Section VIII

Instruments for Precision

HE who starts out without facts, all that are available and relevant, is like a sightless driver without brakes. He cannot see the best way nor avoid ultimate disaster.

LEO W. ALLMAN

RESEARCH, SURVEYS, AND MEASUREMENT

THE public-relations counselor can perform a service only as long as he recognizes public opinion as the great governing force of our social and economic world. Because society functions best when its leaders are in tune with public thought, public-relations men today work with facts, logic, analysis, research, and scientific knowledge. In business and industry they must be able to interpret the public to management as well as management to the public. Neither can be done successfully without factual information.

Public-relations men have not always recognized the importance of the sound factual basis. Some practitioners professed to be indifferent to public opinion, while others were skeptical and distrustful of public-opinion polls. Others relied upon "hunches" or derived their guidance on policy largely from prejudiced or unreliable sources who gave them only what they guessed to be the consensus of the public on given issues.

Blueprint for Public Relations

As one of the giants of the profession has said:

> Management operates a two-way radio set. There is a flow of ideas to the public and a flow of ideas and opinions from the public. They are equally important and each dependent upon the other. Basic in the formula is sound policy directed to the public. However, to form sound policy, top management must know what people think, not what some executive "hunches" that people think. Management must keep informed through independent means about opinions of people outside.

Research and surveys are the instruments that government and business use to check on shifting trends in public thinking. Likewise, progressive public-relations men depend upon scientific sampling systems to determine the basis for new policies and to indicate the direction of future planning.

Among those who have made important contributions to developing and perfecting the highly scientific technique for measuring public opinion are such men as George Gallup, Claude Robinson, Elmo Roper, Renses Likert, Archibald Crossley, Samuel Stouffer, and Hadley Cantril.

One of the nation's leading public-opinion experts and a pioneer in the study of public-opinion sampling is Dr. Robinson, who heads a professional staff of nearly 100 psychologists, analysts, and researchers at his Princeton office and more than 900 interviewers from coast to coast who are in constant touch with people and their thinking on many different subjects. Dr. Robinson, former associate director of the Gallup Poll, founded the Opinion Research Corporation in 1938. It is now the largest organization specializing in opinion research for business.

His doctor's thesis, "Straw Votes, A Study of Political Prediction," was one of the first definitive studies of opinion sampling. His major efforts have been toward problem solving and the generation of ideas for general manage-

ment and public-relations and advertising executives, rather than mere case gathering.

He is retained by some of the country's largest business organizations and associations for advice on public opinion. His Public Opinion Index for Industry, established late in 1942 under the sponsorship of such corporations as General Motors, Chrysler, Monsanto, Texas Company, Johns-Mansville, and Ethyl, already is a major influence in the operation of many other large industrial organizations and is highly recognized for its work in determining in advance the trends as they affect corporate policies.

The over-all work of the Robinson organization now embraces research into the fields of public relations, dealer relations, and labor relations, political studies, and studies in editorial problems, style design, market potentials, and advertising and radio. The work is done by the home-office staff of special business interviewers at Princeton and the field workers.

Dr. Robinson points out that the measurement of public opinion is a steadily developing science with a cumulative body of scientific lore and a record of practical achievement. He explains that the public-relations man has two methods of gauging public opinion—the *impressionistic* method and the *objective* method of sampling.

All of us use impressionistic methods in judging the world about us. We make an observation here, listen to a conversation there, add a little hunch or common sense, and out comes a conclusion. Impressionistic methods of observation have great value. They provide quick appraisals with a minimum of toil. Frequently, too, they yield brilliant insights which solve problems in everyday practice.

But the method of impressionistic observation has grave shortcomings. It involves a relatively high average percentage of error. It is frequently erratic. There have been political prognosticators, for example, who were uncannily accurate in judging the voters' temper in two and three elections in a row, then go completely wrong

on the third or fourth try. Above all, it is frequently difficult for impressionistic observers to agree on what is the fact. One vice-president believes the workers love the company; the other vice-president believes the workers hate the company. One vice-president's opinion is as good as the other's. And company action is paralyzed. There is obviously great need for objective tests.

Thanks to modern opinion sampling, such tests are available. In all scientific procedure, the first step is to set up a measuring stick. In opinion sampling, this measuring stick is the questionnaire which lays down categories into which people classify their attitudes. These categories may allow respondents great latitude, such as "What is your feeling toward the OPA?" Or they may lay down simple alternatives, such as "yes or no," "favor or oppose"; or they may describe in some detail a series of attitude stations on a scale of value. Whatever the method employed, the point is that the questionnaire provides an objective device for measuring sentiment, in the same sense that a thermometer is an objective device for measuring heat and cold.

Questionnaire construction, of course, is a highly skilled business. Attitudes are complex phenomena, and it is easy to force them into tortuous categories that destroy their true meaning. Also, the words and phrases that make up the categories are frequently found to be elastic, like rubber. Words have different meanings and carry different emotional overtones with different people. Word meanings change over a period of time. Why suffer pain when you can be cured by a simple jerk? These facts pose real problems for the opinion researchers.

Once the system of interrogation is worked out, a representative cross section of the public is interviewed. In a nationwide sample, this means East, West, North, and South; urban and rural; big city and small town; men and women; rich and poor; young and old. Depending on the problem representativeness may also call for control by religious or political affiliation, education, or the ownership of a home. The point is that the composition of the sample must parallel that of the population being surveyed. Once that is assured, the researcher can make the inductive leap from the sample to the larger public and be pretty sure that he is right.

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Drs. George Gallup and Saul Forbes Rae, in "The Pulse of Democracy," [1] point out that "wording questions [is] simple only to the uninitiated. The expert knows the possibilities of error. Bias may intrude at various stages, and bias is the eternal foe of the conscientious poll director since it would instantly vitiate his measurements."

After discussing the attention that is given the question and the method employed by the institute in sending out experienced interviewers, "each of whom contacts a small segment of the American cross section," Drs. Gallup and Rae sum up the requirements of survey questions as follows:

1. The question should be as brief and to the point as possible. Long conditional or dependent clauses tend to confuse.
2. The words and phrases should be simple and in common day-to-day use, among all groups in the community.
3. The questions should not include words which have a strong emotional content.
4. The questions must avoid all possible bias or suggestion in favor of or against a particular point of view.
5. The questions should include all the important alternatives which may emerge on a given issue.
6. Where the individual is being asked to choose between different alternatives, this choice of alternatives must be given as early in the question as possible.
7. In cases where the choices in question are lengthy or numerous, it is preferable to list these on a card which the respondent can read. The average person is not likely to be successful in retaining a long list of alternatives or complex questions in his mind.

By the use of opinion-sampling devices, Dr. Gallup has even developed a practical system for forecasting the box office for motion pictures before a single foot of film has been shot.

When a manufacturer begins to lose business to his competitors, he immediately takes steps to find the reason. So

[1] Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, 1940.

he goes out to talk to the customers and find out where his product satisfies and where it fails to satisfy, what customers want in the future, and what price they are willing to pay. Much research apparatus has been available to analyze customer attitude toward products, but no competent apparatus was set up for market analysis in the area of social forms until Dr. Robinson and his associates founded the Public Opinion Index for Industry.

In defining the problem of public relations in market terms, Dr. Robinson says:

> I believe that businessmen should accept the fact that they really manufacture and distribute two kinds of products: the economic product and the social product. The social product I have called "social forms," and by that term I mean simply the relationships between people worked out in the daily business of living—relationships between top management and lower management; between plant and community; between contractor and subcontractor; between the company and the Federal state.
>
> Volume discounts for dealers, the 40-hour week, time and a half for overtime—these are social forms manufactured and distributed by industry.
>
> No doubt most companies have more social forms in their line than they have economic products.

The Index makes one report a month on the public's thinking on issues having to do with corporate policy formation. For example, one of the first Index reports was on the thinking of foremen. The Index went out and interviewed foremen all over the country to find out if there was any fundamental schism in the thinking of top and lower management. It discovered that there was no fundamental cleavage, that foremen tend to identify themselves with top management because they hope some day to become top management. It found, however, that they have legitimate complaints. Top management frequently expounds the theory of management unity but fails to undertake the ac-

tions and the ceremonial that are necessary to make foremen feel in their hearts that they are a part of management.

Also, it was revealed that many foremen had a legitimate complaint about the perversion of the wage pyramid that resulted from overtime for workers on the one hand and stabilization in pay for foremen on the other.

This Index study of the attitudes of foremen wrote the outlines of management policy for foremen very clearly.

Another study of the Index was of the public's attitude toward big business in which the question was raised: Is it bad to be big? Dr. Robinson found that the public says "yes" and "no" to that question—"yes" insofar as bigness routinizes human relations and destroys the man-to-man give and take in human understanding that must underlie social relationships; but "no" in the sense that big concerns frequently produce more cheaply than small companies, "no" in that they frequently afford better surroundings and more security, and "no" in the sense that big concerns provide good vehicles for the people's savings.

Big business has frequently been made the whipping boy in political campaigns, but it is evident that the public does not judge a company by size alone but rather by how good a citizen the company is in its community.

The Public Opinion Index for Industry, in essence, is the application of opinion research to management and public-relations problems.

It has developed pretesting methods for styling and designing a line of products that enable it experimentally to vary the elements of feature and design and to determine the optimum point of customer appeal. In other words, the organization can now furnish a scientific answer in advance of manufacture to the question: How shall we style our product, and what feature or features shall we include to give it the maximum customer appeal at any given price?

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During the past few years the Opinion Research Corporation has supplied factual answers to other questions, such as: What do the customers, employees, stockholders, dealers, and the general public think of the company? What should we do or what are others doing about it? How do the company's publics react to its changes in policy? It has also told corporation subscribers what the public has thought of annual wages and strikes and big business; compared the public and labor-union members' attitudes on various aspects of unionism; and plumbed employee opinion on wage incentives and company pensions, stockholder opinion on annual reports, and foremen's attitudes toward management. Among other things revealed by the Index are how many companies have public-relations functions, what programs they are carrying out, the trend of public-relations budgets, the most important public-relations problems for the coming year, how much influence public-relations men have in company policies, how much outside public-relations counsel is employed, and the attitude of the men in the street toward public-relations directors.

An infallible sign of the awakening of industry to the necessity of learning the public-relations arts is the almost sudden attention being given public attitudes, says Dr. Robinson.

More and more businessmen are discovering that they live and die by public favor. When the public's voice is tuned in clearly for managements to hear, it becomes easier to make decisions on public-relations matters that otherwise might be neglected.

Heretofore businessmen have been busy producing, setting up assembly lines, finding capital with which to finance their ventures, marketing, controlling inventory. How well they have done this job is indicated by the industrial power of the United States during the war and our fantastically high standard of living compared with that of the rest of the world. It is only in recent times that entrepreneurs generally have begun to realize that the production and distribution of economic goods is only one part of the entrepreneurial

function. [The second part, as Dr. Robinson has said, is the production and distribution of social forms.]

Now it is perfectly evident that in the manufacture and distribution of social forms there is competition, the same as there is with an economic product. With the economic product, a manufacturer competes with other manufacturers and sometimes with co-ops and government plants. With social forms the primary surveyors today are industrial leaders, labor leaders, and politicians. Each of these surveyors is urging his particular brand of social philosophy and the goodness of his leadership on the public for their acceptance.

That the politician and the labor-union leader have been pretty good competitors for public favor in the market for social forms is eloquently illustrated by the fact that the power of decision over the past 10 years has steadily moved from the desk of the entrepreneur to that of the labor leader and to that of the man in government. Whether or not the public will accept the philosophy and follow the counsels of the politician, labor leader, or business executive in the future depends on how effective a competitor each of these three leaderships is in the market place for social forms.

Not only must manufacturers invent better social forms, but they must also sell them to the people. The chain store, for example, reduced America's grocery bill by some 10 per cent, but the chains were regarded by many citizens as outsiders, who took from the community and gave nothing in return. Many chains failed to bank locally. Some failed to buy locally and otherwise integrate their enterprise with community interests. The result was the rise of a school of thought that sought to penalize chain stores by special taxes. The chains were forced to realize that their problem was not only to distribute goods economically but also to justify their social forms in their communities.

Now in solving any market problem you always make two basic approaches: First, you try to make a product that is better than that of the competition. You build quality, long life, extra features into your product to appeal to the buyer. Also, you maintain research activity in great laboratories where pure and applied sciences are explored to discover new products and new ways of making old products. One way to beat the competition is to invent new products and make them better than those of your competitor.

The second basic approach to the solution of a market problem

is to tell people about your product. There is a lot of truth in the old adage about making a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door, but it is not the whole truth by any means. You must also tell people about it.

These two basic approaches are as applicable to the manufacture and distribution of social forms as they are to the manufacture and distribution of an economic product. We have institutionalized social invention the same as we have invention in physics, chemistry, and biology; yet the need is obviously as great.

With its technical apparatus, the Index can now gauge the division of opinion in the nation with an accuracy margin of from 2 to 4 per cent and do it within a period of 48 hours. It can find out why publics think as they do; it can find out the difference of attitudes by groups; it can determine the speed and direction of attitude change; it can define the areas of public ignorance, determine the extent of public awareness of a message or event, and gauge the acceptability of a theme, a slogan, or an argument.

Increasingly, opinion research is becoming an indispensable tool of public relations. Every public-relations problem breaks down into two departments—the "What is it?" department and the "What to do about it?" department.

Research photographs public opinion on the "What is it?" side, shows how people stand, what the public knows and doesn't know about a company or a principle, what they approve and disapprove. Normally out of research comes a conception of public-relations strategy: "These people are with you and these are against you, and here is the line of attack that will do the most to bring the dissenters back on the reservation."

As the plan of campaign matures, research can do more. It can pretest public-relations releases and indicate in advance where a message will go across and where it will fail to make an impression.

Research can appraise the effectiveness of campaigns, indicating where they are succeeding and failing, and why.

I emphatically do not wish to leave the impression that public relations will be mechanized through research. It won't. The human soul will forever remain an ultimate mystery, and public re-

lations will always remain the creative art that it is. Research will judge the box office, but the playwrights will create the show.

After an exhaustive and reliable survey of the situation is made, the public-relations executive formulates his policies and charts his course. Thus the public-opinion specialist is to the public-relations man what the meteorologist is to the transcontinental pilot. The pilot reaches his destination, depending upon how accurately he calculates his course after getting his weather information, such as wind velocity, direction, storms, and visibility, from the meteorologist. The public-relations man succeeds according to how accurately he charts his course in the light of data supplied by his research specialist. He must know how to interpret the information and then how to reset his public-relations course in line with public thought.

If the results of a survey are 100 per cent favorable, which is not likely, the public-relations man's job then will be to continue his program along the same line, but always on guard and alert. He must make further periodic surveys to test and measure opinion, so that if there is a falling off in interest or animosity appears to be growing up he will be warned at the outset and shift his program to combat the unfavorable opinion.

If the results of the preliminary survey show a preponderance of animosity, it is his job to suggest the necessary changes in policies. The essence of the practitioner's job is speed. He must be ready, at the whisper of hostility, to recommend changes in policy that will improve the attitude of the public toward the sponsor. If a misunderstanding exists, he must act quickly to clear it up.

If he discovers that the company's policies are such that they violate the public's sense of fair play, he should urge an immediate *change in policy* rather than attempt to whitewash the situation. There are many instances of public-relations men having resigned from their positions rather

than try to justify to the public a policy or action they felt was not just.

Should a firm of public-relations counselors be retained to prepare and direct a public-relations program for a state administration, its first step would be to investigate the administration's present standing, from the public viewpoint. This, of course, would be done by having a survey made among taxpayers, housewives, doctors, lawyers, and every portion of the populace. The research firm employed to test public opinion would send out experienced investigators to interview a certain number of citizens in each category listed on the left. A number of carefully worded questions would be prepared, and the same questions would be asked in each interview. The interviewers would question

Businessmen	To find what they think about	State executives
Professional men and women		Department chiefs
Farmers		Tax and revenue men
Radiomen		Employment officers
Employees		License-department cashiers
Newspapermen		Law-enforcement officers
Clergymen		Secretaries
Politicians		Truck drivers
Clerks		Maintenance men
Salesmen		Field representatives
Taxi drivers		State educational heads
Laborers		Welfare workers
Waiters		State hospital staffs
Parents of school children		Taxation
Club officials		Labor policies
Teachers		Budgetary policies
Job hunters		Other issues
Former employees		
Property owners		

This information obtained by the interviewers from a cross section of the populace would be correlated and coordinated so that the research firm would be able to show the counselors immediately where the points of strain were so that they could detect dangerous land mines. Then from each branch of the administration the counselors would gather facts pertaining to its methods and personnel. Members of the research firm would also question state employees in the same way in which the public were questioned. Finally, after the information had been analyzed by the research firm, the counselors would have at their command a mass of digested information, an accurate picture of the administration at work. Very probably they would know more about the state and the administration than many of those who had spent years in the service of the state.

This material would be of tremendous value to the executive department. Moreover, it would provide this impartial and intelligent outsider, the public-relations firm, with a picture of the organization at work such as could be afforded by no ordinary chart.

With the picture of the state administration well in mind, the counselors could then make their suggestions for the improvement of public relations. Experts are not soothsayers but work according to tried and true plans. Without factual information obtained by reliable surveys, they would lack data by which to chart their course.

Facts can be distorted by misuse in public relations and other lines of endeavors by those who would misrepresent conditions and circumstances. The more attractive tools of the profession appeal to those who are afraid to face the actual facts or who have a wrong conception about public relations and the importance of research. Richard A. Trenkmann, president of Standard Rate & Data Service, Inc., very aptly sums up his views on the importance of facts:

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Factual information is the order of the day, not only because it is more dignified and businesslike, but also because it is far more resultful. Many a good tool can be misused. You can bash a man over the head with a shovel and the Devil can quote scripture for his own ends. But a sound program, whether it be of statesmanship, or finance, or merchandising, must have its solid foundation on facts, or it will be like the Biblical gentleman who built his house upon the sand instead of a rock; it will be futile.

Just because a program is carefully constructed on a factual basis does not deny the sponsor the use of all the tools of attractive presentation which invite favorable response from the public. However, these things are secondary to sound framework but are recognized as needed for effectiveness, just as personality contributes to the effectiveness of real character.

The objective of our attack is to eliminate careless, ill-considered, "curbstone" opinion, hasty, unprofessional public relations—the kind that has no factual foundation, that gives it a bad name, and that sooner or later proves too costly and wasteful.

Trenkmann points out that some things that are not factual must be recognized as of factual significance. A widely held opinion or prejudice must be recognized and dealt with, in public relations at least, as an existing fact.

Facts must be evaluated in the light of time, place, and condition. Facts vary in relative importance, and they also have relative accuracy. They may be qualitatively but not minutely quantitatively true. They may be accurate today but inaccurate tomorrow. Most of the so-called facts of science, economics, and other fields that were generally accepted 150 years ago now seem pretty ridiculous.

The organization or enterprise that employs or retains a professional public-relations counsel must be prepared for a thorough and objective study of policies, operations, and products. The advice of a public-relations counselor with broad business experience, a faculty for seeing both sides of a question, and a highly developed aptitude for getting to the root of the matter is important in many pro-

duction and management problems and in respect to many operating policies.

Psychology.—One function of psychology in public relations is to attune the program to the current favorable public trends.

The practitioner must make allowances for exceptions when he undertakes to build his appeal upon the principles of psychology, for there are exceptions to all rules. It must be borne in mind that the public-relations man and the executives of the sponsoring group cannot arbitrarily be the judge of what is good or bad for the public. The judge is the public—the decision of the judge is reflected in the ultimate response.

We must recognize the truth that facts appeal to the intellect. Action is likely to be the result rather of feeling than of thinking. We rationalize our actions, after the deed, with such facts as we can muster, but we often act counter to the facts because of emotional stimuli.

No policy or campaign can be built merely upon psychological principles, nor can the practitioner rely entirely upon psychology to indicate the pitch. However, after the program has been carefully planned and outlined, psychology should be applied. It is employed as an oil to lubricate the machinery before it is set into motion so that it will operate smoothly and effectively. Even the publicity-wise practitioner must bear in mind that after he has used some attention-getting device successfully he faces his biggest problem —that of holding attention. He must attract not only the eyes but the brains governing the ever-searching, quickly evaluating eyes. It is the eye that must rapidly select from the mass of material pleading for attention that which is to be given preference, that which is to be given casual consideration, and that which will be seen but not registered.

In an effort to influence internal and external public opinion, the publicist or public-relations man, by tests, prac-

tice, and experience, has found the most reliable approaches to be

Affirmation (and frankness)
Agreeableness
Altruism
Association
Authority
Conformity
Familiarity (and proximity)
Practicality

1. Affirmation. We are more likely to accept a frank, positive statement than a timid, halfhearted one. The public-relations man puts the core of his program into an honest, hard-hitting, factual statement. He first gets the public into the habit of agreeing with him by putting to it questions (or statements) for which the answer is yes or by stating facts to which the public agrees. It is only human to accept that which is put forth sincerely and confidently rather than that which is put forth halfheartedly. He avoids hesitant, uncertain suppositions. And he always uses the positive approach, not the negative. For instance, instead of saying production will be reduced 25 per cent, he will say that production will be rescheduled to 75 per cent. If the statement covers the reduction of personnel, the director will not announce that 5,000 employed will be laid off; he will say that effective on such a date total personnel will level off to 12,000, owing to the current steel shortage. This also avoids the shock of an unpleasant surprise to employees. Sudden, unpleasant announcements are always bad public relations.

2. Agreeableness. A pleasant expression of opinion or fact will be well received where a brusque or aggressive statement of the same opinion or fact will not. The public-relations man should avoid the disagreeable, concentrating rather on the more pleasant aspects. He should remember

that a warm smile is a more effective instrument than a frown, nor does it lessen dignity.

3. Altruism. If a person can be made to feel that he is generous, the response will be far more favorable than if the message fails to flatter him for being unselfish, charitable, and public-spirited. If the message encourages a person to feel that he is noble and generous, it produces a friend. When possible, the public-relations man conveys in his message the implication that the reader or listener is a good neighbor and a generous person.

4. Association. The expert may find that it is better to explain the new or the unusual in terms of the old or the ordinary. By using analogy the message can be so pictured to the public that the unknown will be explained by comparison to the known.

5. Authority. We all respect the opinion of the well informed. The approval of an authority has more weight than the condemnations of the unknown man or woman. We are all interested in important people and like to feel that their views are in accord with ours. Therefore, an endorsement of a campaign by a celebrity has tremendous weight. To get such endorsements, the public-relations man prepares a personal letter to be sent to a selected list of important personages, tactfully asking for their endorsement and a few words of judicious comment. The endorsements, however, should be used only during the last stage of the campaign, after the public is well aware of what the purpose of the campaign is. By no means should they be used during the initial stage, when it cannot yet be assumed that the man on the street is familiar with that which the celebrities endorse.

6. Conformity. Human beings naturally like to be with the winner—with the majority. They prefer to help express the opinion of the community as a whole. Therefore, they are likely to accept that which they understand to be

the consensus. An appeal to this tendency is effective. It is universally employed by the great advertising agencies and can be used to good advantage in public-relations activities.

7. Familiarity. Psychologists have proved that interest is accumulative. We are likely to be interested in and form opinions about things that are reasonably familiar and near to us. Therefore, the public-relations executive can get his ideas across effectively by analogy, which explains the plan or product by comparing it with some other plan or product familiar to all. Too great an amount of technical detail, which would not be understood by the general public, should be avoided.

8. Practicality. For general acceptance, all policies and ideas must sound practical. The workability of a plan is one of its final tests. This postwar era of stepped-up tempo demands more than ever before a constant awareness of facts and processes. Therefore, the public-relations program must be essentially practical and have a logical purpose, or its weakness will be immediately discovered.

Men individually differ, of course; but, in general, certain broad and obvious trends may be discerned in their habits of thinking. For this reason, the science of measuring public opinion has been developed.

The basis for opinion and decision is known to every psychologist and any other person who has studied human nature, including the advertising man. The solid basis of opinion, nine times out of ten, is *self-interest.* The average person ordinarily favors that which is pleasant or beneficial to himself.

The first law of nature is self-preservation. Still, few normal adults have not learned that their personal desires may be detrimental to the group or community as a whole. Most of us have learned in many instances to put group

or community interests ahead of or on an equal footing with personal interests. We may be prompted to do this since it is evident that when our community is benefited we are most likely to be benefited. This desire for the *advancement of the community,* an acknowledged human trait, is the second important factor in understanding public opinion.

If opinion is to be expressed and have an active value, freedom is essential. Public opinion, like speech and individual expression, is worthless unless it is free and active. In fact, it cannot exist without freedom. Free public opinion is the essential of the democratic process. A muzzled press, harsh checks on private expression of emotion or logic spell death to public opinion and to the democratic way of life.

Realizing that public relations is destined to play an ever-growing part in shaping public and industrial affairs, *Tide* has conducted a mail survey to determine: (1) what public-relations practitioners themselves feel could and should be done to improve their standing and their service and (2) what the employers or prospective employers of public-relations men feel could and should be done to improve public-relations activities generally.

The questionnaire prepared by *Tide* was mailed to a sample of 1,000, divided equally among public-relations practitioners and business executives. The returns from both groups followed the same general pattern. In the analysis, however, *Tide* placed emphasis on the public-relations group because its replies, quite naturally, were found to be more detailed and, as a result, more informative.

The questions follow:

1. In what phase of client's business do you think a public-relations firm should properly participate in a policy-making capacity? [Eight phases were listed: press relations, customer relations, dealer relations, labor relations, government relations, community relations, financial affairs, advertising operations.]

2. What five organizations (companies, trade or business associations, labor, charitable, or other groups) do you think had the best public-relations program during the past year?

3. What five organizations (among similar groups) do you think are most in need of better public relations?

4. What five persons who practice public relations do you think generally do the best job?

5. When you hire a public-relations man, what characteristics, experience, and talents are most likely to influence you favorably?

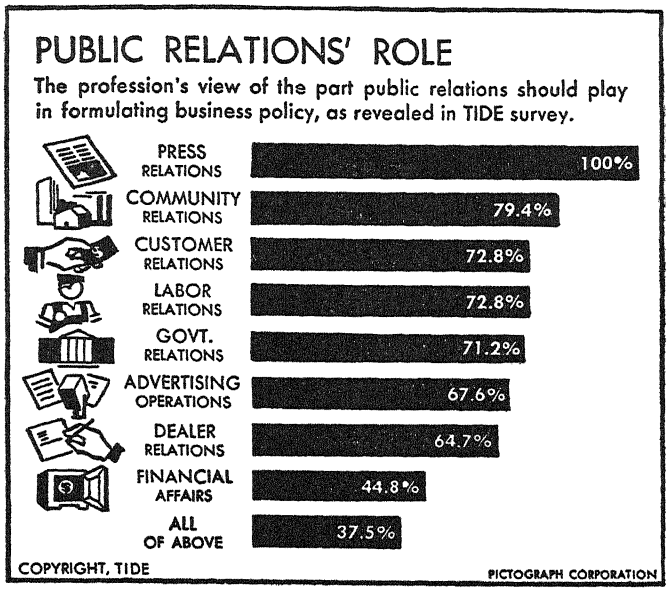
6. What steps, if any, do you think the public-relations profession might take to raise its standards?

In answer to the questions posed by *Tide,* respondents agreed 100 per cent that a company's public-relations executive or counselor should direct its press relations, affirmed, in other words, that publicity is one very important function of public relations. The heavy consensus on six other functions, including advertising and relations with government, labor, and the community, all vital to the conduct of a business, indicated that the profession considers itself qualified to share in leadership. Definitely, public-relations men aspire to a weightier role than that of mere publicists for their clients, according to the *Tide* survey. Over 37 per cent thought that public relations should be concerned with all the listed phases of a client's business in policy-making capacities.

As indicated in the *Tide* chart, of the eight phases mentioned, "financial affairs" seemed to the respondents least likely to belong in the public-relations realm, although 45 per cent felt that public-relations men should deal with them. The *Tide* editors reasoned that the percentage would have been somewhat higher had the questionnaire used the more narrow but perhaps more plausible term "stockholder relations."

To *Tide's* query on which organizations have the best public-relations programs, over 150 separate names were

submitted. In many cases, naturally, respondents headed the list with their own clients. Such partisan preference, *Tide* pointed out, could be ignored in evaluating results because, of the total, only 11 nominees received more than 5 votes and no more than 6 got over 12. The 6 leaders,



listed in order of votes, were as follows: General Motors Corporation, American Telephone and Telegraph Company, American Red Cross, Association of American Railroads, C.I.O.'s Political Action Committee, and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States.

In answer to the third question, respondents listed more than 150 names of organizations most in need of better public relations. The five receiving the highest number of votes were: the National Association of Manufacturers (this was prior to Holcombe Parkes being named vice-president in charge of public relations), the Republican

Party, Montgomery Ward & Company, the C.I.O., and the A. F. of L. *Tide* reported that other fingers pointed at everything from the United States Congress to horse racing.

Respondents nominated 115 candidates as men who, they believed, did the best public-relations job. Heading the list was Paul Garrett, General Motors vice-president and director of public relations. T. J. Ross, head of Ivy Lee & T. J. Ross Associates, counselor for such firms as the Chrysler Corporation, Standard Oil of New York, Western Union, Curtiss-Wright, and the Pennsylvania Railroad, placed second in the poll. Eric Johnston, then president of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, ranked third. Other leaders were Carl Byoir, head of Carl Byoir Associates, which represents Bendix Aviation, Pullman, American Can Company, A & P, Schenley Distillers Corporation, and several others; and Verne Burnett, head of his own firm, with such clients as General Foods, the Grocery Manufacturers Association, and others. Arthur W. Page, vice-president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and a pioneer in public relations, ranked high in the poll.

Tide reported that the various traits suggested as good equipment for a public-relations man were mainly the following: the knack of getting along with people; newspaper experience; ability to write, speak, and think clearly; genuine interest in doing a good job.

On the last question, respondents favored a strong nation-wide association, strict ethical codes, the licensing of practitioners, and establishment of an educational program and recommended that the profession differentiate clearly between public relations and publicity.

Highly significant was the recent "forum" type of poll conducted by *Editor & Publisher*. Listing eight objectives in "A Charter for a Sound Public Relations Program . . ."

by F. B. Speed, Jr., of Speed & Company, *Editor & Publisher* presented these objectives to nationally recognized executives for their comments. With permission from *Editor & Publisher,* we list these objectives and quote, under each, one or more outstanding comments, which should be of interest to every public-relations man and business executive.

1. Promote within the company and in the company's external relations sound operating policies and practices that are in the public interest.

"We must be certain that our business in all its aspects is so conducted as to be worthy of public confidence and good will." [Ralph Starr Butler, General Foods.]

2. Help your employees to an understanding of the problems of management. Enlist their cooperation as a part of the enterprise; make them want to assist it.

"An intensive internal campaign of employee relations, to my mind, is the best place to start with public relations." [David S. Cook, Stromberg-Carlson Company.]

"The development and maintenance of good public relations is a major function of management. Not all members of an organization have a clear idea of the purpose and scope of public relations, or of the way in which they, as individuals, can help in its operation." [Ralph Starr Butler, General Foods.]

"Certainly it seems to me that such a campaign must start at home and I think many such campaigns fail because there is not good feeling inside the company so that a campaign is internally discounted right off the bat." [Keith Henney, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.]

"Good public relations starts with good private relations—and it must start with the head of the business." [Edgar W. Kobak, Mutual Broadcasting System.]

"A most desirable objective with the chances of attainment with shop employees and organized labor decidedly remote, but exceedingly good with field representatives contacting markets and customers." [Anonymous.]

3. Try to inspire a community feeling of pride and ownership.

"The first goal in our factory towns is to deserve and obtain the good will of the citizens for the local plants—for their management, their policies, their treatment of employees, and all the many other things that go to make up good neighborliness." [Ralph Starr Butler, General Foods.]

"We have noticed that advertising directed to the community immediately surrounding our plant does a double-barreled job. It not only interests and stimulates our own employees but helps to clarify in our neighbors' minds the role of our company in the community." [Colin C. Campbell, Rohm & Hass Company.]

4. Improve your relations with all with whom you do business (including stockholders). [No comments were given on this point; however, the subject is mentioned elsewhere in this volume.]

5. Win the understanding, confidence, and support of the general public. Predispose consumers toward the purchase of the company's products.

"One might make the public eager to buy his products. If he couldn't supply those products, however, bad public relations could follow . . . unless reasons for the inability to supply the products were clearly understood. The support of the general public is equally desirable. Some of America's big industries or utilities, for example, threatened by legislative action that could be harmful to them, have, because of the support of the public, been able to stifle such action." [Jerome B. Gray, Gray & Rodgers.]

6. Convince men in public office of your contributions to our everyday economic and social welfare.

"It is a noble objective but contains the same element of futility as the labor objective above." [Anonymous.]

"If I would make a suggestion I would omit the sixth paragraph. I believe if the other three elements—employees, ownership and management, and public—are properly informed that there is no need for special pleading to government.

"Including this brings in a political element and accents what I believe is incorrect thinking that government and business interests need conciliation." [James J. D. Spillan, Benjamin Eshleman Company.]

7. Supply those who mold public opinion with a sound interpretation of your "corporate character"; with the facts without which they can but underestimate your public service. Make it impossible for them to question your integrity.

"Every public-relations worker should endeavor to convince the press itself that a sound public-relations campaign always will be grounded in sincerity and truth. Upon such a grounding the newspaper publishers of the country can be approached for participation on a wholly substantial basis for they will be dealing with *news.*" [Maurice F. Duhamel, Federal Telephone and Radio Corporation.]

"*Editor & Publisher's* outline of some of the objectives of a public-relations campaign is excellent. It brings to the fore with the stamp of approval of a highly respectable and opinion-forming publication, the fact that public relations is not publicity or press agentry, and that public relations must rest on a foundation of a great many things other than the obtaining of lineage." [James W. Irwin, industrial public-relations counselor.]

8. Sell the soundness of free enterprise.

"Business in a very real sense is on trial in this country. Individual business, and business in general, do not always or entirely enjoy the confidence of public. There is too frequent suspicion of the essential contribution of private industry to the general welfare. It is definitely our job, and the job of all business, to recognize that there is dissatisfaction and unrest and suspicion and ignorance with and about business, and to do everything possible to remove the causes and to substitute confidence in the business structure that has built America. Here lies the basic job of public relations; and the need for doing something about it is the most important answer to the question, 'Why are we concerned about public relations?'" [Ralph Starr Butler, General Foods.]

"A strong, prosperous, and, above all, truly free United States can be built only on the 'free enterprise' economy, the superior levels of existence, and the unsullied democratic institutions that have given us world leadership.

"If a 'superstatism' stifles our competitive economic society and the initiative of 'private enterprise,' the specific character which has made America great and influential will then be lost." [Eric A. Johnston, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States.]

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"It is our objective to acquaint the public—or particular segments of the public—with the facts such as:

"(1) That, to the best of our ability, we discharge our responsibility to our stockholders and employees by conducting our business profitably.

"(2) That we try to provide for the welfare of our employees by following progressive policies which supply good working conditions and economic security to a degree which is at once farsighted and practical.

"(3) That we endeavor to serve our consumers by providing honest, serviceable products at a fair price, and that these products represent the best in modern technical research, manufacturing skill, and study of the consumers' product needs.

"(4) That we are a forward-looking, public-spirited company contributing our full share to the social and economic welfare of our country.

"In addition to spreading the knowledge of these facts, we also cooperate with all channels of public information by supplying them with all of the basic material they need to interpret and to report on our company to their readers and listeners.

"Finally, we try to keep before us constantly the correlative obligation of a public-relations staff to adequately and completely reflect to the company those facts, trends, and conditions in the world about us which should have a bearing on the organization's public-relations policies." [William G. Werner, Procter & Gamble Company.]

In answer to the question: Do you agree that advertising appropriations of the future should include funds to advertise public service? *Editor & Publisher* received the following comments:

"I agree wholeheartedly that advertising appropriations should include funds to advertise public service. Otherwise we should not be doing it." [Charles P. Hammond, National Broadcasting Company.]

"It is bad to talk about a 'public-relations campaign.' You never win lasting good public relations by a campaign. Good public relations are the result of right living over a long period. To put the effort on a 'campaign' basis is to indicate that you get out some publicity and do some advertising and all is well. As a matter of fact, the advertising and publicity effort is the easiest, simplest end of the job. I regard each as an 'accessory after the fact.'

"Boiled way down it seems to me that good or bad public relations stem from the policies and acts of management. If these are good, then the use of various mediums for spreading information about them to the public quickens public concept of the institution as being good. The public's memory being distressingly short, it will not do to state the case once on a 'campaign' basis and go fishing." [Volney B. Fowler, Electromotive Division, General Motors.]

Summing up the "charter," the following remarks were received:

"The objectives you list are the major common denominators of all successful public relations programs." [Holcombe Parkes, vice-president of the National Association of Manufacturers.]

"The objective of public relations is simply to win friends for your company or your cause, or whatever institution you represent.

"I consider it equally an obligation to see that management is given an understanding, at all times, of the problems and viewpoints of the employees as well as the public. In fact, I believe any public-relations campaign is one-sided which seeks only to acquaint the public with the company. It is the duty and obligation of a public-relations director to keep his company from deliberately taking any steps which violate public opinion or good taste." [J. Handly Wright, Monsanto Chemical Company.]

Here, in these thoughts, is a definite pattern.

The public-relations man will find that the above comments represent the thinking of the majority of business leaders throughout the country. They should be helpful to him as he develops his own thinking on the subject.