen records, geographic difficulties, or personal mismanagement.

Given this environment of weak political parties, non-democratic traditions, and acute economic and social crises, it was not difficult for Fujimori to soon become a charismatic leader. Thus, his self-coup of April 1992 received immense acceptance from the public. Note Fujimori's approval rating in March (53 percent) versus April (81 percent), according to the poll firm Apoyo, reported by a Peruvian political analyst (Tanaka 1998). Although now it is clear that the country's problems could be solved within democracy without a need for authoritarian solutions, some of Peru's most challenging problems were solved in the first years of his term, thus providing him a good base for his later intentions to remain in power for a long time, with questionable allies, measures, and policies.

By the second half the 1990s, already in his second term, Fujimori and Montesinos accumulated enormous power with no democratic control. In the Congress, their government had a majority that made all his policies possible without any discussion and supervision, and minority groups were not successful in setting a new agenda. After the self-coup, the Judiciary worked with an intervening commission,

appointed by Fujimori and his allies. Intelligence advisor Vladimiro Montesinos kept and strengthened his controversial operations, which included spying on opposition leaders and independent journalists, as well as civil society representatives. At the same time, the government used social welfare programs to create a base of supporters among less privileged citizens, managing politically to create need and dependency.

In addition, according to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Montesino's secretly recorded videos also showed his corruption of many broadcast companies and the penny press (Felch, 2004). Because of advertising declines and tax reforms, broadcasters were deeply in debt. Montesino offered cash in amounts of \$500,000 to \$1.5 million per month in exchange for banning television appearances of the political opposition. By the end of 1999, Montesinos controlled five broadcast channels (in addition to Channel 7, which was already state-owned). In addition, to influence the penny press, he paid the papers' owners for favorable front-page headlines.

Although it formally respected democratic institutions, the control the regime had over different societal sectors made the rampant corruption and abuses possible. It is not surprising that democracy in Peru is full of fragile institutions, weak parties, and highly personalized politics – features that remain even in the current stable political situation. As in other countries in the region, democracy is regularly affected by social unrest and structural problems that together with poverty make the situation a permanent challenge.

The reelection option

In August 1996, Congressman Carlos Torres y Torres Lara, one of the leaders in the majority, initiated the so-called Authentic Interpretation Law, to interpret the 1993 Constitution in a way that allowed Fujimori to run again in 2000. The project was rashly criticized by independent and opposition leaders, who presented a case in the Constitutional Court, TC – a judicial body that remains partially independent; thanks to the good reputation of five of its seven members (the other two were Fujimori's puppets). Three out of the seven members of the TC said the project was unconstitutional, which caused their dismissal from the tribunal. Afterwards, an effort to call for a referendum to vote in favor or against this law was stopped in the Parliament. In 1998, numerous student protests took place in Lima and in various cities in the interior, which were the first important public social resistance movements that Fujimori and Montesinos faced.

By the beginning of 1999, the public expected an early announcement of Fujimori's candidacy for a third term. It did not happen. But by August, the phrase "Perú: País con futuro" (Peru, a country with future) appeared in various parts of the country, and in key avenues in every part of Lima – even on the San Cristobal mountain, one of the hills that surrounds Lima and easily seen from downtown. This was the first, yet not official, announcement that Fujimori was running again, and a statement that he was also planning to use a new slogan, different from those he used in the past: Cambio 90 (1990), Nueva Mayoría (1993), or Vamos Vecino (1998). Indeed, some months later the electoral alliance Peru 2000, formed by all of Fujimori's parties, was announced. Using a slogan

similar to the “Peru, country with future” phrase Fujimori registered his candidacy on December 28, 1999 – a day in the middle of the holiday season, usually a slow news week.

In the meantime, emerging independent opposition leaders (Lima Mayor Alberto Andrade and former Social Security Agency Chief Luis Castañeda Lossio) had already started their campaigns, which spurred harsh attacks from the media associated with Fujimori and Montesinos. Among all the opposition leaders, including those from the older parties such as APRA or Acción Popular (which had fewer possibilities of being elected), the key question was whether it would be possible for them to run an impartial campaign, when it was obvious that all the conditions boded an uneven process.

Organization overview

The nonprofit electoral watchdog Transparencia was born in 1994, after talks among civil society leaders about the need to improve citizenship and citizen education in Peru. The board was comprised of prominent intellectual and academic representatives. One year later, Transparencia observed the first electoral process: the 1995 elections that kept Fujimori in office. The organization continued its role in the municipal elections that followed.

In July 1999, Transparencia observed the “elecciones complementarias,” supplementary municipal elections used to correct minor Election Day noncompliance issues in various districts all over the country. In one of them, Miraflores, an upper middle class neighborhood in Lima, the process received significant media attention, due to the participation of Fernando Andrade, the brother of Lima Mayor Alberto Andrade, a future presidential candidate. It was said that Fujimori and Montesinos played key roles in the elections and that Montesinos gave money to the final winner, Luis Bedoya – a charge that later proved to be true.

Transparencia’s involvement

The 1990s were a good opportunity to develop a better trained staff and to learn that irregularities were possible not only on Election Day but in the entire election process. After five years observing domestic and international electoral processes, Transparencia had enough experience to understand the importance of enacting a neutral role. Within Transparencia the challenge was how to monitor the fairness and freedom of the elections, and how to communicate to the public (including within the international community) about its findings. Transparencia started a public relations campaign, whose two main characteristics were simple yet innovative in a highly politicized situation. The first was positioning itself as neutral and independent of all political groups, although being a democracy advocate was already a political statement for the authoritarian regime. The second feature was Transparencia’s commitment to promptly communicating objective information about the electoral process, meaning being ready for daily challenges in a very unstable time. These two factors were possible thanks to the volunteer network all over the country and a small but effective paid staff that

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Transparencia created, funded by international contributions and personal contributions from its associates.

Transparencia formulated a plan to observe the entire election process and to communicate those observations throughout it. In doing so, it allowed strong participation from the Peruvian civil society. “By making the decision to adopt a comprehensive observation role that includes pre-electoral observation, its traditional information on the day of the elections, and post-electoral observation, Transparencia opened new opportunities for citizen collaboration,” according to a thorough evaluation of Transparencia’s role in the 2000 Elections (Bernbaum, Lopez Pintor, & Sanborn, 2001, p. 109). Furthermore, as the following section will show, Transparencia was successful in raising awareness of the importance of having a free and fair electoral process.

Goals and Measurable Objectives

Although Transparencia began its public relations program in 1999 with savvy positioning and a clear mission, there was not an official public relations program with measurable objectives and established goals. “There was not a plan as it is,” admitted Rafael Roncagliolo, then the General Secretary of Transparencia. “It was in the field that we established fluid work” (R. Roncagliolo, personal communication, January 12, 2008). Indeed, the controversial electoral process showed that a flexible approach was extremely useful when dealing with a powerful authoritarian regime.

Regarding public relations message strategies, Transparencia was clear that it was necessary to provide objective information and not opinion to the public. “While the opposition’s role was to denounce, Transparencia’s role was to inform,” said Roncagliolo. According to Roncagliolo, who led the overall monitoring process, Transparencia had **just** a general strategic direction, but was 100 percent clear about what to say. “The information we provided was based on facts, not on opinions,” added Roncagliolo.

The following discussion of the public relations program is based on the review of Transparencia’s 2000 election final report, Bernbaum et al’s work, interviews with three key players in Lima about Transparencia’s performance, and personal experience of one of the authors.

Establish volunteer networks in all 194 Peruvian provinces by March 2000

The first objective for the organization was to establish a well-managed and effective network of volunteers. In July 1999, Transparencia began to set up working committees in 194 Peruvian provinces. It was clear that without a strong social base it would have been impossible to get public support and legitimacy.

At this point, it is important to mention that Transparencia's public relations objectives were more related to building knowledge about the unfairness and lack of freedom in elections than geared to building a better reputation for the organization. However, the NGO's focus on building knowledge among key stakeholders had a positive effect on its reputation, as well.

To build international relationships and get international support

Transparencia understood from the beginning the role of the international community in a very difficult political process. In a time when the possibilities of garnering local financial resources were limited, cooperation from foreign sources – especially in North America and Europe -- was fundamental. While Transparencia did not yet have the background in 1999 to set a specific financial target, its second objective was to gain enough international funds to accomplish its mission. Additionally, the third objective was to build long-term relationships with international organizations concerned about fair elections. Furthermore, political concerns in governments and institutions from neighboring countries were very important when discussing the situation in future Inter-American settings, such as the Organization of American States.

To gain opinion leaders' support

Through intensive work with independent, democratic journalists, scholars, political analysts and NGOs representatives from all types of ideologies, Transparencia knew that relationship building with opinion-makers in Peru was urgent. The NGO understood that approaching opinion leaders, who usually have more knowledge and information and can influence others, was the only way to access the few outlets provided by independent media. Transparencia intended to become a reliable source of information, since there was no media trust in the electoral authorities. "We wanted to provide elements for a further discussion among opinion leaders," said Percy Medina, the Director of Institutional Relations in 2000 and currently the head of Transparencia (P. Medina, personal conversation, December 14, 2007).

To build public knowledge about the unfair election process

Through the implementation of a very active network of volunteers, Transparencia aimed to reach, directly and indirectly, a wide range of the public that was otherwise inaccessible, since most of the media were managed and influenced by the government. "The 2000 electoral process was marked by the near absence of political information and debate on national television, as well as a lack of access to mass media on the part of opposition parties as well as independent observers," (Bernbaum et al., p. 36).

Strategic Tactics and Techniques

Evaluation statements released to media

From its previous experience, Transparencia knew that addressing the general public through the independent media (those not under the influence of the government)

was an effective way to reach wide audiences. Thus, Transparencia released various evaluation statements of the electoral process, especially when something important happened. The most important were released after the April 9 Election Day and in the days around the run-off, where Fujimori was running with no opponent due to the resignation of Alejandro Toledo.² These denounced the absence of conditions for a fair Election Day. For example, on May 29, the day after the election runoff, Transparencia released a report saying that the process was not democratic, free and fair because of “(1) partial and insufficient legislation, (2) loss of impartiality on the part of the stated, (3) absence of electoral competition, and (4) incompetence and partiality of the electoral authorities” (Bernbaum et al., p. 82).

Exit poll

Because of the unreliable electoral authorities, from the beginning of the electoral process Transparencia had planned to develop a “quick count,” a statistically valid exit poll garnered from a sample of polling stations to compare with the official results. On Election Day, an early exit poll reported the victory of opposition candidate Alejandro Toledo. Later, the National Office for Electoral Processes (ONPE) released partial results implying that the winner was Fujimori and a run-off election was not needed. (According to Peruvian law, there is no need for a run-off if a candidate receives 50 percent plus one vote.) In the evening, the results of Transparencia’s quick count were the only reliable results, and generated a lot of media attention, nationally and internationally. Transparencia said, overall, that a run-off was needed, while Fujimori claimed he was the victor.

Approaching opinion leaders

Before the official start of the electoral process, Transparencia contacted key members of influential communities (academia, diplomatic missions, media, donor, both Peruvian and international), in order to keep them informed about facts regarding the electoral process. Transparencia mailed them regular reports and newsletters about the campaign, and invited them to gatherings and events about the electoral process. This strategic mix alternated interpersonal communication with controlled tools.

Assistance to international missions observing the elections

Transparencia also assisted its international counterparts in observing the whole electoral process and the Election Day itself. In October 1999 Transparencia started inviting electoral observers from various countries to visit Peru for field experiences. In helping them, Transparencia received international media attention and presented itself as the most reliable source of information. Thus, assisting other election observers was not only a matter of providing accurate information for an impartial assessment, but a way for Transparencia to gain endorsement from the international community – a wise step when facing harsh attacks from the government-influenced media.³

Datos Electorales

Probably the most effective tool for reaching the media was the weekly newsletter Datos Electorales (issue numbers 8 to 38), which reported all the inequalities of the campaign. Using quantitative content analyses of Peruvian media, Transparencia documented the unfairness of the electoral process that a wide range of independents, opposition leaders, and external observers knew through anecdotal evidence. Analyses published in the newsletter included unequal access to media, uneven coverage of the candidates' activities, and controversial use of public funds favoring Fujimori's candidacy.

Budget

For all its operation in the first round, between August 1999 and April 2000, Transparencia devoted US \$1,268,000 coming from seven foreign sources: USAID, the German Government, the Spanish Government, the Canadian Government, the Finnish Government, the Swiss government and an NGO from Belgium. It is important to clarify that this amount was used for Transparencia's overall operation, including the establishment of the volunteers network, civic and electoral education programs, the quick count and related expenses. The organization did not break out communication expenses separately.

Results Achieved

The plan would have benefited from more specific, measurable objectives at the outset. Some of the objectives were very general because this was a new endeavor. However, Transparencia achieved the following results related to its objectives:

- *Met its objective of creating a volunteer network* in all 194 provinces by March 2000. By the end of March, Transparencia had an overwhelming number of more than 19,000 volunteers nationwide.
- *Raised US \$1,268,000 in funds* from the international community from August 1999 through April 2000. Raised US \$672,700 from April to June, although it did not use the money (or make a new commitment with the donors about funding other programs), due to the decision for not observing the run-off.
- *Increased the number of opinion leaders* with whom Transparencia extended a relationship by the end of the campaign. For instance, while it enlisted 13 international observer organizations to partner with it in overseeing the 2000 election, it received 28 observer organization commitments to oversee the run-off. For the run-off, an important number of irregularities remained and only Fujimori kept campaigning, despite Toledo's withdrawal from the race. Transparencia ultimately chose not to observe the run-off.

Transparencia also achieved the following results related to its strategies and tactics:

- *Provided facts about an uneven campaign.* Through an imaginative approach, Transparencia was able to provide objective data about an electoral process that

- was perceived as unfair since the beginning, due to all the illegal steps taken to make possible the new, unconstitutional candidacy of Fujimori. “It was very helpful to be able to put numbers to the perceptions that so many people had but that they couldn’t prove,” said Alfredo Torres, director of national opinion poll firm Apoyo (Bernbaum et al., 2001, p. 63).
- *Made some unfair elements of the campaign newsworthy.* Transparencia was successful in identifying the key stages of the electoral process and monitoring the performance of the electoral authorities. This allowed Transparencia to report impartially about developments in the campaign, and was especially useful for other electoral observers. For example, Eduardo Stein, the head of the OAS’s Electoral Observation Mission, said that “Transparencia helped significantly in refocusing the problem of the role of the media in a political campaign” (Bernbaum et al., 2001, p. 93). For Stein the materials and analysis provided by Transparencia allowed the OAS mission “to understand much better the seriousness of the problem.” This also generated media attention in international publications because international journalists used Transparencia as a major source of information for their reports. (Regularly, Transparencia approached the international media through the Foreign Press Association, APEP, providing them not only the information contained in *Datos Electorales*, but also legal and electoral analysis). A search of the Lexis Nexis database of major U.S. newspapers showed that there were 84 articles in major dailies or wire service stories (e.g., Associated Press, Knight Ridder) that mentioned Transparencia’s role in the elections and/or included quotations from Transparencia officials from November, 1999 through the runoffs in June, 2001.

One of the main tactics for communicating campaign unevenness was the newsletter, *Datos Electorales*. “What was original about *Datos Electorales* was that it quantified the inequity,” said Santiago Pedraglio, a Peruvian political analyst and journalist who was the *Datos Electorales* editor (S. Pedraglio, personal communication, December 14, 2007). In a situation where the electoral authorities were unreliable and the media remain mostly closed to opposition candidates, the information provided by *Datos Electorales* was particularly important. “In a time when all the electoral authorities were more interested in assuring the Fujimori’s reelection, the information released by Transparencia was especially useful,” said Jacqueline Fowks, a communication analyst and author of a book about the role of the media in the 2000 Elections (J. Fowks, email communication, December 28, 2007).

For instance, in November 1999, Transparencia reported that Fujimori got 83 percent of the coverage among the four potential candidates: himself, Andrade (10 percent), Toledo (4 percent), and Castañeda (3 percent). In public television that was expected to be neutral, the situation was even worse, as Figure 1 reflects. It was the first time that such a report was issued. A later report from February-March while the official candidates were already campaigning showed that Fujimori generated more than one-third of the TV coverage (35 percent), while the other eight candidates received the remaining amount.

Datos Electorales also was successful when reporting about the use of penny media to attack opposition campaigns (see Figure 2). Although the coverage seemed to be more equitable in quantity, the headlines were full of adjectives that framed the opposition presidential candidates as unskilled. Transparencia was able to present the information about the candidates' coverage in a way that showed how the media focused on opposition candidates' negative attributes (see Table 1).

Independent media reaction to *Datos Electorales* was overwhelmingly positive. International observers such as the OAS or the joint mission Carter Center/National Democratic Institute also used Transparencia's *Datos Electorales* when reporting about the electoral process. On the other hand, Peruvian television remained closed to opposing viewpoints and the penny-newspapers -- most of them de facto controlled by the government -- were reluctant and hostile to Transparencia.

The newsletter was easy to read and had newsworthy information. Although newsletters were posted to the web site, Internet technology in 2000 was not as fast as it is now (at least in Peru). However, Transparencia's staff ensured that the newsletter reached the journalists quickly in other ways. As soon as they were produced, the newsletters were faxed to the media, with hard copies following by mail. Occasionally they were hand-delivered to journalists' offices.

- *Raised awareness about the importance of assessing the whole process.* Transparencia understood that monitoring elections was not a matter of observing just the Election Day but the conditions and the role of the electoral bodies. In doing so, Transparencia used international standards extensively. Since Transparencia was founded with an educational purpose, it also devoted important efforts to educate and empower the options the elector has, as he or she has the final decision. They also educated the members of each polling station, as they were the starting point of ensuring a fair vote counting. "Over a seven-month period leading up to the elections, Transparencia educated the Peruvian public about what was required for free and fair elections," said Bernmaun et al., adding that the domestic electoral watchdog also "documented irregularities in a way that had not been done before, and channeled this information to opinion leaders who interpreted this information and disseminated it both nationally and internationally" (2001, p. 86). Although the "quick count" exit poll is a statistical tool, it also was used as an important communication tactic because communicating the data demonstrated Transparencia's capability and helped reach some of the campaign's objectives.
- *Achieved positioning itself as a reliable source of information.* From the beginning, Transparencia rapidly positioned itself as a consistent and permanent resource for gathering and obtaining objective data. A 2001 poll in January found that 56 percent of the public described Transparencia as an impartial, neutral observer. By June, that had increased to 81 percent of respondents surveyed.
- *Provide a basis for future activities.* The 2000 elections provided Transparencia an exceptional base for its actions in the following years. By July 2000, when it

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was clear that Fujimori would remain in office, Transparencia was in good standing to push for democratic changes, from negotiations called by the OAS.

Conclusions and Discussion of Implications

Transparencia's role during the 2000 elections was fundamental for recovering democracy in Peru. By November, when Fujimori resigned after a proven corruption scandal, Transparencia was acknowledged as a key player for preparing the transitional process, including the assurance of having a new free and fair electoral process in the following year. The organization was also essential in suggesting and implementing accountability actions for government agencies in the transition regime led by Valentin Paniagua.

Currently, Transparencia continues with its educational role and its observation activities for a wide range of electoral processes. For instance, it was involved in the 2006 general elections and the 2006 regional and municipal elections. Since 2000, there has not been a similarly difficult political situation, so Transparencia's role has not been as relevant as it was in the 2000 electoral process. The organization has promoted important legislation about the democratization of the political parties, but changes by the Congress reduced their expected effectiveness. Nevertheless, Transparencia has been providing assistance in the region and developing advocacy campaigns about the importance of being an informed voter.

For public relations practitioners and students, this case is an example of the ideals of the Latin American School for Public Relations because the Transparencia communication campaign was used to promote social change in Peru's evolving democracy.

TEACHING NOTES

Discussion questions

- What can public relations practitioners working for non-governmental organizations in other evolving democracies learn from the experiences of Transparencia?
- What are the challenges for public relations practitioners working in settings where media are not free to write what they want, due to corruption or pressures by government officials?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of Transparencia's decision to choose a strategy of information-based communication, rather than persuasion-based communication that directly opposed Fujimori's illegal attempt to earn a third presidential term?
- Select one of the general objectives of the Transparencia campaign and rewrite it to ensure that it is specific, measurable, and time-oriented.

- If you could go back in time and design this campaign, what evaluation measures would you have suggested at the outset? What information would have been necessary to evaluate the campaign effectively?
- In public relations planning, we discuss using research in the planning and evaluation stages. In this case, Transparencia also used research as a strategic tactic (content analysis of Peruvian media; public opinion polls). Discuss this strategy.
- Given the changes in communication technologies since 2000, what are some of the digital communication tactics that Transparencia could add in the future (funding permitting)?
- Could Transparencia have achieved as much as it did without the help of international funding? Could it have achieved as much as it did without the exposure from international media?
- If you were a public relations officer or advisor to the president of your country, would you advise that your government provide financial assistance for election oversight in other countries? Why or why not? Is this the role of governments, non-governmental organizations, or both?
- Discuss how knowledge of relationship management theory, agenda-setting theory, and framing theory could improve the strategic choices in this case.

Other assignments

Look at Transparencia's web site at <http://www.transparencia.org.pe>. (If you are not fluent in Spanish, Google for the English-language translation.) Discuss Transparencia's name, how it brands itself, and how it positions itself relative to other non-governmental organizations. If you were the organization's webmaster, what would you add to the web site?

Look at an issue of *El Comercio* (if available in your library) or at *El Comercio* online at <http://www.elcomerciope.com.pe>. Now look at a major newspaper in your country (online or in hard copy). How do they compare? If you were an international public relations practitioner working with both newspapers on a story, how would media relations with the two newspapers be similar? How would media relations be different?

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Endnotes

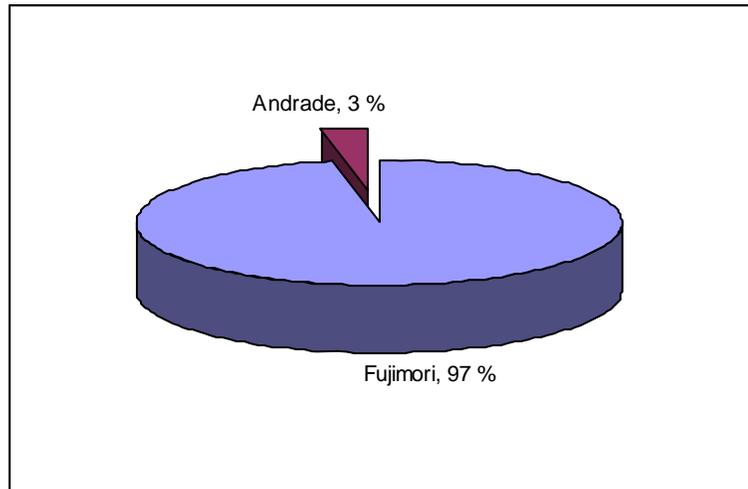
¹ There is an extensive bibliography about Fujimori's regimen, from its origin to its fall. In English, see *Fujimori's Peru: Deception in the Public Sphere* by Catherine Conaghan (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005) and *The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Peru*, a compilation of contributions by scholars based in the U.S. edited by Julio Carrion (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005). In Spanish, some key titles are *Lecciones del final del fujimorismo* by Jane Marcus-Delgado and Martin Tanaka (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2001), *La década de la antipolítica. Auge y huida de Alberto Fujimori y Vladimiro Montesinos*, by Carlos Iván Degregori (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2000) and *El fujimorismo: ascenso y caída de un régimen autoritario*, by Julio Cotler and Romeo Grompone (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2000). About Montesinos, it is useful to read *El espía imperfecto*, by Sally Bowen (PEISA, 2003), also available in English as *The Imperfect Spy*.

² Toledo became president in 2001, in an electoral process organized by new electoral authorities during the so called Transition Government headed by Valentin Paniagua.

³ Indeed, an attack campaign on Transparencia was released by at least two major TV networks, many month before the Election Day, when the watchdog started reporting about the lack of access to open TV. The reaction to these attacks was to keep working. Involuntary victimized, Transparencia also got a lot of sympathy from the international community and the independent media.

Figure 1

Time devoted to potential candidates on public television, November 1999

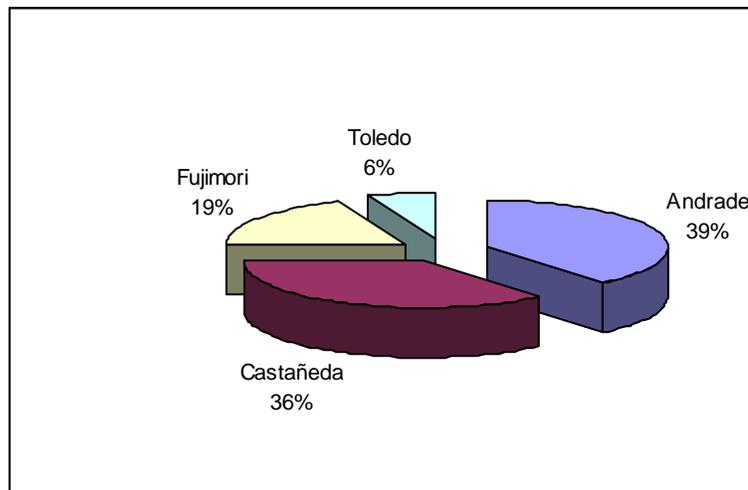


Source: Datos Electorales 14

(Note: neither Toledo, nor Castañeda got any coverage)

Figure 2

Presidential candidates on the cover of the newspapers that cost less than one sol (US\$ 0.15), January 10-March 10, 2000



Source: Datos Electorales 27.

Note: the rest of the candidates were not mentioned on the cover page.

Table 1

What cover pages' headlines of the newspapers that cost less than one sol said about the candidates,
January 10-March 10, 2000

	Andrade	Castañeda	Toledo	Fujimori
He is against the poor	51	30	0	0
He has emotional problems	1	39	0	0
He has dubious earnings	0	26	0	0
He likes protest and violence	21	0	0	0
He is pro-terrorist	14	1	0	0
He is bourgeois (pituco)	13	0	0	0
He is fraudulent	0	0	10	0
He has links with Alan Garcia	1	5	0	0
Associated with homosexuals	0	9	0	0
He is a liar	0	0	5	0
He helps the poorest	0	0	0	31
He supports good works	0	0	0	10
He is against terrorists	0	0	0	12
Other	22	6	4	8

Source: Datos Electorales 27.

Relevant Web sites

International Public Relations Association

<http://www.ipra.org>

Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management

<http://www.globalpr.org>

Inter-American Confederation of Public Relations (CONFIARP)

http://www.confarp.org/1_home.htm

Latin American Association of University Careers in Public Relations.

<http://www.alacaurp.org>

InterAmerican Press Association

<http://www.sipiapa.org>

Foreign Press Association of Peru

<http://www.apepweb.org>

Freedom House

<http://www.freedomhouse.org>

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Transparencia

www.transparencia.org.pe

Peruvian Office of the National Elections

www.onpe.gob.pe

Peruvian National Elections (legal)

www.jne.gob.pe

Election-related blog

<http://dia.pucp.edu.pe/proyectos/fernandotuesta/>

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**Withdrawal of Vioxx in Brazil:
Aligning the Global Mandate and Local Actions**

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Executive Summary

This case study shows how Merck Sharp & Dohme, one of the biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world, conducted a public relations campaign to protect its reputation during the worldwide withdrawal of its market-leader drug Vioxx. The case documents the specific internal and external strategies and actions during the most spontaneous withdrawal of a product in the history of the pharmaceutical industry in Brazil. This large Latin American country and one of the BRICH (i.e., Brazil, Russia, India, and China) emergent economies required special actions and some adjustments in Merck's global strategy.

The campaign was developed to inform patients, the medical community, and the community at large about the risks of taking the arthritis and acute pain medication and the procedures to reimburse those who had already purchased the product. The main strategy focused on media relations and intended to acknowledge the problem and to inform main publics about the procedures for withdrawal. The company was conscious that a crisis could be generated by withdrawing the product, the consequences of which could not be foreseen. The company's beliefs, values, and management philosophy guided the process, which was carried out successfully despite the unavoidable financial losses. More than three years after the product withdrawal, Merck is still concerned about its reputation in the Brazilian market.

Problem Statement

On September 30, 2004, Merck Sharp & Dohme (hereafter Merck) announced a voluntary worldwide withdrawal of Vioxx (rofecoxib), its arthritis and acute pain medication, worldwide. This decision resulted in the development of the most elaborate and critical public relations campaign by the company in contemporary history. In Brazil, as in other world markets, the medication was a top seller, requiring prompt actions and responses to the concerns of the medical community, regulatory agencies, and consumers. The campaign aimed to ease any confusion the product withdrawal and the disclosed research may have caused, as well as to position the company as responsible and concerned for the well-being of patients and the reputation of physicians who prescribed the medication.

Background

The company

Merck is a global pharmaceutical company with approximately 63,000 employees ("História no mundo," n.d.). The company conducts research at nine major centers worldwide, manufactures products in 28 facilities, and operates in more than 140 countries. Merck started its activities in Brazil in 1952 ("No Brasil," n.d.). Merck-Brazil has approximately 935 employees. The Brazilian market is undoubtedly one of the most important in Latin America, not only for its 190 million inhabitants, but also for the size

of its emergent economy. The pharmaceutical industry is one of the leading sectors of the Brazilian economy.

The drug

Rofecoxib was approved as a safe and effective medication by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 1999 (see table 1) and was subsequently marketed under the brand name Vioxx (Rubin, 2004). Since then, the drug has gained widespread acceptance among physicians treating patients with arthritis and other conditions causing chronic or acute pain. Worldwide, over 80 million people were prescribed rofecoxib. Worldwide sales of Vioxx in 2003 were \$2.5 billion (“Merck announces voluntary,” 2004). In terms of market share, the Brazilian market was responsible for one to two percent of worldwide sales of Vioxx. Brazil’s sales of Vioxx achieved revenue around \$30 million per year (Martinez, 2004).

The company’s decision to withdraw Vioxx was based on studies about the drug’s effects. Researchers discovered in a study that there was an increased relative risk for confirmed cardiovascular events, such as heart attack and stroke, beginning after 18 months of treatment in the patients taking Vioxx compared to those taking a placebo. The company’s researchers argued that the results for the first 18 months of the study did not show any increased risk of confirmed cardiovascular events on Vioxx. Patients who were taking Vioxx were encouraged to contact their health care providers to discuss or discontinue the use of Vioxx and possible alternative treatments.

Regarding the decision to withdraw Vioxx, Raymond V. Gilmartin, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Merck, said “We are taking this action because we believe it best serves the interests of patients (...) we concluded that a voluntary withdrawal is the responsible course to take” (“Merck announces voluntary,” 2004, ¶ 3).

On the other hand, Observatory Press, an independent nonprofit organization that monitors the media in Brazil, shows other opinions and views about the case. For instance, Capozzoli (2004) argues that “Merck, in fact, suspended the use of the drug because they recognized that they might lose more as consequence of complaints filed by consumers harmed, relatives of people killed or disabled by heart attacks and strokes.” Actually, he argues that Vioxx’s withdrawal was not a result of the company’s concern about patient’s health, but that decision considered just the impact on company’s profit.

Merck informed the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and regulatory authorities in other countries of its decision. As a consequence of the Vioxx withdrawal, the Brazilian National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa) decided to suspend all drugs using rofecoxib.

Financial impact

With regard to financial guidance, prior to the announcement, Merck remained comfortable with its 2004 earnings per share of \$3.11 to \$3.17 (“Merck announces

voluntary,” 2004). The company expected earnings per share to be negatively affected by \$0.50 to \$0.60 as a result of Vioxx’s announcement. This estimate included foregone sales, writeoffs of inventory held by Merck, customer returns of products previously sold and costs to undertake the pullback of the product. Included in this cost estimate was the expectation of foregone fourth quarter sales of VIOXX of \$700 million to \$750 million.

According to Simons (2008):

Merck's resurgence is still a work in progress. Its seven newest drugs are just beginning to make an impact on revenues. Most notably, cervical cancer vaccine Gardasil garnered sales of \$1.5 billion in 2007, its first full year on the market. Overall, Merck's revenues grew 7 percent last year, to \$24.2 billion. (¶ 13).

He adds: “Over the past two years Merck has exceeded expectations on all fronts - scientific, financial, and legal. Since the beginning of 2006 it has gained FDA approval for seven new drugs, more than any of its peers” (¶ 4).

Litigation impact

After Vioxx withdrawal, Merck suffered an avalanche of lawsuits in the United States against one of its most profitable drugs from patients that had used this medication. However, the company has won the majority of the jury trials. Last November, the company entered into an agreement with law firms for \$4.85 billion. Merck had initially estimated \$20 billion for compensations. This represents another victory for the company’s strategy. According to Simons (2008), “Restoring Merck's reputation as a scientific partner grew easier as the company began to win Vioxx verdicts” (¶ 11).

Goals and Measurable Objectives

Merck & Co. in Brazil has a goal to preserve the reputation and credibility of itself and its products among Brazilian physicians, patients, media and consumers.

The main issue to Merck was managing this crisis after the Vioxx withdrawal. Its primary concerns were: How to communicate this decision to clients, the medical community, media, and employees and how to be transparent and maintain the reputation of the company and its products.

The global objective was to communicate the product withdrawal to specific publics in each country as soon as possible, with important and transparent information, based on the company’s values and practices.

The primary objectives were guided from Merck’s management philosophy (see table 2):

- To protect the patient – the patient is first;
- Inform, with details, the medical community;

- Clarify the main aspects of the product withdrawal to the larger community quickly and broadly (spreading news and information to the greatest number of people).

The secondary objective was to minimize the negative impacts or effects that Vioxx's withdrawal could cause to Merck's reputation.

Primary publics

The primary publics of this campaign were customers, physicians, government officials, distributors and suppliers, employees, shareholders, and media representatives. The secondary public of the campaign was the community of consumers at large.

Strategies overview

The company announced the decision to each subsidiary around the world and offered common guidelines in order to keep the same institutional discourse. In Brazil, the company created a committee to manage the crisis. This committee was formed by company representatives of all sectors affected by the decision, such as human resources, marketing, communications, sales, financial, and legal. It met on September 30, 2004, the day the withdrawal was announced, to analyze the situation and divided the responsibilities among the groups. The communications department had prepared for a news conference that same day to respond to media questions.

Additionally, Merck-Brazil localized the global strategy by explaining the reason for the product withdrawal to the strategic publics with the use of domestic statistics and regulatory compliance. With the use of local facts and figures the company intended to place the issue into a Brazilian context. Finally, the domestic strategy included the identification of influential and credible personalities to maximize the communication impact on targeted publics. Alternative means of communication were also part of this proactive strategy.

During Vioxx's withdrawal, Merck handed information out to key influencers, such as medical and healthcare professionals. The company established permanent contact with the news media to offer clear, accurate, and timely information. Closed monitoring of the media coverage was conducted to clarify any misunderstanding or fill any information gaps and voids.

Then, Merck announced reimbursement to all consumers who had already purchased the drug. The next strategic stages consisted of the distribution of directions to process reimbursements to pharmacies, as well as the strengthening of Customer Service's operations, which had been specially trained to inform the public properly.

Merck did not assign a budget for this campaign. The company's communication officers used existing resources and communication platforms and channels. The priority was to take every action necessary and appropriate to inform the publics in a proper and

timely way. However, according to Vieira (2004), the costs with Vioxx's withdrawal operation was around 3.6 million Brazilian reais (approximately US \$1.2 million in 2004).

Strategies and tactics

Tactics were developed to achieve the global and domestic strategies during the second half of 2004. Information subsidies were used to carry out the media relations component of the campaign. A news conference with the participation of 14 journalists was held on September 30. Thirty-four individual interviews were conducted between September and November. The national and local news outlets received news releases announcing the Vioxx withdrawal and the reimbursement procedures between September and October. Paid advertisements were placed in major newspapers and television stations of the country, including media with national and state reach (i.e., São Paulo, Brasilia, Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul, Bahia, Amazonas, Ceara, Parana, and Mato Grosso).

Internal communication

Tactics for employee relations were designed to inform on the reasons for the withdrawal and encourage employees to spread the information to their circles of influence, such as family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. The internal campaign included an emergency meeting at an auditorium for employees of Merck-Brazil's main office called by the president of the Brazil's headquarters. The president's message was Web cast to employees in other facilities across the country. The president explained the situation and dictated actions to take. The sales department was asked to stop the promotion of Vioxx immediately and the sales force was requested to contact physicians and their aides by telephone and in person. Personalized letters to physicians and aides followed.

Even if the public had all the information about the withdrawal and the procedure for reimbursement, a contingency plan was maintained especially for employees. The contingency plan for employees consisted of constant communication between the Executive Committee and the global president of the company, Ray Gilmartin. Also a webpage on the internal network (myMerck) was created to share clippings, messages of solidarity and support received from physicians, patients, and other interested parties. To ensure uniformity of the messages, all the directors received a guide with directions to align communication with their working teams; that is, the content was not altered, yet the messages were adjusted to clarify the content when necessary.

The first message from Tadeu Alves, president of Merck-Brazil in 2004, sent to employees was the following: "I want all of you to know we will do everything possible to overcome this crisis in the best way. We will keep all of you informed at all times. All of our actions will be based on our mission and values, which have been keeping our company alive and active for more than a hundred years. With your commitment, we will

continue being active and driving in the next decades, and we will be stronger after this episode is behind us. We count on you” (Online communication, 2004).

Employee testimony

"It was a shock to everyone. We are sad, weary, but immediately we have redirected our energies to overcome the problem. What surprised me most was the courage and positive attitude of the employees." These are the words of the associate director of Marketing Nilton Tojar, certainly shared by many other employees (“Relatório Social,” 2005).

Indeed, the success Vioxx had built during five years in Brazil created strong ties between employees and the brand. Thus, the news surprised everyone. However, this unexpected situation did not produce inertia among Merck’s employees; employees acted rapidly to contain the crisis. "Furthermore, the loyalty of customers—physicians, pharmacists, and distributors—and their disposition to assist in the withdrawal and provide clarifications to the public, have been a rewarding experience. This only shows the trust they have in our activities," Francisco Geraldo Sette, Marketing (“Relatório Social,” 2005).

Media relations

In the early afternoon on September 30, 2004, three spokespeople of the company were trained, all the material support was ready, and journalists were invited to a news conference. Over the next month, more than 700 news stories were carried in newspapers, magazines, radio and television broadcasts, and on the Internet. The majority of the coverage included the key message from Merck as a source of information. Several publications were positive regarding the attitude taken by Merck. Throughout this period, the company’s spokespeople attended all phone and in-person interview requests to clarify the voluntary withdrawal of the drug and the procedures for reimbursement to patients.

Physicians, patients, and pharmacists

Another important decision was to immediately expand the company's service center and to train attendants to clarify all doubts that could arise from physicians, patients, and pharmacists. Trade associations of the pharmaceutical sector were also included in this strategic stage. The Customer Service Center had a team of eight people. After the Vioxx withdrawal it became a center of 40 employees. The normal 400 daily calls reached a peak of 5,000. At the end of the first month after the withdrawal, more than 50,000 calls were answered.

The company’s web site was also improved with necessary information about the Vioxx withdrawal. The web site was used to inform physicians, patients, pharmacists, and distributors. The web site offered a link with specific information to each one of these main publics.

Advertising

To ensure that a large number of patients had access to information regarding the withdrawal, Merck Sharp & Dohme placed advertisements in newspapers across the country. The first advertisement was about the Vioxx withdrawal, explaining the reasons behind the withdrawal and reaffirming the company's commitment to the public. The second advertisement was published in newspapers and broadcast on television stations when the procedure for reimbursement was structured.

Every effort was made to ensure that patients and physicians had the information as quickly and efficiently as possible. The objective was to construct clear, honest, and consistent messages supported by facts and figures. It was vital to provide accurate information, which may defend the company's credibility and reputation among targeted publics. Subsequently, a task force of managers was created after the company announced the withdrawal. This taskforce was directed to ensure that patients, physicians, health professionals, and society as a whole gained access to needed clarifications and understanding on how to proceed after Merck's decision.

Government agencies and authorities

Immediately after the announcement of the withdrawal, Merck sent formal communications to regulatory authorities, such as the Agency for Health Surveillance, Surveillance Sanitary Agencies of all states, agencies of consumer protection, and other government agencies in charge of health issues.

Results

In a critical episode such as a product withdrawal, measuring the results may be a challenging task. The wide coverage of the media, from October to November 2004, resulted in 838 news stories in newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. Nearly 2.8 million boxes of Vioxx estimated in the market were collected with the decisive support of the patients and the network of distributors, pharmacists, and physicians.

No employee resigned or was discharged as a consequence of the company's financial losses caused by the Vioxx withdrawal from the market and subsequent reimbursements. Thanks to their efforts, the company closed the year 2004 with an increase of 15 percent in sales over 2003. This meant that Merck's products continued to be prescribed, which demonstrated the trust of consumers and health professionals in the company and its products.

As a result of Merck's efforts, the company received dozens of spontaneous messages of support from the medical community, from trade associations, and other strategic partners. Below are additional results:

- 5,560 visits to the Vioxx pages of the company's web site between September 30, 2004 and January 31, 2005.

- 79,476 calls to the Customer Service Center between September 30, 2004 and January 22, 2005.
- 94 percent of calls were regarding the reimbursement procedures to the patients.
- 838 news stories were published in newspapers and magazines. More than half of news stories (N = 534) were positives or neutrals (these news stories contained key messages presented by Merck).
- In a survey to evaluate the communication process of the product withdrawal, employees' opinions showed that they considered Vioxx's crisis as one of the most relevant moments in the company's history in Brazil, and its handling something to be remembered with pride.
- 2,785,425 boxes of Vioxx were withdrawn. About 22 million Brazilian reais were paid in reimbursements to patients.

Conclusion and Discussion

This case study revealed some relevant aspects regarding proactive and strategic public relations to avoid a crisis. Today, it is a challenge for companies to establish a solid relationship with their strategic publics. Undoubtedly, transparency in communication is the most important ingredient to gain and maintain an outstanding reputation. Of course, this presumes previous high-quality products and services, good internal relations, and other financial, organizational, and communication factors.

The company learned some lessons, among them: inform as soon as possible to everyone directly or indirectly involved in a situation or organizational decision or action; develop strategies and tactics, including key messages that reflect the values and standards of the company; and, finally, but not least, show care and respect for the public that you need to communicate with.

The company also adopted a proactive position with all its public—physicians, media representatives, suppliers, government officials, employees, pharmacists and other strategic publics. The company argues that prioritizing the patients and taking an ethical posture in the Vioxx withdrawal, it gained a solid relationship and maintained credibility among its publics.

TEACHING NOTES

The case study introduced here may be used in discussions concerning crisis communications, communications management and global strategic public relations.

1. What is the impact of the decision to withdraw Vioxx in terms of communication and reputation management? In the long term, what do you think will be the consequences to the relationship between the company and primary stakeholders (i.e., patients, medical community, media, and the larger community of consumers)?

2. Experts argue that to manage a crises situation, the concept of transparency should guide the strategic public relations program because it is considered the best approach to maintain, protect, and/or repair the company's reputation. What do you think about this statement?
3. Most crisis situations involving large companies affect the motivation level of employees and management; however, in this case, the company observed that its employees, after the critical period, recognized the actions taken by their company as ethical and responsible. Employees of Merck seem to feel pride for the company. They learned how important it is to respect, internalize, and practice the values and philosophies of the company. Why is effective internal communications essential in times of crisis?
4. If you work for a global pharmaceutical company that faces a similar situation such as the one described in this chapter, what would you do differently? Similarly, after experiencing the Vioxx withdrawal campaign, what are the main lessons learned that you could use to improve crisis preparedness of Merck in Brazil or other world locations? This will lead you to the development and trial of an improved crisis communication plan.
5. Research the withdrawal of Vioxx in your country and compare it with the withdrawal recall in Brazil. Are there common elements? Might have some of the Brazilian methods been used effectively in your country? Might Brazil have benefited from some of the things done in your country?
6. In April 2008 an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that Merck employees or consultants paid by Merck had written many of the early reports about the risks of Vioxx. The articles had originally been attributed to noted physicians and medical researchers. When the "ghostwriting" was discovered, U.S. media, many with international reach, along with international news services such as Reuters and AFP carried the story. Refer to these web sites or research the story on your own.
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com:80/articles/104365.php>
<http://www.reuters.com/article/reutersEdge/idUSN1520754020080415>
<http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/04/16/business/16vioxx.php>
<http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/04/16/vioxx.articles.ap/>
http://www.pharmacychoice.com/News/article.cfm?Article_ID=80109
 Assume you were the public relations manager for Merck in Brazil in 2004 and knew about the "ghostwriting." What advice would you have given your management? Would you have handled the Vioxx withdrawal from the market differently? Now assume you are public relations manager for Merck in your country today Do you think the news media or the public are aware of this most recent development? If so, what would you do?

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Table 1: Vioxx Timeline (adapted from Rubin, 2004)

May 1999	FDA approves Vioxx
March 2000	Merck reveals that a new study found Vioxx patients had double the rate of serious cardiovascular problems compared with those on naproxen, an older nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug, or NSAID
Nov. 2000	<i>The New England Journal of Medicine</i> publishes the study, called VIGOR
Feb. 2001	An advisory panel recommends the FDA require a label warning of the possible link to cardiovascular problems
Sept. 2001	The FDA warns Merck to stop misleading doctors about Vioxx's effect on the cardiovascular system
April 2002	The FDA tells Merck to add information about cardiovascular risk to Vioxx's label
Aug. 25, 2004	An FDA researcher presents results of a database analysis of 1.4 million patients; it concludes that Vioxx users are more likely to suffer a heart attack or sudden cardiac death than those taking Celebrex or an older NSAID
Sept. 23, 2004	Merck says it learned this day that patients taking Vioxx in a study were twice as likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke as those on placebo
Sept. 30, 2004	Merck withdraws Vioxx from the U.S. and the more than 80 other countries in which it was marketed

Table 2: Merck's Management Philosophy ("Mission statement," n.d.)

Mission Statement
<p>Merck & Co., Inc. is a global research-driven pharmaceutical company dedicated to putting patients first. Established in 1891, Merck discovers, develops, manufactures and markets vaccines and medicines to address unmet medical needs. The company also devotes extensive efforts to increase access to medicines through far-reaching programs that not only donate Merck medicines but help deliver them to the people who need them. Merck also publishes unbiased health information as a not-for-profit service. For more information, visit www.merck.com</p>
Our Mission
<p>... to provide society with superior products and services by developing innovations and solutions that improve the quality of life and satisfy customer needs, and to provide employees with meaningful work and advancement opportunities, and investors with a superior rate of return</p>
Our Values
<p>Our business is preserving and improving human life. All of our actions must be measured by our success in achieving this goal. We value, above all, our ability to serve everyone who can benefit from the appropriate use of our products and services, thereby providing lasting consumer satisfaction.</p> <p>We are committed to the highest standards of ethics and integrity. We are responsible to our customers, to Merck employees and their families, to the environments we inhabit, and to the societies we serve worldwide. In discharging our responsibilities, we do not take professional or ethical shortcuts. Our interactions with all segments of society must reflect the high standards we profess.</p> <p>We are dedicated to the highest level of scientific excellence and commit our research to improving human and animal health and the quality of life. We strive to identify the most critical needs of consumers and customers, and we devote our resources to meeting those needs.</p> <p>We expect profits, but only from work that satisfies customer needs and benefits humanity. Our ability to meet our responsibilities depends on maintaining a financial position that invites investment in leading-edge research and that makes possible effective delivery of research results.</p> <p>We recognize that the ability to excel -- to most competitively meet society's and customers' needs -- depends on the integrity, knowledge, imagination, skill, diversity and teamwork of our employees, and we value these qualities most highly. To this end, we strive to create an environment of mutual respect, encouragement and teamwork -- an environment that rewards commitment and performance and is responsive to the needs of our employees and their families.</p>

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Picture 01: Vioxx – the drug produced by Merck



**The Social Role of Public Relations in Latin America:
A Ten-Country Community Relations Program Becomes an
Effective Public
Relations Tool for a U.S. Multinational**

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Executive Summary

Multinational firms entering countries in transition face cultural challenges that often make it difficult for them to practice effective public relations. That, in turn, can inhibit their ability to develop the mutually beneficial relationships they need to establish with their key publics in order to meet their business objectives. Some of the challenges these firms face include the varying degrees of public relations expertise that is locally available as well as the different levels of understanding of public relations and its role as a management tool. Other challenges include unreliable media practices, competitors' different interpretation of rules and fair play and the public's perception that foreign companies invest in developing countries solely to make a quick profit.

The last challenge is a particularly sensitive one in Latin America, a region where there is little trust in public and private institutions, which, as a consequence, spills over to new foreign investors. In a region characterized by large socioeconomic differences, and in countries where government and private sector corruption is still prevalent, even the best-intentioned investor with the strongest corporate reputation in its homeland is likely to be viewed with an initial degree of distrust by the local Latin American consumer.

From that environment has emerged what is known as "the Latin American school of thought" in public relations, which posits that, for companies to be successful in the region, they need to become socially responsible corporate citizens. In other words, first and foremost, their public relations strategies need to be built around a foundation of corporate social responsibility. The concept is basically a macro-view of the two-way model of communication which concludes that only when the organization's key publics see it as a socially responsible entity that listens to their needs will they be ready to listen to the organization and develop a sense of trust.

One U.S. multinational company that has managed to successfully implement that type of socially responsible public relations is BellSouth, which has operations in 10 Latin American countries. BellSouth created a regional community relations program with the specific goal of demonstrating its intent to become a partner in the long-term well-being of the countries where it operates – in much the same way it does in its home market in the U.S. The program, BellSouth's Proniño (tr. "for child"), was designed to address one of Latin America's most pressing needs: the education of children who cannot attend school because from a very early age they need to work full time to help their families. With it, BellSouth has been able to help thousands of children to get an education. Beyond the social impact on the lives of the children enrolled in the program, BellSouth Proniño has helped the company to position itself as an active and committed community leader in social responsibility throughout the region. That, in turn, has allowed the company to develop and maintain important relationships with the publics on whom its business success depends: government, opinion leaders, customers and the media of the countries in which it operates.

Problem Statement

As a foreign investor, a multinational corporation and a relatively new player in Latin America, BellSouth needed to develop a public relations strategy for the region that would allow it to overcome the challenges of the local environment and to position itself as a socially responsible company as well as a partner in the long-term well-being of the countries in which it operates. That, in turn, would enable the company to create a brand image as well as to develop mutually beneficial relationships with its key publics, particularly with the local governments, opinion leaders, the media and the public in general.

However, many of the social and cultural characteristics of Latin American countries make it difficult for multinational firms to succeed there using U.S.-style public relations practices. For example, two-way symmetrical communication, which the IABC Excellence Study advocates as essential for excellence, is difficult to achieve in the hierarchical cultures common in Latin America. As Sriramesh and White (1992) contend:

Societies with greater power distance in relationships [and that display higher levels of authoritarianism] will tend to be more elitist and ... harbour asymmetrical worldviews ... Public relations practitioners ... in these societies ... are also more likely to have authoritarian tendencies (p. 610).

Montenegro (2004) notes that in Latin America “the lack of communication between managers and employees has long been a historical tradition” (p. 110). Austin similarly observes that the region’s societal culture generally is characterized by a hierarchical structure – “paternalistic manager-employee relations and autocratic decision-making.” (Austin 1990, p. 354, cited in Montenegro, 2004, p. 110)

Underlying this asymmetrical worldview is a “lack of concern” that not only “extends inwardly into organizations” but externally into the community at large as a consequence of the region’s colonial cultural legacy. (Montenegro, 2004, p. 110) A feudal system under Spanish rule fostered “a government culture ... in which each level of government hierarchy attempted to compensate for low salaries by profiting from government service.” (Sharpe and Simões, 1996, p. 279) As a consequence, notes Montenegro (2004), “government graft and corruption became ingrained in the culture ... [and] many of the New World appointees ... appointed family members to positions through nepotism” (p. 110). In such a social environment with its “overemphasis on family ownership and self-interest in social, political and economic issues ... family needs take priority over community needs.” (Montenegro, 2004, p. 111) Sharpe and Simões (1996) similarly observe that such a system “failed to create the recognition of serving the community as a facet of public relations performance” inasmuch as “meeting the needs of the poor is viewed primarily as a responsibility of the church and the government rather than of private corporations and businesses or individual citizens” (p. 284).

However, even as the region generally has taken an inward focus, a sense of social responsibility has developed over the years in certain circles. Institutions of higher education in journalism (e.g., in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico) began offering a liberally based curriculum of humanities and the social sciences in the mid-1930s; in particular, “private Catholic universities ... emphasized social concerns.” (Ferreira, Tilson and Salwen, 2000, p. 62) The scholarly focus on “social communication” – training journalists to publicize and correct social ills – was further supported in the 1960s and 1970s by programs developed by the Quito, Ecuador-based Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Periodismo para América Latina (CIESPAL), a pan-regional journalism training and education institute. This approach argued that “practicing journalists ... needed to be made socially aware of the region’s experiences with poverty, dictatorships, foreign exploitation and other social problems.” (ibid, p. 65) In recent years, social responsibility has become a major theme of interest at regional conferences of public relations educators and practitioners, such as those organized by the Congress of the Inter-American Confederation of Public Relations (CONFIARP) and the Latin American Association of University Careers of Public Relations (ALACAURP).

Still, such discussions are not very broadly based in Latin American society, which remains dominated by asymmetrical worldviews. Given their power and influence in society, opinion leaders with such a mindset inhibit two-way symmetrical communication, which is essential for excellence in public relations. Furthermore, practitioners in such insular, hierarchically structured environments will often use communication “to manipulate publics for the benefit of the organization” (Grunig, 1989, p. 18), which “steers ... practitioners toward actions that are unethical ... [and] socially irresponsible.” (Grunig and White, 1992, p. 40) Such organizations “can wreak havoc on their publics when their fundamental values and assumptions... suggest that it is ethical for the organization to ‘exercise dominion’ over that environment.” (Grunig and White, 1992, p. 42)

In Latin America, such an asymmetrical communications style can extend to relations with the media, leading to practices that include paying for journalists to use news from companies. This, in turn, has complicated the objective reporting of corporate news, which is essential to building public trust in institutions. As Tilson and Rockwell (2004) report, according to Garvin (1999), government payoffs to journalists "are customary throughout much of Latin America, where salaries for journalists are usually very low. Those who work in the news business often find that they are expected to supplement their income off the job... an entry-level newspaper reporter makes as little as \$350 a month." (Garvin 1999, p. 8a, cited in Tilson & Rockwell, p.417) For example, in Mexico, Long (2004) observes that "at times, the media, as with government and other institutions, have been a part of the entrenched corruption that afflicted Mexico for all of the twentieth century... the media received its marching orders – and frequently plain brown envelopes filled with pesos – from the dominant political party and other special interests . . . In many cases, the cash changed hands before stories were written; on occasion, the envelope came in appreciation for a certain story or placement." (p. 46)

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As Tilson and Rockwell (2004) report, in Central America also, newspapers and radio stations often sell advertising disguised as news in a format called *campos pagados* (tr. “paid space”). Because they are not labeled as advertorials, readers can easily mistake them for real news.

However, some of the leading public relations consultancies in Latin America now report a sea-change in such behavior. In interviews with the leading public relations firms in Mexico, Long (2004) reports a change in attitude on both sides of the news desk. One of the principals in Zimat Golin/Harris notes that “media bribes have been almost eradicated... Today those who take payments are an endangered species. Nobody controls the media in this country anymore ... For years, the media feared the government would lift its radio-TV concessions or its lucrative print advertising. No longer.” (p. 50) An official at Edelman Public Relations Worldwide says “Mexico's news media are becoming more professional. ‘We see many new, young and serious-minded professionals pursuing journalism, especially covering business and technology.’” (Long, 2004, p. 51) According to Long (2004), a Fleishman-Hillard executive observes further that “younger Mexicans are becoming more trusting of the media, and reporters and editors are learning how to use the freedoms they acquired with the end of authoritarian rule. It is a given ... that the public will gain from a better-informed media.” (p. 51)

Nevertheless, the general lack of trust of institutions prevalent in many countries throughout Latin America – often the result of a history of political and private sector mismanagement – runs against genuine corporate efforts to establish successful relationships with key publics. Moreover, public disenchantment with institutions also undermines the legitimacy of governments and weakens popular support for democracy in Latin America. A regional poll conducted in April-May 2002 by Cima-Barometro Iberoamericano – which includes several Gallup affiliates – reports popular support below 30 percent for a majority of Latin American presidents; moreover, according to the survey, “political parties are equally discredited,” with public trust of these institutions generally under 20 percent. (Oppenheimer, 2002b, p. 7A) The results echo a Latinobarometro 2001 poll that revealed a drop from 60 to 48 percent in support for democracy across the region; in some countries, such as El Salvador and Brazil, only 25 percent and 30 percent polled in those respective countries thought that “democracy was preferable to any other kind of government,” with the most trusted institutions being the Church (76 percent) and television (70 percent). (Oppenheimer, 2000, 2001c) Not surprisingly, disenchanted citizens often choose not to vote in national elections. Voter turnout in presidential and congressional elections throughout the region within the past few years has been abysmal. Abstention rates have ranged from 61 percent (1999 presidential elections in El Salvador and Guatemala) to 42 percent (2001 congressional elections in Argentina) to 40 percent (2002 presidential elections in Costa Rica) to 34 percent (2001 presidential elections in Honduras), “produc[ing] politically weak presidents that have a hard time governing.” (Oppenheimer, 2002a, p. 11a)

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When operating in environments characterized by public disenchantment and distrust of institutions, multinational companies must make an especially concerted effort to close that gap and begin building trust. For without trust, their messages will not be believed, and their communication and operational efforts are likely to fail. As Canary and Spitzberg (1984) contend, public relations will be successful to the degree that the organization and publics trust one another, agree on who has rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other and commit oneself to one another. Indeed, as Grunig and Huang (2000) explain:

Trust is the characteristic that allows organizations to exist – trust by shareholders, employees, consumers, governments, and communities, for example. Without trust, stockholders will not buy stock, employees will not work, consumers will not buy products, and governments will interfere with the organization’s mission. (p. 29)

That statement is most relevant to Latin America, particularly given the history of multinational corporations in the region. Latin America has been economically important for the U.S. since the early 1800s when U.S. merchants began trading with Argentina and Brazil, and the region accounted for 19 percent of U.S. exports and 22 percent of its imports. (Luer and Tilson, 1996, Tilson and Newsom, 2001) Today, according to U.S. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, “Latin America is the fastest growing region in the world for U.S. exports,” which, growing at twice the rate of any other region, have tripled in 10 years. (Tilson and Newsom, 2001, p. 35)

Nevertheless, such “progress” has not been well received by all in the region. Resentment against foreign companies, particularly U.S. firms, and against the U.S. in general is deep-seated and longstanding. According to Roberto Campos, former president of Brazil, such hostility toward the U.S. stems from a history of “geographic mutilation ... armed intervention and occupation ... political intervention ... and economic domination.” (Gunther, 1966, pp. 144-145) U.S. corporate abuses, for example, have ranged from the early twentieth-century “banana empires” of the United Fruit Company and the Standard Fruit Company – “that wielded immense power in the countries where they operated [Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica], oftentimes to the detriment of the local citizenry (Rodríguez, 1965, p. 103)—to U.S. oil companies and other interests that dominated Guatemala during the mid-1950s to present-day scandals of IBM (alleged bribery and fraud involving government contracts in the late 1990s) and of Ford Motor Company in Argentina (alleged collaboration with the military’s “dirty war” clean-up of dissidents in the 1970s). (Tilson, 1999) In sum, Gunther (1996) observes that:

The sheer, overwhelming physical, economic and emotional weight of United States power... the extent of our wealth, our influence, our prestige is suffocating Oligarchs and landowners who, in the last analysis, control policy in most hemisphere countries are as a rule closely intermeshed with North American business interests ... The largest criticism from most Latin Americans ... is that ... we tend to support the status quo ... which means identifying ourselves with older,

standpat forces, instead of aligning with or actively supporting movements for popular reform (pp. 146-147).

When dealing with such complex environments, it's critical that multinationals differentiate themselves in their conduct and in their communication. However, if the prevalent thinking is that institutions are dishonest, being good is not enough. Foreign companies need to communicate their philosophy to their publics and prove it with actions.

Background

BellSouth operates cellular communications companies in 10 Latin American countries (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela). In each of these countries, it faces not only tough competition but also regulatory decisions that impact the company's ability to succeed in these markets.



Initial research in these countries indicated that BellSouth needed to find a way to give a soul to its corporate brand by demonstrating a commitment to the local communities.

In the Southeastern U.S. where BellSouth has its home base, the BellSouth brand is easily associated with community involvement. The company's support of the community dates back to its very origins with the former Bell System and today it is managed through the BellSouth Foundation, an endowed trust of BellSouth Corporation devoted to education in the South. Since its creation in 1986, the Foundation has funded more than 595 grants and operated numerous special initiatives, with a total investment of more than \$56 million as of 2003. Through the Foundation, BellSouth supports innovative educational projects that integrate technology in the classroom, foster the education of minorities and help teachers update their knowledge to meet the educational needs of students in the 21st century. The Foundation's focus on education stems from the company's belief that its future success depends on having an educated base of consumers that can use its services, as well as an educated workforce pool from which to hire employees who can develop and deliver leading-edge telecommunications services.

However, while BellSouth had earned a reputation in the U.S. for its community mindedness, in Latin America, where it is a recent arrival, there was no such connotation even though its affiliated companies contributed to numerous causes in their respective markets – albeit without a cohesive strategy. Research indicated that merely stating that the company had a proven track record in community involvement in the U.S. was not enough to extend the reputation to the region. It became obvious that BellSouth needed to demonstrate its commitment in Latin America with actual deeds. To do so, the company decided to create a regional community relations program for Latin America that was consistent with the focus on education that was characteristic of its corporate giving in the U.S.

Goals and Objectives of the Campaign

BellSouth's goal was to position itself as a socially responsible investor in Latin America and a partner in the long-term development of the countries in which it operates. To reach that goal, the company decided to create a regional community relations plan for Latin America that would:

- Demonstrate the company's commitment to the communities it serves by addressing a real social need.
- Help establish trust with its target audiences in Latin America, such as government and opinion leaders, the media and the public in general by proving its intent to become a true partner in the development of the social infrastructure of the community.
- Position BellSouth as a leader in corporate responsibility in that region by showing the way for other investors to become involved.

- Group the social responsibility efforts of its 10 Latin American operations toward one single cause that the company could “own” region-wide, thus building enough critical mass to generate an impact among its key publics.
- Create a program that would provide numerous opportunities for public relations and relationship-building activities.

Many causes were considered for possible sponsorship, such as popular sports in Latin America (soccer and baseball), mental health issues, drug abuse and the arts. In the end, however, and after considering the pros and cons of all the alternatives, BellSouth decided to focus on the education of Latin America’s working children.

There were a number of reasons behind that decision. First, many U.S.-based employees traveling to Latin America had noticed the high number of children who appeared to be working instead of going to school and had voiced their concerns to company executives.

Secondary research on the issue showed that there are an estimated 21 million working children in Latin America, with ages ranging from 3 and 4 up to their teens, which makes this a most-pressing social need. The definition of “working children” merits clarification. These are not students making a little spending money by working a few hours as baby sitters and mowing lawns after school as is common practice in the U.S. The working children of Latin America cannot attend school at all because they need to help their families by working full time selling flowers and gum on the streets, shining shoes, working in the fields, serving as full-time domestic help and often engaging in more dangerous activities. Not only is this a great loss for the children but also for the region at large. Children who enter adulthood without a basic education will not be able to become full contributors to society. Worse yet, as working children become adults without realizing the benefit of an education, they typically send their own children to work, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty and illiteracy. This has a long-term impact not only for the region but also for the companies and institutions whose future success depends on the well-being of the communities where they operate.

A macro-look at the problem of poverty in the region underscores the concern. According to the World Bank, the number of poor in Latin America has grown from 136 million in 1986 to 180 million. (Oppenheimer, 2001a) Of further concern is the increasing concentration of wealth in the region. According to Tilson and Rockwell (2004), “the United Nations’ *Human Development Report 2001* details severe disparities in income, with the richest 20 percent of the population earning a disproportionate share as compared with the poorest 20 percent.” (p. 414) In general, Latin America “has the widest gap between rich and poor in the world, with the richest 20 percent having 30 times the income of the poorest 20 percent. (Oppenheimer 2001b, cited in Tilson and Rockwell, 2004, p. 414) According to the Inter-American Development Bank’s *Development Beyond Economics 2000* study, the region’s average per-capita income has declined from 50 percent to 30 percent of the average in the developed world

since 1950. (Bussey 2000, cited in Tilson and Rockwell, 2004, p. 414) More poignantly, three countries – Haiti, Guatemala, and Nicaragua – rank lowest in the hemisphere on the United Nation’s Human Development Index, which is based on a number of social indicators, including per-capita income, school attendance, literacy rates and life expectancy. (Tilson and Rockwell, 2004, p. 414)

Moreover, the Inter-American Development Bank study indicates that privileged classes that rule such societies do little to support public policies necessary to provide vital social services to the poor. (Oppenheimer 2001b, cited in Tilson and Rockwell, 2004, p. 414) An earlier Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) report corroborates the inequities in economic development and places the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of public institutions – government administrations, justice systems and electoral bodies; as Ricardo Hausmann, IDB chief economist noted, "Latin American countries have problems with the rule of law, corruption and the ineffectiveness of government." (Bussey 2000, cited in Tilson, 2004, p. 39) According to Tilson (2004), a 2001 Summit of the Americas report spread the responsibility yet farther afield indicating that “foreign and domestic corporations in Latin America do little to promote the welfare of employees or the local community. The report urges corporations to proactively work with host governments to institute private-sector initiatives to improve social conditions.” (p. 41)

As the search began for a regional community relations program, BellSouth’s Ecuador affiliate put forth for possible region wide implementation a program it had just started in partnership with the INNFA (Instituto Nacional de la Infancia y la Familia), precisely to help working children in that country to receive an education.

Additional research by BellSouth revealed moreover that Latin America’s working children were an “orphan issue”: that is, no company had adopted their plight as its main focus of social responsibility. In fact, in many countries, the problem of working children had remained unattended until BellSouth addressed it.

Finally, the issue of the education of working children was in line with BellSouth’s focus for corporate philanthropy which, through the BellSouth Foundation, had focused its giving on education. Thus, the schooling of working children in Latin America seemed to be a natural extension of its corporate philosophy.

All the above factors indicated that BellSouth could effectively position itself as a regional leader in social responsibility by focusing its efforts on the education of Latin America’s working children. From a public relations point of view, such a program could serve to visibly demonstrate its long-term interest in the improvement of the Latin America community, thus addressing the concerns of the company’s key publics: the local governments, opinion leaders, media and the public in general.

Strategic Tactics and Techniques

Communications efforts are wasted unless the target audience grasps the message that the organization intends to deliver. Unfortunately, that is easier said than done, particularly when it comes to philanthropy. Many a program is wasted in ambiguous communications. To prevent that, BellSouth deliberately designed its program around a very clear concept: it would address the needs of working children by providing small scholarships (covering tuition, uniform, school supplies, transportation, tutoring and extracurricular activities as well as family counseling) so that they could return to school. Scholarships would be small, ranging from \$100 to \$400 per year per child, depending on the country.

The program was funded with a \$6 million commitment over five years (\$3 million from BellSouth Foundation, matched with another \$3 million from BellSouth's 10 Latin American operations.) This was the first time in its history that the BellSouth Foundation made a donation outside the United States. In fact, the Foundation had to amend its own statutes in order to expand the company's philanthropy to foreign markets.

Program credibility is also critical. BellSouth knew that it needed to partner with social and educational experts to ensure that the program had the needed credibility and a good chance of success. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were carefully screened and selected in each country to administer BellSouth Proniño on a day-to-day basis. On an ongoing basis, the BellSouth Foundation audits the NGOs, as well as the actual programs, to ensure compliance with the program guidelines.

The program was announced in 2000 as a regional initiative of BellSouth and launched in each country at the beginning of 2001, coinciding with the start of the school year. In Latin America, the school year typically follows the calendar year: it starts during the first quarter and ends in the third quarter. Interestingly, in some countries such as Argentina, where even discussing the subject of working children had been a social taboo, the actual launch was preceded by an educational campaign to raise public awareness of the plight of working children.

BellSouth Proniño is managed by the public relations manager/director in each country, thus making an important link between its philanthropic and public relations aspects. Media, government officials, and business and opinion leaders are invited to attend events planned in the schools around festivities, donations and volunteer activities, thus further increasing awareness of the program and attention to the cause it addresses. BellSouth made Proniño its flagship community relations program for Latin America. That meant that every BellSouth affiliate could be part of a large regional initiative (10-country, five-year, \$6-million), giving each of them the weight to stand out in their communities and have an impact.

Country	Children Enrolled*	NGO (Non-government organization managing the program from BellSouth Proniño)
Argentina	1,725	Asociación Conciencia
Chile	234	Consejo de Defensa del Niño
Colombia	1,815	Fundación Mario Santo Domingo
Ecuador	664	Fundación Grupo Esquel
Guatemala	900	Fundación para el Desarrollo Rural (FunRural)
Nicaragua	555	Save the Children USA
Panama	300	Casa Esperanza
Peru	1,898	Centro de Estudios Sociales y Publicaciones (CESIP)
Uruguay	275	Asociación Civil Gurises Unidos
Venezuela	260	Asociación Ayuda a un Niño
TOTAL:	8,626 children enrolled – 10 countries participating	

**As of January 2004*

Results Achieved

BellSouth Proniño has fully met the overall goal of positioning the company as a socially responsible investor in Latin America and a partner in the long-term development of the countries in which it operates. By effectively delivering on its promise (i.e., sponsoring the education of working children), it demonstrates BellSouth's commitment to its Latin American host communities and makes BellSouth a model U.S. multinational in the area of corporate social responsibility.

The program also has become very effective in terms of establishing relationships with key audiences. Company executives can point to the program to demonstrate BellSouth's partnership with the countries in which it operates. It has become particularly helpful in establishing relationships with Latin America's new generation of leaders, who welcome initiatives from the private sector to help them address the needs of their countries' underprivileged social segments.

As a public relations tool, the program offers endless opportunities to reach the company's publics via events, press conferences, talks with opinion leaders, visits to schools, etc. Advertising and social marketing campaigns have been launched not only to

promote the program and BellSouth's role in it but also to draw attention to the problem of working children.

Importantly, the program has strengthened the relationship with one of the company's most important publics: its own employees. That has resulted not only in the sense of pride that results from working for a socially responsible company but also in terms of volunteerism. Volunteer initiatives have been created in most of the countries, allowing employees to donate time and money (through payroll deduction) to help BellSouth Proniño.

Recognition

BellSouth Proniño has received a lot of recognition precisely from the types of associations and institutions it was created to address:

- In 2002, it was recognized by the Trust Fund of the Organization of American States with an honorable mention.
- Since its inception, BellSouth Proniño has received recognition and assistance from the South American headquarters of the International Labor Organization's International Programme for the Eradication of Child Labour (IPEC) in Lima.
- BellSouth Proniño has received recognition from Latin American government officials, including Peru's president Toledo, as well as the first ladies of Nicaragua and Colombia.
- In November of 2002, Argentina's American Chamber selected BellSouth Proniño as the top corporate community project in that country.
- BellSouth Proniño is one of the programs of Fundación Telcel, the philanthropic arm of BellSouth's Venezuela affiliate, Telcel-BellSouth. Fundación Telcel was selected as Venezuela's top philanthropic organization in 2002.
- In Panama, BellSouth Proniño was awarded the prestigious EDUCO award in 2002 from the Private Sector Council for Educational Assistance.
- In December 2003, it was selected by the American Chamber of Commerce in Guatemala as the community relations program of the year.
- In December 2003, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell recognized BellSouth Panama for its BellSouth Proniño program.

Additionally, the program has received recognition from other groups:

- In September 2003, the program received a first place award in the Community Relations category of the Platinum PR Awards competition, sponsored by *PR News*. It also received an honorable mention by the same organization under the Global PR category.
- In June 2003, BellSouth Proniño received a Special Recognition Award from the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

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Success Factors

BellSouth Proniño's success, both as a community relations program and as a public relations strategy, can be attributed to a number of factors.

First and foremost, it *addresses a very real and visible need*: the education of working children. Children are endearing, and most people will relate to an institution that endeavors to address a social problem that affects children.

Second, unlike many philanthropic programs that focus on ambiguous and loosely defined initiatives, BellSouth Proniño *is built around a very simple and clear concept*, one that can be summarized in one sentence and delivered easily as a key message: "BellSouth Proniño is a regional initiative of BellSouth designed to help working children in Latin America receive an education by providing them with small scholarships covering tuition, books and supplies, uniforms, transportation, tutoring, meals and counseling." A clear statement of program objectives is critical in ensuring that the organization's key publics understand what is being done and see it as an action that addresses a social concern that is relevant to them.

Third, BellSouth was *able to narrowly define a very specific need* that no one had addressed before and, in so doing, it positioned itself as the leader in addressing the issue. In fact, in some countries, as was the case in Argentina where the topic of working children had been swept under the rug, the company started the program with a communication plan to raise awareness about the problem.

Fourth, in a region where government leaders are expected to solve huge social problems, the involvement by a multinational in addressing one of them is greatly appreciated. In public relations terms, this becomes an example of *two-way communication and relationship building*.

Fifth, as a public relations tactic, BellSouth Proniño offers *endless opportunities for public relations activities* which create opportunities for the company to increase awareness among its target publics of both the need to help working children and its social responsibility role in the solution.

Finally, BellSouth Proniño is a source of pride for company employees, particularly in a part of the world where corporate responsibility is more the exception than the norm. Consequently, BellSouth Proniño becomes an effective relationship building tool with one *of the company's key publics: its own employees*. In many countries, that has resulted in requests for opportunities to get involved, which have been harnessed into a volunteer program. Company employees and their families support the program via donations of time and money, thus enriching the program and helping communicate the effort to outside audiences.

Conclusion

As a region in transition, Latin America presents a number of challenges for foreign multinationals needing to conduct high quality, effective and honest public relations. The public's lack of trust of institutions, in particular, is an obstacle to establishing mutually beneficial relationships with key publics.

With its regional community relations program, BellSouth has been able to succeed in generating trust and positioning itself as a leader in corporate responsibility.

The return on the program has been excellent, considering that BellSouth Proniño was funded by re-allocating existing budgets. BellSouth's Latin American companies are able to be a part of a much larger, regional project allowing them to position themselves as leaders of corporate responsibility throughout Latin America. In a larger sense, BellSouth Proniño points the way for other corporations and their public relations counsel to follow. In the final analysis, as Tilson (2004) notes:

Corporate responsibility should be a priority for public relations professionals who counsel top management, and good citizenship an integral part of every strategic public relations plan. In so doing, the profession not only can best serve its interests and those of its employers but also can help transform societies into ones that are civil, ethical, and equitable for all peoples. (p. 41)

TEACHING NOTE

Overview

The BellSouth Proniño case gives students an opportunity to discuss both the challenges and expectations that multinational companies face in host countries/regions. To successfully launch its cellular communication business operations in Latin America, BellSouth needed not only to create a brand image but also to develop mutually beneficial, long-term relationships with a range of key publics including government officials, regulators, the media, opinion leaders, customers and the general public. Company executives realized that, given the historic distrust of institutions and particularly of multinationals in the region, they had to visibly demonstrate a long-term commitment as a socially responsible investor and partner in the well-being of the communities in which BellSouth operated. Positioning itself as a socially responsible company would "give a soul to the brand," create and sustain important relationships with key publics on whom its success depended, and, most important, contribute to the overall development of communities in which BellSouth had a long-term self-interest.

Questions for Discussion

Students can approach the case study from a variety of perspectives (e.g., the point of view of the company, consumers, the media and host governments) using the following questions to guide their analysis and prompt class discussion:

- *What cultural, social, political, and economic factors in the Latin American environment affected BellSouth's decision to initiate a program of social responsibility?*

This allows the class to discuss the historical record of multinational corporations in Latin America and, more broadly, in developing countries around the world. Attention should be given to the impact of public opinion, rising expectations and the influence of the mass media both in host countries and at home upon corporate decision-making.

- *What are the pros and cons of initiating a corporate program of social responsibility?*

Students should explore both the internal and external advantages and disadvantages of creating BellSouth Proniño specifically and community programs in general. For example, what corporate staffing requirements are necessary? What are the budgetary concerns that must be addressed? How is the program to be implemented in the host country? Who will monitor the program, and how should its effectiveness be evaluated? What benefits should the company expect from its investment in the program? What should be done if the program does not live up to corporate or public expectations?

- *What are some of the key publics, or constituencies, affected by BellSouth's decision?*

Several of the most important audiences are outlined in the case study, but all are not. What others must the company consider (e.g., investors, activist non-government organizations and home-country media)? How should the company rank its key publics in order of importance, and how will those rankings affect its decisions? What research should the company do on these publics before making a decision on a program of social responsibility?

- *How successful was BellSouth's corporate communication plan?*

Students should examine the company's overall strategy as well as its specific tactics (e.g., press conferences) that were used to launch BellSouth Proniño and to publicize it subsequently. What were the advantages and disadvantages of selecting a social issue that could be used as a "fullscope" initiative? Was the plan comprehensive enough to reach all of the company's key publics? Were there any important constituencies that the case study did not discuss in terms of the corporate communication plan? If so, how might the company best reach these publics? How did BellSouth use "integrated communication" (i.e., advertising, marketing, and public relations) collectively to communicate with its publics?

- *What effect has BellSouth Proniño had on the company and its key publics?*

Given the company's overall business and public relations goals, has the program been effective in helping BellSouth accomplish what it wanted to achieve? How well has BellSouth Proniño been received specifically by: the media, consumers, government officials, and employees? What evidence is there of that? Students also should discuss the long-term implications of the program on local communities and society at large. What's the next step for BellSouth Proniño?

You are the Director

Assume that you have been promoted to public relations director for a theoretical BellSouth International – Africa. Company executives have asked you to expand BellSouth Proniño to the countries on that continent in which the company operates. Discuss how you would proceed in replicating the program and what challenges you might face in doing so. What lessons can you learn from the company’s experiences in Latin America? What changes would you make in the program to adapt to the social, political, cultural and economic environment in Africa?

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**Public Relations in the Caribbean:
HIV/AIDS Public Information/Education Campaigns in
the Bahamas**

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Executive Summary

HIV/AIDS has reached epidemic proportions in the Caribbean. The Caribbean is the second most affected region in the world after Sub-Saharan Africa. At the present rate of acceleration more than half of the Caribbean's potential workforce may be wiped out within the next 25 years if this deadly disease is not arrested. One of the countries with the highest rate of HIV/AIDS cases in the region is the Bahamas. With the second highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in adults, the Bahamas is estimated to have a prevalence rate above 4 percent. Haiti is classified as the only more distressed country in the region with a prevalence rate above 7 percent.

In 1985, the Bahamas recorded its first AIDS case. Three years later, the Bahamian government, with the creation of its National AIDS Program (NAP), began health promotion and information campaigns to promote healthy lifestyles, educate the public about HIV/AIDS and inform people about methods of prevention. In 1988 NAP established the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat to coordinate and implement the promotion and information/education campaigns. The AIDS Secretariat serves as the national coordinating body for all information dealing with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

Over the past 18 years the Bahamian government, through the Ministry of Health, has recorded a number of successes including a dramatic drop in mother-to-child transmission of AIDS, a decline in the overall mortality rate, an overall decrease in new persons testing HIV positive (from 700 plus in 1994 to 350 plus in 1999) and fewer than 2 percent of antenatal clinic clients continuing to be HIV positive. Because of these successes, the Bahamian model for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS is considered a success. (Caribbean AIDS Telecommunication Information Network)

However, despite these successes, the country still has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the English speaking Caribbean. Further, it is not known what impact the public communication (information/education) health campaigns have had on the target audience(s). Unfortunately, because of budget constraints, many of these campaigns were never evaluated. This lack of assessment continues today and has raised many questions about the effectiveness of the messages. Perhaps what is more alarming is the recent increase in HIV/AIDS among the adolescent age group, the future productive members of Bahamian society. Their lack of knowledge about the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS raises several crucial questions about campaign design and execution, benchmarking and pre-test and post-test of message design.

This case study discusses the Bahamian HIV/AIDS promotion and information/education campaigns and addresses the issues surrounding the design and implementation of public health communication campaigns in developing countries with serious health crises. The purpose of this case study is to emphasize the importance of evaluation and assessment of the messages of public information/education campaigns even when there are financial constraints and limited resources. Knowing how effective

your messages are in reaching your target audience(s) could be the difference between limited successes in health campaigns like HIV/AIDS and complete eradication of these health calamities. This case study demonstrates the need to evaluate campaign messages so that limited resources are used efficiently and effectively and audience behavior and attitudes are effectively monitored. When the effect/impact of messages is not evaluated, campaign organizers limit their ability to adjust or adapt the messages for more meaningful actions from the target public.

The Problem

At the recent Forum 2003 held in Nassau and sponsored by the College of the Bahamas, medical experts who work in the Bahamas in HIV/AIDS healthcare raised several areas of concern. One of the conference presenters, Dr. Percival McNeil, noted that while there had been a dramatic decrease in mother-to-infant transfer of the disease, this occurred only within the population that they came in contact with, that is, those who came to the hospitals or community clinics and took part in the MTCT (Mother-To-Child-Transmission) prevention program (approximately 150 women and 90 children living with HIV). He believes that many in the target populations were not being reached. A former director of the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, Christine Campbell, agreed with his assessment.

Thus, it can be argued that the target populations did not receive or pay attention to the messages of prevention and testing and therefore did not respond to them. These concerns center on issues of message design and communication effectiveness. As Monahan notes, communication campaigns play an important role in disease prevention and health promotion. However, “designing effective campaigns about health is often a difficult task.” (Monahan)

Another area of concern is the low funding the information/education campaigns receive. In the Caribbean most of the monetary emphasis in the HIV/AIDS national programs has been placed on the care and treatment of HIV/AIDS patients with less attention to prevention. In the Caribbean, by the end of 2000, countries had spent \$162 million or 5 percent of their health budgets on public awareness and prevention, \$362 million or 11 percent on basic care, and \$2.76 billion or 83 percent on highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). (World Bank) Theodore also notes that a large percentage of funding in response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean goes to treatment (93 percent) while prevention only accounts for a small fraction (5 percent). The remaining 2 percent goes to research, capacity building and increasing the commitment of governments. (Theodore)

In the Bahamas the health budget is similarly allocated. The basic care program received \$69 per capita, the HAART program \$220 per capita, and the preventive program \$8 per capita. (World Bank) Thus, the most funded area of the national program is treatment and care to decrease the mortality rate of those living with HIV/AIDS.

Another aspect of the problem, as the World Bank 2001 study “HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean” notes, is the issue of underreporting. The World Bank study explains that this practice of underreporting makes it difficult to know the extent of the HIV/AIDS problem in the Caribbean. (World Bank) The Bahamas is credited with one of the better reporting systems in the region; however, there is still concern for underreporting, particularly among Haitian immigrants, many of whom are in the country illegally and could be deported if they came forward to be tested, and in Family Island rural communities.

Although there have been success stories in treatment programs such as the mother-child transmission studies conducted in the Bahamas, very little is known about the effectiveness of the HIV/AIDS public health promotion and information/education campaigns conducted by the Ministry of Health through the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat. The evaluation of health communication programs is essential as it could make a difference in lives lost to HIV/AIDS. As the Institute of Public Relations 2003 report “Guidelines for Measuring the Effectiveness of PR Programs and Activities” notes, public relations measurement and evaluation “is any and all research designed to determine the relative effectiveness or value of what is done in public relations.” (Lindenmann)

The Institute’s report also notes, more specifically, “PR measurement is a way of giving a result a precise dimension, generally by comparison to some standard or baseline and usually is done in a quantifiable or numerical manner.” (Lindenmann) That the Bahamas has recorded results of success in the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS is evident; however, the communication specialists who designed and implemented the programs cannot quantifiably link these successes to the messages disseminated. Awareness of HIV/AIDS has increased throughout the country, but what does this mean? Are Bahamians more knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, what it is and how it is transmitted? Does this awareness/knowledge affect the behavior of target populations? When public relations practitioners measure outputs, outtakes and outcomes, they “usually come up with a precise measure -- a number; for example, 1,000 brochures distributed...60,000 hits on a web site...50 percent message recall...an 80 percent increase in awareness levels, etc.” (Lindenmann) To date the Bahamas has not done this type of evaluation.

To measure success, the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat has done more subjective evaluation of its health information/education campaigns. According to the present director of the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, Rosemae Bain, the communication campaigns were not evaluated in any significant way. (Bain) The AIDS Secretariat deduced the effectiveness of the communication campaign messages based on the NAP’s overall successes: the reduction of newly reported cases, decrease in the prevalence of HIV and decrease in the number of new AIDS cases. The result of this approach leaves the Bahamian health organizers responsible for the public information/communication campaigns wanting to know the answers to questions such as the following: Did those public relations activities and/or advertising efforts that they initiated have an effect—

that is, “move the needle” in the right direction—and if so, how can they support and document that from a research perspective? Did the communication activities they implemented actually change what people know, what they think and feel, and how they actually act? What impact—if any—will various public relations, marketing communications and advertising activities have on changing the public and opinion-leader awareness, understanding, retention, attitude and behavior levels? Answering questions such as these can justify the subjective results and what communicators working in the public health sectors do to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas.

Background of the Country

The Bahamas is an archipelago of 700 islands and cays that descend in an arc from Bimini Island in the north near the coastal state of Florida, USA to Inagua Island and Ragged Island in the south near Cuba. With a population of 300,000 unevenly distributed among 29 inhabited islands, the country has enjoyed significant political and economic growth since it gained its independence from Britain in 1973. The main population centers are Nassau, the capital city on New Providence Island, and Freeport, Grand Bahama. The remaining islands are referred to as the “Family Islands.” More than 60 percent of the population lives in Nassau, and more than 95 percent of the population lives on just seven of the islands.

The major industry, tourism, has used public relations tools and strategies since its inception in the Bahamas in the 1800s. From early publicity campaigns to public information campaigns to current uses of two-way symmetric and asymmetric public relations strategies, the profession has evolved in the Bahamas with a pattern similar to the United States. However, one of the major differences in its development pattern is the use of public relations first by British colonial administrators throughout the colonial period and later by government agencies like the Bahamas Development Board and the Ministry of Tourism. More than three million tourists visit these islands annually. Most of the tourists who visit the country come from the United States; therefore the Bahamas is economically reliant on the United States.

Beyond tourist revenues, the country also has thriving banking and e-commerce industries. Other industries include cement, oil refining and transshipment, salt, rum, aragonite, pharmaceuticals and spiral-welded steel pipe. Fifty percent of the labor force works in the tourist industry, 40 percent in other services, 5 percent in industry and 5 percent in agriculture. With a literacy rate of 95.5 percent, this former British colony has a constitutional parliamentary democracy. The country has a population that is 85 percent black, 12 percent white, and 3 percent Asian and Hispanic. The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita is \$17,000. Tourism accounts for more than 60 percent of the GDP. (CIA) The Bahamas is ranked high according to the United Nations Human Development Index and is one of the countries in the region at the highest stage of demographic transition—a process of population change consisting of a gradual evolution from high birth and death rates to low ones. (UN) The urbanization process is very advanced.

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There is mixed media ownership in the Bahamas. Print media has always been an exclusively private enterprise. The government of the Bahamas owned and controlled the electronic media—radio and television—until 1992. Today there are three major dailies and one weekly newspaper in Nassau, the capital city: the *Nassau Guardian*, which has the largest circulation 17,000; the *Nassau Tribune*, with 16,000 circulation; the *Bahama Journal* with 3,000 circulation, and the weekly tabloid, the *Punch*. Freeport, the second largest city in the island chain, has one daily newspaper—*Freeport News*, which is owned by the *Nassau Guardian*. Several of the other islands (Andros, Abaco, and Eleuthera) also have one major daily newspaper with very small circulations.

The country began radio broadcasting in 1937 with the British model of public service broadcasting and changed to a commercial system in 1950. By the 1980s the country had five radio stations and one television station, all government owned. Economic and political changes in the early 1990s changed the ownership and control of electronic media in the country. Privatization and liberalization policies brought new players to the field of broadcasting as private radio and cable television began operating in the country. Prior to opening the market to private media enterprises, the country had access to foreign media through spillover signals since the introduction of radio and television in the United States in the 1920s and 1950s respectively. Later, in the 1980s, many Bahamians extended this access through their ownership of satellite dishes and VCRs. Today the country has a mixed media market with government-controlled local television and public radio. Radio, cable television (owned by a local consortium and providing mostly foreign media products, primarily American), satellite and Internet are privately owned; the government also is an Internet provider. Media are concentrated in the capital cities of the most populous islands: Nassau, New Providence; Freeport, Grand Bahama; Marsh Harbour, Abaco, and Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera.

The Bahamas, like other Caribbean countries, has a very vibrant culture juxtaposed between the old and the new worlds. There is the influence of African culture and the history of slavery and colonization, which imposed British social structures, norms and values. From civil service to education and judiciary, this English-speaking country, like its English-speaking Caribbean counterparts, has built its educational, legal and political systems on the British model. Also influencing Bahamian culture are Caribbean culture and the ever-imposing American culture that seems to be the most dominant culture in the Bahamas. The country, like many other countries in the region, is caught between the flotsam and jetsam of the American consumer culture, the remnants of African culture seen mostly at festive occasions, the admiration for things British and the emergence of a Caribbean culture based mostly on music, language and food.

Background of the Problem

The Bahamas HIV/AIDS crisis must be seen against the backdrop of the wider Caribbean region's HIV/AIDS crisis. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is spreading rapidly

throughout the Caribbean region. CARICOM (the regional union of sovereign-states in the Caribbean which includes Antigua, Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad, Tobago, Belize, Guyana and Suriname) estimates that more cases of HIV/AIDS were reported in the Caribbean between 1995 and 1998 than had been reported since the beginning of the epidemic in the early 1980s. (World Bank) At the end of 2002 there were approximately 440,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, up from 360,000 at the end of 1999. (USAID) However, as the World Bank 2001 study notes, this estimate may be low as many countries have underreported or have no reports on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the region. “Given the widespread underreporting in the region, it is estimated that more than half a million people are infected with HIV.” (World Bank)

Based on the region’s heterogeneity, the World Bank study notes, epidemics in the Caribbean have different driving forces and transmission routes. According to this study, different countries also have varied in their responses to HIV/AIDS. “As a result, the Caribbean region as a whole might be considered to have not a single HIV/AIDS epidemic, but a ‘mosaic’ of epidemics.” (World Bank)

The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean poses special development challenges for the region. These countries have small economies, are heavily dependent on export revenues and tourism, lack regional integration on trade and monetary issues, are vulnerable to natural disasters, and now have a growing incidence of HIV/AIDS. “Many countries are losing their youngest people to emigration and to the effects of HIV/AIDS epidemic.” (USAID)

Since 1985 the Bahamas has had a strong commitment to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. With the highest annual incidence rate in the English speaking Caribbean, the country implemented a comprehensive national HIV/AIDS program in 1985 and has had remarkable success over the past 18 years. However, as ideal as the Bahamian model may be in achieving these successes in the fight against HIV/AIDS, there are serious gaps in its assessment and evaluation of the communication campaigns that have been implemented since the late 1980s. This measurement problem is not limited to the Bahamas; it also exists in the wider Caribbean region.

The Red Cross summarizes the problem as a “gap in HIV/AIDS work” in the Caribbean region. (Red Cross Caran) Its Strategic Framework notes that the magnitude of HIV/AIDS is so enormous that, although many organizations are working in the area of HIV/AIDS, there still exist some gaps in the areas of prevention, care and support and advocacy in many countries within the Caribbean region. The Strategic Framework states that one of the major areas where the gap is evident is in the communication campaign “Information on AIDS awareness and prevention has not reached everybody.” (Red Cross Caran)

The Red Cross also notes, “There is a need for tailor-made strategies and campaign materials especially for vulnerable communities. There is an extreme shortage of targeted and culturally appropriate HIV/AIDS information material in many countries in the region.” (Red Cross Caran)

The Bahamas National AIDS Program also has identified these areas as areas that need urgent attention. A May 2002 strategy report on the country’s latest initiative to arrest the spread of HIV/AIDS, “Commonwealth of The Bahamas Accelerating Access to Care and Support for Bahamians Living with HIV/AIDS,” (Bahamas Government) outlines the country’s plans to improve and enhance its response to HIV/AIDS through communication campaigns. One of the objectives the report describes is the need to strengthen advocacy and resource mobilization efforts that will ensure universal access to Bahamians in need of antiretroviral (ARV) medication through better communication - both interpersonal and mediated:

The goal of the Initiative’s communication component is to increase the demand and uptake of care and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families, while also reducing the stigma that surrounds the epidemic.

The communication strategy will also seek to increase the visibility of prevention initiatives and send a clear message that prevention of the further spread of HIV is still the best weapon for the successful fight against the epidemic. (Bahamas Government)

More pointedly, at Forum 2003, Dr. McNeil framed the problem with the following question: “How do we reach those infected or at risk for infection and address social and behavioral issues?” Many health communication planners, theorists and practitioners (Atkin and Wallack; Lupton; Nowak and Siska; Bond, Kreniske, Susser, and Vincent; and Hornik) have noted the difficult challenge in changing human sexual behavior. It is perhaps the most difficult challenge in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. In many Caribbean countries fear, stigma and social norms inhibit discussion of sexual mores and behaviors. The crux of national AIDS programs’ success lies in changing deeply ingrained personal, group and social behaviors. As the 2003 World Bank IMF Joint Report points out, “changes in attitudes, values and practices emerge from social processes, which themselves vary enormously across settings and cultures.” (World Bank and International Monetary Fund)

The 2001 World Bank study also stresses the need to address the information gaps in the HIV/AIDS communication campaigns. “Information gaps need to be addressed in order to make final recommendations on breast-feeding and medical care policies for HIV-positive women in Caribbean countries,” the report noted. (World Bank) The predominant mode of transmission of HIV in the Bahamas and the rest of the Caribbean is heterosexual sex, primarily among the sexually active age group, 20-44 years. In the 1980s, three epidemics were occurring simultaneously in the Bahamas: crack cocaine, genital ulcers and HIV. These three epidemics combined and contributed

to the high incidence of HIV in the country. By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the country experienced a four-fold increase in HIV infection.

In 1983 the government of the Bahamas began monitoring the number of HIV/AIDS cases in the country. By 2000, AIDS had become the second leading cause of death in the general population of the Bahamas, and the leading cause of death among all persons 15-44 years of age. The number of new persons testing HIV positive increased from 347 in 1999 to 408 in 2000. As of December 31, 2001, there had been a cumulative total of 8,852 HIV infections, 4,092 cases of AIDS and 4,760 persons testing HIV positive. Of the 4,092 cases of AIDS, 2,938 or 71 percent have died. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat)

According to the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, the country continues to record more than 280 new cases of AIDS per year. On the positive side, the country has recorded a drop in mortality from AIDS. The death rate declined from 70 percent to 50 percent from 1994 to 2000. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat) However, the decrease in the death rate could be attributed to the fact that antiretroviral drugs (ARV) are more readily available for the treatment of HIV/AIDS. Since October 2001, the government of the Bahamas has contributed more than \$1 million for the purchase of ARVs. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat)

Even though people with HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas are living longer with the help of antiretroviral drugs, the number of new HIV/AIDS cases each year still remains high. What accounts for this? Why are people not changing their behaviors or, if they are, to what extent? How effective are the messages? Are they reaching the target audiences? Without effective measurement of the impact of messages, analysis of channels of distribution and analysis of the content of messages, it is very difficult to state that the messages have had a strong effect on the target publics.

The fastest growing group of persons testing positive for HIV is Bahamian adolescents, both males and females. This group is perhaps least likely to be reached by national television PSAs, programs or advertisements since they are more likely to interact with foreign media and the local private radio stations. Further, the government's messages were not targeted to this specific group. As the World Bank study notes, in order to be successful, HIV/AIDS campaigns must prevent the sexual transmission of HIV in young people and adults. "Reaching young people is a key element in the prevention of the AIDS epidemic," the report noted. (World Bank)

Goals and Objectives of the Campaigns

In 1985 the Bahamas government established the National Standing Committee for the Prevention and Control of AIDS. This committee evolved into the National AIDS Program (NAP). NAP implemented a comprehensive healthcare program to attack the HIV/AIDS problem. A significant part of the program focused on health promotion campaigns and public information campaigns. The information campaigns began in the

Bahamas in 1985 and were targeted first at high-risk groups (prostitutes and drug addicts sharing needles). However, by the mid-1990s the campaigns were mainly aimed at the general population. In 1988 NAP established the AIDS Secretariat to coordinate the HIV/AIDS education/information campaigns.

In July 2003 the AIDS Secretariat noted in a report on the progress of the National HIV/AIDS Program that the overall goal of the country's national HIV/AIDS program is to develop a national program that reduces the incidence and impact of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat) The main goal of the promotion and information campaigns is the prevention and control of the spread of STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections), HIV and AIDS in the Bahamas. In 2001, the AIDS Secretariat extended the goals of the program to include the need to empower persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) and the community to promote well-being by creating supportive environments.

There are no clearly defined objectives for the promotion and information/education campaigns. However, according to the AIDS Secretariat 2003 report (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat), overall objectives of the Secretariat are:

1. To reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in vulnerable populations.
2. To sustain reduction of vertical transmissions from mother to child.
3. To promote policies to enhance development and stimulate new legislation.
4. To promote human rights and non-discrimination in the society.
5. To coordinate and disseminate information for all matters dealing with HIV/AIDS and STIs.

Strategic Tactics and Techniques

The Bahamas government, through the Ministry of Health, partnered with regional and international agencies to address various aspects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The country implemented a multi-sector national response that engaged government, civil society and local, regional and international donors. Some of the international partners included the European Union and its member countries, the Joint United Nations Program on AIDS (UNAIDS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Regional partnerships were formed with CAREC (Caribbean Epidemiology Center), CARICOM, CRN+ (Caribbean Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS), PAHO (Pan American Health Organization), the Caribbean Research Council and the University of the West Indies. Within the country the NAP developed partnerships with the Bahamas AIDS Foundation, the Bahamas Red Cross, Samaritan House, Imperial Life Insurance Company and numerous other civic and religious organizations.

The Bahamas government's quick response to the epidemic and the results of its programs make the Bahamas, like Uganda, a model for success in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The country's comprehensive approach resulted in a

collaborative effort with all sectors of the community to develop programs that would aid in the control and spread of HIV/AIDS. This approach addressed political, economic, social and cultural characteristics of the Bahamas in the design and implementation of the program.

In 1985 NAP identified specific strategies for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS:

1. Prevention of sexual transmission.
2. Prevention of transmission through blood/blood products.
3. Prevention of prenatal transmission
4. Conduct epidemiological surveillance and research.
5. Reduction of the impact of HIV infection on individuals, groups and society.
6. Development of treatment protocols for HIV/AIDS. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat)

The AIDS Secretariat's information/education programs drew on the expertise of volunteers and persons in non-government organizations and used a wide variety of tactics and techniques to reach the population. For example, mass media (radio, television, and to a lesser extent, print), word of mouth, group sessions, displays and exhibitions, and theatre presentations. Overall, the national program emphasized care, treatment and support, research and surveillance. The following section outlines promotion and information/education campaigns that have been implemented in the country since 1988.

HIV/AIDS promotion and information/education campaigns

The national health promotion and information campaigns provided communities and individuals with information and skills to advance their own health needs. The campaigns used interpersonal communication and mediated communication channels to reach a broad cross section of the country. Most of the mediated campaigns were concentrated in the two major urban centers—Nassau and Freeport. In the Family Islands the campaigns were transmitted mainly on the public radio stations.

One of the target publics the educational campaigns addressed immediately was the Haitian population. According to the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, "Significant work has been done at the community level. The French–Creole speaking population presented the challenge of a language barrier." (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat) In response to this challenge, the Secretariat trained laypersons and Creole community leaders to interact with this population and educate them about HIV/AIDS and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. According to the AIDS Secretariat, this approach resulted in greater impact upon this population than other approaches.

Health communicators also used social marketing to promote condom use. This on-going program uses a combination of interpersonal and mediated communication. Posters, advertisements and PSAs are used to disseminate the message through various channels. Bartenders are used as lay educators to encourage condom use, particularly

among the tourists and college students on spring break. The condoms are "gift wrapped" with brightly colored fliers and placed in strategic locations or given to bartenders to distribute to attract and promote condom use. Condoms are placed in hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, bars and other places frequented by students on spring break.

The Secretariat also used cultural activities such as the Family Island Regattas to inform and educate Bahamians on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Brochures, posters, fliers, pamphlets and other print materials were distributed at these events.

The Secretariat conducted training workshops for civic organizations, unions, churches and uniformed organizations such as the police force, defense force and customs and immigration officers. The Secretariat also developed information/educational programs in conjunction with civic organizations. Youth groups such as The Bahamas Red Cross, Girl Guides and the Pathfinders developed programs to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in their target areas. For example, in 1999 the Red Cross initiated a junior volunteers HIV/AIDS training program to encourage the delay of the initial sex act, explain various preventive methods and advocate the concept of sound care.

Teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, and persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) worked with the AIDS Secretariat to target school populations to discourage risk-taking behaviors. The Bahamas AIDS Secretariat organized the AIDS Secretariat Annual School Competition in which schools throughout New Providence, Grand Bahama and the Family Islands participated. This educational campaign is targeted at the nation's youth so they can acquire knowledge and understanding about HIV/AIDS. These contests include essay writing, poetry and art.

In 2002 a pilot program *Focus on Youth*, based on a Canadian model, targeted the youth population in New Providence. *Focus on Youth* is a research-based prevention program that gives young women skills to postpone their first sexual encounter and make wise decisions regarding sexuality. The initial program was tested in New Providence. In 2003 additional schools were targeted in New Providence and the Family Islands to participate in the program. The targeted population was also expanded to include young men.

The media, especially local television, has played a significant role in the public communication campaigns. The mass media was used to disseminate AIDS messages to the public throughout the country. In television, radio and to a lesser extent print media, prevention efforts were designed to increase knowledge and personal health skills of specifically targeted populations. PSAs were produced as mini-daytime dramas with different endings. "This type of presentation allows the viewer to interact with a romantic or potentially sexual scenario; by making the right decision for the character on the screen the viewers also reinforce the safe choices that will protect them in real life."

(Caribbean AIDS Telecommunication Information Network) News stories, talk shows and editorials also were used.

Billboards were also strategically placed in the urban cities of Nassau and Freeport. One of the prominent billboards, placed in the busy business district in downtown Nassau near the entrance of the major public hospital, read “No Sex No AIDS ... Know Sex, Know AIDS.” Posters, brochures and fliers created by Secretariat staff rendered such messages as “Protect yourself, your wife and your main squeeze. USE A CONDOM EVERYTIME”, “Tips for a safe date: Privacy leads to intimacy... petting leads to sexual intercourse. STICK WITH THE CROWDS!!!” “AIDS? Could it happen to YOU?” “No matter which place or what time, talk to your partner about protection from HIV/AIDS”, and “The road to AIDS is paved with excuses: ‘he looked fine’, ‘we didn’t have a condom’ ‘I didn’t think it could happen to me.’ Use a Condom Everytime.”

Posters and fliers were placed in the window of the Bank of Nova Scotia in downtown Nassau, chosen because it is a major thoroughfare for tourists. The bank building is located near the harbor where the cruise ships dock. According to Campbell, the former director of the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, many tourists and citizens gave positive feedback on the AIDS messages displayed in the bank’s window.

In the Family Islands, structured outreach workshops were held on an ongoing basis. These workshops were held at the community clinics in the Family Islands and were usually coordinated by the community clinic staff—nurse and administrative staff.

Results Achieved

At the end of 2001, three notable trends were evident in the Bahamas: a dramatic drop in mother-to-child transmissions, a decline in the overall mortality rate and an overall decrease in new persons testing HIV positive—from 700 plus in 1994 to 350 plus in 1999, and fewer than 2 percent of antenatal clinic clients continuing to be HIV positive.

Specific successes included:

- Health practitioners believed that there was increased awareness of HIV/AIDS among the Bahamian population.
- Condom sales increased by 33 percent between 1998 and 1999. Also, the overall condom distribution in the private and public sector had increased and involved health care settings, hotels, guesthouses, motels and bars.
- The HIV seroprevalence rate among pregnant women declined from 5.4 percent in 1993 to 3 percent in 2000 (a 44 percent decrease in HIV seroprevalence rate). At the end of 2001 it had dropped to less than 2 percent.
- Pregnant women showed an improvement in seeking early antenatal case with 95 percent agreeing to undergo voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) for HIV antibodies.

- The Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV rate was reduced from 28 percent to 12 percent (a 57 percent reduction rate in MTCT of HIV).
- There was a decrease in the AIDS death rate from 70 percent to 50 percent.
- Increasing and sustained support to the national response from the private sector was observed.
- Increasing and sustained support from regional and international NGOs occurred.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that these programs have yielded successes. The Bahamas have recorded dramatic reductions in mother-to-child transference, a decline in the number of persons dying from HIV/AIDS and a decrease in the number of persons infected by HIV/AIDS. However, these results are based on hospital and clinical patients—those who come in contact with medical personnel. The impact of the campaign messages on the population at large, particularly the population located away from the urban centers, leaves many doubts as to the overall effectiveness of the public information/educational campaigns.

Before designing new messages and new campaigns to fill the ‘information gap,’ health communication planners in the Bahamas should assess previous and current communication campaigns. Measuring the effectiveness of past and on-going campaigns could provide new direction and emphasis for the HIV/AIDS communication campaigns. Most importantly, evaluation and assessment of previous and on-going campaigns will allow communication planners to know what succeeded and what failed. Which messages were effective and which ones were not? Which channels were effective and which channels were not effective? Communication planners should also identify best communication campaign practices in the region; this approach would provide a benchmark for comparison of other HIV/AIDS communication campaigns in the Caribbean. Wherever possible, they also should pretest their messages.

No study has been done to quantify the impact of the mass media messages. Further, the television viewing habits of Bahamians are complex. Local television—the state owned ZNS TV 13—plays a significant role in the mass media campaigns. But with the influx of foreign programming and easy access to foreign programming (satellite, cable and Internet), it is not known how effective these national messages have been as there are no definitive studies that reveal how many Bahamians watch the national television service. So who are the recipients of the television messages—PSAs, news programs and talk shows—that are disseminated on national television? Did the Bahamian population, particularly the at-risk populations, receive these messages and did they respond? New communication technology also has changed Bahamian media habits, perhaps making the national television channel an ineffective channel for the dissemination of the HIV/AIDS communication campaign messages.

Many researchers and theorists (Mendelsohn, 1968, 1973; Levy and Windahl; McGuire; Parott; Hyman and Sheastsley; Wallack; and Cutlip, Center, Broom) have offered reasons why information campaigns succeed or fail. In an elaborate treatise Mendelsohn explains why some communication campaigns succeed. He believes communication campaigns succeed if they have realistic goals, environmental support systems and knowledge of the target audiences. (Mendelsohn 1973) In opposition to Mendelsohn, Hyman and Sheastsley explain why some communication campaigns fail. They reason that selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention are common threats to success of communication campaigns. They believe these filters ensure that receivers will be immune to influence from campaigns. (Hyman and Sheastsley) Campaign planners are still caught between the two positions as campaign after campaign throughout the world supports either or both of these theories.

However, other researchers and theorists (Atkin and Wallack; Flay and Burton) note that campaigns that conduct formative research before the campaign begins are generally more effective. This pre-testing approach is designed to identify potential relevant issues, campaign themes, target audiences, message concepts and useful media channels/message vehicles. The idea is to know the intended audience(s) before specifying campaign objectives or devising message strategies (Atkin and Freimuth; Palmer).

At the end of the campaign communication planners also should conduct summative research. Nowak and Siska note post-campaign evaluations play a valuable role in influencing and shaping the messages of ongoing and future campaigns. (Nowak and Siska) Two types of post-campaign research that could be helpful are process evaluation and outcome/effectiveness evaluation. Process evaluation research attempts to determine when, where and how often campaign materials were shown or used. Outcome/effectiveness evaluation research determines whether campaigns or messages successfully achieved the desired outcomes.

Most of the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat's communication interventions were culturally sensitive to the needs of Bahamians, used peer educators, provided participants with skills training and were conducted over multiple sessions and long periods of time. Although no empirical studies have been conducted to evaluate or assess the communication interventions, the country has seen increasing condom use, increasing awareness, decreasing mortality rates, decreasing HIV/AIDS cases, declining hospital bed occupancy and decreasing mother-to-child transmission. What the data does not show, but what is highly probable, is a decrease in the number of sexual partners an individual might have, a decrease in the sharing of needles, a delay in the onset of intercourse and improved communication with partners regarding safer sexual practices. All of these outcomes are associated with decreasing HIV infection.

The Bahamas AIDS Secretariat needs to take immediate action to evaluate its communication campaigns before investing more funds in them. The stakes are too high.

HIV/AIDS has no cure and if the HIV/AIDS epidemic is not arrested, the Bahamas and the Caribbean could face political, social, cultural and economic changes that will reverse the progress of the last 50 years. Therefore, public health communication campaigns should be evaluated and modified as indicated to ensure that they are useful in creating significant behavior change and improvements in health status. Simple association of trends over time with campaign initiations is not sufficient grounds for claiming a causal effect.

TEACHING NOTE

Purpose of Case Study

- To give students a better understanding of the importance of evaluation and assessment of campaign messages.
- To demonstrate the significance of research at all stages of the campaign—before the campaign begins, during the campaign and after the campaign ends.
- To explain how evaluation involves every phase of a campaign.
- To emphasize the significance of knowing your audience and knowing how effective your messages are in reaching your target audience(s).
- To emphasize the need for effective evaluation techniques such as impact analysis, audience coverage, audience response, campaign impact and environmental assessment.

Identifying the Problem

HIV/AIDS communication campaigns (promotion, education and information) have not been assessed or evaluated in the Bahamas since they began in 1985. This lack of assessment continues today and has raised many of questions about the effectiveness of the messages.

As a result, campaign planners do not know which messages or channels of communication are most effective for target audience(s). The spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas could have a devastating effect if the information gaps are not filled. Particularly noted is the recent increase of HIV/AIDS in adolescents. Information campaigns are under-funded and there are issues of underreporting of HIV/AIDS cases.

This situation raises crucial questions about campaign design and execution, benchmarking and pre-test and post-test of message design. The success stories are based on patients that healthcare officials in the Bahamas come in contact with, not on the general public.

The issues of this case study are multifaceted. First, campaign planners need to know the effectiveness of their messages. Second, they need to know what happened and why. Third, the importance of research at all stages of the campaigns must be addressed. Fourth, the successes of the Bahamian NAP must be viewed from the context of the

populations that come to the public hospitals and clinics. Fifth, the multi-sector approach contributes to the successes of the Bahamas NAP.

The promotion and information/education campaigns are a major part of the NAP. However, there is no empirical evidence of how effective the communication campaigns are in prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

Forecasting the Most Desirable Outcome

The most desirable outcome is for complete eradication of HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas through the use of effective communication campaigns. Ultimately, information/educational campaigns will become even more valuable in health promotion campaigns such as HIV/AIDS as the consequences become increasingly severe if this epidemic is not eradicated.

Another outcome is identifying the target audiences who need to be reached and the most appropriate communication channel to achieve desired effects. This approach could improve message design and content.

The Bahamas AIDS Secretariat should clearly identify its objectives for the promotion and information/education campaigns and thereby produce quantifiable results. This will provide communication planners with a better understanding of the impact of the campaigns and the effectiveness of the messages on their target audiences.

Identifying the Critical Issues

1. When health communication campaigns are not evaluated there could be serious knowledge gaps, which could lead to insufficient information to help people change high-risk behavior, which could ultimately cause an increase in HIV/AIDS in developing countries like the Bahamas.
2. HIV/AIDS prevention programs, especially the communication campaigns, need more financial support to accomplish their goals and objectives. An increase in funding could lead to more reliable forms of evaluation.
3. More support is needed for HIV/AIDS-related research for communication campaigns at the national level. The increased support could lead to empirical studies that attempt to measure the impact of communication campaigns at the national level.
4. There are no clearly defined objectives for the information/education campaigns. Measuring the impact of a campaign is very difficult if there are no clearly defined objectives.
5. Identifying the target audience(s) is crucial to design and dissemination of messages.
6. Identifying appropriate channels of communication is also important for the prevention, treatment and care messages to reach the targeted population(s).

Stakeholders in this Case

1. Bahamas government
2. People of the Bahamas
3. People living with HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas
4. The business community of the Bahamas, especially the tourist industry
5. The country's political and social decision makers
6. Healthcare workers
7. Local, regional and international NGOs
8. The Caribbean region and its people
9. The Americas (United States of America, Canada, South America and Central America)

Questions for Discussion

1. What benchmark data would you need to evaluate the success of the information/education campaigns in the Bahamas?
2. How would you systematically assess the Bahamas HIV/AIDS information/education campaigns?
3. How would formative research make a difference in the education/information campaigns?
4. What types of summative research would you use to evaluate the campaigns?
5. How do you account for the successes in the Bahamas National AIDS Program when there has been no formative or summative evaluation of the effectiveness of campaign messages?

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Case Briefs

The World's Biggest Prize
**Launch of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and It's Governance
Prize**
Magna Carta Public Relations (Pty) Ltd.
South Africa

The Big Stationery Drive
MWEB Home
Atmosphere Communications
South Africa

The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA)
PRISM Awards, 2007
www.PRISA.co.za

The World's Biggest Prize
**Launch of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and Its Governance
Prize**

**Magna Carta Public Relations (Pty) Ltd.
South Africa**

Category:	Traditional Media Relations
Title:	World's Biggest Prize – Launch of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and Its Governance Prize
Client:	The Mo Ibrahim Foundation (The Foundation)
Consultancy:	Magna Carta Public Relations (Pty) Ltd

Summary

Mid 2006 London based Sudanese Businessman and Telecommunications giant, Mo Ibrahim, set in motion a chain of events to realize his long held dream: the existence of a foundation that champions the course of good governance in Africa.

Magna Carta and its global partner, Ketchum, successfully conducted an international and Pan African media and stakeholder campaign to position and launch The Foundation in the key international and African markets that had witnessed numerous attempts at improving governance fail.

The Foundation achieved acknowledgment at the highest levels of government, including President Mbeki, Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair and receiving high level media exposure.

Statement of Opportunity

Nature of the Institution

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation champions good governance in Africa through rewarding former Sub-Saharan State heads who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and governance during their term of office.

The award (due November 2007) will be measured against five criteria determined by the Ibrahim Index on Governance. Namely: Economic Development, Safety and Security, Human Development covering Health and Education, Democratic Freedoms, Transparency and Civil Society.

The recipient of this annual award will receive US\$500 000 annually for 10 years. In addition, \$200 000 will be channeled to his/her charitable cause annually (x10 years), and thereafter earn a life long retirement stipend of \$200 000 per year.

Specific problem or opportunity addressed by the program

Reputation Management:

- Global communication in a skeptical market:
 - Political and foreign reporters and editors were highly skeptical of initiatives of this nature especially those perceived as individually driven. While risking a possible leak, senior figures in the media were engaged on the subject prior to launch to sensitize them and gauge their reaction to The Foundation.
- Credibility:
 - The Foundation, offering the world's single biggest prize, needed wide public support and legitimacy, akin to the Nobel Prize.
- Stakeholder engagement and endorsement:
 - Political and academic support and influence in major world capitals

Geographical area in which program was conducted

Worldwide, with key markets in London, Nairobi, Johannesburg, Paris, Washington D.C., New York, Brussels, Dakar, Lagos and Abuja.

Research

Magna Carta researched existing credible initiatives aimed at promoting good governance in Africa.

On the Ibrahim Governance Index, Magna Carta investigated existing measures of multi-lateral institutions (UN Human Development Index and World Bank Report on Development, Governance and Corruption) and International NGO's, e.g.: Transparency International's Index on Corruption.

Magna Carta identified and referenced the above research and indexed the findings against The Foundation in the message formulation.

Planning

Three months of planning preceded The Foundation's 'rolling' launch – starting in London, then Nairobi, and Johannesburg, supported by media outreach activities in Paris, Washington D.C., New York, Brussels, Dakar, Lagos and Abuja. Magna Carta managed the PR campaign in all the major African hubs and consulted on global and regional message development.

Campaign objectives

- Obtain media coverage positioning the Foundation as promoting good governance in Africa.
- High level endorsement of influential Western and African governments and politicians, including leading multi-lateral institutions (AU, UN and EU).

- Create public dialogue with thought leaders and academics on good governance and leadership challenges facing Africa.
- Stimulate general public awareness.

Identified target publics and actions desired of them

- Media – international with global reach and those with reach into Africa, Pan Africa, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal
 - Action: report positively and objectively on The Foundation
- Politicians, business leaders and academics
 - Action: endorsement to leverage the Foundation’s credibility
- General public:
 - Create awareness and discussion

Key message framework

Eight primary messages, addressing Pan-African and Global governance issues formed the central narrative around the announcement.

Core communication channels included

- Print, online and electronic media
- Press announcements and press releases
- Launch events
- Think-tank influencer sessions

Vehicles to carry the messages

- High profile launch events to target audiences in London, Kenya and Johannesburg
- Targeted and region specific press announcements
- Exclusive media interviews
- Endorsement sent to press
- High level stakeholder engagements and events in Kenya and South Africa, including meetings with heads of state and leading figures in government
- Think-tank sessions in Johannesburg and London with key academics and authorities on governance

Management support

Mo Ibrahim and his senior management were continually part of the strategic and planning process. Updates and discussions were held regularly and sometimes daily via international tele-conferences.

Execution

Implementation

- Week before launch, confidential discussions held with leading academics. Those with newspaper columns and frequently consulted by the media for comment were invited to think-tank discussions in London and Johannesburg
- Lobbied leading foreign news editors in key markets for pre-launch coverage
- Personal and confidential letters were sent to all 48 Sub Saharan African Heads of State notifying them of the upcoming launch
- Leading figures in business, civil society, media and government were notified in writing (under embargo), prior to invitations in Kenya and South Africa alerting them to the Foundations launch
- Campaign kicked off with embargoed pre-launch media dinners and interviews in London, Johannesburg, Nairobi and Lagos
- Evening 25 October: media releases issued simultaneously in all key markets

London (Ketchum)

- 26 October: official media launch held followed by an evening reception with diplomats from Africa, highlighted by high level UK government attendance.
- 27 October: think-tank sessions held on “Governance Challenges facing Africa”

Nairobi (Magna Carta)

- 31 October: launched with media and high level stakeholder luncheon, followed by a press conference

Johannesburg (Magna Carta)

- 1 November: official launch, meeting with President Mbeki, media interviews and evening reception well attended by business and government leading figures
- 2 November: think-tank session
- Media follows and telephonic interviews held in Lagos and other key African markets.

Difficulties encountered and adjustments to the plan

- Launching in Kenya and South Africa four days after the London launch threatened to destroy African media interest
- In preparation of this, new and local angles were developed and a new “African media release” was sent from Johannesburg morning of 30 October which successfully amplified African media interest

Evaluation

- Extensive global and African media front page and leading story coverage
- Well attended launch and media events in London, Nairobi, Kenya and South Africa

- A record 53 journalist attended the Nairobi Press Conference, including a Tanzanian media contingent
- Kenya: exclusive interviews with key media, and regionally based international news outlets
- 58 hits across the full South African media spectrum generating over R5m in coverage
- Two 30-minute interviews and debate on SAFM (with President Mbeki remarking to Mo Ibrahim on the level of debate he generated during the interview)
- Three weeks of rolling coverage following the London launch, directly and indirectly through independent commentary and opinion pages in South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria. Some of the commentary came from the academics invited to the Roundtable Discussion that write for newspaper columns
- Coverage was marked by an overall positive and objective tone in all markets
- Foundation Secured eight video and written endorsements from Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan, Bill Clinton, Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank, AU Commissioner Alpha Konare, PM Tony Blair, Prof. Amartya Sen of Harvard University, Louis Michel European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Development
- Magna Carta appointed to handle maintenance campaign going forward

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The Big Stationary Drive
MWEB Home

Atmosphere Communications
South Africa

Category:	Social Responsibility
Title:	The Big Stationery Drive
Client:	MWEB Home
Consultancy:	Atmosphere Communications

Summary

Rural schools receive inadequate stationery supplies from government. Three students sharing one pencil is something I see everyday.

Daniela Browne, National Director: SMILE.

Atmosphere Communications conceptualized the MWEB Big Stationery Drive for MWEB Home, South Africa's largest Internet Service Provider, to right the future of our learners by providing vital education tools.

Atmosphere's concept consolidated its client's disparate CSI initiatives into one compelling communication proposition. It demonstrated MWEB's commitment to education as validated by three online education tools made available to its members including SA Encyclopedia, Microsoft Encarta, and Learning and Library.

More importantly, the inaugural campaign affected meaningful change. Rural schools benefited financially to the value of R100 000 and 16 000 pieces of stationery, enough to fully equip disadvantaged learners in 40 schools for a full year.

Challenges and Opportunities

MWEB Home, the consumer division in MWEB that provides a wide range of fast Internet access options to the home Internet user, briefed Atmosphere Communications to investigate relevant PR opportunities around a donation that it would be making to the needy over the 2005 festive season. Instead, Atmosphere reverted with a creative campaign concept that consolidated the various initiatives supported by MWEB Home into a relevant and original social investment drive that would provide disadvantaged learners with the tools for a better education.

Atmosphere initiated strategic partnerships with like-minded brands including Pick 'n Pay and SMILE to make the Big Stationery Drive a reality. Client secured the partnership with DSTV which Atmosphere managed. This national campaign encourages members of the public to donate stationery at participating Pick 'n Pay stores. In addition, MWEB members could donate cash via MWEB's web site (www.mweb.co.za). All

contributions were donated to under-privileged schools by SMILE, a community-based, education, non-profit organization.

Challenge 1: Campaign Relevance

- Atmosphere identified education as the most relevant platform as it highlighted the client's unique member benefits.
- Moreover, it identified the back-to-school period as the most relevant opportunity with which to reach its biggest target public namely, mothers.

Challenge 2: Creating a Physical Presence

- MWEB Home supplies its members with an intangible product that is sold via distributors such as Incredible Connection in a Big Black Box. The challenge lay in creating an affordable physical presence nationally with which to optimally engage the target public.
- Atmosphere recommended that MWEB Home consider producing oversized signature Big Black Boxes which could be used year-on-year to contain donations and proactively formed a strategic partnership with Pick 'n Pay.
- Another challenge lay in communicating the concept to all Pick 'n Pay store managers and staff, many of whom work part-time shifts, ensuring that the Big Black Boxes were properly displayed, emptied regularly and that all donations were accounted for.
- Regular emails were sent and ring-arounds to all stores conducted by Atmosphere to ensure that the Big Stationery Drive remained top-of-mind.
- Moreover, Atmosphere negotiated free in-store radio advertising highlighting the campaign. This not only alerted shoppers, it also served as a reminder to staff.

Challenge 3: Production Costs

- Deadlines were tight and publicity opportunities with long-lead glossy consumer and lifestyle media had been missed.
- Atmosphere devised a solid media relations campaign exploiting opportunities with national daily and weekly print titles as well as regional and community titles and radio stations.
- However, it was still blatantly obvious that above-the-line support would be needed to catapult the campaign into the consumer limelight.
- Atmosphere suggested engaging a media partner. As a fellow Multichoice company, client engaged DSTV. Television advertising airtime to the value of R250 000 was donated by DSTV across its network.
- Bester Burke Underground, CAB Films, The Refinery (responsible for post production) and PPP (responsible for editing) donated their time at dramatically reduced rates to produce a 45-second television advert.

- Atmosphere recommended a print advertising campaign in community newspapers as opposed to regional or national newspapers. Adverts appeared in those community newspapers which cover areas in which participating Pick 'n Pay stores were located. Again, a dramatic cost saving with maximum impact was achieved.
- Besides email communication to its 350,000 members, MWEB Home ran an online campaign with its portal's unused inventory. At the time, www.mweb.co.za was the most visited web site in South Africa, according to the Online Publishing Association.

Research

Atmosphere conducted extensive informal research on two levels to:

1. Identify existing education initiatives by government and the private sector to ensure relevance and originality through:
 - a. Telephonic interviews with selected education writers;
 - b. Research in print and online media titles;
 - c. Web research on Department of Education, South Africa's largest educators (e.g. UNISA and Educor) and organizations targeting a similar public audience (e.g. Microsoft, Telkom, etc.).
2. Identify the most relevant communities and beneficiaries through
 - a. Liaison and brainstorming with Greater Good South Africa, an award-winning portal concept that makes it possible for both individuals and businesses to support bona fide non-profit organizations in a range of different ways;
 - b. Liaison and brainstorming with specialist organizations that target the Youth Market such as Schoolyard Marketing and Instant Grass.

Communication Take-Out

- Atmosphere identified the dire need for stationery in rural schools and recommended the Big MWEB Stationery Drive to client with confidence, secure in the fact that this was a truly original education platform that would affect real change.
- Moreover, SMILE was identified as the most suitable beneficiary in ensuring that benefits were felt at a grass-roots level. The organization works with approximately 27,000 learners, 500 teachers and 230 community-based primary and high schools in seven provinces.

The Plan

Communication Objectives

Devise and launch a CSI initiative that communicates the importance MWEB places on education.

Identify suitable under-privileged institutions as beneficiaries of the CSI initiative in Gauteng, Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Identify, engage and forge strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations to amplify and support MWEB Home's CSI initiative and to provide MWEB Home with a real world presence.

Encourage all target publics to participate by implementing an educational awareness campaign about MWEB Home's CSI initiative.



Criteria for Success

- Creative PR driven CSI concept to client satisfaction.
- Development of project plan for client approval.

- Identify and secure the participation of at least x1 underprivileged institution in each of the regions (minimum of x3 institutions).
- Provide supporting rationale to justify MWEB Home's assistance.
- Ensure that the support provided by MWEB Home benefits the needy.

- Secure x1 national media partner to publicize initiative.
- Secure the participation of x1 national retail partner.

- Draft and pitch a minimum of three media releases resulting in a minimum of nine pieces of on-message publicity in the selected media strike list.
- Work with above-the-line to ensure consistent messaging and extrapolate value-added publicity opportunities from any potential advertising spend.

Target Publics**Strategic Partners**

Like-minded organizations with a national presence and desirable consumer database.

Internal

MWEB Home and Multichoice staff members.

Consumers

LSM 7-10, 35 YO+, predominantly white (80 percent), English and Afrikaans speaking, generally married with children (69 percent), mothers living in urban areas i.e. Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban.

Core Messages

- MWEB Home is South Africa's largest Internet Service Provider.
- MWEB Home nurtures the communities in which it operates.
- MWEB Home is an exemplary corporate citizen.

- I work for a great organization that nurtures and supports the communities in which it operates.

- MWEB Home is South Africa's largest Internet Service Provider.
- MWEB Home nurtures the communities in which it operates.
- MWEB Home is an exemplary corporate citizen.
- MWEB Home places importance on local education.

Desired Actions

- Partner with MWEB Home.
- Provide MWEB Home access to its audiences.
- Provide MWEB Home with a real world presence to demonstrate its commitment to local education.

- Make stationery and/ or financial donations.
- Evangelize the MWEB Big Stationery Drive both within MWEB and externally.

- Make a stationery or financial donation.

Strategy Overview

Atmosphere implemented a separate publicity initiative prior to conceptualizing the MWEB Big Stationery Drive. This campaign was designed to highlight MWEB Home's education products as a benefit to becoming an MWEB Home member during the back-to-school period (January and February) using various media relations tools at our disposal including, amongst other activities:

- Media releases on the benefits of the Internet in education.
- A series of advertorials and sponsored columns in female consumer glossy magazines such as Woman's Value and Dit, Sarie, Your Family, Rooi Rose and Fairlady.

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- Media snippets including tips for mom's on how to use the Internet as an "edutainment" tool.

Atmosphere orchestrated the MWEB Big Stationery Drive to coincide with this back-to-school activity thereby capitalizing on the opportunity to communicate the importance that MWEB places on local education.

Atmosphere aggressively targeted potential partner organizations that would provide its client with access to its target public while seizing the opportunity creating a real world presence for MWEB Home. After having secured Pick 'n Pay and SMILE, Atmosphere embarked on a consumer media relations campaign targeting predominantly daily and weekly print titles as well as electronic and broadcast media.

The end result was a seemingly integrated campaign that clearly highlighted the importance that MWEB Home places on the state of local education. And, an enormously successful CSI initiative that over-delivered on expectation dramatically.

Activity Overview

1. Strategic Partners
 - a. Identified and secured most relevant CSI beneficiaries i.e. SMILE.
 - b. Pursued Pick 'n Pay as retail partner, briefed store managers, secured free in-store radio spots and drafted script as well as mentions on Pick 'n Pay collateral such as web site and newsletters.
 - c. Briefed-in concept to DSTV and secured all relevant marketing collateral for the production of co-branded Big Black Boxes.
 - d. Drafted and disseminated briefing notes to all parties.
2. Internal Communication
 - a. Drafted relevant communication for staff which client communicated internally.
 - b. Ensured excess Big Black Boxes were strategically placed at the entrance to Multichoice's offices in Guateng, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Western Cape as well as MWEB Home's offices for staff donations.
3. Consumer Communication
 - a. Identified and provided all spokespeople with media briefing notes and core messaging sheet.
 - b. Drafted and disseminated a call to action release targeting national media.
 - c. Drafted individual releases for community papers with details of the schools that would benefit and nearest participating Pick 'n Pays to extrapolate value-added publicity in those publications that received advertising spend.
 - d. Disseminated a photo-story of the making of the MWEB Big Stationery Drive television advert.

- e. Motivated a photo-shoot with Corne Krige and the Stormers Rugby team making a donation in a Cape based Pick 'n Pay as a publicity stunt.
- f. Managed the administrative process of collecting stationery.
- g. Drafted and disseminated follow-up media release on results of the campaign and beneficiaries.

Evaluation**Criteria for Success**

- Creative PR driven CSI concept to client satisfaction.
- Development of project plan for client approval.
- Identify and secure the participation of at least x1 underprivileged institution in each of regions (minimum of x3 institutions).
- Provide supporting rationale to justify MWEB Home's assistance.
- Ensure that the support provided by MWEB Home benefits the needy.
- Secure x1 national media partner to publicize initiative.
- Secure the participation of x1 national retail partner.
- Draft and pitch a minimum of x3 media releases resulting in a minimum of nine pieces of on-message publicity in the selected media strike list.
- Work with above-the-line to ensure consistent messaging and extrapolate value-added publicity opportunities from any potential advertising spend.

Delivered by Atmosphere

- Conceptualized and launched the MWEB Big Stationery Drive.
- Project plan approved by client and all participating partners.
- By partnering with SMILE, x40 underprivileged schools in all three provinces benefited.
- A comprehensive list of the schools which benefited and the items that were donated were supplied and letters of thanks received.
- Monies raised were donated to SMILE with which to print educational books and distribute accordingly.
- You/ Huisgenoot magazine secured as media partner which was declined by client.
- DSTV was the media partner of choice for reach.
- x32 Pick-n-Pay stores participated.
- x5 Media releases drafted and disseminated.
- Extensive free radio exposure secured on Pick-'n-Pay's in-store radio stations.
- x255 TV spots flighted on DSTV.
- A minimum of x25 pieces of on-message print publicity secured.

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Worthy of a Mention

- MWEB Home members pledged R50 000.
- MWEB Home matched the pledge with a further donation of R50 000.
- 16,000 pieces of stationery were collected in the Big Black MWEB Boxes - enough to sustain 40 under-privileged schools for an entire year.

“We are astonished by the positive feedback from the community. We’ve even been informed of a man who has asked his friends to donate cash or stationery instead of gifts for his 70th birthday – now that’s dedication.” “The stationery response has been excellent, with the greatest amount of stationery being collected in Gauteng. Thank you to all the sponsors for all their assistance with this Big Stationery Drive campaign and the wonderful generosity throughout this campaign. It has been such a pleasure working with you – your efficiency has made all the tasks so easy.” Daniela Browne, National Director, SMILE

About the Authors

b j Altschul is an assistant professor of public communication at American University in Washington, DC. Drawing from her previous experience as director of the Office of Communication for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and public relations manager for the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute, she now specializes in ways to bridge the gap between scientists and non-scientists regarding the public relations challenges of food and agricultural biotechnology. As a consultant, she authored a background paper for the Virginia Biotechnology Research Act Study Commission when that state was considering what type of legislative oversight would best protect its citizens as the food and biotechnology industry sought to grow. Although her professional experience often has been in support of the industry, as an educator she strives to explore both the pros and cons from the perspective of all points of view. Toward that end, students in her public relations case studies classes role-play in teams representing major organizations, attempting to solve communication problems through online discussion, face-to-face debate in response to scenarios based on current news, and preparation of campaign materials on behalf of their “clients.”

Meta G. Carstarphen, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma. A former assistant public affairs officer for the Federal Aviation Administration, she helped coordinate media relations, internal communication and education programs for the agency’s Southwest Regional office. Now a specialist in community relations and multicultural public relations, Carstarphen teaches courses in PR writing, multimedia, campaigns, research, race/gender/media, and cultural studies. She is the author of the Allyn & Bacon textbook, *Writing PR: A Multimedia Approach*.

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