the need, followed possibly by editorials, etc.

The planned special project, which covers a very wide area of possible activities, is one of the areas on which the most thinking should be done in the preparation of a public relations program. A special event, in itself, is a public relations instrument. But even more so is the peg, the story, around which other media can be used, such as the newspaper, the magazine, the radio, direct mail, etc. I cannot begin to even outline the various types of special events that can be conceived; they are dependent upon the nature of the agency, its resources and the story it wishes to put over. But included among special events are such almost routine aspects of agency public relations as the annual meeting, an institute or panel discussion, a come-and-see tour, an exhibition. The greater the originality and the more natural the tie-in with your particular agency, the greater the effectiveness of your special event.

These are the media of public relations; their use must be coordinated into a master public relations plan. And this plan must be a part of, and a reflection of, the highest policy level thinking of the agency. Agency action must be in line with its publicly expressed policy; if not, serious repercussions can develop. Public relations—over the long run—is not a cover-up for agency deficiencies; it can help extenuate unfortunate lapses, but not for too long. As business has learned, public relations is planned thinking before the action. The public relations man is your eyes, your ears and your sense of feel. And, I hope not immodestly, he is an important part of your agency "brains". If he is not, he is not a good public relations man. Most assuredly—if you have a public relations department worthy of the name—it is a part of your top policy level thinking.

DEVELOPING A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM IN A FUNCTIONAL AGENCY

By FRANCES SCHMIDT
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IN a sense, our topic itself is a misnomer, since there is no such thing as *developing* a public relations program. Any agency existing in a community, maintained by that community, and set up to serve that community, has a public relations program from the day it opens its office, whether recognized or not. More precisely put, our concern today is how to develop a *good* public relations program, one which is not the result of pure accident, but rather the result of a thoughtful, planned effort to tell our story of service to the community in such a way that they will understand it, accept it, support it, and use it.

Too much of our public relations in social work has been defensive—after the fact, so to speak. We have inclined too much to wait until a bad story hit the front pages—or a newly initiated policy received public criticism—before we have done anything about it. Then, when we are on the defensive, we hurriedly call meetings, plan strategy, and try to figure the best way out of a bad spot.

It is my conviction that it is high time for us to learn a lesson from business, even though we may consider ourselves as somewhat more rarefied characters than the plodding man of commerce. Whether we like his tactics or not, we have to grant that in most cases if he survives at all, he has put his product over to the people. Most of our agencies have never been put to the test of actually having to depend on the results of their own public relations programs, since our fund-raising brethren have done a job for us, sometimes in spite of ourselves—and I say that with some feeling as an ex fund-raiser.

I believe that the telephone company, and some of the railroads, are good examples of what I mean by an aggressive public relations program, rather than a defensive one. During the war, they looked ahead and saw the trouble they were facing, in terms of poor service, complaints from an irate public, etc. They didn't wait for it to happen, and then apologize. Instead, they took their story to the public, clearly, for the most part intelligently, and asked the public to share their troubles with them. The public responded and I think it is true that these particular utilities emerged from this period with better acceptance from their communities than they had ever previously enjoyed.

I am not saying that we should emulate them to the extent of running full page ads, putting on network radio shows, etc., but I believe that we can adapt their program to our own purposes.

When we see our public relations program in this way—as a planned part of our operation rather than as a cross we

must bear—we see that every aspect of our agency must fit somewhere into the picture.

First of all, and it is bromidic even to say it, is our program. Unless our program is one on which we can afford to stand close scrutiny, unless it is one of which we are honestly proud, then there is no point in discussing our public relations because they will not be good. I am not saying that shoddy products have not been, and are not constantly sold, as the result of high-pressure advertising. But that is not public relations—and I think it is safe to say that most of those products are not long with us.

Next we must approach our policy making with at least one eye on the public relations values. This is not to say that we should not consider a change in policy because the public is not ready for it—in most instances in our field, our policies are and should be ahead of the public. But we should at least know where the public is in relation to this particular subject, see clearly what some of the possible attitudes are going to be, and make our presentation one which will best insure acceptance.

I think one illustration of this kind of planning is with us now—in the family field which I represent. We all know that come the first hint of a recession or a depression, the heat is on the family agency—primarily because their services have not been satisfactorily presented to the community. What is the position of the family agency, and of the fund-raising body which maintains it, going to be? Are we going to hedge on it, which will mean continual rejections of people who come to us for relief, sincerely believing that that is our function? Are we going to accept certain cases in which there is sufficient pressure from the community? Are we going to sabotage our counselling program which most of us feel is our particular service and again take on a very small part of a total public welfare job? Or are we going to anticipate our dilemma and begin to plan now what our procedure is to be—not only plan it, of course, but present it to our public?

These things I have been talking about so far are to me basic ways in which public relations must be related to the administration of the agency. You are probably thinking that I still have not been very helpful in giving specific suggestions as to how one develops a good public relations program. I will now give you the one-two-three.

We'll start with the executive, from whom all things stem. For the moment, I'll consider myself an agency executive—and ask myself a few questions which I think are pertinent to this discussion. If I'm honest with myself, and if you are interested in playing the game to the extent of asking yourselves the same questions, I think the process will be a little painful.

The questions would be something like this: How often this past week have I sloughed somebody off when they asked, "But what do you *do* in that agency?", particularly if the question is asked over the bridge table or at a cocktail party. How often have I gotten irritated when some lay person didn't get the point of what I was saying, even though I would understand even less of his particular business? How often have I thought I was too busy, or been too lazy, to make a personal appointment instead of handling a question over the phone, thus sacrificing an opportunity to tell our story to someone in the community? How often have I heard myself using professional jargon just because it's easier than trying to say the same thing in simple English?

There are many others, but you get

the point. And if an executive does not have too easy a conscience after such an examination, what do you think would be the results of such a catechism extended to all staff members?

For as you know very well, public relations is not developed by the person sitting in the public relation director's office. It is developed by every member of your staff, for every time he or she represents your agency in the community, there is a public relations result, good or bad. And yet how much importance do we, even by implication, attach to this part of his job? Do we ourselves not tend to overlook it in our training, in our supervision, in our administration of his time? We refer to certain workers as having "a flare for publicity" or a "flare for speaking" or for meeting people. We're happy if they have it but if they don't, we do not teach it to them. Yet we never say they have a "flare for keeping statistics" or "flare for working in an office". If they don't have it, we teach it to them. Yet how many of us include in our subjects for seminar, in our supervisory discussions, the techniques of reporting back to a referral source, the techniques of telling our story simply and understandably, the techniques of using a collateral interview not only for the case to be discussed but as an opportunity to present the case of the agency as a whole?

This isn't something which a professional person automatically knows. It is something on which he needs help. When I was a district supervisor in a Brooklyn family agency, one of my most experienced case workers, with 10 years in the field, admitted that she approached all collateral interviews with great anxiety and nervousness, because she never "knew quite what to say." She asked if I would sit down with her and help her learn how to do this thing which had always been expected of her but which she herself knew she had not been doing well.

To me, this matter of staff training is the thing on which your public relations program stands or falls. Everytime a business man gets a two page, single spaced letter giving a complete case history when all he wants to know is "Did or didn't you help my employee?", his respect for the agency goes down a notch. Everytime a staff member walks into a principal's office and assumes that she knows all about the operation of a school but he knows nothing about her job, we lose a friend. Everytime a stenographer doesn't know how to answer when somebody asks her what the agency does, we may have denied service to someone who was asking because he thought it might be some place that could help him.

Of course, before we can train staff we ourselves have to know how to do the job. We have to listen to ourselves describe our work and find out whether we have learned to talk about it in simple, human terms. I think that one of the most important results of the fee service in my own agency is that it forced the staff to learn how to tell the community about family counselling. We could not just say that we were extending our services to all income groups, and then wait for the horde to descend. They had to know it was there and we had to tell them.

Now we have our executive sure of his or her own competence, we have him training his staff to participate in the job—where do we go then? Believe me, if these two things have been done well, we need not have too much concern about where we go, because it will be in the right direction. But to get down to the "specifics" which you were promised

—I think the only thing I can do is to tell you briefly of the public relations program which is now in operation in my own agency. It might better be called a "community education" program, both because it is more descriptive and because that term was suggested by my colleague on the platform with me, Elliot E. Cohen.

We recognized that any effort to tell our story to the community we serve would be ineffective unless it penetrated into the many communities in which our districts are located. We felt that it had to come from the grass-roots, to coin a phrase, if it were to do the job of bringing family counselling to those who needed it, and those who supported it. We recognized, too, that by and large we did not know those communities even though we had been working in them. We know, of course, a few key people but we didn't know the real leadership of those communities—the local business men, the local political leaders, the local union men. We felt that we had to know those people, and that we had to have their help, if we were to become a really integral part of that community. So, by devious methods (Federation lists of workers, personal contacts of Board members), we got the names of as many of those community leaders as we could and we invited them to a meeting. We told them frankly that we wanted to use them and that we couldn't use them unless they knew something of what we did, how we worked, and liked what they knew. This meeting then was frankly an educational one in which we told them as simply as we knew how why family counselling is vital to the health of a community, how it works, who does it. We told them, then, that we were going to ask them to serve in their own local communities as advisory committees to whom we could look for help and counsel in determining how to get our story over best to that particular place.

We have taken only the first step, the initial meeting. We had however about 200 new people, new to us, who came to the meeting, heard about the agency, and went away impressed. We were surprised, I confess, at their willingness to come. We were more surprised, I believe, at the reaction which was one of "Why didn't we know this was going on? Why didn't you tell us this a long time ago?"

The success of the program will, of course, depend on the follow-up—and here we go back to the point I keep pounding home, which is that it will be the staff that will ultimately be responsible for its success or failure.

This will, of course, be supplemented by the use of any mass media we can develop. But I firmly believe that mass media alone are not enough; that unless every member of our staff is on the public relations staff of the agency; that unless as an agency we see this as part of the job for which they are hired and part of the job for which they are trained, we will not be doing the thing for which I believe we have a sacred (and I use that word hesitantly for it sounds maudlin) responsibility—and that is, to make our services, whatever they may be, available to everyone in the community who may need them and to inform our giving public on what it is they are buying when they contribute to our support.

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

By JULIAN L. GREIFER
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EXHORTATION, public meetings, propaganda devices, have held the stage in attempting to influence public relations. To a lesser degree, promoting social legislation, education for self-discipline, meeting critical situations when they arise, have been other means utilized to meet the challenge of prejudice and inter-group conflict. These techniques have their place and value. To achieve good inter-group relations we need to take many approaches and utilize a variety of educational media. Whether these attempts reach into the soil out of which prejudices grow and actually modify and condition attitudes is doubtful. Goodwin Watson, in his recent book, *Action for Unity*, de-emphasizes the influence of preaching and exhortation, although he does not altogether discount them. He points to the need to achieve participation on the part of people in common endeavors as a way of reaching the emotions, the crucible where prejudices are formed. Participation in common action implies that people of different backgrounds and origin work together toward a common end. Working together, meeting common needs, implies ego involvement and should result in the growth of friendly relations as a natural by-product. Such activities educate the emotions. It has been pointed out by the social psychologists, that participation in joint endeavors on the part of people from differing groups, reduces stereotypes and permits the most desirable kind of inter-group relations to grow.

The Jewish Community Center, as a group work agency operating in a community or in a neighborhood of a metropolitan city, has the unique opportunity to contribute toward the improvement of group relations because of its strategic position. It may operate consciously in that direction along the following lines:

1. As a participating unit in a council of social agencies joining with similar agencies in city-wide projects; participating in movements toward the reduction of juvenile delinquency; serving as an active member in city-wide associations for better housing, city planning, and other efforts toward civic improvement. The best instance of this type of cooperative activity is the place that the YMHA and the Jewish Center or Jewish settlement house occupied in the USO programs during the war, when complete collaboration brought excellent results in inter-group relations.

2. Instituting a non-sectarian admission policy, so that Jew and Gentile, Negro and white, may be free to join and participate in the manifold activities of the Center.

3. In the smaller community where