



PR MATTERS 1Q 2003

There's an old joke about how a life insurance salesperson proclaims to his customer that: "life insurance is the answer."

Then he asks about the question.

Some companies communicate that way. They start and end with tactics before they figure out the landscape they're operating within.

It quickly leads to "tactic-it is," and it's not a good place to be for communications professionals or for management (who needs to make sure everyone is going in the right direction).

This quarter's PR Matters gives you "Four D's of Effective Communication," to help you figure out if you're stuck in the "doing."

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BUSINESS BUILDING TIP: *Four D's of Effective Communication*

DISCOVERY

First, listen to your staff to hear their brand issues and expectations. In internal interviews, you'll get much better results when your staff can express candid concerns.

Then, research your company and industry through external barometer audits to be sure your plan is backed by the latest market intelligence. Look within both your organization and your industry, to develop a credible, fact-filled positioning platform complete with key message points.

Technology has tremendously improved the research process. For example, make sure you know the advantages of utilizing online focus groups or bulletin boards, as well as gathering competitive intelligence online.





DIAGRAMMING

Once positioning has been created, determine specific objectives, strategies and tactics to communicate your messages effectively and with impact. Along with a traditional plan, develop a one-page summary to remind managers of the big picture. Make sure the one page plan includes your overall goal and strategy for reaching that goal.

Objectives need to be structured to positively enhance the bottom line and are most effective when they fall into what's already being measured within the company.

REMEMBER: "What Gets Measured Gets Done."

Objectives often fall into these areas:

- § Increase brand awareness in specific industries among targeted clients
- § Develop strategic positioning platform for all aspects of marketing communications
- § Position one or several executives as industry experts
- § Engaging marketing materials that stand above the clutter
- § Media coverage that communicates key messages among targeted media
- § Generate qualified sales leads, members or volunteers

Crisis communication planning also belongs in this section, and uncertain times underscore the importance of having your plan ready.

DOING

Most organizations start and end here, often negating their brand building efforts. This is where Hart & Partners is different from a traditional agency. We strive to work ourselves out of a job, encouraging you to develop internal resources (or select outside partners) to implement your plan, ensuring your knowledge stays within your organization.

Implementation activities may include:

- § Product and service introductions
- § Trade, business and enthusiast media relations
- § Trade shows
- § Industry expert programs
- § Crisis communications
- § Online marketing
- § Internal communications
- § Spokesperson and media training





DEBRIEFING

Don't develop a plan, then let it sit on the shelf. Periodically assess the program and look for areas of improvement. Find a resource to help you determine an unbiased ROI to measure success and provide future direction for your marketing communication program.

HELPFUL WEBSITE

Jim Romenesko's Media News

<http://www.medianews.org>

Jim Romenesko's Media News (part of PoynterOnline's site for journalists) highlights media news and commentary. Here you'll find plenty of behind-the-scenes stories and insider views to help give you a perspective of the media landscape.

While you're there, check out the rest of PoynterOnline. You can use the "Nelson" tool to search 221 sites on your topics of interest.

And finally, if you've got too much time on your hands, you can vote for your favorite headline of the day.

HART & PARTNERS NEWS

Check out the YMCA of Florida's First Coast website at www.FirstCoastYMCA.com

It has all kinds of improvements, including:

- * Design that ties into overall branding efforts, and photos featuring members
- * Zip code search function
- * Home page photos "refresh" every time site is viewed
- * QuickLinks function provides quick reference to site pages
- * Location map with MapQuest links (directions) & personal contacts at each branch
- * Enhanced "In the News" section with current releases posted
- * Nearly 200 pages of discrete information about the YMCA

Phase II will launch soon, with even more functionality.





What do you do when you pick up great media coverage in a strategic market?
You have a plan to maximize it, of course!

H&P client Advanced Technology Services (ATS), based in Peoria, IL was recently featured in the Detroit Free Press about the company's recent expansion in Livonia, MI. Thanks to the Detroit-area coverage, local papers picked up the story and even featured ATS in an editorial about successful home-grown entrepreneurs.

QUOTE

"An idea can turn to dust or magic, depending on the talent that rubs against it."

William Bernbach (1911-1982)

Pioneer of modern advertising

No. 1 on Advertising Age's 20th century honor roll of most influential people

If you enjoyed this e-newsletter, please tell your friends and colleagues about it, and encourage them to sign up.

Until next time,

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