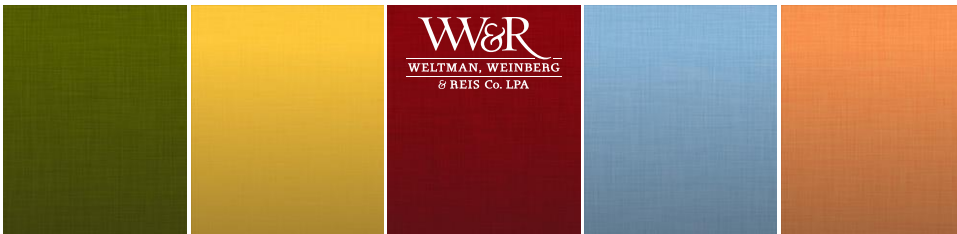


Public Relations and the Local Government

Presented by:
Sara M. Donnersbach, Esq.

June 2016



Overview

- *Initial Considerations:*
- *Establishing internal guidelines to communicate within your communities;*
 - *Internally and externally,*
 - *including time lines and*
 - *appropriate actions to take at certain intervals*
- *Identifying sound communication policies to build positive relationships among government and the community; and*
- *Developing an understanding of how to best create positive publicity and enhance reputations.*



Overview



Initial Considerations

- *Government communicators can and do make life or death differences in people's lives.*
 - *needy people who learn they're eligible for free food or medical care by reading government produced and distributed brochures;*
 - *victims saved from further abuse, or even death, because television public service announcements about child abuse, spouse abuse, and elder abuse publicized toll-free hotlines and encouraged people to use them for reporting abuse;*
 - *people saved from using defective products –*
 - *whether a bean bag inadvertently filled with toxic beans or a car whose fuel line is likely to rupture and start an engine fire*
 - *because of news releases or press conferences by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the National Transportation Safety Board, or their counterparts at the state or local levels.*

What is Public Relations

- It's not advertising
- Impressions cannot be purchased
- It consist of the following:
 - Persuasion
 - Information
 - Communication
 - Third-party validation
 - Public opinion
 - Public policy





What is Public Relations

- Persuasion - the action or fact of persuading someone or of being persuaded to do or believe something.
 - It is not manipulation
 - Persuade the persuadable
 - Context and timing
 - You have to be interested to be persuaded
 - Reciprocity compels
 - Persistence pays
 - Compliment sincerely
 - Set expectations



What is Public Relations

- Persuasion - the action or fact of persuading someone or of being persuaded to do or believe something.
 - Don't assume
 - Create scarcity
 - Create urgency
 - Images matter
 - Truth-tell
 - Build rapport
 - Build flexibility



What is Public Relations

- Persuasion - the action or fact of persuading someone or of being persuaded to do or believe something.
 - Learn to transfer energy
 - Communicating clearly is key
 - Being prepared gives you the advantage
 - Detach and stay calm in conflict
 - Use anger purposefully
 - Confidence and certainty



What is Public Relations

- Information - what is conveyed or represented by a particular arrangement or sequence of things.
- Managing the spread of information between an individual or an organization and the public





What is Public Relations

- Communication - the imparting or exchanging of information or news
- Public relations is more than managing the flow of information between an organization and its publics.
 - It is a communications discipline that engages and informs key audiences, builds important relationships and brings vital information back into an organization for analysis and action.
 - It has real, measurable impact on the achievement of strategic organizational goals.



What is Public Relations

- Third party validation – A process where an independent party is asked to confirm whether another's information is accurate or to validate the intent.
 - involves placing a premeditated message in the "mouth of the media." Third-party technique can take many forms, ranging from the hiring of journalists to report the organization in a favorable light, to using scientists within the organization to present their perhaps prejudicial findings to the public.



What is Public Relations

- Public Opinion - views prevalent among the general public
 - the constant forming and revising of people's opinion
 - “Public opinion is the sum of individual opinions on an issue *affecting* those individuals.”
 - “Public opinion is a collection of views held by persons *interested* in the subject.”
- Inherent in these and other definitions is the concept of *self interest*



What is Public Relations

- Public Policy - the principles, often unwritten, on which social laws are based.
 - Public policy is considered strong when it solves problems efficiently and effectively, serves justice, supports governmental institutions and policies, and encourages active citizenship
 - Public policy is commonly embodied in "constitutions, legislative acts, and judicial decisions."



What is Public Relations

- The Public Relations Society of America, PRSA, notes:
 - “Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.”



Why is Public Relations Valuable

- PR creates awareness and support among target audiences for its services, mission, philosophy and approach to doing business.
- PR helps build credibility that advertising cannot. It helps manage risk and establishes reputations that drive support.
- Good PR can make the difference between a successful council and local punchline.

Establishing Internal Guidelines

- Internal communication should:
 - contribute to public employees feeling included and motivated and to them being able to carry out their tasks in an efficient and competent manner; and
 - contribute to the government entity, as an organization functioning efficiently and appropriately, in normal day-to-day activities and in the event of serious incidents and emergencies.



Establishing Internal Guidelines

- A solid internal public relations program can improve loyalty and help retain valuable employees and members.
- In every case – whether the government entity is large or small; local, state or national – there is an objective.
 - Objectives may include generating a profit, approving legislation or giving back to the community.
 - To advance the objective, those doing so need a clear understanding of the goals.
- An effective public relations program is rooted in research which is used to set objectives, develop strategy and design tactics.
 - the initial stage of objectives-setting research is the basis for the entire PR program.
 - It provides a framework for strategy, execution, and evaluation.



Establishing Internal Guidelines

- WHY SET MEASURABLE PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES:
 - Objectives create a structure for prioritization: Once your aim is clear, the focus and sequence of your strategy and tactics are clear.
 - Objectives reduce the potential for disputes before, during, and after the program: If everyone agrees in advance on the objectives, it is less likely anyone will challenge the program's priorities and results.
 - Objectives focus resources to drive performance and efficiency: A clear and shared sense of purpose distills program tactics and focuses financial and human resources on those areas on which they have the greatest impact.



Establishing Internal Guidelines

- WHY SET MEASURABLE PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES:
 - Objectives help create successful programs by identifying areas for prescriptive change and continual improvement. Over time, tracking performance against properly set objectives allows for corrective action, or positive adjustments.
 - Objectives set the stage for evaluation by making it easier to determine if the PR program met or exceeded expectations.
 - Objectives link the PR objective to the business objective.
 - For example investing significant resources towards the promotion of a tax levy, when the future is pinned to the success of another program, is not in alignment. However, if the PR objectives in support of the other program are met or exceeded, the link between PR and the overall success of the business is much more tangible.



Establishing Internal Guidelines

- HOW TO SET PROPER PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES
 - PR objectives should be meaningful, reasonable and quantifiable
 - obtaining a clear understanding of your organization's business or performance goals is the first step in setting measurable objectives
 - be realistic about what a PR program can reasonably accomplish with fixed resources and within a specific time-frame
 - To be quantifiable, both conceptually and practically, an objective must include answers to what, who, how much and when.

Establishing Internal Guidelines

- CHECK-LIST
 - ASSUME NOTHING: START WITH RESEARCH
 - REMEMBER THAT OBJECTIVES ARE DIFFERENT FROM ACTIONS
 - REMEMBER TO BEGIN WITH THE DESIRED RESULT IN MIND
 - REMEMBER TO GET AGREEMENT FROM LEADERSHIP



Establishing External Guidelines

- External communication should –
 - give a clear, cohesive and explanatory picture of the government's work and policies;
 - contribute to the impact of government decisions;
 - create confidence in the government and their offices as institutions;
 - promote open dialogue; and
 - support the government and their offices in the event of serious incidents and in emergencies.



Establishing External Guidelines

- Outputs are usually the immediate results of a particular PR program or activity. More often than not, they represent what is readily apparent to the eye. They measure how well an organization presents itself to others, the amount of attention or exposure that the organization receives.
- Outcomes measure whether target audience groups actually received the messages directed at them ... paid attention to them ... understood the messages ... and retained those messages in any shape or form. They also measure whether the materials disseminated have resulted in any opinion, attitude and/or behavior changes on the part of those targeted publics to whom the messages were directed.



Establishing External Guidelines

- Measure by focusing on six very precise elements or components of the relationships that exist.
 - Control Mutuality
 - The degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another.
 - Trust
 - One party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party. There are three dimensions to trust:
 - integrity: the belief that an organization is fair and just
 - dependability: the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do; and
 - competence: the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do.



Establishing External Guidelines

- Satisfaction
 - The extent to which each party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced.
- Commitment
 - The extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote.
- Exchange Relationship
 - one party gives benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future.
- Communal Relationship
 - both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other -- even when they get nothing in return



Establishing External Guidelines


- Strategies to maintain relationships with strategic constituencies
 - Access—members of publics or opinion leaders provide access to public relations people
 - Positivity—anything the organization or public does to make the relationship more enjoyable for the parties involved.
 - Openness—of thoughts and feelings among parties involved.
 - Assurances—attempts by parties in the relationship to assure the other parties that they and their concerns are legitimate.
 - Networking—building networks or coalitions with the same groups that the publics do, such as environmentalists, unions, or community groups




Establishing External Guidelines

- Strategies to maintain relationships with strategic constituencies
 - Sharing of tasks—organizations' and publics' sharing in solving joint or separate problems.
 - Integrative. These approaches are symmetrical because all parties in a relationship benefit by searching out common or complementary interests and solving problems together through open discussion and joint decision-making.
 - Distributive. These strategies are asymmetrical because one party benefits at the expense of another by seeking to maximize gains and minimize losses within a win-lose or self-gain perspective.
 - Dual Concern. These strategies have particular relevance for public relations because they take into consideration the dual role of balancing the interests of publics with the interests of the organization.






Identifying sound communication policies to build positive relationships among government and the community

- Communications systems need to be:
 - Interoperable—able to communicate within and across agencies and jurisdictions.
 - Reliable—able to function in the context of any kind of emergency.
 - Portable—built on standardized radio technologies, protocols, and frequencies.
 - Scalable—suitable for use on a small or large scale as the needs of the incident dictate.
 - Resilient—able to perform despite damaged or lost infrastructure.
 - Redundant—able to use alternate communications methods when primary systems go out.
- 



Sound Techniques

- All communication at government offices is based on the overall objectives for communication and the core values of transparency, factualness, comprehensibility, relevance and timeliness.
 - Transparency - Activities are to be characterized by transparency and public access to information. Transparency is a prerequisite for a well-functioning democracy. Transparency includes being accessible, listening and inviting discourse and dialogue.
- 



Sound Techniques

- Transparency means that:
 - important information, when it is deemed possible and appropriate, is made public before it is formally requested;
 - information is made available quickly, albeit always considering the applicable regulations and the accuracy of the content;
 - dialogue is used as a complement to information; and
 - information is made accessible to everyone, with consideration given to those who need extra support to avail themselves of the information.



Sound Techniques

- All communication at government offices is based on the overall objectives for communication and the core values of transparency, factualness, comprehensibility, relevance and timeliness.
 - Factualness and comprehensibility
 - A prerequisite for credible communication is that it is factual, comprehensible and put in context. Communication must be related to the mandate of government and its offices. It must be adapted to the target groups concerned. The message and the choice of channels are based on an analysis of the different needs and knowledge of the target groups.





Sound Techniques

- Factualness and comprehensibility means that:
 - the language employed is straightforward, comprehensible and considered, and that it is presented in an informative way;
 - the focus lies on explaining policy, its context and practical significance for those it affects;
 - communication is based on mandates to assist in their role as government representatives and therefore not as party representatives; and
 - communication is adapted to the needs and knowledge of the target groups concerned.



Sound Techniques

- All communication at government offices is based on the overall objectives for communication and the core values of transparency, factualness, comprehensibility, relevance and timeliness.
 - Relevance and timeliness
 - Communication must be timely, be based on government and its offices priorities and be relevant to the groups concerned. Communication must contribute to achieving the operational objectives in a resource-efficient manner.





Sound Techniques


- Relevance and timeliness means that:
 - prioritization is based on the operational objectives and the needs and knowledge of the target groups concerned,
 - strategic monitoring is conducted continuously; and
 - existing information is continuously updated.



Developing an understanding of how to best create positive publicity and enhance reputations


- Government departments and agencies
 - Public health and safety
 - Local planning
 - Environmental protection
 - Changes to taxation
- Print media versus television and social media
 - Straight forward, matter of fact
 - Persuasive images and evocative music – emotive style





Developing an understanding of how to best create positive publicity and enhance reputations

- 5 ways social media can improve government relations
 - Monitor – public policy discussions and debate
 - FB, Twitter and YouTube
 - Relationships – interaction via social media builds and strengthens effective relationships – get to know each other
 - Accessibility – direct messaging and communication through multiple channels
 - Message – direct communication and secondary channels and third party support
 - Document – public outreach and promote community events



Developing an understanding of how to best create positive publicity and enhance reputations

- Choosing the proper media
- Most people rely on an array of outlets – with varying audience profiles – for political news
 - Recognize the target audience
 - Consistent conservatives
 - Consistent liberals



Developing an understanding of how to best create positive publicity and enhance reputations

- Consistent conservatives:
 - Are tightly clustered around a single news source, far more than any other group in the survey, with [47% citing Fox News as their main source for news about government and politics](#).
 - Express greater distrust than trust of 24 of the 36 news sources measured in the survey. At the same time, fully 88% of consistent conservatives trust Fox News.
 - Are, when on Facebook, more likely than those in other ideological groups to hear political opinions that are in line with their own views.
 - Are more likely to have friends who share their own political views. Two-thirds (66%) say most of their close friends share their views on government and politics.



Developing an understanding of how to best create positive publicity and enhance reputations

- Consistently liberal views:
 - Are less unified in their media loyalty; they rely on a greater range of news outlets, including some – like NPR and the New York Times – that others use far less.
 - Express more trust than distrust of 28 of the 36 news outlets in the survey. [NPR, PBS and the BBC are the most trusted news sources for consistent liberals](#).
 - Are more likely than those in other ideological groups to block or “defriend” someone on a social network – as well as to end a personal friendship – because of politics.
 - Are more likely to follow issue-based groups, rather than political parties or candidates, in their Facebook feeds.



Questions?



Thank You

Sara M. Donnersbach
Partner, Cleveland
Consumer Collection



email
sdonnersbach@weltman.com

phone
216.685.1039

www.weltman.com

