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Sound Like Your Situation?

By Robert A. Kelly

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What a shame! Potentially productive public relations people resting on their oars in a large organization. Just kind of tinkering with tactics and leaving target audience perceptions (and behaviors) to pretty much do their own thing.

Big pain on the way!

Unattended, key public perceptions can morph into painful behaviors that hurt the organization.

Just plain shouldn't happen.

In military-speak, all it takes is some ongoing "intel."

First, insist that that potentially productive public relations team get busy by prioritizing your most important audiences. They can't work on everything at once. So for starters, they can identify that really key target audience.

Then monitor perceptions by interacting with some folks who make up that audience, and do it on a regular basis. Same with other important external publics, when time allows.

What's on their minds? Any negative feelings? See or hear anything that needs correcting? Is there a problem on the horizon that may come your way?

The answers to those questions help your crew form the public relations goal - altered perceptions leading to altered behaviors. For example, correct the impression that you sell shoddy merchandise; or a perception that you favor one particular ethnic group; or a belief that your services aren't worth the price you charge.

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Setting the public relations goal let's your public relations team focus on which strategy they want to employ to reach that goal.

There's not a big choice. In fact, just three are available. They can choose between creating perceptions (opinions) when none exist, or changing existing opinion, or reinforcing it.

But their ammo will be the persuasive messages they prepare for communication to that key target audience. Messages designed to affect perceptions in a way that leads to the behaviors you desire.

The message must outline what the problem is and what some members of that target audience believe. Then it must clearly set down the truth of the matter omitting any exaggeration or hype. In other words, it must be believable, credible and especially persuasive and compelling.

Enter "beasts of burden," the communications tactics your people will use to move your message to the attention of members of your key, target audience.

There is a vast array of communications tactics from which your public relations people can choose. They include everything from face-to-face meetings, emailings, op-eds and news releases to special events, speeches, trade show appearances and town hall meetings.

Wait a minute, not so fast! How will your public relations team measure progress? Best way is to put on the monitor hats again and fan out among members of the target audience.

Using the persuasive message as a guide, are respondents aware of the message? If so, what is their reaction to it? Does your crew find evidence that prior opinion (perception) has moved in your direction? If so, to what extent? Was the create/change/reinforce strategy choice correct, or must it be adjusted? Are refinements in the message in order, meaning there is still considerable work to be done?

Obviously, the problem solving sequence must be carefully retuned as progress is made in order to keep it on target - alter perception, change behavior, and achieve not only a successful, but the desired public relations result.

end

Bob Kelly counsels, writes and speaks about the fundamental premise of public relations. He has been DPR, Pepsi-Cola Co.; AGM-PR, Texaco Inc.; VP-PR, Olin Corp.; VP-PR, Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Co.; director of communications, U.S. Department of the Interior, and deputy assistant press secretary, The White House.

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Hearing Impaired in the Workplace

Sound Like Your Situation?

By Chris Hampton

Hearing Impaired and the Workplace by Chris Hampton Dec 09 2004

Being hearing impaired can be a real challenge in the workplace. The biggest problem is that few understand the problem, and usually the person with the hearing impairment is hesitant to admit the fact.

When in one on one situation things may be just fine, especially there is little background noise. In a crowd situation the hearing impaired person may hear, but not understand, 50% or more of what is said. It can be very frustrating in meetings etc.

Sound is made up of Frequency and Volume measured in decibels. In the ear that sound is converted to electrical impulses to the brain. Many things can happen to keep the sound from reaching the brain.

Say some one says the letter "A". That "A" is made of the frequency determined by that person's voice box and the loudness that he speaks. That sound goes out into the room and mixes with the noise in the room. A person with normal hearing in both ears has little problem understanding the letter "A".

But a person that has hearing in one ear only, cannot determine where that sound comes from. And the brain has to work twice as hard to process that sound.

It is a matter of information. With two ears twice the information available to the brain.

Same with someone that has a hearing loss the percentage of hearing loss, for whatever reason, reduces the amount of information available to the brain to process.

A normal ear may process the sound of the letter "A" with this much information, 0110110110011011 to the brain while the damaged ear may only send this much, -----11011-----, so the brain has to look for more clues as to what that information really represents.

If you will notice a person with hearing loss does everything possible to gather clues or information to help in the hearing process. Some of the things are: Looking at your face or lips while you talk. Turning their head so that the good ear is facing the speaker Cupping the ear with the hand

Remember even a hearing aid does not work as well as a normal functioning ear.

I hope this helps you understand what the loss of hearing really is.

Chris Hampton –Arizona Acoustic Art –

Chris Hampton has 25 years experience in the sound and vibration industry and being hearing impaired knows the importance of sound and noise control and conditioning.

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