

KALEIDOSCOPE

EXPLORING THE MANY FACETS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Summer 2000



What Do We Do?

by Anne Sceia Klein, Fellow PRSA

Over the past six months, we have asked a number of people for their perception of what our firm does. In response, people said we do:

- media relations and publicity
- hospital public relations
- special events
- crisis communications
- environmental communications

Interestingly, each of those comments came from different persons, and each was their perception of the main focus of our work.

In actuality, we do ALL of those things, and much more.

Anne Klein & Associates is a full-service public relations firm specializing in "reputation management." Most of our work is in three main areas:

- positioning organizations, their products and services in the marketplace;
- communicating with communities so organizations maintain their franchise to operate; and

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Crisis Communications

CRISIS PLANS NEED UPDATING

The recent crash of the Air France Concorde demonstrates that a crisis can happen to any organization, even one whose supersonic planes had an unblemished safety record for over 30 years.

Have you reviewed your organization's crisis communications plan lately? Is your plan in sync with 24-hour news coverage and the Internet? Is it in sync with the needs of families and the public at large? If not, it's time to get the plan updated. The rules of crisis communications have changed dramatically since we first started thinking about it as a specialized discipline over two decades ago.

We didn't realize it then, but a new era of communications dawned in 1979. It started with the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant near Harrisburg, Pa. General Public Utilities, owner of the plant, was unprepared to communicate in the early hours of what was thought to be a near melt-down (shortly after the release of an eerily predictive movie, "The China Syndrome"). GPU's communications staff was unable to gather information quickly for an onslaught of information-starved news reporters, and corporate officials were severely criticized for their lack of candor.

The Tylenol product-tampering crisis in 1982 reinforced the need for good planning. Although Johnson & Johnson had no formal communications plan of its own, its corporate culture of "doing the right thing" allowed it to emerge virtually unscathed. But insightful executives realized that more was needed.

After Three Mile Island and Tylenol, smart companies began to prepare communications plans for various types

of disasters that could befall their organizations. The trend started in the nuclear, oil and chemical industries, and gradually spread to consumer product manufacturers, banks, insurance companies, hospitals and others. Smart CEOs were taking no chances that they could be unprepared for disasters that could include deaths of employees, customers or innocent bystanders.

After Exxon's much criticized response (or lack thereof) to the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, organizations realized that their crisis plans needed to address more than just the factual elements of a crisis. The public had come to expect that compassionate statements of caring and concern would be delivered immediately by the CEO, on the scene.

In 1996, we had TWA Flight 800. And the crisis communications rules evolved again. The crisis dragged on as speculation grew about the cause of the disaster. TWA was criticized because it did not respond quickly enough to the concerns of families, who complained bitterly about hearing news through leaks before TWA officials talked to them.

That crash was followed three years later by a rapid succession of air tragedies – Swiss Air, Egypt Air, Alaska Air and most recently the Concorde. We also experienced the Oklahoma City and World Trade Center bombings, then the Columbine massacre. In the corporate arena, companies like Intel, Perrier and Coca-Cola suffered through crises that threatened both their corporate reputations and their bottom lines.

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WE'LL MISS YOU, FRANK..

With great sadness we announce the passing of Frank X. Long, senior counselor, on July 30. Anne had known Frank since 1967 when she joined PRSA. With Frank's mentoring and assistance, Anne landed her position at Girard Bank.



Frank Long, APR, Fellow PRSA

Frank worked at the public relations firm serving Girard and with his help, Anne won her first professional awards. When Anne started AKA in 1982, she sought Frank's help with new business pitches and client service. With a solid foundation, the firm grew to where it is today. Frank was always there for Anne and for AKA. He helped us on assignments, brainstormed with us for creative ideas, provided extra staff power in times of overload, and offered valuable marketing advice (Frank provided the name and slogan for this newsletter). There is a big corner in our hearts that will always be reserved for Frank. All of us who knew Frank mourn his passing. And we celebrate the years of friendship we all treasured.

PRSA AWARDS ACTIVITIES

Account executive Marisa Avallone Sharkey is on the planning committee for the annual "Pepperpot Awards" dinner and ceremony to be held in December. The awards, presented by the Philadelphia chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), honor excellence in public relations programs.

In June, senior counselor Fred McCaffrey led an AKA team that judged entries in the category of Annual Reports for the annual awards competition of the Maryland chapter of PRSA. Various other members of the Philadelphia chapter judged entries in other categories, and AKA hosted a meeting to select Maryland's "Best of Show" winner.

ANNE IN PRINT AND IN PERSON

Anne wrote the foreward of a new book, "Successful Spokespersons Are Made, Not Born." The book, by long-time colleague Hal Hart, collects his accumulated wisdom in teaching media interview techniques and presentation skills over the past 20 years. Reviewing the book, Hal Warner, APR, a Fellow and past president of PRSA, said that Hal's is one of the most useful books written on the subject of speaker training. It is available in both downloadable and printed versions at www.1stbooks.com. Both Anne and Jerry are prominently mentioned in the book's acknowledgments.

Anne participated in a workshop for grade school girls entitled, "Leadership 2004: Share Your Voice," sponsored by the Alice Paul Foundation. Discussing "Women in Untraditional Careers," Anne talked about a typical workday, her education and training, what she likes about her career, balancing work and personal life, and her definition of success. She also passed on some "I wish someone had told me" tips. About 300 girls from grade schools throughout southern New Jersey attended.



Executive assistant Joanne Grimes and her husband, Bob, served as volunteers for the Republican National Convention held in Philadelphia July 31st through August 4th. Joanne and Bob were among the hosts of "PoliticalFest," a non-partisan expo showcasing political campaigns throughout U.S. history and highlighting the office of the President of the United States. The expo, held at the Philadelphia Convention Center, was open to the public. Among the featured exhibits were the Presidential cabin on Air Force One, a replica of the White House Oval Office and inaugural gowns of former First Ladies.

PR BY DEGREES

Account executives Wendy Lathrope and Marisa Avallone Sharkey completed their academic studies at Rowan University and received their master's degrees in public relations.



Jerry Klein continued his busy travel schedule as president of Pinnacle Worldwide. Left photo: Jerry (front row, far left) and Anne (center) pose with other Pinnacle members at the North American Spring Meeting in Tucson, Arizona. Right photo: With Mount Etna steaming in the background, Anne and Jerry prepare to dine at Pinnacle's 2000 International Summer Meeting in Sicily with Andrew Littauer (left), president of Pinnacle's office in Bucharest, Romania, counselor Mike Morris (right) and Morris's wife and niece. Jerry, who also led a strategic planning meeting in Denver in July, will "graduate" to chairman of Pinnacle at its September meeting in Toronto. Pinnacle consists of more than 60 leading independent public relations firms around the world.

AKA ASSISTS RARITAN ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND MARKETING FRONTS

Nestled in a remote part of southern New Jersey is a company that has quietly been making high quality marine equipment including toilets and waste treatment systems for pleasure boats throughout the world for over 40 years. A family-owned business, **Raritan Engineering Co., Inc.** (www.raritaneng.com) has grown into a multi-million dollar company with innovative products (three new ones in one year) and a stellar reputation. Employees take great pride in their work, hand-assembling each product using only the finest materials. The company is also a committed advocate for clean waters and specifically designs its products to be environmentally superior.

In the early years, Raritan had no need for a marketing agenda; it relied solely on reputation, trade shows and occasional ads. And sales grew. But recently, when a surge of competition using sophisticated modern marketing techniques threatened to lure away Raritan's customer base, the company knew it had to undertake a more aggressive marketing program. Raritan called on Anne Klein & Associates to assist.

Initially, Raritan asked AKA to help with its effort to impact environmental legislation for clean marine waters. Very soon after the two firms began working together, Raritan added the marketing assignment – a move that was timed perfectly.



Raritan manufactures environmentally friendly marine equipment such as the Lectra-San™ waste treatment system.

Raritan was just about to launch its Sea Fresh™ System, a revolutionary product that for the first time ever allows boaters to easily switch between using raw water and onboard freshwater for their waste disposal systems.

Even though Raritan was already known to the boating press, a full media relations campaign was needed for Sea Fresh. AKA began with a news release and follow-up phone calls to a targeted list of editors. This resulted in mentions in the “new product” sections of significant boating publications, and also helped set the stage for Raritan products to be discussed in larger feature stories on marine toilets and marine sanitation and environmental issues.

AKA is working to help Raritan retain its position as the leader in a rapidly changing market. Raritan's product sheets have been revamped. New marketing techniques have been put in place for the many trade shows Raritan attends each year. AKA also worked with management on new ways to help keep its sales reps ahead of the competition.

Currently, as AKA continues to help Raritan with legislative initiatives, the agency has also been busy blitzing the press with news about Raritan's new Tank Monitor™. In early fall, AKA will help Raritan launch a new, modestly priced marine toilet.

Client News

Crown Cork & Seal and AKA worked together to produce “A Global Leader in Packaging,” a multi-purpose capabilities brochure that can be used for employee recruitment and as a corporate overview of the company's history and products and its R&D and engineering capabilities. Philadelphia-headquartered Crown is a premier manufacturer of retail packaging products.

A public meeting in July proceeded without a hitch for AKA client **Lonza**. Lonza's Riverside plant, in suburban Philadelphia, manufactures pharmaceutical ingredients. As required by EPA rules, Lonza invited local residents to talk about plans to upgrade the company's on-site hazardous waste incinerator. Lonza is investing in more sophisticated

anti-pollution systems in order to meet stricter environmental regulations in 2002. Residents and government officials at the meeting expressed confidence that Lonza was doing the right thing and would continue to conduct itself as a responsible corporate neighbor. Lonza's reservoir of good will is the result of its own good works, along with a strategic community relations program that AKA designed to explain the plant, its products and processes to the community.

As a consequence of building better community understanding, Lonza has received approval for every local permit application that it has sought.

Sometimes the work we do for clients is behind the scenes. We worked for clients recently on such interesting issues as:

... response to public criticism of a healthcare organization for an action taken that was perfectly legal and in the best interest of the community but publicly misunderstood.

... preparation of background materials for a community meeting to address chemical contamination of groundwater.

... preparation of communications materials, including key messages and Q&As, for an attorney to use for a client who was incorrectly characterized in the public press.

... preparation of communications materials on an environmental issue for use in one-on-one meetings and in open houses with residents of a community.

... strategic planning for contract negotiations.

CRISIS PLANS NEED UPDATING (Continued from front page.)

The news cycle has shrunk dramatically since CNN was founded in 1980. Because of technology, major crises are often broadcast while they are still happening. Speculation and analysis start immediately and continue interminably. The Internet facilitates a giant, worldwide rumor mill.

So what can we do? We need to be prepared better and respond faster than ever before. The competitive nature of news demands that corporate officials make statements immediately, whether they have the details or not. Corporate experts need to be able to provide background information and respond to

speculation, and to post updated information on the Web immediately.

They also need to be able to respond immediately to the needs of victims. They must quickly set up "800" telephone hotlines, provide gathering places for families, and be sensitive to the needs of the families and the public to mourn.

What we have learned from the crises and tragedies of the last two decades is that the need for compassion may be even greater than the need for facts – at least initially. Companies are judged by how they treat victims and their families. It's of vital importance to do the right thing. And to do it as quickly as possible.

What Do We Do?

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communicating during change.

These broad areas of communications cover many different facets of public relations practice. In each issue of *Kaleidoscope*, we feature as many different projects as we can. It is interesting that our clients and readers often pick up on one facet to the exclusion of others.

We are a public relations firm with a breadth and depth of experience in many public relations practice areas. Our clients span a range of industries. We have been recognized by our peers with awards in many different public relations categories including crisis, environmental and marketing communications, community relations, public affairs, institutional programs, and new and existing product public relations.

And that's what we do!

A.S.K.

Anne Klein & Associates is a public relations consulting firm based in the Philadelphia region, with clients throughout the United States. It is a



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