Program planning, the second step in the public relations RACE process, is called “Action” because the organization starts making plans to do something about an issue or situation.
The RACE is On…
Research…ACTION…Communication…Evaluation

This chapter examines:

- The Value of Planning
- Different Approaches and Models to PR Planning
- The Eight Elements of a Program Plan:
  - Situation
  - Objectives
  - Audience
  - Strategy
  - Tactics
  - Calendar/Timetable
  - Budget
  - Evaluation
Program Planning Involves…

Giving considerable thought--before any PR activity can be implemented--to what should be done and in what sequence to accomplish an organization’s objectives.

Strategic planning– meaning “deciding where you want to be in the future (the goal) and how to get there (the strategies)”
Specifically...

PR Program Planning can involve the coordination of multiple methods: social media, news releases, special events, web pages, press kits, news conferences, media interviews, brochures, newsletters, speeches, advocacy ads, etc. to try to achieve specific results.

Such systematic planning prevents haphazard, ineffective communication.

Having a blueprint of what is to be done and how it will be executed makes programs more effective and PR more valuable to the organization.
Planning Your Plan!

A PR program plan identifies what is to be done, why, and how to accomplish it.

By preparing such a plan, either as a brief outline or an as extensive document, the practitioner can make certain all the elements have been properly considered and that everyone involved understands the “big picture.”

Often this plan goes to the client for approval and possible modification before it is started.
Eight Elements of a Program

Plan

- Situation
- Objectives
- Audience
- Strategy
- Tactics

Calendar/

Timetable

Budget

Evaluation
1. Situation

A clear understanding is needed of the situation that led to the conclusion that a public relations program was needed:

- Is there a problem or negative situation that needs to be overcome? Ex: Market share/sales are down (Butterfinger’s “The Finger” campaign p. 149)

- Is there a need to reinforce an ongoing effort to preserve an organization’s reputation and public support? Ex: Denny’s and Clorox

- Is this a one-time project? Ex: New library opening
2. Objectives

- What is the desired outcome?
- Does it really address the situation?
- Is it realistic and achievable?
- Can success be measured in meaningful terms?

Types of Objectives:

- Informational: Increase public awareness; deliver key messages (Examples: p. 152)
- Motivational: More bottom-line oriented with goals to increase/expand sales, attendance, donations, media placements (Examples: p. 152-3)
3. Audience

PR programs should be directed toward specific and defined audiences or publics.

Use market research to identify key publics by such demographics as age, income, where people live, social strata, education, consumption of specific products.

Audience Examples p. 153
4. Strategy

How, in concept, is an objective going to be achieved?

Key themes and messages should be stated that will be reiterated throughout the campaign on all publicity materials.

Plan should contain a listing of key messages that the campaign wants to get across to the target audiences and the media.

See examples p. 154
5. Tactics

These are the “nuts and bolts” of the plan that describe, in sequence, the specific activities that put the strategies into operation and help achieve the stated objectives.

Strategy establishes why something is being done and why it will work for the campaign’s purposes.

It’s the tactics that get the job done.

Tactics involve using the tools of communication to reach primary and secondary audiences with key messages.

Nestle’s April Fool’s prank (p. 156)
6. Calendar/Timetable

- Deciding when a campaign should be conducted
- Determining the proper sequence of activities
- Compiling a list of steps that must be completed to produce a finished product

See Gantt Chart p. 158
No program plan is complete without a budget.

An obvious question amid all of the objective, strategy and tactic-setting is: “How much will all of this cost?”

Organizations establish an amount they can afford and then ask the PR staff or outside agency to write a program plan that reflects that amount.
8. Evaluation

Previously stated objectives must be measurable in some way to show clients and employers that the program accomplished its purpose.

Types of evaluation can be: compilation of news clips, broadcast air time, brochure distribution, readership and/or viewership figures, sales, market share.

CofC’s recent Bully Pulpit series- the College was exposed to 108 million TV viewers and had an advertising equivalency value of $21 million.

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