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ABSTRACT

The Public Relations section of the Proceedings contains the following 8 papers: "The Cultural Competence Spiral: An Assessment and Profile of U.S. Public Relations Practitioners' Preparation for International Assignments" (Alan R. Freitag); "Trust, Communication, and Quality Relationships in the Workplace: Comparing Views of CEOs and Top Communicators" (Dan Berkowitz and Peeraya Hanpongpandh); "Public Relations or Social Marketing: International Implications" (Terri Lynn Johnson); "An Innovative Look at Gender in Public Relations: Examining Relationships between Gender and Source Credibility in Employee Communication Messages and Media" (Donald K. Wright and Jill R. Haynes); "The World Wide Web, Online Resources and Public Relations Practitioners: What They Use and What They Recommend" (Michael Ryan); "Public Relations Management: A Multiple-Case Study in Media Management" (Kenneth D. Plowman); "The World Wide Web as a Communications Tool: PR Practitioner Perspectives" (Laura Newland Hill and Candace White); and "What Dimensions Constitute a Good Corporate Image in the Eyes of Chinese Educated Public" (Kaman Betty Lee). (RS)

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The Cultural Competence Spiral: An Assessment and Profile of U.S Public Relations Practitioners' Preparation for International Assignments

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The United States has arguably been at the vanguard of public relations practice for a century or more and remains at the cutting edge (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985, ch. 2), but the application of the craft's skills, techniques and methods has spread rapidly to many parts of the globe in recent years (Culbertson & Chen, 1996, p.1). Sharpe's (1992) analysis of his personal experiences succinctly summarizes what is happening. "The leap in advancements in the development of public relations in other countries...frequently astounds a United States visitor," he says. "In fact advancements that have taken us nearly a century to achieve have been accomplished in a decade in many countries. Many of the professional accomplishments we are still working toward in education and in our professional organizations have already been achieved in less developed countries" (p. 103). Epley (1992) pointed out that: "Ten years ago, all of the world's five largest public relations firms were American owned. Today, only one is" (p. 111).

What has occurred, and continues to occur, in the practice of public relations is the same sweeping trend that has affected virtually all dimensions of society: exponential progress in transportation and communication technology commingle with tectonic political changes to alter the fabric of global commerce and exchange. At the same time, unique cultural differences restrict the development and application of universal templates for public relations practice. The result is a vastly redesigned and dynamic playing field with a host of component forces reshaping the traditional public relations strategies and tactics that have characterized practice in the United States and which U.S. practitioners have tended, ethnocentrically, to export and superimpose globally as universal absolutes. This is an approach not likely to meet with success given inherent cultural differences which affect human communication.

The international practice of public relations is further complicated by the increasingly wide range of systemic differences in media upon which public relations campaigns rely for a substantial

portion of their effects. The proliferation of satellite broadcasting networks, digital transmission and multipoint production of publications, and the worldwide web have simplified information exchange, but cultural differences remain which affect the reception, retention and processing of that information. This is a 24-hour, interconnected world. Time zones and national borders are no longer significant barriers to information flow.

McDermott (1997) compares international public relations under these conditions to 3-D chess. While practitioners have been accustomed to "playing" on a two-dimensional board, the international dimension introduces additional complications that require practitioners to think and act along different vectors.

Burson (1997) observed that the practice of international public relations has changed drastically in the past 40 years. He said there is much more competition, therefore more choices for clients. The techniques of effective public relations practice, he said, are being transferred globally and rapidly. The implications therein for continued U.S. preeminence in the field are considerable. This research effort attempts to illuminate the path toward understanding some of those implications.

Following were the objectives of this research effort:

- Identify preparatory measures and qualifications which increase the likelihood of perceived success and satisfaction among public relations practitioners engaged in international assignments
- Assess the depth and degree of U.S. public relations practitioners' preparedness to undertake international assignments
- Identify factors which lead to international assignment seeking behavior by public relations practitioners
- Determine whether perceived success and satisfaction in international public relations assignments leads to additional international assignment seeking behavior

The argument is that practitioners with appropriate cultural preparation will be more likely to seek and accept international assignment opportunities, to perceive their experiences to have been successful and satisfying, to gain additional cultural competence with each assignment, and to reinforce their international assignment seeking behavior. The spiral might be graphically depicted like this:

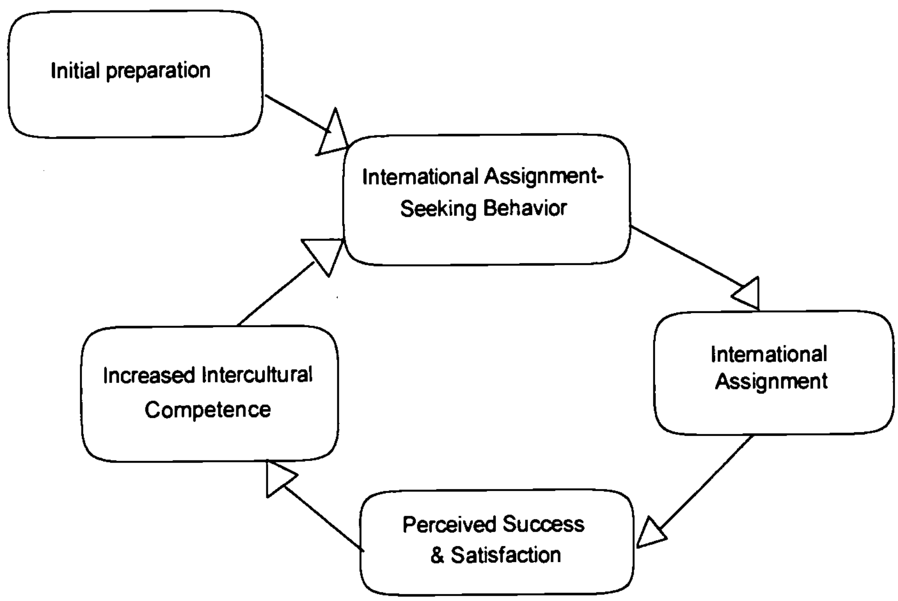

Figure 1

The theoretical result is that increased intercultural competence among a growing segment of U.S. public relations practitioners will elevate overall competitiveness in an increasingly multinational environment and the argument, if supported by the research, would point toward the need for concentrated efforts toward providing U.S. practitioners with the necessary preparatory training.

Fundamental assumptions upon which this research is predicated are that differences exist among cultures, that those differences affect human communication patterns and processes, and that public relations as a discipline dependent upon communication is impacted by those differences. One may predict, then, that an appreciation and understanding of cultural differences (intercultural competence) would foster successful and satisfying performance in international public relations assignments.

Another fundamental assumption of this research is the need to consider international public relations as a distinct subset of the discipline. The premise is that public relations is practiced by means of communication at all its levels: symbolic; nonverbal; verbal; interpersonal; small group; mass; etc. Communication, in turn, is a fundamental component of culture; indeed, the terms may almost be used interchangeably. Consequently, a basic understanding of crosscultural issues will permit an appreciation for the need to consider international public relations as presenting a unique set of challenges to the practitioner.

Put another way, differences exist among cultures, and those differences affect human communication patterns and processes. Public relations as a discipline dependent upon communication is impacted by those differences. One may predict, then, that an appreciation for and understanding of cultural differences would foster successful and satisfying performance in international public relations assignments.

Literature Review

Though intercultural competence is essentially a social judgment, previous research into its components (see, for example, Spitzberg, 1988) permits us to suggest those relationships (between preparation/experience and success/satisfaction in intercultural settings) exist.

Hall (1977) speculates that cultures vary along a continuum from high-context to low-context in terms of communication patterns. In high-context cultures, such as Japanese, African-American, or Latino, meaning is internalized and implied by the physical setting and other external factors, while in low-context cultures, such as German, European-American, and English, explicit content is the norm. Further, in high-context cultures, time is less structured and the emphasis is on commitment between people, while low-context cultures are characterized by fragile bonds and fewer long-term relationships. The implications of even this simplification of Hall for the practice of public relations are obvious -- the design of communication campaigns and the development and distribution of public relations materials ought necessarily to reflect the cultural environment of the individual target publics.

Hofstede (1980) argued that communication pattern differences among cultures, in terms of mental programs, develop in childhood. He suggested several distinguishing factors and said cultures varied along a continuum for each syndrome:

- *Power distance*: the degree to which the culture believes power should be distributed among its members
- *Uncertainty avoidance*: the extent to which the culture can tolerate ambiguity
- *Individualism/collectivism*: the degree of cultural allegiance to the individual vs. the group
- *Masculinity/femininity*: cultural preference for achievement and assertiveness vs. nurturance and social support

Hofstede's taxonomy, too, suggests the difficulties encountered in transposing public relations techniques and products from one culture to another.

Hammer, Nishida and Wiseman (1996) applied competence theory to situational communication factors such as competition, formality, task orientation, interest, constraint and

others in order to demonstrate that cultural competence can vary significantly across situational prototypes. That would suggest that any preparation or training a public relations practitioner might undergo prior to a crosscultural assignment must be tailored not only in culture-specific terms, but also in situation-specific terms. A distinction might be made, for instance, between the practitioner given an international assignment in conjunction with the introduction of a new product versus a practitioner dispatched to handle public relations aspects of an environmental crisis; each may require considerably different preparation, Hammer et al would argue.

Zimmerman (1995) was concerned with the affective (anxiety, stress, ambiguity) and behavioral (language proficiency, frequency of interaction) dimensions of crosscultural communication competence, testing international students to identify areas most important to facilitating intercultural adaptation. She found that length of immersion in a foreign culture is not so consequential, in terms of honing communication skills, as is the frequency of interaction. The findings suggest that the length of time a public relations practitioner is exposed to cultures other than his or her own may not predict dependent variables such as success and satisfaction. More important may be the number of opportunities for crosscultural communication transactions.

As stated, an assumption of this project is that cultural differences affect the practice of public relations on an international scale, and that these differences compel the need to entertain the likelihood that global practice introduces the need for principles beyond those which have guided practice limited primarily to U.S. publics. Stressing the need to develop a universal code of standards for public relations, and to push for greater interdisciplinary education and research in the field, Sharpe (1986) says fundamental societal conditions dictate the need for a re-evaluation of the practice of public relations. Such a bold statement accents the recognition by researchers that the

internationalization of public relations imparts to scholars and professionals the necessity to redefine globally the tenets of the discipline.

A few years later, Sharpe (1992) cited the conflict between public relations development and the desire to retain deeply rooted cultural behavior. This conflict, he says, "shapes the face of public relations differently country by country even though the principles as to what public relations is and can do remain the same worldwide..." (p.104).

Roth et al (1996) agree and posit "that an international set of principles for practice is feasible" if practitioners work toward fuller understanding of each others' perspectives. Drawing upon the fields of social science continues to offer a fruitful avenue.

Expanding the field of view, Gomez (1992) goes beyond a narrow definition of public relations and maintains that integrated techniques of marketing, public relations, research, promotion, etc., must be reconsidered in a unified concept of "social communication" on an international basis. McDermott (1991) sees progress in this area, noting that the number of universities in the United States offering courses in international public relations, or at least in international mass communication, has been growing since the late 1980s, though the number remains small.

A strong link between social science theory and public relations practice on a crosscultural basis is provided by Wakefield (1996). He acknowledges that culture is a "slippery concept," but stresses the need to develop greater crosscultural competence through acculturation, suggesting that cultural anthropological approaches may be the most effective. Similarly, Vercic et al (1993) emphasized that public relations is influenced by its contextual cultures and political systems, and aimed for a "middle ground theory between cultural relativism and ethnocentrism."

There have been additional attempts to construct a comprehensive theory of international public relations. Kinzar and Bohn (1985) described an ethnocentric model and a polycentric model. In the first, the home nation headquarters of the organization directs overseas public relations activities. In the second, host nation public relations practitioners exercise considerable autonomy.

However, Botan (1992) stressed the need to focus on the central purpose of public relations -- "using communication to adapt relationships between organizations" (p.153) -- rather than relying on a business-centered approach.

Adequate scholarship, therefore, supports the notion that practicing public relations in an international environment presents unique challenges. Identifying strengths and shortcomings among U.S. practitioners should help point the way toward enhancing preparation for international assignments.

Method

A four-page survey instrument containing 23 items was designed to address a litany of objectives. Among them, and salient to this paper, were:

- Determine basic demographic information

  ✓Age and gender
  ✓Years in public relations
  ✓Specific crosscultural educational background
  ✓Basic foreign language capability

- Determine international experience

  ✓Extent of all international travel experience
  ✓Frequency and duration of international public relations assignments
  ✓Functional role fulfilled during international public relations assignments
  ✓Structural approach to international public relations assignments

- Assess degree of perceived success from international experience

- Assess degree of satisfaction derived from international experience
- Assess attitude toward seeking international public relations assignments

The target population from which the sample was drawn were members of the Public Relations Society of America. While not all U.S. practitioners belong to PRSA, the argument is that its 18,000 members constitute the world's largest organization of practitioners. The survey was distributed to a simple random probability sample of 1997-98 members. Desired sample size was set at roughly 400 in order to achieve a 4% sampling variability for 50/50 response proportions and a 95% confidence interval (see Stemple & Westley, 1989, p. 162). Assuming a response rate of 33%, that required the initial mailing list of 1,200 randomly generated names. The single-wave return rate achieved was 35.33%, or 424 usable surveys. A pilot test preceded the full survey.

The final survey instrument was mailed along with a supporting letter from the national president of PRSA which stressed the importance of the research and encouraged respondent cooperation. The initial mailing included a stamped, pre-addressed return envelope for the completed survey. Survey data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows.

Results

Respondents' ages ranged from 23 to 78 years with a mean age of 44.05 (SD = 11.28). Experience in public relations practice ranged from 1 to 45 years with a mean of 16.40 (SD = 9.24). Age distribution indicates most sampled practitioners fall in the 30 to 54 age category with sharp drop-offs both below and above that range. Professional experience levels revealed strength in the 4- through 25-year zone.

Of the 424 respondents, 177 (41.7%) were male while 247 (58.3%) were female. Position classifications revealed corporate public relations as the dominant category followed by nonprofit/not-for-profit public relations and agency public relations, with consultants, government public relations practitioners and public relations educators represented by much smaller groups.

Nearly a third of respondents reported having completed non-U.S. history courses at the college level. Roughly a fourth included non-U.S. economics, government or political science in their curricula, but proportions of respondents completing courses in international business, philosophy, geography/geology, and literature were quite low. Moreover, just 16% completed a course in crosscultural or intercultural communication -- a discipline that would have provided a basis for understanding the general impact of culture upon human, therefore public, relations (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Percentage of Respondents Completing College-level International Courses

	Crosscultural Communication	*International Business*	*History*	*Philosophy*	*Economics Government Political Science*	*Geography Geology*	*Literature*
Yes	16.0 (*f*=68)	12.5 (*f*=53)	30.9 (*f*=131)	19.1 (*f*=81)	25.0 (*f*=106)	16.3 (*f*=69)	21.5 (*f*=91)
No	84 (*f*=356)	87.5 (*f*=371)	69.1 (*f*= 293)	80.9 (*f*=343)	75.0 (*f*=318)	83.7 (*f*=355)	78.5 (*f*=333)

n = 424

More than two-thirds (68.4%, *f* = 290) of the respondents reported completing at least a half year of language studies; the mean for years of college-level language studies among the sample

population is 1.447 (SD = 1.263). And 213 respondents (50.2%) had completed two years or more of language studies.

The figures drop sharply, though, when respondents reported study in a second foreign language. Just 11.1% (f = 47) studied a second foreign language at the college level, and 5.6% (f = 24) did so for two or more years. As a result, the mean for years of study in a second foreign language is .194 (SD = .643).

Table 2 depicts languages chosen for study by respondents. French and Spanish are top choices, with German a distant third, followed by an eclectic assortment.

TABLE 2
Choice of College-level Language Studies

First Language	*Second Language*
None (31.6%, f = 134)	None (88.9%, f = 377)
French (26.9%, f = 114)	French (2.6%, f = 11)
Spanish (25.7%, f = 109)	Italian (2.1%, f = 9)
German (9.2%, f = 39)	Spanish (1.4%, f = 6)
Italian (2.4%, f = 10)	German, Japanese, Russian (each 0.9%, f = 4)
Latin (1.7%, f = 7)	Latin (0.7%, f =3)
Chinese, Japanese (each 0.7%, f = 3)	Greek (0.5%, f = 2)
Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Thai (each 0.2%, f = 1)	Arabic, Korean, Persian, Portuguese (each 0.2%, f = 1)
Total = 99.9% due to rounding	Total = 100%

Despite more than two-thirds of the respondents having studied a foreign language, and half completing at least two years at the college level, only 17.2% (f = 73) reported themselves to be conversational or fluent in any language beyond English. The survey instrument allowed for the possibility that this fluency or conversational ability may have stemmed from reasons other than college study -- Peace Corps training and experience, Defense Language Institute, private language training, a language other than English used at home, military-related overseas experience, etc.

Nevertheless, it appears less than one sampled U.S. American public relations practitioner in six is capable of conversing in a language other than English.

Following the pattern for college-level study, the two languages most frequently cited by respondents for conversational or fluent ability were Spanish (6.4%, $f = 27$) and French (5.4%, $f = 23$), followed by German, Italian, with a smattering of other languages claimed by a handful of respondents.

Fluency or conversational ability in a second foreign language was reported by just 3.3% of respondents ($f = 14$), with Spanish, French and German representing more than half of those. Only two respondents (0.4%) reported fluency or conversational ability in a third foreign language -- in these cases, Italian and Arabic.

The next series of questions asked about the extent of respondents' personal and professional travel outside the United States. Of the 424 respondents, 11.6% ($N = 49$) had never crossed U.S. borders for any reason. Table 3 depicts cumulative, lifetime travel outside the United States for business or pleasure by responding practitioners.

TABLE 3
Cumulative Lifetime Travel Outside the United States

Cumulative Duration	*Percentage of Respondents*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Less than one month	3.8 ($f = 16$)	3.8
One month or more, but less than three months	25.7 ($f = 109$)	29.5
Three months or more, but less than six months	15.8 ($f = 67$)	45.3
Six months or more, but less than one year	10.6 ($f = 45$)	55.9
One year or more, but less than two years	11.1 ($f = 47$)	67
Two years or more, but less than five years	11.8 ($f = 50$)	78.8
More than five years	9.7 ($f = 41$)	88.5
None	11.6 ($f = 49$)	100.1

Note: Cumulative total percentage exceeds 100% due to rounding

Nearly 90% of practitioners have travel experience outside the United States, with the mode appearing in the one-to-three-month division in this configuration. Keep in mind, however, that these figures include all travel outside the United States and could conceivably include, in addition to time spent in a professional capacity, service in the military, the Peace Corps, personal vacation, etc. When distinguishing time spent outside the United States solely in a professional public relations capacity, 31.4% (*f* = 133) of practitioners reported having had international experience of this nature. Table 4 shows that the cumulative duration of professionally related international exposure is similarly diminished. Two-thirds of U.S. practitioners have not accumulated any professional experience outside the United States, though one in four has accumulated one month or more. Roughly one in nine practitioners has spent a year or more professionally outside the United States.

TABLE 4
Cumulative Lifetime Professional Travel Outside the United States

Cumulative Duration	*Percentage of Respondents*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Less than one month	6.6 (*f* = 28)	6.6
One month or more, but less than three months	6.4 (*f* = 27)	13
Three months or more, but less than six months	2.8 (*f* = 12)	15.8
Six months or more, but less than one year	4.2 (*f* = 18)	20
One year or more, but less than two years	4.2 (*f* = 18)	24.2
Two years or more, but less than five years	4.2 (*f* = 18)	28.4
More than five years	2.8 (*f* = 12)	31.2
None	68.6 (*f* = 291)	99.8

Note: Cumulative total percentage is less than 100% due to rounding

Of the 424 usable surveys, 18.6% (*f* = 79) of respondents reported having made international trips in the past two years, the number of trips ranging from one to 30, with a mean of 3.43 (*SD* = 4.15), discounting those who reported taking no trips. Those 79 respondents made a

total of 271 international trips in their professional capacity in the past two years, and the average trip lasted 2.2 weeks, or between 15 and 16 days. The median trip, however, was slightly less than seven days. Only about 9% of the trips exceeded two weeks, but ranged up to seven weeks, with two extreme trips of 25 weeks and 52 weeks.

Respondents with international experience indicated on scales of one through seven their perceptions, respectively, of their level of preparedness for their international experience, their success in those assignments, the extent to which those assignments were satisfying, and their attitude toward seeking additional international assignments. In each case, one indicated low levels and seven high levels. Though there is no statistical logic in comparing scores on one scale to those on another among these four issues, comparisons provide relative perspective. Therefore, results are presented together in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Preparation, Success, Satisfaction, and Seeking Attitude -- International Assignments

	Felt Prepared	*Perceived Success*	*Perceived Satisfaction*	*Seek More Assignments*
Mean	4.38	5.4	5.92	5.74
Median	4.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
SD	1.58	1.22	1.38	1.44
		n = 130		

Respondents tended to eschew low scores for these scales, resulting in fine distinctions among the higher possible rating selections. Nevertheless, it appears practitioners in the sample gauged their preparation levels to be somewhere between the halfway and three-quarter point on the scale -- the lowest score for these four loosely related categories. Success was assessed moderately positively, while satisfaction earned somewhat higher scores. The attitude toward

seeking additional international opportunities was expressed near the far right end of the scale as well.

Again using a seven-point scale, sampled practitioners with international experience rated the degree to which selected college courses contributed to success in international assignments in their views, with one indicating the least contribution and seven the greatest. Table 6 lists the subject areas in ascending order of relative mean scores rather than the order in which they appeared in the survey instrument.

TABLE 6
Contribution of College-level Courses to Success -- International Assignments

	Literature	*Geography/ Geology*	*History*	*Philosophy*	*International Business*	*Crosscultural Communication*	*Economics*	*Foreign Language*
Mean	3.62	4.02	4.67	4.92	5.06	5.09	5.22	5.82
Median	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	6.00
SD	1.45	1.49	1.46	1.47	1.42	1.70	1.31	1.31

Mean scores place literature and geography in the lower portion of ranked subjects along with history. Noteworthy is the high value ascribed to non-U.S. economic studies. Given the centrality of communication in public relations, it is no surprise that foreign language study would head the list. Based upon "seven" ratings, responses suggested strongly held convictions by many that crosscultural communication and foreign language courses are salient in regard to international assignment success. In fact, 25.0% (*f* = 32) of respondents with international experience rated crosscultural communication courses a seven on the seven-point scale, while 37.7% (*f* = 49) rated foreign language studies a seven. No other subjects approached those levels of endorsement.

Of interest are the areas of the globe in which U.S. practitioners are conducting public relations activities. Europe is clearly the most common regional destination, followed by the Asia/Pacific region a distant second, then South and Central America, and North America[1]. Very few practitioners say most of their experience has been in the Middle East, Africa or the Caribbean (Table 7).

TABLE 7
Dominant Regions for International Assignments

Europe (53.5%, *f* = 69)
Asia/Pacific (23.3%, *f* = 30)
South/Central America (10.1%, *f* = 13)
North America (7.8%, *f* = 10)
Africa (2.3%, *f* = 3)
Middle East (2.3%, *f* = 3)
Caribbean (.8%, *f* = 1)

England tops the list of countries in which respondents acquired the most international experience, with Japan second. They are followed closely by Canada, China, Germany, Mexico, France and an eclectic litany (Table 8).

[1] While North America was identified in completed surveys as a location for international public relations assignments, generally with Canada the specific country indicated, the number may be inaccurate and probably too low. Some respondents identified South and/or Central America as the region in which they acquired most of their international experience, but then listed Mexico as the destination country. Mexico, of course, is part of North America. I did not correct the entries because of the possibility, evident in several surveys, that the country in which the practitioner acquired the most experience was not necessarily in the region in which he or she had acquired the most experience.

TABLE 8
Dominant Countries for International Assignments

England (22.8%, f = 29)
Japan (8.7%, f = 11)
Canada (7.9%, f = 10)
China, Germany, Mexico
(each 6.3%, f = 8)
France (5.5%, f= 7)
Italy (3.9%, f = 5)
The Netherlands, The United States[2]
(2.4, f = 3)
Russia, Brazil, South Korea, Israel, Peru, New Zealand
(each 1.6%, f = 2)
Australia, Belarus, Cuba, Estonia, Ghana, Hungary, India, Kenya, Kuwait, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Venezuela
(each 0.8%, f = 1)

Two points need to be stressed. First, the percentages indicated in Tables 7 and 8 are proportions of the subset of respondents who have had international experience. As proportions of the entire sample, for instance, these tables would show that while more than half the practitioners with international experience have acquired that experience in Europe, that represents just 14.2% of all respondents. Just 0.7% of all practitioners in the sample cite Africa for that distinction, and the same holds for the Middle East. Similarly, though 8.7% of those with international experience have focused primarily on Japan, the world's second largest economy, just 2.6% of the aggregate of sampled practitioners have done so.

The second point is that these are the regions and nations which were cited as dominant in practitioners' professional background. It does not mean practitioners have not acquired at least some experience in other regions and countries.

[2] Several respondents indicated they had acquired most of their international public relations experience in the United States and the question's syntax did not preclude that possibility. It may be that these practitioners are (or were) heavily engaged in international activities, but from offices within the United States. The fourth interview subject who managed international public relations from the corporation's U.S. headquarters might be representative of that possibility.

Respondents with no professional international experience indicated on a seven-point scale their attitudes toward seeking their first international assignment opportunities. A rating of one indicated the respondent would decline or avoid such an assignment, while a seven indicated he or she would eagerly seek the experience. Data are comparable to those reported in the last column of Table 5 which indicated additional international assignment seeking attitudes among practitioners with previous experience. In this case, the mean score was 4.43 (compared to 5.74 in Table 5 and a median of 4.00 (compared to 6.00 in Table 5), indicating moderately less interest in international experience among those for whom such an assignment would be their first.

The cultural competence spiral on p.3 suggests that a practitioner's level of prior cultural and related training would positively correlate with assessments of perceived success and satisfaction in international assignments, and with expressed desire to seek additional assignments. Again, operationalizing preparation in terms of academics and time spent outside the United States, exposed to non-U.S. cultures, Table 9 reflects those correlations. Only one correlation holds at a statistically significant level: that of cumulative foreign travel with perception of success in international assignments. However, there is a noteworthy sequence of significant correlations: As cumulative foreign travel is positively correlated with perceived success, perceived success is also positively correlated with both perceived satisfaction and expressed desire to seek additional assignments. Since initial travel is a prerequisite to the other factors, there appears to be support for the cultural competence spiral.

TABLE 9
Pearson Correlations for Academic Preparation, Cumulative Personal and Professional Travel, Success and Satisfaction, and Seeking

		Nr. of Courses	*Yrs. 1st Lang.*	*Foreign Travel*	*Cume Int. PR Time*	*Success*	*Satis-faction*	*Seek More*
Nr. of Courses	*r*	1.000	.096	.344**	.176*	.039	-.008	-.019
	p	.	.280	.000	.046	.661	.932	.833
Yrs. 1st Lang.	*r*		1.000	.131	.023	-.081	-.106	.052
	p		.	.139	.794	.359	.234	.562
Cume Foreign Travel	*r*			1.000	.700**	.208*	.102	.080
	p			.	.000	.018	.252	.366
Cume Int. PR Time	*r*				1.000	.159	.119	.070
	p				.	.072	.178	.431
Success	*r*					1.000	.634**	.216**
	p					.	.000	.014
Satisfaction	*r*						1.000	.352**
	p						.	.000
Seek More	*r*							1.000
	p							.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Note: Listwise exclusion is used, reducing *n* to 129.

Similarly, one would expect that among practitioners with no international experience, those with an international academic background and/or who had experienced foreign travel for other than professional reasons would be more likely to express a desire for professional international opportunities. Using the same technique as depicted in Table 9, preparation is operationalized as the number of non-U.S. courses completed, years of first foreign language study, and cumulative time spent outside the United States (in this instance, respondents included reported no professional international time). Results reported in Table 10 indicate strong positive correlations between the desire for international assignments and both the number of courses taken and foreign

travel. Since the preparatory factors obviously precede the first international assignment, these relationships support the first link in the competence spiral.

TABLE 10
Pearson Correlations for Academic Preparation, Cumulative (non-professional) Foreign Travel, and Seeking First International Assignment

		Nr. of Courses	*Yrs. 1st Lang.*	*Cume Foreign Travel*	*Seek First*
Nr. of Courses	*r*	1.000	.133*	.211**	.188**
	p	.	.024	.000	.001
Yrs. 1st Lang.	*r*		1.000	.224**	.068
	p		.	.000	.251
Cume Foreign Travel	*r*			1.000	.146*
	p			.	.014
Seek First	*r*				1.000
	p				.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Note: Listwise exclusion is used, reducing n to 286.

Though it was not the aim of this research project, a number of statistical tests were conducted to determine if gender were a factor in a number of reported variables, since previous public relations researchers have found significant gender differences regarding several aspects of practice. Independent T-Tests for operationalized preparation factors reveal no appreciable gender differences for years of first foreign language study, cumulative foreign travel, or international professional time acquired. However, sampled women practitioners report a significantly higher number of internationally-focused college course work completed. Women have completed an average of 1.13 courses, while men have completed an average of .8125 (n = 292, p = .047).

Though space prevents presentation of details, survey data indicates, that government public relations practitioners are better prepared and more extensively experienced than their counterparts in agency, corporate, nonprofit and consultant sectors in a variety of operationalized measures. They have completed more relevant classes and are second only to consultants in foreign language study, though a small percentage, in comparison to other sectors, claims conversational or fluent ability. While greater percentages of consultants and corporate public relations practitioners have acquired professional international experience, government practitioners are more likely to have spent extended periods outside the United States in a professional capacity, with a cumulative mean approaching one year -- more than twice the aggregate mean.

Even more pronounced, though, are the low preparation indicators reflected by surveyed practitioners in the nonprofit sector. This subset of the population appears to have taken fewer foundational courses, ranks in the middle of the aggregate group in terms of foreign language study completed, and reports the lowest level of conversational or fluent foreign language ability. Additionally, they are the least likely to have traveled outside the United States for any reason, and are least likely to have acquired professional experience outside the United States.

Discussion

The aim was to determine the extent of preparatory background among public relations practitioners that would provide grounding in anticipation of professional international assignments, and to discern the depth of international experience among that population. The survey data provide a fairly definitive profile of the profession in these regards.

Relevant course work is scant, with a range of roughly 16-30% of surveyed practitioners indicating completion of individual courses listed in the instrument. However, foreign language

study is more prevalent, with more than two-thirds of respondents completing some college-level study, though just one in six claims even conversational ability, and study in a second foreign language is rare.

The cultural competence spiral posits that increased preparation will result in commensurate increases in levels of perceived satisfaction and success in international assignments and in the desire to seek those assignments. Using a variety of operationalized factors, statistical significance was achieved only between cumulative foreign travel and the perception of success in international assignments. Nevertheless, correlational direction, coupled with at least one statistically significant correlation, suggests partial support for the hypothesis.

The spiral further predicts that perceptions of success and satisfaction will be positively correlated to expressed desire to seek additional international assignments. Data revealed this to be significantly supported for both success and satisfaction. As a result, it appears that as cumulative foreign travel increases, so do perceived success, satisfaction, and the desire for additional assignments, providing support for the cultural competence spiral.

Finally, the spiral model predicts that practitioners with no international experience will be more likely to express the desire to gain that experience if they have acquired the appropriate preparatory background. The operationalized factors of cumulative, nonprofessional foreign travel and number of relevant courses both correlated positively and at statistically significant levels with the desire to seek a first assignment, supporting the hypothesis.

The link between adequate preparation and perceived success and satisfaction strongly supports the call by Pratt and Ogbondah (1996) to bolster international education for public relations practitioners, and that curricula should include relevant business, politics, ethnicity, and even religion courses.

Schuler (1990) stressed the need for practitioners to acquire foreign language skills, but saw these skill as only one step toward achieving cultural competence. Survey data show that while language study among U.S. public relations practitioners is relatively common, the ability to employ those skills even conversationally is fairly rare, and undergirding language skills with relevant culturally-relevant course work is equally rare.

It would seem increased attention ought to be placed on internationalizing both undergraduate and graduate preparation for practitioners. Survey data show that roughly one-third of respondents experienced international assignments of various duration. With increasing globalization of businesses and organizations, a convincing argument can be made regarding the need for adequate preparation if practitioners are to contribute to ongoing improvements in public relations excellence.

To address the inadequacies extant among the professional cadre of practitioners, increased effort ought to be directed toward providing internationally-oriented development seminars. Professional seminars are a fixture of the profession, with sessions occurring throughout the United States virtually every weekend, sponsored by a variety of organizations, agencies, educational institutions, etc. Topics typically include media relations, media training, investor relations, new technologies, and so forth. Occasionally a seminar will focus on international dimensions of the practice; these need to be intensified, multiplied, and participation stressed. Their content needs to incorporate cultural aspects of communication as they relate to public relations, and should include theoretical and practical approaches to international public relations as well as global and comparative approaches. Through these seminars, as well as through other professional conduits, practitioners should be encouraged to return to campuses to enroll in relevant courses such as those described in other parts of this manuscript, including foreign languages. Moreover,

practitioners qualified should be encouraged to approach those campuses to seek opportunities to teach those courses so their acquired skills and knowledge might be shared.

As part of both undergraduate/graduate education and professional development, the value of crosscultural acumen for practitioners and for the discipline should be emphasized. Stress should be placed on the contribution international competence can make toward transitioning from one-way to two-way models of practice, and from the technician to the management functions. Practitioners ought to be made aware, too, that acquiring these skills can aid in earning a place with the dominant coalition at the conference table. The other side of the coin is that failing to develop these skills may well place public relations at a decided disadvantage as organizational vision extends further and further beyond national borders.

Two other practical concerns emerge from this research. One is that of those with international experience, nearly one-fourth appear to have focused on England and half on Europe. The growing strength of Asian and Latin American economies, and the increasing potential and importance of other economic spheres such as those of Africa and the Caribbean, demand greater attention.

Survey data offered support for components of the crosscultural competence spiral. However, further research focused on individual connections within the spiral would strengthen (or possibly weaken) those connections and help us understand them more clearly. For example, research is needed aimed solely at confirming or refuting the correlation between initial preparation and the desire to seek a first assignment, or to demonstrate that success and satisfaction indeed contribute (or do not contribute) to increased crosscultural competence. Such research will help refine the model which, in turn, may prove useful in understanding professional development.

The most obvious application of this research toward further investigation in the discipline would be the use of these methods in examining the public relations practice in other nations. Adapting the survey instrument to determine comparative levels of cultural competence among Argentine, South African, Czech, and Thai practitioners, for instance, would be very instructive. Would we find, as in the United States, that one in six practitioners can converse in a second language?

There may come a time, perhaps soon, when the term *international public relations* becomes unnecessary. Indeed, an argument can be made already that there is no such thing as *national public relations*. The news release launched on the Worldwide Web, the video footage bounced off a satellite, the news interview conducted via teleconferencing, along with other traditional public relations techniques supported by new and emerging means of transmission, communication and transportation, have no respect for national borders. On a grander scale, the goal of long-term relationship building in a world grown increasingly mobile presents challenges and complexities requiring entirely new skill sets for practitioners faced with serving organizations whose success depends upon ongoing, productive exchange with those mobile publics. Who will have those skills?

Practitioners will still be needed to handle noise complaints from residents near a hospital's helipad, address university town/gown disputes, or soften the effects of a layoff at a local plant, but the practitioners who can just as easily arrange a news conference in Ankara that accommodates peculiarities of the Turkish media system, or overcome resistance to a new product in Caracas, are the ones who will excel personally and, moreover, elevate the status of the profession.

Perhaps this research will encourage the more ambitious in the profession to seek and hone those skills necessary to achieve cultural competence. Perhaps more universities and colleges will

take steps to internationalize their public relations curriculum. It's an exciting prospect, and one that augurs well for the profession.

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TRUST, COMMUNICATION, AND QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE: COMPARING VIEWS OF CEOS AND TOP COMMUNICATORS

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TRUST, COMMUNICATION, AND QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE: COMPARING VIEWS OF CEOS AND TOP COMMUNICATORS

Over the past few years, American workers have faced layoffs, restructuring, increased workloads and greater responsibilities, all within huge clouds of uncertainty (Thomsen, 1997). A variety of factors are effecting this change: each requires organizations to exhibit flexibility and to move beyond traditional responses to employee concerns (Colvin, 1997; Howard, 1998). It has become increasingly apparent that the need for internal relationship management will increase as employees and the workplace environment continue to change.

Organizations regularly have jumped on the bandwagon for new management approaches, with each new idea bringing another label and hopes for a panacea to a management's performance problems (Fleisher & Burton, 1995). Among these approaches are total quality management (TQM), ISO certification, management by objectives (MBO), quality circles, management by walking around (MBWA), reengineering, and benchmarking, to name a few (Epperheimer, 1997; Fleisher & Burton, 1995; Masciarelli, 1998). Organizations tend to try any and all of these approaches to beat the competition, and they have seen some gains from their efforts. But in the end, no single approach has ever changed the overall picture in a significant way.

In part, an explanation for the small degree of improvement is that most organizations fail to develop and apply internal relationship management

techniques in a systematic way that attends to their network of personal and organizational relationships. Yet, the fast-paced, high-performance organizations of the future will need to integrate their people and systems by building concern for truth and trust to enhance these relationships (Landes, 1998). Such a vision of relationship management represents both an enormous challenge and an opportunity for public relations/communication specialists.

The purpose of this study is to assess the alignment of perceptions held by CEOs and top communicators about internal relationship management and the three core values of trust, communication and quality relationships in the workplace. Data come from an exploratory survey of CEOs and top communicators in six Midwestern states. Analysis looks at possible contrasts between CEOs and communicators, along with key overarching belief structures toward these dimensions. The data will be examined through cluster analysis, which looks for common belief structures within a group of people and helps build an issue orientation typology.

Relevant Literature

Today's employees demand more and expect more from their organizations. As a result, communication methods used to motivate employees five years ago have lost their effectiveness (Howard, 1998). Traditional management techniques simply are not adequate for companies that want to sustain a competitive advantage. The best answer to this change, suggest some scholars and practitioners, is a conscientious effort toward relationship-building.

Good working relationships within an organization are important to an organization's success (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995). As long as the relationships are authentic and genuine, both parties benefit (Baker, 1994). For this reason, managers need to shift their thinking toward building a culture that empowers employees, informs them of quality goals, and gains their compliance to increase the quality of relationships (Heath, Leth, & Nathan, 1994). To accomplish this kind of relationship management, excellent companies are adopting people-oriented approaches based on core corporate values such as quality relationships, trust, and truth (Colvin, 1997; Howard, 1998; Landes, 1998).

In a move away from traditional management practices that focus mainly on profitability, some scholars have introduced new models for internal relationships. These models suggest that companies should regularly communicate with employees in an open environment, build mutual trust them, and gain their commitment by supporting the initiatives they introduce (Landes, 1998; Masciarelli, 1998). The most successful companies in today's market have found that effective building of internal relationships can lead to major beneficial results externally as well (Beckett-Camarata, Camarata & Barker, 1998; Howard, 1998; Masciarelli, 1998; Sparrow, 1998; Wright, 1995)

Public relations practitioners are indeed becoming more concerned about employees' needs, and they are making greater efforts in the area of internal public relations (Colvin, 1997; Thomsen, 1997; Howard, 1998). However, matters such as corporate culture, empowerment, and core values practiced by public relations professionals may not seem urgent to a CEO who is focused on revenue, cost, and

profit. Although more and more CEOs accept many of the principles as do public relations practitioners, they often fall short of including public relations theory and practice in the strategic management of the company (Campbell, 1993; Thompson, 1997).

Role of Public Relations in Management

As a remedy for the weak internal relationships that often grow from traditional communication practices, management is turning to public relations and communication specialists to serve as organizational experts in this area (Landes, 1998; Wilson, 1994). To a majority of CEOs, however, the role of public relations in management still remains unclear. CEOs may feel that public relations has a great impact on the bottom line, but most of them do not know how they can tie public relations to that bottom line. Many of them believe that the contribution of public relations is intangible and difficult to measure (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995). One strategy for communicators to address the problem is to adopt the CEO's language and frame soft or people-oriented issues with a clear tie to the CEO's fundamental objectives (Thompson, 1997). Further, public relations should help an organization create value-based relationships with its publics, and define itself in terms of the organization's mission (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; Lindeborg, 1994).

From this management perspective, relationships between the organization and its employees need to be conceptualized and managed as long-term organizational investments. They also need to be recognized as the means to build core competencies and draw on advantageous opportunities that follow (Beckett-Camrata, et al., 1998). This requires both CEOs and public relations practitioners to

devise and utilize alternative strategies. It requires a shift in thinking toward a management strategy built on social exchange and equity based relationships.

Role of Public Relations in Internal Relationship Management

In response to these trends in organization-employee relationships, management has begun to shift from product management to relationship management. This has come from several approaches (Beckett-Camarata, et al., 1998) including quality of work life (QWL), organizational citizen behavior (OCB), and service quality and customer satisfaction (SERVQUAL).

This shift in thinking encourages both CEOs and public relations practitioners to confront expanding management theory to include an interdisciplinary view of relationship management. There, relationship management becomes a tool for enhancing external effectiveness as well as affecting perceptions of "product" quality, and total company performance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1990). To be taken seriously in this internal relationship management perspective, though, public relations must focus on four key efforts:

1) shift from traditional communication approaches to a strategic focus on systemic relationships and the philosophy that people are the primary assets of an organization;

2) develop closer working relationships with other management functions such as human resources, information systems, finance, and marketing;

3) reshape perceptions of the public relations function within the organization (Landes, 1998);

4) practice value-driven philosophies: quality and service, relationship commitment and trust, and open and honest communication (Howard, 1998; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Wilson, 1994)

The following section elaborates on some of the key dimensions that have just been discussed.

Trust. Trust is defined as "a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (Moorman, Deshpande, & Zaltman, 1993). Trust requires that parties in a relationship have confidence in the reliability and integrity of the others involved (Speakman, 1988). Hrebiniak (1974) adds that "because relationships characterized by trust are so highly valued, both management and employees will quickly commit themselves to such organizational relationships."

Open and Honest Communication. Informal and formal communication among employees provides the opportunity to ask questions, offer opinions, and give and receive feedback. This practice requires an understanding of symmetrical communication including a cooperative, integrative, participative and reflective openness (Kent & Taylor, 1998; Senge, 1990). Open and honest communication involves true open-door policies where senior executives are entirely accessible to employees (Wilson, 1994).

Quality Relationships/Relationship Commitment. As long as the relationships within an organization are authentic and genuine, both parties will find benefits for maintaining it. Some of the most important attributes of relationships include mutual understanding, mutual satisfaction, mutual legitimacy, reciprocity, credibility, open communication, trust, and commitment (Grunig, Grunig, & Ehling, 1992; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Morgan and Hunt (1994) viewed "commitment to relationship" as a key factor for successful internal relationships. They portrayed relationship

commitment as a central goal within an organization, because it leads to the important outcomes as decreased turnover (Porter, Steer, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974), higher motivation (Farrell & Rusbult, 1981), and increased organizational citizenship behaviors (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Relationship commitment also results from such things as recruiting and training practices (Caldwell, Chatman, & O'Reilly, 1990), job equity (Williams & Hazer, 1986), and organizational support (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990).

In all, excellent internal relationship management correlates closely with organizational success outside the organization. Excellent internal relationship management has been described as helping "workers feel they are given the opportunity to do what they do best every day, believe their opinions count, sense that their fellow workers are committed to quality, and make direct connection between their work and their company's mission" (Howard, 1998). A key need for public relations professionals is to help their CEOs understand how to make internal relationship management work effectively for their organizations. In excellent organizations, CEOs and dominant coalitions value and support communication because of an understanding about how communicators can make substantial contributions to strategic management. Without CEOs and dominant coalitions who support and value communication — and who demand two-way communication practices (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995) — there is less possibility for CEOs to attain the benefit of public relations and communication contributing to the bottom line.

The preceding discussion suggests that while organizations are encountering significant changes in the nature of employee in the workplace, CEOs will increasingly consider internal relationships to be significantly important. However, the role of public relations in management, especially in the CEO's eyes, still remains unclear. Many of them do not understand how public relations can contribute to strategic management and the bottom line.

This study examines some of these conceptual concerns about communication, trust and the nature of organizational relationships through a survey of CEOs and top communicators at corporations with more than 1,000 employees. The first, and most basic, research question (RQ) is:

> RQ1: Do clear differences exist between the views of CEOs and top communicators regarding communication, trust, and organizational relationships?

If no clear differences appear between CEOs and top communicators, two additional RQs become important:

> RQ2: What beliefs about communication, trust, and organizational relationships are most clearly linked to different viewpoints about these concerns?

> RQ3: What beliefs about communication, trust, and organizational relationships are held in common across opinion groups?

Method

Data were collected by surveying CEOs and top communicators in six Midwestern states, including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, and Missouri. The sampling frame was initially composed of a list of 536 top corporate communicators obtained from a mailing list service. Organizations in other regions of the U.S. would likely have somewhat different organizational cultures, so this study's

findings need to be applied cautiously to other settings. A pretest sample of twelve names suggested that the list was somewhat out of date. Sampling therefore proceeded by drawing a purposive sample of corporations that maximized variability among types and sizes of organizations, while also approximating proportions of organizations in each state,. The sampling process focused on larger organizations with more than 1,000 employees, so that from the initial 536 companies, 268 remained in the sampling frame. These were chosen to focus on organizations large enough that a top communicator would be crucial for maintaining a successful internal culture. In order to accomplish data collection within available resources, 50 companies were selected, and the names and addresses of both CEOs and top communicators were obtained from the current Ward's Business directory and then verified through telephone calls to the companies. The final list represented 50 CEOs and 50 communicators from companies in manufacturing, food products, insurance, transportation, utilities, and finance. This purposive sample was adequate for the purpose of exploring the similarities and differences between CEOs and communicators. This is because the study's purpose was to identify an opinion typology rather than describe the population proportions of people in different segments of that typology. The first author had used small samples in this approach several times and achieved both satisfactory response rates and data quality that allowed meaningful exploration of the study concepts (Berkowitz & Hristodoulakis, 1999; Berkowitz & Turnmire, 1994).

Survey items were developed from two main sources. First, items were modified from some used by one of the authors in previous informal survey

research in this area. Second, additional items were adapted from those used by Dozier, Grunig and Grunig (1995) for their survey of CEOs and communicators concerning excellence in communication. Twelve survey items examined respondents' values and beliefs about trust, communication, and organizational relationships. Ten of the twelve focused on situations internal to respondents' organizations, while the last two considered relationships outside the organization. This allowed comparing respondents' linking of internal and external views in the analysis. The questionnaire also included one open-ended item that asked respondents about other factors that they considered important for their organization's success in the marketplace. We asked four items about respondents' backgrounds, including (1) if they thought communication managers were part of the management team; (2) how long they had worked for their organizations; (3) their level of job satisfaction; and (4) the actual size of their organization in terms of the number of employees.

The first wave of the survey used a set of individualized postcards informing people in the sample that they would soon receive a survey questionnaire. Three days later, a mailing containing an individualized cover letter, a three-page questionnaire, and a postage-paid reply envelope was sent to those in the sample. Two weeks later, a reminder postcard was sent to those who had not yet replied. In another two weeks, those who had not yet replied were sent another mailing with a cover letter, questionnaire, and return envelope.

In all, 17 usable questionnaires were received from CEOs, with the sample of 51 reduced to 46 because of bad addresses or questionnaires that had been returned

blank. The CEO response rate was 37.0%. Sixteen usable questionnaires were received from communicators, with the sample reduced to 48, for a 33.3% communicator response rate. Three pretest questionnaires from communicators were included in the analysis, which increased their number to 19. Although this response rate is somewhat lower than what was hoped for, this population appears difficult to survey. For example, a 1998 survey of PRSA members in New York yielded only a 26% response rate from its 900 members. The relatively complex survey methodology employed by Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig (1995) in the "Excellence" study of communicators and CEOs yielded a response rate of only 12%.

Again, it is important to restate that this size of response, although it is not adequate for providing descriptive results about the population's responses to survey items, it is adequate for exploring basic differences and commonalties between CEOs and communicators through identification of belief typologies.

Results

Data analysis was accomplished through a cluster analysis of 11 of the 12 main survey items, with CEO and communicator responses combined into the same analysis. The 12th item involved an assessment of organization success and was used later to compare groups rather than create them. This analysis strategy groups respondents according to their response patterns over the range of survey items and allows for CEOs and top communicators to appear in separate groups or to be combined into opinion groups according to the similarities of their opinions. The purpose of cluster analysis is much like using factor analysis to look for groups of people rather than groups of variables. However, cluster analysis creates groups by

bringing cases together, whereas factor analysis works to break apart a sample. This approach is also similar in purpose to Q-methodology (for more on cluster analysis, see Aldenderfer and Blashfield, 1984).

TABLE 1 HERE

Through heuristic methods that examined changes in joining distances, a two-cluster solution was chosen, with 20 people in Cluster 1 and 16 people in Cluster 2. The choice of this small number of clusters both provides a parsimonious interpretation of the results and responds to relatively small sample size of the data. CEOs were evenly divided between the two clusters, with eight in Cluster 1 and nine in Cluster 2. Table 1 presents the distribution of CEOs and top communicators in the two clusters. Communicators were somewhat more common in Cluster 1 (60% of the cluster members), with Cluster 2 somewhat more evenly split between the two groups. This distribution of CEOs and communicators into mixed groups suggests that perceptions of trust, communication and organizational relationships do indeed go beyond this single demographic difference, so that distinctions in perceptions must stem from specific dimensions of the data. This result addresses RQ1 and supports the need for RQ2 and RQ3.

To explore RQ2 and RQ3, which concern the nature of the opinion clusters, item means were calculated for each of the clusters across the 11 clustering items. This information appears in Table 2. RQ2 asked about beliefs related to communication, trust, and organizational relationships that are most clearly linked

to different viewpoints. Two approaches to data interpretation can address this question. First, the clusters can be examined according to the items where they differ most strongly. Here, they are divided by items 2, 6, and 8. Looking at the nature of these three items shows that all address the actual nature of communication within the respondent's organization. In each case, respondents in Cluster 2 believed that communication within their organization mainly served the purpose of bringing employees' into alignment with management policies and actions. Cluster 1 respondents, in contrast, did not view communication this way. This was the only opinion dimension that meaningfully divided the groups.

TABLE 2 HERE

A second approach to understanding the nature of the opinion clusters is to look at the items where their opinions are the strongest (highlighted on Table 2 in boldface). Surprisingly, these items were the same for both clusters (items 5, 9, and 11), with responses approaching +4 on the scale, which corresponds to "agree strongly." In each case, respondents believed that:

1) Internal relationships are influenced by the level of trust within an organization.
2) Internal relationships are influenced by the quality of communication within an organization.
3) The quality of internal relationships impacts the quality of external relationships.

To paint a portrait of the opinion clusters so far, members of both clusters hold similar views about the dimensions where they feel most strongly, yet the clusters

are also separated by their perceptions of the purpose of communication in relation to management policies. Of the two groups, Cluster 2 respondents see communication more as a management tool than as a tool for maintaining relationships within their organization. It is not clear whether Cluster 2 respondents feel that this is a bad thing, however. It is interesting to add that Cluster 1 -- those people who felt that communication was not a tool of management -- had a somewhat larger proportion of communicators, while Cluster 2 -- those who felt communication served management's goals -- had a somewhat larger proportion of CEOs. It is important to mention that the differences in proportions between these clusters is not large enough to tie the contrast simply to CEOs versus communicators.

RQ3 asked about common beliefs across clusters. This question was partially addressed in the previous discussion of the strongest beliefs within each cluster. However, these strongly held common values were not where the two groups reached their greatest consensus (except for item 11 concerning internal and external relationships). In addition, the two clusters held highly similar attitudes for items 3 and 7. Item 3 concerns the role of communication in building teamwork, where both clusters saw the value of communication. Item 7 also found both clusters expressing the belief that communication fosters cooperative working relationships.

To summarize this discussion of results so far, the data analysis supports this study's conceptual framework linking communication and trust to quality relationships. The results show a similar belief that communication helps build and maintain a sense of common purpose within the organization. Although the team-

building role of communication is among the commonly held values of CEOs and top communicators, nearly half the respondents (16 of 36) nonetheless saw communication serving management in actual practice.

TABLE 3 HERE

Another strategy for understanding the nature of the clusters is to compare the two groups' for items that were not used to create the clusters. Both items used here assess respondents' feelings toward their organization. Responses to these items appear in Table 3. For the overall assessment of stakeholder relationships, both groups expressed a similar response close to a +3, representing moderate agreement that stakeholder relationships were positive. For the assessment of their own job satisfaction, both clusters scored between "somewhat" and "very" satisfied, with members of Cluster 2 reflecting a slightly more positive opinion. In all, these measures again show more similarity than difference across clusters.

To summarize overall results, the data analyzed in relation to the RQs found the following:

1) There was no clear split between CEOs and top communicators with regard to communication, trust, and organizational relationships, although there were differences in viewpoints among respondents;

2) Main beliefs about communication, trust, and organizational relationships centered on the actual nature and purpose of communication within the organization. There, respondents split on the notion of communication as a tool of management.

3) Common beliefs between clusters regarding ideals about communication, trust, and relationships were clearly the central thrust of responses to this

study's survey. There were far more similarities than differences in responses to the survey items among CEOs and communicators.

Discussion and Conclusions

This paper set out to explore the views of CEOs and top communicators in relation to trust, communication, and quality internal relationships. We explored these notions about trust, communication, and quality relationships through a small-scale survey of CEOs and top communicators. Although the small, purposive sample represents only an approximation of the population it studied, it nonetheless sheds some light on the research questions. Key among the answers were two findings. First, there was no clear split between CEOs and top communicators in their views about these dimensions. Second, a set of core values exists among both groups that supports the positive effects of trust and quality communication within the organization. Here, respondents saw a connection between the quality of internal relationships and the organization's success with its external publics.

Despite these beliefs, a clear contrast appeared among respondents regarding the actual purpose of communication in their organization. Overall, respondents were almost evenly split about whether communication's chief purpose was to build support for management initiatives, or to build internal relationships. Although the trend was not particularly strong, communicators seemed more likely to see communication as building relationships, while CEOs were somewhat more likely to see communication as serving management's interests. In essence, if the literature suggests that organizations are still in negotiation about the place of communication in building and maintaining everyday working relationships, then

this study lends support to the idea that organizations and the styles of their managers are still in transition.

A synthesis of the literature discussed here, along with this study's findings appears in our "Excellent Internal Relationship Management model," as illustrated in Figure 1. This model for managing internal relationships (adapted from Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995, p. 48) involves a combination of three main components:

1) core corporate values, which include trust, two-way communication, and quality relationships;

(2) win-win outcomes, based on mutual understanding, and mutual benefit;

(3) key parties, including the CEO, dominant coalition (including public relations and communication specialists), and employees.

FIGURE 1 HERE

To implement this model of excellent internal relationship management, it first requires having a senior-level corporate communications officer who plays an active role at the decision-making table and reports directly to the organization's most senior management and the CEO (Wright, 1995). Involving this top communicator in the dominant coalition is crucial for accomplishing "advanced practices (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995).

To do so, the top communicator needs to work at promoting trust in both the organization's people and its system. With a position at the decision-making table, the top communicator can stand up for open and honest communications, with the goal of building quality relationships with employees and external publics (Landes,

1998). In an organization with excellent internal relationship management, the relationship between the organization and its employees requires regular attention.

The top communicator is also the key to creating a better understanding in the CEO, and other members of the senior management team toward the public relations and communication functions. Likewise, the top communicator will help facilitate mutual understanding between the CEO and employees. When there is mutual understanding, each party understands the reason that the other acts in a particular way, and is more likely to accept the other's behavior (Baker, 1994). With improved mutual understanding, top communicators should have a clearer sense of which benefits their CEOs seek, and CEOs, in turn, should have a clearer sense of which benefits communicators seek.

This research contributes to a greater understanding of excellent internal relationship management and at least some of the factors that affect the process. However, there is still a need for scholars to study how long-term organizational relationships can be achieved through mutual understanding, as well as mutual benefit between the organization and its employees, and how effective building of internal relationships can lead to major beneficial results externally. Future research efforts in these areas will provide a better understanding of the need for public relations and communication input in the successful internal-external relationship management. It is important to again mention that this study was based on a small, purposive data set. Future work should draw on larger sample that can test the ideas presented here in a broader context.

# # #

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Table 1: Crosstabulation of CEOs and top communicators by cluster

Group	Cluster 1 (n=20)	Cluster 2 (n=16)
Communicators	60.0%	43.8%
CEOs	40.0	56.3
TOTAL	100%	100.1

Table 2: Comparison of clustering item means between clusters

Survey Item	Cluster 1 (n=20)	Cluster 2 (n=16)	Difference
1. Employees in my organization believe that the level of trust is high.	2.25	2.56	0.31
2. Communication between superiors and subordinates within my organization tends to be one-way.	-2.15	-0.44	1.71*
3. My organization tends to communicate in a way that promotes effective teamwork.	2.25	2.19	0.06
4. Communication within my organization promotes a trusting work environment.	2.30	2.63	0.33
5. The quality of relationships within my organization is influenced by the level of trust.	4.00	3.69	0.31
6. The main purpose of communication in my organization is to get employees aligned with management priorties.	0.90	2.88	1.98**
7. Communication within my organization does a good job of fostering cooperative working relationships.	2.25	2.31	0.06
8. Communication within my organization is designed mainly to help employees view management actions favorably.	-2.80	2.00	4.80**
9. The quality of relationships within my organization is influenced by the quality of communication.	3.20	3.56	0.36
10. Employees in my organization believe that the quality of communication is high.	1.90	2.13	0.23
11. The quality of the relationships within our organization has a measureable impact on the quality of relationships we have with our customers.	3.75	3.75	0.00

NOTE: Responses to items were based on an 11-point scale ranging from +5 (agree strongly) to -5 (disagree strongly).

For t-test comparison of means, * = $p \leq .05$ ** = $p \leq .01$

Table 3: Comparison of attitudes toward the organization between clusters

Item	Cluster 1 (n=20)	Cluster 2 (n=16)
Assessment of organization's relationship with stakeholders.	2.70	2.88
Job satisfaction	1.45	1.25

NOTES: Assessment of relationships was measured through the same +5/-5 scale as the 11 clustering items. Higher positive scores represent a more favorable assessment of the relationship.

Job satisfaction was measured by asking respondents if they were "very satisfied," "somewhat satisfied," "somewhat dissatisfied," or "very dissatisfied," where "very satisfied" was scored as a 1 and "very dissatisfied" scored as a 4.

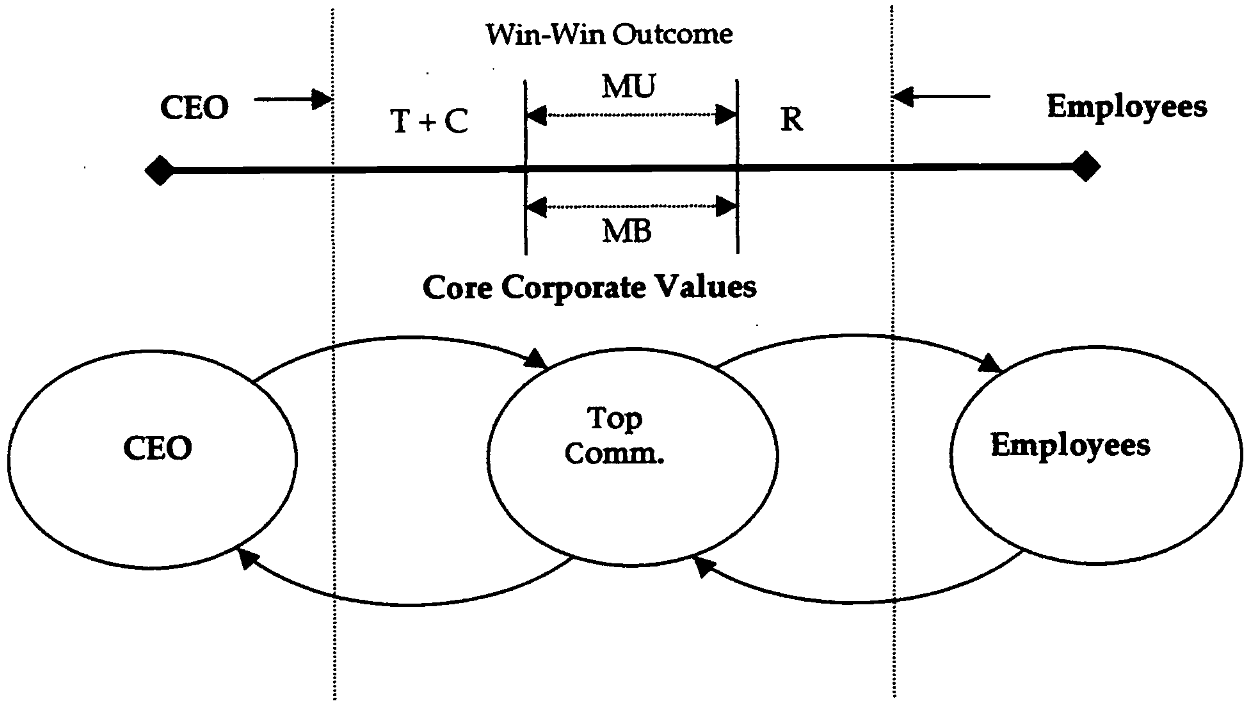

Figure 1. The Excellent Internal Relationship Management model is built from three components: (1) Core corporate values of trust (T), communication (C), and quality relationships (R); (2) A win-win outcome goal of mutual understanding (MU), and mutual benefit (MB); and (3) the key parties involved: the CEO, top communicator, and employees. Arrows indicate relationship interactions.

PR

Public Relations or Social Marketing: International Implications

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Abstract

National development campaigns, called social marketing, are a form of international public relations, funded from grants and foundations. Most PR texts refer only briefly, if at all, to social marketing/international development programs. The confusion with marketing may inhibit rather than promote attaining the goals of the campaign. PR strategies and tactics, if more systematically applied, could enhance achieving program goals and objectives.

Introduction

Public relations as a profession and as an academic discipline in the United States is a relative newcomer like many of the social sciences. "Public relations as an academic discipline is in its eighth decade.... Public Relations research, in a systematic context, is a more recent activity. *Public Relations Review,* the first scholarly Journal devoted to research in and commentary on the discipline, was established in 1975" (Pratt, 1994, p. 221). Many of the social sciences share theory and the public relations area is no exception. Many of the theories of mass communication, organizational communication, and other disciplines are studied in the public relations area. Diffusion of innovations theory, agenda-setting theory, media effects theory, hierarchy of needs theory, spiral of silence, adoption theory, and many marketing concepts, to name a few, are discussed across these disciplines and considered and re-considered in implementing the practice of these various communications-based disciplines.

This research first demonstrates how public relations and social marketing theory intermingle, notes how increased awareness of and emphasis on public relations theory might benefit social marketing campaigns, and reviews specific national development campaigns as examples. In reviewing specifically oral rehydration campaigns, some aspects of those already employed are found to be applicable to the public relations discipline. Sometimes other public relations theories, strategies, and tactics could be used to perhaps increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the

campaigns. These development campaigns have come to be called "social marketing," which is more a business school title than a communications title. In public relations, many marketing tools and tactics are used, but there are differences between marketing and public relations. In fact, some movement toward cooperation as well as a resistance to such a movement in the form of integrated marketing communications seems to be welling up from both the business and the communications disciplines. In the development area, the two are more closely connected than what occurs in the for-profit area. In development what occurs or should occur is not simply a marketing campaign but also a public relations campaign. Carried out by a not-for-profit or government agency, it includes public relations as well as marketing, and the campaigns would benefit from some additional theories, tactics and strategies found in public relations in addition to the communications and marketing theories now employed. A different vocabulary of reference with less negative connotations needs to be employed. But concerns about terminology are not new to development. The term development itself, by the way, is a public relations term used for fund-raising and donor relations. How to refer to the nations where social marketing occurs is a case in point. Third World, Underdeveloped, Developing — all carry baggage that is best not included and we are searching for a better, less judgmental way to describe these countries.

Part I: The intermingling of marketing and public relations as applied to development: Defining the terms

According to the Academy for Educational Development (AED), social marketing as an approach to planned social change premiered in 1971 in an article in the *Journal of Marketing*. Social marketing is described as "the 'design, implementation, and management of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving the consideration of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research' - in short, the application of the full spectrum of commercial marketing techniques and management to the advancement of a social cause" (Smith, 1992, p. 37: McKee, 1988, p. 8).

Social marketing as a tool for development can be found in many programs administered in many countries. Overseas, the goals usually fall in the areas of nutrition and health (AIDS awareness and containment, oral rehydration therapy to treat diarrheal dehydration in infants and children, birth control/family planning), education (literacy, parental involvement with learning) and even agriculture (farming methodology to increase crop yield). In the United States, social marketing programs are more often connected with the health and education areas, but the campaigns concern different topics, including programs in smoking cessation, blood pressure awareness, alcohol abuse, heart healthy lifestyles, physical fitness, adult literacy (Kotler & Roberto, 1989). The emphasis of social marketing campaigns is most often on marketing principles including market research, the four Ps-- product. place, price, and promotion – the exchange theory, and audience segmentation (McKee, 1988, pp. 8-11). While these are marketing principles, similar activities are carried on in public relations except for the exchange theory. Cutlip, Center and Broom

devote more than two pages of text to explaining the differences between marketing and public relations (1994, pp. 6-8). Yet, these authors also discuss "Public Relations as Marketing" (Ibid., pp. 504-505). The differences can be summarized in that marketing includes a transaction, "two parties trading values," quoting Philip Kotler (Cutlip et al., 1994, p. 7), and that marketing is a line function, involved directly with placing a product in exchange for something of value, while public relations is a staff support function. Cutlip, Center and Broom state:

> In summary, marketing focuses on exchange relationships with customers that lead to quid pro quo transactions, meeting customer demands and achieving organizational economic objectives. Public relations covers a broad range of relationships and goals with many publics: employees, investors, neighbors, special-interest groups, governments, and many more. Effective public relations contributes to the marketing effort by maintaining a hospitable social and political environment. Likewise, successful marketing and satisfied customers make good relations with others easier to build and maintain.

To achieve organizational goals, every organization must attend to its public relations and marketing functions. Each contributes by building and maintaining the different relationships essential for organization survival and growth (1994, p. 8).

Markets, needed in marketing, and publics, needed in public relations, are different concepts according to McElreath. He notes that while they both describe segments of a population, they are not identical concepts. "Because publics recognize a common set of problems and want to be better organized to do something about their situation, publics turn to organizations for solutions; publics seek out organizations" (1993, p. 99). On the other hand,

he sees organizations seeking markets. Publics, he says, "often have a way of pushing themselves into the picture and making people take notice. The transition from latent, to aware, and then to active public is an organizing process.... Markets can be developed and refined, but they do not transform themselves into organizations; publics do" (Ibid.).

Since development is more concerned with publics, not markets, and rarely expects quid pro quo economic exchange, "social public relations" might be a more accurate term. No matter what it is called, the best of both disciplines can and should be employed to reach development goals, such as saving infants lives with ORT, vaccinating against small pox, or teaching more successful farming methods or sanitation methods. Helitzer-Allen notes that social marketing sometimes sells an "idea" rather than a product (p. 7) so it is easy to see that this is a flexible definition when applied to international development programs. In fact, if social marketing programs really emphasize the marketing aspects over the public relations aspects, this could lead to distrust and disillusionment when problems occur as in the Nestlé campaign, referred to later.

Many public relations advocates, practitioners and academics, stress the differences between marketing and public relations and advocate their separateness. In one of the most extensive undertakings in the history of public relations research, the IABC Excellence study reported that of the excellent organizations studied the marketing function and the public relations functions were separate (Grunig, 1992, 19). This study, costing in the neighborhood of one-half million dollars (US), explored the public

relations function's contribution to the bottom line and identified factors contributing to organizational success. James Grunig, who edited the study, has repeatedly stated the importance of the two functions and the importance of public relations being a separate, but cooperative function, like the personnel and the legal departments in an organization, for instance. As more organizations have experienced budget cuts, the debate over the two functions has grown and it has become more important for public relations to measure results in relationship to the bottom line as marketing has for years. As a result. many more articles and books are talking about each function cooperating so that the "best of both worlds" can be used to support the organization. Ehling, White and Grunig discuss extensively the debate between marketing and public relations and some of the problems with a marketing dominant view of an organization's communications activities (Grunig, 1992, Chapter 13). Since social marketing has goals and objectives which more parallel not-for-profit goals and objectives than business ones, the process should emphasize the public relations activities and, in fact, be called social public relations. Both functions can add important elements to the campaigns, but the public relations function most closely fits the goals and objectives of the model.

In 1991, Thomas L. Harris published the *Marketer's Guide to Public Relations*. In a more recent article (1993), Harris says, I take the view that marketing and public relations can, should and must be compatible. I make a clear distinction between those public relations functions which support marketing which I call MPR [Marketing Public Relations] and the other public relations

activities that define the corporation's relationships with its non-customer publics which I label CPR (p. 14). He relates that more and more companies are forming what he calls a hybrid function which allows the public relations activities that support marketing to work directly with marketing. He calls for an integration of the two functions. Harris says the marketer must "speak with one voice not only to consumers but also to all those who influence their purchase decisions. That means all components of the communications process must work together" (Ibid., p. 15). E. W. Brody also discusses the need to integrate the marketing and public relations functions as a result of specialized media and fragmented audiences. He especially notes "those who persist in applying traditional mass communication techniques to induce change in human behavior will be applying not only the weakest of available tools but one that continues to decline in influence" (1994, p. 2 1). Since developmental work is most often involved in trying to increase or eliminate different behaviors, his call to integrate marketing and public relations has special merit. Grunig and Hunt describe the relationship of public relations to social marketing this way:

> Many nonprofit organizations--especially colleges and universities, hospitals and even government agencies do what marketing people call "social marketing" under the direction of a public relations manager. Because marketing is part of the public relations role in these organizations, public relations people working in that setting need to understand marketing theory as well as public relations theory. Most public relations technicians--especially those with no training in marketing--do promotions work with the press agentry or two-way asymmetric model as their guide. The two-way symmetric model can work in marketing as well as public relations--and modern marketing theory stresses just such a model. Indeed, most marketing theorists define

> marketing as an *exchange relationship* between buyer and seller. (Emphasis in original, 1984, pp. 357-358).

Grunig's finding that social marketing fits a press agentry or two-way asymmetric model of public relations demonstrates well the relationship between public relations and social marketing. In addition, this supports my theory that social marketing could be improved with a more rigorous application of the two-way symmetric model. In this model, the purpose of the campaign is mutual understanding with balanced effects on the groups involved. The research is extensive, both formative and summative, checking exposure, content, attitudes and understanding. The two-way symmetric model is used most often currently in the United States in the regulated businesses, like the utilities, which may parallel conditions of many of the projects for international development, in that they too are often regulated by local government and often have a monopoly on the effort. Also, Grunig's reference is to social marketing in the United States. Most of the social marketing in development lacks the public relations manager and that expertise he or she has to offer. (See Grunig's Characteristics of Four Models of Public Relations. Appendix I.)

Part II: Review of public relations theory as applied to social marketing campaigns

The two-way symmetric model is the model currently being studied and developed in public relations theory, although academicians and practitioners both suggest that no one model fits all situations. This model, however, has several advantages when it comes to social marketing. The most obvious is that by seeking mutual understanding between the organization and the publics

/markets, there is less room to attempt to manipulate or control the people involved, an ethical concern always, but a concern especially in international development projects where cross-cultural decisions are being made. In addition, because most social marketing situations are not competitive in the sense used in the business world (i.e., The Family of the Future program in Egypt doesn't care which birth control method is used or whose brand of condom, just so one is used.) this model best fits the social marketing situation.

Cutlip, Center, and Broom compare Grunig's two way symmetrical public relations model to the open systems model and to what occurs at the third step of the four step public relations process: the action strategy. This strategy "concentrates on adjustment and adaptation within the organization" (Cutlip et al., 1994, p. 384). In social marketing, this means that the sponsoring organization, government or not-for-profit, will listen to the needs and wants of the publics and respond accordingly. The goals and objectives of the sponsoring organization will be tailored to fit the goals and objectives of the publics being served. While this may seem simplistic and basic, for example, "give them what they want," marketing and public relations are often accused of creating markets where none exist. (The good marketer can sell refrigerators to the Eskimos: after all, it is bear proof! In our consumer-based economy, we have become good at convincing people that any jeans won't do, they must be GUESS or Gloria Vanderbilt.) In social marketing, on the other hand, public relations can first create an awareness of the social problem among the local people

and offer acceptable and useful solutions, rather than just creating a market and offering a product.

For credibility of the effort in international development programs and social marketing, where the long term goals and objectives are not a better bottom line for this quarter, but a better world for all, this is an important concept that must be practiced assiduously. And, if the local people do not perceive the social problem in the same way as the development personnel, the situation can be researched in more detail so that the local people's perceptions of the problems are addressed with critical solutions. "The first assumption basic to this approach is that change is as likely within the organization as it is on the part of the organization's publics. Another assumption of this approach is that changes result in 'win-win' outcomes. meaning that both sides in an organization-publics relationship can benefit" (Ibid., p 386).

This is especially important in developmental campaigns to insure that the goals and objectives are not driven by top-down desires and that the real needs and wants of the people are considered, not assumed or manipulated. For example, to stop or even slow the AIDS epidemic is a goal in the best interests of everyone in the world. The strategies to do this, however, must also be in the best interest of everyone. Establishing isolated AIDS colonies similar to the "leper" colonies might help reach the goal, but as an objective, it is not in the best interests of those with AIDS or their loved ones. While this may seem extreme as an example, when the norms of one culture are imposed on a different culture, the results sometimes are as extreme. A real

life example might be the Nestlé formula promotion. In countries with access to enough wealth to buy and mix the formula properly and the access to clean water and necessary conditions for bottling and bottle storage, Nestlé's efforts might be a good objective toward the goal of healthier babies. In the African countries, which lacked such access, it was a death sentence for many babies (Huber, 1978, p. 27-29; Cutlip et al., 1994, p. 346; Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 51).

Both marketing and public relations fields have borrowed from each other extensively. Clara Degan edited a book on incorporating marketing principles in public relations for IABC in 1987. For those who argue that public relations campaigns will not "move products" and therefore ignore public relations in favor of marketing alone, Ilyssa Levins notes the importance of using both marketing and public relations. She suggests that "a strategic PR campaign designed to sell product should provide several waves of compelling news to give reporters a reason to file another story about the same product" (Levins, 1993, p. 18) and that by providing issues management, a public relations strategy, crises can often be avoided altogether or minimized (Ibid., p. 19). Issues management is a public relations function that monitors the total environment so that issues might be identified early and strategic responses can be prepared to solve the problem or respond to the opportunity. Cutlip, Center and Broom define issues management as "the proactive process of anticipating, identifying, evaluating and responding to public policy issues that affect organizations and their publics" (Cutlip et al.. 1994, p. 16).

When Harris calls for the integration of the marketing and public relations function, most of his emphasis is on the publicity role of public relations, which may or may not be applicable to the developmental campaign depending on the availability of the mass media in various countries and the level of exposure to the media of the target audiences. Several of his other examples for integrating public relations strategies, however, do have an important role to play in social public relations campaigns. Harris calls for providing value added customer service. His example is the Butterball Turkey Talkline (1993, p. 16). While a telephone hotline will not work in many developing countries, the value-added aspect works in such situations as those with visiting nurses or other trained expert providers who can provide the value-added service to the consumer.

He also suggests that the campaign influence the influentials. His example is a campaign to overcome the notion that white bread is unhealthy by undertaking a study by expert dietitians and releasing the results directly to the American Dietetic Association members at their annual meeting. This is much like demonstrating to local doctors the effectiveness of oral rehydration therapy so that they will "buy into" the treatment. Another suggestion Harris makes is to "[d]efend products at risk and give consumers permission to buy" (1993, p. 16). His example here is McDonald's polystyrene foam clamshell package being replaced with paper. McDonald's formed a joint task force to study the solid waste problem with the Environmental Defense Fund to come up with the package changeover. In the case of social public relations, the overseeing agency often works with a local agency

to study the situation first and make a decision that is more likely to be accepted because of the local agency's involvement and endorsement.

Part III: Review of specific campaigns

What is happening in social public relations programs is that in many cases both public relations and marketing are being integrated into the campaign to promote healthier and more desirable behavior. The problem, after a review of several campaigns, seems to be that the public relations aspects of the campaigns are not applied systematically in a single campaign nor are they applied to all the campaigns. As a result, the emphasis is on the marketing aspects which brings on the questions of who desires the behavior change and what reasons underlie the desire for change. In some cases, even the marketing efforts are not systematically applied and would benefit from a more professional marketing approach (McKee, 1988, p. 134).

One important social public relations campaign is the campaign to persuade mothers to give infants, suffering from often fatal diarrheal dehydration, the oral rehydration therapy (ORT). Both McKee and Fox review these campaigns. Films are one of the main communication tools used in these efforts. Several films were reviewed. One, available from Development through Self-Reliance DSR), Inc., entitled "A Special Drink for Diarrhea You Can Make It Yourself," also dealt with this problem. The rapid dehydration of infants, the high number of infant deaths in developing countries attributed to this dehydration, the lack of availability of intravenous rehydration in some areas, the rapid reversal of the

health threat with oral rehydration therapy, and the availability of the product or the ingredients to make the product at home, all make this an important and, it would seem, a somewhat easy behavior to introduce. McKee quotes AED (1984) as saying that the simple sugar-salt solution (ORS) helps in 95 percent of the cases and is much less costly than the clinic-based intravenous method (McKee, 1988, p. 5 1). Even though almost any mother, literate or not, could recognize the symptoms and mix up the ORS, the behavioral changes necessary were slow to come, using nonmarketing methods, according to McKee's sources (Ibid.). The cultural contexts are so diverse and the impact of those contexts are so overwhelming that the research must be done thoroughly and carefully to determine what will work and what will work the best. McKee relates somewhat better results with social public relations in a 1980 and 1981 (starting dates) campaigns in Gambia and Honduras. Fox relates the results when a social public relations approach in 1988 in Egypt is used rather than education via the health care providers at the clinics.

In McKee's example, the "Academy for Educational Development (AED) was contracted by USAID to undertake the Mass Media and Health Practices (MMHP) program with the ministries of Health in The Gambia and Honduras..." (McKee, 1988, p. 67). One of the goals of the program was "to contribute significantly toward the prevention and treatment of acute diarrhea in isolated rural areas of both countries" (Ibid. p. 68). Both countries experienced significant child mortality from diarrheal dehydration. In both cases, the ORS had to be mixed, either from a packet or from scratch, and mothers had to be taught the procedure, meaning in

marketing terms, there was not a product for sale. The price also was not the conventional marketing exchange. but rather "a complex set of behaviors" (Ibid., p. 70) and McKee determined that price was "very high to traditional, rural mothers" (Ibid.) in both areas. Both countries' campaigns included extensive formative research, standard in both marketing and public relations. This formative research showed the need for multiple target publics (Markets seems an inappropriate term since no product was purchased.) since, for example, mothers were not the only caregivers involved and health care workers also needed to be convinced of the usefulness of the procedure. This research also led to multiple messages in multiple contexts to complement cultural norms and beliefs. Many of the messages were pre-tested and altered as needed, a common practice in marketing and public relations. In both countries, a full-fledged multi-media campaign was undertaken including slogans, volunteers, contests and other methods of building awareness, interest, trial, evaluation and adoption. An extensive summative evaluation done concurrently by a separate agency, in this case, Stanford University's Institute for Communications Research, was undertaken. This type of summative research is also common to both marketing and public relations. Baseline evaluations concerning access, knowledge and practice were undertaken and showed access and exposure to the intended audience was high (Ibid., p. 77). In addition, the awareness was high and the procedures were learned by a substantial percentage of the target publics (Ibid., pp. 78-79). More than 60% of the mothers in both countries adopted ORS but little evidence was found of permanent change in feeding procedures during bouts of

diarrhea and while there was some drop in infant mortality from diarrhea, the investigators concluded some of the drop may have been attributed to oral rehydration intervention, but the results were difficult to confirm (Ibid., p. 81). The deteriorating conditions in both countries contributed to other nutritional complications and monthly interviews as part of the evaluation process may have been a strengthening factor in the process. The only real results that were demonstrable, according to McKee, were "that it is possible to use a variety of media to put across simple messages which mothers can learn" (Ibid., p. 83).

Fox relates the campaign in Egypt as undertaken by the National Control of Diarrheal Diseases Project (NCDDP). In this campaign, the "NCDDP has in a very few years created national awareness and generated use of oral rehydration therapy (ORT) through mass media advertising, subsidized production and distribution of packets of oral rehydration salts (ORS), and training programs for physicians and other health workers" (Fox, 1988, p. 95). Fox notes many favorable factors in Egypt that contributed to the success of the social public relations campaign of ORT. As in the other examples, infant mortality is high and diarrheal dehydration is a major factor. Intervention to save children's lives, according to Fox, "receive full religious and cultural support" (Ibid., p. 97).

In addition, Egypt's population concentration, medical infrastructure, media usage, educational levels, and governmental goals have all contributed positively to an environment more receptive and more adaptable to social public relations campaigns than most, according to Fox. Even the placement and price of the

commercials is helpful. Egypt was also a country receiving massive US foreign aid which needed "useful and mutually acceptable projects" (Fox, 1988, p. 98). Fox also notes that all the pre-existing criteria for success are present in the ORT campaign situation in Egypt, citing Kotler and Rothschild's conditions that support behavior change (Ibid., p. 99). The NCDDP is a special unit of the Egyptian government's Ministry of Health. The price was affordable (US 35¢ for packet of ten); the product was consistent in packaging, simplifying training; commercial availability and home administration made place easy, promotion included the general public, emphasizing those involved in child care, physicians and pharmacists. The research up front was considerable and done locally. Apparently pre-testing was not done or did not show problems which occurred with one spokesperson, a comedian, who was dropped and the media campaign revamped. It costs a great deal more to do this than to adequately pre-test this campaign (for example, with focus groups) to avoid this kind of a problem, but not all problems always show up. Both conventional marketing and public relations theory call for this pre-testing. The second spokesperson was well received. Training centers were established at medical facilities which helped overcome some physician skepticism that ORT was too low tech, too good to be true (Ibid., p. 102). As in Gambia and Honduras, awareness was up and use was, too. In another evaluation process, "dependence on intravenous rehydration in hospitals has been virtually replaced by use of ORT" (Ibid.). At the time Fox wrote this report (1988), tracking on mortality statistics was inconclusive, but most evaluation looked positive.

This campaign also helped the Egyptian government change the way it had aimed health care programs only at physicians (Fox, 1988, p. 103). The program does need to be continued, since this is an on-going problem, and there is some indication that because of the governmental involvement the program will continue. Some physicians still do not support ORT and use other, largely useless, and possibly harmful treatments (Ibid., p. 107). All in all, the campaign in Egypt certainly increased awareness and adoption, however, and seems well based for continuation.

What could public relations theory have contributed to this process beyond what was used and beyond marketing theory? While neither Fox's nor McKee's summaries can cover all the details, the campaigns on the surface look like well researched and implemented public relations campaigns. Interestingly, McKee comes up with a model (See Appendix IV.) that fits closely the emphasis on feedforward of the four step public relations process. It is an adaptation of the marketing model (similar to the public relations four step process. Cutlip et al., 1994, p. 318) intermixed with the learning process approach (McKee, 1988, Figure 2, p. 168). (These two models are included as Appendix II and III.) The feedforward process is documented by the Benchmark Evaluation Model (Cutlip et al., 1994, p. 427) where the summative evaluations become the formative evaluations for the next program cycle.

While it sometimes seems that we must jump into a project without adequate formative research and determination of a precampaign benchmark, especially in development areas, because lives are at stake, we cannot "know where we are going until we

are sure of where we have been," to use an old phrase. Establishing more detailed knowledge in these cases of the actual infant mortality rates and how they are determined might have allowed for a more definitive evaluation in the McKee examples. In addition, going back with intermediate benchmark surveys to see program progress is often another method public relations uses to be more specific in evaluation and more open to adapting the program in process as needed.

Public relations theory also calls for additional evaluation in addition to the surveys, McKee reports the findings were not trusted because, in light of the campaign, parents may have been unwilling to put diarrhea as a cause of death. Maybe other methods of evaluation could have been instituted to determine cause of death. For instance, if the infants' bodies were handled by morgues, some type of survey of those institutions might have been undertaken. This must be carefully monitored, which is a must in a public relations evaluation process. The additional Egyptian evaluation of infant mortality over time looks to be useful. Also, some profit does accrue to NCDDP which will fund special projects approved by the Ministry of Health and USAID (Fox, 1988, p. 107).

The jingle used in the film, which actually teaches the mothers how to make ORS, is an example of another good tool for educating. It is how children in America learn their ABCs. A proven model for learning, it is often used for product recognition in marketing, as well. ("Kids love Armour hot dogs!") It would be interesting to know if this film was included with any of the campaign's other tactics.

Edward Bernays' concept of semantic tyranny would be appropriate in these campaigns. Since the words used for ORT or ORS, or products or the programs in the native languages vary and are not included in the literature, it is not known if careful attention to wording was applied in the field. Certainly the development officials did not use this concept with any of their names or labeling in English. Semantic tyranny or "words rule" means that one chooses the words that create the right idea and position the product, program, or behavior correctly in people's minds. (The government tried to give us the "Public Hygiene Department." The "Department of Health and Human Services" is a big improvement. It also beats the use of the word "Welfare"! Reagan tried for semantic tyranny with the "Strategic Defense Initiative." The media did him one better with "Star Wars.") Calling a program the "right" name could help people understand its importance and accept it.

Conclusions

Applied public relations theory certainly will not eliminate all problems in this international picture. For public relations to be truly effective in the cross-cultural setting, more must be done to train the public relations experts in cross-cultural practice. John Burk discussed international public relations in the *Public Relations Quarterly* and noted that international public relations has fallen far behind multinational corporations (MNCs) and calls for cross cultural training for these practitioners. The solution may be to give more public relations training to the development experts in following both public relations and marketing theory in a model such as the one created by McKee.

While public relations is done to a limited extent in the social marketing process, the field should be recognized as an area where public relations is more appropriate than marketing as the primary mover and more emphasis put on basic public relations processes and the diffusion of innovations or the adoption process, more goals and objectives could be set and met in the social marketing arena.

In addition, a more open approach supporting the two-way symmetrical model in the feedforward, multi-implementation form suggested by McKee and a willingness to use all possible theories, whether from the marketing or the public relations discipline, and to use all possible channels, whether mass media including news, advertising, and entertainment, interpersonal media, specialized media, new technology, folk media and any others available, must continue for these projects to work efficiently and effectively.

Also the development field should take Edward Bernays' idea of the rule of words to heart and develop a vocabulary with more positive connotations to fit the unique and important job it is doing world-wide to make this a better place for all of us. Public relations professionals, if they were to become aware of this field and begin to be more involved, could play a role in this renaming, also, and it might be an opportunity, as in many of the domestic not-for-profit and social welfare campaigns, to show public relations as a problem solving profession in a very favorable light in terms of contributions to international society.

Appendix I

Grunig's Characteristics of Four Models of Public Relations. Found in Grunig and Hunt, *Managing Public Relations, p. 22.*

TABLE 2–1 Characteristics of Four Models of Public Relations

	Model			
Characteristic	*Press Agentry/ Publicity*	*Public Information*	*Two-Way Asymmetric*	*Two-Way Symmetric*
Purpose	Propaganda	Dissemination of information	Scientific persuasion	Mutual understanding
Nature of Communication	One-way; complete truth not essential	One-way; truth important	Two-way; imbalanced effects	Two-way; balanced effects
Communication Model	Source → Rec.	Source → Rec.	Source ⇄ Rec. Feedback	Group ⇄ Group
Nature of Research	Little; "counting house"	Little; readability, readership	Formative; evaluative of attitudes	Formative; evaluative of understanding
Leading Historical Figures	P. T. Barnum	Ivy Lee	Edward L. Bernays	Bernays, educators, professional leaders
Where Practiced Today	Sports, theatre, product promotion	Government; nonprofit associations, business	Competitive business; agencies	Regulated business; agencies
Estimated Percentage of Organizations Practicing Today	15%	50%	20%	15%

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Appendix II

Four-Step Public Relations Process from Cutlip, Center and Broom, *Effective Public Relations* (7th ed.), p. 318.

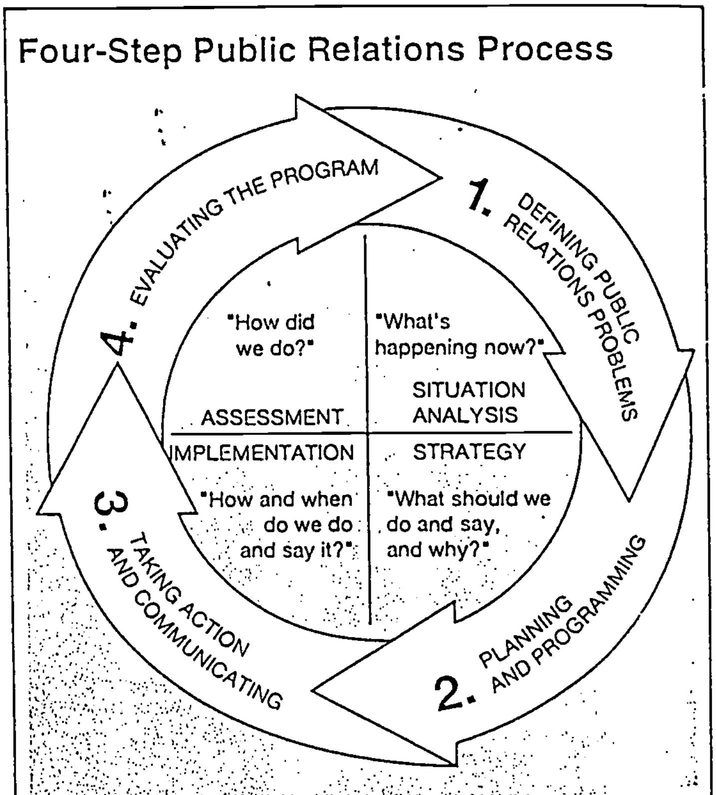

Figure 10–1

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Appendix III

The Marketing Process as used in McKee, *Social Marketing in International Development: A Critical Review, p. 22.*

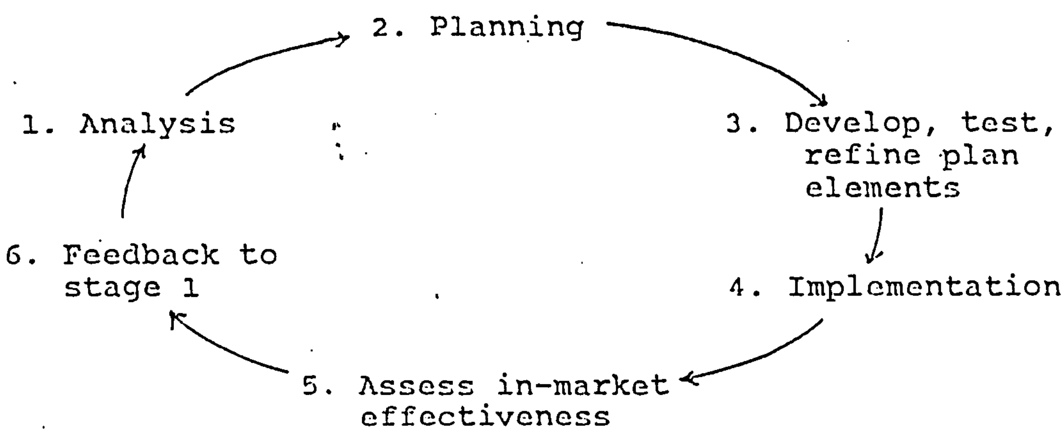

FIGURE 1 - THE MARKETING PROCESS
(Source: SOMARC, 1985, p. 4)

Appendix IV

Multiple step Community-based Marketing Process, in McKee, *Social Marketing in International Development: A Critical Review*, p. 168.

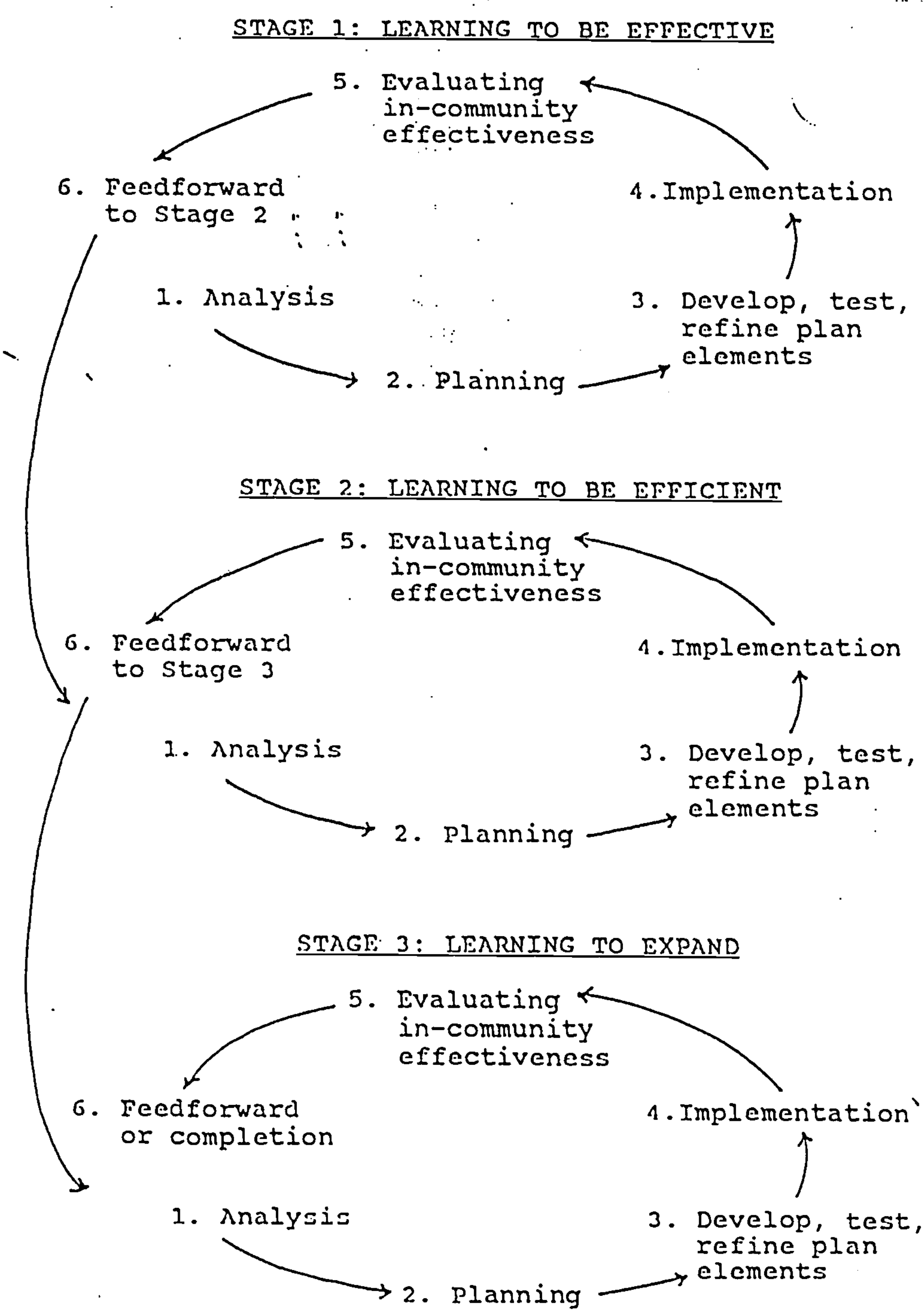

FIGURE 2 - A COMMUNITY-BASED MARKETING PROCESS

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An Innovative Look at Gender in Public Relations:

Examining Relationships between Gender and Source Credibility in Employee Communication Messages and Media

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An Innovative Look at Gender in Public Relations:
Examining Relationships between Gender and Source Credibility in Employee Communication Messages and Media

Gender differences between women and men have served as the focal point for many public relations research studies within the past two decades, and much of this research has paralleled a sort of feminization of public relations, stimulated considerably by a large influx of women into the field. More women practice public relations than men today in the U.S., but in 1962 only one-quarter of the nation's public relations workforce was female (Smith, 1968). Gender parity was achieved in 1982 (Dozier, L. Grunig & J. Grunig, 1995), and by 1994 about 60% of the nation's public relations practitioners were women (U.S. Department of Labor, 1995). Today that percentage is even higher.

As Hon, L. Grunig and Dozier (1992) point out, when gender issues first entered the public relations literature, most of the research articles were built around one of two highly conflicting themes. One emphasized "problems" public relations might face if "too many women" entered the business (Bates, 1983; Bernstein, 1986; "Could Be Woman's Field," 1982; Davies, 1974; Joseph, 1985; Lesly, 1988; "PR People Deplore Feminization," 1984; Thaler, 1986). The thesis used in this approach suggested the entry of too many women into the field would have a negative impact on public relations. The other viewpoint addressed the benefits public relations could realize from an emergence of women, and examined social, cultural, and professional differences between female and male public relations people (Cline et al., 1986; Creedon, 1989 & 1991; L. Grunig, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1990b; Rakow, 1987, 1989; Toth, 1989a, 1989b, 1990).

In spite of all of these studies, the body of knowledge in public relations appears devoid of any research that examines gender in terms of how women and men react differently to public relations communication messages and the communication media delivering them. This void also appears to be apparent throughout most other areas of mass communication research. McCroskey and Richmond (1996) discuss gender research findings in speech-communication saying, "Although research focusing on the impact of biological sex differences on communication has generally found little impact, research on culturally based gender roles has indicated a very large impact." (p. 241)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Most previous gender research in public relations concentrates upon differences between women and men as professional colleagues and/or communication senders. The study reported on in this essay examines the impact of gender differences on the receivers of public relations communication messages. It involves a situation assessment of internal communication knowledge employees have about their organization's quality program.

The research explores how one company's public relations messages about its quality program are used by employees. It also measures how knowledge employees have about information contained in these messages, and the selection of internal communication media to acquire the knowledge, differ between female and male employees. Finally, the study searches for any existing correlation between gender and the level of employee knowledge about the company's quality program, and provides data to establish how communication channels which support employee and organizational needs are used differently by women and men.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender

The majority of the past decade's gender studies in public relations have concentrated on frustrations women have experienced in professional settings, and much of this has included studies comparing women and men in terms of topics such as professionalism, prestige, salary differences, and the unique roles public relations people function in.

This has included differences in how men and women perceive work (Allen, Seibert, & Rush, 1990); comparing organizational sex roles in public relations (Broom, 1982; Lauzen, 1990; Toth, et al., 1997; Wright & Springston, 1991); studies about power – or the lack of it from a female perspective (Conrad, 1985; Ferguson, 1990; L. Grunig, 1990b & 1992; Kanter, 1986; Kasten, 1986; Moore, 1986; Sander & Hall, 1986;); sex discrimination (Cline et al., 1986; L. Grunig, 1989; Wright et al., 1991); and, considerable research comparing salaries of female and male public relations practitioners (Cline et al., 1986; Dozier, Chapo, & Sullivan, 1983; IABC, 1989; L. Grunig, 1988, 1989b, 1990b, & 1992; Jacobson & Tortorello, 1990; Theus, 1985; Turk, 1986; Wright et al., 1991).

Another line of research grew out the feminist transformation of public relations. It included studies examining social consequences of having more women working in public relations (Fox-Genovese, 1991); the struggle with female job satisfaction (L. Grunig, 1990b); sexual harassment (Bovet, 1993; Crull, 1991; Segrave, 1994; Serini et al., 1998); and research about the impact of "family concerns" that presented themselves when many women wanted to combine public relations careers with "home and family activities" (Edwards & Edwards, 1985); Heins, et al, 1976; Hochschild, 1989; Kahn-Hut, et al, 1982).

In one of the more recent, comprehensive studies, Dozier, L. Gruniig, and J. Grunig (1995) report that although many public relations workplace differences between women and men are being corrected, women still are required to, "carry an extra burden of technical duties such as writing, editing, and production tasks, when compared to their male counterparts." (p. 160)

Although gender discrimination still exists on parts of the public relations playing field, women have made great strides in cracking – even if not totally breaking – the imaginary "glass ceiling" which some had suggested was preventing females from advancing into senior-level professional positions. In preparation for this essay, the authors were able to identify more than 50 major U.S. corporations where women currently occupy the chief public relations officer's position, usually holding a title such as senior vice president or vice president. And, two of the last three national presidents of the Public Relations Society of America have been women.

Defining Knowledge and Communication

Knowledge, as defined by Davenport and Prusak (1998), is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. Within organizations, knowledge often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories, but also in organizational routines, processes, practices and norms.

Communication, for this study's purposes, is defined as a message with a sender and receiver. This study deals with internal organizational communication messages which usually are designed to change the way the receivers perceive something, or to have an impact on their judgement or behavior.

In order to meet organizational objectives including internal and external customer expectations, organization members must share knowledge and communication.

Knowledge

Individuals begin learning about all subjects with knowledge – facts about the way things work. When people learn facts first, they cannot utilize them without understanding (Shiba & Graham, 1993). Understanding is one basis for ownership, and knowledge has become more important in certain situations than financial resources, market position, technology or assets (Cohen, 1998).

Most organizations contain many different types of knowledge, and it frequently is the responsibility of the public relations function to create environments and systems for capturing, organizing and sharing knowledge throughout the organization (Martinez, 1998). Marquart (1996) suggests the knowledge and insights organizations are able to teach their employees actually increase in value when used and practiced.

Knowledge has been studied by many scholars, but only a small amount of published research concerns employee knowledge as it relates to quality systems. Zand (1981) says the process of converting knowledge into action is the engine that drives the organization. Beer (1980) claims the behavior of employees and the process by which they interact and communicate are the means by which goods are sold, products manufactured, work coordinated, and budgets and plans developed.

Communication

Employees get information from many different sources. Faehrenbach and Goldfarb (1990) compared preferred sources for employee information with the actual sources employees get information from. Their study of 14 possible internal communication sources discovered employees would prefer to receive more information they're currently getting from these 11 sources: top executives, small group meetings, immediate supervisor, orientation programs, employee publications, large group meetings, annual reports, audiovisuals, upward organizational communication, employee handbooks, and company-wide publications. This research also found employees think they receive about the right amount of information from bulletin boards, but would

prefer to use the grapevine and external mass media less frequently for organizational information than presently is the case.

The need for effective communication between organizations and their employees has been understood for more than half a century. Early researchers identified communication as a necessary activity for employees within all organizational levels (Hicks, 1955; Timmons, 1940; Woodland, 1932). Subsequent studies reported employees almost always were anxious to learn news and information that could impact their jobs (Burns, 1954; Goetzinger & Valentine, 1964; Lee & Lee, 1956, Stogdill & Shartle, 1955; Ulrich, Boaz & Lawrence, 1950).

The major thrust of research in public relations and mass communication over the past half century has focused upon communication models that underscore senders, messages, and message effects, more than they put emphasis on receivers. The traditional communication models of Lasswell (1948), Shannon and Weaver (1949), Osgood (1963), Schramm (1954), Newcomb (1953), Gerber (1956), and Westley and MacLean (1957) all emphasize important points relevant in communication process and structure, but none of them particularly stress the importance of receivers to overall communication success. Some related theories and models that grew out of these studies – including "cognitive dissonance," (Festinger, 1957), "semantic differential" (Osgood, 1963), and "selective perception" (Berelson & Steiner, 1964) – provide more concentration on the receiver's role in the communication process. However, all of these theories elaborate much more on the messages themselves rather than the media delivering them. Cognitive dissonance and selective perception focus upon the different ways receivers might interpret messages, and/or seek out or avoid certain types of information. Semantic differential is used mainly as a measurement technique to gauge how receivers feel about opinion statements.

Uses and gratification approach attempts to describe what people do with media and how they "use" and are "gratified" by information received from various media. Benchmarking studies in this area were conducted by Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1942, 1944, & 1949), Suchman (1942), Herzog (1944), Riley & Riley (1951), and Berelson (1965). Blumler and McQuail (1969) report effects realized in communication messages may be dependent on or related to audience members' needs and motives. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) say all media compete with other sources of need

satisfaction. Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973) view communications media as a means used by individuals to connect (or disconnect) themselves with others. Severin and Tankard (1987) claim the uses and gratifications approach sheds light on helping to explain some selective behavior in how communication media are used.

Source Credibility

One of the few variables organizations usually can control in the employee communication process is the choice of the source, or sources, used to disseminate messages. And, the selection of certain sources also virtually guarantees control over the message itself.

Aristotle (1954, trans.) first introduced the importance the source of communication 25 centuries ago, and his analysis, written in *Rhetoric*, is relevant today. The methods used by modern credibility theorists might differ from Aristotle's, but their interests are similar in generally suggesting people usually consider messages credible when they come from sources perceived as being competent.

Most source credibility research in mass communication literature focuses or concentrates on the integrity of an individual communicator – i.e., a person – rather than on the credibility of various media employed to disseminate messages. Hoveland, Janis and Kelly (1953) suggest audiences will gravitate to sources perceived as offering incentives or rewards. They also believe credibility is a two-dimensional construct consisting of trustworthiness and competence. Sherif, et al. (1965) claim social judgment plays a significant role in determining source credibility. Berlo, Lemert and Mertz (1951) developed a model to measure how receivers gauge source credibility with safety, qualification, and dynamism being the important components. Trenholm (1986) points out there are many criticisms about research methods used to measure source creditility.

Hovland and Weiss (1951) claim high-credibility sources produce more opinion change than low-credibility sources. These findings are substantiated in research conducted by McGinnes and Ward (1974) and Horai, Naccuri, and Fatoulla (1974). Whitehead (1968) says these four factors were dominant in his measures of source credibility: trustworthiness, professionalism or competence, dynamism, and objectivity. Anderson suggests source credibility can amplify the value of information in a message.

Discussion about certain media being more credible than other media are somewhat limited in the academic literature of public relations, and this research has surfaced only in recent years (Pincus, 1994; Wright, 1995). Advertisers, marketing specialists, and broadcasters have been more concerned about the impact different media have on communication campaigns than their public relations colleagues (Page, et al., 1984).

A small number of senior-level public relations practitioners recently have recommended designing communication campaigns with more concern about receivers. Jackson (1997), probably the most outspoken of these advocates, says the ultimate goal in public relations is to influence behavior, and suggests carefully determining how messages will be disseminated with each target audience.

D'Aprix (1996) says research clearly indicates most employees prefer to receive job-related information from their immediate supervisors, followed by, in order of preference: small group meetings, company executives, annual reports to employees, and employee handbooks or other booklets. He adds the sources employees least prefer to receive job-related information from are the external mass media, followed by, the grapevine, union, audiovisual programs, and mass meetings. Jackson (1997) says although knowledge about supervisors being the most preferred employee communication source has existed for half a century, many organizations neither hire supervisors based upon their ability to communicate effectively nor disseminate many internal communications messages through employee preferred sources.

Another noted practitioner, Morley (1998) writes, ". . .in most companies employee communications are the province of the personnel department, now often referred to as the Human Resources (HR) department, whose very name suggests placing human beings in the same category as coal, steel, wheat or money – just one of the raw materials needed to feed the machinery of business." (p. 64) D'Aprix (1996) says some organizations create internal problems because they fail to provide employees with important information they must have to perform their jobs effectively. Smith (1991) advises organizations to stop taking employees and their opinions for granted. "In many organizations , employees have been – and still are – taken for granted. At the very lest they are

ranked on the communication ladder behind the news media, stockholders, financial analysts and politicians. This is shabby treatment, indeed, for the people who make the organization go." (p. 228)

Quality

Druckman (1997) notes there is a great deal of research on quality, but little clear understanding about the relationships between quality and organizational effectiveness. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s quality systems were implemented in organizations across the U.S. such as AT&T (Delsanter, 1991), 3M (Pring, 1991), and American Express (Creelman, 1991). Some of these systems adhere to the ISO 9001 standard, some to principles of Total Quality Management, and others coin their own terms. Ultimately, the goal of implementing a quality system is to change an organization's culture in order to meet customer needs in more efficient and effective ways.

Quality systems, sometimes referred to as quality circles, were first implemented effectively 40 years ago in Japan as the result of work done by W. Edward Deming, known as the "father of quality" (Mooney, 1996). U.S. corporations did not adopt quality systems until 20 years later, and most of these American programs emerged only because of productivity declines (Ruch, 1984). Effective participation in a quality program usually implies the entire organization is willing to share information, meet goals, and more in a common direction (Walters, 1994).

Organizations implement quality in different ways. Townsend (1986) explains many companies have taken hold of the quality movement and superimposed their own spin on the philosophies of Deming, Juran and others.

Sullivan (1991) says effective communication and employee involvement are two vital ingredients of any organizational quality program. Most companies typically place considerable emphasis upon both of these two key areas during the initial start-up of most quality projects. Zuckerman (1996) examined basic elements of many quality programs and said, when properly implemented what quality programs create foremost are communication systems.

Ample evidence suggests the quality movement has been successful. An International Public Relations Association Gold Paper Report (1994) reported on a survey of 500 large companies that participate in Total Quality Management programs. The study finds more than one-third of the firms report competitive gains from implementing TQM techniques.

Larkin and Larkin (1994) explain many companies do not communicate effectively with their employees about quality, and say some organizations even forbid truthful top-down communication with employees about quality program results. Although usually this action is taken to prevent sharing comparative information with competing companies, it inhibits organizational change due to blocked communication channels.

METHOD

The analysis reported in this essay measures gender differences within the context of a larger study examining employee knowledge levels about an organization's quality system. A survey questionnaire was sent to a stratified, random sample of employees (n=965) who work in a manufacturing facility operated by an international chemical company. Located in the Southeastern U.S., this plant develops, produces and sells specialty chemicals worldwide. A condition of the company's participation in this research project was that it would not be identified.

The 58-item questionnaire was distributed via electronic mail. The survey was created in a word processing program as a protected form document to limit tampering. Subjects could only complete the fields where answers were required. Responding to the survey simply involved pointing the computer's mouse on the appropriate box and clicking. Subjects also were provided the option of printing the survey and returning it via surface mail. An incentive drawing was held to encourage responses. Although subjects were promised anonymity, they had the option of participating in the drawing by indicating their name on a form independent from the questionnaire. Usable responses were received from 185 subjects yielding a response rate of 19 percent. Of the respondents 67 percent (n=123) were men and 33 percent (n=60) were women. The gender of two respondents was not identified.

Data analysis consisted of a number of statistical procedures in attempts to determine the probability of relationship differences between male and female subjects. Frequencies and measures of central tendency were computed for all variables. Significant differences in mean responses of women and men were tested for with t-tests.

Prior to distribution of the study's principal measuring instrument, a pre-test survey and follow-up interviews were conducted among thirty-nine employees considered – by reason of their

positions – to have the greatest knowledge about quality at the study facility. The pre-test was designed to determine what information was important for the employees to know about the quality system. The pre-test consisted of seventeen closed-ended questions and one open-ended question that provided respondents an opportunity to share specific thoughts and opinions that may not have been covered in the closed-ended statements. Results of the pre-test were used to draft questions for the study's major survey. The survey portion of the pre-test realized a response rate of 53 percent.

RESULTS

Before findings were analyzed in terms of gender, results of all respondents were examined on an overall basis. About half (48%) agreed the organization's quality system was a valuable tool in the company's business process. More than 60% knew the purpose of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and were comfortable consulting these as a guideline for daily work activities. There also was a general understanding that the company uses quality system documents in training new employees and all workers being sent to a new job function. Most (58%) claimed to know where to find quality system documentation.

Employees had considerable knowledge about how to handling "nonconforming product", a product or service which does not meet customer requirements in terms of quality system guidelines. Almost all (96%) employees understood the definition of nonconforming product and 95% understood the process for handling products which fall in this category. An additional 92% agreed non conforming products were not to be sent to customers. Results dropped slightly when addressing the corrective action process that tracks and monitors events related to nonconformance. The major barriers to quality were lack of understanding customer needs, lack of quality-focused leadership, and weaknesses in communication.

Respondents ranked the Intranet as the source used most to get information about the company's quality system. This was followed, in this order, by Quality Coordinator, Records Coordinator, Quality Department, E-mail, Supervisor, Co-workers, Training Classes, Management Review, Newsletter, and Department Director.

Gender Differences

As shown by tables presented in this paper's appendix, results produced a number of statistically significant differences between female and male receivers of employee communication messages about the company's quality program. Gender was not found to play an overly significant role in level of knowledge about the company's quality system, but it does appear to be extremely significant in determining information sources and perceived barriers to quality.

TABLE ONE

Frequency Tables of Responses to the question,
"Where do you get information about the quality system?"

[This table reports frequency scores indicating the percentage of respondents who selected each of the following media.]

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*
Intranet	87%	83%	97%
Company Newsletter	39%	37%	44%
Training Classes	48%	47%	51%
Management Review	40%	35%	51%
E-mail	63%	62%	66%
Department Director	40%	31%	53%
Coworkers	46%	42%	51%
Supervisor	55%	53%	59%
Quality Department	59%	53%	73%
Quality Coordinator	84%	83%	85%
Records Coordinator	59%	56%	63%
Information Not Shared	3%	4%	0%

Table One, above, shows eleven major sources respondents identified as media through which employees receive information about the company's quality system, and women were found to be more likely than men to use ten of these sources. Almost all (97%) of the women who responded to this study used the company's Intranet to acquire safety information compared with 83% of the men; 73% of the women claimed to have sought out quality information from the company's quality

department (compared to 53% of the men); and 53% of the women had acquired quality information from their department director (compared to 31% of the men). As Table Two indicates, all three of these findings were found to be statistically significant through t-tests (with $p = < .01$).

TABLE TWO

Mean Differences for Responses to the question,
"Where do you get information about the quality system?"

[This table reports mean score and t-test analysis results showing differences between men and women on the selection of each of the following media. Answer options ranged from "1" for "Most Significant" to "3" for "Least Significant." The lower the mean score reported below the less significant respondents considered it to be.]

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Intranet	1.13	1.17	1.03	t = 2.7	p = < .01
Company Newsletter	1.61	1.63	1.56	t = 0.9	p = < .36
Department Director	1.62	1.69	1.47	t = 2.8	p = < .01
Management Review	1.97	1.96	2.00	t = 2.0	p = < .05
E-mail	1.55	1.58	1.49	t = 0.6	p = < .55
Training Classes	1.45	1.47	1.41	t = 0.5	p = < .61
Coworkers	1.41	1.48	1.27	t = 1.1	p = < .25
Supervisor	1.52	1.53	1.49	t = 0.7	p = < .45
Quality Department	1.60	1.65	1.49	t = 2.7	p = < .01
Quality Coordinator	1.37	1.39	1.34	t = 0.3	p = < .74
Records Coordinator	1.16	1.17	1.15	t = 0.8	p = < .41
Information is not Shared	1.96	1.96	2.00	t = -1.6	p = < .12

Although statistical significance was not realized, women also were found generally to be more open to receiving information about the quality program on seven of the eight other items measured. The only information source men were found to use more frequently than women was the company's management review process, used by 40% of the men and 35% of the women. T-tests found mean differences on this item significant (with $p = < .05$).

Women also were slightly more likely than men to consider the company's quality system to be a "valuable tool" (with $p = < .09$), and women also were slightly more likely to ask the quality coordinator for information about the system than men were (with $p = < .09$).

With more impressive statistical significance women were discovered to be considerably more likely than men to agree: to ask the quality department if they had questions about the quality system (with $p = < .00$); their department director shares information with them about the quality system (with $p = < .00$); they know where to find documents in the quality system (with $p = < .00$); they can find daily work procedures on the company's intranet (with $p = < .00$); their supervisors provide them with the information they need about the quality system (with $p = < .01$); the purpose of work procedures is to have a guideline for daily work processes (with $p = < .01$); internal audits provide valuable information about the effectiveness of the quality system (with $p = < .01$); the quality system established a system for handling corrective actions (with $p = < .03$); the quality system has an audit process (with $p = < .04$); the process for internal audit is described in a procedure found on the company's intranet (with $p = < .04$); and, when a corrective action is identified in their work area, they enter the event into the corrective action system (with $p = < .05$).

Men were more likely than women to consider only that there is a paper copy of standard operating procedures in their work area (with $p = < .02$).

When subjects were asked what they thought the three most significant barriers were to continuous quality improvement in the organization, statistical significance was discovered only on one item – men were more likely to consider cost constraints a barrier (with $p = < .05$). Men were much more likely to identify obstacles than women were, as more males than females also identified these additional constraints: resource constraints aside from costs, inappropriate organizational culture, inappropriate organizational structure, weaknesses in operational systems and processes, lack of quality-focused leadership, and weaknesses in communication to be barriers to continuous quality improvement in their organization. Roughly equal numbers of women and men agreed that lack other barriers included: lack of recognition/reward for quality behavior, lack of understanding of customer needs, and lack of employee skills and competencies.

Other Findings

In addition to gender, data also were analyzed in terms of education level, positions employees held in the company, and years of service. Survey findings show that by position level and education level the most knowledgeable employee group was the contract workforce, most of whom did not complete a college education. In the location where this research was conducted, contract workers are primarily clerical employees. Since they have responsibilities for updating documentation, it seems reasonable to infer that the workers with the most knowledge are the employees that have the most day-to-day contact with the process. Longer years of service did not correlate with amount of knowledge about quality. And, significant findings were minimal in measures examining any impact length of service had on employee communication source credibility.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Statistically significant findings in this study of an organization's employees suggest women are more likely than men to:

- Seek information about the company they work for;
- Use a wide range of internal public relations communications message media including:
  - The Intranet;
  - Their department directors.

Results suggest men are more likely than women to seek information through management reviews.

Although statistical significance was not attained, women also appeared more likely than men to:

- Read the company newspaper,
- Use e-mail,
- Attend training classes,
- Communicate with their supervisor, and
- Communicate with co-workers.

Women also appeared more likely to consider the company's quality system to be a "valuable tool," and were more likely to ask the company's quality coordinator for information about the quality system than men were.

Other results suggest women are more likely than men to:

- Ask the quality department if they have questions;
- Ask their department director to share information with them;
- Know where to find internal documents;
- Be able to find information on the company's Intranet
- Have their supervisors provide them with the information they need to perform their jobs effectively;

Men were more likely than women to consider only that there is a paper copy of standard operating procedures in their work area (with $p = < .02$). And, men also were more likely than women to consider cost constraints a significant barrier to continuous quality improvement in the organization. Additional analysis revealed men were much more likely to identify obstacles and constraints to a quality program's success than women were.

Perhaps the most important finding in this study is that women employees appear to be more likely than their male colleagues to seek out internal communication messages and information. Women also make more regular and thorough use of a wide range of internal communications media including the Intranet, department directors, the company newspaper, and e-mail. Men were found more likely to seek information through management reviews.

A number of previous research studies (Cline, et al, 1986; Dozier, et al., 1995; Ferguson, 1990; L. Grunig, 1988, 1990a, 1990b, & 1992; Toth, et al., 1997) have addressed the fact women are more noted than men for nurturing others. Results of this study suggest they also might do a better job of self-nurturing.

Women also were found more likely than men to ask questions of department directors, supervisors, and colleagues when they were uncertain of information. Although knowledge about women being more likely to ask questions than men is nothing new, there are a number of potential

implications for these results when taken in the context of internal public relations communications messages.

If Jackson (1997) and other practitioners of public relations are serious when they claim communication messages need to be prepared with their receivers in mind, results of this study suggest care might be taken to recognize that women receivers and men receivers are different.

One final thought about methodology, since this study appears to be one of the first to use an e-mail survey in a scholarly setting. As the methodology section explains, the survey was sent to subjects as a protected form document "attachment" to their e-mail. Although this permitted researchers the ability to deliver a professionally looking questionnaire, subjects had to download the attachment in order to respond. Follow-up interviews with some members of the study's sample suggest the response rate might have been considerably higher if the authors had ignored their perceived need for the questionnaire's professional appearance, and delivered their questions within the regular text box of the company's e-mail system. We are led to believe more employees might have completed such a survey.

Tables of Frequency Distributions with Mean Comparisons between Men and Women

Subjects were asked to answer each question on a five-point scale ranging from "1" for "strongly disagree" to "5" for "strongly agree," thus the higher the mean score, the greater the agreement on each item. Results are displayed below. All frequency totals might not equal 100% due to rounding.

Responses to the question, **"The quality system is a valuable tool."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	39%	36%	44%	
Agree	48%	47%	51%	
Uncertain	10%	14%	3%	
Disagree	2%	2%	0%	
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	2%	
Mean:	4.21	4.15	4.36	t = -1.7 p = < .09

Responses to the question, **"The quality system provides a framework for work processes."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	29%	28%	32%	
Agree	60%	59%	63%	
Uncertain	7%	10%	0%	
Disagree	4%	4%	3%	
Strongly Disagree	1%	0%	2%	
Mean:	4.12	4.10	4.20	t = -0.9 p = < .38

Responses to the question, **"The quality system established a system for handling corrective actions."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	29%	26%	37%	
Agree	64%	64%	62%	
Uncertain	6%	8%	2%	
Disagree	1%	0%	0%	
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	
Mean:	4.21	4.15	4.35	t = -2.2 p = < .03

Responses to the question, **"The quality system has an audit process."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	34%	30%	43%	
Agree	60%	62%	53%	
Uncertain	7%	8%	3%	
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	
Mean:	4.27	4.21	4.40	t = -2.1 p = < .04

Responses to the question, **"The quality manual provides a general overview of our Quality System."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	27%	24%	35%	
Agree	61%	62%	58%	
Uncertain	10%	12%	7%	
Disagree	2%	3%	0%	
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	0%	
Mean:	4.13	4.05	4.28	t = -2.2 p = < .31

Responses to the question, **"If I have questions about the quality system, I would ask a coworker."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	5%	3%	9%	
Agree	37%	40%	29%	
Uncertain	16%	18%	14%	
Disagree	37%	33%	46%	
Strongly Disagree	6%	7%	3%	
Mean:	2.99	3.01	2.93	t = 0.5 p = < .66

Responses to the question, **"If I need information about the quality system, I would ask the quality coordinator."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	32%	30%	38%	
Agree	59%	59%	58%	
Uncertain	6%	8%	2%	
Disagree	3%	3%	2%	
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	
Mean:	4.21	4.15	4.33	t = -1.7 p = < .09

Responses to the question, **"If the quality coordinator is not available, I would ask the records coordinator about the quality system."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	17%	18%	17%	
Agree	55%	50%	63%	
Uncertain	19%	21%	13%	
Disagree	9%	11%	7%	
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	
Mean:	3.80	3.76	3.90	t = -1.1 p = < .28

Responses to the question, **"My supervisor provides me with the information I need about the quality system."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	9%	7%	14%	
Agree	45%	38%	59%	
Uncertain	15%	19%	7%	
Disagree	27%	31%	19%	
Strongly Disagree	4%	5%	2%	
Mean:	3.30	3.12	3.64	t = -3.1 p = < .01

Responses to the question, **"My department director shares information with me about the quality system."**				
	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	12%	7%	22%	
Agree	45%	39%	57%	
Uncertain	16%	23%	3%	
Disagree	22%	25%	17%	
Strongly Disagree	4%	6%	2%	
Mean:	3.39	3.18	3.80	t = -3.7 p = < .00

Responses to the question, **"If I had questions about the quality system, I would ask the quality department."**				
	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	22%	15%	35%	
Agree	42%	39%	50%	
Uncertain	17%	22%	8%	
Disagree	14%	18%	7%	
Strongly Disagree	4%	6%	0%	
Mean:	3.65	3.41	4.13	t = -4.5 p = < .00

Responses to the question, **"The purpose of work procedures is to have a guideline for daily work processes."**				
	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	25%	22%	32%	
Agree	63%	61%	67%	
Uncertain	7%	11%	2%	
Disagree	4%	6%	0%	
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	
Mean:	4.10	4.00	4.30	t = -2.8 p = < .01

Responses to the question, **"I consult my procedures every time I complete a task."**

	Total (n=185)	*Men* (n=162)	*Women* (n=60)	
Strongly Agree	2%	2%	2%	
Agree	60%	9%	15%	
Uncertain	9%	11%	5%	
Disagree	11%	57%	67%	
Strongly Disagree	2%	20%	12%	
Mean:	2.19	2.16	2.28	t = -0.8 p = < .41

Responses to the question, **"Work procedures are used to train new employees about processes."**

	Total (n=185)	*Men* (n=162)	*Women* (n=60)	
Strongly Agree	19%	18%	22%	
Agree	60%	60%	60%	
Uncertain	13%	16%	7%	
Disagree	7%	4%	12%	
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%	0%	
Mean:	3.89	3.89	3.92	t = -0.2 p = < .82

Responses to the question, **"Documents have been written to describe the process for corrective and preventive action."**

	Total (n=185)	*Men* (n=162)	*Women* (n=60)	
Strongly Agree	18%	19%	17%	
Agree	66%	67%	66%	
Uncertain	13%	11%	15%	
Disagree	2%	2%	2%	
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%	0%	
Mean:	3.98	3.99	3.98	t = 0.1 p = < .94

Responses to the question, **"The process for internal audit is described in a procedure found on the intranet."**

	Total (n=185)	Men (n=162)	Women (n=60)		
Strongly Agree	17%	15%	22%		
Agree	48%	45%	53%		
Uncertain	34%	40%	22%		
Disagree	1%	0%	2%		
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	0%		
Mean:	3.81	3.73	3.97	t = -2.0	p = < .04

Responses to the question, **"The control of nonconforming product can be found in a guideline or administration document."**

	Total (n=185)	Men (n=162)	Women (n=60)		
Strongly Agree	16%	14%	19%		
Agree	47%	45%	51%		
Uncertain	34%	38%	26%		
Disagree	3%	3%	4%		
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	0%		
Mean:	3.75	3.69	3.86	t = -1.4	p = < .18

Responses to the question, **"I know where to find documents in the quality system."**

	Total (n=185)	Men (n=162)	Women (n=60)		
Strongly Agree	26%	21%	37%		
Agree	58%	59%	56%		
Uncertain	11%	13%	7%		
Disagree	4%	6%	0%		
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%	0%		
Mean:	4.04	3.91	4.31	t = -3.2	p = < .00

Responses to the question, **"I can find my daily work procedures on the intranet."**

	Total (n=185)	*Men (n=162)*	*Women (n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	17%	11%	31%	
Agree	38%	35%	45%	
Uncertain	22%	27%	10%	
Disagree	17%	19%	12%	
Strongly Disagree	7%	8%	2%	
Mean:	3.42	3.21	3.91	t = -4.0 p = < .00

Responses to the question, **"There is a paper copy of standard operating procedures in my work area."**

	Total (n=185)	*Men (n=162)*	*Women (n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	18%	19%	15%	
Agree	41%	44%	34%	
Uncertain	11%	12%	9%	
Disagree	20%	19%	24%	
Strongly Disagree	10%	6%	19%	
Mean:	3.37	3.52	3.03	t = 2.4 p = < .02

Responses to the question, **"If I could not find my procedures, I would ask the quality coordinator or records coordinator."**

	Total (n=185)	*Men (n=162)*	*Women (n=60)*	
Strongly Agree	29%	27%	32%	
Agree	59%	59%	59%	
Uncertain	7%	9%	2%	
Disagree	6%	5%	7%	
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	
Mean:	4.11	4.08	4.17	t = -0.7 p = < .47

Responses to the question, **"Internal audits provide valuable information about the effectiveness of the quality system."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	25%	21%	34%		
Agree	56%	57%	56%		
Uncertain	12%	14%	7%		
Disagree	7%	7%	3%		
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%	0%		
Mean:	3.97	3.87	4.20	t = -2.5	p = < .01

Responses to the question, **"Internal audits provide management with information about whether procedures are being followed."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	25%	22%	34%		
Agree	56%	57%	56%		
Uncertain	10%	14%	2%		
Disagree	8%	7%	7%		
Strongly Disagree	1%	0%	2%		
Mean:	3.98	3.93	4.14	t = -1.6	p = < .11

Responses to the question, **"When a product or service does not meet requirements it is considered to be nonconforming."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	31%	28%	39%		
Agree	65%	68%	59%		
Uncertain	3%	3%	2%		
Disagree	1%	1%	0%		
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%		
Mean:	4.26	4.23	4.37	t = -1.7	p = < .09

Responses to the question, **"A nonconforming product should be segregated from other products."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	43%	42%	45%		
Agree	53%	54%	50%		
Uncertain	3%	3%	3%		
Disagree	1%	1%	2%		
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%		
Mean:	4.37	4.37	4.38	t = -0.1	p = < .91

Responses to the question, **"If a product or service is nonconforming, I should notify my supervisor."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	37%	36%	38%		
Agree	54%	57%	48%		
Uncertain	4%	3%	5%		
Disagree	5%	3%	9%		
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%		
Mean:	4.23	4.26	4.16	t = 0.9	p = < .37

Responses to the question, **"A nonconforming product should be sent on to the customer for them to handle."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	1%	2%	0%		
Agree	4%	5%	4%		
Uncertain	2%	2%	4%		
Disagree	18%	15%	22%		
Strongly Disagree	75%	77%	71%		
Mean:	1.39	1.39	1.39	t = 0.1	p = < .98

Responses to the question, **"When a corrective action is identified in my work area, I enter the event into the corrective action system."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	14%	12%	19%		
Agree	48%	44%	56%		
Uncertain	15%	20%	7%		
Disagree	20%	21%	19%		
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	0%		
Mean:	3.52	3.42	3.75	t = -2.0	p = < .05

Responses to the question, **"When a corrective action is identified in my work area, I notify my supervisor."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	12%	12%	12%		
Agree	60%	58%	64%		
Uncertain	7%	10%	2%		
Disagree	17%	17%	17%		
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	5%		
Mean:	3.61	3.61	3.61	t = -0.1	p = < .98

Responses to the question, **"when a corrective action is identified in my work area, I make a note and keep it for later."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	3%	4%	2%		
Agree	12%	13%	9%		
Uncertain	7%	8%	5%		
Disagree	57%	57%	58%		
Strongly Disagree	21%	18%	27%		
Mean:	2.19	2.29	2.00	t = 1.8	p = < .07

Responses to the question, **"When there is an issue in my work area and I fix it now, in order to prevent errors at a later date, I should enter the event into the preventive action system or corrective action system."**

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Strongly Agree	22%	21%	24%		
Agree	48%	45%	55%		
Uncertain	22%	26%	12%		
Disagree	7%	6%	7%		
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%	2%		
Mean:	3.83	3.80	3.93	t = -1.0	p = < .34

Responses then were asked, **"What do you think are the three most significant barriers to continuous quality improvement in the organization?"** Ten response options were provided and subjects were asked to rank each on a three-point scale ranging from "least significant" to "significant," thus the lower the mean score, the more significant an item was considered to be. Results are displayed below. All frequency totals might not equal 100% due to rounding.

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Lack of recognition/reward for quality behavior

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	28%	30%	23%		
Significant	26%	23%	35%		
Least Significant	46%	48%	42%		
Mean:	2.18	2.18	2.19	t = -0.1	p = < .95

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Lack of understanding of customer needs

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	56%	57%	55%		
Significant	22%	23%	23%		
Least Significant	21%	21%	23%		
Mean:	1.65	1.64	1.68	t = -0.2	p = < .85

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Inappropriate organizational culture

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	29%	32%	15%		
Significant	43%	39%	62%		
Least Significant	29%	29%	23%		
Mean:	2.00	1.97	2.08	t = -0.5	p = < .64

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Cost constraints

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	32%	40%	7%		
Significant	37%	34%	47%		
Least Significant	31%	26%	47%		
Mean:	1.98	1.86	2.40	t = -2.4	p = < .02

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Other resource constraints

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	32%	32%	28%		
Significant	45%	50%	36%		
Least Significant	27%	18%	36%		
Mean:	1.92	1.86	2.08	t = -1.2	p = < .23

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Lack of employee skills and competencies

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	27%	26%	28%		
Significant	41%	42%	39%		
Least Significant	32%	32%	33%		
Mean:	2.06	2.06	2.06	t = 0.1	p = < .98

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Weaknesses in operational systems and processes

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	38%	41%	27%		
Significant	30%	27%	36%		
Least Significant	33%	33%	36%		
Mean:	1.95	1.92	2.07	t = -0.6	p = < .56

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Inappropriate organizational structure

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	33%	36%	22%		
Significant	29%	31%	22%		
Least Significant	38%	33%	56%		
Mean:	2.04	1.97	2.33	t = -1.1	p = < .26

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Lack of quality-focused leadership

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	43%	49%	26%		
Significant	26%	20%	42%		
Least Significant	31%	31%	32%		
Mean:	1.89	1.82	2.05	t = -1.0	p = < .33

Opinions about this barrier to continuous quality improvement:
Weakness in communication

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Most Significant	40%	40%	39%		
Significant	24%	29%	15%		
Least Significant	37%	32%	46%		
Mean:	1.97	1.92	2.06	t = -0.7	p = < .46

Frequency Tables of Responses to the question,
"Where do you get information about the quality system?"

[This table reports frequency scores indicating the percentage of respondents who selected each of the following media.]

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*
Intranet	87%	83%	97%
Company Newsletter	39%	37%	44%
Training Classes	48%	47%	51%
Management Review	40%	35%	51%
E-mail	63%	62%	66%
Department Director	40%	31%	53%
Coworkers	46%	42%	51%
Supervisor	55%	53%	59%
Quality Department	59%	53%	73%
Quality Coordinator	84%	83%	85%
Records Coordinator	59%	56%	63%
Information Not Shared	3%	4%	0%

Tables of Mean Differences for Responses to the question,
"Where do you get information about the quality system?"

[This table reports mean score and t-test analysis results showing differences between men and women on the selection of each of the following media. Answer options ranged from "1" for "Most Significant" to "3" for "Least Significant." The lower the mean score reported below the less significant respondents considered it to be.]

	Total *(n=185)*	***Men*** *(n=162)*	***Women*** *(n=60)*		
Intranet	1.13	1.17	1.03	t = 2.7	p = < .01
Company Newsletter	1.61	1.63	1.56	t = 0.9	p = < .36
Department Director	1.62	1.69	1.47	t = 2.8	p = < .01
Management Review	1.97	1.96	2.00	t = 2.0	p = < .05
E-mail	1.55	1.58	1.49	t = 0.6	p = < .55
Training Classes	1.45	1.47	1.41	t = 0.5	p = < .61
Coworkers	1.41	1.48	1.27	t = 1.1	p = < .25
Supervisor	1.52	1.53	1.49	t = 0.7	p = < .45
Quality Department	1.60	1.65	1.49	t = 2.7	p = < .01
Quality Coordinator	1.37	1.39	1.34	t = 0.3	p = < .74
Records Coordinator	1.16	1.17	1.15	t = 0.8	p = < .41
Information is not Shared	1.96	1.96	2.00	t = -1.6	p = < .12

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The World Wide Web, Online Resources and Public Relations Practitioners: What They Use and What They Recommend

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Abstract of

The World Wide Web, Online Resources and Public Relations Practitioners: What They Use and What They Recommend

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This paper reports the results of a nationwide survey of 150 public relations practitioners who were asked about the extent to which they use computers, including the extent to which they use the World Wide Web and online resources; when they began using computers for different purposes; what computer skills are needed in their offices; what skills they seek in new hires; and the extent to which they were involved in creating Web pages. Results suggest that computer literacy, for this group, is essential.

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The World Wide Web, Online Resources and Public Relations Practitioners: What They Use and What They Recommend

It would be difficult to overstate the impact the computer revolution has had on the mass communication industry. It was little more than a decade ago that the World Wide Web, online resources, databases and other technical marvels were even discussed outside the academic and scientific communities. Researchers, critics, commentators and practitioners are trying today to find the most effective ways to use the new technology.

A great deal has been written about applying technical innovations in newspaper and broadcast newsrooms, and academics debate how and whether journalism programs should teach students to use new technology.

Garrison (1995, 1997) and Davenport, Fico and Weinstock (1996), for example, have documented the increased use by newspapers of online services as reporting tools; their results suggested an increeasing focus on the Internet and an increasing willingness of publishers to spend money for online services.

De Riemer (1992) found nearly a decade ago that almost 90 percent of journalists used a database weekly, and that younger journalists seem

more likely to use databases. Ward and Hansen (1991) reported that 90 percent of the newspapers they studied subscribed to at least one database, and that in 60 percent of the newsrooms equipped with computers, reporters searched records electronically.

Koch (1991), in analyzing the ways in which reporters' jobs would change as they increasingly used new technologies, argued that online data technologies provide journalists with more and better information than that possessed by officials they cover, The ". . .intelligent use of these online resources is not the 'same old journalism' (or public relations or position paper) but has the potential to fundamentally alter the rules of the public information game," he wrote (p. xxiii).

Other writers have addressed the practical problems of using online resources and of convincing some journalists they are worthwhile. Cohen (1996) and Noack (1996) noted that not all online information is equal, that some is credible and some is not, and that journalists must check their sources carefully. Garrison (1995) reported that it is not always easy to convince some journalists that integrating online resources into the newsgathering process can be inexpensive and easy.

Another important stream of literature focuses on the integration of online resources into the mass communication curriculum. But, again,

the discussion has been almost exclusively in the news context. Several writers have noted that journalism programs have failed to train their students adequately to use new technologies.

Gerhard (1990), for instance, surveyed journalism and mass communication department heads and found almost all said students should be exposed to datebase searching techniques, but that many simply did not have the funds to support that. DeFleur and Davenport (1993) reported that most of the programs they studied did not even plan to teach students about computer-assisted news collection. Johnson (1995) argued that journalism faculties are not competent to teach the materials students need in the digital age, and that the material must be taught elsewhere on campus.

But some journalism teachers have developed the competence to teach students how to use online and Web resources. Gunaratne and Lee (1996), for example, argued that students must have computer skills and they described ways to integrate such training into the curriculum, and they noted that many programs are recruiting teachers who have the skills and can pass them on to students. Ketterer (1998) suggested ways of teaching students how to use online resources and how to evaluate the credibility of information obtained from those sources.

Much is known about how journalists use the World Wide Web, online resources and other new technologies, but little is known about how public relations practitioners use the new technical marvels. The baseline data that are available for reporters and editors simply are not available for public relations. This study represents an effort to collect those baseline data so that practitioners, teachers and scholars will be able to use new technologies more effectively, to study the impact of those technologies on routine public relations practice and to integrate the new technologies into public relations curricula as necessary.

This study documents (1) the extent to which a sample of practitioners uses computers and for what purposes, (2) some characteristics of the innovators, (3) the extent to which practitioners use the World Wide Web and online resources and (4) the importance of a World Wide Web site to an organization and to the public relations mission and the extent to which practitioners were involved in the development of the site.

Method

The focus in this research is on members of the Public Relations Society of America, individuals who are likely to be opinion leaders, who adopt innovations early and who make them work. A sample of 150 PRSA

members was randomly drawn from PRSA's 19,000-member roster. Individuals whose titles did not suggest that they were active practitioners were not selected.

The 35-item questionnaire was based on the literature pertaining to the use by journalists of Internet and online resources and to the integration of technical training into the journalism curriculum. Given the lack of information about practitioners' use of new computer technoligies, it was necessary to include six open-end questions, which made completion of the four-page questionnaire more time-consuming. The draft questionnaire was critiqued by almost two dozen practitioners and substantive changes were made as a result.

The questionnaire, a cover letter and a self-addressed return envelope were mailed to those sampled in the winter of 1999. A second mailing was sent to non-respondents one month later. A total of 67 responded, a return of 44.6 percent.

Results

Demographic data show that respondents are well-educated and experienced--and that they are heavy computer users. Virtually all respondents were college graduates, as shown in Table 1, and a substantial number (42.4 percent) had advanced degrees. Nearly three-

quarters of the respondents have practiced public relations for more than five years, and nearly 30 percent had practice more than 16 years.

Table 1 About Here

All respondents use a computer in some capacity for their work. In fact, 100 percent use computers for more than two hours each day, and more than 75 percent use computers for more than four hours. Ninety-five percent have used computers for writing and editing for more than a decade, as shown in Table 1, and nearly 75 percent have used computers for other purposes for more than a decade.

This is a computer-literate group, as evidenced by data reported in Table 1: 100 percent describe themselves as "highly" or "moderately" literate with computers; nearly 70 percent say they are consulted by persons in their public relations department about software purchases; and all are consulted about software problems.

As one might expect, computers are used for word processing, but nearly 100 percent said computers were used in their offices for electronic mail and accessing the World Wide Web, as shown in Table 2. Computers are used to accomplish the more traditional public relations tasks, but they also are widely used for web page maintenance, data collection, web page development, and for surveillance of other

companies. The data suggest that practitioners are starting to use computers for exploring data bases, monitoring government activities, mapping and even code writing.

Table 2 About Here

Respondents suggested that new hires in public relations might well be expected to know how to use computers not only to write and edit, but also to send and receive electronic mail and to access the World Wide Web. Data suggest that practitioners may be expected to know how to use the computer to explore data bases, to collect and analyze data, and to develop and maintain web pages, as suggested in Table 2.

Nearly 88 percent of respondents said they work in departments in which online services are used to support public relations objectives, and that 87 percent of practitioners in those departments use online services each day. The most popular of the online resources are the World Wide Web, Yahoo!, America Online and Lexis/Nexis, as reporting in Table 3.

Table 3 About Here

Respondents reported that individuals also use usenet newsgroups, the Microsoft Network, bulletin board systems, O'Dwyer's PR Services Report, CompuServe and Data Times. No respondents reported that

persons in their offices use Dialog/Knowledge Index, Information America, Prodigy, CDB Infotek or Genie.

Responses to questions about World Wide Web sites in public relations are reported in Table 3. Nearly 94 percent said they perceive that a public relations department website is "important" or "very important" in supporting public relations objectives, and 80 percent said they believe the organization's site is "important" or "very important" in supporting public relations objectives.

In spite of the importance of the organization or department web site, only 55 percent of respondents said they were "very involved" in determining the objectives of the site, and fewer than 50 percent said they were "very involved" in constructing the site. And a quarter said they were only "somewhat involved" or "not involved" in web site construction.

Conclusions

Results of this study must be interpreted with some care. Respondents are members of the Public Relations Society of America, a somewhat elite group whose members may be unlike practitioners in general; indeed the directory of PRSA members describes itself as "the who's who list of the public relations world." Furthermore, the response

rate is 44.6 percent. While that is a reasonable response rate given the complexity of the questionnaire and the time required to complete it, 83 of those sampled did not respond. That lack of response may suggest that they had nothing to say (i.e., they do not use computers much or have ideas about them). One simply does not know.

Even with these limitations, it is apparent that practitioners are using computers in their work. Huge numbers of respondents said they use computers at least three hours a day, that they have been using computers for writing and editing for roughly a decade and that they have been using computers for other purposes for at least five years. Furthermore, all consider themselves at least "moderately literate" with computers, and many are consulted at least occasionally about software purchases or problems.

Respondents in this study reported practitioners use computers for a wide range of activities, including electronic mail, accessing the World Wide Web, using spreadsheets, maintaining and developing web sites, data analysis and collection, surveillance, and exploring data bases, all functions that many practitioners had not eve heard of in the last decade.

All of this suggests that public relations students simply must be computer literate if they are to compete successfully in the 21st Century.

This means more than knowing simply how to write and edit at a computer terminal. Respondents said that new hires in their departments are expected to know how to use computers to write and edit, certainly, but also to send and received electronic mail and to access the World Wide Web. Substantial numbers said students should know how to use computers to produce graphics, use spreadsheets and in producing public relations materials.

Not every employee in every department needs to have each skill, but it is apparent that those with larger numbers of these skills will have greater opportunities to succeed. One may anticipate increased emphasis on computer skills in the next century, so one can surmise that the range of skills required of new hires will increase—at least for some period.

These baseline data should be useful in the next century as scholars and practitioners attempt to make sense of the technical revolution and to predict its outcome. They also should be useful to students and to those who develop public relations curricula as they try to determine what computer skills are important.

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Table 1

Sample Demographics, Computer Usage

	Number	Percentage
1. Education		
Some college	2	3.0
Bachelor's degree	36	54.5
Master's degree	25	37.9
Ph.D. degree	5	4.5
2. Year of highest degree		
1963-70	3	4.8
1971-80	14	22.2
1981-90	20	31.7
1991 +	26	39.4
3. Number years in public relations		
1-5	18	27.3
6-10	12	18.2
11-15	17	25.8
16-20	7	10.6
21 +	12	18.2
4. Organization type		
Company	25	39.7
Agency	14	22.2
Association	2	3.2
Non-profit	22	33.8

Table 1, *continued*

	Number	Percentage
5. Public relations agency or department size		
1	15	23.1
2-3	15	23.1
4-8	18	27.7
9 +	17	26.2
6. Number of hours of computer use in an average workday		
1-2	0	0
3-4	15	22.7
5-6	28	42.4
7-8	14	21.2
9 +	9	13.6
7. Year began using a computer for writing and editing		
1960-80	9	13.8
1981-85	26	40.0
1986-90	27	41.5
1991 +	3	4.6
8. Year began using a computer for other purposes		
1960-80	4	6.2
1981-85	13	20.0
1986-90	30	46.2
1991-95	18	27.7
1996 +	0	0

Table 1, *continued*

	Number	Percentage
9. Self-described computer literacy		
Highly literate	30	44.8
Moderately literate	37	55.2
Not literate	0	0
10. Frequency of consultations with practitioners within the public relations department about computer or software **purchases**		
Daily	0	0
Weekly	9	13.8
Monthly	14	21.5
Every six months	21	32.3
Never	21	32.3
11. Frequency of consultations with practitioners within the public relations department about computer or software **problems**		
Daily	7	10.6
Weekly	17	25.8
Monthly	14	21.2
Every six months	15	22.7
Never	13	19.7

Table 2

Computer Usage within the Public Relations Department

	Number	Percentage
12. Percentage of staff in the public relations agency or department that works regularly with computers (other than for writing and editing)		
1-25	4	6.3
26-50	5	7.8
71-75	7	10.9
76 +	48	75.0
13. Purposes for which computers are used in the public relations department		
Writing	66	98.5
Editing	66	98.5
Electronic mail	66	98.5
Using the World Wide Web	66	98.5
Graphics	58	86.6
Using spreadsheets	48	71.6
Production	41	61.2
Web page maintenance	41	61.2
Data collection	40	59.7
Web page development	39	58.2
Surveillance of other companies	38	56.7
Data analysis	37	55.2
Exploring data bases	33	49.3
Photography	30	44.8
Monitoring government activities	26	38.8
Mapping	11	16.4
Programming (code writing)	8	11.9
Surveillance of other PR agencies	6	9.0

Table 2, *continued*

	Number	Percentage
14. Computer skills new hires in the public relations agency or department may be expected to have		
Writing	63	94.0
Editing	62	92.5
Electronic mail	58	86.6
Using the World Wide Web	56	83.6
Graphics	33	49.3
Using spreadsheets	26	38.8
Production	21	31.3
Exploring data bases	18	26.9
Data collection	16	23.9
Data analysis	13	19.4
Web page development	9	13.4
Web page maintenance	9	13.4
Photography	7	10.4
Mapping	3	4.5
Programming (code writing)	2	3.0

Table 3

Usage of the Web and Other Online Resources

	Number	Percentage
15. Department uses online services to support public relations objectives		
Yes	57	87.7
No	8	12.3
16. Frequency of use by individuals within the department of online resources		
Daily	47	87.0
Weekly	6	11.1
Monthly	1	1.9
Less than monthly	0	0
17. Online resources used by individuals within the department use		
World Wide Web	54	80.6
Yahoo!	44	65.7
America Online	23	34.3
Lexis/Nexis	22	32.8
Usenet newsgroups	15	22.4
Microsoft Network	13	19.4
Bulletin board systems	10	14.9
O'Dwyer's PR Services Report	6	9.0
CompuServe	5	7.5
DataTimes	1	1.5
Dialog/Knowledge Index	0	0
Information America	0	0
Prodigy	0	0
CDB Infotek	0	0
Genie	0	0

Table 3, *continued*

	Number	Percentage
18. Perceived importance of the World Wide Web in the department in terms of supporting public relations objectives		
Very important	31	47.7
Important	30	46.2
Unimportant	2	3.1
Very unimportant	0	0
Not sure	1	1.5
Does not apply	1	1.5
19. Perceived importance of the organization's World Wide Web site in terms of supporting public relations objectives		
Very important	26	39.4
Important	27	40.9
Unimportant	4	6.1
Very unimportant	1	1.5
Not sure	3	4.5
Does not apply	5	7.6
20. Extent of the department's involvement in determining the objectives of the organization's web site		
Very involved	35	53.8
Involved	8	12.3
Somewhat involved	9	13.8
Not involved	5	7.7
Not sure	0	0
Does not apply	8	12.3

Table 3, *continued*

	Number	Percentage
21. Extent of the department's involvement in constructing the organization's web site		
Very involved	32	48.5
Involved	11	16.7
Somewhat involved	8	12.1
Not involved	8	12.1
Not sure	0	0
Does not apply	7	10.6
22. Attributes of a good web site		
Useful content	46	68.7
Easily accessible information	43	64.2
Valid, accurate information	38	56.7
Speed	14	20.9
Relevant, current links	12	17.1
Striking graphics	11	16.4
Reputable source	6	9.0
Downloadable, delimited data	5	7.5
Minimum graphics	4	6.0

PR

Public Relations Management: A Multiple-Case Study in Media Management

by

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Public Relations Management: A Multiple-Case Study in Media Management

Abstract

This study examines 15 single case studies related to public relations management conducted from 1996-1998. Graduate students at San Jose State University conducted the studies. In a multiple-case analysis the communication management style of these organizations leaned towards the participative theory, but resorted to the authoritative style on certain occasions, in a mixed motive manner. The same pattern followed for Theories Y and Z vs. Theory X, and two-way symmetrical vs. two-way asymmetrical communications.

Public Relations Management: A Multiple-Case Study in Media Management

This study grew out of a graduate course at San Jose State University entitled, Media Management, Economics and New Technologies. The premise of the course is to examine how organizations manage their communication whether it be in the fields of journalism, advertising, public relations, or integrated communications. The course has been taught for three years, in the Spring Semesters of 1996, 1997, and 1998. Students were tasked with approaching a client about doing an academic case study to evaluate the primary research question of how that organization manages its communication practices. Any type of organization could be chosen, and any aspect of communications examined -- internal, meaning either employee relations or within the communication department itself, or external, meaning client-orient or to strategic publics.

The purpose of this particular multiple-case study was to extract from 45 cases, those that applied to public relations management. A total of 15 were chosen. The importance of the study is to combine for the first time, theory normally relegated to media management, public relations theory, and the multi-case method. This would serve to further examine the relationship between theory and practice, and hopefully, bring any differences closer together and promote increased understanding in the public relations field.

This multiple-case study explored three theories and a related fourth relative to the communication management style of these organizations: authoritarian versus participative, management, Theory X versus Theories Y and Z, symmetrical versus asymmetrical communication, and mixed motives.

Several methods of evidence were used in this case study to develop the process of triangulation and add to the verifiablity of the results (Yin, 1994). Documents were selected based on the existing archives and availability. Agendas and year-end reports were useful to show the background, past successes and future goals of the organizations studied. Archival records such as organizational charts and budgets provided the business aspects of the units examined. The bulk of evidence came from conducting personal interviews with several individuals. Those individuals varied between executive directors, directors, managers and employees. Analysis was across the cases with the results section focusing on explanation of patterns based on the research questions. The evidence from this multi-case design is more compelling, and the overall study is therefore considered more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983).

There were delimiters to this case study. First was the time factor. The case studies were conducted in fewer than 16 weeks so there was a limit to the amount of information that could be collected and examined during that time. Another delimiter was the role of most of the researchers as participant observers. Although this circumstance allowed for ease of access to people and information, it also was somewhat awkward in an interview situation. Because all the individuals involved usually worked together, the respondents knew that what they said could affect the interviewer. Some of the interview questions were awkward but the answers obtained still seemed more honest and in-depth than an outsider could have obtained.

The conduct of these case studies and the multi-case analysis is an important link in the continued viability and growth of the public relations field. After reading this case study, the organizations' style of management should be more evident.

Literature Review

This multiple-case analysis compares participative and authoritarian culture, Theories, X, Y and Z, two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models of communication, and mixed motives.

The Continuum

Understanding these theories listed above might be easier if placed on a continuum. By definition, most of these theories fall near one end or the other of this spectrum. However, in practice, most management styles incorporate parts of each theory. McGregor (1960) said, "Managers can draw on both sets of ideas depending on the situation." This would make it difficult to plot a manager's style at a specific place on the continuum. A manager's style may swing like a pendulum, depending on the given situation. However, patterns from this analysis showed that managers' styles were consistent enough to plot them at some point on the continuum. As Dozier, L. Grunig, and J. Grunig (1995) describe, "... the values of one culture ... typically predominate in each organization" (p. 17).

This continuum is illustrated in Figure 1. At the extreme left are plotted Leadership Theory's authoritarian management style, Theory X and the two-way asymmetrical model. On the extreme right are the participative theory management style, Theory Y and the two-way symmetrical model.

PLACE FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Authoritarian and Participative

An organizational structure is "the sum total of shared values, symbols, meanings, beliefs, assumptions, and expectations that organize and integrate a group of people who work together" (Dozier et al., 1995, p. 135). There are two main types of organizational structure: authoritarian and participative.

Authoritarian. Dozier et al. described authoritarian leadership as emphasizing "centralized control and decision making by a few powerful managers" (1995, p.77). Gonring and Clark declared authoritarian culture restrictive. "Innovation is stifled, departments operate separately, with no shared goals. Employees fear supervisors. Decision-making in the organization is centralized" (1992, p. 26). According to Dozier et al.: "The various departments in authoritarian organizational cultures do not share a common mission. Employees say managers act as if the employees they supervise don't have initiative and require constant direction" (p. 140). In this type of department, decisions are made by the manager without consulting staff members. These staff members are then expected to follow through on whatever decision the manager has decreed. Overall then, authoritarian leadership is characterized by; centralized control with the various departments lacking a common mission and employees who have no initiative and cannot act without constant direction.

Participative. In contrast to authoritarian, Likert's (1961) research showed that the participative management approach was successful because increasing participation by organizational members at all levels helped build more productive organizations. House and Dessler (1974) said managers could enhance the psychological state of employees, giving them greater motivation to perform and increasing job satisfaction. Matejko (1986) said,

"Participation implies a situation in which all interested parties exercise some legitimate control over these decisions which are of vital interest to them" (p. 193).

Gonring and Clark wrote in 1992 that: "The participative culture ... is characterized by teamwork, shared power and decision-making, and is guided by common goals. The organization as a whole is open to ideas from outside" (p. 26).

Dozier et al. (1995) described participative cultures/organizations as: "Organizations ... infuse their employees with shared values, pulling employees together as a team to accomplish a common mission. Open to outside ideas, these organizations favor innovation and adaptation over tradition and domination" (p. 17). Also, "Participative management means involving subordinates in decision-making and thereby sourcing the expertise of people involved in the job – this generally results in higher quality decisions being made, which are more acceptable to the staff" (http://www.kznpremier.co.za/GG/bullet05.htm).

These descriptions of participative leadership theory have common elements. Every definition links participative management and culture to teamwork, employee involvement, shared decision-making, and sense of equality.

In what could be a combination of the authoritarian and participative styles of leadership, Barnard (1938) said that if goals were imposed from the top down, attainment of these goals depended on the willingness to comply from the bottom up. Barnard added that authority depends on the subordinate's approval that goes hand-in-hand with the issues of teamwork emphasized in a department.

Two other researchers also had ideas on this theme of conflict. House (1977) characterized effective leaders as using the authoritarian style when resistance is encountered, but

encouraging employee participation in decision making when compliance is assured. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) said successful leaders are flexible and cognizant of their choices; directing when necessary and allowing freedom when possible.

Another set of management styles important in discussing the functions of a communications department is Theories X, Y and Z.

The Alphabet Theories

Theory X. McGregor (1967) was interested in the basic nature of people. He developed two theories to describe managers' beliefs. They were Theory X and Theory Y.

> A Theory X manager believes the average person dislikes work and will avoid work whenever possible. These managers must respond to this attitude with controls such as punishments if employees fail to produce. Theory X managers also must assume that employees prefer to be directed in order to avoid responsibility. (p. 39)

McGregor did not believe these theories were necessarily managerial strategies but were rather underlying beliefs about human nature that influence managers to adopt one strategy over another. He said that: "… most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organization objectives. The average human being prefers being directed … has relatively little ambition, wants security above all" (1967, pp. 33-34).

Theory Y. McGregor (as cited in Sohn, Wicks, Lacy, & Silvie 1999) wrote about Theory Y as an alternative to Theory X. In an attempt to understand motivations and interactions of individuals with organizations, he said: "Theory Y managers believe that employees find work as enjoyable as play. They are self-motivated and self-directed. …[They] are committed to

organizational goals, ... do not need the threat of punishment, ... seek responsibility and are creative in solving organizational problems."

There are four assumptions to Theory Y: interdependent teams, self-control, the transactional nature of influence, and intrinsic motivation. These assumptions lead to the central principle of Theory Y, that being integration; the creation of conditions that provide employees the opportunity to achieve their own goals while achieving the goals of the organization at the same time.

Theory Z. This theory could be construed as a combination of Theories X and Y although Theory Z examines and makes assumptions about the culture of organizations, whereas X and Y makes assumptions about individuals within organizations. Theory Z was developed by Ouchi (1981), who described this management style as, "...long-term employment, often for a lifetime, although the lifetime relationship is not formally stated (p. 71).

Lacy et al. (1999) said that Ouchi contrasted American organizations (Type A) with Japanese organizations (Type J). Type A organizations were characterized by short-term employment, specialized career paths, rapid promotion, formal control, and individual responsibility. They value individuality over group membership. Type J organizations, in contrast, are characterized by lifetime employment, slow advancement, informal control, consensus decision making, and generalized career paths. Loyalty to groups is of primary concern and more important that individual achievement. The Theory Z organization that Ouchi proposed attempts to blend the best of A and J by retaining individual achievement and advancement while also providing a continuing sense of organizational community. Theory Z is important because it draws attention to the human relations approach to management.

Two-way Communication Models

The asymmetrical and symmetrical or two-way models of communications also make a major contribution to these case studies. "In asymmetrical practices, communicators use attitude theory, persuasion, and manipulation to shape public attitudes and behaviors. In symmetrical practices, communicators use theories and techniques of conflict resolution and negotiation to increase dominant coalition understanding of publics" (Dozier et al., 1995, p. 46).

Asymmetrical Communication. The goals of this type of managerial communication are to:

- Persuade a public that your organization is right on an issue
- Get publics to behave as your organization wants
- Manipulates publics scientifically
- Use attitude theory in a campaign (Dozier et al., 1995. p. 46)

Under the two-way asymmetrical model, communicators collect information about their important publics not to modify their own goals, objectives, or other forms of organization behavior. Instead, those managers of communication use that information to persuade publics to think and behave as they desire. They want to manipulate or persuade publics that the organization is all knowing and to do what the organization desires.

Symmetrical Communication. The task for a symmetrical manager is to:

- Negotiate with an activist public
- Use theories of conflict resolution in dealing with publics
- Help management to understand the opinion of particular publics
- Determine how publics react to the organization (Dozier et al., 1995, p. 46)

Two-way symmetrical communication allows organizations to build long-term relationships that are satisfactory to both sides. It seeks to manage conflict and promote mutual understanding. "Communicators can play a somewhat paradoxical role as advocates of the organization's interest in negotiations with key publics but advocates of the publics' interest in discussions with the organization's strategic planners and decision-makers" (p. 13). Symmetrical practices emphasize change in the management and key publics' attitudes and behaviors. Whereas, asymmetrical practices emphasize changing the attitudes and behaviors of those same key publics, without similar changes in the organization.

Using both symmetrical and asymmetrical communication is not unusual. Murphy (1991) developed the term mixed motives from game theory that suggest both sides pursue their own interests, but both sides also realize that the game's outcome must be satisfactory to both parties. A combination of these two types of managerial communication is the new model of symmetry as two-way practices (Dozier et al., 1995). The new model of symmetry applies when "...communicators try to persuade dominant coalitions to move towards the public's position" (p, 49). Plowman (1996) expanded on this new model further and encompassed both the asymmetrical and symmetrical communications within a mixed motive model for public relations.

Having examined leaderships theory in the form of authoritarian and participative management styles, the alphabet theories and combination thereof, and the combined asymmetrical and symmetrical communication practices, it could be concluded that a mixed motive model would be most appropriate for this multiple-case study.

Research Questions

Although contingency theory might best describe the gamut of options for managers of communications in actual practice, it might be best to separate the various options in the research questions to cover all the contingencies that might arise in the actual case studies. The following research questions were common to these case studies.

1. Is the organizational culture of the organizations studied more authoritarian than participative?
2. Are the managerial styles of communicators more Theory X or Theories Y or Z ?
3. Do the communication practices tend to be more asymmetrical than symmetrical?
4. Are the management of communication practices more reflective of a mixed motive model, a combination of the authoritarian and participative, Theories X, Y and Z, and the two-way models?

Methodology

This section explains why a multiple-case study and case studies in general are effective. It describes briefly the 15 organizations chosen for the individual studies. It also discusses the data collection process and the issue of bias, and the type of analysis chosen for the study.

Multiple-Case Study

A multiple-case study uses common criteria to analyze a number of individual case studies that have close or similar criteria. Those criteria can be similar to the concept of triangulation. Triangulation allow researchers to review a wide range of issues, including "historical, attitudinal and behavioral issues" that may affect organizations under study. Any finding or conclusion is more likely to be convincing if "converging lines of inquiry" can be found (Yin, pp. 91-92).

This convergence of analysis was referred to by Yin (1994) as *replication* for multiple-case study design. Essentially he said that to pursue one set of theoretical replications might involve up to three single cases. This study considered from four to seven theories depending on a particular viewpoint of theory-connectedness. For a multiple-case study of this size, Yin cited *theoretical replication* as the best design and that it would produce contrasting results but for predictable reasons 9p. 46). This case study then, is one of multiple embedded cases, meaning each individual case also has multiple units of analysis.

As far as case studies themselves, as Yin (1994) said, "In brief, the case study allows an investigator to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as...organizational and managerial process..." (p. 3). The case study helps answer the "how" and "why" through qualitative methods of evidence instead of statistical data. In an effort to answer the four research questions for this case study, several sources of evidence will be used.. According to Yin (1994), "...the various sources are highly complimentary, and a good case study will therefore want to use as many sources as possible" (p. 80). Triangulating for the 15 cases, four sources of evidence were used: documentation, archival records, interviews, and participant observation. Before describing that evidence, though, the 15 organizations should be briefly described.

<u>Organizations</u>

In this multiple-case study, 15 of the 45 total case studies were chosen for evaluation purposes because of their use of the theories examined in the literature review and their similarity in method. Most of the organizations were located in the Silicon Valley area of California. Actual

interviewees are not listed because of guarantees of confidentiality to insure depth and quality of data collected. Organizations are listed in no particular order.

The San Jose Downtown Association, a non-profit organization that markets downtown San Jose

KSBW TV_8, a television station serving Monterey, Salinas, and Santa Cruz counties for over 40 years

Shotwell Public Relations Agency, founded in 1985, focuses on the high-tech industry -- located in Santa Clara

The Community and Physician's Relations Department at the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University

The Office of External Affairs at the NASA Ames Research Center at Moffett Field.

The Semiconductor Industry Association represents US-based semiconductor manufacturers -- established in 1977 and in San Jose

Pigliaro/Kuhlman, Inc., a high-tech advertising agency in San Jose -- founded in 1988

Netcom On-line Services in San Jose -- the nation's largest internet service provider

AMC Theatres, Inc. – 14 in Saratoga -- a chain of movie theatres

Tom's of Maine, a $20 million a year company that manufactures "natural personal care products" including toothpaste, soap, shampoo, and deodorant -- in Keenebunk, Maine

The Marketing Communication Office of De Anza Community College in Cupertino

The Marketing Department of the Valley Fair Shopping Center in Santa Clara

San Jose State University's media communications as an element of its two-year Academic Priorities Planning Process that began in 1993

The Strybing Arboretum Society, a non-profit educational and cultural organization that operates Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens in San Francisco.

The van Bronkhorst Group, a business-to-business marketing communications agency that services technology-based companies in Santa Clara.

Documentation

According to Yin (1994), documents have three main purposes: verifying correct spelling and titles or names of organizations, providing specific details to corroborate information from other sources, and helping the researcher make inferences. He cautions that while documents are an important means if confirming and adding to information already gathered, they should be used carefully. Documentary evidence should not be accepted as a literal recording of events as that have previously taken place. Upon reviewing documentation, the researcher must remember that the documents were written for a particular purpose, other than that of the case study being conducted. Keeping this in mind, the researcher(s) is less likely to be misled by the evidence presented (pp. 81-82)

On the other hand, document review as a source of evidence in a case study has four main strengths, according to Yin (1994): It is stable, it is unobtrusive, it is exact, and it enables broad coverage of material.

Archival Records

According to Yin (1994), archival records have the same four strengths as documentary records, with one addition – they provide information that is precise and quantitative (p. 80). As with documentary evidence, he warns that, "Most archival records were produced for a specific purpose and a specific audience…and these conditions must be fully appreciated in order to

interpret the usefulness of any archival records" (p. 84). Records used for these case studies included previous budget information and organizational charts, and prior survey data about the effectiveness of the communications function.

Personal Interviews

The bulk of evidence for the case studies came from 2-4 personal interviews with key staff members such as department heads and relevant members of departments. Individual researchers used survey, open-ended, and focused interviews. Focused interviews was predominant in that "...the interviews may still remain open-ended and assume a conversational manner, but you are more likely to be following a certain set of questions derived from case study protocol" (Yin, 1994, p. 85). The focused interview was developed "...to provide some basis for interpreting statistically significant effects of mass communications" (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956, p. 5). The focused interviews worked better for these case studies for two reasons. First, the schedules of the respondents were known so it was easier to capturing an hour of their valuable time. Secondly, and more importantly, because of the close relationship of the primary researcher with each of these individuals it was easy for the interviewer to follow unexpected directions in the interview. Most of the case studies involved a researcher as a participant-observer.

Participant-Observation

There are several obvious benefits to being a participant observer in a case study. The researcher had access to all the documentation and archival records. The researcher worked closely with those being interviewed so scheduling time with them was easier than with an

outsider. And finally, the researcher had an understanding of the organization, the department, and the key publics it serves.

Concerns of being a participant observer included innate bias from the researcher's viewpoint of job, department, staff, etc. Backer (1958) said this was a main problem of this research method because the investigator has to assume positions or advocacy roles at certain times that may interfere with the interest of good scientific practice. On the other hand, a strong disposition toward the organization worked to the benefit of these case studies because of the depth of research that was accomplished.

Using these multiple sources of evidence represents the process of triangulation that is an important advantage. It means that "...any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode" (Yin, 1994, p. 92). Again, the basis for collection of the information for this study was guided by the parameters of the research questions. A research protocol (Lindlof, 1995) was developed from the research questions for all of the cases. Examples of several of those are found in Appendix A. The interviews were evaluated and analyzed according to pattern-matching analysis.

Analysis

One of most preferred strategies to use in case study analysis is "pattern-matching logic" according to Yin (p. 106). Trochim (1989) said that pattern-matching "compares an empirically based pattern with a predicted one." If the patterns match in two or more instances within a single case study and then among the several cases at the multiple-level then it will be strengthened as to internal validity (p. 106). By reviewing all the documentary and archival

material and comparing them to the responses received during the personal interviews, the results should triangulate to evaluate the research questions posed in the literature review. The ultimate goal of the analysis is to compare the results to the theories and then, according to Yin (1994), generalize to theory, *analytic generalization,* and not to a population as in quantitative research. This will allow the research to confirm or adapt the theories to the actual practice of public relations management.

If the majority of cases support the same theory, replication may be claimed. It is predicted that participative, Theories Y and Z, two-way symmetrical and mixed motives will be the predominant patterns. The research questions themselves provide the initial framework of analysis (Lindlof, 1995) to guide the organization of the Results section next.

Results

Major patterns resulted from the four methods of data collection. Resulting patterns among the 15 organizations were mixed overall. The four patterns in evidence related to the four research questions and were: 1) The leadership style trends toward participative with definite instances of authoritarian in certain situations or when someone had to make a final decision; 2) Theories Y and Z were the stronger pattern, but Theory X also was in evidence; 3) Again, there was a trend toward two-way symmetrical but that did not rule out the use of two-way asymmetrical communication when needed; and 4) The strongest pattern was a mixture of the use of all these theories, mostly in a mixed motive or contingency manner.

Participative vs. Authoritarian

Most managers or directors of communication said they practice participative management, but to varying degrees. The method of participant observation, however, usually

revealed more of a leaning to authoritarian management than managers would admit. For example, at the hospital the director hopes her staff sees her as "collaborative" and that she tries to present things in a "palatable" way to make things OK with everyone. She said, "Teamwork is very, very important to me in how I manage." She said she tries very hard to be a good listener and tries to be as available as possible when staff need her and helps them problem solve as necessary. The director also said she gives as much authority as possible to her managers, but she will stay more involved if she feels she has more of a history in the situation or that her relationships with others will help in a particular situation. The two managers seemed to corroborate much of what the director said she tries to do.

The two managers, however, said the director needs to give more authority to them. One manager said she has about "70% of the authority" over her area that she should have which she attributes to the director's fear of burdening her staff and her innate nature as a perfectionist who is used to doing things herself.

The other manager held the opinion that although she has the "responsibility" for all her programs, she only has "authority" over some. She said that the director does expect communication on everything although she doesn't "just hang around all the time" interfering.

At the TV station, five managers said they practices participative management, one practices both styles but they all said the station itself practices mostly authoritarian management. The researcher observed that most of the managers practice more authoritarian than participative and would just not admit that to themselves. The one manager who admitted to both said he believed in participative management on as long as "everything gets done." He feels that authoritarian is appropriate in situations "when employees aren't on top of things, or

aren't doing what they're supposed to." Most of the managers condemned employing authoritarian techniques because it made them look "mean" or because they have had bad experiences working for or with authoritarian managers themselves.

The on-line services company was going through a merger at the time of the case study so part of the study was on communication about the merger. Documentary evidence showed the company was participatory, "This is truly a team effort" and "ICG.and Netcom recognize that our employees are our biggest asset." A department head described Netcom's management style as "open door." She said, "There were no obstacles in the implementation of our communications strategy" (regarding the merger). Another manager, however, described Netcom's management policy as being open door only on the surface, with much more reliance on the chain-of-command. He said: "...there are a lot of mirrors. The door has the open sign on it but when you go in, there's not any info. Most of the middle managers interviewed at Netcom seemed to indicate that at the upper levels, the management style was very much chain-of-command, but under them, the management style differed from department to department and from manager to manager. For example, one said he practiced a very participative form of management, but that a counterpart practiced a more authoritarian style.

Theories X, Y, and Z

Another pattern emerged with regard to whether managers considered themselves to be Theory X, Theory Y, or Theory Z practitioners. All the managers that responded claimed to be a combination of Theory Y and Theory Z.

At the agencies, the interviewees stated that Theory X did not exist at all. One partner jokingly said, “Like many people I hate Monday mornings, but everyone who works at the agency has self-confidence and is motivated to accomplish the job at hand.”

Other employees agreed with the Theory Y assessment. One said, “I feel we have a good working environment and everyone enjoys what they are doing.” Another added, “I enjoy what I am doing and I am learning from _____ (the founding partner), who I consider to be a good mentor because he is very positive and productive.” In the founding partner’s survey he said, “The agency definitely practices Theory Y. All of my employees want to work here and are self-motivated and self-directed.”

The executive director as the San Jose Downtown Association also practiced Theory Y management. Yet, while the employees agreed that this was his style, they did not agree that it was effective. The executive director was often heard to say, “everybody wants to work at the San Jose Downtown Association,” his employees felt differently. “I don’t feel lucky to work here, “ the marketing director stressed. “They are lucky to have me.”

At the TV station, the same manager that sometimes used the authoritarian style, also used Theory X. He said he believed, in some cases, “employees dislike work and avoid responsibility whenever possible.” It is with those employees that he used Theory X. Otherwise he treats employees on a case by case basis and uses whichever theory he feels appropriate. If all of his employees were “reliable and did their jobs,” he would choose to use a combination of Theory Y and Theory Z. The other managers considered themselves to be a combination of Theory Y and Theory Z exclusively. One said, “I’m glad I can choose to be a combination of these theories because I’m definitely not one or the other.” Interestingly, when the managers

were asked which theory best describe the organization as a whole, most of them said they viewed the station as being overwhelmingly Theory X. They maintained this opinion even after claiming to be mainly Theory Y and Theory Z.

At Tom's of Maine, the emphasis on the mission and company values fit Theory Z style of management. Worker participation was encouraged in a recent internal newsletter. Employees were asked to answer a series of questions about their preferences for community involvement and alternative suggestions were encouraged. The founder of the company has written in detail about the importance of his personal relationships with employees, another distinction ascribed to Z-culture. Tom's was recently named, for the fourth straight year) to *Working Mother* magazine's list of 100 top companies for working parents for its salary, child care and family friendly programs.

Two-way Symmetrical and Two-way Asymmetrical Communication

Although two-way symmetrical communication seemed to be the preferred choice, two-way asymmetrical communication was a stronger pattern here than either authoritarian or Theory X.

Both the agencies said they practiced two-way symmetrical communication especially with clients. One partner said; "We are always looking our for our client's best interests." He went on to elaborate that, "We guide our clients but we are neither seen or heard.... We are ultimately in the business to make a profit and gain an excellent reputation by building good relations with our clients. Another agency employee said: "The agency uses two-way symmetrical communication usually 90% of the time." The founder of one of the agencies wrote

down that, "Public relations is very 'relationship-based,' so we have to constantly communicate our services to them, since it's not a tangible that requires lots of two-way talking."

At De Anza the Marketing Communication Office used two-way symmetrical communication to raise money from corporations and members of the community. However, concerning student recruitment, the office practiced asymmetrical communication. Although the demographics of the students were known, the office was not in charge of outreach to the local high schools. Instead the office produced advertisements, brochures, and movie slides that for prospective students. This asymmetrical communication with students proved ineffective when a student protest against the administration was held.

The community relations manager as the TV station said: "I think KSBW is two-way asymmetrical. They are really ignorant about our publics and their needs ... unless it's about money – then they'll pay attention. That's when they are two-way symmetrical. I think it is my job to pay attention to our publics' needs." Then later she said of the station/public relationship, "I like the idea of finding win-win situations." Another manager jokingly answered, "win-win is what our station practices. Win-lose is what our sales department practices."

In the case of the Downtown Association, the executive director seemed to practice two-way asymmetrical communication, especially in employee relations. The communications manager there stated, "ideas from staff are rarely implemented." The marketing assistant remarked, "the executive director can't always implement ideas from staff," while the marketing director said, "the executive director may listen to ideas from staff, but hardly ever are any of our ideas implemented into SJDA goals."

Another pattern emerged in the staff's evaluation of the executive director as a manipulator. "The executive director often communicates in a patronizing way, and uses sarcasm when dealing with serious issues," said the communications manager and added, "I don't think this is appropriate." The administrative assistant answered similarly, "he does manipulate situations to put himself in a better position." The marketing director concurred as well.

At the hospital, the researcher referred to what was happening in her department with the two-way models as *relationships.* Each person interviewed used this word and it is used several times in the 1995 year end report.

The director said, "The focus of this department is around relationships with the community, physicians, patients and volunteers." She said the CPRD helps the hospital "deal with the inside and outside world" since they serve publics in both. The healthcare marketplace is "cut throat" right now and her department's goal is to do their best for less or "at least convince the payers and physicians - our market - that we are."

The manager of the Pediatric Telecenter said its goal was to "develop relationships with all the community - patients, families and physicians." According to the 1995 CPRD Year-End Report, "PIRC plays a significant role in the promotion of the most appropriate use of health care resources." Most of this manager's programs could be quantifiably recorded and verified by the researcher. She has statistics, graphs and tables that show how many calls they have received, referrals to the hospital, number of emergency room visits they have preempted, etc.

The other manager had a completely different role as the Community Outreach Manager. She was in charge of community education, educational outreach, hospital tours, SafeKids

Coalition of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, and serves as a liaison between the hospital and other community organizations and the public. She sees her role as having the hospital out there in the professional community by being involved in coalitions, and committees. She said the "hospital needs to be seen as a player in community programming."

She builds "relationships" with schools, organizations, businesses, physicians and the general public in her job. The LPCH wants to be "collaborative" and they realize that "taking care of kids is a community effort - not just one or more programs." Her main public is the general community and more specifically, the parents. Unlike the manager of the Pediatric Telecenter, this manager said she "cannot measure our success accordingly because it is immeasurable." She could show the number of events attended, tours conducted and promotional supplies distributed, but there is not an accurate way to show the impact this area has on the hospital, and definitely not a way to show it financially. Each of these areas has very different focuses, but they are all similar in that they build relationships which is one of the goals listed in the year end report.

<u>Mixed Motives</u>

From the first three patterns can be seen a tendency toward participative leadership, Theory Y and Theory Z, and two-way symmetrical communication. However, much of this evidence is qualified by the situation and the relative influence of internal and external publics. The intent seems to be symmetrical but the reality is often asymmetrical. In the case of the TV station, although most managers claimed to practice participative management, many said they felt authoritarian management styles were predominant.

The agencies and the hospital achieved and maintained positive client relationships. The agencies did this through sound corporate image objectives via established personal contacts with reporters, editors, and publishers of media outlets. The interviews, however, also revealed that that where issues of payroll, new hires and location were concerned, a certain amount of input was taken but the final, authoritarian decision rested with senior management.

Throughout the cases were instances participatory, Theory Y and symmetrical overall management but employees still desired more autonomy and authority. In fact, an outside communication assessment at the Downtown Association in 1996 stated, “we recommend restructuring staff with greater autonomy and authority for department directors.”

Conclusions

The four research questions were answered in this study and the results corroborate earlier predictions with some qualifications. For example, the management style of the Community and Physician Relations Department (CPRD) definitely leans towards the participative theory, but will resort to the authoritarian style on certain occasions, in a mixed motive manner. Two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical communications also are in evidence.

Authoritarian and Participative

Using the Shotwell Public Relations Agency as representative, the management style swayed greatly toward participative management but sometimes the owner has no choice but to use authoritarian management especially in such matters as payroll and new hires. The agency did not operate as authoritarian organization "in which the organizational cultures do not share a common mission and decisions are made by the manager without consulting staff members"

(Dozier et al., 1995 p. 140). The agency operates in a participative organizational structure where all employees "feel part of the team, work together, foster interdepartmental coordination and maintain responsibility in getting the job done" (p. 138). At the TV station, managers said they practiced participative management but that the organization generally had an authoritarian culture. While at San Jose State, university leaders were trying to change the culture to participatory and while the resident culture was somewhat disbelieving and resistant. There seemed to be mixed motives depending on viewpoint, at what level of management you were or if the focus of the particular communication was internal to employees or external to strategic publics. In some cases, organizations were authoritarian internally participative externally. Pagliaro/Kuhlman was an example.

Theories X, Y, and Z

For these theories, KSBW was exemplary and representative of all the cases. Each manager described their style as a combination of the three theories, citing degrees of mixed motives. The majority, however, indicated they were predominately Theory Y and Theory Z practitioners. With one exception the managers did not say that employees prefer to be directed to avoid responsibility (Lacy, Sohn, & Wicks, 1993, p. 39). Also, the pattern among the cases indicated that Theory Y workers were creative in solving organizational problems (p. 39).

Exemplifying Theory Z, Tom's of Maine always sought close relationships with its employees, emphasizing their participation in decision-making, suggestions, involvement in assessing the mission. Though not proven, holding a company-wide meeting to revisit the company's volunteer effort does increase the effectiveness of the program.

In one exception at Netcom, the researcher conclude that the company did not practice a Theory Z style of management as Ouchi said in 1981 to retain individual achievement and advancement while providing a continuing sense of organizational community. Instead, the researcher thought the company practices more of a Theory X style in the guise of Theory Y.

Two-way Communication

Defining themselves as managers of two-way symmetrical communication, most of the organizations were looking at their external strategic publics. In the hospital, the roles of each department are quite different and impact different publics. Some programs are designed with input from the community or based on community needs. Some decisions are just made by the hospital without such input. Therefore, the CPRD implements the asymmetrical and symmetrical forms of communication with their publics. In the case of Netcom, one-way asynchronous would best describe its management style, although once again senior management gave the impression of the two-way asynchronous style. It was apparent that management preferred the two-way method, but did not have enough trust in its employees to do so. These two case where mixed motives and one-way communication predominated were the exceptions to the multi-case study when referring to the two-way models. The reset of the organizations preferred symmetrical communications in that they negotiated and compromised between organization and publics to produce "win-win" situations for both sides (Dozier et al., 1995, p. 47)

Mixed Motives

The results of this study did not address mixed motives as defined by Dozier et al., 1995, Murphy, 1991, and Plowman, 1996. A definition of public relations as a mixed motive game

helps reconcile the divergent asymmetric versus symmetric models, as a multi-directional scale of competition and cooperation in which organizational needs must be balanced against constituents' needs, but never lose their primacy. In this study, however, mixed motives was not a combination of the participative and authoritarian, Theories X, Y, and X, and the two-way models as management deals with separate internal and external publics. The new model of symmetry as two-way practices seems to indicate conditions where mixed motives can be practiced with the same public. This study indicates that separate management strategies can be practiced in a mixed motive manner from one public to the next. In a number of the cases in the multi-case study, a CEO would be asymmetrical to external publics and symmetrical to internal publics. Just the opposite was true in another case. Or, the managers said they practiced participative management while the organization itself was authoritarian or Theory X. Different management styles could exist in the same organization between upper and lower management and between departments in the same organization as well. In other cases, and this was the strongest pattern of the study, Dozier et al. (1995) was justified in that, overall intent was participatory, Theory Y, and symmetrical, but there were situations where final decisions had to be made and they were done quite authoritatively.

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APPENDIX A

Management Survey

Please state your name and job title:

Please briefly list your job description:

There are three management theories which I am studying. They are called Theory X, Theory Y, and Theory Z. They are defined by as follows:

Theory X: Theory X managers think that average employees dislike work and they avoid responsibility whenever possible. Theory X managers believe they must punish employees when their performance is poor. Theory X managers also believe that employees prefer to take directions from management, so they can avoid taking responsibility.

Theory Y: Theory Y managers are the opposite of Theory X managers. They assume that employees enjoy work and are self-motivated and self-directed. They also believe that employees are committed to the goals of the organization, and the threat of punishment is not required to motivate productivity. Theory Y managers are concerned with what motivates employees and how they interact within the organization.

Please note: Managers rely on both Theory X and Theory Y ideas, depending on their needs or situation.

Theory Z: Theory Z examines the culture of an organization, whereas Theories X and Y examine the individuals in that organization. Theory Z attempts to retain individual achievement and advancement by providing employees with a sense of community within the organization.

(MORE)

Appendix A
2-2-2

Which theory/theories best describes your management practices?

Which theory/theories do you feel best describe the organization as a whole?

There are many ways to define and describe communication between an organization and its publics. I have chosen to define two types. They are as follows:

Two-Way Symmetrical Communication: This type of communication strives toward negotiation and compromise between the organization and its publics to produce a "win-win" situation for both sides.

Two-Way Asymmetrical Communication: This form of communication is designed to benefit the organization exclusively. Information about the publics is often manipulated for the good of the organization. This provides a "win-lose" situation, where the organization wins only if the publics lose.

With these two models in mind, please describe how you manage communication between KSBW and its publics:

How does your communication method differ from the way the station as a whole communicates with its publics?

I would now like to examine two types of organizational culture. They are defined as follows:

Participative Culture: This involves open communication between employees and managers, teamwork, equality, employee empowerment, and shared decision making. In other words, employees

(MORE)

Appendix A
3-3-3

participate in the day-to-day decision making and practices of anorganization.
Authoritarian Culture: This involves centralized decision making by management, closed off communication between employees and management, managers maintain control and authority by upholding traditional management methods.

Please note: The presence of both participative and authoritarian cultures are found in most organizations. However, the values of one or the other typically dominates.

Please describe your approach to organizational culture. Do you practice one style in particular or both?

How would you describe the organizational culture of KSBW on the whole?

Please feel free to list any additional comments:

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this survey, I really appreciate it!

Thanks Again,

Nicole Fratzke
(408)656-0680

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The World Wide Web As A Communications Tool: PR Practitioner Perspectives

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The World Wide Web As A Communications Tool: PR Practitioner Perspectives

ABSTRACT

Interviews with public relations practitioners in organizations with Web sites were used to explore perceptions about the value the Web as a communications tool and how it fits into the communications mix. Practitioners believe a Web site symbolizes an organization's competitiveness, enhances an organization's image, and increases their personal sense of professionalism. However, they often have responsibility for a Web site without additional resources to maintain it, and do not see it as a high priority on their to-do list. Practitioners must juggle issues such as skepticism about the value of their site, inefficient evaluation methods, and control of the site.

INTRODUCTION

The World Wide Web is becoming a significant communications tool for businesses and organizations. Web sites are used to keep stakeholders up-to-date, provide information to the media, gather information about publics, strengthen corporate identity, and a host of other public relations functions. Most Fortune 500 companies use Web sites for external communication, focusing on promoting the company image and enhancing public relations rather than for direct sales or other revenue generating activities (Chang, Arnett, Capella, and Beatty, 1997).

The trend to use Web sites for public relations type activities is noteworthy. White and Raman (1998) contend that the Web is the first public relations mass medium in that content reaches a mass audience, but is not filtered through gatekeepers. It is a controlled mass medium since the sender of the message has control over the content that reaches the receiver. Traditionally in public relations, controlled messages are sent through newsletters, annual reports, and other vehicles written by communication professionals in an organization. Prior to the advent of the World Wide Web, advertising was the only way to send a controlled message to a mass audience through a mass medium.

Practitioner Perspectives of the WWW

A survey of public relations practitioners in *pr reporter* found that while the use of technology is identified as a leading public relations trend, its impact and value are mixed (Sept. 28, 1998). *The Public Relations Strategist* has published three articles about Internet issues to date. One addressed the need to keep a Web site's content current and offered recommendations to ensure that it is (Gumpert 1997). Another dealt with the potentially negative consequences—code violations, deceptive advertising, and questionable promotions—of surreptitiously using chat rooms to promote the company (Baker 1996). The third discussed some false assumptions about the Web, including who is using it, the speed at which journalists are adopting it, the advantages of unfiltered communications, and the skills needed to take advantage of the Web (Ovaitt 1995).

Articles in the trade press provide practitioners with information on how to use the Internet, World Wide Web, and other online technologies to improve the execution of their jobs. Some concentrate on using the Internet to gather information—for example, collect clippings or scanning issues (Alexander 1996; Jackson and Stoakes 1997; Young 1997). Other articles address how to use the medium to communicate with clients and other target publics, especially the media (Cohen 1997; Harden 1996; Kissing 1997; Settles 1996). A small number discuss creating and maintaining Web sites, primarily focusing on tips to make the site interesting and useable (Marken 1995; Middleberg 1996). These articles focus on developing skills and tools for enhancing the technical responsibilities of a public relations job.

However, despite its importance to public relations, Johnson (1997) notes, "rigorous public relations research about the use of new technologies has been limited." Most previous academic research deals mainly with online technology in general, not the World Wide Web specifically. Johnson's work looked at public relations professionals' use of interactive or computer-or-satellite-mediated technologies, including the World Wide Web. Thomsen (1996, 1995) studied the use of online databases for issues management and forums by public relations professionals. Ramsey (1993) asked about computerized research techniques used by issues management professionals. White and Raman (1998) looked at planning

and research in regard to Web sites, but did not specifically address the issue from the point of view of the public relations practitioner.

Need for Study

This study looks at how public relations practitioners perceive Web sites as a communications tool and how the World Wide Web fits into their overall communications strategy. It attempts to fill a gap in public relations research and professional literature, since as Johnson (1997) noted, there is no organizing framework that merges new technologies with existing communication tools used in public relations. In-depth interviews were conducted with 13 public relations practitioners whose organizations had established Web sites. The study investigates their perceptions of the World Wide Web as a communications tool to gain a better understanding of how Web sites are actually incorporated into communication strategies. The research uses a grounded theory approach that relies on the analysis of the data to guide the theories that emerge (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Grounded theory is appropriate for this study since little research about the topic exists.

LITERATURE TO PROVIDE FRAMEWORK

Literature on how practitioners perceive the Web as a communications tool does not exist. Even though it is not necessary to find a priori theory to guide the study, it is helpful to look at existing literature in public relations to help structure thought about how new communication technologies fit into existing organizational structure and communication strategies. To develop this structure, three areas were identified that may be useful to the study: research about public relations roles, professionalism, and encroachment. The information found in the literature on the use of technology in public relations lead to the review of research on public relations roles and professionalism. The focus on encroachment research stemmed from articles in trade magazines about the most suitable department within an organization to control a Web site. The literature review was used to add depth to the researcher's understanding of the practice of public relations and provided an overall picture of some issues and concerns that may confront the practitioners who were to be interviewed.

Public Relations Roles

The job responsibilities of a practitioner and his or her role in the organization may influence how a practitioner perceives a Web site as a communications tool. Broom (1979) proposed four roles to explain the responsibilities of public relations practitioners. These descriptions were based on conceptual models found in a wide range of literature on consulting, and as described by Broom and Smith (1982), are:

Expert prescriber. The practitioner operates as the authority on both public relations problems and their solutions. The practitioner researches and defines the problem, develops the program and takes major responsibility for its implementation.

Communication technician. The practitioners provide their organization or client with the specialized skills needed to carry out public relations programs. Rather than being part of the management team, they are primarily concerned with preparing and producing communications materials for the public relations effort.

Communication facilitator. The practitioner is a sensitive "go-between" or information broker. He or she serves as a liaison, interpreter and mediator between the organization and its publics, with an emphasis on maintaining a continuous flow of two-way communication.

Problem-solving process facilitator. Practitioners operate as members of the management team, collaborating with others throughout the organization to define and solve problems. They help guide other managers and the organization through a rational problem-solving process that may involve all parts of the organization in the public relations planning and programming process.

Most public relations practitioners do not operate solely in one of these areas, but adopt all the roles to a varying degree. Dozier (1992), therefore, collapsed the four roles into that of manager and technician based on the fact that the same people tend to play the expert prescriber, communication facilitator, and problem-solving process facilitator roles, while different people play the technician role. Furthermore, Reagan, Anderson, Sumner, and Hill (1990) concluded that because Broom and Smith's four

roles do not appear in empirical tests, that at the theoretical level, it is probable that only two roles exist: manager and technician.

Johnson (1997) considering public relations roles in the use of new technology suggested that managers may use technology to spot trends, monitor issues, and note sensitive changes among target publics. White and Raman (1998) that those responsible for Web sites operated primarily as communication technicians. Technicians use technology for improving productivity and enhancing activities like media relations and employee communications. The predominant role of the public relations practitioners identified in this study may be useful in understanding how the practitioner views a Web site.

Professionalism and Public Relations

The literature on professionalism introduces the possibility that the use of a Web site as a communications tool may be influenced by practitioners' understanding of what it means to be a professional. The issue of professionalism in public relations branches into two areas. One centers on discussion of whether or not public relations, as an occupation, is a profession and on licensing and accreditation issues.

The other branch looks at the presence of professionalism among the people practicing public relations. The second path has potential relevance to this study.

The empirical research on professionalism in public relations is based in McLeod and Hawley's (1964) study of professionalism of Milwaukee journalists. These researchers identified 24 characteristics associated with professionalism from a list of characteristics developed from sociological studies on professionalism in other occupations. McKee, Nayman, and Lattimore (1975) adopted the list, using only 21 items, in their investigation of how public relations people see themselves as professionals. Their study found the following job characteristics were most often rated extremely or quite important by respondents: opportunity for originality and initiative, improving professional competency, full use of ability and training, having influence on important decisions, opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge, enjoyment of what's involved in doing the job, and earning a good living. A conclusion made by the researchers

reiterated an earlier observation made by McLeod and Hawley, "A person who sees himself as a professional is more apt to act like a professional (McKee et al. 1975)."

The 24 characteristics were used again when Wright (1978) looked at the differences between public relations counselors at various levels of professional orientation. A major assumption by Wright was that public relations should be examined in terms of the individual and not the practice (1978). His findings indicated that practitioners "want to be more professional than their present position will allow" and they were experiencing frustration about the lack of latitude in decision making and supervision.

Later research by Wright (1981), Cameron, Sallot, and Lariscy (1996) and Sallot, Cameron, and Lariscy (1997) began to tie these personal characteristics with the standards associated with defining an occupation as a profession. The intent of these studies was to determine if the efforts to establish professional standards for the occupation were being accomplished. There was less emphasis on what is considered a professional characteristic and more emphasis on professional standards.

The potential influence of the concept of professionalism on the use of new communication technologies was identified in Johnson's (1997) study on public relations that noted:

> [T]he adoption of the new technologies was self-driven by [practitioners'] own definitions of professionalism. All the respondents admitted to knowledge gaps about various technologies and their self-identity as a professional was dependent on reducing the gap.

Public Relations and Encroachment

When one department in an organization is unable to demonstrate that it performs a substantially different function than another, the department with the most resources or power usually takes over the less powerful one (Lauzen 1993). According to Lauzen, in public relations encroachment is defined as the assignment of non-public relations professionals to manage the public relations function. The study notes that encroachment often is perceived when the marketing department is involved. Marketing departments generally have more influence in an organization than public relations, and often the lines between the

responsibilities of the two are blurred. This same trend is also identified in non-profit organizations, except in these organizations the public relations department is often encroached upon by the fund-raising department. This vulnerability is connected to the role enacted by the senior public relations practitioner, how the public relations department is valued by the organization, and the financial situation of the organization (Kelly 1993).

The literature about encroachment reveals the existence of threats to public relations departments from other departments that may be more powerful (have more resources) or that are believed to be more valuable. In many organizations, it is possible that another department within the organization is vying for, or already has, control of the Web site. This encroachment may create barriers to including the site in the organization's overall communication strategy. Since other departments like marketing, advertising, customer service, and information systems (IS) also have a vested interest in the Web site, public relations' influence with these departments may determine how communication goals are incorporated (especially if the site is initiated by another department).

Magazine articles with titles like *Don't let PR control your Web site* (Seybold 1996) and *Bypassed again? IS often left out of Web planning* (Booker 1995) indicate some of the competition within an organization for control of a Web site. Seybold warns no to give the corporate public relations department control and ownership of the Web site "because they will turn it into a boring corporate brochure." She recommended that a site concentrate on business strategy support, with a focus on saving money, improving customer service or expanding audience reach (1996). This attitude reflects a dichotomous view about the function of a Web site, a view where public relations goals and business goals aren't compatible in this medium.

On the other hand, a public relations department may inherit a site because the department that created it no longer wants it, as this comment indicates: "The MIS [management information systems] guys did it without bothering to tell anyone. Then the Web got famous. That home page started getting more visibility, internally and externally. Someone had to feed the beast. So the MIS guys came to public

relations and said, 'Isn't this really your job?' (Ovaitt 1995)." The public relations department may have to assume responsibility for the upkeep of something they may not have the resources in terms of time, personnel, or funding to maintain.

METHOD

Qualitative research, in the form of long interviews, was used to gain an understanding of public relations practitioners' perceptions of the World Wide Web as a communications tool. Because existing public relations research literature about the topic is limited, qualitative research and inductive analysis are appropriate. A grounded theory approach is well-suited to the study of organizational phenomena in areas where little previous knowledge exists and the nature of the research questions call for an exploratory or descriptive focus (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

Participants

Thirteen people, selected through a purposive sample, were interviewed for this study. The only criterion was that participants practiced public relations in an organization that had a Web site. One exception to the criterion was made: a practitioner who worked for a company that was only in the planning stages of a Web site was included. This was done to provide a contrast to the perceptions of practitioners with an established site. Several interviewees were identified by the researchers and asked to participate in the study. In addition, the *Public Relations Tactics 1997-1998 Blue Book* was used to identify other participants. A search on the World Wide Web was conducted to see which companies listed in the Blue Book had Web sites. Practitioners at organizations with a Web site were contacted and asked if they would be willing to participate in the study.

The selected participants worked for organizations located in five large southeastern cities. They all identified themselves as public relations practitioners. (See Figure 1). Eight women and five men participated; 12 were white, one was black. The size of the sample is acceptable for this type of study where the purpose is to gain access to the categories and assumptions according to which one culture

(public relations practitioners) construe a phenomenon (McCracken, 1988). The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Analysis

An inductive development of conceptualizations grounded in the collected data was employed to analyze the transcripts. This method is responsive to changes as additional data are analyzed. This responsiveness creates emergent categories which, as they are emerging, are continually being developed and checked for relevance (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Grounded theory, the result of this analysis, also takes advantage of the fact that the researcher is an instrument in the qualitative research process. In the analysis process, the researcher asks if a logical connection exists between each comment and any other comment or note (Taylor, 1994).

Transcripts of the interviews were first analyzed using open coding, a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, and categorizing data (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Each interview was reviewed for comments regarding the practitioners' perceptions about how the Web site fit with the performance of their jobs and how it was used as a communications tool. Relevant comments were marked with codes that indicated their connection to similar bits of information found in other interviews.

After initial categories, or instances of phenomena, were identified, they were compared to each other at a second level of analysis using axial coding. The similarities and differences of the categories identified during the open coding process were noted and used to create a theme under which related categories could be grouped. Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that the intent of axial coding is to see how the open coding categories relate to each other by making abstract comparisons between them. Finally, the emergent themes were identified (selective coding).

FINDINGS

Three dominant themes emerged from analysis of the data. The most predominant finding was the Web site's low priority for both the practitioner and the organization among those interviewed. This theme was called **The Web as a "B list" Task**. Another prevalent theme was **Anticipated Value,** which helped

explain why the organizations in the study maintained Web sites and the benefits the practitioner gets or anticipates getting from the site. The third theme, **Juggling Act**, considered issues that influenced how well a practitioner manages a Web site as a public relations responsibility.

It's a "B list" Task

For the participants interviewed, working on the Web site was a low priority task—a "B list" activity in the lexicon of time management. This phenomenon was expressed in these comments:

> "Obviously it goes to the bottom of the list most of the time, because I have other programs where I have people at my door."
>
> "It always seems to go back to the back burner after we talk about it."
>
> "It feels like it's one of those priorities that always gets bumped. When, you know, there's always something else coming in ahead of it and it tends to get neglected."

The low priority for an organization's Web site came not only from the public relations practitioners, but also from their superiors as the following comments illustrate.

> "There's not a lot of organizational priority on it. So, it follows that there's not a lot of priority of my time spent on it."
>
> "…it was on the bottom of the totem pole for my boss and you look to your boss for your priority. And while we wanted it and we all came to consensus for, we knew it was on the bottom of the list. So it was not a top priority."

A disadvantage of a site remaining on a "B" list too long was illustrated in this comment:

> "The problem was we didn't have the staff support necessary, in terms of number of staff or in terms of ability to maintain a Web page on a daily basis. Particularly in terms of time, we didn't have the time to maintain a Web page on a daily basis. We knew all this going in and we did it anyway. We are now paying the price of that I believe. We've had the same Web site up for over a year. It is out-of-date information. It, it is not what we need to have on a Web site for [our] image."

Reasons for a Web site becoming a "B" list item were readily apparent. The facts that the Web content didn't always have critical deadlines and that the practitioner had a heavy, existing workload were the most conspicuous.

No deadline—In many cases, higher priority tasks were usually those that had deadlines associated with them, whereas maintaining or improving the Web site did not carry deadline pressure.

> "And now that I have the Web site, it's, I guess it's kind of a secondary priority because it doesn't have to get out in the mail, it doesn't have to, it doesn't have to go to the printer."
>
> "Because I have an event in September and now is when it has to be planned for. Period. It's got to be done now. There's nothing else I can do about it. And I can't take the time away from immediate things to put to something [the Web site] that, you know, really could wait."

Too much to do—Another frustration was that the Web site was just one of the many responsibilities a practitioner had to squeeze it into the workweek. As one practitioner said, "We've got enough to do now. What are we going to give up?" Another commented, "Anyway there's just not man-hours in the week to get everything done, plus do some of the projects that need to be done such as the Web page." If only one person in the organization was assigned to work on the Web site, it might never receive attention, as the following comment illustrated.

> "Well it was, it was just me in that position ... and being a webmaster is kind of a full-time job, really to get everything on there and keep it up to date. So I didn't really have the time to that. And didn't even attempt to, to do it because it was too much of a project."

Obviously a solution to the time problem is to add personnel, but even when there were already two people in the department available to give attention to the site, it did not seem to be enough. Several comments indicated that maintaining the Web site could be a full time job.

> "I wish, if I got my dream, I wish that we could hire a third person who was in

charge of, of just the Web site. You know, keeping it changing constantly. Keeping it up-to-date."

"We're realizing more and more it could support its own staff, you know, especially a part-time staff. Somebody who's updating the site".

When asked about advice for organizations thinking about creating a site, a participant made these recommendations: "Seriously think, be prepared to allow the time to do it right. Make it a priority. Don't, don't expect somebody to just fit it into their day, because it, it won't happen." This admonition summed up the reasons for a Web site becoming a "B list" task: it addressed priority, the number of other responsibilities, and lack of time.

In one large organization in the study, the public relations/marketing department initiated the Web site, and when the site was being established, hired a full-time person who was "completely dedicated to the Web site." The public relations practitioner in the organization still had a problem: remembering to give the Web site coordinator information that needed to be posted.

Anticipated Value

The low priority phenomenon begs the question, Why do these organizations have a Web site? Whether the public relations practitioners developed their site or inherited it from another department, they all had perceptions that it would add value to their public relations strategies. The following benefits or anticipated benefits were identified by interviewees: ability to demonstrate competitiveness, supplementing media relations activities, opportunity to reach new audiences, relationship building, and developing personal skills. These attributes of the Web site were reasons the practitioners continued keeping the site on their agenda.

Demonstrating competitiveness. It would be easier to name this concept "Shows We're Technological," but doing so would not describe its significance. There is more to it than mere technological savvy. There was a perceived relationship between technology and competitiveness for the participants. For them, having a Web site showed that they had technological skills, a characteristic they

thought was important. As a participant said, "Yeah, I mean we have to have it because we have to look like we are on top of the technology."

It is difficult to describe exactly how technological savvy and the concept of being competitive are connected. The notion was described by one participant this way:

> "And it's important, in my opinion, that we stay competitive. And one of the things this (having a Web site) does for us is makes us, at the very least, appear to be competitive. Now we are competitive, mind you. But the fact that we're able to put this on our publications (points to a Web site address on a brochure) helps us. The fact that we're able to put that on publications sort of says, 'yeah we're up on the times. We're not lagging behind…"

It may be easier to understand this expectation of a Web site by noting that one participant believed it was harmful for an organization not to have a Web site. She thought companies without one are perceived in a negative light. Another participant said his organization could not demonstrate to the parents of potential students that it was technologically savvy without a Web site. For him, a school that does not demonstrate technological proficiency will have trouble recruiting pupils. The following statement also illustrated how a Web site is linked to the notion of competitiveness.

> "It was something the organization realized it needed to do to stay current and utilize all the communications resources that were out there and all the resources that our competitors were using also."

Supplementing media relations. A Web site was seen as enhancing the performance of other public relations tools used by the participants. It provided additional information or offered easy access to the organization. Of particular interest were the comments about news releases, one of the most essential public relations tools: "So every press release I send out, it goes on our site as is, you know." This was standard operating procedure for most of the participants. However, participants had even greater expectations about the press relations benefits of a Web site. As one participant explained:

> "...if a reporter is doing research, that's what we really want, for them to come to Community Chest (Web site) for them to do their research for social services ... Well if they're doing a search and they want to know about welfare reform and they type in that, then our Web site will pop up and it will be all the information that we're doing with welfare reform."

On the other hand, participants had very few stories about the press actually using the site. A few participants could cite specific examples of the use of their site by journalists, but overall, most felt that very little media coverage was generated because of the site. An interesting twist to the media relations benefits of a Web site was the fear of one participant that the Web site might take the place of personal contact. His line of discovery went like this:

> (When reporters use Web sites) "that's frightening in a way, I mean that has a down side in that you're trying to eliminate your position. Basically is what you're doing is to make the information so easy that they don't need you very much anymore. The Daily News will get the information from here, and never, and you're thinking, 'well the phones are not even ringing. Do they even need us any more?'"

Reaching new audiences. There was a belief that the Web site had the ability to reach publics the organization normally does not reach. The following respondent's comment came after discussing potential visitors accessing the Web site: "I think we could hit our audience in that way, better than we could with the direct mail. And it's so much cheaper." A participant associated with a fund-raising organization that was always trying to find new donors echoed this sentiment.

> "There are a lot of people out there who we haven't even touched, who may not have a paying job, who may be homemakers, but would give if they had a channel, a vehicle. So, if they can give through the Web site great."

Building relationships. A Web site was not viewed as a replacement for face-to-face contact, but it was perceived as a way to strengthen relationships that already exist, mainly because of the e-mail

function. For one participant, a Web site made it possible for alumni to reach his organization at any time. He said,

> "And we can talk to them individually as, as well as responding immediately when they feel like talking to us, like 3 a.m. on a Tuesday. And then when we get in we can say, 'whoa, we got a letter from so-and-so.' So we can respond to their Web sites too."

Also, networking opportunities were enhanced as the following comment indicated,

> "And we go to conferences, national conferences and more and more non-profits are using the Internet and using e-mail so it's been real good for that. I mean I can have that address on my cards and it's an easy and inexpensive way for us to communicate with other organizations around the country."

Increasing my personal value. The organization was not the only recipient of benefits offered by a Web site. The practitioners also believed that the acquisition of new skills was a personal benefit. This is noteworthy in light the list of job characteristic— which included the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge—associated with professionalism. These comments illustrated this point:

> "It's not going to hurt for me to have that knowledge on my résumé, for companies to know that if this is something they want done, I can do it."
>
> "I don't think either of us would know, say Photoshop, the software of a whole lot of different programs if we didn't have Publisher [for doing the Web site]. So it keeps us technologically decent, not proficient I would say, but decent."
>
> "I really think that it's so technical that I just as soon have somebody else do it. But, that's not going to happen at this organization. And at the same time I think it would be good knowledge for me. I think it would help me grow professionally."

The Juggling Act

The participants in the study indicated they had to deal with several issues simultaneously as they tried to judge the worth of their Web site. In analyzing the transcripts, it appeared that the practitioners

were juggling several perceptions of the Web site. Some issues might be in the air at any given time, while others were in need of immediate attention. Which issue took priority for the practitioner could vary situationally. These issues were given the names "skepticism," "evaluation," "up-to-date," and "control." They are related to concepts already discussed, but for various reasons stand on their own and are also very connected to one other.

Skepticism. Doubts about the value of Web sites as a communications tool existed. One practitioner said, "A lot of people are online, but not as many as need to be for us to put all our eggs in the Web site, I think." A similar sentiment was reflected in this statement: "Well, a lot of people still question the validity of the Web site. 'Do we really need it and this is an expense we don't really need to have?'"

Many of the practitioners believed in the value of the Web site, but had to deal with others in the organization who were skeptical. The skeptics wanted tangible evidence as one participant pointed out, "They're a lot into proof, 'prove this to me, why is this important, that I won't take just your word for it, I want to know why, why are we putting this extra effort into it.' So, you have to prove to them that it's worth their while."

This attitude was a likely the cause for the "B list" status. The site had a lower priority than other activities because people—either the practitioner or organization leaders—doubted a site was providing something as valuable as the resources that were being put into it. A participant added validity to this assessment with this observation: "And I know it should be high on the priority list and I already have a problem with that. Because there are certain things that have to get done and there are things more pressing than a site people might hit if they're out surfing the Web."

Evaluation. Most participants in the study had not formally evaluated the effectiveness of their Web site. One participant said, "I've done some evaluation, but not an intense evaluation." Without adequate evaluation of a Web site, it will be difficult to gather the ammunition needed to disarm the skeptics. Only one of the participants conducted regular evaluations on the site and this was only analysis of hits. Others also counted hits, but not as systematically. A participant said, "We've kind of just really

looked at how many hits we're getting and it's always increasing and we take that as kind of a good sign, so, you know, we haven't really become very scientific about it." Another participant pointed out a reason for the lack of evaluation: "They won't spend a lot of money on evaluation programs like marketing surveys or anything of that nature. They just will not do it."

There was often an evaluation process inside the organization that involved comments from committees made of up organizational leaders. No participant indicated that targeted publics were providing evaluation information, except occasionally through feedback mechanisms on the site or comments in person. The vagaries of this approach were illustrated in this comment: "I don't know how effective it is. I haven't had people make enough comments or calls or whatever. It's not out there enough for people to know about it."

Up-to-date factor. Many of the participants were bothered by the fact that they could not keep the site up-to-date with their current resources. For one respondent, the need to be up-to-date was a reason for questioning the wisdom of putting up the site in the first place. She described the situation this way:

> "The communications department resisted a little bit because we knew that in order to do it the right way, to be online, we had to have current information on a daily basis online or it wouldn't work. You can't go online with a product and then update it every six months. You may as well not be there at all."

The next comment was representative of comments from many of the participants.

> "When we don't do that (update the site) on a timely basis, it bothers me a great deal. But, you know the last thing I want is for it to be old news on our news pages when we're going to a lot of time and trouble to, you know, tell the world about something new that we're doing and you turn to our Web site and it's not even there. It is something that we have control over, that we totally can control the content. I mean, I can send a press release to every newspaper in the world and I can't guarantee that they're going to print it.

But something that we have total control over, you know, it's frustrating if we can't get it up there..."

Practitioners believed that keeping a site up-to-date was vital to the effectiveness of their sites. They thought their publics expected Web sites to be up-to-date and were afraid if they did not do so they would undermine the advantages of demonstrating they were technologically savvy.

Quality control. Throughout the interviews, the idea that the site is a reflection of the organization's image was expressed. The relationship between quality control and corporate image was revealed in this explanation of why maintenance of a site was taken from a telecommunications department and given to a communications and marketing department: "The powers that be really wanted my position as director of publications, to take over the look of that, kind of our corporate identity." The practitioner, whose office is still in the process of training the new webmaster said, "One problem was that we don't have any, really, means of controlling that site. What goes on it. How it looks. And as a result it's kind of a schizophrenic looking thing." He attributed the disparate appearance to the site designer's lack of public relations and communications skills. A site that had inconsistent pages was viewed as problematic, as seen in this observation made by a different participant:

> "If you were a perspective student looking at our Web site, and you clicked up, and you were interested in sports, and you clicked up lacrosse, you would find a really impressive site several layers thick on lacrosse and what it has to offer and how successful we've been. And then you said, 'well maybe I don't want to play lacrosse, maybe I want to play golf.' So you click on golf and nothing. So then do you say, 'this school's inconsistent, it doesn't have its act together'? That's bothered me a whole lot. The only solution is for me to take over golf, because the golf coach is never going to do it. And I don't have time to do it."

Lack of communication between the practitioner and the site designer also created problems as is noted in the following comment.

> "He designed a Web page for [us] but he didn't discuss it with me or meet with me about it, or sit down and do it together…he didn't talk to the staff to see what we wanted on it.'"

Another organization described the following situation.

> "It was our ad agency who had been recruited for all our print materials for the fund-raising campaign, okay. So they knew our message strategy. They knew everything we needed. They went ahead and designed the Web page based on input that we gave them, based on senior staff meetings, from all the departments here at Community Chest. So we all had input on what it needed to be."

However, when the participants (there were two in this interview) were asked what they thought of their current site, they responded:

> "It's very dull. It needs better visuals. It needs to come up sooner. It comes up real slow because of the visual that's on there. It needs to be just more graphically pleasing to the eye. If nothing but the Community Chest logo. It needs to be better. It's just not, it's not good. We weren't pleased with it when we got it."

Controlling the quality of a Web site was an important issue. The more influence a practitioner had on the site, the greater his ability to direct its appearance. Practitioners with sites that had multiple sources of content had to balance the need to disseminate information with the need to shape the organization's image. Juggling various issues was a source of frustration for the practitioners, and if not handled with dexterity, could interfere with a site's ability to be effective.

Summary

There is little doubt that a Web site was a communications tool for a public relations practitioner—one of many tools they utilize to share information with an organization's public. One participant said, "it is one more piece of the puzzle." The study found that practitioners thought using this tool required more time than anticipated and that a Web site was often a low-priority item, both for

practitioners who had a number of other responsibilities and more pressing matters, as well as for other managers in the organization. Participants believed that a Web site had the potential to provide information to the media, demonstrate the organization's competitiveness, and build relationships with new and existing publics. Working with a site was perceived to enhance personal skills. However, several issues interfered with the participants ability to maximize the benefits of a Web site: skepticism about the value of a Web site; inadequate evaluation methods, inability to keep the site updated, and quality control expectations.

DISCUSSION

To maximize the benefits of a Web site for an organization, it is helpful to see what a Web site is and is not for the practitioner. An understanding of how Web sites are perceived by public relations professionals with a vested interest in these sites can help formulate thinking about how the Web is impacting the practice of public relations. Recommendations that may help public relations practitioners can be offered based on these findings.

Perceptions. Participants in the study perceived that their Web sites had the potential to provide new benefits to their organization, such as the opportunity to reach new audiences and an additional interface with journalists. However, they could not articulate or demonstrate with research that they were currently achieving these benefits. There was a positive perception of the anticipated value of the site that co-existed with some skepticism about the value of the site under current circumstances. Participants believed that if given time and resources to do the job right, the site could reach its potential.

Participants believed that a Web site is symbolic—having a Web site creates a positive image and competitive edge for an organization, and allows the organization to appear to be on the cutting edge. The study found a perception that a Web site symbolizes keeping up with trends and being at the forefront of what is happening in the world. Understanding this perception can benefit practitioners involved with Web sites. If a site is created all or in part for the purpose of conveying a cutting-edge image, the site must be up-to-date and technologically advanced. This, of course, takes resources; the study found that lack of resources for maintaining a Web site was common. If image building is a priority for the organization's

Web site, it is necessary to make the resources to maintain it a priority.

The participants had a pragmatic acceptance of the reality of limited resources. They were not overly frustrated that they were not achieving what they wanted with their Web site. But at the same time, they expressed concerns that their site was not living up to its potential and was a low priority item. This ties back to Johnson's (1997) observation that practitioners' adoption of technology is driven by their own definitions of professionalism and their attempt to live up to what one "ought" to do and "ought to know."

One of the most common frustrations—especially for those who had outside departments posting content—was the perception that the site did not reflect positively on the organization. The frustration was related to the fact that even thought the site was something they were responsible for, they were unable to completely control it. There may be several reasons for this perceived lack of control: inadequate resources make it impractical to review other departments' content before it is posted, the belief that other departments will chaff at having the public relations department overseeing their work, or the fact that practitioners do not have the time to make the site what they thought it "ought" to be. This connects to the McKee et al. (1975) list of extremely or quite important job characteristics which includes having influence on important decisions. In this case the practitioners may feel professionally frustrated that they do not have much influence on the company's image as they would like. This lack of influence could also be connected to the fact that most of the participants described their work in terms that would categorize them in the role of communication technician. But those participants whose responsibilities extended beyond the technician role, also seemed to be frustrated by their departments' lack of control of the site's appearance and lack of support from superiors.

On the other hand, none of the participants reported that any other department was trying to take responsibility for the site from them. This absence of a perception of encroachment by another department may be a function of the sample.

The Web as a communications tool. A Web site is becoming a widely adopted public relations tool. It is used to provide information to both external and internal publics. The e-mail function is seen as

offering two-way communication opportunities. But the Web is not seen as a replacement for other tools. For instance, participants routinely posted news releases to their sites without abandoning traditional methods of distributing releases. They did not think the audiences of their newsletters would visit the Web site to get the same information and did not believe the Web replaced face-to-face communication.

For the participants in this study, a Web site was more work than most anticipated. These practitioners already felt overwhelmed by their workload and had little incentive to make the Web site a higher priority than the other tasks on their agenda. Most felt that the organization did not commit the resources needed to increase the level of attention given to the site. They also faced other obstacles to making the site a priority. These include skepticism about the value of the site, the lack of useful evaluation procedures, and the fact that multiple audiences are often the targets of a Web site.

As for understanding how a Web site fits into an overall communications plan, the participants in this study did not articulate on a specific plan for their organizations other than "to get the word out about us."

Recommendations. The practitioner needs to be prepared to make the site a priority if it is to stay up-to-date and present a positive image of the organization. In order for the site to become a priority, there must be a commitment to provide the personnel, training and equipment needed to keep pace with the additional work. Also, if the site is to be a useful tool, standards for evaluating its But once again, there needs to be a commitment of resources if research is to be funded. If it is to be a useful tool, standards for evaluating its effectiveness in that context must to be established. Practitioners also need reliable measures that can be used in these evaluations.

Future Research

Exploratory research often raises more questions that it answers. Such was the case in this study. Several themes emerged from this research which also were found in previous qualitative studies. The notions that a Web site is a mark of professionalism for both the practitioner and the organization, the idea that the use of technology is a necessary tool of the future, and the perception of Web sites as an image

builder symbolizing that an organization is on top of things were congruent with findings of Johnson (1997) as well as White and Raman (1998). These recurring ideas warrant further study. It will be interesting to find out whether in the future, the predictions of anticipated value hold true.

The study found that public relations practitioners perceive a Web site as a tool to enhance an organization's image. Future research needs to explore whether this holds true for the users of the Web site. Do people think having a Web site is a mark of quality for an organization? Does a Web site truly improve an organization's image? Related to this was the belief that having a Web site helped participants in the study reach new audiences even though no one had concrete evidence this was the case. Evaluation tools for measuring the effectiveness of Web sites need to be developed. Additionally, more research is needed which looks at audiences of new media.

Participants also believed that journalists used the Web site to obtain information about the organization. Participants routinely posted news releases to their sites, but did not know if journalists were reading them on the Web. None of the participants worked for publicly traded organizations, so the issue of investor relations and insider trading problems are not relevant. Research that examines how useful Web sites are to journalists—especially sites of smaller organizations—is needed.

It would also be interesting to explore how public relations practitioners determine the priority they assign to their different tasks. If a Web site is given low priority because other tools or activities are deemed more important, what are the criteria the practitioner uses to assign a higher priority? The findings seemed to indicate that it is deadline pressures or "people at the door." However, research is needed to reconcile the fact that Web sites are considered important, particularly for image building and competitiveness, but yet they are often given low priority in terms of time and resources.

The literature review for this study included a look at professionalism in public relations. In this study, the issue of professionalism primarily came up in interviews with young women who worked in non-profit organizations. Being seen as a professional is a more pressing issue for women in non-profit organizations than for men in that environment or for women in for-profit organizations. This phenomenon

could be explored further.

Limitations

A limitation of qualitative studies is that the findings are not generalizable to a larger population, not even to other public relations practitioners who work with a Web site. However, after ten or so interviews in this study the responses began to be somewhat redundant, and because some findings in the study are very similar to findings from other related studies, the findings are trustworthy.

Follow up conversations with some of the participants in the study indicated that some things about use of their Web sites had changed since the study was conducted. The primary limitation of research about new technologies is that it is very difficult to keep pace with a rapidly moving target.

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Figure 1. Description of interview participants.

Job title	responsibilities
director of communications	Web site, newsletters, TV show, press releases, advertising, flyers, brochures and publicity materials, communication consulting to other groups, "all communications aspects of the organization"
marketing & PR intern	Web site, press releases, journal articles
director of public affairs	alumni affairs, press relations, fund-raising, corporate image
asst. director, public affairs	Web site, newsletters, press releases
mgr. of corporate communications	Web site content, editor for quarterly magazine, special events, newsletters, publicity, awards shows, "internal and external communications"
director of development	fund-raising for a medical college
director of communications & marketing	supervises directors of publications, marketing and advertising, and media relations, "all university publications"
communications director	supervises Web site publications staff, media relations, volunteer relations, special events
former comm. director	held position when Web site was created
community relations specialist	Web site, media relations, community outreach, publications, PR consulting to other groups, grant writing, promotions
V.P. of marketing and development	Web site, fundraising events, media relations, all PR, publications, marketing retail stores
advertising manager	heads dept. responsible for PR, advertising, exhibits and promotions, new media, print and collateral materials
PR/marketing manager	"everything that is PR/marketing," media relations,employee communications, marketing plans

What Dimensions Constitute A Good Corporate Image in The Eyes of Chinese Educated Public

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What Dimensions Constitute A Good Corporate Image In the Eyes of Chinese Educated Public

Abstract

Given the potentially prospering China market in future, the present study is to examine what dimensions constitute a good corporate image in the eyes of Chinese educated public. Two hundred and fifty-four (54 males and 200 females) undergraduate students in Hong Kong participated in the present study. An empirical measure called Corporate Image Scale was developed and used. Varimax factor analyses revealed seven meaningful factors. Moreover, the seven factors were further entered into multiple regressions hierarchically. The predictability of each factor on Overall Corporate Image was examined. Implications of findings are discussed.

What Dimensions Constitute A Good Corporate Image In the Eyes of Chinese Educated Public

Abstract

Given the potentially prospering China market in future, the present study is to examine what dimensions constitute a good corporate image in the eyes of Chinese educated public. Two hundred and fifty-four (54 males and 200 females) undergraduate students in Hong Kong participated in the present study. An empirical measure called Corporate Image Scale was developed and used. Varimax factor analyses revealed seven meaningful factors. Moreover, the seven factors were further entered into multiple regressions hierarchically. The predictability of each factor on Overall Corporate Image was examined. Implications of findings are discussed.

<u>What Dimensions Constitute A Good Corporate Image In the Eyes of Chinese Educated Public</u>

We have entered into a business era in which a good corporate image is considered worthy to establish and maintain (Fombrun, 1996). Many business executives start to realize both the tangible and intangible values that a good corporate image could bring to a company (Fombrun, 1996). Specifically, a well-regarded company generally: (1) experiences greater trust and loyalty from consumers; (2) commands premium prices for their products; (3) increases their marketability; (4) enjoys more negotiation power with business partners; (5) has more stable revenues; (6) attracts top recruits to apply for positions; (7) experiences greater loyalty, morale and productivity from employees; (8) recovers faster from crisis; (9) enjoys greater publicity from the media; and (10) gains more respect from government bodies (Coombs, 1998; Fombrun, 1996; Goldhaber, 1993; Siomkos & Shrivastava, 1993; Gregory, 1991; Marken, 1990; Garbett, 1988).

The creation and maintenance of a company's image often fall onto the responsibility of public relations practitioners, since they, much more than others in the organization, tell various publics 'what the organization is' (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1998; Cheney & Dionisopoulos, 1989). Despite the increasing recognition of the significance of a good corporate image as a company's valuable asset, little <u>empirical</u> research has been done on: (1) exploring what components constitute a good corporate image in the eyes of various stakeholders; and (2) developing a corporate image scale.

The present author argued that the organization cannot simply presuppose that it 'knows best' and 'knows what the publics want' (Grunig, 1984). Thus, one needs to find out <u>from their various stakeholders</u> what dimensions they think are

important to constitute a good corporate image in their eyes. Such a step, although often overlooked, appears to be a prerequisite for establishing a good corporate image.

In order to find out the important dimensions of a good corporate image from its stakeholders, it is also contended that a corporate image scale is needed. The development of such a corporate image scale would: (1) serve as an objective indication as to how a particular company is evaluated among various stakeholders; (2) examine the weights of each dimension; and (3) allow comparisons among different corporations' public images.

In view of the paucity of empirical studies on corporate image in Western literature, it is not surprising then, to find that there is even less done on Chinese-based sample. However, it is suggested by the present author that the potentially prospering China market in future may necessitate public relations practitioners to understand how Chinese publics conceptualize the dimensions of corporate image. Therefore the present study was aimed at: (1) exploring what dimensions constitute a good corporate image among Hong Kong educated public; (2) examining the weights of each dimension; and (3) developing a corporate image scale. Although there are various groups of stakeholders that can affect or are affected by an organization's goals and operations (Bedeian, 1989), the educated public is worthwhile to study because: (1) it represents a subgroup of the general public; and (2) it constitutes a special subgroup in that members of the educated public tend to have higher potentials for *critical power*, *consuming power*, and *investment power*.

The Changes in the Conceptualizations of Corporate Image

The concept of corporate image is fundamental to the research, teaching and practice of public relations (Moffitt, 1994). It was suggested by Moffitt (1994) that "corporate image issues inform both academics as a metatheorical construct and

practitioners as a technical construct" (p.41). For many years, 'corporate image' has been an elusive concept for organizational communication scholars as well as related business fields of advertising, marketing, management, and public relations to grasp and define (Williams & Moffitt, 1997). Numerous definitions or understandings of the concept of image exist across the disciplines (Grunig, 1993). Some have conceived corporate image as primarily determined and controlled by the organization (Dowling, 1986; Cottle, 1988; Chajet, 1988; Garbett, 1988; Carlivati, 1990; Gregory, 1991). Some saw a corporation's image as merely tied to the visual-- the company's logo, copy platform, name, or other graphics (Kovach, 1985; Cottle, 1988; Kertesz, 1991; Moffitt, 1994; William & Moffitt, 1997). Such conceptualization of corporate image is now considered fragmentary.

Contrasting to the aforementioned viewpoint, some researchers argued that image is not dictated exclusively by the organization but that image is also in the stakeholders that relate to the organization (O'Neil, 1984; Denbow & Culbertson, 1985; Grunig, Ramsey, & Schneider, 1985; Dowling, 1986; Baskin & Aronoff, 1988; Cole, 1989; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Moffitt, 1994). In other words, corporate image is no longer viewed as being constructed solely by the organization in a 'monologic' and 'one-way' approach (Williams & Moffitt, 1997). Instead, corporate image is the result of a *interactive* process of corporate image production by the organization and audience consumption by the populations and publics (Cole, 1989; Denbow & Culbertson, 1985; Olins, 1991; O'Neil, 1984).

To the stakeholders, Gregory (1991) contended, their *perception* of the company is *the reality*. Hence, 'corporate image' has been recently re-conceptualized among communication researchers as well as public relations practitioners with the emphasis on the *receivers'* side (e.g., Ind, 1990; Moffitt, 1994;

Argenti, 1994; Williams & Moffitt, 1997). For example, Ind (1990) defined 'corporate image' as 'the picture that an audience has of an organization through the accumulation of all received messages'. Such definition clearly emphasizes the aspect of corporate image as seen from the viewpoint of constituencies (Argenti, 1994).

Sources Affecting Audiences' Perception of A Company

As receivers of corporate messages, the audience's consumption process of corporate image has been considered theoretically. Moffitt (1992, 1994) found in her studies that various types of information or influence would affect a public's perception of a company. They included such items as conversations with friends and family, viewing advertisements, and even observing the physical vestiges of the company. In addition, she contended that individual evaluate a company's image from different kinds of interaction, orchestrated or unintended, mediated or interpersonal.

Williams and Moffitt (1997) further extended the work by Moffitt (1992, 1994) and found supporting evidence on Moffitt's (1992, 1994) previous contention that environmental, personal, and social aspects of the audience member can affect the received corporate image. Specifically, it was found that an audience's construction of an organizational image is partially derived from their personal experiences, social interaction and environmental factors such as their conversation with friends or family members who work in the company, their occupation, residential region and other demographic characteristics. Their work further consolidates the notion that a corporate image is largely subject to the interpretation of the audience.

In Williams and Moffitt's study (1997), it was found that 'organization-controlled' factor such as employment size, philanthropy, advertising, and buildings,

as opposed to the personal and environmental factors, dominated and contributed a large share (accounts for over 60% of the total regression model in respondent's judgment of overall image) to what subjects thought of as corporate image. The results of this study indicated that organizational factor—that is, features of an organization that public would attend to when evaluating the company—is a crucial aspect that needs further investigation.

The present author postulated that the elements in Williams and Moffit's (1997) 'organization-controlled' factor are considered partial at most along the array of the possible aspects that a public audience would base on in evaluating a company. Thus, the main purpose of the present study is to explore empirically the possible dimensions of corporate image and the degree of significance of each dimension attributed to the construct of corporate image among Hong Kong educated public.

Dimensions of Corporate Image

It is suggested by several researchers that corporate image is not a sole concept but a set of concepts, and that it consists of *multidimensional* constructs (Haedrich, 1993; Moffitt, 1994; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Perhaps Beinstein's (1986) definition of 'corporate image' could serve as a guideline pertaining to the possible dimensions that public audience would base on in evaluating a company in general. According to Bernstein (1986), 'corporate image' is what the audiences believe or feel about the company from what is known about: 1) the company's products performance, price, availability, delivery, and after-sales service; and 2) what the company has to say about its products and service, and about itself. In addition, several authors from Western literature (e.g., Dowling,1986; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Haedrich, 1993; Moffitt, 1994; Fombrun, 1996) have suggested some

possible dimensions that may constitute the construct of 'corporate image'. Summarizing their work, 'corporate image' may include the following dimensions:

Quality of Products and Services

It is suggested by several authors that the most direct dimension that the public would base on in evaluating a corporation may be through its products and services (Dowling,1986; Haedrich, 1993; Fombrun, 1996). Specifically, general public may make assessments on whether the company cultivates *champion product quality* and provides *excellent customer service* (Fombrun, 1996). A company is more likely to be evaluated positively if consumers are satisfied with its products and services. In contrast, a company is likely to receive negative comments if consumers complain about its products and services.

Degree of Innovation

It is also suggested by Haedrich (1993) that the general public may also take into consideration the degree of innovation of the company's products and services in making assessment of the company. Perhaps the degree of innovation of a company's products and services reflects the company's creativeness and adaptability to the market's demands in the eyes of the consumers.

Advertising intensity

Fombrun and Shanley (1990) investigated the relationship between a company's advertising intensity and its reputation among executives, directors and securities analysts in the United States. Using a company's total advertising expenditures in 1984 as an indicator of advertising intensity, Fombrun and Shanley (1990) found that advertising intensity was positively and significantly correlated with subjects' assessments of reputation. Their finding was consistent with what Rumelt (1987) had claimed that advertising not only helps firms develop strategic positions

that are differentiated from their competitors', but also presents firms in a favorable light among consumers and other stakeholders. It is speculated that by the present author that perhaps a company's advertising intensity also serves as indicators of its financial back-up and strategic/ marketing performance among stakeholders.

Diversification of unrelated product-categories

In addition to advertising intensity, Fombrun and Shanley (1990) also investigated whether a company's diversification of product-categories would affect its reputation among stakeholders. Results of their findings suggested that the greater a firm's unrelated diversification, the worse its reputation. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) provided the following reasons in an attempt to explain their findings: First, they contended that constituents may expect lowered efficiency from diversification because of functional duplication. Second, they stated that capital markets usually favor firms that only diversify into related product-market domains in which 'production synergies' could be capitalized. The reputations of unrelated diversifiers might decline because constituents expect them not to capitalize on production synergies between domains. Specifically, they claimed that constituents would expect that inclusion of unrelated-diversified products under a broad corporate umbrella would hamper a company's capital allocations.

It should be noted that the respondents involved in Fombrun and Shanley's (1990) study largely belonged to business and finance sectors, who undoubtedly would evaluate a company from a professional's perspective. However, it is reasonable to argue that the relationship between diversification of unrelated product-categories and corporate image may still hold among the educated public, although their rationales in interpreting/explaining the relationship may be different: To the educated public, they may feel confused by the different images/ signals sent by a

company's various unrelated-diversified products. Such confusion may have a negative impact on their evaluation on the company's overall image. Such speculation needs further exploration.

While the aforementioned attributes—quality of products and services, degree of innovation, advertising intensity, and diversification of product-categories—are often perceived as belonging to image-establishing/ maintaining at the brand-level, it is contended by Haedrich (1993) that in reality, the brand image will rub off on the corporate images. In other words, a company's brand images exert a considerable influence on the corporate image, in that a company's market behavior has a considerable effect on the way in which general public perceive the company (Haedrich, 1993).

Social responsibility

Several authors postulate that a company's social responsibility (Dowling, 1986; Moffitt, 1994; Fombrun, 1996) may be another dimension general public would largely base on in evaluating a company. The dimension of social responsibility alludes to the public's evaluation of whether the company is *devoted to serving the community* and is *environmental-friendly* (Dowling, 1986; Moffitt, 1994; Fombrun, 1996). Moffitt (1994) conducted a qualitative study in which 13 adult subjects were interviewed and asked about their impression on State Farm Insurance, the largest employer in one of the British communities. Qualitative data suggested that the company enjoyed a positive image within the community for being a good public citizen. The positive relationship between a company's social responsibility and reputation was empirically supported by Fombrun and Shanley's (1990) study.

Treatment to employees

In Moffitt's (1994) qualitative study mentioned above, it was found that subjects would take into account on how the company treats its employees. For example, one of the respondents, when asked to evaluate State Farm Insurance, made the following comment: "They provide their employees with a life style most people don't have if it weren't for State Farm…I have heard nothing but good about how they treat their employees. They give them cost-of-living raises, insurance, other things. All around, they're pretty good…They take care of the employees" (pp.57). Results of Moffitt's (1994) study suggested that when subjects perceived that the company was a generous and benevolent employer, positive evaluations were given. Such kind of suggested pattern needs to be empirically proven.

Media visibility

Often, a company's information gets disseminated to the public through press articles and mass media presentations (McQuail, 1985). According to Nelkin (1988), the media themselves act not only as vehicles for advertising and mirrors of reality reflecting firm's actions, but also as active agents shaping information through editorials and feature articles. The information they convey, their visual and verbal images, and the tone of their presentation can define a corporation (Nelkin, 1988). Needless to say, favorable media coverage is likely to contribute to a company's positive image among stakeholders. Firms frequently and nonnegatively mentioned by the media might as well develop better image than other firms due to mere exposure effect, whereby repeated exposure would result in an increase in positive attitude toward the object (Zajonc, 1968). In contrast, negative comments made by the media are likely to elicit negative evaluations from the publics. These speculations need further exploration.

Corporate management

Haedrick (1993) suggested that the dimension of corporate management may be included in the audience' s construct of corporate image. Whether a company is perceived as bureaucratic, close-minded, stability-oriented or flexible, open-minded, innovative-oriented may affect its image among their stakeholders. Further, Lee' s (1998) study suggested that a corporation' s perceived efforts in communicating with the public may affect audiences' attitudes towards a company. At present, the relationships between corporate culture and corporate image would be mainly exploratory.

Economic performance

Fombrun and Shanley (1990) found in their study that investors and creditors would take into consideration of a company' s economic performance such as profitability, financial development, and market share in evaluating the company. Perhaps the educated public may also take into account a firm' s economic performance since it signals a firm' s inherent quality. While Fombrun and Shanley' s study (1990) suggested that the respondents would base on a company' s past and current economic performance to make judgment on the company, Lee (1998) contended that the dimension of a company' s future prospect may also be included in the audience' s construct of corporate image.

Summarizing the aforementioned Western-based literature on the possible dimensions of 'corporate image', the present study attempts to verify empirically these dimensions on a Chinese-based sample. The following three research questions follow from the literature review:

RQ1: What are the dimensions that constitute 'corporate image' among Hong Kong educated public?

RQ2: What are the weights of the dimensions?

RQ3: Are there any differences in Hong Kong educated public in conceptualizing the dimensions of corporate image from what the Western literature suggested?

Preliminary Study

In order to explore the possible components of corporate image in the eyes of Hong Kong educated public, three focus groups were conducted at the preliminary stage. Results derived from the focus groups would set a basis for the development of the corporate image scale.

Method

Overview

Focus group methodology was chosen as an appropriate approach at the preliminary stage of the present study because: (1) the present study is exploratory in nature; (2) since the interest of the present study is to explore how Hong Kong educated public constructs corporate image, focus group methodology enables the present researcher to recruit members of Hong Kong educated public and find out, through their interaction, what they think about corporate image; and most important of all, (3) the use of focus group for preliminary investigation is to aid in the construction of the corporate image scale.

Participants

Three groups were conducted with a total of 18 participants (6 males and 12 females). The participants were all first-year students of the part-time master-degree program of communication studies at Hong Kong Baptist University. Participants' average age was 34 years 6 months. They were from the industries of advertising, public affairs, public relations, marketing, banking, mass media, and the like. All the participants were Chinese. The participants were randomly assigned into three groups with six participants in each group.

Focus group protocol

The protocol was developed in three main questions with each question consisting at least one subquestion. Through asking participants from general to specific questions, it is believed that dimensions of the construct of corporate image in the eyes of Hong Kong educated public would be revealed. The questions are listed in Appendix A.

Procedure

The researcher of the present study first obtained the approval from the instructor of one of the master-degree courses to use one hour of her class to conduct the focus groups. One week before the study, the students were informed that there would a one-hour focus group study the following week.

Three focus groups were conducted on October 22, 1998 in three separate classrooms at Hong Kong Baptist University. There were one moderator and one observer for each group. The moderators and observers were given guidelines as to how to conduct focus groups. In general, the moderators were responsible for asking questions and monitoring the whole session, whereas the role of observers was to jot down key ideas as well as problems encountered during the session. Group members were arranged in a circle. Each moderator began the session and established rapport by introducing him/herself as well as the observer. He/she then stated that the purpose of the study was to find out their opinions on corporate image. Each session was audiotaped and lasted an hour. When the sessions were over, the participants were thanked and promised to be informed of the results.

The audiotapes of the focus groups discussions were transcribed and analyzed in a qualitative and interpretive approach. Common themes and answers to the

questions were gleaned from the transcript. It is believed that the results of this qualitative study would set a premise for further quantitative studies.

Results and Discussion

Responses from group members showed that the following components appeared to be important in constituting a good corporate image: (1) good product quality/ service; (2) innovative in product-developing; (3) good and sincere customer-handling, especially when dealing with customers' complaints; (4) good corporate culture and management—energetic, creative, innovative, encourages upward and downward communication between managerial levels and other levels of staff, values employees, and provides good training programs; (5) assumes social responsibility; (6) good image of the figure head; (7) advertising quality and intensity; (8) has high degree of transparency to the public; and (9) future-oriented. In addition, respondents indicated that the price of a company's product/service could affect the company's image as well. However, there were contrasting opinions on the issue of price— some suggested that reasonable charges could create a good image; whereas others suggested that premium prices indicate outstanding quality.

Results of the three focus groups appeared to be consistent with what Western literature has suggested pertaining to the possible dimensions of corporate image. No distinctive components were revealed that reflected unique aspect of Chinese cultural-value at the preliminary stage.

Primary Study

Since results from the preliminary study suggested some potentially meaningful components of corporate image, empirical testing was further pursued.

Method

Subjects

Two hundred and fifty four (54 males and 200 females) undergraduate students enrolled in the courses of communication studies at Hong Kong Baptist University participated in the present study. The mean age of the subjects in the present study was 19.99 years old (SD = 1.18 years), ranging from 18 years old to 26 years old. All were Chinese. Each of them completed a questionnaire anonymously.

Measure

In view of the lack of an empirical measure for corporate image, a Corporate Image Scale (CIS) was developed. The initial questionnaire was composed of 56 items. Among the 56 items, 51 of them tapped various dimensions of corporate image derived from literature review and the results of preliminary study. Specifically, the following dimensions were included: *Quality of products/ services* (e.g., "The quality of the products of this company is outstanding"), *Advertising quality and intensity* (e.g., "The company's advertisements about its products are well-executed"), *Degree of innovativeness* (e.g., "The products of this company are innovative"), *Social responsibility* (e.g., "This company is generous in donation to social causes"), *Image of the figure head* (e.g., "The Chief Executive Officer is a good leader"), *Treatment to employees* (e.g., "The company treats its employees kindly"), *Diversification of unrelated product-categories* (e.g., "This company has many diversified lines of unrelated products"), *Media visibility* (e.g., "There is a lot of media coverage on this company"), *Economic performance* (e.g., "The company has positive financial development"), and *Corporate management* (e.g., "Managers in this company are receptive to different ideas"). The other 5 items were intended to constitute an 'overall image scale'. Subjects were asked to rate along a 9-point

Likert-type scale (ranging from 1= probably very untrue to 9= probably very true) The 56 items of the CII are listed in Appendix B .

Procedure

Questionnaires were group-administered in one of subjects' classes upon the approval of the lecturers in advance. A brief introduction pertaining to the purpose of the study and the instruction for completing the questionnaires was provided by the present author. Specifically, the subjects were asked to evaluate Hong Kong Telecom Co. Ltd. on 56 items based on their general perception/ impression on the company. Hong Kong Telecom is a telecommunication company in Hong Kong. It was chosen for the present study due to the consideration that: (1) it is a well-known company in Hong Kong; (2) it is local-based; and (3) it is a profit-making corporation. All the aforementioned characteristics fulfilled the criteria for the selection of a company to study for the present study. The administration of the questionnaires was approximately 20-minutes long. The completed questionnaires were collected by the present author.

Results

Factor Analyses

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was used to check for sampling adequacy. A value of .89 was yielded, which reflected that the sample of the present study was adequate.

Initially, with only a criterion requiring that the eigenvalue be greater than or equal to 1, explorative principal-component analysis with varimax rotation indicated thirteen factors for the present sample. Varimax rotation was used because it maximizes high loadings and minimizes low loadings for each factor. In other words, it maintains the independence among the factors but increases their interpretability. The accepted criterion for significant factor loadings was .50 in the present study.

Careful examinations of the factor loadings revealed that item number 3, 18, 29, 33, 37 and 39 had loadings less than .50, and were therefore excluded for further analysis. It should also be noted that although item number 47 had a loading value of .59, it was deleted due to the absence of other items loaded on the same factor.

Factor analysis was re-conducted with the remaining 44 items, which resulted in ten factors. Using the same criterion for significant loadings, item number 50 was deleted.

In the third-round of factor analysis of 43 items, ten factors were revealed. Under careful examinations number 35, 42, 46 were deleted from Factor 1 due to the following reasons: (1) the three items, which theoretically described the degree of perceived social responsibility of the company, were found to be conceptually unrelated to the rest of the items loaded on Factor 1 (which appeared to be describing the perceived dynamic quality of the company); (2) other items that described the degree of perceived social responsibility of the company loaded on Factor 7; and (3) it was found that the reliability of Factor 1 after the deletion of the three items remained high, $\alpha = .86$. Item number 7 was deleted from Factor 2 because: (1) the item, which was about the perceived quality of corporate advertisements, was found to be conceptually unrelated to the rest of the items loaded on Factor 2 (which appeared to be describing the perceived quality of the company's products and services); (2) other items pertaining to the company's advertising and marketing activities loaded on Factor 5; and (3) the reliability of Factor 2 after the deletion of item number 7 remained high, $\alpha = .86$. Item number 51 was deleted from Factor 3 due to similar reasons: (1) the item, which was about perceived quality of public relations work of the company, was found to be conceptually unrelated to the rest of the items loaded on Factor 3 (which appeared to be describing the perceived corporate culture of the

company); and (2) the reliability of Factor 3 after the deletion of item number 51 was acceptable, $\alpha = .79$.

Furthermore, Factor 8 (which consisted of item number 22, 26, and 30), Factor 9 (which consisted of item number 28 and 32), and Factor 10 (which consisted of item number 15 and19) were also deleted due to the following considerations: (1) the items loaded on Factor 8, Factor 9, and Factor 10 yielded low reliabilities, $\alpha = .49$, $\alpha = .56$; and $\alpha = .52$ respectively; (2) the eigenvalues of Factor 8, and Factor 9, and Factor 10 were comparatively small, being 1.19, 1.10, and 1.09 respectively; and (3) the variances accounted for Factor 8, Factor 9, and Factor 10 are small, 2.76%, 2.56%, and 2.53% respectively.

The remaining 31 items were subjected to factor analysis again which resulted in 7 factors. The seven factors collectively accounted for 65.93% of the total variance. Factor 1, which accounted for 29.04% of the variance, appeared to reflect the *'Perceived Corporate Dynamism'*. The 7 items loaded on Factor 1 yielded a high reliability, $\alpha = .86$. Factor 2, represented the *'Perceived Quality of Products and Services'*, accounted for 12.62% of the total variance. Reliability of the 5 items loaded on this factor was $\alpha = .86$. Factor 3 accounted for 6.73% of the total variance. This factor was labeled as *'Perceived Corporate Management'*. The 5 items loaded on this factor had a reliability of $\alpha = .78$. Factor 4, representing the construct of *'Perceived Financial Prospect'*, accounted for 5.87% of the total variance. Reliability of the 4 items loaded on this factor was $\alpha = .79$. Factor 5, which accounted for 4.22% of the total variances, appeared to reflect the 'Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities'. The 4 items loaded on this factor yielded a reliability of $\alpha = .77$. Factor 6 accounted for 3.81% of the total variances. The factor was labeled as

'Perceived Treatment to Employees'. Reliability of the 3 items constituting this factor was

α = .85. Finally, Factor 7 accounted for 3.65% of the total variance. This factor reflected the *'Perceived Social Responsiblity'*. The 3 items loaded on this factor yielded a reliability of α = .75. The factor loadings, the reliability coefficients, and the variances each factor accounted for, are presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 Here

Factor scores were created through the method of regression. Moreover, an 'Overall Image' score was calculated by aggregating item 5, 44, 48, 52, and 55. Reliability of the Overall Image Scale was α = .90.

Multiple Regression

In order to examine the predictability of the Perceived Corporate Dynamism, Perceived Quality of Products and Services, Perceived Corporate Management, Perceived Financial Prospect, Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities, Perceived Treatment to Employees, and Perceived Social Responsibility on Overall Image. A series of multiple regression was conducted.

First, the seven factor scores were entered simultaneously in the multiple regression. Table 2 contains the results of the simultaneous multiple regression.

Insert Table 2 Here

The model containing all seven factors was significant, $R^2 = .66$, $F(7, 246) = 69.27$, $p<.001$.

In order to examine the incremental power of each factor to the 'Overall Image' score, hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. The order of entry of the factors was based on the size of the standardized regression coefficients of the factor scores in the simultaneous multiple regression (see Table 2) as follows: Perceived Corporate Management ($\beta = .44, p < .001$), Perceived Quality of Products and Services ($\beta = .37, p < .001$), Perceived Treatment to Employees ($\beta = .34, p < .001$), Perceived Social Responsibility ($\beta = .32, p < .001$), Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities, ($\beta = .24, p < .001$), Perceived Corporate Dynamism, ($\beta = .23, p < .001$), and Perceived Financial Prospect ($\beta = .01$, n.s.).

Insert Table 3 Here

In step 1, Perceived Corporate Management was entered into the regression equation. It was found that this factor accounted for 24% of the variance in the Overall Image, $R^2 = .24, p < .001$. When Perceived Quality of Products and Services was entered into the regression equation in step 2, the R^2 increased to .38 ($\Delta R^2 = .14$, $p < .001$). When Perceived Treatment to Employees was entered into the regression equation in step 3, the R^2 increased to .52 ($\Delta R^2 = .13, p < .001$). When Perceived Social Responsibility was entered into the regression equation in step 4, the R^2 increased to .61 ($\Delta R^2 = .09, p < .001$). When Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities was entered into the regression equation in step 5, the R^2 increased to .67 ($\Delta R^2 = .06, p < .001$). When Perceived Corporate Dynamism was entered into the regression equation in step 6, the R^2 increased to .73 ($\Delta R^2 = .06, p < .001$). Finally, when Perceived Financial Prospect was entered into the regression equation in step 7, no increase was observed, R^2 remained .73.

Furthermore, items in the discarded Factor 8, 9 and 10 were correlated with the 'Overall Image' score to ensure the deletions were justified. Results showed that all but two of the correlations were non-significant. There were significant correlations between 'overall image' and item 26 ('The prices of this company's products/ services are reasonable') as well as between the 'overall image' and item 15 ('This company has many diversified lines of unrelated products.'), $r = .26$, $p < .01$ and $r = .21$, $p < .01$. Considering the low magnitudes of the above correlations, the deletions were still justified by taking the conceptualizations issue into account. Finally, there was no gender difference in the 'Overall Image' score [$M = 4.72$ ($SD = 1.36$) and $M = 5.08$ ($SD = 1.26$) for males and females respectively; $t(223) = -1.63$, n.s.].

Discussion

Although there has been literature (e.g., Dowling,1986; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Haedrich, 1993; Moffitt, 1994; Fombrun, 1996) suggesting some possible dimensions of corporate image, the present author contends that they are informative yet insufficient because: (1) empirical verifications are lacking; and (2) current literature is largely, if not completely, Western-based. In view of the growing demand of information about the potential China market, the present study was regarded as a preliminary study of a series of future research on corporate image in Chinese-based samples.

In summary, the present study identified 7 factors from the newly-developed corporate image scale, namely: Perceived Corporate Dynamism, Perceived Quality of Products and Services, Perceived Corporate Management, Perceived Financial Prospect, Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities, Perceived Treatment to Employees, and Perceived Social Responsibility. Multiple Regression further showed

that the predictability of the seven factors on respondents' overall impression a corporation was in the following descending order: Perceived Corporate Management, Perceived Quality of Products and Services, Perceived Treatment to Employees, Perceived Social Responsibility, Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities, Perceived Corporate Dynamism and finally, Perceived Financial Prospect.

The results of the multiple regression suggested that the dimensions of corporate image have different degree of importance in terms of their unique contribution on respondents' overall impression of a corporation. A closer examination of the top three predictive factors would find an interesting pattern: Among these three factors, two factors—namely, Perceived Corporate Management and Perceived Treatment to Employees, with Perceived Corporate Management being the most predictive factor and Perceived Treatment to Employees being the third—were more related to the corporation's internal functioning; whereas one factor (Perceived Quality of Products and Services) was more pertaining to the corporation's external functioning. This reflects that in addition to "what the corporation produces", the educated respondents in the present study also took into consideration of "how the corporation is run" when making evaluation of the company. Specifically, the respondents concerned about: (1) whether the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a good leader; (2) whether he/she has strong leadership; (3) whether the company is a moral one; (4) whether the company has a good management system, and (5) whether managers are flexible. The emphasis on the company's *internal* 'well-being' may reflect two possible phenomena: First, the demands and expectations of respondents on a company have extended from the mere concern of *"what the company does to us?"* (as could be reflected by the concern of the company's quality of products and services, social responsibility and so on) to a

concern of *"what the company does to itself?"* The concern of the company's internal well-being may reflect a more sophisticated demand of the educated respondents on the organization in that a good corporate management may be regarded as: (1) a fundamental and (2) long-term key factor to its external well-being. Second, the strong emphasis on the quality of the organization per se, especially on the quality of the leaders of the organization may reflect distinct Chinese cultural values (Bond, 1991). The aforementioned two speculations need to be further confirmed.

A closer examination of the items in the fourth most predictive factor, Perceived Social Responsibility, suggested that Hong Kong culture may have slight difference from Western culture in perceiving what constitute a socially-committed company. In Western culture, 'environmental-friendly' is regarded to be a very crucial criterion to be a socially-responsible company (Fombrun, 1996). In contrast, the present study suggests that Hong Kong culture may place less emphasis on the environmental issue, as was shown that items pertaining to the company's degree of involvement of 'going green' were all deleted from the scale. Instead, 'charity donation' appears to be the major judgment base of the degree of perceived social responsibility of a corporation among the educated respondents.

Moreover, Both Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities and Perceived Dynamism were found to be not quite contributing to the establishment of a good corporate image. Perhaps these two factors may be more related to the image of the company's products/ services than the image of the company per se.

Interestingly, a company's financial prospect, although found to be an important dimension of corporate image among Western-based investors and creditors (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), was the least and minuscule factor in predicting Hong

Kong educated public's overall impression on a company. This finding is in line with the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) that different stakeholders have different interests. Conclusively, the present study showed that educated public put more emphasis on other dimensions—such as the company's management and values, its products and services, its social responsibility and the like—than its financial growth.

In general, the results of the present study may serve as some guidelines to public relations practitioners as to which dimensions, among an array of possible ones, should they focus on in building and/or maintaining a corporation's public image. Of greater importance, it is hoped that the present study would serve as a reminder for business practitioners that in establishing a corporate image, it is the *receivers' side* that they should be focusing on. As Young (1996) has stated "Listening has a higher priority than talking" in building a company's good name (p.19). The essence of Young's message is that audiences' needs have to be heard, not "speculated". Results of the present study suggested that the present Chinese educated sample put into consideration of both the corporation's internal and external performances. The present results may provide new insight to public relations discipline that the corporation's internal functioning is of significant "public relations" value as well. In other words, the present study suggested that a company's *internal* practices and values may have some *external* effects.

The present study also reminds public relations practitioners that a good corporate image embeds various dimensions (Haedrich, 1993; Moffitt, 1994; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), as was shown in the present study that the seven factors – namely, Perceived Corporate Dynamism, Perceived Quality of Products and Services, Perceived Corporate Management, Perceived Financial Prospect, Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities, Perceived Treatment to Employees, and

Perceived Social Responsibility—together accounted for 66 % of the variability of Overall Image. While public relations practitioners are advised to put strategically *more* resources on the significant dimensions, it must be reminded that a good corporate image is constituted by 'a set of concepts' (Haedrich, 1993; Moffitt, 1994; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990).

Finally, the corporate image scale was developed in an attempt to bridge the gap between the recognization of the importance of corporate image and the deficient of an empirical measure. It is expected that a corporate image scale would be contributing to both academic and business sectors in that it offers an empirical measure as to how favorable or unfavorable a particular corporation's image is in the eyes of public audiences. The present study is regarded as the first step towards building a corporate image index. Cautions have to be taken in using the present corporate image scale since the dimensions revealed in the present study need to be further verified in other types of corporation and in other cultures.

Limitations

Due to the preliminary nature of the present study, a discussion of limitations can provide directions for future research. First, being a British colony for about 100 years, Hong Kong has become a converged city of both Chinese and Western cultures. This may be the reason why subjects in the present study revealed similar dimensions of corporate image suggested by Western literature. Further investigations need to be conducted in other parts of China in order to have a complete grasp of the full picture about the dimensions of corporate image in Chinese culture. However, the present study may be regarded as the first step towards a possible series of corporate-image study of this kind. Second, although educated public is regarded as one of the subgroup of the general public, cautions have to be made in generalizing the results of

the present study to the general population in Hong Kong. Third, the company selected in the present study is a large-sized telecommunications company. Again, generalizability of the present study to non-telecommunications, or small-to-middle-sized company should be made with cautions. Finally, Telecom was facing quite an extensive media reports of its decision to reduce the employees' salaries when the present study was undertaken. Such extensive media reports may especally raise special attention from the general public as to how the company treated its employees. This may explain why Perceived Treatment to Employees was the third largest significant factor in predicting respondents' overall impression on the company. In conclusion, future research needs to explore different types of companies and use different types of samples in order to draw more generalizable findings.

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Appendix B

Corporate Image Scale

1). The quality of the products of this company is outstanding.
2). This company' s advertisements about its products (including TV ad, radio ad, newspaper print ad, magazine print ad etc.) are well-executed.
3). This company is truthful in what it says to the public.
4). The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a good leader.
5). My overall attitudes/ impression towards the company are:
   i). Very negative — Very positive
   ii). Very unpleasant — Very pleasant
   iii). Very unfavorable — Very favorable
6). This company' s products are reliable.
7). This company' s advertisements about itself (including TV ad, radio ad, newspaper print ad, magazine print ad etc.) are well-executed.
8). This company is credible.
9). The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has strong leadership.
10). The services provided by the company are outstanding.
11). The company' s advertisement and promotion techniques are attractive.
12). The company treats its employees kindly.
13). The company' s profitability is high.
14). The services provided by the company are professional.
15). This company has many diversified lines of unrelated products.
16). The company provides good benefits to the employees.
17). The company' s financial growth is promising.
18). The company has good customer service.
19). This company is selling products that are unrelated to each other.
20). Employees are highly valued by the company.
21). The company has positive financial development.
22). The prices of this company' s products/ services are too high.
23). This company is devoted to donating money for charity purpose.
24). There is a lot of media coverage on this company.
25). The company has a positive future prospect.
26). The prices of this company' s products/services are reasonable.
27). This company is generous in donation to social causes.
28). The company is conservative.
29). The market share of the company is large.
30). The prices of this company' s products/services are too low.
31). This company is a good public citizen.
32). The company is bureaucratic.
33). The company has high stock value.
34). The products of this company are innovative.
35). This company is contributing to educational development in community.
36). The company is a modern enterprise.
37). The company is locally-competitive.
38). This company generates creative products.
39). This company is devoted to developing nonpolluting products.
40). Managers in this company are receptive to different ideas.
41). The company often has new ideas in providing services to customers.

42). This company has put efforts in making and handling products in an environmentally-friendly manner.
43). Managers in this company are flexible.
44). The company has a clean reputation in general.
45). The company is advanced in technology.
46). This company is devoted to contributing to the community/ society.
47). The company is putting efforts in communicating with the public.
48). The company' s overall image is favorable.
49). The company has excellent marketing strategies.
50). This company is enthusiastic about participating in volunteer work in the community.
51). The company is doing a good public relations job.
52). Many people are impressed by the company.
53). This company is a moral company.
54). The company has a good management system.
55). Overall, the company is evaluated positively in the eyes of general public.
56). The company is internationally-competitive.

Note. -Item number 22 and 30 were reverse-coded.
-Item number 3, 7, 15,18, 19, 22, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 39, 42, 46, 47, 50 and 51were deleted.
-Item number 5, 44, 48, 52, and 55 comprise the 'Overall Image Scale'.

Table 1
Factor Analyses of Corporate Image Scale

Factors	Factor Loadings 1	2	3
Perceived Corporate Dynamism			
41). The company often has new ideas in providing services to customers.	72		
38). This company generates creative products.	70		
56). The company is internationally-competitive.	67		
40). Managers in this company are receptive to different ideas.	65		
36). The company is a modern enterprise.	64		
34). The products of this company are innovative.	59		
45). The company is advanced in technology.	58		
Eigen values	9.01		
Variance explained (%)	29.04		
Internal consistency (alpha)	.86		
Perceived Quality of Products and Services			
6). The company's products are reliable.		75	
10). The services provided by the company are outstanding.		72	
1). The quality of the products of this company is outstanding.		71	
14). The services provided by the company are professional.		67	
8). The company is credible.		59	
Eigen values		3.91	
Variance explained (%)		12.62	
Internal consistency (alpha)		.86	
Perceived Corporate Management			
4). The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a good leader.			74
9). The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has strong leadership.			69
53). This company is moral company.			59
54). The company has a good management system.			58
43). Managers in this company are flexible.			53
Eigen values			2.09
Variance explained (%)			6.73
Internal consistency (alpha)			.78

(Cont' d)

Factors	4	5	6	7
	Factor Loadings			
Perceived Financial Prospect				
17). The company' s financial growth is promising.	84			
21). The company has positive financial development.	83			
25). The company has a positive future prospect.	62			
13). The company' s profitability is high	62			
Eigen values	1.82			
Variance explained (%)	5.87			
Internal consistency (alpha)	.79			
Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities				
2). This company' s advertisements about its products (including TV ads, radio ad, newspaper print ad, magazine print ad etc.) are well-executed.		74		
49). The company has excellent marketing strategies.		67		
11). The company' s advertisement and promotion techniques are attractive.		62		
24). There is a lot of media coverage on this company.		55		
Eigen values		1.31		
Variance explained (%)		4.22		
Internal consistency (alpha)		.77		
Perceived Treatment to Employees				
16). The company provides good benefits to the employees.			82	
12). The company treats its employees kindly.			80	
20). Employees are highly valued by the company.			77	
Eigen values			1.18	
Variance explained (%)			3.81	
Internal consistency (alpha)			.85	
Perceived Social Responsibility				
23). This company is devoted to donating money for charity purpose.				81
27). This company is generous in donation to social causes.				81
31). This company is a good public citizen				64
Eigen values				1.13
Variance explained (%)				3.65
Internal consistency (alpha)				.75

Note.-- Only loadings .50 or higher were considered to significantly contribute to a factor. No items were cross-loaded. Decimal points have been omitted from factor loadings.

Table 2
Simultaneous Multiple Regression of the Seven Factors on Overall Image

Factor	β	t
1. Perceived Corporate Dynamism	.24	6.39***
2. Perceived Quality of Products and Services	.37	9.99***
3. Perceived Corporate Management	.44	11.90***
4. Perceived Financial Prospect	.01	.246
5. Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities	.24	6.50***
6. Perceived Treatment to Employees	.34	9.18***
7. Perceived Social Responsibility	.32	8.71***
F	69.27***	
dfs	7, 246	
R^2	.66	
Adjusted R^2	.65	
n	254	

*Note.-- *** p<.001*

Table 3
Hierarchical Regression Analyses of the Seven Factors on Overall Image

Factor	R^2	ΔR^2	F of ΔR^2
Step 1:			
Perceived Corporate Management	.24	.24	70.31***
Step 2:			
Perceived Corporate Management Perceived Quality of Products and Services	.38	.14	70.23***
Step 3:			
Perceived Corporate Management Perceived Quality of Products and Services Perceived Treatment to Employees	.52	.13	78.91***
Step 4:			
Perceived Corporate Management Perceived Quality of Products and Services Perceived Treatment to Employees Perceived Social Responsibility	.61	.09	87.54***
Step 5:			
Perceived Corporate Management Perceived Quality of Products and Services Perceived Treatment to Employees Perceived Social Responsibility Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities	.67	.06	89.02***
Step 6:			
Perceived Corporate Management Perceived Quality of Products and Services Perceived Treatment to Employees Perceived Social Responsibility Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities Perceived Corporate Dynamism	.73	.06	98.35***

(Cont' d)

Factor	R^2	ΔR^2	F of ΔR^2
Step 7: Perceived Corporate Management; Perceived Quality of Products and Services; Perceived Treatment to Employees; Perceived Social Responsibility; Perceived Advertising and Marketing Activities; Perceived Corporate Dynamism; Perceived Financial Prospects	.73	0	83.92***

*Note.--***p<.001*

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