THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
CHAPTER 2’S KEY CONCEPTS

- Understand the evolution of public relations from ancient empires to today’s practice
- Know how PR tactics contributed to American independence, the settlement of the West, and social causes such as voting rights for women
- Appreciate the roles of Americans influential in the development of PR such as Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays, P.T. Barnum, and others
- Have insight into the reasons for the mass influx of women into the field
- Be aware of current developments and trends in the field
While a 20th century development in terms of a profession, techniques used to persuade people to accept the authority of the government and religion have been used throughout time.

As far back as the Roman period, Julius Caesar ordered the posting of a news sheet outside the Forum to inform citizens of the actions of Roman legislators.

Techniques (still in use today) such as: interpersonal communication, speeches, art, symbols, slogans, literature, staged events, and publicity.

Not called public relations at the time but their purpose and effect were the same as today: influence, persuade, accept

The 1800s have been called The Golden Age of Press Agerncy
Phineas T. Barnum—the great American showman of the 19th century was the master of the pseudoevent. Best remembered for his Barnum & Bailey three ring circuses.

- Barnum used two feet, 15 pound Tom Thumb to promote
- Hyping: the shrewd use of the media and other devices to promote an individual, product/service, cause, event
- Press agent: is at the center of hyping and is defined as “a person whose work is to get publicity for an individual, organization, etc.”
- Pseudoevent: a planned happening that occurs primarily for the purpose of being reported.
- Some of the more flamboyant and fun aspects of PR today trace their roots to the development of press agentry
1900-1950: THE AGE OF PR PIONEERS

- Ivy Lee: the first public relations counselor.
- Lee was a former business reporter at the New York World.
- Emergence of modern PR began in 1906 when Lee was hired by the coal industry, then embroiled in a strike. Miners’ leaders were talking to reporters, providing facts and figures, but coal owners leader had refused to talk to the press. Lee persuaded leaders to change their attitude.
- Lee issued a “Declaration of Principles” which signaled the end of the “public-be damned” attitude of business and the beginning of the “public-be-informed” era.
- In 1914 Lee was hired by industrialist John D. Rockefeller in the wake of the “Ludlow Massacre” in Colorado, a strike at Rockefeller’s fuel and iron plant.
- Lee got Rockefeller to talk to the press and the striking workers, staged events and portrayed Rockefeller as more concerned.
Edward Bernays and his wife and partner Doris Fleischman: helped define PR’s counseling role as advisers to corporate and institutional managements beginning in the 1920s.

Bernays is widely acknowledged as the founder of modern public relations

He wrote the influential 1923 book, “Crystallizing Public Opinion” that was the first to set down the broad principles that govern the new profession of ‘public relations counsel.’

Bernays called PR “the engineering of consent.”

Some of his classic campaigns are still studied today: Ivory Soap, “Torches of Liberty” and Light’s Golden Jubilee
OTHER KEY FIGURES

- Henry Ford- recognized as the first major industrialist to utilize two basic PR concepts: “positioning” – the idea that credit and publicity always go to those who do something first and ready accessibility to the press.

- Teddy Roosevelt- proved a master in generating publicity. He was the first president to make extensive use of news conferences and interviewing in drumming up support for his projects. And he knew the value of the presidential tour for publicity purposes.

- George Creel- brought in by President Woodrow Wilson to organize a comprehensive PR effort to advise him and his cabinet, to carry out programs, and to influence U.S. and world opinion. Persuaded newspapers and magazines to provide free space for promotion of war Liberty Bonds. The Creel Committee’s efforts had a profound effect on the development of PR by demonstrating the success of these full-blown techniques. It also awakened an awareness in Americans of the power of mediated information in changing public attitudes and behaviors.

- Arthur Page- as an AT&T VP (1927+) he’s credited with establishing the concept that PR should have an active voice in higher management, laying the foundation for corporate PR. Today there is the prestigious Arthur W. Page Society made up of some 350 senior-level PR executives that set forth guidelines and commentary on communications management.
1960s—Issues management was added to the job description of PR managers because of the Vietnam War, the civil rights women’s movements, and environmental concern growth. The idea that PR should be more than persuading people that corporate policy was correct. The idea emerged that perhaps it would be beneficial to have a dialogue with various publics and adapt corporate policy to their particular concerns.

1970s—era of reform in the stock market and investor relations. Companies must immediately disclose any information that may affect the value of its stock. The field of investor relations boomed.

1980s—the concept of PR as a management function is in full bloom. Strategic became a buzzword and MBO (management by objective) was heavily endorsed by PR practitioners.

1990s—Reputation or perception management was the buzzword—the idea of PR people working to maintain credibility, to build solid internal and external relationships, and to manage issues.

2000—the concept grows of PR as the practice of “relationship management.” PR people, the idea goes, are in the business of building and fostering relationships with an organization’s various publics.

And (lest we forget!) the emergence of “new” and “social” media change the landscape for distributing and receiving communications.
Feminization of the field—today women constitute 70 percent of PR practitioners
Reasons? (p. 57)
But women still earn only about 80 cents for every dollar earned by a man (overall, not just in PR)
Reasons? (p. 57)
A Multicultural World- more sensitivity and knowledge of multiple audiences
Recruitment of Minorities- PR should better reflect diversity of populations
The advent of “Transparency”—companies committed to being more open—the public is demanding more accountability from all of society’s institutions
Increased Emphasis on Evaluation—PR pros will continue to improve measurement techniques for showing management how their activities actually contribute to the bottom line
Managing the 24/7 News Cycle—the need for PR people to constantly update information, answer journalists’ inquiries at all hours of the days, and be aware that any and all information is readily available to a worldwide audience
Continued growth of digital media- Traditional mass media will continue to decline or remain static. PR will have to keep expanding its tool to reach a greater fragmented public, in terms of how best to reach desired publics
Corporate Social Responsibility- more and more companies are striving to be responsible in terms of environment, sustainability, product quality and safety, ethical supply chains, and fair treatment of employees
Outsourcing to PR Firms- In-house PR departments are declining with more work in media relations, sponsored/staged events, annual reports, and other work going to PR agencies and firms.
Organizations and causes have used effective public relations to accomplish highly visible results.

PRWeek put together a professional panel that honored nine as the “greatest campaigns ever” during the second half of the 20th century.

See list on p. 54.