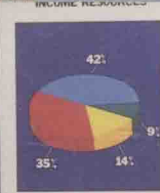
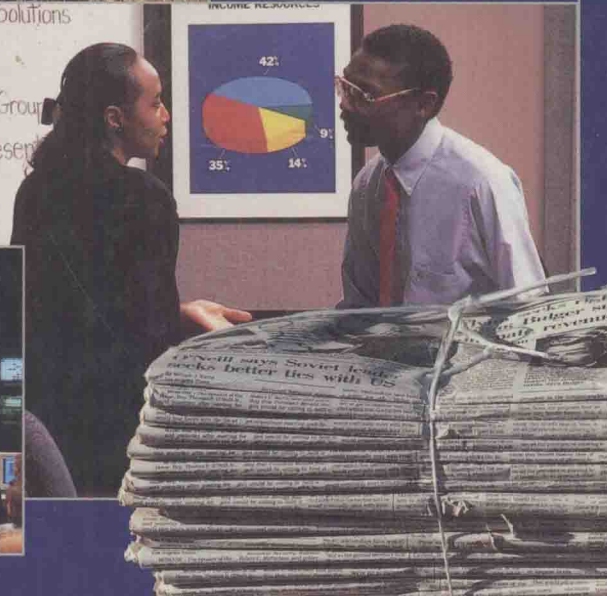
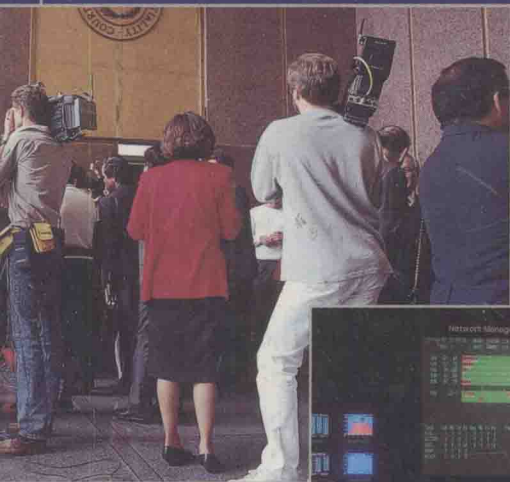


FOURTH EDITION

PUBLIC RELATIONS

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Dennis L. Wilcox / Phillip H. Ault / Warren K. Agee



Public Relations

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

FOURTH EDITION

With a Foreword by Edward L. Bernays

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Public Relations

FOREWORD

BY EDWARD L. BERNAYS¹

One of the basic requirements of a vocation is that it have a literature of its own. In 1923 I wrote *Crystalizing Public Opinion*, published by Boni and Liveright, the first book on public relations. It defined the principles and practices of the new vocation of public relations and the ethics by which it should be governed.

Today there are more than 16,000 items in the bibliography of public relations. Every new volume, like this one that discusses the old and new problems the vocation faces, should be welcomed.

With the increasing complexity of our society, the public relations practitioner, an applied social scientist, must gain new and old knowledge from books before he or she can practice effectively. That is the pattern pursued consistently by lawyers, medical doctors, and those in other vocations.

With people power the most dominant force in society, it is essential that the public relations practitioner have the broadest understanding possible of the vocation. This book meets that need.

The past is prelude to the future. That is why the historical treatment of public relations in this volume is so important. Historical perspective provides proof why people must be given such serious consideration. Every activity depends on people for its survival, whether profit or nonprofit. By taking up various steps to pursue, this book provides basic approaches for teacher, student, and practitioner.

In my practice of 77 years, books have been my greatest, most valuable resource.

Many people in public relations, as in other fields, think of themselves as Columbuses and Magellans in tackling their problems, as if they were the first ever to burst upon a particular issue. But the real Columbuses and Magellans read a book like this and then proceed to use books like this one as their greatest resource in the practice of their vocation.

There are serious problems concerning public relations that readers of this book must face if the vocation is to survive. The words *public relations* are in the public domain. Unlike true professions, public relations has not been defined by law. In the American language, words have the stability of soap bubbles. Anyone can misuse the term *public relations*. And many people unfitted by education, experience, or ethics use the term to mean whatever they want it to mean.

1. New York University commemorated the sixty-second anniversary of the teaching of public relations at a ceremony in 1985, during which NYU President John Brademas presented Dr. Bernays with a presidential citation.

I noted in one directory of a public relations association 14 different appellations. None of them gave the least indication of an individual's education, experience, or ethics. Today any car salesperson or paperhanger can call himself or herself a "public relations practitioner." I have seen help-wanted advertisements for tourist-guide public relations practitioners who are required to "love people." It is in the interest of all the readers of this book to strengthen the status of public relations by making it a profession.

Public relations is an art applied to a science—social science—in which the public interest rather than financial motivation is the primary consideration. A professional practitioner in public relations would turn down Somoza, Franco, and Hitler as clients, as I did.

Public relations today has all the characteristics of a profession except one. Public relations lacks licensing and registration by the state with legal sanctions.

The public relations vocation has its literature, an earmark of a profession. With more than 16,000 items published as of this writing, the literature grows every year.

Public relations has its educational courses, another earmark of a profession. In this and most other countries, instruction is offered in public relations. But what is actually taught as public relations often differs from school to school. Obviously, education would be standardized if licensing and registration were adopted in public relations, as is currently the case with instruction in the professions.

Public relations has its associations. They exist both in this country and internationally. There is an International Public Relations Association, with members in more than 66 countries.

Ethics is still another earmark of a profession. The public relations societies have their codes of ethics. In the case of licensed and registered professions, these codes of ethics are enforced by law. In public relations, no legal sanctions exist.

A group of practitioners is trying to bring about needed change. A committee calling for registration and licensing with legal sanctions has been established, not only to preserve and codify the standards of the field but also to prevent unqualified individuals from calling themselves public relations practitioners. It would also standardize the teaching of public relations in the United States.

In my judgment, degrees in public relations should be given on completion of a liberal arts program. In the two years following, M.S. degree graduates in public relations would study the social science disciplines, including economics and history. Additionally, universities could set up a double-degree program for students who plan a career in a specific area of public relations—for example, degrees in medicine and public relations for a career in medical public relations.

In sum, this book promises to be a good preparation for life in a public relations career.

Edward L. Bernays has received honorary doctorates from Boston University, Babson College, Ball State University, and Northeastern University for his contributions to the fields of public relations and social science.

P R E F A C E

The world of public relations expands and changes so rapidly that a textbook covering the entire field, as *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics* does, requires frequent revision to stay abreast of developments. This fourth edition does precisely that. It examines public relations at the end of the twentieth century in both theory and practice, with emphasis on emerging trends.

Basic organization of the textbook remains the same as in the third edition. In a survey, users of the book told us overwhelmingly to keep it that way. Within that format, much up-to-the-minute new material drawn from real-world public relations practice has been added.

Six aspects of public relations in particular receive strong emphasis in this edition:

- Ethics and professionalism
- Diversity
- International public relations
- The environment
- Crisis management
- New technologies

Concern about ethical responsibility in public relations practice has grown as the field expands. This textbook examines numerous aspects of ethics and illustrates them with examples from professional practice. Among them is Hill and Knowlton's disputed Campaign for a Free Kuwait during the Persian Gulf War. The chapter includes the new Code of Good Practice for creators and users of video news releases (VNRs).

We discuss the significant issue of multiracial and multilingual diversity from two angles: (1) how public relations professionals can reach the diverse audiences that comprise contemporary society and (2) the need for greater minority participation in public relations practice. Accusations of racial bias against the Denny's restaurant chain and the ways in which the company responded to them provide a case study.

As more corporations expand into global marketing, trade barriers fall, and worldwide communication becomes virtually instantaneous, international public relations practice multiplies. In our chapter on international public relations, and in other references throughout the textbook, we explain how the global system operates and the opportunities it offers to individuals. Case studies include the successful campaign to "sell" the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Public demands for cleanup of the environment have created a challenging new role for public relations. We look at the opportunities and problems from opposite points of view. First, we discuss how corporations, governments, and other organizations identify their environmental problems, respond to criticism, and inform the public about their cleanup efforts. Second, we examine operating methods and financing of environmental activist organizations that are forcing change. A case study of the 3M Company shows how one international corporation operates a broad environmental program.

Corporations and nonprofit organizations alike constantly face the possibility of unexpected crisis. The manner in which management meets the crisis—by wisely communicating openly and quickly with the public or, alternatively, by “stonewalling” and trying to cover up the problem—can determine whether an organization can emerge from its problem virtually unscathed or critically damaged. We discuss two classic cases, the excellent performance by the makers of Tylenol in its poisoning crisis and the public relations disaster for Exxon in its Alaskan oil spill. We also examine Pepsi Cola’s handling of the hoax caused by customers claiming to find syringes in Pepsi cans and the crisis that struck Sears, Roebuck & Company when two state governments revealed that its auto mechanics had been cheating customers.

The textbook also looks at developments in electronic technology that are blending the telephone, computer, and television systems into a new form of two-way communication popularly called an “information superhighway.”

As every instructor knows, examples, anecdotes, and case histories are extremely valuable in helping students grasp principles and theories. *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics* has won a reputation for its abundance of this material, mostly drawn from professional practice. This edition is filled with new material.

Chapter 1 describes the epic public relations battle waged by conflicting medical, insurance, political, and social organizations over President Clinton’s health-care plan. Follow-up references to specific aspects of the fight appear throughout the textbook. Other examples drawn from the news pages include such diverse public relations episodes as Michael Jackson’s career crisis resulting from child-abuse charges against him, the McDonald’s organization’s use of community public relations to win zoning rights for a restaurant, and a computer error that cost Pepsi millions of dollars when a half-million Filipinos held winning tickets for the grand prize in a contest drawing. Riots broke out after the company paid only a token amount to each holder of a prize ticket.

This book is divided into five parts:

- Part One: Role
- Part Two: Process
- Part Three: Strategy
- Part Four: Application
- Part Five: Tactics

The organization is based on the fact that diversity exists in the teaching of introductory courses in public relations. At some colleges and universities, the course is

offered as an overview of the entire field, covering theories, strategies, and on-the-job tactics. Other universities concentrate on theory and strategy, teaching the technical applications in public relations writing courses. Therefore, we concentrate on the tactical material in Part Five. Instructors may include it or not, as they desire. Thus the book may be used under both teaching approaches.

The first four parts examine the principles, theories, and strategies in a natural teaching sequence. The fifth part explains the techniques of day-by-day public relations practice—such assignments as preparing a news release, writing a speech, coaching a client for a television appearance, and staging a news conference. For the reader's convenience, we have grouped the techniques into three categories, with a chapter on each: "Written Tactics" (Ch. 22); "Spoken Tactics" (Ch. 23); and "Visual Tactics" (Ch. 24).

We also draw readers' attention to Chapter 21, "Public Relations and New Technologies." Discussion centers on the spectacular advances worldwide in message-delivery methods and electronic research sources. It explains how such tools as facsimile, video news releases, desktop publishing, and satellite transmission are used in public relations practice.

A new feature in the fourth edition will help both instructors and students. Each chapter opens with a Preview. This defines the objective of the chapter and lists in concise form the major topics covered in the text.

Also new in this edition is a four-color section titled "The Tools of Public Relations." This introduces students to some of the methods practitioners use to deliver their messages. More than 60 new black-and-white illustrations add to the textbook's up-to-the-minute "feel."

The chapter titled "The Individual in Public Relations," which appeared as Chapter 5 in previous editions, has been moved forward to become Chapter 4 in the fourth edition. This improves the natural flow of instruction.

Supplementing the body of the text are a glossary of public relations terms and a comprehensive bibliography at the back of the book, as well as lists of suggested readings and review questions at the end of each chapter.

Supplements to the textbook include the following:

- an instructor's manual/test bank;
- a computerized test bank, available in IBM or Mac formats.

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Our special gratitude is extended to Edward L. Bernays for writing the Foreword to this textbook.

*Dennis L. Wilcox
Phillip H. Ault
Warren K. Agee*

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