

Public and Media Relations Strategies

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PR 101

- Public Relations: The discipline which looks to shape and build reputation with the aim of earning understanding and support, and influencing opinion and behavior.
 - Informing, educating and engaging with target audiences - **not just media** (school districts, community, policymakers, reporters, etc.)
- Proactive vs. Reactive
 - Proactive: *Planned, targeted* campaigns to advance your designated priorities
 - Reactive: Responses triggered by actions of *others*
 - Both can be positive!

PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE CONT'D...

- ◉ Good Proactive Public Relations
 - New research or published work
 - New, innovative program, products or tools (in development or ready to launch)
 - New partnerships
 - New legislation introduced or in-the-works
 - Hosting of events, large convening activities
 - Awards/recognition of state chapter leaders or members; deans, faculty and/or students
 - Participation in state or national conferences, meetings, webinars, Congressional hearings, etc.

PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE CONT'D...

◉ Good Reactive Public Relations

- Strong, coordinated and, when possible, collaborative responses to positive *or* negative third-party announcements
- Impressive, relevant research, statistics and specific examples to echo positive announcements, contest negative news (i.e. Documenting effectiveness)
- New perspectives or recommendations on:
 - A *timely, active* topic or event
 - A controversial topic
- Best to ensure:
 - Respected spokespeople with as relevant expertise as possible
 - Engagement of high-profile and/or third-party supporters

KNOW, BUILD AND PROTECT YOUR REPUTATION

- Who is your target audience and what matters to them most about you?
 - Awareness: Do they know about you?
 - Reputation Assessment: What are the current perceptions? Are they good, bad, right, wrong, skewed, etc.?
 - Questions ahead of any campaign:
 - What do they *already* know and what do we *want* them to know?
 - What new information do we have to share?
 - What is the most engaging way to package that? (i.e. UCF flyer)
 - What is the best way to reach these stakeholders?

ABP

A_{lways} B_e P_{repared}

- Keep communications contact(s) aware of announcements you want to make/information you want to share
- Continuously ask yourself if new developments would be *meaningful* to the public
- Be constant. Build a collection.
- Have multiple trained, respected spokespeople
- Designate a fast-response team for reactive PR
 - Have a plan in place of who will organize, write, contact, speak, etc.

REPORTERS: WHO NEEDS 'EM?

- Answer: Everyone.
- Reporters shape public opinion and set the stage for debates
- Current media landscape is very different
- National vs. regional/local reporters
 - National: *Widespread*, national-scale impact
 - Regional/local: State and/or *community* impact (Personalize)
- Tips: Get on the radar. Be a source and a resource. Have chapter or program reps, as well as those whom work directly impacts.

AACTE'S WORK WITH MEMBERS

- ◉ NCTQ Report on Illinois Educator Preparation Programs
 - Coordinated state chapter and IL members, formed core committee
 - Conference calls to plan, get on same page
 - Combined response signed by various IL educator preparation groups (each committee member responsible for IHE's approval)
 - Designated spokespeople, divided media contacts
 - Drafted opinion pieces, sought third-party supporters
 - Results: *Chicago Tribune*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, multiple local papers
 - Lessons learned: Response system in place; third-party supporters in the queue; work of institutions

AACTE'S WORK WITH MEMBERS

- Encouraging planning, outreach and/or participation around:
 - Education Nation
 - TEACH Campaign
 - NCTQ National Report
- Showcasing chapters' and members' accomplishments
 - New Member News section of NewsStream
 - Media outreach around participation in Annual Meeting, briefings; Award winners

WHY ALL OF THIS MATTERS

- ◉ Good, effective public relations can:
 - Create and enhance awareness of your programs, chapters, work and issues
 - Build a case
 - Generate support
 - Help develop new relationships and/or partnerships
- ◉ Without good public relations, there can be:
 - Misrepresentations and thus, misunderstanding of your programs, chapters, work and issues
 - Damage to your image
 - No voice when it matters most

CHECKLIST

- ◉ Know target audiences and their current perceptions
- ◉ Identify opportunities to showcase work, program effectiveness - ensure that is communicated with PR staff
- ◉ Have a fast-response plan and team in-place and keep the lines of communication open with them
- ◉ Outline PR objectives with communications staff, relevant program and state chapter reps
- ◉ Set key messages: Identify what you want audiences to know

CHECKLIST CONT'D...

- ◉ Get in touch with the right spokespeople
 - Ensure program or chapter spokespeople are comfortable, articulate and *accessible* public speakers
 - Identify third-party supporters and begin outreach to build relationships with them as potential spokespeople (Current star students or graduates; Teachers of the Year; principals, superintendents, etc.)
- ◉ Know the best ways to reach those audiences (media - press releases, e-mails, calls; other - listservs, print flyers, e-mails, website, etc.)
- ◉ Start building a collection of your program's and chapter's positive, impactful work
- ◉ Evaluate successes and lessons learned - make plans to improve

AACTE IS HERE TO SERVE YOU.

- Keep AACTE in mind for questions, guidance or other assistance before, during or after various PR efforts and campaigns
- Recommend your communications staff get in touch with AACTE to be placed on Communications Listserv
 - Serve as sources for national and regional media opportunities secured by AACTE
 - Stay updated on AACTE's national stances, talking points, opportunities for local PR campaigns, etc.
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