

Thinking About A Public Relations Career?

By Robert A. Kelly

Thinking About A Public Relations Career?

Robert A. Kelly
bobbkelly@TNI.net

No Site Listed <http://www.marketing-seek.com>

Thinking About A Public Relations Career?

by Robert A. Kelly

Without a solid, well-designed foundation, few buildings successfully withstand the ravages of time and weather. And so it is with public relations, ever-dependent upon how well its practitioners understand the discipline.

Yet, some public relations people manage to go through their entire career without a firm grasp of what public relations is all about. Their response to crises, or to requests for well thought-out solutions to public relations problems, reveals a serious lack of understanding. They confuse the basic function of public relations with any number of tactical parts that make up the whole, such as publicity, crisis management or employee relations. Understandably, they feel unsure in approaching public relations problems, then uncertain about what counsel to give their clients. Many, relying on career-long misconceptions about public relations, forge ahead anyway advising the client ineffectively sometimes with damaging, if not dangerous counsel.

If you undertake a public relations career, you can take steps to avoid this sad waste of your talent by discussing public relations' strategic role in any organization with professionals whom you respect. But do it early, do it seriously, and do it now so that you create that solid foundation of understanding about this business that will help you make a meaningful contribution to the field of public relations for many years to come.

My core belief about the basic function of public relations has allowed me to feel right over the years about my assessment of public relations problems and opportunities and about the counsel I give the client. It also provides the tools I need to defend that advice if necessary.

In my experience, the key question about that central function was, and still is "What do both internal and external clients want from us?" I believe they want us to apply our special skills in a way that helps them achieve their business objectives. But no matter what strategic plan we create to solve a problem, no matter what tactical program we put in place, at the end of the day the public relations professional must modify somebody's behavior if we are to earn our money.

That's right, modify somebody's behavior. But, on the way we must do everything necessary to reach our target audiences, and to nurture the relationships between those audiences and the client's business by burnishing the reputation of the company, its products and services. We'll do our best to persuade those audiences to do what the client wishes them to do. And, while seeking public understanding and acceptance of our client, we'll insure that our joint activities not only comply with the law, but clearly serve the public interest. Then, we pull-out all tactical stops to actually move those individuals to action.

Our client will be pleased that we have brought matters to this point.

But, when that client measures our real effectiveness, I suggest that he or she will be fully satisfied with those public relations results only when our "reach, persuade and move-to-action" efforts produce a visible, and desired, modification in the behaviors of those people our client wishes to influence. In my view, here is the central, strategic function of public relations - the basic context in which we must operate - and one that is best learned at the beginning of your career.

end

Now a public relations consultant, Bob Kelly has been director of public relations for Pepsi-Cola Co.; assistant general manager, public relations, Texaco Inc.; vice president, public relations, Olin Corporation and vice president, public relations, Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Co. He also served as assistant to the secretary and director of communications, U.S. Department of the Interior, and later as deputy assistant press secretary, The White House. Parents of three married children, Bob and wife Patti reside in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)