

The Management Series

Volume 3

The Public Relations Series
The Marketing Series
The Admin Know-How Series

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PR Series 3

WRONG PUBLICS

What is a “public”?

One hears “*the public*,” a star says “*my public*.” You look in the dictionary and you find “public” means an organized or general body of people.

There is a specialized definition of the word “PUBLIC” which is not in the dictionary but which is used in the field of public relations. “PUBLIC” is a professional term to PR people. It doesn’t mean the mob or the masses. It means “a TYPE OF AUDIENCE.”

The broad population to PR professionals is divided up into separate *publics*. Possibly the early birds in PR should have begun to use “audiences” back in 1911. But they didn’t. They used the word “publics” to mean different types of audiences for their communications.

So you won’t find this in the dictionaries as a PR professional term. But you sure better wrap your wits and tongue around this term for USE. Otherwise, you’ll make more PR errors than can easily be computed.

WRONG PUBLIC sums up about 99% of the errors in PR activities and adds up to the majority reason for PR failures.

So what’s a “public”?

PRese (PR slang) uses “public” along with another word always. There is no single form for “public” in PR.

There is the “community public,” meaning people in the town not personally grouped into any other special public. There is the “employee public,” meaning the people who work for the firm. There’s the “shareholder public,” meaning the birds who own shares in the PR’s company. There’s the “teenage public,” meaning the under-twenty people. There’s the “doctor public,” meaning the MD audience the PR is trying to reach.

There are hundreds of different types of publics.

An interest in common or a professional or caste characteristic in common—some similarity amongst a special group—determines the type of public or audience.

The PR needs this grouping as he can expect each different type of public to have different interests. Therefore his promotion to them must be designed specially for each type of public.

In the PR world there aren't kids—there is a “child public.” There aren't teenagers—there's a “teenage public.” There aren't elderly people—there's an “elderly public.”

The PR man thinks not in huge masses. He thinks in group types within the masses.

PR is an activity concerned with *presentation* and *audience*. Even when he writes a news release, he “slants” it for a publication that reaches a type of audience and he writes it *for* that audience (modified by editorial idiosyncrasies).

A PR *surveys* in terms of special publics. Then he presents his material so as to influence *that* particular public.

He doesn't offer stories about wheelchairs to the teenage public or Mickey Mouse prizes to the elderly public, if he is a good PR man.

All releases should be designed to reach a special public.

When you mix it up, you fail.

When you get it straight and survey it, you succeed.

The “police public” is not going to buy the glories of hash. The “criminal public” isn't going to go into raptures over the “heroes in blue.”

All expert PR is aimed at a specific, carefully surveyed, special audience called a “_____ public.”

When you know that, you can grasp the subject of PR.

When you can use it expertly, you are a pro PR!

To give some examples of wrong publics, Ron's Journal was designed for org staffs as an intimate chat with staff members to let them in on what's going on and what we're planning so that staffs could be informative to the Scientology public. It was a “staff public” medium of communication.

Somebody (in NY) broke the rules, played it to the Scientology public. Then somebody else figured it was a substitute for a congress and dropped congresses.

The exact end result was to cut totally my comm line to org staffs. The other day I heard how staffs missed hearing from me.

If my line to staffs in orgs is going to be played to PE attendees, that's it. Wrong public. No comm line to staffs.

I do a briefing of SO members on Flag, some dimwit uses it to play to Public Div public. Wrong public. So that line is cut.

Clear News publishes Treason orders on students to promote an AO! Wrong public.

Clear News is used for an FSM newsletter. Wrong public.

Clearing Course fliers go to new book buyers. Wrong public.

Letter Registrars write to people on a mailing list sent in by a mail-order house. Wrong public.

A conclusion someone not knowledgeable in PR technique could reach would be “promotion doesn’t work.”

Promotion never works on wrong publics.

THE SYSTEM

The PR has to figure out his precise publics. There may be several distinct types.

Then he has to survey and look over the reactions of each different type.

He then plans and designs his communication and offerings for each one.

An orderly org has each different public categorized and labeled in Address.

Then the PR sends the right message to the right public in each case. There may be a dozen different messages if there are a dozen different publics. Each one is right for that public.

The PR is after a result, a call-in, a reply, a response.

The right message in the right form to the right public gets the result.

A wrong message to the wrong public simply costs lots of money and gets no result.

Even if a PR is engaged in “molding public opinion,” it still requires a different message to each different public.

L. RON HUBBARD
Founder