

# Tactics Vs. Endgame? Endgame Wins!

By Robert A. Kelly

Tactics Vs. Endgame? Endgame Wins!

Robert A. Kelly  
bobbkelly@TNI.net

PRCommentary.com LLC <http://www.prcommentary.com>

It took me a while to see just HOW crucial the behaviors of an organization's key audiences really are to its success, be it big or small, non-profit, business, association or even a public sector enterprise.

Sounds elemental, doesn't it? But the truth is, few organizations can succeed today if those target audience behaviors don't fit the organization's objectives.

Fortunately for those working in public relations, most people act on their own perception of the facts which leads to behaviors about which we can do something. And that means that when we create, change or reinforce that opinion by reaching, persuading and moving-to-desired-action those people whose behaviors affect the organization, the public relations mission is accomplished.

So, while applying that reality to your business helps you achieve your objectives AND business success, the public relations people still must modify somebody's behavior if they are to help you hit those objectives. Happily, it can be done and done well, as long as you keep your eye on that behavioral endgame.

For example, you may wish to influence people to begin thinking more positively about your organization, thus strengthening its reputation and business potential. It could be as simple as communicating your organization's strengths to a target audience leading them to want to work more closely with you. Or even providing environmental activists with the facts about the company's full compliance with Federal regulations, in the hope they will bring their plant-site demonstrations to an end.

But remember, until you have a solid indication that target

behaviors have, in fact, changed in ways that meet your primary behavior modification goal, you DON'T know if your investment has paid off.

So, let's look at ways to increase one's comfort level about that public relations investment. Here are five steps, that can help you hit the public relations goal – desired behavior modification -- on your next public relations venture.

Above all, in my opinion, you must keep your eye on the end-game, and not merely the communications tactics, because the reason we do public relations in the first place is to change the behaviors of certain groups of people important to the success of our organization.

### Step 1 Accept the Fact That People Act on their Perception of the Facts

Most behavioral experts agree that people really do act on THEIR perception of the facts, and that how they react to those facts actually does affect their behaviors. It follows that individual understanding of those facts must be continually informed if those behaviors are to help achieve the organization's goal and objectives.

### Step 2 Create, Change or Reinforce Opinion

Here, after assessing opinion among your target audiences through media monitoring, opinion sampling and thought-leader contact, you must decide how you will approach each target audience. Choosing the correct mode – 1) reinforcing existing opinion, 2) creating new opinion from scratch or 3) changing current and possibly long-held views -- is obviously central to your message preparation strategy and its copy approach.

### Step 3 Reach, Persuade and Move-to-Action

Now, you must reach, persuade and move-to-action those people whose behaviors will affect your organization. That includes, among others, a variety of stakeholders including customers, employees, prospects, retirees, media, legislators and regulators, and both financial and plant communities.

Reaching these target groups means applying the most effective communications tools available to you. Again, among others, these will include such tactics as media relations and publicity-generating news conferences and press releases, newsletters and e-mails, high-profile speeches, charitable contributions, investor relations and informal opinion surveys.

Persuading these important groups of stakeholders to your

way of thinking depends heavily on the message you prepare for each target audience. You must understand and identify what is really at issue at the moment; impart a sense of credibility to your comments; perform regular assessments of how opinion is currently running among that group, constantly adjusting your message; as well as highlighting those key issue points most likely to engage their attention and involvement.

#### Step 4 Gain and Hold Understanding and Acceptance

By this time, your action program should begin to gain and hold the kind of public understanding and acceptance that leads to the desired shift in public behavior.

Signs that your messages are turning some opinion in your direction should appear. A chance comment in a business meeting, a popular columnist's observations, e-mails from interested parties or co-worker alerts that this political figure or that local celebrity made public references to your topic, should begin to build. Many of these indicators, each reflecting the state of individual perception, will gradually begin to reflect the modified behaviors you have in mind.

#### Step 5 Modify the Behavior, Achieve your Goal

When the changes in behaviors become truly apparent through media reports, thought-leader comment, employee and community chatter and other feedback, at the same time clearly meeting your original behavior modification goal, your public relations program is a success.

end

Bob Kelly counsels, writes and speaks about the fundamental premise of public relations. He has been DPR, Pepsi-Cola Co.; AGM-PR, Texaco Inc.; VP-PR, Olin Corp.; VP-PR, Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Co.; director of communications, U.S. Department of the Interior, and deputy assistant press secretary, The White House. <mailto:bobkelly@TNI.net>  
Visit: <http://www.prcommentary.com>

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)