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Library Trends

Aspects of Library Public Relations

LEN ARNOLD, *Issue Editor*

October, 1958

Library Trends

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LIBRARY TRENDS, a quarterly journal in librarianship, provides a medium for evaluative recapitulation of current thought and practice, searching for those ideas and procedures which hold the greatest potentialities for the future.

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Introduction

LEN ARNOLD

A GROUP OF INTREPID LIBRARIANS have drawn together for this issue of *Library Trends* much of what is known about current thinking and practice covering many aspects of library public relations. This is set against a delineation of general public relations by an outstanding educator in the field of communication. The issue was accomplished by these knowledgeable people in spite of the needling of a self-styled impressario, neither librarian nor educator, but a public relations man occupied, at the time, wholly with library public relations.

A "line" unmistakably pervades the issue. It exhorts, pleads, argues, challenges librarians to identify public relations literally as a function of librarianship and to seek to develop its potentialities—to treat it equally with other defined and accepted areas of library management.

This "line" is not a matter of editorial design. It emerges from the experience and material with which the authors deal. Hence, it marks fairly just about where the profession stands today on library public relations—at the point where exhortation, pleading, and argument are essential in a discussion of library public relations.

Most librarians are still convinced that public relations endeavors require more time, energy, and budgetary provision than they are worth. Many presume that, since so much of library public relations depends on library services, they are doing all that is necessary, or convenient, when they expand their library's services; e.g., "We just started an adult education program—that's good public relations, isn't it?"


There will be less of this as professional associations really take leadership in developing library public relations, and as library schools latch on to their responsibilities in this area. There will be virtually none of such sheer nonsense when library public relations becomes

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institutionalized, when library public relations is treated as one of the disciplines of the profession. When this time comes, no librarian will be encouraged to treat public relations on a take-it-or-leave-it basis and we will be able to forget about whether librarians' psychological profiles show extroverted bulges or introverted curves. When this time comes, no librarian will be able to dally with public relations as if it were some "new look" in female fashions.

Why not now? Proper public relations practice is based on objective scrutiny of every phase of a library's administration and services and a continual "finding out" about whether they meet the real needs of people. This motivation has the effect of questioning a librarian's librarianship, constantly putting it to the democratic, hence dangerous, test. As an every day affair, this fundamental public relations function could be at least distressing to a library administrator whose ideas are tightly bound by ironclad assumptions and impenetrable professional smugness.

Even so, there are glimpses of a time to come when unafraid library administrators and imaginative professional leaders will bring librarianship to fullness and increase the personal satisfaction of librarians many times over, by developing the potential of library public relations. These glimpses are caught in reading this issue of *Library Trends*; you can almost see the future at the end of the "line."



A Working Concept of Public Relations

CURTIS D. MAC DOUGALL

FOR MANY WHO, TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, considered "propaganda" to be a naughty word, "public relations" today has a similar sinister connotation.

They, and their younger contemporaries, say that the propagandist, as well as the press agent and publicity director, has merely changed his title to that of public relations counsel. These "wonder children of the age" are called hidden persuaders, pressure boys, masters of the Invisible Sell, space grabbers, ballyhoo boys, hucksters, cunning manipulators of the mind, malicious engineers of public consent, masters of the art or science of getting one's own way—in short, generally, socially undesirable characters.

By contrast, the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of persons who perform public relations functions today contend that their activities are of great social benefit. They take credit for having converted business and industry completely away from the "public be damned" attitude and say that they have humanized business, helped give it good manners and, most important, a conscience; and that they have taught it that he profits most who serves best. They define public relations as simply doing the right thing and letting people know about it, applying the Golden Rule in everyday activities while not letting one's light shine un-noticed under a basket. To them, sound public relations means the daily application of common sense, common courtesy, and common decency in accordance with a continuous program of enlightened self interest through good works which not only earn one a good reputation but cause him to deserve it as a good neighbor.

Curse or blessing, organized public relations is a product of the times. It is an inevitable consequence of large population growth, urbanization, impersonalization, and complexity in all social, eco-

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conomic, political, and other aspects of modern life. No scientific means have yet been devised to determine accurately the extent to which public relations may have contributed to the confusion of our times, or how much, on the other hand, it constructively assists the frustrated victim of complexity to grope his way toward an understanding of contemporary social forces. Whether, as its adverse critics assert, public relations has provided a dangerous weapon for "sharpies" and others out for "a fast buck," or, as its defenders assert, it has applied appreciable restraints to the "dog eat dog" economic system, it, nevertheless, is true that much of the discussion regarding public relations really pertains to the system of which it is a part rather than to the tool itself. Perhaps public relations should be considered as a symptom or symbol of a highly complex and impersonal social order.

Certain it is that to be heard today one must shout. Newspapers no longer have sufficient space in which to tell all the news that's fit to print and wouldn't have it even if they discontinued all their comic strips and other features. Community newspapers, news magazines, news letters, and other media of communication have filled the gap only partially. The voice which wants to be heard must speak up for itself; it no longer is possible to rely on others to find you out and present your point of view for you.

Modern public relations, however, involves much more than devising ways and means of obtaining widespread and continuous publicity. In fact, the best advice a public relations counsel might give a client could be assiduously to avoid the limelight. *Webster's New International Dictionary* succinctly defines the scope of modern public relations thus: "The activities of an industry, union, corporation, profession, government or other organization in building and maintaining sound and productive relations with special publics such as customers, employes or stockholders and with the public at large, so as to adapt itself to its environment and interpret itself to society."

By contrast, press agency is merely attracting attention to yourself, usually with only immediate or short range results in mind. The term was first applied, a couple of generations ago, to agents employed by circuses, theaters, dramatic companies, and the like to attract audiences. They did so by such advertising methods as billboards, handbills, news releases, parades, barkers, free sideshows, and passes to influential customers who would help start the trek toward the big tent, museum, or arena. These show business press agents engaged in extravagant claims and a considerable amount of fakery which was

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expected, received with good humor, and enjoyed as part of the fun. The Prince of Fakers, of course, was P. T. Barnum, many of whose methods were emulated by Harry Reichenbach for the benefit of the fledgling motion picture industry.

Some press agency, of course, exists today, but it usually is not upon the advice of a scientific-minded public relations counsel. Instead, as in the past, it is by someone seeking a quick specific return as the lovesick swain who chained himself to a radiator in the attempt to help his girl friend get a singing engagement. Public relations counsel-inspired publicity stunts are more far reaching in purpose and are a part of a long range program. Anniversary banquets, public exhibits, lecture series, and educational programs are within this category. Most organizations with well developed departments of public relations engage in a considerable amount of public service. They provide material—much of it excellent audio-visual educational aids—to schools, study clubs, civic organizations, and the public at large. This material contains a minimum of “puffery” or none at all. Some of it contains information which, it is hoped, will help build attitudes which ultimately, usually indirectly, will redound to the advantage of those who finance it. Much of it merely is intended to help create good will toward the disseminating agency.

There is no attempt to disguise or deny the fact that the Department of Public Relations of a business corporation is expected to contribute to the ultimate prosperity of the organization, or that a public relations agency employed by a motion picture star or politician tries to win fame and/or fortune for its client. Labor unions have gone in for public relations to try to win public support for themselves as well as to influence legislators and other public officials. Government sells itself on a big scale to the voting public by providing and publicizing services. Crude methods of press agency or publicity-seeking, however, have generally been abandoned by the experts in the field as the broader concept of public relations has evolved. Publicity today is just one department within any public relations outfit, whether it be an agency serving many clients or a part of a large industrial organization. Individuals who depend upon keeping their names known still expect their publicity man to obtain frequent mention for them in the gossip columns and public prints generally, and particular industries, businesses, and trade associations still “plant” or try to inspire articles in magazines and other publications. Much of the cynicism which exists in some places regarding public relations is

due to the increasing difficulty of determining what is and is not primarily publicity inspired. When a candidate for public office shows up at a clam bake, it is taken for granted that he is seeking votes as well as nourishment. It is not so easy to detect motives when public figures show up at public functions, visit hospitals, autograph baseballs and programs, make charitable and philanthropic contributions, lend support to this or that cause, make public statements, etc.

As students of public opinion formation and other aspects of human behavior, however, public relations counsel do not rely solely on incessant publicity, through advertising or the media of communication. They are much more scientific than that in their appraisal of what makes for enduring success. Thus, they consider not just the mass public but also the special publics with which their clients deal, on which they rely. Such publics include a company's employees, its stockholders, suppliers, neighbors, and customers. Public relations counsel, it is obvious, did not create these or other public relationships. No individual or institution can avoid having public relationships, and it is trite to point out that everyone with whom one has contact forms an opinion of him, which can be either beneficial or harmful. In the long run, it is a satisfied employee or customer who does the most for a business. If your employees say, "It's a good place to work," or your customers declare, "They give you a square deal," you are immune to the effect of any press agency or publicity stunts in which your competitor can engage.

It is good public relations activity when:

- A department store provides adequate rest rooms;
- A filling station attendant cleans your windshield and puts air in your tires;
- A congressman answers his crank mail courteously;
- A mayor presides at a cornerstone laying;
- A music store loans instruments for a public school concert;
- A college publicly recognizes the work of a scholar;
- A newspaper provides a speaker for a men's club;
- The management of a factory sends a letter congratulating an employee on a wedding anniversary;
- A large corporation sends easy-to-read annual reports and personal letters to minority stockholders;
- A chain store manager participates in community affairs; or
- A fire department welcomes school children on a field trip.

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Hart, Michigan, businessmen and farmers annually sponsor a Mexican Homecoming Fiesta for the entertainment of migratory cherry pickers.

Such activities are open and above board. Their purpose, to build good will, is obvious but not resented. What *is* resented is any attempt to disguise the nature of an activity as through a "front" organization, ostensibly operating objectively in the public interest but actually supported, often secretly, by those who expect to benefit by its operations. In 1929, one of the most extravagant public relations stunts of all times occurred when the president of the United States and many other notables went to Dearborn, Michigan to help celebrate Light's Golden Jubilee. Ostensibly, it was to honor the aging Thomas A. Edison, which it did. It was, however, the brainchild of the electric light industry's public relations director. He was Edward L. Bernays, nephew of Sigmund Freud and, next to Ivy Ledbetter Lee, the leading pioneer in this field. His *Crystallizing Public Opinion*,¹ published by Boni, Liveright in 1923, was the first full-length book defining this new way of "engineering consent" by means of "public relations counsel," a term Bernays invented.

Today, these public relations counsel work closely with personnel managers who may be under them. Public relations can take a great deal of the credit for making workers happier on their jobs. Enlightened P.R. men are not strikebreakers or union busters and they do not resort to "gimmicks" to keep labor pacified so as to prevent unrest, for such methods do not have lasting effect. It is certainly true that a large segment of the business and industrial world has learned this lesson the hard way after many decades of bitter conflict, and that some elements have not learned it yet. Public relations men with broad perspectives, however, have supplanted strong labor unions and protective governmental agencies as the principal influence upon management, into whose planning sessions they now are being admitted in increasing numbers, to go to the roots of discontent on the part of either employees or customers rather than to devise ways of circumventing situations needing reformation.

Similarly, in its policies toward the general public, the public relations-minded organization is today generally open-handed. For example, in their early days both the railroads and the airlines did their best to make difficult the work of newspaper reporters attempting to obtain information regarding accidents. Today, they realize that the good will they thereby would lose makes the effort dangerous. Full

cooperation in the handling of such news has replaced concerted efforts to suppress or cover-up the facts. Greatest credit for effecting this change generally is accorded the late Ivy Ledbetter Lee, who was employed by the Rockefeller interests early in the century after a series of public investigations and exposes by the so-called muck-rakers in several widely circulated magazines had caused widespread distrust of big business. Lee recognized that the "public be damned" attitude no longer was workable, if it ever had been, and he persuaded his clients to end the policy of secrecy which previously had been orthodox. Some who call themselves public relations counsel today still may act occasionally, or even frequently, as censors or "cover-up" artists, attempting to prevent or counteract an unfavorable response to some incident without going to the roots of its cause. Such practitioners, however, are decidedly not up to date or in tune with the times. The most effective public relations, may it be repeated, is now pretty generally recognized as that which takes "the long view" and which recognizes that the effects on sales or reputation are indirect and difficult to measure. There is rapidly increasing recognition that you can "phony it up" just so long but that the day of reckoning comes inevitably. The only sound first step in any effective public relations program is to "put the house in order."

The informational and propaganda efforts of the federal government during both world wars provided great impetus to commercial public relations. Not only were thousands of persons given training in public relations techniques, but also great strides were made in the development of scientific methods of studying public attitudes and opinions. This work has been continued by private agencies and by an increasing number of colleges and universities. Communications is now recognized as a so-called discipline within the social sciences. Market analysis, public opinion polling, and content analysis are among the subjects studied quantitatively by these new scholarly experts on communications. Motivational research is the name given to efforts to determine the potential receptivity by particular audiences of advertising and other appeals. Bernays defines the function of the public relations counsel as to "interpret the client to the public and the public to the client."

Since most communications research to date has been primarily to benefit the person who has something—a commodity or an idea—to sell, the need for greater public understanding of what is happening is beginning to be felt. Since the short-lived (1937-41) Institute for

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Propaganda Analysis, there has been no large-scale organized effort to educate the general public to the purposes and/or methods of the special pleader.

Today, the only effective antidote to any public relations efforts which are "bad" is counter-efforts which are "good," just as it long has been known that the best defense against propaganda is counter-propaganda. Minority groups, especially those with small bankrolls—a characteristic of minority groups—are learning to use this new weapon in self-defense in order not to lose whatever is at stake by default. Granted that the large and powerful have the advantage; they would have it, public relations or no public relations. More and more, social agencies and professional groups have been getting off their supercilious high horses as regards public relations and are festooning their public facades. Voices that make no attempt to be heard are ineffective. Even a death rattle may have some influence on posterity.

If public relations is motivated behavior, good manners, smart actions to make people like you, then certainly it can be practiced by ethical individuals and institutions for good and socially useful ends as well as for strictly monetary purposes. If this sounds like, "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em," that's exactly as it is supposed to sound. A few more cheery "good mornings" and smiling "good byes" in freshly painted and well lighted highbrow dens would make life decidedly more pleasant. It is not possible to consider public relations as a fad or a bogie which will pass or go away if you wait long enough. As has been said, it is impossible to exist in any society without public relationships, anyway. A policy to have no conscious public relations is a public relations policy itself. Few persons or institutions can achieve much without being liked, at least by the right people. Liking often grows out of understanding and understanding is based on information. The "inner glow" which comes from anonymous do-gooding may be great compensation, but to be content with it is vouchsafed only to those who already have established themselves.

The best public relations is that which has an altruistic motive, which takes a broad view of the place of the practitioner in the social order and has a sense of social responsibility or at least enlightened self interest. The greatest potential danger of a thoroughly public relations-conscious public is the artificiality in the behavior of persons toward each other which it might entail. Today, it already is difficult

to know what is a publicity stunt and what isn't, and that goes for a great deal of charity and philanthropy as well as for banquets, mass meetings, and other newsworthy affairs. Even when the motivations of the sponsors of such events do not seem to be ulterior, publicity seekers may take advantage of such occasions to grab the limelight they provide. It is to conjecture whether anyone who relies upon public favor for a livelihood today can fail to be conscious of his public relations in everything that he does. If this means that his behavior will always be circumspect, good. It is to shudder, however, to contemplate a world in which nobody ever joined anything, never went anywhere, never said anything or did anything without a careful weighing of the possible effect upon his economic well being. Quite a few persons active in public affairs, who have virtually reached this stage of behavior already, have complained bitterly over the fact that they must struggle to retain the small amount of privacy which they want for themselves. If nothing is ever "on the level"—meaning done without conscious purpose to improve the status of the perpetrator—the spontaneity and nonconformity which have been responsible in the past for so much of what is today considered good shall have disappeared. More important, those who learn to act like conforming robots will come to think only as robots. If they learn to like such an existence, a new Dark Ages may be imminent without the aid of nuclear warfare. It could come sooner than 1984.

Encouraging evidence that man is not so easily converted into a mental automaton has been provided by numerous political elections in which the public relations effort was overwhelmingly in behalf of one candidate or party but the people voted the other way. This indicates that basic attitudes and opinions are not so easily manipulated as the would-be manipulator would like to have it. Kermit Eby recalls that in 1944, when he was educational director for the Congress of Industrial Organizations, he was instrumental in the distribution of forty million pieces of literature on behalf of the candidacy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Surveys showed that F.D.R. got 71 per cent of the CIO vote. He also got 68 per cent of the AFL vote although that organization distributed virtually no literature in his behalf. In *Harper's* for June 1957, R. L. Heilbronner² revealed that an expensive campaign to make Cincinnati "United Nations conscious" was "a gigantic frost" because "most people don't give a damn about most things, unless those things are part and parcel of their concrete lives."

Maybe skillful public relations conducted by groups without axes

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to grind could make people "give a damn" about the United Nations and many other things. The public relations profession (if that is what it is) cannot be blamed for all of the ignorance and indifference—the anti-intellectualism—of our times. Even if it were not scapegoating to declare the opposite, the alternative is not to allow victory by default. Just as the automobile, nuclear power, etc., can be used for good or bad purposes, so can public relations. It may be true that your good public relations is my bad public relations. That, however, is merely tantamount to acceptance of the fact that modern life in this democracy is characterized by competing, conflicting interests all wanting to be heard.

What is the alternative to becoming public relations-conscious today? Ideally, it would be to work for a smaller, simpler society. Historians and anthropologists tell us, however, that such societies are not without their hates and fears and tensions, albeit on a smaller scale and at a slower pace.

Like it or not, public relations is a development of our contemporary culture. It's the way those who depend on wide-spread favorable acceptance by others operate in an age when face-to-face relationships are minimized. The public relations-conscious organization has to study itself constantly to ask, "Am I doing the right thing?" Good ethics may be a natural consequence of such inquiry. A professional attitude may become predominant to the delight of the socially-minded pragmatist.

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Public Relations in Librarianship

RICHARD BARKSDALE HARWELL

PUBLIC RELATIONS IS WITH THE PUBLIC. It is the relationship of your library with its borrowers, with the non-borrowers of your community, with your trustees or library committee, with dealers, collectors, salesmen of equipment; with scholars and contest solvers, with your staff and the administration for which you work. Public relations is with the public, and as true as in its Biblical context is the admonition, "Whatsoever you do unto the least of these . . ."

"Curse or blessing," C. D. MacDougall calls public relations. Either is possible. For your public relations is what you make it. It cannot be shuddered at and wished away, but it can be welcomed and made to serve you well. It is with you every minute of every day. It is waiting at your library doors. It is observing the cleanliness of your hallways and public rooms. It is reacting to the service of all your staff, listening in on telephone conversations, reading your mail. It follows you home, into your personal life. It accompanies you on all your ventures into the life of your community.

Public relations has been endowed with a kind of twentieth century magic by the corporations and their P.R. officers. Neither the corporations nor the P.R. men invented public relations. It has been with us since the beginning of trade. But the American business man has learned the foolishness of *caveat emptor* as a motto, has learned the dead end of selling wooden nutmegs. He has made the good will of his public part and parcel of the assets of his business. Public relations is as much a part of the daily life of a library as it is of any business. Perhaps more so, for a library is not self-supporting and depends, even more than the usual business, primarily on the good opinion of its patrons. It is the day-to-day building of the atmosphere of good will in which a library (or a business) can operate most widely

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and most effectively to give the best possible service to its public. As R. L. Heilbronner¹ wrote in *Harper's Magazine* for June 1957: "In a word, public relations covers a lot of acreage—blurring out into advertising, slopping over into selling, dipping down into publicity, and touching—or at least aspiring to—the 'making' of public opinion itself."

Edward W. Barrett, dean of Columbia University's School of Journalism, praises J. W. Hill, himself the ungowned dean of American P.R. men, for seeing "public relations as a broad management function—more precisely . . . as the management function of giving the same organized and careful attention to the asset of good will as is given to any other major asset of the business."² Public relations may well be the most important asset—"the priceless ingredient," to quote the phrase that one firm's advertising program has made famous—for bad public relations can cancel the good of every other asset.

With a knowledge of the experiences of other libraries and other types of organizations, public relations becomes perforce a do-it-yourself program. Public relations is the asset, is the program, most expressive of the individuality, the personality, of each separate library. It may be patterned emulatively, but never imitatively. It must be done according to the needs of your library. It must express as attractively (and as accurately) as possible your library to the public.

First, public relations must be properly fitted into the administrative pattern of your library. Few libraries can afford the services of a special public relations officer. For those that can, fine. University and college libraries often can work through a campus public relations office. In some cases, a city P.R. man is available to public libraries. Where a trained professional is available, it is an error both factual and tactical to direct public relations except through that individual. In other cases, public relations must be conducted as an auxiliary responsibility of the librarian or delegated to some other member of his staff. In both of these alternatives, however, it remains a function of management and the responsibility of the librarian.

A library's policies in many fields must be worked out thoroughly and wisely by the librarian and his governing board. Once worked out, policy must be implemented by actions which elucidate it in every function of the library and by every member of a library's staff. The right hand must know what to expect of the left hand. It is of basic importance for good public relations that all staff be kept as fully informed as possible, both of long-term library policy and im-

mediate newsworthy developments which relate to that policy. If not with a single voice, the library must at least speak in a consistent accent.

The extent of a library's services and resources must be well enough known for any and every employee to respond with accurate answers or definite and proper referrals to patrons' questions. There is hardly a greater disservice that a library can do its public relations program than to permit an employee to answer an inquiry with a "that's-not-my-business" type of reply. It matters not how extensive a library's services are if the attainment of those services becomes a dismaying pursuit of referrals from one functionary to another. Good service is the handmaiden of good public relations. This does not mean that every library must provide every service. It does mean that whatever service a library provides must be done well. A well considered "no" can be much more effective public relations than an ill considered "yes."

Public relations is as important within your organization as it is without. Staff relations are a part of public relations. Ability to work with a governing board is a part of public relations. And, once these relationships are satisfactorily established, each member of your staff, each member of your board becomes a part-time P.R. man for your library. But the more apparent aspects of public relations are those outside your management family. Public relations is with the public, but each library has several publics. There is its public which borrows books. There is a public made up of others in the same profession. There is a public, in some libraries at least, of scholars or professional users of materials.

Relations with the general borrowing public are broadest, most demanding, and, yet, easiest. Here the field is reasonably well defined. Here publicity (and publicity must be positively delimited as only a small aspect of public relations) can be effective. Here patrons' response is quickest and most vocal; if you are taking the wrong tack, someone will tell you so. Librarians generally have done good work with publicity, but it is too easy to forget that not all publicity is good publicity.

Publicity begins at home—or, at least, in the library profession itself. Staff news sheets, exhibits, guides to exhibits are all part of a library publicity program. The incidence of library publicity material of this type pitched at a kindergarten level is more appalling than appealing. Is it necessary that adult human beings approach the

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problem of announcing a staff party as if they were writing for the amusement of low grade morons? The same approach pervades much of the material issued in the name of recruiting for librarianship. Unless librarians write as intelligent people, how can intelligent people be recruited to the ranks of librarianship? The cute crack, the quick quip are devices best left to the experienced writer or to the professional adman. In the hands of the tyro, they too soon become an oversweetened syllabus, more fluff than substance and inclined to cloy. But staff news sheets can be informative, can be cleanly written and neatly printed. Recruiting pamphlets can be intelligently and attractively devised. Exhibits can be artfully and artistically arranged. If these things are done well, they make for good public relations. But there is no middle ground. It is better that they not be done at all than that they be done badly.

Newspaper publicity must be controlled within the management function of public relations, but it is practicably possible to delegate responsibility in this area. It is helpful both to the library and to a paper that one person be responsible for newspaper publicity. A minimum of experience can establish a satisfactory working relationship between a library and a reporter. He will know what he wants. It is your business to give him the facts. Handout journalism has been a corollary development of public relations as a profession. It is certainly not its healthiest aspect. Make information available to newspapers, but don't try to style it for them. Reporters are better reporters than are librarians.

Notices and articles in the library press are another aspect of continuing public relations. The unfortunate proliferation of library periodicals makes complete coverage impossible, cuts down the readership for any single journal, and lowers the average quality of writing on librarianship; but this is, nevertheless, a legitimate area for use in furthering public relations. Wide knowledge of one's own profession and of his colleagues in it is a prerequisite for general recognition of librarianship as a profession. Librarians are inclined to write too much solely for other librarians, talk too much to other librarians. Participation in national, regional, and local organizations of professional librarians is good public relations, particularly if such organizations reach other professions and the public in general. Individual participation by staff members is also good for a library. Individuals should be encouraged in membership in civic groups, professional organizations in specific subject fields, and in activity in

community projects. As useful as professional exchange is, articles in the non-library press, speeches before Rotary, Kiwanis, and other civic or special interest groups are especially rewarding.

Publicity and participation are merely vehicles of public relations. The public as a mass can be effectively reached through newspapers, radio, and television. The public as a special force in promoting the welfare of a library can be better and more directly reached through individual participation in the widest possible variety of activities. Public relations as a continuing function is a more important and a slower process. It is axiomatic that repeated incidental mention of a celebrity is more important to his reputation than one large splurge of publicity about him. Every time the library is mentioned favorably, every time an individual connected with the library appears in the community in a favorable light, good public relations are being built. Every time a library is listed among the acknowledgments in a published book, every time an individual sees a creditable publication from the library, every time an organization or an individual is helped by the library's services, the library increases in stature. The cumulative effects are unlimited: better budgets, adequate staffing, more books, finer buildings, easier recruiting—in a word: better libraries.

“Good will” is often listed in corporate assets as valued at \$1.00—not because it is worth little but because it is an intangible beyond practical evaluation. Good will is priceless. It is public relations that build good will. Libraries are a public or institutional service, tangible examples of good public relations on the part of a municipality, a corporation, or an educational institution providing informational and recreational resources to its constituency. Librarianship is a service profession. If librarians are to emphasize their work as a profession, interpreting as well as making available knowledge, this emphasis must be based on good service. It must be quality service at all levels of operations. Good service, conceived to support community and institutional goals, will automatically result in good public relations. Good public relations will create lasting good will.

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behavior of everyone associated with it from top management down through the ranks.

Public relations is often referred to as a management function. This is true, to a certain degree, for policies are set by management or the administrative officers but it is the staff or the employees who carry out these policies. One cannot function without the other. A good program of internal relations is the base on which good public relations are built. An employee or staff group that works harmoniously, with an understanding of the objectives and the methods by which these objectives are to be accomplished, is of the greatest importance.

A good program of internal relations begins with the employees—all of the employees. Their attitudes affect cost, efficiency, and service but their effect does not stop there. They also influence consumer and community attitudes and help to shape public opinion.

After examining the real fundamentals upon which good public relations are built one comes to the realization that no organization or institution can function, fully and successfully, without putting these fundamentals into practice. Libraries must apply these principles to merit public understanding and support. Only then will people make the maximum use of resources and services and provide adequate support, for libraries of all kinds and sizes.

Libraries have been practicing public relations for years but in the postwar period the library's responsibility to the community or group it serves has grown enormously. In a rapidly changing world, libraries are faced with many new and different kinds of competition, not only in the areas of service and communication, but also in the areas of finance and personnel. Social, scientific, and economic changes have brought a host of new challenges as well as problems. Often, the very existence of a library depends upon how well it meets these changes. Because of these conditions, it is advisable to take a long look at the existing public relations program in every library to determine whether it is adequate, and if it is not, how it can be improved.

Such soul-searching is common in industry and merchandising and is often accomplished by means of surveys, polls, interviews, and research studies. Most libraries can neither afford the time nor the money for such large-scale projects. A simple method has been devised, however, for agencies who wish to conduct their own surveys. It requires a certain amount of time and an even greater amount of honesty on the part of the administrative officers, which include the board of trustees or directors and the librarian. Department heads

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and staff members are invited to participate, at some point in the program, and make valuable contributions to the whole.

These are six questions to be asked and answered when evaluating an existing library public relations program:

1. Is there anything wrong with the activities of this institution?
2. Is there anything wrong with the objectives of this institution?
3. What is our policy toward the public?
4. What policies have caused misunderstanding, if any?
5. Have we done everything we can to promote good will?
6. How much does the public really know about this institution?

Some of these questions apply specifically to public relations and others apply to internal relations and these, of necessity, must be answered and discussed first, for good public relations thrive only on good internal relations.

After the institutional aims and objectives have been subjected to the searchlight of truth it may seem feasible to adopt an entirely new plan, or new ideas and planning may be added to those parts of the existing public relations program that have proved to be sound and productive. Any plan should be elastic enough to meet changing attitudes and conditions. Some aspects of every program will be concerned with long-term usage and others will be adopted for short-term usage. An ideal library public relations program does these things:

1. Evaluates public attitudes and public needs.
2. Forms policies and procedures identified with these attitudes and needs.
3. Explains policies and problems to its publics.
4. Develops programs and services that will earn public understanding and support.

Evaluating public attitudes and public needs is the library's first responsibility. It must know what people in a given community or area need to help them lead fuller lives and to help them meet everyday problems in the home, the school, at work, and in their social environment. Generalizations about people's needs are known to most librarians. They know that the first desire is for security. People want to know how to raise their families, how to acquire and keep a home, how to better themselves financially and socially, and how to understand and get along with other people. Their secondary interests

include hobbies, group activities, and leisure-time pursuits. But one cannot generalize about attitudes. These cannot be taken for granted. A librarian must know what the people in his community are thinking and how they feel about almost everything. This knowledge can be acquired only by personal contact with people and groups at all levels. In the past, some librarians have been accused of living in an ivory tower but every progressive librarian knows that such a state of isolation is not possible in modern society.

Policies and procedures are developed after the evaluation of public attitudes and needs has been completed. A willingness to help and work with both the individual and the group and to encourage interest and participation in library activities is the first step toward gaining public understanding and support. The fact that a library has anticipated and met the needs of an individual or a group soon becomes common knowledge. Word-of-mouth publicity is a powerful force that costs nothing and is often more effective than many high-priced publicity campaigns.

Publicity is the tool that is used to tell the story of the library and to explain its policies and problems to its publics. It is *not* the purpose but an important tool of public relations that is used to create an intelligent, informed, and favorable public opinion. Much of the success of any institution depends on the process by which people are kept informed. The publicity family is a large one and includes newspapers, magazines, films, radio, television, photographs, special programs, public speeches, exhibits, books, book lists, reports, posters, publications, special events, meetings, and that all important word-of-mouth publicity. Libraries use publicity to gain or retain financial support, advance salaries, influence political action, get public sentiment behind a budget plea, promote good will, obtain gifts of books and money, spread information about library facilities, increase circulation, build up reference use, interest definite groups of people, promote attendance, direct people to the library and dozens and dozens of other large and small projects.

Publicity techniques are not difficult to master and many libraries have learned to use the methods and media once regarded as the sole property of business. Librarians have learned, too, that there is no hocus-pocus about writing releases for newspapers or spot announcements for radio and television. There are certain basic techniques to be followed and these can be learned with the help of books plus careful study of the publicity outlets in each community. In

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recent years, some librarians have made use of planned programs and publicity materials with considerable success. Many feel the subscription cost of these materials is far less costly and more effective than what they are able to produce themselves, at a like cost.

Many libraries enlist the cooperation of individuals and groups to help publicize services and policies. These may be within the library framework, such as a group of libraries pooling materials and talent for newspaper and radio news or for displays or booklists. Individuals and groups out of the library framework might include the Friends of the Library or the local gas and light company or newspaper editor, or the display manager of a department store or anyone else who helps to publicize the library, either directly or indirectly. Many libraries reach a wider audience more effectively and economically because of interest and cooperation on the part of individuals and groups who have already been "sold" on the library.

While a library has an active educational mission it cannot stop at providing suitable books and maintaining a competent staff just for the casual visitor. A library must be more than a mere purveyor of books. Special programs and services that will earn public understanding and support are the concern of many libraries. A large library may possibly sponsor a dozen such programs while a smaller library may concentrate on a single program. Some of the special services and programs that have been successfully developed by libraries in recent years include work with teen-agers, older adults, shut-ins, new citizens, parents, businessmen, and newcomers to the community.

No program, however, is undertaken without careful consideration of the needs and interests of the community or area the library serves. There would be no point in sponsoring a Great Books program in a community where the people need desperately to learn and understand the English language, just because a library somewhere else has undertaken such a program. It would seem equally foolish to undertake an elementary course in the English language in a community where people had long since mastered the tongue. This not only applies to programs but to services, also.

Some special programs and services are worked out with the assistance of interested individuals and community groups and are cooperative in nature. This, often, takes much of the pressure of time and work from the library staff and at the same time, creates the best possible kind of public relations.

Who can say how much good public relations will cost a library?

No one can budget public relations. It is an intangible that is part and parcel, bone and sinew of every organization and institution. One library may have thousands and thousands of dollars to spend on personnel and resources while a smaller library may have one-tenth as much at its command. But the smaller library may have the better public relations because the librarian and the staff have learned that having a lot of money does not guarantee good public relations. Public relations is an individual thing. It expresses the personality of a library. Public relations is a slow-building process which calls for attention, tact, and a consideration of every day matters. In other words, it is a program of service.

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tutional face. Externally, that face is brought to the community as a living, breathing thing.

Because one of its prime functions is interpretation of the community to the library and of the library to the community, the library board should be the first link in the chain of public relations. Here is formed the policy on which service is based and which, siphoned down to the library consumer, forms his opinion of that service. Situations differ, a board may be floundering for want of P.R. skills; or it may count among its members a professional public relations man. If, on the other hand, a board has placed a P.R. director on the library payroll, it should give ear to his advice, and call on him for the help he can give. He can assist the board (1) in knowing the library. Election or appointment to the board presupposes an interest; it does not, however, insure knowledge of library organization, methods, background, long range aims or immediate needs. As an example, introductory tours of the library system give an on-the-spot introduction to particular situations, services and staff, helping to fix a defined picture in the trustee's mind which will stand him in good stead during his term of office. (2) P.R. communication skills can be used in presentation of information for board consideration and action. (3) Such skills are also valuable in the presentation of board matters to other bodies. Instances are budget and bond requests, building programs, legislative programs and the like. (4) The P.R. counsel can offer profitable guidance on dealing with the press and other news media. Trustees have, after all, the ultimate responsibility for library service and the impression they make as individuals and as a body are the seed from which the public opinion of the library grows.

Policy set by the board must be transmitted both to the public and to the staff. Since the employees are the ones who will implement the policy or be directly affected by it, they must not only be informed clearly and fully with the reasons and the thinking behind the decision, but the matter must be so presented as to win the widest possible acceptance.

Corporations have even discovered that the P.R. chief, given his proper place in the organization, can be effective in the labor-management relations of board-administrator-staff.

A librarian, who is not his own P.R. director, can find in the one he hires many of the same helps the board does. A P.R. counsel can provide guidance on the skillful presentation of program and policy, both upward and downward; he can interpret the reactions of others

