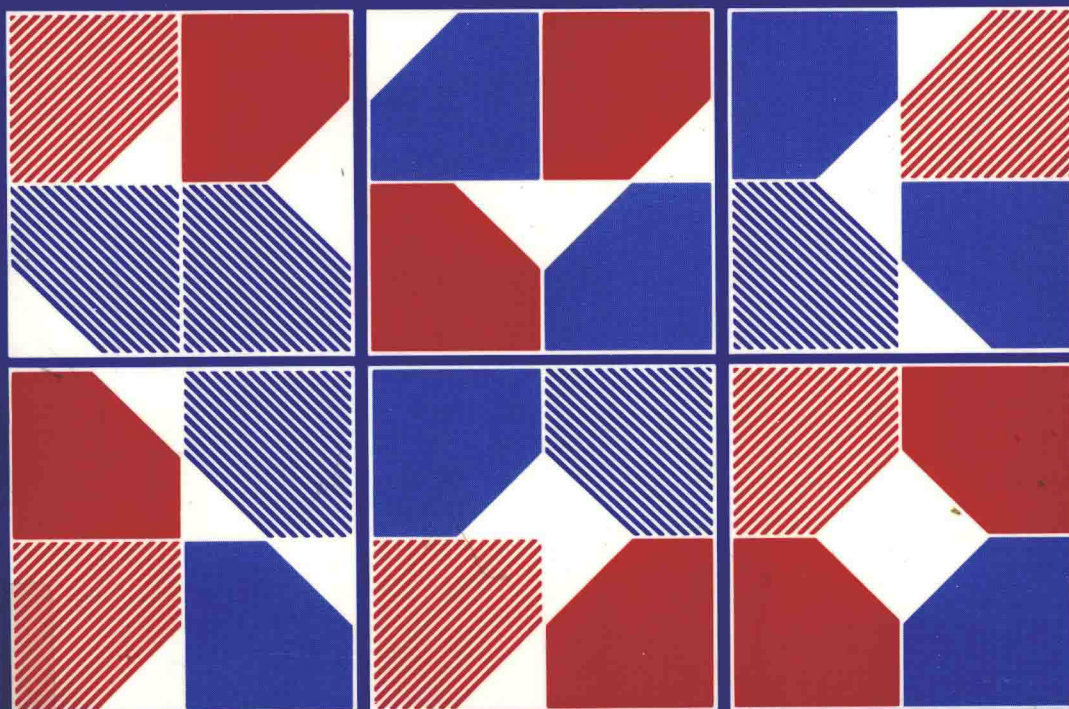


PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES

Managerial Case Studies
and Problems

FOURTH EDITION



ALLEN H. CENTER / PATRICK JACKSON

PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES

Managerial Case Studies and Problems

Fourth Edition

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PUBLIC
RELATIONS
PRACTICES

To all my students.
They keep me younger than I am. A.H.C.

To the teachers of public relations,
who are giving us a new generation
of true professionals. P.J.



PREFACE

The third edition of this text was well received by many of those teaching and taking advanced public relations courses. It was tempting not to tamper with it for another year or two.

That was overruled because there are so many major and rapid changes affecting relationships. On a grand scale, huge enterprises and wings of government are seeking to adjust beneficially to the global village of disparate cultures, values, and standards of behavior. At the local community level, life is strained as jobs fall victim to technology or are moved to an area of lower wages and costs, with the tax base and public services such as education suffering. The function of public relations must be able to mediate in these changing circumstances, as in past changes. Textbooks and courses must keep pace.

The practical purpose of this text remains essentially the same. We seek, with live case studies and problems, to help future practition-

ers develop agility in bridging between the covenants and the application of effective two-way communications in a wide variety of situations likely to confront them and their employers.

There has been a change in co-authorship. Professor Frank E. Walsh left academia to pursue other interests and withdrew from work on this text. Patrick Jackson, former adjunct faculty at Boston University, best known in the calling as editor of *pr reporter* and a leading seminarian in professional development, has come aboard.

In this revision, we have retained several timeless cases that involved public issues or broke new ground in the maturing of the function. Several cases with evolving subjects were updated. Some cases that have lost significance were dropped. And several precedential cases were summarized and moved to the Anthology, with resources noted so that students might dig into them on their own. Fifteen new cases were

added, most of a nature that entry level practitioners can readily identify. A few deal with such broad matters of public concern as financial takeovers, corporate ethics and integrity, AIDS in the workplace, and addictions.

The first two chapters describe the purposes of public relations and the manner in which the function deals with problems and opportunities. The bulk of the book contains thirty-five live case studies in eight chapters concerning primary publics such as employees and media, or major problems such as public issues, crisis management, and standards or ethics.

Each chapter has a definitive introduction providing insights that come to life in the cases that follow. Introductions vary in size and substance, tailored to the assumed knowledge of students. Employee relations, for instance, reflects that most students have had work experience of some kind, whereas crisis management contains elements not yet encountered. Each chapter closes with a case problem for class discussion closely related to the thrust of the chapter. One chapter deals candidly with career preparation. And the concluding chapter contains eighteen problem-solving exercises, each simulated from actual experience. These eighteen exercises are grouped on removable pages so that they can be used individually as homework, makeup work, or in exams.

Taken altogether, we believe there is enough variety to permit selectivity by educators fitting the size of the class and the structure of the course—and enough provocation for lively classroom participation. For those interested in behavioral science research in depth, one new case about the colossal effort to advance beyond war provides a clear application of diffusion theory in the real world of today and tomorrow.

Putting together a text of live case studies, contrasted with a collection of successful case histories, requires objective cooperation by the organizations represented, particularly when the subject, the scenario, or the conclusion is not laudatory. We are grateful for the information and illustrations supplied. We hope that

the cooperation pays off and that this text enables instruction to be better attuned to the pressing needs of employers.

Allen Center wishes to record that one of the most enjoyable and beneficial aspects of revising this text and teaching for the past ten years has derived from the friendship, counsel, and interchange of ideas with colleagues Glen Broom and David Dozier. Never mind the generation gap or disparate career experiences. Neither the debatable situations in this text nor the messy ills that beset the world have escaped lively appraisal and argument at weekly lunches. Resolution, of course, remains elusive. Allen also wishes to acknowledge that over a period of thirty-eight years, since his first text appeared, Nancy Center has maintained an amazing patience as sounding board, resident grammarian, and ego restorer as needed. In this edition, specifically, Allen thanks students Teresa Cresafulli, Dawn Fletcher, Stacey McGregor, Sandy Maynes, and Rick Stirewalt for their help in synthesizing cases for the Anthology.

Patrick Jackson wishes to acknowledge help from colleagues Robin Peters, Lois Hogan, Dale Ellison, Stacey Smith, and Shelby Perley.

Allen and Pat mutually thank educators Dennis Wilcox at San Jose State and Parry Sorenson at Utah for their frank and constructive reviews of the manuscript for this edition. Both have been continuous users of the text since its first appearance. Most of what they suggested has been accommodated in amendments to the manuscript, particularly the inclusion of Questions For Discussion after each case (strongly urged by Dennis).

Finally, the Instructor's Manual merits comment. The Center and Jackson co-authorship and a division of the revision work jelled over an early breakfast at a national PRSA conference. The question of what to do about an Instructor's Manual was left open. Fortunately, in the fall of 1988, Martha Lauzen joined the full-time journalism faculty at San Diego State University bringing with her boundless energy,

a doctorate from Maryland, teaching experience there, new business coordination at Doramus, Porter Novelli in Washington, and most recently opinion research experience as Senior Associate, The Naisbitt Group in Washington. Her initial assignments at SDSU included the Public Relations Practices and Problems senior

level course. She adopted the third edition of this book. We prevailed on her, concurrent with her teaching, to prepare the manual for this fourth edition. Her fresh and objective third-party approach adds a dimension we feel will be welcome and beneficial to educators.



Allen H. Center



Patrick Jackson



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CHAPTER 1

THE PURPOSES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

PUBLIC RELATIONS IS AN APPLIED SCIENCE

However firm our grasp of the principles, the history, and the theories of the field, we must be able to apply them to actual cases.

This is true for the entry level recent graduate and for the seasoned professional. The proof of capability is in handling cases successfully for employers or clients.

For this reason, the case study method of learning about public relations is an essential part of a practitioner's education. Case studies accurately model situations facing organizations, managers, and public relations practitioners.

Though this book came into being primarily for use in the classroom—and includes practical exercises at the end of each chapter suitable for students—it is also the major collection of carefully analyzed case studies for the field. Stu-

dents can feel confident that they are using these cases right alongside seasoned veterans.

Which proves the point:

★ The bottom line of public relations practice is in the results that come from putting theories and principles to work—in a way that benefits the organization issuing the paycheck and the society of which that organization is a part.

PUBLIC RELATIONS IS A RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGEMENT

Although everyone in the organization can help (or hurt) its relations with various publics, establishing public relations policies, goals, and activities is clearly a managerial function. Public relations staffers are part of management.

The term *public relations* is often confusing because it is used inaccurately. Used correctly, public relations describes the *processes* of practice—the techniques, strategies, structures, and tactics of the field. As such, the term is analogous to law, medicine, nursing, etc. Too often, public relations is also used to describe the *outcomes* of effective

practice—so we hear of good public relations, which technically means good techniques or strategies. The proper term for the desired outcomes of public relations practice is *public relationships*. An organization with effective public relations will attain positive public relationships.

In approaching the cases and problems presented in this book, an understanding of the meaning of management is essential. The basic definition is:

★ Getting things done with people.

This means that managers work with and through others to carry out their assignments. Their job isn't to do the work themselves but to guide and assist others in doing it. But there is another implication here that relates directly to public relations:

★ Organizations must be able to get the cooperation of people, both inside and outside the organization, in order to achieve their objectives.

Thus, public relations managers must build capabilities in both these meanings of management. For this reason, they are often selected as much for their managerial abilities in leading a staff and guiding others in the organization as for their public relations skills.

The cases and problems in this book will help you practice both meanings.

THE GOAL OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IS CHANGE

When an organization invests resources in public relations, it expects that something will be

different than before or than it would be had the investment not been made.

Examples of change might be:

- improved relations with customers,
- better community relations,
- reduced tension with watchdog agencies,
- greater employee loyalty or productivity,
- more confidence in the value of a company's stock and
- any number of others you can think of.

If all public relations does is maintain the status quo, it is being used ineffectually. But, if it only changes the way people feel or think about the organization—and vice versa—it has not realized its full potential, which is to elicit mutually favorable *behavior* from the organization and its publics.

Behavior may be of three types:

1. getting people to do something;
2. getting them not to do something;
3. winning their consent to let the organization try something without attacking or criticizing in the middle of the experiment.

Looked at from another perspective, the type of change sought may be to

1. *motivate* new behavior;
2. *reinforce* existing positive behavior;
3. *modify* negative behavior.