

**THE EDMONTON SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
ANNUAL BOARD/STAFF PLANNING WORKSHOP**

**October 27 and 28, 1989**

**Presented by  
Sharon Belicek  
Communications Consultant  
and  
Facilitator**

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**Edmonton, Alberta**



# AGENDA

Friday, October 27th, 1989

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Dinner

Salon A, 16th Floor

Inn on 7th

10001 - 107th Street

7:45 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

## Opening Session

7:45 p.m.  
to 8:00 p.m.

Introduction

Michael Phair  
Chairperson, Board of Directors

Sharon Belicek  
Communications Consultant  
Facilitator

8:00 p.m.  
to 8:30 p.m.

1989 The Year in Review

Margaret Duncan  
Senior Planner

Policies, Procedure &  
Project Planning

Peter Faid  
Executive Director

8:30 p.m.  
to 9:15 p.m.

Critical Issues Facing the  
Community 1990 and Beyond

Identifying the Issues

9:15 p.m.  
to 9:45 p.m.

Critical Issues Facing the  
Community 1990 and Beyond

Setting the Priorities

9:45 p.m.  
to 10:00 p.m.

Review and Wrap Up

Peter Faid

Roles & Responsibilities:  
Board & Staff

Michael Phair

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**Saturday, October 28th, 1989**

**"Enhancing the Council's Profile in the Community"**

**Sharon Belicek, Communications Consultant, Facilitator**

**Family & Social Services Staff Training Room  
6th Floor, Centre West**

10035 - 108 Street

8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	Coffee & Doughnuts
9:00 a.m. to 9:05 a.m.	Introduction
9:05 a.m. to 9:35 a.m.	Polishing the Corporate Image
9:35 a.m. to 10:05 a.m.	Defining your Publics
10:05 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	BREAK
10:15 a.m. to 11:35 a.m.	The Communications Plan — Laying the Foundation
11:35 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.	The Communications Plan — Building the Structure
11:50 a.m. to 1:10 p.m.	LUNCH
1:10 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.	Your Visual Identity
1:15 p.m. to 1:25 p.m.	Marketing the Council — Publicity's the Tool
1:25 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.	Using Publicity and the Community to Build Council Membership
2:15 p.m. to 2:25 p.m.	BREAK
2:25 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Communicating with the Board — A Major Public
3:00 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.	Working Successfully with the Media
3:20 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Summary and Wrap Up

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# ASSIGNMENT 1

## Critical Issues Facing the Community Identifying the Issues

Each group is asked to come up with the top five issues facing the community in 1990 and beyond.

Assignment 1: Issues

- POVERTY**
- of children
  - of single parent families/young families
  - of women
  - of the elderly
  - of entrenched social allowance recipients
  - 
  - relation to foodbanks and emergency services
  - relation to changing labour force ( ie. the rise of part-time work, under/unemployment)
- VIOLENCE**
- Personal: child abuse, violence towards spouse
  - Public: high rate of violent crime in Edmonton
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- NEGLECT**
- urban natives and the issues they face
  - transient populations
- MULTICULTURALISM**
- needs of new immigrants
  - access to ethno-specific vs. generalized services
- CHANGES IN WORK AND FAMILY**
- evolving family structure, new social pressures
  - restructuring of jobs, ageing labour force, women's increased participation
- APPROPRIATE SERVICE DELIVERY**
- home/community versus institutional responsibility

### ISSUE-RELATED ACTION

- to develop "new transitional thinking"
- to encourage citizen participation and to inform popular public opinion
- to develop the caring community
- to understand better present funding patterns, the dependencies they foster, and the 'retooling' they demand (to avoid irrelevance)
- to explore the relationships between financial deficits and cutbacks in social services (is universality being undermined?)

## ASSIGNMENT 2

### Assignment 2      Setting Priorities: Emphasis and Methods

The Council's activity can be thought of as three discrete stages:

#### CONCEPTION -- ORGANIZATION -- EXECUTION

##### 1. CONCEPTION

Targets must be set. Criteria for focussing the Council's work should be decided. Possible bases for setting priorities include

- establishing a clear, long term vision of what the Council should be
- building on present and proven strengths
- concentrating efforts where impact will be greatest
- specializing on a few specific issues chosen by the Board

##### 2. ORGANIZATION

What proportion of resources can be allotted to projects, advocacy, interagency work, public education, training and consultation?

A strong emphasis on proactive, as opposed to reactive, advocacy was voiced. Coordination and collaboration were cited as critical ingredients of effective organization.

Planning is more easily accomplished once targets are set and a solid vision of the Council's ideal image is articulated.

**Which projects should be undertaken?**

##### 3. EXECUTION      This stage involves at least two kinds of action.

A) **Research** -- The importance of hard data and reliable, updated information was emphasized. This research, in turn, is integral to many other Council activities.

Marketing and public education components should be built into research activity.

B) **Action** -- Inter-agency links should be maintained to strengthen existing organizations. The Council can perform the spokesperson role for the non-profit sector, facilitating its restructuring and development.

Public education is a priority. Advocacy and community development continue to be priorities for the Council, as are training and consulting services.

How can these activities be accomplished? Forums, panels, Alberta Facts, First Reading, workshops, videos and other non-print media... "a plurality of solutions exists."



## ASSIGNMENT 3

### Critical Issues Facing the Community Setting the Priorities

Imagine it is October 1990. You are reflecting upon the Council's accomplishments during the preceding year.

What would you have liked the Council to have achieved during that year? And what useful indicators would you employ to show that the Council had achieved what it set out to achieve?

List your accomplishments and indicators on the flip chart.

#### Assignment 3

#### Focus and Results

- 
1. (conception) "What business are we in?"
    - to provide service, to provide products?
    - need for clarity and consensus
  
  2. (organization)
    - increase membership and encourage more involvement by members
    - establish a full complement of staff
    - clarify and specify roles of board and staff; aim for 20% more smiles from both board and staff
  
  3. (execution)
    - complete existing projects; initiate 3 or 4 new projects
    - coordinate collaborative (inter-agency) efforts in 3 new areas
    - continue to fulfill present commitments
    - improve ability to respond to public inquiries quickly

## WRAP UP AND REVIEW

9:45 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Let's focus now on what we've discussed.

What broad themes have become apparent from the discussions?

In particular, what do we see as the roles and responsibilities of the board and staff?

What are the issues that we think might be addressed during the November meeting?

### Wrap Up and Review

#### Broad themes

Most of the issues identified in the first assignment relate to

- equity/inequity (resources, power, consumption)
- pluralism (of people, their needs, and possible action)
- community (public awareness, education, participation)
- changing composition (of families and the workplace)

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#### Roles and Responsibilities

Working together, the Board and staff need to set precise targets so that project priorities are clear and Council activities generally have clear direction and aspiration in the longer term.

How many projects **must** be undertaken to meet budget commitments?

How much work **can** be undertaken given the resources and time available?

Which projects **should** be given priority this year?

# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

**Sharon Belicek**

**Communications Consultant and Facilitator**

**Saturday, October 28, 1989**

The principles of effective organizational communications can be summarized in six phrases:

1. set your communications goals;
2. identify your publics;
3. target your audiences;
4. choose your strategies;
5. select effective messages;
6. select the most appropriate media for delivering your messages.

I begin today's session with a discussion about how the Council wishes to be perceived — what image it wants to project — because more often than not, the image you project can have a supportive or hindering effect on your communications with your publics.

Next, I have spent some time defining your publics because without knowing who your publics are, you can't select your messages — what it is you want to say to your publics; and without effective, well-targeted messages, you may or will not scatter limited budget dollars and valuable time on communications efforts that aren't paying back into the organization.

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The purpose of communications is to support an organization's efforts to win the cooperation of groups of people. You won't walk out of here today with a completed, comprehensive communications plan to accomplish that task. You will leave with the foundation for that plan and the framework for its structure.

Through our discussion of communications planning in sections three and four, I hope to leave you with an understanding of the communications planning process and its relevance to the overall planning process of the Council.

By focusing on your visual identity, publicity tools to market the Council, ways to build Council membership and working successfully with the media, I hope to empower you with ideas and methods to identify the Council's communications issues, help you focus on ways to grasp those issues, grapple with the problems on conflicts arising from the issues and find some solutions to address the issues.

Today, I have taken a fairly broad approach to the subject of organizational communications. Given the scope of what we have to cover, I have set up a series of eight exercises throughout the day designed to help you focus on the communications

process and stimulate your ideas. Because of the amount of material we have to cover, it's important for us to stay on schedule.

Throughout the day, I invite you to comment and ask questions. All ideas are useful even if only to stimulate other ideas. You don't need to be a communications guru to be able to develop creative communications ideas.

The whole communications process is really straightforward.

So enjoy today's brainstorming!

# **1. Polishing the Council's Image**

The corporate image is a fragile commodity. Indeed, a positive corporate image is essential to long-term success.

Most organizations today understand clearly that while it takes a great deal of time to build a favourable image, it takes only one slip to create a negative public impression.

## **Discovering the Corporate Image**

Before an organization can take action in achieving a new or enhanced image, it must first decide the specific kind of image it wants to have.

To discover your own special, distinct corporate image ask yourself the following questions:

- i. What is the Council's present corporate image? How is it perceived by its publics? Is the Council satisfied with this perception?
- ii. What corporate image does the Council want to have? An organization can't be all things to all people.
- iii. What must we do to enhance our corporate image?

## **SEE ASSIGNMENT 1.**

In my view, the answers to many of these questions have already been answered.

The Council is considered to be playing a unique and important role in the community.

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There is strong support for the Council's role in matters of social policy and community development?

This is not to advocate complacency. It is to advocate that the Council use certain resources readily at its disposal to enhance its position in the community — municipally, provincially and, it appropriate, in the community beyond Alberta — enabling itself to reach its goals and to realize its vision of itself for the next decade.

The well-planned, well-targeted use of carefully defined communications strategies can make a solid contribution to this realization.

In part seven of our workshop today, I'll address another aspect of corporate image — corporate visual identity.

# ASSIGNMENT 1

## Polishing the Image

I'd like you to take the next 15 minutes addressing these questions:

1. What is the Council's present corporate image?
2. How is it perceived by its publics?
3. Is the Council satisfied with this perception?
4. What corporate image does the Council want to have? Remember, an organization can't be all things to all people.
5. What must the Council do to enhance its corporate image?

List your ideas on the flip charts.

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### Assignment #1: POLISHING THE IMAGE

#### A. Image (perceptions by publics currently):

1. Good source of information
2. Advocate in the community
3. 'Watchdog/shepherd, seeker of truth'

#### B. Problems (misperceptions by publics currently):

1. ESPC is often perceived as city/government agency, i.e., Alberta Social Services.
2. People at large are frequently confused as to role of E.S.P.C.
3. Social Allowance recipients are frequently directed to E.S.P.C. due to, for example, the 'Other Welfare Manual'.
4. ESPC is seen as opposition to private sector eg., business.

#### C. Image desired: how do we achieve it?

The ESPC must focus and coordinate to maintain an independent, unbiased source of accurate, timely information.

1. To be seen as a catalyst
2. To be seen as a facilitator for community development
3. To be well-regarded among agencies in social services and the community
4. To be viewed as an agency of scope: research -> advocacy  
advocacy -> action

## 2. Defining Your Publics

Once you have defined the image you want to project, the next step is to define your publics.

I understand that the Council has done some work to date defining its publics.

What I'm about to give you is a useful method for defining those publics — without the process leaving you feeling overwhelmed by its magnitude.

The purpose of defining your publics is this:

An organization to be effective in dealing and communicating with its publics must not only understand who the publics are; but also, know whether those publics are latent, aware or active.

What constitutes a public?

A public arises when a group of people

- a) faces a similar situation
- b) recognizes what is problematic in that situation
- c) organizes to do something about the situation.

The evolution of publics can be classified into three groups mentioned a few minutes ago: latent, active and aware.

The lines that divide these groups may change as the groups evolve. In other words we're not dealing with static phenomena here, which is part of what makes my work so much fun.

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This framework can be used to define three stages in the evolution of publics:

1. Latent public: when a group is in a situation but does not recognize the situation as being problematic;

**Example:**

a good example is those airline employees; caught up in the early stage of airline deregulation.

2. Aware public: when the group recognizes the problem.
3. Active public: when the group organizes to do something about the problem.

This three-stage approach to defining publics helps an organization design communications strategies to target groups at each level of the evolutionary process.

Further, publics may also be classified into several overlapping categories:

1. External and internal

External — those not directly connected with the organization

The news media

Government

Educators

Clients

The community

Internal — those directly connected with the organization	
Supervisors	Clerical staff
Managers	Board of directors

**SEE ASSIGNMENT 2.**

Publics can be further classified as primary, secondary or marginal.

Primary publics can most help or hinder an organizations efforts. Secondary publics are less important. Marginal publics are least important to consider.

**Example:**

Those who fund or regulate the activities of the Council would be considered primary publics, while the general public would be secondary.

**Example:**

Publics	
External	Internal
United Way (primary)	Board of directors (primary)
News Media	
Government	

**SEE ASSIGNMENT 3.**

**3. Traditional and Future Publics**

Employees and current clients are examples of traditional publics.

Students are potential clients are future publics.

**4. Your various publics may be proponents, opponents or uncommitted.**

An organization must deal differently with those who support it and those who oppose it. For supporters, communications that reinforces a belief may be in order, but to change the opinions of skeptics' calls for strong, persuasive communications.

Remember too, that the uncommitted public, particularly in politics, can often be crucial.

To conclude this section, remember:

1. An organization must communicate with many different publics — each having its own special needs and requiring different types of communications;
2. An organization to be effective in dealing with its publics must develop varying communications strategies tailored to respond to of address issues arising from each of its publics.



## ASSIGNMENT 2

### Defining Your Publics

1. Name five major external publics of the Edmonton Social Planning Council.
2. Name five internal publics of the Council.

List your ideas on the flip charts.

#### Assignment #2: DEFINING YOUR PUBLICS

##### A. External Publics:

Other Social Service Agencies:	-public -private
Governments:	-Federal -Provincial -Municipal
Power Brokers	
Individuals:	-library users -people seeking information and assistance

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Media

Educators:	-Schools, Colleges
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Disadvantaged/marginalized	-"The great unwashed"
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##### B. Internal Publics:

Board members

Staff:	-Administrative -Professional -contract staff -practicum students
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Membership

Funders:	-United Way -City -Government
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Service Volunteers

Consultants/Contractors

Bank, Accountant, Lawyer

## ASSIGNMENT 3

### Defining Your Publics

Among the Council's five external publics, which of these could be categorized as primary, secondary or marginal?

List your ideas on the flip chart.

### **3. The Communication Plan — Laying the Foundation**

So far, we've discussed the corporate image the Council intends to project. You've identified those key publics to whom you plan to project that corporate image.

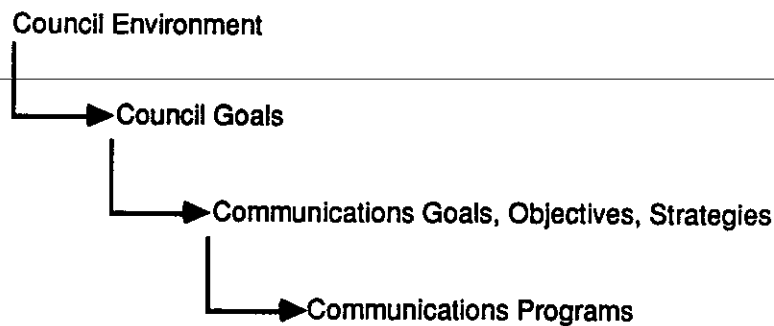
Now you are ready to begin laying the foundation for your corporate communications plan.

Invariably, communications coordinators must function within the scope of an organization, developing — one hopes — innovative solutions to the organizations communications issues or problems. Communications deals with perceptions, attitudes and opinions as compared to the more empirical, quantitative, concrete world found in some other areas of management.

Therefore, it's imperative to think about communications strategically — in terms of the organization's, mission, principles, goals, objectives and strategies — so that your communications solutions reflect the big picture, addressing the organization's real needs.

The broad environment in which the organization works must dictate overall business goals. These in turn dictate the specific communications goals, objectives and strategies.

Once your publics have been clearly defined, your environment understood, and organizational/business goals have been identified, the task of organizing for a communications program should, we hope, flow naturally.



Before going any further with the communications plan, let's turn then to the MISSION STATEMENT of the Council.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit, social action agency which seeks social justice through applied research, policy analysis, community development and organizational training.

The Council believes that all people are entitled to exercise social rights and freedoms enabling them to live and work in an environment that enhances individual, family and community growth without restricting the rights and freedoms of others.

The Council seeks to create, to advocate, and to support changes in policies, attitudes and actions in order to enhance these social rights and freedoms.

This is where you are. This is what you stand for.

Your VISION STATEMENT defines your future directions.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council of the 1990s will be the leading non-political social policy organization in the Edmonton area, with a reputation for commitment to the facilitation of social, economic, and environmental improvement in the community, through increased understanding and constructive public debate.

The Council will act as critics, facilitators, catalysts, instigators, researchers, advocates and publicists.

Individuals and groups who influence and/or are affected by social policy will seek the Council's services as a community partner.

Government will look to the Council as the voice of the community conscience.

The Council will take a strong stand on current social issues.

The Council will seek and gain respect through its honesty and thorough research rather than through the acceptance of its position.

The Council will be a leader in the community.

Next, consider your GOALS for 1990.

To increase public awareness of current social issues and to exercise an independent voice in the community.

To encourage greater public participation in the development of social policies and in the implementation of social programs.

To undertake research into the nature and magnitude of social issues in the community.

#### **SEE ASSIGNMENT 4.**

The next step in the process is to set communications objectives.

Solid communications objectives stand up to the following questions:

Do they clearly describe the end result expected?

Are they understandable to everyone in the organization?

Are they realistic, attainable, measurable?

Are they consistent with the Council's goals and objectives?

#### **Other 'Goal' Examples:**

To increase the Council's profile in the community.

# FLIP CHART 1

## Definitions

**A goal describes what you want to achieve.**

**An objective tells you what you have to do to achieve your goal.**

**A strategy tells you (how) the methods you will use to achieve your objective.**

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To increase the Council's influence in the community.

To provide board members with timely information to ensure that the board is knowledgeable and well informed about the work and activities of the Council.

**SEE ASSIGNMENT 5.**

**Other 'Objective' possibilities:**

1. Distribute to weeklies, dailies, provincial magazines one by-line article per month, targeting a specific social issue.
2. Orchestrate at least three local speaking engagements per quarter for Board members in key areas, on specific issues.
3. Speakers program and speech modules.
4. Meetings once quarterly with key politicians/decision/makers.

Now after you have defined your communications objectives, the Council must choose and describe those particular methods that will help you achieve your objectives. These tactics are your strategies.

**SEE ASSIGNMENT 6.**

Communications programs to be effective must be bolstered with sound budgets and principles of cost control.

At this point, the Council also should begin to estimate costs:

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Estimate the extent of the resources — both manpower and material — needed to accomplish each activity;

Estimate the cost and availability of those resources.

**Note:** Because of limited budgets, adaptable programs (ones that can be readily recycled and redesigned to meet changing needs) should always be reconsidered.

For example, television, newspaper and magazine advertising are generally too expensive for most communications budgets. However, special events, personalized literature, direct mail, personal contacts, or promotional displays are the kinds of inexpensive communications vehicles that can be easily duplicated.

## FLIP CHART 2

### Example

#### Goal, Objective, Strategies

##### Council Goal

To encourage greater public participation in the development of social policies and in the implementation of social programs.

##### Communications Goal

To increase public awareness of social issues.

##### Communications Objective

Orchestrate at least three local speaking engagements per quarter in key areas on the function and current social-issue priorities of the Council, and its social activist role in the community.

##### Communications Strategies

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1. Target
    - business breakfast clubs
    - community leagues
    - notary clubs
  2. Target Speech themes
    - First quarter
      - Poverty and unemployment
    - Second quarter
      - Family violence and child abuse
    - Third quarter
      - Immigration in Alberta
    - Fourth quarter
      - Problems of immigrant women

## **ASSIGNMENT 4**

### **Communications Goals**

Given Council's organizational goals for 1990 and looking at the big picture, what should the Council's three major communications goals be for the next year?

#### Assignment #4: COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

1. To generate increased participation in Council activities, ie 50th Anniversary.

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2. To increase public awareness on social issues.
3. To increase membership and the participation of membership



## ASSIGNMENT 5

### Communications Objectives

What communications objective(s) can the Council undertake to support and achieve these communications goals? Select at least one objective.

#### Assignment #5: COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

1. To speak out more frequently and consistently with selected number of new publics, (eg: University of Alberta, businesses, schools).
2. To expand membership.
3. To present a consistent, rounded image.
4. To have a more visible role as an inter-agency broker.

## ASSIGNMENT 6

### Setting the Communications Strategies

Select one or more communications strategies; that is, the methods you will use to reach each objective. List your strategies on the flip chart.

#### Assignment #6: SETTING THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1. To prepare a new brochure.
2. To present an E.S.P.C display at University of Alberta during registration in January 1990.
3. To give better information to board members and general membership.
4. To meet with schools in Edmonton, (re: Tracking the Trends').
5. To initiate joint programs with the Chamber of Commerce.
6. To approach a cable T.V. station to videotape interviews with E.S.P.C. Staff, (use more audio and video enhance our print media).
7. To involve membership by identifying volunteer opportunities through newsletters and meetings.
8. To organize major media coverage; e.g., for the 50th Anniversary celebration.

## **5. The Council's Communications Plan — Building the Structure**

As I have mentioned before in our program, before launching a particular communications plan, an organization must consider its goals, objectives and strategies.

Once that is done, the plan pulls together all the aspects we've discussed 'til now — goals, strategies, research — into a cohesive whole.

The plan specifies a series of "what's" (objectives) to be done and the "hows" (strategies) to get them done, whatever is necessary to reach the goals.

The skeleton of a typical communications plan would resemble this:

### **1. Background to the issue/subject or problem**

This is the so-called situation analysis that describes the major aim of the plan.

It can be a general statement that refers to audiences, known research, the organization's positions, history and the obstacles faced in reaching the desired goal.

The over-riding goal should be divided into several subordinate objectives. These are the "what's" to be accomplished.

### **2. Programming the approach**

This section of the plan sketches broad approaches to address the issue or solve the problem at hand.

It outlines the strategies, the "hows," and the communications tools to be used to meet the objectives.

Target audiences (selected from the publics) are defined here.

Specific messages and appeals should be selected:

What do we want to tell our audiences?

How do we want them to perceive us?

How do we want them to feel about us?

What do we want them to do?

Communications vehicles — advertising, video, direct mail — and their costs should be considered.

### **3. Activating the plan**

This stage of the plan describes operating tactics: activities — advertising, news release, news conference — are defined, people are assigned to implement these activities.

Deadlines are established.

This stage forms the guts of the plan.

#### **4. Evaluating the campaign**

To find out whether the plan worked or not, evaluation methods, methods of measuring results, should be spelled out here:

Pre-testing and post-testing of audience attitudes, qualitative analysis of event attendance, content analysis of media success, surveys, sales figures, staff reports, letters to management, feedback from others, the specific method of evaluative testing is up to you. But the aspect of including a mechanism for measuring your results is imperative.

Finally, the plan should be spelled out in writing so that progress can be monitored and the Council and Board can assess results.

#### **5. Your Visual Identity**

Are any of you familiar with the concept of visual identity?

Visual identity is a means of standardizing the format of all primarily external messages which the Council wishes to convey to its various audiences.

Why, you ask yourself, is there a need to standardize your format?

Very simply, the appearance of an organizations communications vehicles — that is, annual reports, newsletter, corporate brochures — influences the public's perception of the organization.

A weak or fragmented visual identity weakens and fragments your message.

Why is it important to have a strong consistent visual identity?

When a communications format is readily recognizable, an audience is more likely to respond favourably and positively to the message contained in it. Once a visual identity program has been implemented the benefits become significant as time progresses and the audiences repeatedly exposed to it begin to relate to the organization in almost a subliminal manner.

Outstanding examples of strong visual identity are Coca Cola and Shell.

To determine the strengths or weaknesses of your organization's visual identity, you must conduct a visual identity audit. For the audit, you need the commitment of management to the process, one industrious and imaginative communications coordinator, one well-organized and creative graphics designer and one copy of every document that you use to communicated with your audiences.

These documents should include Council/Board letterhead, business cards, fact sheets, newsletters, reports, pamphlets, booklets, brochures, news release stationery — literally every item must be included in the audit process.

Your objective here is to create a cohesive, up to date, progressive, polished, well-organized image of the organization.

This concept need not inhibit the Council's creativity, individuality or flexibility.

Application of the concept might assist the Council in presenting a cohesive, consistent image to its audiences.

The elements of a visual identity review are the same as those applied in developing a communications plan:

What image do you want to protect?

What message do you want to convey?

You set your goal. Set your objectives. Prepare your strategy and everything, one hopes, will flow from there.

## 6. Marketing the Council — Publicity's the Tool

An essential element of your communications plan is that of publicity. Publicity, through news releases and other methods, is designed to broaden knowledge, and positive recognition about an organization and its activities.

Publicity is most often gained by dealing directly with the media, either in reacting to inquiries or in initiating the communication.

Publicity differs dramatically from advertising.

Advertising possesses the following characteristics:

You pay for it.

You control what is said.

You control to whom it is said.

You control how it is said.

To a degree, you control where it is put in a publication or when it is heard over the air.

You control the frequency of its use.

Publicity offers no such controls.

Publicity is subject to review by news editors, who may decide to use all of the story, some of the story or none of the story.

When it will run, who will see it, how often it will be used — all are subject, to a large degree, to the whims of a news editor.

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But while publicity is by no means a "sure thing," it does offer two over-riding benefits that enhance its appeal, even beyond those offered by advertising.

**FIRST**, while not free, it costs only the time and effort expended by communications staff and management in attempting to place it in the media.

**SECOND**, and most important, publicity which appears in the news rather than in advertising columns carries the implicit endorsement of the publication in which it appears.

Publicity is perceived as "objective news" rather than as self-serving promotion.

This translates into the most sought after commodity for an organization—credibility.

### **Avenues of Publicity**

The four most important avenues for publicity remain: newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

## **Newspaper**

Any day of the week, 70 percent of the adult population watches some television news and reads at least one newspaper.

Newspapers provide more depth of coverage and more diversity than television or radio.

Newspapers range from giant dailies with circulations in the hundreds of thousands or millions to small weekly newspapers, written edited and produced by a single individual.

All are targets for news releases and stories.

### **Successful Placement**

1. Know and honour deadlines. News events or releases should be scheduled to accommodate deadlines.

An old and despised practice is to announce bad news right around deadline time on Friday afternoon; the premise is that newspaper journalists won't have time to follow up the story and that few people read Saturday's papers anyway.

This technique leaves reporters and editors hostile. I don't recommend its use.

2. Write, don't call.

Mail or messenger news releases rather than trying to explain them over the phone.

Follow up calls to "make sure reporters got our release" should be avoided.

3. Direct the release to a specific person or editor. It has a greater chance of being read.

Find out which reporter covers a particular beat and target releases accordingly.

The various section editors and beat reporters are the key contacts.

4. Make personal contact.

Knowing a reporter pays residual dividends.

### **Functions of Newspaper Personnel**

**Publisher** responsible for overall newspaper policy

**Editorial Editor** generally responsible for editorial page content, including the opinion editorial section.

**Managing Editor** responsible for overall content

**Section Editor** responsible for the content of a section of the newspaper.

When a reporter uses your story idea, follow up with a note of commendation — particularly on the story's accuracy.

5. Don't badger. For every release editors use, dozens are discarded.

6. Use "exclusives" sparingly. The "exclusive" promises one newspaper a "scoop" over its competitors. There is a risk of alienating the competitors and you'll need those competitors later.

## **Magazines**

Magazines generally can be classified into general interest, news, quality, business-oriented, trade, men's/women's interests, and special interest.

General interest — These are aimed at the entire population and are designed to appeal to all groups; for example, Reader's Digest and TV Guide.

News — Alberta Report and Macleans — These weeklies summarize news events, provide background and add depth to evolving stories.

Target publications carefully. Know what the magazine uses.

### **Successful Placement**

Magazine placement differs from newspaper placement in a number of ways.

1. Magazines have longer lead times than newspapers.
2. Articles must be less time-oriented than daily press material and must be written in more of a feature style.
3. Articles must be scheduled further in advance.
4. Innovate. Magazines like creative ideas and shun run-of-the-mill material. Suggest new approaches and break new ground. Retreaded news releases seldom have a chance.

- 
5. Use "exclusives." Magazines insist on it.

## **Radio and Television**

As TV has taken on the entertainment characteristics of radio, radio has moved more strongly into news dissemination.

Television offers a variety of opportunities, particularly on the local level for groups to tell their stories through film, video and on-the-air interviews.

The networks, local stations and public broadcasting all feature interview programs to complement nightly news stories.

### **Successful Placement**

1. Generally call, don't write.

Radio and television are more telephone oriented than newspapers.

To begin each day, radio news directors and television assignment editors plot their staff assignments. A telephone care to these people early in the day may evoke some interest.



2. Keep the story simple.

Rarely does a radio story last one minute — the equivalent perhaps of a page and a half of triple spaced copy.

Television stories may be a bit longer, but not much.

3. Know and honour deadlines.

Broadcast deadlines are usually stricter than for newspaper work. Unless a TV story can be filmed or taped in time for the six o'clock news, it will be useless.

Schedule radio and TV publicity early enough to avoid running up against competition from unexpected fast-breaking news.

4. For TV be visual

TV assignment editors are rarely interested in non-visual stories. "Talking heads" are anathema to producers.

However, stories that offer dramatic interesting visuals have a good chance of being used.

5. Get to know the talent coordinators/producers.

Talk shows are excellent vehicles through which to discuss the services your organization offers. Earning the trust of the talent coordinator or producer will help ensure that invitations will continue to appear.

## 7. Using Publicity and the Community to Build Council Membership

Before we get in to our discussion on how the Edmonton Social Planning Council can use publicity effectively to build its membership, let's begin this section by asking ourselves these questions:

What is the current membership of the Council?

Does the Council set an annual membership target?

What criteria might the Council use to establish that target?

What methods does the Council use to attract and recruit membership?

What benefits are there for prospective members in joining the Council?

Is the Council communicating those benefits effectively?

How can Board and Council members help to forge contacts in the community?

And closely allied with that question, how can Board and Council members uncover potential sources of funding or fee for service contracts?

With these questions in mind, consider the following:

The community of an organization can vary widely, depending on the size and nature of the business.

The "mom and pop" grocery store may have a community of a few city blocks; the community of a car assembly plant may be the city where the plant is located and the community of a multinational corporation may embrace much of the world.

It is in its community that the Council must seek its membership. Your Council membership strategy should be couched in a broader community relations strategy .

Who are the principle members of the Edmonton Social Planning Council Community?

**Community leaders:** These are the shapers of opinion in the community — public officials, vocal advocates. They can generally be reached through regular contact at influential local groups, face-to-face meetings and special mailings.

**Local media:** It is important to get to know the local news media for effective community relations.

An organization such as the Council has almost a captive audience in the media simply because of the nature of the Council and its work. Social issues form the substance of newspaper content, news magazine content and daily news reports on radio and television. That you are a credible organization, providing credible and reliable social researches, only serves to further strengthen your position as a resource to the media.

I have mentioned only two out of the many possible key constituencies for the Council. Key constituencies vary from community to community. Each organization must learn

which members of its community are key resources for building Council membership, Council influence and Council credibility.

### **Possible Messages for Building Council Membership and Community Relations Constituencies**

Communities expect from its resident organizations such tangible commodities as wages, employment and taxes. But communities also expect intangible contributions which you can turn to your benefit.

#### **Appearance**

The community hopes that an organization will contribute positively to the quality of life in the area.

Perhaps by becoming members of the Council, new members could contribute to and invest in this city's future.

#### **Participation**

As a citizen of its community, an organization is expected to contribute responsibly in community affairs.

Perhaps by becoming members of the Council, new members could influence and shape the city's quality of life.

#### **Stability**

Communities prefer stable organizations that will grow with the area.

Your organization offers credible, meaningful social action, community planning and development.

With these thoughts and ideas in the back of your mind, we'll go into our next assignment.

**SEE ASSIGNMENT 7.**

## ASSIGNMENT 7

For your next assignment address the following issues:

### Council Membership

1. Once you've got the membership, in what two ways can you sustain and develop that membership?
2. Indicate two methods through which you can effectively work with the membership.
3. Conversely, name two ways in which the membership can effectively work with you.

Assignment #7: COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

#### A. How to sustain and develop membership:

1. Continue to provide benefits for membership through publications and access to library resources.
2. Bring in members as volunteers.
3. Recognize and appreciate volunteers.

#### B. How to work effectively with membership:

1. Volunteer to follow-up on non-renewed memberships
2. Send information on renewals, including updates on years events, i.e., 50th Anniversary
3. Inform members of ongoing issues, groups, and forums; encourage participation
4. Use specific material/brochures to explain what it means to be a member of the E.S.P.C.
5. Give feedback; regular contact is important.
6. Acknowledge 5, 10 year members at Annual General Meetings, special pins.
7. Invite participation at committee level.
8. Offer a possible discount on publications.
9. Hold more social events like the Christmas open house.

#### C. How the membership can work with the ESPC:

1. Invite members to write for *First Reading*.
2. Invite members to speak at public forums.

\*Previous successful campaigns for membership have been through *First Reading*; targeted campaigns have not been very successful. Therefore it is important to understand why people become members and to be aware of 'target' audience.

## **8. Communicating with the Board — A Major Public**

We discussed before the need for an organization to identify and define its public in order to communicate effectively as an organization.

Your Board of Directors is a major public.

In most board/organization relationships, the organization relies on the board as a sounding board (no pun intended) and final arbitrator of the policies and positions the organization pursues.

The board is responsible for policy decision. The organization carries out these policy decisions day-to-day making the "how things are to be done decisions" about specific projects. In other words, the board is responsible for the "what" an organization is to accomplish. The organization is responsible for managing how those decisions are carried out.

The board establishes meaningful policies in areas of policy programming that relate directly to how the organization functions in the community.

These distinctions in the roles and responsibilities between board staff and organization staff, effective communication between the two is imperative.

Consider this background as we go into our final assignment of the workshop.

**SEE ASSIGNMENT 8.**

### **Example:**

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Provide board members with timely information to ensure that the Board is kept knowledgeable about the activities of the Council.

## ASSIGNMENT 8

### Board/Staff Communications

1. Identify one means through which Council staff can enhance its communications with Board staff.
2. Identify one means through which Board staff can enhance its communications with Council staff.
3. Identify one means through which you personally can make a contribution toward enhancing communications between Board/Council staff.

#### Assignment #8: BOARD/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

##### Improving Relations:

##### A. How the Board can enhance communications with staff:

1. Communicate appreciation; help identify issues and initiate action
2. Provide clear direction on staff responsibility for tasks --  
Who is to do what?
3. Give consistent feedback from committees to staff.
4. Participate on committees.
5. Read, study material in order to keep up on social issues.
6. Create a "to do" list so that Board can remember what was promised from month to month.

##### B. How staff can enhance communications with the Board:

1. Have more personal contact at Board events.
2. Include more structure in staff reports.
3. Share more information.
4. Hold more social activities; e.g. lunch, wine and cheese,
5. Increase feedback on policy issues
6. Learn more about the financial system.
7. Read and study material in order to keep up on social issues.

## 9. Working Successfully with the Media\*

How do you perceive the news media?

Do you perceive them as friend of foe?

How do you feel about working with the media?

What control do you have when working with the media?

We've all heard about the 'victims' of the 'press'... those people who have been interviewed and feel the stories or statements have been distorted or taken out of context, leaving them or their organization in a bad light. In this section of our workshop I'll be giving you background and information on the process to follow to obtain optimum results initiating and responding to media contact.

### **Handling Interviews**

There are few experiences in life guaranteed to invoke the wide spectrum of emotions most people undergo when requested to do an interview with the media.

More often than not, the person to be interviewed will feel apprehension and tension which may escalate to full-blown fear, just before the interview is to take place. These are normal reactions.

Developing a positive, mutually beneficial and constructive relationship with the news media clearly pays dividends, particularly in the case of not-for-profit organizations such as the Council.

The basic principle to follow in handling the media is that information should always be available except for specific, legitimate reasons. For example:

1. where the information concerns contract negotiations that would be adversely affected by disclosure;
2. where information is patented or is identified as such by the owner;
3. where the information is part of an investigatory file and its release would jeopardize proceedings.

### **Reporting the News**

The role of the reporters is to seek out information and then to verify and relate what is uncovered to the readers or listeners. The reporter prepares the story with answers to the questions who, what, why, when, where, how, and often, how much?

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\* Special thanks to Don Nicol, Director, Public Communications, Alberta Transportation and author of "Media Relations Primer" from which this material has been extracted.

## **Presenting the News**

The first thought in presenting the day's news, whether in print, radio or television is given to the interest it evokes; the second, to the purpose it is to serve; and the third, to the best way it can be presented.

Not everything that happens each day is a headline, but almost every item is of some news value in one way or another.

The big stories, especially those that benefit the public, are easy to report. They virtually speak for themselves.

The little stories, however, are the ones that make up the bulk of the day's news.

Remember, radio has news usually every hour on the hour. Television news broadcasts at the noon hour, at six o'clock and again at ten or eleven at night. They are always looking for good material.

## **Reaching the Media**

There is one simple and effective way in which an organization can be heard, and it is probably the least expensive form of communication. Personal contact.

Through personal contact with the editors you can become more than a written release. You can become a familiar voice on the phone. There is no greater way to endear yourself to the news media than to honour your commitments or promises to follow up and follow through with the media.

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## **The News Conference**

If your story is complicated, could be misunderstood, or its significance could be lost in simple written form, a news conference can be staged.

Remember, however, a news conference should not be called unless there is a solid story.

## **The News Release**

News releases should be written in simple, straightforward language, the way the story would read in the paper the next day. A blanket release can be issued for all media, although "specials" can be done for technical media.

News releases should be short, preferably one page but not more than two and always double spaced on letterhead.

Use the inverted pyramid format; that is, with the most important information in the first sentence / paragraph. The release should answer the questions who, what, where, when, why and how.

Avoid embargoes. If one media outlet breaks an embargo, the embargo is off.



Finally, remember there is no guarantee that a news release will ever be used by a news outlet. If you want a copper-bottomed guarantee that your message will be used, buy advertising space.

Avoid situations where more than one person is designated as the source in handling media queries on a particular issue. A single spokesperson ensures consistency in public statements and generally reduces confusion.

### **Unfavourable Stories**

What to do about these. Generally, nothing.

But if a story could seriously damage the credibility of an organization or if unfairly critical stories seem to be part of a pattern by a reporter or news outlet, several avenues are open to you.

In the case of a newspaper, there is always the letter to the editor. In choosing this course, get the letter off immediately, keep it short and show both the name and the title of the person in whose name the letter is sent.

Remember, letters to the editor do not always show up in the paper. The paper can ignore it if it chooses to. Also, even though it may run, the editor has the entire editorial page in which to fire back.

Where appropriate, do follow up. Newspapers, in particular, file stories so that without follow up the chance of an error being repeated the next time is high.

### **Handling Media Inquiries**

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Because members of the media are seeking information for dissemination to a wide audience, it is in the interests of the Council to ensure the media receive the most accurate information possible.

An issue or situation will be reported by the media whether or not an organization's position or actions are explained by a member of that organization or by someone less knowledgeable.

The issue of who speaks to the media and on what subjects or issues should be resolved by the Board and Council and set in writing. A media relations strategy is a helpful practical tool. Perhaps your public education committee might be just to group to address this need.

### **Dealing with the Media**

The following is offered as a brief reference guide before responding to a request to participate in an interview.

<b>The telephone</b>	Interviews are usually conducted over the phone, because most reporters need information right away to make the newscast or the next newspaper. The older news gets the less news value it has.
<b>Know who you are talking to</b>	It is a good idea to write down the reporter's name, the name of the media outlet and the telephone numbers.
<b>On tape</b>	If the interviewer is from TV or radio, you may ask if your words are being taped for broadcast. If you do not want to be taped, say so; but still provide what information you can. There is nothing wrong with being taped, but be sure of what you want to say.
<b>Knowing the answer</b>	When you know the answer to a question, answer it briefly and factually. You may have to give background information for perspective, but, again, be brief and don't get side-tracked. <b>NEVER TALK ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEMS. ALSO, TAKE THE HIGH ROAD. DON'T TAKE SHOTS AT OTHERS. IT ONLY SERVES TO UNDERMINE YOUR CREDIBILITY.</b>
<b>Asked for an opinion</b>	It is wisest to decline personal comment unless it is a professional opinion and you are prepared to substantiate it.
<b>Don't know the answer</b>	Say so. Then offer to find someone who does. Never guess.
<b>Comment on second-hand quotes</b>	It is wisest to decline comment on the statements of another person.

**Other points to remember;**

1. Prepare for the interview. Don't try to wing it.
2. Stay on subject.
3. Listen carefully to the question asked.
4. Don't use technical jargon.
5. Don't say too much.
6. Don't go off the record. Furthermore, don't give a reporter information and then tell him its off the record.
7. **NEVER, NEVER** lie to a reporter. If they don't get the truth from you, they'll get it from someone else. Credibility can never fully be restored once this kind of situation has occurred and been discovered. Tell the truth even if it hurts.

## **Six of the Toughest News Questions**

### **1. The Secret Question**

Some bright young reporters use this technique believing that they will get more honest and newsworthy responses from their news targets if they refuse to state the subject of their inquiry to anyone except the individual they wish to interview. The best stories, however, are those based on far better information than the "startled" responses of an official surprised by the questions.

### **2. The Two Evils**

Here, the reporter provides radically different propositions for response.

Typical of this style of question is the following: "Ms. Smith, which is it that you prefer, more than 200 truckers being out of a job or the environment being degraded by insufficient controls on hazardous materials?"

When in this situation, keep cool and don't even choose between the two. Frame your answer in a positive tone, perhaps even touching lightly on both positions offered by the reporter, but answer in terms of what is important to the Council.

### **3. Third Party Trick**

Here, you might be asked to respond to a question that is really meant to be asked of a third party who isn't present at the interview.

Decline comment.

### **4. It's not What you Used to Be...**

This is the situation where the Council may have changed its position over a period of time and the reporter is asking why a specific policy or practice that existed some years ago is different from today's policies and practices.

You are better off to admit that the old policy was wrong and proceed to explain your new direction.

### **5. The Hypothetical Question**

A reporter asks, "If this happens, what will your response be?" and, "If that is your response, and if this is the result of your response, how then will you modify what you said before?"

Don't respond to hypothetical questions. Stick with the facts

If the reporter insists on a response, reply in hypothetical terms also. But beware of playing games with professional "question askers."

### **6. The Ethical Line**

Here, the questions are asked, answers are given and as the interview ends the reporter asks, "Now that you have given me the Council's opinion, what's your personal opinion?"

Your personal opinion is simply not relevant.

## **How to Make Bad News Worse**

Here are four sure-fire ways to make bad news even worse:

1. Lose your temper.
2. Phone the offending media outlet and demand a meeting with the management at which you threaten everything withholding advertising to bodily harm.
3. Call the reporter and demand a retraction.
4. File a lawsuit.

These responses by you are certain to make the media bristle with self-righteousness.

## SUMMARY AND WRAP UP

When I introduced today's session, I indicated that my goal was to leave you with an understanding of organizational communications and of the communications planning process; to empower you by providing you with methods to identify the Council's communications issues and goals; for focusing on ways to grasp those issues and grapple with the problems or conflicts arising from the issues; and for finding solutions to address the problems or issues.

As a group, you have generated excellent ideas and I hope that I have left you with a solid foundation for building your 1990 communications plan.

But the process doesn't stop here with today's workshop. Indeed, in many respects your work has just begun.

One very strong recommendation that I must make is that the Council give consideration to employing a Communications Consultant to work with the Public Education Committee in developing a comprehensive communication plan for 1990.

I also must point out that the effects of communications planning — developing a media relations strategy, developing a communications strategy — are cumulative and that you can't expect to accomplish these task all at once.

Meanwhile, I'll be providing each of you with a copy of this workshop and with a number of Tip Sheets for working successfully with the news media, writing to get to the point, and developing productive community relations.

Before you leave today, I would also ask you to complete the planning workshop evaluation.

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I've enjoyed working with you. Thank you for your commitment and enthusiasm.

Sharon Belicek

Communications Consultant and Facilitator

# PLANNING WORKSHOP

## Evaluation

It would be helpful in planning future workshops if you could give us your evaluation of how things went today?

1. What are some of the things that you feel you got out of the workshop?
  2. What did you particularly **like** about today's workshop?
  3. What did you particularly **dislike** about today's workshop?
- 
4. How do you feel about the **process** that was used for today's workshop?
  5. What ideas do you have for making any **future** workshops better?

## TIP SHEET #1

**The key to all good writing is get to the point!**

1. Use contractions like it's or doesn't.
2. Leave out the word **that** whenever possible.
3. Use pronouns like **I, we, they, and you.**
4. When referring back to a noun, repeat the noun, or use a pronoun. Don't create "eloquent substitutions."
5. Use brief, clear sentences.
6. Cover only one item per paragraph.
7. Use language the reader understands.

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Source: Fraser P. Seitel, "The Practice of Public Relations," Third Edition, 1987, Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio.

## TIP SHEET #2

### The Flesch "Sixty-Word Blacklist"

In his book *Say What You Mean*, Rudolf Flesch expressed particular loathing for the following words, which, he contended, could easily be replaced by substituting the words in parentheses.

1. advise (write)
2. affirmative (yes)
3. anticipate (expect)
4. appear (seem)
5. ascertain (find out)
6. assist (help)
7. complete (fill out)
8. comply (follow)
9. constitute (be)
10. cooperate (help)
11. deceased (dead)
12. deem (think)
13. desire (want)
14. determine (figure, find)
15. disclose (show)
16. effect (make)
17. elect (choose, pick)
18. endeavor (try)
19. ensue (follow)
20. execute (sign)
21. experience (have)
22. facilitate (make easy)
23. failed to (didn't)
24. forward (send)
25. furnish (send)
26. inasmuch as (since)
27. inconvenience (trouble)
28. indicate (say, show)
29. initial (first)
30. in lieu of (instead of)
31. insufficient (not enough)
32. in the event that (if)
33. locate (find)
34. negative (no)
35. obtain (get)
36. personnel (people)
37. pertaining to (of, about)
38. presently (now)
39. prior to (before)
40. prohibit (forbid)
41. pursuant to (under)
42. provide (give, say)
43. represent (be)
44. request (ask for)
45. require (need)
46. residence (home, address)
47. reveal (show)
48. review (check)
49. spouse (wife, husband)
50. state (say)
51. submit (give, send)
52. subsequent (later)
53. substantial (big, large, great)
54. sufficient (enough)
55. supply (send)
56. sustain (suffer)
57. terminate (end, stop)
58. thus (so, that way)
59. transpire (happen)
60. vehicle (car, truck)

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Source: Fraser P. Seitel, "The Practice of Public Relations," Third Edition, 1987, Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio.



## TIP SHEET #3

### Ten Commandments of News Releases

Once upon a time, a public relations sage offered the following ten commandments that, alas, get broken from time-to-time.

1. **Thou shalt be selective with the releases thou send.** Don't waste your ammunition on stories that bore you. They'll bore others, too.
2. **Thou shalt not send multiple copies of the same release.** It causes confusion and wastes time, but occasionally, *The New York Times* has been known to run a release tossed out by one editor but salvaged by another.
3. **Thou shalt have contact names and phone numbers on all releases.** Reporters must be able to get in touch with someone to clarify and answer questions. Don't send out announcements if you don't intend to be there when reporters call.
4. **Thou shalt know deadlines.** It's a good idea to let reporters know what's coming. That way, if it's especially newsworthy, they can save space and won't be surprised when it arrives close to deadline.
5. **Thou shalt follow up with a telephone call.** Don't assume a reporter received an important release. Releases get overlooked. Messages get lost. Newsrooms don't have secretaries. Sometimes reporters miss significant releases. So it's all right to check up from time-to-time. But don't call needlessly.
6. **Thou shalt take "no" for an answer.** If, after having given it your best shot, the answer is "no," forget it. Don't be offended. Don't take it personally. But don't overstay your welcome either.
7. **Thou shalt find out about standard criteria.** All periodicals have guidelines for things like executive changes and company news briefs. You should know these. Requirements may change. No newspaper editor likes to know his paper isn't being read, especially by those looking for ink.
8. **Thou shalt know and respect the meaning of "exclusive."** Exclusive means just that — giving a release to one publication at the expense of its competition. It does not mean giving it to two publications at the same time. Also, it does not mean giving the release to one television station and one newspaper. If reporters get burned, they tend to remember.
9. **Thou shalt not send releases to people who left the publication years ago.** Few things disturb an editor more than receiving mail addressed to a deceased predecessor.
10. **Thou shalt get to know reporters before needing one.** Even if a reporter doesn't use all your releases, it helps to get to know the person. Public relations people occasionally forget that reporters are people too.

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Source: Fraser P. Seitel, "The Practice of Public Relations," Third Edition, 1987, Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio.

## TIP SHEET #4

### Influencing Public Opinion

Thoughtfully applying these rules before embarking on a campaign to influence public opinion can pay off in long-lasting benefits. Alternatively, ignoring them can cause decisive setbacks in the court of public opinion.

1. **The better they know you, the more they'll like you — providing you deserve it.** Organizations often feel that their poor image stems from a general lack of knowledge of their activities. Becoming better known means that liabilities as well as assets will be highlighted. So a firm that seeks the time light must also accept the attendant responsibility.
2. **Change yourself. It's easier than changing the public.** The public will never change its thinking about you unless you, on your own, reform any questionable policies and practices.
3. **Speak the language of action.** If you want to be listened to, support your words with actions. Words, in themselves, are hollow.
4. **Weary not in well-doing.** Public opinion takes time to develop. Don't give up good programs if they don't meet with immediate public recognition. Give it time to build.
5. **Truth rides the storm; half-truth and falsehood blow away.** Always base public relations programs on truth. There simply is no substitute.
6. **Put your heart where your money is.** Money alone can't buy favorable public opinion. Back up your money with personal participation. The public will get the message.
7. **You may like cake, but you can fish better with worms.** You must tell your story in terms of the public's needs and not your own. If you have an abstract idea to put across, bait the hook with human interest, not self-interest.
8. **People interest people most.** People want to hear about other people. They're less interested in a firm. Express things in terms of human interest.
9. **Watch that log — it may be a crocodile.** Clever or easy solutions rarely work. Before taking any public stand, an organization must thoroughly examine all the ramifications.

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Source: Fraser P. Seitel, "The Practice of Public Relations," Third Edition, 1987, Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio.

## TIP SHEET #5

### The Telephone Interview

#### Newspaper

1. Be sure you know who is on the other end of the line and phrase your answers accordingly.
2. Find out when and how the material is to be used so your responses will be appropriate to the target audience.
3. Be sure you have a good clear telephone line. Many people have been misquoted because a comment wasn't clearly heard.
4. Remember that a reporter is always a reporter and may use even casual preliminary remarks in a story. So don't say anything you don't want to see in print or hear on the air.
5. Always get the reporter's phone number so you can call back with new information or corrections.
6. State your main premise or most important statement clearly and directly in simple language. Then repeat it the same way in summing up.
7. Don't be subtle or wry. Subtleties and clever remarks often translate very badly in print and can make you look ridiculous.
8. Stay away from absolutes. Never say "never."
9. If in doubt about an essential fact, or if you wish time to give a little additional thought to your response, tell the reporter you'll call him back in a few minutes. **Then do it.**
10. Be sure to call back if new information develops that changes either facts or opinions you have given the reporter. This can save much embarrassment.
11. Spell out any difficult names (including your own) or terms, if they're unusual.
12. Print interviews (unlike broadcasting) offer an opportunity to use exact figures. But be extremely careful that they are clearly understood.
13. Offer any photographs, graphs, or illustrations you have that would be appropriate to the story.
14. Be sure the news organization has a good, current picture of you in its files. Keep a ready supply on hand.
15. If possible, have a supply of good background material on hand for reporters who are not completely familiar with your subject.

## TIP SHEET #5 (continued)

### If the interview is for radio...

1. Ask whether the interview is to be aired live, taped, or as excerpted tape. If it's a tape to be edited for newscasts, it's essential to keep your answers within 10 to 20 seconds in length. Get right to the point!
  2. Ask whether you should use the interviewer's name in your response.
  3. Turn off the air conditioner or any other "noise makers" in your office. Cut off all other telephone calls and close your office door.
  4. Get your energy level up. Sit up straight in the chair and sound alert.
  5. Don't yell ... speak in normal tones over the telephone mouthpiece, not directly into it. And hold it far enough away from your mouth to avoid "popping" or "hissing."
  6. Watch those vocalized pauses. That "uh" sounds worse on radio than anywhere else. Silence sounds better.
  7. When questions are broad or general, use the opportunity to include points you want to stress within your answer.
  8. Avoid the use of numbers unless they are absolutely essential to make your point. If you must use them, round them off and use as few as possible.
  9. If you have reason to expect to be called for an interview, prepare answers in advance to questions you anticipate will be asked.
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## TIP SHEET #6

### What to Wear on Television

1. Select something that reflects your professional image and that you are comfortable with.
2. Don't wear apparel with limp textures, bulky tweeds or novelty weaves that might expand or exaggerate on camera.
3. Rely on familiar fashion classics rather than extreme high fashion trendy garments that might divert attention from your message.
4. Avoid clothes such as recreational sportswear or evening wear when they do not complement your normal occupational role.
5. Choose apparel with subdued colors that do not overpower your natural skin tone.
6. Don't wear strongly patterned or shiny fabrics that appear to quiver on television.
7. Avoid colors that blend into those of the studio set.
8. If possible, bring along an optional outfit, different in color, to accommodate contrast to the studio set and lighting conditions.
9. Avoid curiosities in jewelry or accessories that divert attention from your message.
10. Choose small accessories (earrings for women; cuff links for men) that enhance your apparel.
11. Don't wear accessories that are large, move too much, glare or make noise.
12. Keep your hairstyle simple, making sure it does not obscure your face from different camera angles.
13. Don't use exaggerated makeup. Be guided by the station makeup artist or on-camera station personnel.
14. When possible, call the station in advance of an appearance for guidance on the color and tonality of your on-air apparel.

## TIP SHEET #7

### Yes You Do, No You Don't

#### Yes You Do

Relax	(you are the expert)
Concentrate	(it helps you maintain control)
Anticipate	(what would your neighbor ask?)
Listen	(questions give you clues)
Say it Simply	(no jargon, short declarative sentences)
Be Brief	(20 seconds or less, if at all possible)
Tell the Truth	(lies can kill you, your career, your company)
Be Friendly	(a smile can disarm; a frown can incite)
Have a Message	(3 to 5 points <i>you</i> want to make)
Project	(Energy is the key)
Be Patient	(questions may be repeated in one way or another)
Create Images	(they help your "audience" understand)
Say Thank You	(a reporter has just helped you do your job)

#### No You Don't

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Lie	(your job could be on the line)
Get Hostile	(hostility then becomes the story)
Exaggerate	(facts speak for themselves, why embellish?)
Speculate	(facts, please, only the facts)
Over Answer	(respond briefly, and to the point)
Volunteer	(unless it's in your interest)
Read a Response	(paraphrase, it's more natural)
Use Jargon	(your audience probably doesn't understand)
Use Acronyms	(your audience <i>won't</i> understand)
Fake it	(if you don't know the answer, say so)
Appear Evasive	(that's a sign you may have something to hide)
Be Defensive	(be proactive, speak in positives)
Pass the Buck	(accept the spokesperson's role)
Get Sidetracked	(know your message, concentrate, and deliver it)

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## TIP SHEET #8

### Conducting a Successful News Conference

By Frank Potter

- I. Consider media deadlines in deciding time of conference
- II. Primary considerations:
  - A. location (neutral site, convenience, parking)
  - B. who speaks?
    1. person with most expertise or political clout?
    2. single agency representative or a group?
  - C. room arrangement
    1. adequate space and lighting
    2. seating vs. camera space
    3. ground floor location
    4. entrance/exit door for news conference speakers
  - D. technical aspects
    1. sound system or distribution amplifier
    2. lighting — avoid back-lighting from windows
    3. good acoustics
  - E. logistics/strategy
    1. sign in sheets for contact info.
    2. background material printed
    3. fact sheets printed
    4. visuals used
    5. entrance/exit of speakers
      - a) availability after conference for interviews
    6. strategy: getting ahead of the story, disarming tactics

## TIP SHEET #9

### Speaking and TV Interview Guidelines

1. **First impressions** are critical. Start any appearance or presentation with a friendly smile and a warm thank you to the person who introduced you addressing that person by the first name. You'll share that person's aura of credibility and establish your own likability.
2. **Eye contact** is vital to credibility especially during tough questioning by the media. It says you believe what you are saying and are not evading the issue.
3. **Keep smiling** unless the subject matter is grim. In that case reflect the proper concern but return to more positive matters as soon as possible and resume the personable smile.
4. **Keep it tight.** Whether making a speech or answering questions, make short, simple and specific statements. **Speak in headlines!**
5. **Start with the conclusion ... then explain.** Better yet, **tell 'em, tell 'em what you told 'em, then tell 'em again.**
6. **Accentuate the positive** and do not be the one to bring up the negative. If damaging issues surface, concede only what you **must** in the briefest way, then describe what **positive steps** are now underway to handle the problem.
7. **Anticipate every possible negative question** and have a ready answer even if no one ever asked before. **Nobody likes nasty surprises and most can be avoided with preparation.**
8. You may or may not be speaking to knowledgeable people. Even to the most specialized audience **simplicity** communicates best, especially when familiar illustrations and comparisons are used.
9. **Don't let an outrageous accusation or statement go unchallenged.** It gains credibility the longer you let it hang around before shooting it down. Refute it **politely**, offering a brief positive explanation, then **shift** to the issues you want aired.
10. Keep your organization **plugs** gentle and unobtrusive but get them in using such devices as, "Well, we at the City of Anaheim feel strongly that standards of practice are best set by the private sector."