

Planning Programs and Campaigns

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- » Recognize the importance of having a plan
- » Understand the steps necessary to organize a campaign plan
- » Identify the eight basic elements of a plan
- » Present a plan for management approval

The Value of a Written Plan

The primary focus of this book has been on the tactical aspects of public relations—news releases, feature placements, publicity photos, video clips, online newsrooms, satellite media tours, media relations, newsletters, speeches, and so on—that require considerable writing skill and creativity.

Now that you have mastered multiple “media techniques,” it is important to devote a chapter to the key concepts of campaign management and public relations programming. Basically, we are now talking about the coordination of multiple “tactics” as part of an overall program to achieve organizational objectives.

A written plan is imperative for any public relations campaign. It improves the campaign’s effectiveness. By using multiple communication tools together, you ensure a greater overall impact. Put another way, a plan is a blueprint. It explains the situation, analyzes what can be done about it, outlines strategies and tactics, proposes a timeline of activities, and tells how the results will be evaluated.

Laurie Wilson, author of *Strategic Program Planning for Effective Public Relations Campaigns*, offers some insight about the relationship of a program plan to the actual process of writing and distributing materials to key audiences. She says:

Each communication tactic is planned before it is created. The copy outline requires for each communication tactic the identification of the key public, the desired action by the public to contribute to the accomplishment of the plan’s objectives, and the

message to be sent to that public to motivate its action. Each of these elements draws the information as it is specified in the strategic plan.

This chapter provides a brief overview of how to write a comprehensive public relations program. With this skill, you will become much more than a public relations writer—you will also become a public relations manager.

Developing a Plan

The first step in developing a plan is to consult with the client or your management. This serves two purposes. First, it gets these people involved. Second, it is likely to give you the basic information you need to start making a plan.

In talking with the people who will pay for the campaign, you strive to identify the problems and opportunities confronting the organization. In some cases, these will be apparent to all. At other times, one party will have ideas that have not occurred to the other. Out of this discussion should be an agreement as to the general nature of the situation and a preliminary establishment of the campaign's objectives. All of this, of course, is subject to change when more information is gathered.

PR planning is a bona fide social science that distinguishes strategic PR from the seat-of-the-pants practice of which many in the field are often guilty. ❧ Fraser Seitel, author of *The Practice of Public Relations*

A good example is the California Avocado Commission. It faced the problem of selling Haas avocados on the East Coast. Sales were not good, and, with a bumper crop of 600 million avocados, the California growers realized that they had a problem. Some informal research found that New Yorkers were not acquainted with avocados that turned jet black when ripe; they thought the fruit was rotten. The objective, then, was to inform consumers that Haas avocados are supposed to have black skins and that they have excellent flavor. The campaign succeeded because it was based on sound information and analysis.

Gathering Information

You cannot know too much about the subject you intend to promote. Don't be satisfied with a cursory investigation—dig and keep on digging until you have the whole story. There are several sources from which you can get the facts and figures that will enable you to plan an effective campaign:

- » **Organization.** Much basic information should be available within the organization. Ask for marketing research that has been conducted about the product or service. Talk to sales representatives who deal with customers. Get an overall picture of the organization's successes and failures. Find out why things have happened or how they have been done.
- » **References.** Go through all the information in your files. Consult other files. Use libraries and online databases. Review Chapter 1; many sources of information are cited there.

- » **Questions.** Ask colleagues for their idiosyncratic suggestions. Read any case histories you can find.
- » **Analysis of communications.** Fit the organization, inquiries on telephone, mail, checked and studied.
- » **Brainstorming.** Get a group of colleagues together. Many of the ideas won't be the kernel of a creative idea that can be brainstormed in a session among colleagues.
- » **Focus group interviews.** Assemble a group of the audience you want to reach. These interviews may point to a need for detailed surveys.
- » **Surveys.** In many situations, you will want to know attitudes and perceptions of target audience and money. If the organization does not have a survey, either do the survey yourself or use a survey firm.
- » **Media databases.** To plan your tactics, you need to know what media are available. Communication will be most efficient. A number of media databases, such as *BurrellesLuce*, provide profiles of various media.



FIGURE 18.1 Planning a public relations program requires a meeting in which participants discuss the characteristics of the organization with innovative and creative tactics that will accomplish the program's objectives.

ons Media

Questions. Ask colleagues for their ideas. Review the experiences of others in similar situations. Read any case histories you can find. The trade press is a good source.

Analysis of communications. Field reports from representatives of the organization, inquiries on telephone hotlines, and consumer complaints should be checked and studied.

Brainstorming. Get a group of colleagues together to kick around ideas and suggestions. Many of the ideas won't be practical or realistic, but some may contain the kernel of a creative idea that can be further developed into a strategy. A typical brainstorming session among colleagues is shown in Figure 18.1.

Focus group interviews. Assemble a group of people who are representative of the audience you want to reach. These interviews are not quantitative research, but they may point to a need for detailed research in a specific area.

Surveys. In many situations, you will need to conduct a survey to ascertain the attitudes and perceptions of target audiences. Doing a survey takes a lot of time and money. If the organization does not have the relevant data on hand, you must either do the survey yourself or use a survey research firm.

Media databases. To plan your tactics, you need to know which channels of communication will be most efficient. A number of media directories, including *Bacon's* and *BurrellesLuce*, provide profiles of various media outlets and their audiences.



18.1 Planning a public relations program requires brainstorming sessions like this which participants discuss the characteristics of the audience and work to come up with creative and innovative tactics that will accomplish the organization's objectives.

» **Demographics.** The *Statistical Abstracts of the United States*, *American Demographics*, and the comprehensive *Simmons Index* provide insights into the characteristics of an audience. *Simmons*, in particular, will give you detailed information on consumer buying habits and consumers' major sources of information. Another good resource is surveys by various organizations about lifestyles, public opinion, and consumer behavior. Many of these survey results are posted on websites and reported in the media.

Analyzing the Information

Having gathered all pertinent information and perhaps conducted a survey or several focus groups, your job is to analyze all the facts and ideas. You must consider the reliability of what you have found. If there are contradictions, you must eliminate erroneous elements and confirm the credibility of what remains.

Now, with reliable information in hand, you can start to draw conclusions. The situation, with its problems and opportunities, and the reason for it should be apparent. The objectives should be obvious, and the strategy, after careful thought, should start to take form.

Before goals and tactics are drafted, PR Directors must thoroughly understand their organization's business plan. ❧

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is the situation as I see it, these are the objectives I think we should select, and this is the strategy I suggest." This discussion may result in an approval in principle. If it does, you can start writing a program or campaign plan that will outline the strategies and tactics required to address the problem or opportunity.

Elements of a Plan

There is some variation regarding the elements of a basic program or campaign plan. Organizations designate these elements in different ways, combining or dividing them as seems appropriate. Nevertheless, any good plan will cover eight elements: (1) situation, (2) objectives, (3) audience, (4) strategy, (5) tactics, (6) timing, (7) budget, and (8) evaluation. These elements are described in the following sections and summarized in the Tips for Success on page 475.

Situation

An organization's situation can be determined by summarizing the organization's relations with its public or publics. This tells why the program is needed and points out the need or the opportunity. This may be the most important part of the plan. Unless a client or management is convinced that a campaign is necessary, it is not likely to approve spending money on it.

Tips for Success

Component

- A basic public relations plan is a blueprint of what you and your client or employer to make sure that it is coordinated, evaluated, and coordinated for maximum effectiveness.
- + **Situation.** You cannot set valid objectives without understanding the situation. (a) discuss it with the client program to accomplish, (b) do your own research from the perspective of the client's business plan.
 - + **Objectives.** Once you understand the situation, you can determine if your stated objectives are realistic. To determine if your stated objectives are realistic, you can ask: (a) How will success be measured in terms meaningful to the client? (b) How will success be measured in terms meaningful to the client? (c) How will success be measured in terms meaningful to the client?
 - + **Audience.** Identify, as precisely as possible, the audience to which your communications are directed. Is this the right audience? If there are several groups, prioritize them for your particular objectives.
 - + **Strategies.** The strategy describes how, in concrete terms, you will achieve your objectives. It is a plan of action that provides guidelines for the activity you will employ. There are usually or always several strategies. Strategies may be broad or narrow, depending on the audience.
 - + **Tactics.** This is the body of the plan, which describes the specific activities proposed to achieve each objective. Tactics should be related to the unifying theme of the plan, but relate each to the unifying theme. Tactics may include news releases, brochures, radio spots, and other media.
 - + **Calendar.** It is important to have a timetable, starting with the beginning of each project within the calendar makes sure that you begin projects—such as news releases, or special events—early enough that they can be completed in time.
 - + **Budget.** How much will implementation of the plan cost? Make sure that you include the cost of all activities. Make sure that you include the cost of all activities. In addition, about 10 percent of the budget should be set aside for contingencies.
 - + **Evaluation.** Before you begin, you and the client or employer should agree on how you will evaluate your success in achieving your objectives. (a) realistic, (b) credible, (c) specific, and (d) appropriate.

Tips for Success Components of a Public Relations Plan

A basic public relations plan is a blueprint of what you want to do and how you will accomplish your task. Such a plan, be it a brief outline or a comprehensive document, will enable you and your client or employer to make sure that all elements have been properly considered, evaluated, and coordinated for maximum effectiveness:

Situation. You cannot set valid objectives without understanding the problem. To understand the situation, (a) discuss it with the client to find out what he or she expects the program to accomplish, (b) do your own research, and (c) evaluate your ideas in the broader perspective of the client's business plan.

Objectives. Once you understand the situation, it should be easy to define the objectives. To determine if your stated objectives are the right ones, ask yourself: (a) Do they really solve or help to solve the problem? (b) Are they realistic and achievable? (c) Can success be measured in terms meaningful to the client?

Audience. Identify, as precisely as possible, the group of people to whom you are going to direct your communications. Is this the right group to approach in order to solve the problem? If there are several groups, prioritize them according to which are most important for your particular objectives.

Strategies. The strategy describes how, in concept, the objective is to be achieved. Strategy is a plan of action that provides guidelines for selecting the communications activity you will employ. There are usually one or more strategies for each target audience. Strategies may be broad or narrow, depending on the objective and the audience.

Tactics. This is the body of the plan, which describes, in sequence, the specific communications activities proposed to achieve each objective. Discuss each activity as a separate thought, but relate each to the unifying strategy and theme. In selecting communication tools—news releases, brochures, radio announcements, and so on—ask yourself if the use of each will really reach your priority audiences and help you accomplish your stated objectives.

Calendar. It is important to have a timetable, usually outlined in chart form, that shows the start and completion of each project within the framework of the total program. A calendar makes sure that you begin projects—such as brochures, story placements, newsletters, or special events—early enough that they are ready when they are needed.

Budget. How much will implementation of the plan cost? Outline, in sequence, the exact costs of all activities. Make sure that you include such things as postage, car mileage, and staffing. In addition, about 10 percent of the total budget should be allocated to contingencies.

Evaluation. Before you begin, you and the client or management must agree on the criteria you will use to evaluate your success in achieving the objective. Evaluation criteria should be (a) realistic, (b) credible, (c) specific, and (d) appropriate to the client's expectations.

A need often is a remedial situation. For example:

- » BP, after the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, had to restore public confidence about its commitment to clean up the spill and be socially responsible.
- » Wal-Mart, under attack from labor unions about employee benefits and community groups that didn't like "big box" stores, was forced to change policies and begin new "green" initiatives to improve its corporate image and reputation.
- » Domino's Pizza had to regain the confidence of its customers after two employees in North Carolina, as a prank, posted a YouTube video showing them making a pizza with unsanitary ingredients.

Most public relations situations, however, are not problems that must be solved in a hurry. Instead, they are opportunities for an organization to increase public awareness, advance its reputation, or attract new customers or clients. Here are some examples:

- » Murphy-Goode winery conducted a social media campaign to attract young adults to its brand by sponsoring an online contest to hire a social media expert. See the PR Casebook on page 477.
- » Friskies PetCare Company increased brand awareness by sponsoring a national canine Frisbee competition.
- » The New York State Canal System launched a campaign to make citizens more aware of the historic canal system as a first-class tourist destination.
- » McCormick & Company launched a multiple social media initiative to increase use of its various spices and rubs during the summer grilling season.

Objectives

Neither employers nor clients are likely to approve a campaign without clear objectives. Many campaigns will have two or three objectives, but others might have just one objective. The key, however, is to thoroughly understand what you are trying to accomplish. See the Tips for Success on page 480 on how public relations campaigns often assist an organization's marketing efforts.

It's also important that you don't confuse objectives with the "means" rather than the "end." Novices, for example, often set an objective such as "Generate publicity for the new product." Publicity, however, is not an end in itself. The real objective is to create awareness among consumers about the availability of the new product and to motivate them to purchase it.

There are basically two kinds of objectives: informational and motivational.

Informational Objectives — A large percentage of public relations plans are designed primarily to increase awareness of an issue, an event, or a product. Here are some informational objectives:

- » To inform people about the nutritional benefits of eating strawberries
- » To tell people that cigarette smoking is a major cause of cancer
- » To generate awareness about a new computer tablet on the market
- » To inform the public that water conservation is needed

PR casebook

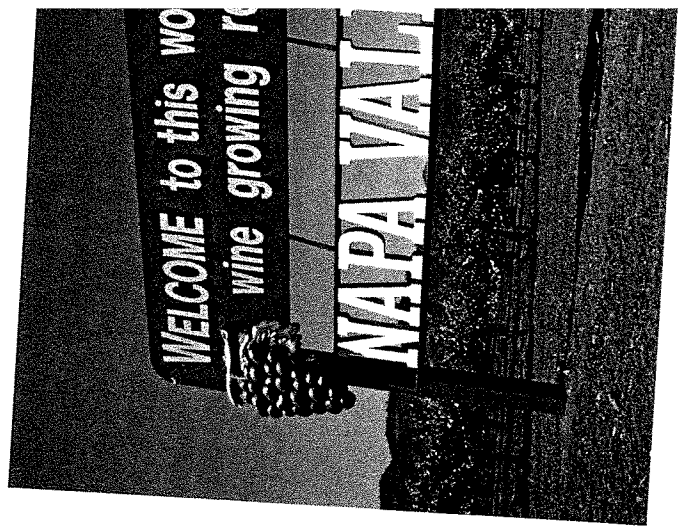
Winery Creates a "Goode" Job Throu
A public relations plan contains eight bas that Murphy-Goode winery implemented wine consumers. The innovative campaig

Situation

The winery, noting the social media phen its brand by creating a social media-basec would receive \$10,000 a month, be elegant Country Lifestyle" of the Napa Valley in C: Job") coincided with a time when jobs wei social media savvy.

Objectives

- » Increase brand awareness and exceed
- » Move from 1 million media impressions pressions as a result of the campaign.
- » Increase traffic to website.



PR casebook

Winery Creates a "Goode" Job through Social Media

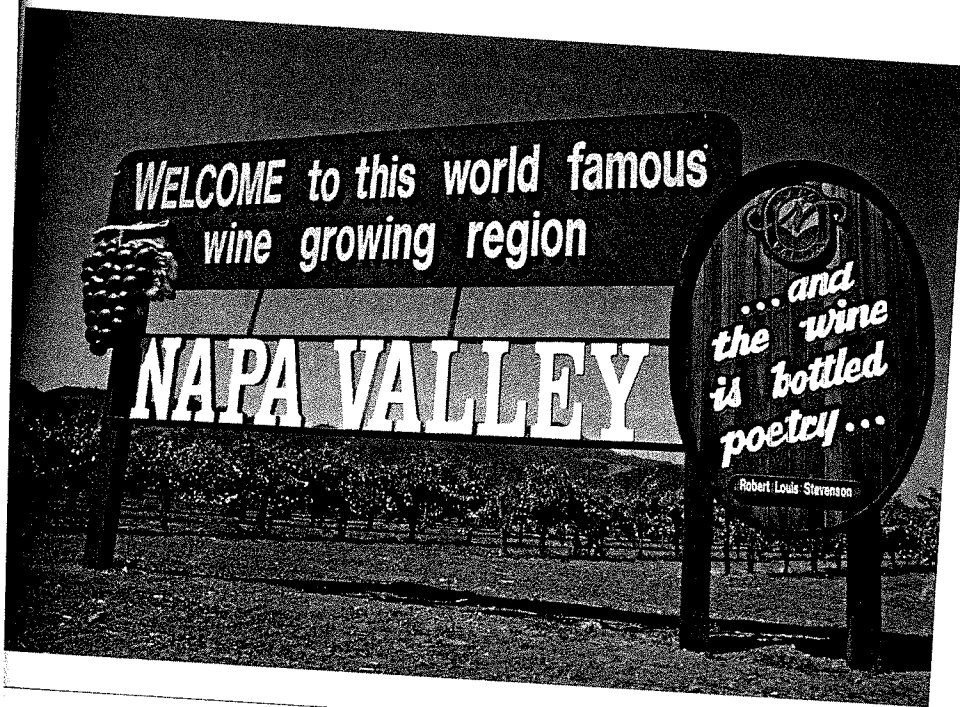
A public relations plan contains eight basic elements. The following is an outline of a plan that Murphy-Goode winery implemented using social media to reach millennial (aged 21-31) wine consumers. The innovative campaign received a Silver Anvil award from PRSA.

Situation

The winery, noting the social media phenomenon, decided that it could expand awareness of its brand by creating a social media-based campaign employing a social media expert who would receive \$10,000 a month, be elegantly housed, and be charged with living "the Wine Country Lifestyle" of the Napa Valley in California. The idea of a dream job ("A Really Goode Job") coincided with a time when jobs were hard to find among young people, who were also social media savvy.

Objectives

- » Increase brand awareness and exceed media coverage of competitive brands.
- » Move from 1 million media impressions in the previous year to at least 300 million impressions as a result of the campaign.
- » Increase traffic to website.



- » Increase email database.
- Increase distribution.

- Create dialogue with millennial generation social media users

- Establish image as young, hip brand and social media leader in the wine industry

Research

Market research indicated that almost 50 percent of millennials said they are drinking more wine and that wine education was important. The Internet was a key communications tool for them, but they didn't want traditional sales messages. Instead, they preferred to get their information from peers. It was determined, however, that peer messages were highly influenced by traditional media, which were then spread into the digital community through websites, emails, Facebook, YouTube, and blogs.

Target Audience

Millennials were the target audience because it was a demographic that could replace aging consumer bases. In addition, the nature of a highly unusual dream job involving wine and the social media would be attractive to them—a group that highly valued technology, unconventional careers, and Internet-based brand recommendations. The possibility of a great job, in an age of economic recession, would create an irresistible opportunity.

Strategy

The strategy was to conduct an online contest in which individuals would apply for the "Goode Job" through submitting applications via YouTube or the winery's website. After the application deadline, the campaign would count down to the final 50 candidates, the top 10, and then the winning candidate for the job. This strategy would garner myriad brand ads at no cost and dramatically increase traffic and direct sales opportunities. An online poll about favorite applicants encouraged consumer participation and interest while adding to the winery's email database.

Tactics

The winery created a webpage that could take applications and display applicant videos in large numbers.

The "Really Goode Job" page was linked to the winery's regular website. The site explained the job, the winery, the brand personality, wines, and the application process. It also directed visitors to wine sales pages, posted news releases, and provided contact information.

The launch event was in San Francisco. Applicants were encouraged to attend so they could meet the winemaker and learn more about the job. Pre-event news releases and media advisories were distributed, along with Internet flash mob notices. Over 200 people waited in line, which created great visuals for television stations. Coverage in the mainstream media spread virally to all social media.

Calendar

The program was a 3-month activity, from April through July.

Budget

\$200,000 for staffing and collateral materials

Evaluation

All objectives were met or exceeded:

- » Media coverage was triple what was planned
- » Major media coverage included CNN, *Los Angeles Times*, *Associated Press*
- » About 2,000 people applied for "A Really Goode Job" on YouTube.
- » There was a fourfold increase in the number of applications
- » Traffic to the Murphy-Goode website over 433,000.
- » Product orders increased 60 percent.
- » Media coverage exceeded coverage of other wineries
- » The winery established itself as a social media leader

Although informational objectives are less measurable, the public relations firm and department, it is ext "awareness" was attained unless before-and-after survey and time consuming. In addition, awareness may become aware of your new product, but they will buy it.

Motivational Objectives — Motivational objectives are more difficult to achieve. However, they are easier to change attitudes and opinions with the idea of a reward. Some motivational objectives might be:

- » To increase the consumption of "healthy" food
- » To reduce cigarette smoking
- » To increase the sales of the new tablet computer
- » To reduce the amount of water used in a household

Notice that motivational objectives are more measurable than informational objectives. The effectiveness of the public relations plan is based on increasing sales or changing public support for social media.

By contrast, informational objectives measure the informational objective of making people aware of cancer. This might be achieved, but not necessarily.

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100,000 for staffing and collateral materials

valuation

Objectives were met or exceeded:

- Media coverage was triple what was expected.
- Major media coverage included CNN, Fox News, the *Today Show*, MSNBC, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, Associated Press (AP), and Reuters news service.
- About 2,000 people applied for "A Really Goode Job." About half posted video applications on YouTube.
- There was a fourfold increase in the winery's email database.
- Traffic to the Murphy-Goode website increased from several hundred hits a month to over 433,000.
- Product orders increased 60 percent.
- Media coverage exceeded coverage of all competing brands for the year.
- The winery established itself as a social media leader in the wine industry.

Although informational objectives are legitimate and are used by virtually every public relations firm and department, it is extremely difficult to measure how much "awareness" was attained unless before-and-after surveys are done; these are expensive and time consuming. In addition, awareness doesn't equal action. Consumers may become aware of your new product, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they will purchase it.

Behavioral Objectives — Motivational objectives are more ambitious, and also more difficult to achieve. However, they are easier to measure. Basically, you want to change attitudes and opinions with the idea of modifying behavior. Examples of motivational objectives might be:

- Increase the consumption of "healthy" foods, such as strawberries
- Reduce cigarette smoking
- Increase the sales of the new tablet computer
- Reduce the amount of water used in a household

Behavioral objectives are more "bottom-line oriented." The effectiveness of the public relations plan is based on making something happen, whether it is increasing sales or changing public support for some issue. In contrast, informational objectives merely inform or educate people. Take the motivational objective of making people aware of cigarette smoking as a major example. This might be achieved, but people who are "informed" and "aware"

often continue to smoke. A better gauge of the American Cancer Society's success in its efforts would be an actual increase in the number of people who have stopped smoking or a decline in cigarette sales.

In setting objectives, you must be sure that they are realistic and achievable. Furthermore, they must be within the power of the campaign alone to attain. Sometimes the unwary set objectives such as "to increase sales," without realizing that sales may be affected by such things as product quality, packaging, pricing, merchandising, advertising, sales promotion, display, and competitive activity.

In establishing objectives, you must state exactly what you want the audience to know (a new product is now on the market), to believe (it will cut utility bills), and to do (ask for a demonstration). Objectives must be measurable. At some point the people who pay for the campaign are likely to ask, "What did you accomplish?" Many practitioners rely on general feedback—random comments and isolated examples that indicate public reaction. True professionals give facts and figures.

Evaluation is covered in detail in Chapter 19; at this point, however, you must start thinking about setting objectives that can be measured with figures. In an

Tips for Success

How Public Relations Helps Fulfill Marketing Objectives

A public relations program, particularly product publicity, can make a substantial contribution to fulfilling an organization's marketing plan:

- + It can develop new prospects for new markets, such as inquiries from people who saw or heard a product release in the news media.
- + It can provide third-party endorsements—via newspapers, magazines, radio, and television—through news releases about a company's products or services, community involvement, inventions, and new plans.
- + It can generate sales leads, usually through articles in the trade press about new products and services.
- + It can pave the way for sales calls.
- + It can stretch the organization's advertising dollars through timely and supportive releases about it and its products.
- + It can provide inexpensive sales literature for the company, because articles about it and its products can be reprinted for prospective clients.
- + It can establish the organization as an authoritative source of information on a given subject.
- + It can help sell minor products. Some products are too specialized for large advertising expenditures, so exposure to the market is more cost-effective if product publicity is utilized.

informational campaign, it is easy to state a number of people who believe that carpooling is a national objective in this situation could be used for carpooling." However, it would be far better to pool by 50 percent."

As you think about these numerical goals, be a base point for such measurements. To be convinced by your campaign, you must consult attitudes toward carpooling and then do add if there has been any change.

Audience

Public relations programs should be directed to the public. If you define the audience as the "homework."

In most cases, you are looking for specific primary audience for the message is parents of pregnant women. This knowledge of strategies and tactics that would primarily increase the use of carpooling is another primary audience for the message more precisely to secondary audience for the message on carpooling example, sponsored a program encouraging the summer months to raise money for charity activities of their children and were more inclined to activities.

Another common mistake is defining the primary audience for the message as channels to reach the public, or motivate. On occasion, in programs "public" or audience.

Gaining a thorough understanding of your audience which are directly related to accomplishing your objectives can formulate successful strategies and tactics.

Strategy

Strategy is the broad concept on which the campaign is based. It is the key to the campaign, what the primary audiences perceive as relevant and important.

The vaccination program for children, for example, is a program that parents love their children and want them to be healthy.

ormational campaign, it is easy to state an objective such as: "To increase the number of people who believe that carpooling is a good way to save energy." A motivational objective in this situation could be "To increase the number of people who carpooling." However, it would be far better to put it this way: "To increase carpooling by 50 percent."

As you think about these numerical goals, you should realize that there must be a base point for such measurements. To know how many people have been convinced by your campaign, you must consult public opinion surveys about public attitudes toward carpooling and then do additional surveys after the campaign to see if there has been any change.

ience

ic relations programs should be directed toward specific and defined audiences. Public relations. If you define the audience as the "general public," you are not doing your work.

In most cases, you are looking for specific audiences within a "general public." For example, the Ohio vaccination program for children under the age of 2. The primary audience for the message is parents with young children. A secondary audience is pregnant women. This knowledge should provide guidance on the selection of strategies and tactics that would primarily reach these defined audiences.

Increasing the use of carpooling is another example of an objective for which you can define the audience more precisely than saying "the general public." The primary audience for the message on carpooling is people who drive to work. A secondary audience might be parents who drive their children to school. Sunkist, for example, sponsored a program encouraging kids to have a lemonade stand during the summer months to raise money for charity. Its primary audience for the campaign was women aged 25 to 35 with families because they usually supervised the activities of their children and were more inclined than men to support community activities.

Another common mistake is defining the mass media as an audience. In 9 out of 10 cases, media serve as channels to reach the audiences that you want to inform, persuade, or motivate. On occasion, in programs that seek to change how mass media reports an organization or an issue, editors and reporters can become a primary audience.

Gaining a thorough understanding of your primary and secondary audiences, and how they are directly related to accomplishing your objectives, is the only way that you can formulate successful strategies and tactics.

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Strategy is the broad concept on which the campaign will be based. Strategy must be formulated directly to the objective, and it must be formed with a thorough knowledge of how the primary audiences perceive as relevant and in their self-interest. The Ohio vaccination program for children, for example, was based on the idea that parents love their children and want them to be healthy. Thus, the strategy was to

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tell parents how important vaccinations are in keeping their children out of danger. In fact, the theme of the campaign became "Project L.O.V.E." with the subhead "Love Our Kids Vaccination Project."

The program to increase carpooling was based on research showing that commuters were interested in saving time and money. Thus, the strategy was to show how people using designated carpool lanes could cut the time of their commute. A second strategy was to show how much money a carpooler would save annually in gasoline, insurance, and maintenance costs.

☛ **A PR campaign or program is a series of coordinated, unified activities and messages, driven by a single strategy, delivered to relevant publics by a variety of means.** ☛

Doug Newsom and Jim Haynes, authors of *Public Relations Writing*

ries in local media about kids setting up lemonade stands in the community to raise money for charity.

These examples illustrate two basic concepts about strategy. First, the strategy must reflect the audience's self-interests. Second, the strategy must be expressed in simple terms as a *key selling proposition*. It must be reiterated throughout the campaign in various ways, but the concept should remain clear and simple. Every campaign has one to three key messages, which are expressed in every activity—whether it's a news release, a feature article, a media interview, or a promotional event.

Indeed, one of the criteria for an effective public relations program is whether the audience was exposed to your key copy points and absorbed them. One way of determining this is a content analysis of media mentions, which will be discussed under evaluation and in the next chapter.

Tactics

This is the "how to do it" portion of the plan. In public relations, it often is called the "execution" part of the plan. Tactics are the actual materials that are produced in a public relations campaign by one or several public relations writers.

The children's vaccination project, for example, used a variety of tactics, including:

- » Posters in child-care centers and doctors' offices
- » PSAs on radio stations that had audiences of childbearing age
- » Articles in newspapers and magazines catering to parents
- » Pamphlets sent to child-care service providers
- » Booklets mailed to every new mother explaining vaccination and the schedule of shots
- » Letters to doctors reminding them to ask about vaccinations when a child has a checkup
- » Corporate and hospital sponsorship of two-week-long "Shots for Tots" promotional events
- » Endorsements by government leaders and child-care experts

- » Information advertisements in community newspapers
- » Stories about the L.O.V.E. Project on television

The campaign on carpooling also used a variety of tactics. One tactic was to enlist the support of drive-time DJs on popular radio stations, who promoted carpooling as part of their early-morning and late-afternoon banter between songs. Billboards along major highways were also used. There was also a concentrated effort to distribute posters and pamphlets that businesses could post and distribute to employees. Editors of employee newsletters and magazines were going for possible stories. Another successful tactic was to enlist the support of public relations players telling them how to organize carpooling.

The Sunkist campaign used the following with Billy Dean, (2) heartwarming feature stands raising money for charity, (3) distribution of camera-ready features about a lemonade stand, (5) an appearance by world series for a barbecue and concert, at chain Harris Teeter to do a promotion about 1

Calendar

Three aspects of timing must be considered: (1) the sequence of activities, and (2) the sequence of activities, and (3) the sequence of activities.

A campaign must be timely; it must be the most to the intended audience. Some useful information on strawberries in May and June is available in the *Strawberry Grower's Guide*, published by the University of California, Davis, in February and March, just before the April 15th deadline.

At times, the environmental context is important. For example, an agency report that traffic congestion has reached a peak in Los Angeles might be more successful if it follows a price increase for gasoline. A campaign to provide for the homeless is more successful if it follows a major disaster. Other kinds of campaigns are less dependent on the environmental context.

The L.O.V.E. vaccination program, a Red Cross campaign, is a good example of a campaign that is more successful if it follows a price increase for gasoline. A campaign to provide for the homeless is more successful if it follows a major disaster. Other kinds of campaigns are less dependent on the environmental context.

The second aspect of timing is the schedule of activities. A typical pattern is to have a concentrated effort on a number of activities are implemented.

Information advertisements in community newspapers

Stories about the L.O.V.E. Project on television and in the city's daily newspaper

The campaign on carpooling also used a variety of tactics. One tactic was to enlist the support of drive-time DJs at popular radio stations, who promoted carpooling as part of their early-morning and late-afternoon banter between programs. Billboards along major highways were also used. There was also a concerted effort to distribute posters and pamphlets that businesses could post to distribute to employees. Editors of

“Today, our clients clamor for a blog, a Facebook page, a YouTube channel, or a Twitter handle, convinced that they hold the solution to their problem. Yet the faulty logic still holds true. An individual tactic—no matter how popular—cannot substitute for a solid PR strategy.”

Holly Potter, vice president of public relations for Kaiser Permanente

Employee newsletters and magazines were given background information on carpooling for possible stories. Another successful tactic was the compilation of a kit for employers telling them how to organize carpools for their employees.

The Sunkist campaign used the following tactics: (1) kick-off concert in Nashville with Billy Dean, (2) heartwarming feature stories about kids and their lemonade stands raising money for charity, (3) distribution of a media kit to food editors, (4) distribution of camera-ready features about the program and tips on how kids can set up a lemonade stand, (5) an appearance by Billy Dean at the Little League Baseball series for a barbecue and concert, and (6) a partnership with supermarket Harris Teeter to do a promotion about the program in all 400 of its stores.

Standard

Aspects of timing must be considered: (1) when the campaign is to be conducted, (2) the sequence of activities, and (3) the reach and frequency of the message. A campaign must be timely; it must be conducted when the key messages mean the most to the intended audience. Some subjects are seasonal; hence publicists refer to information on strawberries in May and June, when a crop comes to market. A program on doing your own taxes attracts the most audience interest in February and March, just before the April 15th deadline.

At times, the environmental context is important. A campaign on carpooling will be more successful if it follows a price increase in gasoline or a government report that traffic congestion has reached gridlock proportions. A charitable campaign to provide for the homeless is more effective if the local newspaper has just published a five-part series on the human dimensions of the problem.

Other kinds of campaigns are less dependent on seasonal or environmental context. The L.O.V.E. vaccination program, a Red Cross drive for blood donations, and even the launch of a new e-reader could be done almost any time during the year. The pre-Christmas season, however, is a favorite time for companies to introduce new products.

The second aspect of timing is the scheduling of activities during a campaign. A common pattern is to have a concentrated effort at the beginning of a campaign. A number of activities are implemented. This is the launch phase of an idea.

or concept and, much like a rocket, takes a concentration of power just to break the awareness barrier. After the campaign has achieved orbit, however, it takes less energy, and fewer activities are needed to maintain momentum.

You must also think about advance planning. Monthly publications, for example, often need information at least 6 to 8 weeks before an issue. If you want something in the August issue, you have to think about placing it in May or June. A popular talk show may work on a schedule that books guests 3 or 4 months in advance. The main idea is that you must constantly think ahead to make things happen in the appropriate sequence.

A brochure may be needed on March 29, but you must start the brochure long before that date. To determine the starting date, you must know every step in the production process and how long it will take.

This activity, as well as the scheduling of other public relations tactics, should not be trusted to your memory or to jottings on your desk calendar. It is important that the entire public relations team working on the program has a single source of information, such as a wiki, for the schedule of the entire campaign.

The easiest way to keep everything on schedule is to prepare a working calendar for detailed planning and internal use. The brochure example, cited earlier, might look like this:

Activity	Date Due	Responsibility
Outline brochure	January 11	J. Ross, G. Jones
Write copy	January 18	J. Ross
Photos and artwork	January 25	A. Peck and N. Lopez
Design and layout	February 8	A. Peck and N. Lopez
Final client approval	February 15	B. Boss
Printer prep and proofs	February 28	Ace Printers. G. Jones, supervising
Printing and binding	March 10	Ace Printers. G. Jones, supervising
Delivery	March 15	United Parcel Service. G. Jones, supervising

Other entries planned using this kind of format might be preparing news releases, drafting speeches, writing pitch letters, scheduling spokespeople on radio talk shows, arranging media tours, and commissioning a camera-ready feature article. You can also map activities by listing the activities at the left of a chart, with days or weeks across the top. Lines or bars show graphically when various steps are being worked on. This is often called a *Gantt chart*; an example is shown in Figure 18.3.

The main idea is that you should have a systematic means of tracking activities throughout the public relations program so everything stays on schedule. If a brochure or a media kit is delayed, it can delay other activities, such as a media tour or

IIT PR Timeline



Sept. Oct.]

Positioning
 VC Launch
 Editorial Calendars
 Tech./App. Articles
 Press Release Program
 Trade Show Support
 Guest Editorials
 Mini-seminars
 Executive Round Table
 Primer Brochure
 Ongoing Services

FIGURE 18.3 Planning requires precision scheduling the various activities and tactics in a public relations program. News releases, are ongoing; others are phased in

a news conference, that are dependent on activities in a public relations program are interrelated. The third element of calendaring is a timeline that reaches every possible audience and the message number of different people exposed to a single and pattern of messages presented to a participant. In a Gantt chart, for example, multiple news messages perhaps different angles, will be done through

Budget

A budget can be divided into two categories: staff expenses. Staff and administrative time usually totals 70 percent or more will go to salaries and administrative expenses. In a \$100,000 campaign done by a public relations firm has different hours involved. The head of the agency, who would cost \$200 per hour. The account supervisor might bill

IIT PR Timeline

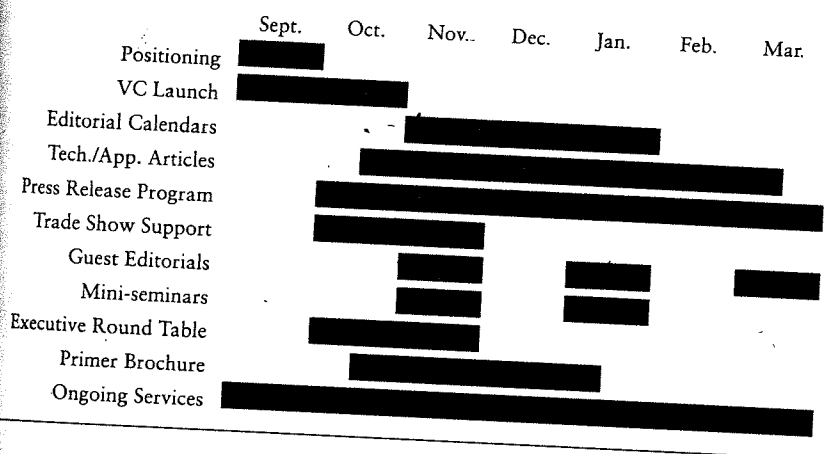


FIGURE 18.3 Planning requires precision scheduling. This is a simplified Gantt chart showing the various activities and tactics in a public relations program. Some tactics, such as news releases, are ongoing; others are phased in during the campaign.

news conference, that are dependent on having the materials available. All activities in a public relations program are interrelated for maximum effectiveness. The third element of calendaring is a timeline that ensures that the message reaches every possible audience and the message is repeated frequently. *Reach* is the number of different people exposed to a single message. *Frequency* is the number of messages presented to a particular public in a given amount of time. A Gantt chart, for example, multiple news releases about the same subject, but from different angles, will be done throughout the campaign.

Budget

A budget can be divided into two categories: staff time and out-of-pocket (OOP) expenses. Staff and administrative time usually takes the lion's share of any public relations budget. In a \$100,000 campaign done by a public relations firm, for example, 60 percent or more will go to salaries and administrative fees. A public relations firm has different hourly rates for the level of personnel involved. The head of the agency, who would oversee the account, might bill at \$200 per hour. The account supervisor might bill at \$120 per hour, and the account

executive at \$100 per hour. Account coordinators, those who do a lot of the clerical work, might bill at \$55 per hour.

A public relations firm, when submitting a plan, has usually constructed a budget based on the number of estimated staff hours it will take to implement a plan. The other part of the budget is out-of-pocket expenses, which includes payments to various vendors for such things as printing, postage, graphics, video production, travel, phone, fax, photocopying, and so on.

You can do a reasonable job of estimating out-of-pocket expenses by making a few phone calls. You would call a printer, for example, to get an estimate of how much 10,000 copies of a pamphlet would cost. If you are doing a media tour, you would decide what cities would be visited and then find out the cost of airline fares, hotels, meals, and ground transportation costs. The Internal Revenue Service even has a guide to daily living expenses in major cities around the world.

One method of doing a budget is to use two columns. The left column, for example, will give the staff cost for writing a pamphlet or compiling a media kit. The right column will give the actual OOP costs for having the pamphlet or the media kit designed, printed, and delivered. Internal public relations departments, where the staff is already on the payroll, often compile only the OOP expenses.

Budgets should also have a line item for contingencies—that is, unexpected expenses. In general, allow about 10 percent of the budget for contingencies.

Evaluation

Evaluation refers directly back to your stated objectives: It is the process by which you determine whether you have met your objectives.

If you have an informational objective, such as increasing awareness, a common procedure is to show placements in key publications and broadcast stations that reached the intended audience. Related to this is a content analysis of whether the news coverage included your key messages. A more scientific approach is to do a benchmark study of audience knowledge and perceptions before and after the campaign. In many cases, "before" activity has already been documented through marketing studies, so all you have to do is a post-campaign survey.

Motivational objectives, such as increased market share or sales, are much easier to determine. The Ohio campaign had the objective of increasing vaccinations—and it succeeded by raising the vaccination rate by 117 percent in public clinics over a 2-year period. A campaign by Ketchum on behalf of prune producers caused a 4 percent increase in sales after several years of decline.

Increased sales, however, may be the result of other factors, such as the economy, the additional use of advertising, or a reduction in prices. Because of this, it is often wise to limit your objectives to something that can be related directly to your activities. For example, you might get feature placements in various magazines that also give a website for more information. Success could then be declared when there have been 50,000 visitors to the site.

Chapter 19 expands on methods of evaluation in public relations.

Submitting a Plan for Approval

The eight elements of a plan, which have just been written and submitted to management or a client, are covered in Chapter 14, but here's the general checklist:

- » Title page (date, program name, client or agency name)
- » Executive summary (overview of the plan)
- » Table of contents (name and page number)
- » Statement of principles (the planner's approach to the campaign)
- » Capabilities of the team or public relations firm
- » The eight sections of the program plan, from introduction to conclusion
- » Conclusion (summary of why this is the best plan)

Before you submit your written plan to a client, you should review it with a critical eye. You might even ask for a pre-submission review. Here are some questions to ask:

- » Is the situation clearly stated?
- » Is the audience the right one? Is it clearly defined?
- » Are the objectives attainable and measurable?
- » Is the strategy logical and effective?
- » Is the message persuasive and memorable?
- » Are the tactics sound and effective?
- » Is the timing right?
- » Are the costs reasonable and justified?
- » Will the proposed evaluation really measure what you want to know?
- » Is the plan practical and appropriate?
- » Is the plan logical, strong, and clearly written?
- » Should any additions or deletions be made?

In addition to these suggestions, the Tips section at the end of the chapter provides a thumbnail of what makes a winning campaign.

Your responsibility is to make the proposed plan based on your professional expertise. You should be a work in progress, and your client or manager may not think a particular idea is very good, or that it is eliminating a component.

In many cases, such feedback from the client improves the plan. At other times, if you think the plan is effective, you should let your client know. The effectiveness of the plan, you have to measure in a practical manner and persuade them that your initial

Submitting a Plan for Approval

Eight elements of a plan, which have just been discussed, become the sections in a written plan submitted to management or a client for approval. How to write proposals covered in Chapter 14, but here's the general organization of a public relations plan:

Title page (date, program name, client or organization, and team members)

Executive summary (overview of the plan)

Table of contents (name and page number of each section)

Statement of principles (the planner's approach to the situation, i.e., integrated with marketing, alignment of campaign with overall organizational goals, etc.)

Capabilities of the team or public relations firm submitting the plan

The eight sections of the program plan, from situation to evaluation

Conclusion (summary of why this is the best plan and request for approval)

Before you submit your written plan to a client or management for final approval, you review it with a critical eye. You might even ask some knowledgeable person whose opinion you respect to read the plan and then discuss it with you. Check these points:

Is the situation clearly stated?

Is the audience the right one? Is it clearly defined?

Are the objectives attainable and measurable?

Is the strategy logical and effective?

Is the message persuasive and memorable?

Are the tactics sound and effective?

Is the timing right?

Are the costs reasonable and justified?

Will the proposed evaluation really measure the results?

Is the plan practical and appropriate?

Is the plan logical, strong, and clearly written?

Should any additions or deletions be made?

In addition to these suggestions, the Tips for Success on page 488 provides a list of what makes a winning campaign.

Your responsibility is to make the proposed plan as sound as you can make it, using your professional expertise. You should remember, however, that any plan is in progress, and your client or management may suggest changes. They may think a particular idea is very good, or they may decide to reduce the cost by deleting a component.

In many cases, such feedback from the client or management sharpens and improves the plan. At other times, if you think the proposed changes would seriously reduce the effectiveness of the plan, you have to express your rationale in a diplomatic and persuasive manner and persuade them that your initial idea is the better one.