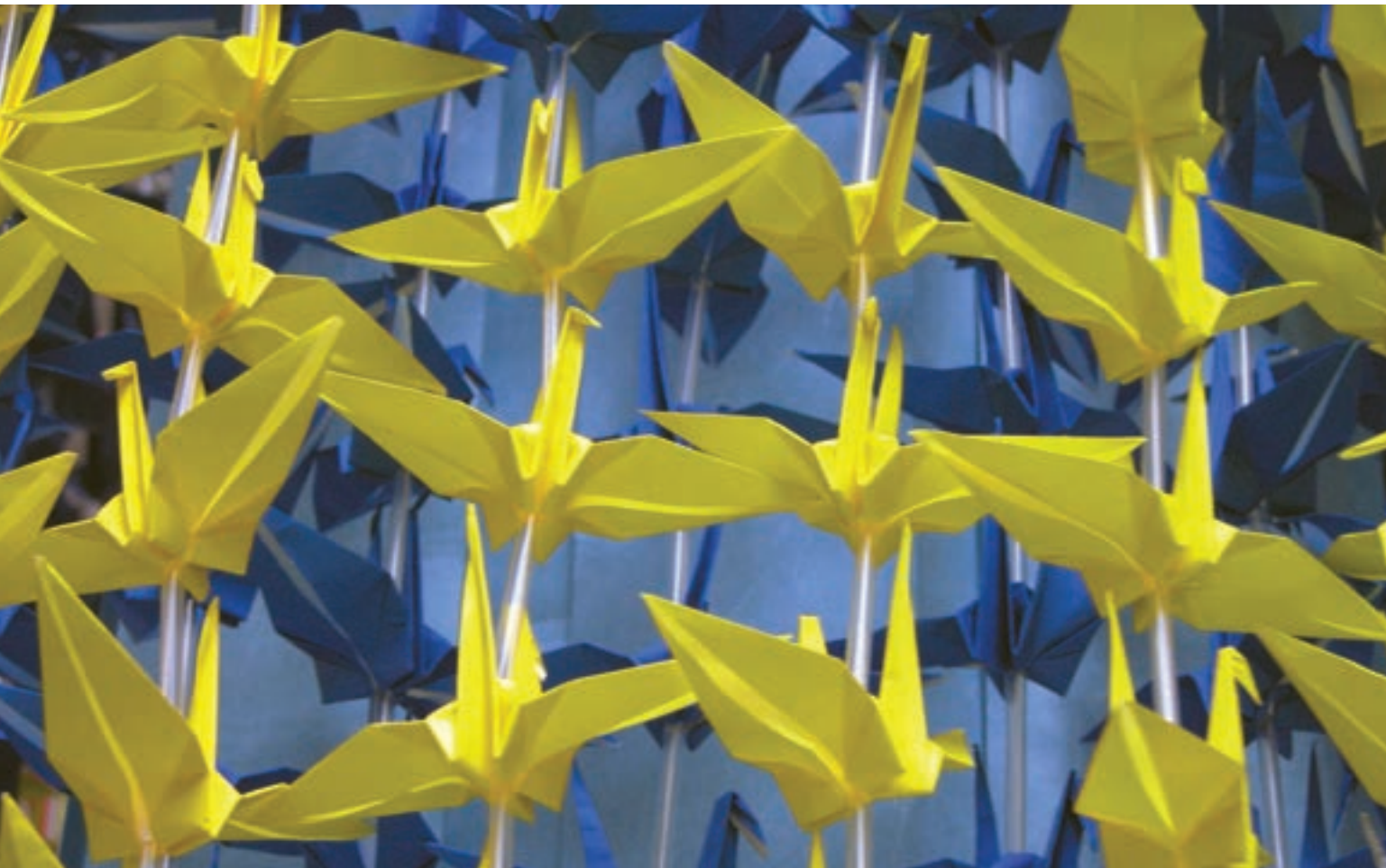GLOBAL EDITION

Public Relations
Strategies and Tactics

ELEVENTH EDITION

Dennis L. Wilcox • Glen T. Cameron • Bryan H. Reber

PEARSON

Public Relations

Strategies and Tactics

Key Messages   Public relations plans, as part of the strategy, often contain a listing of key messages that the campaign wants to get across to the target audiences and the media. In the case of Go Red for Women, a national awareness campaign for heart disease in women, the three key messages were:

1. Heart disease is the number-one killer of women.
2. Take the Go Red Heart Checkup to find out your personal risk for heart disease.
3. Spread the national rallying cry to "Share Your Untold Story of the Heart."

In the case of Ketchum's DoubleTree cookie CAREavan campaign, the key messages were as follows:

> **25th Anniversary of the Cookie.** The hotel chain will celebrate the anniversary of its signature chocolate chip cookie by touring various cities and distributing samples through a summer CAREavan tour.
>
> **Share the Care.** Little things and kindness mean a lot and help contribute to a rewarding hotel experience—the ultimate mission of the chain's 60,000 employees.
>
> **Join Us Online.** Visit *www.facebook.com/DoubleTree* to enter a sweepstakes and get the latest news and deals on all the properties.

Tactics

Tactics, in contrast to strategies, are the nuts-and-bolts part of the plan. They describe the specific activities that put each strategy into operation and help to achieve the stated objectives. In the public relations field, the implementation of various tactics is

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INSIGHTS

A New Frontier for Strategy

One of the tendencies in human nature that is shared among public relations professionals is a blind faith in common sense as well as a tendency to use a "same-old, same-old" approach to strategies.

Both of these are probably wise instincts in general. However, from the perspective of upper management, commonsensical, clichéd counsel on communication strategy may appear less rigorous and less valuable than comparable counsel from legal professionals who bring case law to bear on questions, or counsel from consulting engineers who bring materials science to their recommendations to management. Over the last several decades, a large body of social science research has developed to provide better understanding of how communication works and what effect it has on audiences.

The next frontier for the field of public relations, and for students entering the profession now, should be to embrace theories of communication as a basis for strategy recommendations. (See Chapters 9 and 10 for an introduction to many of the social science breakthroughs that can provide a sound basis for strategy development.)

on the job

A MULTICULTURAL WORLD

Latinas Don't Walk, They Strut: A Celebration of Latin Style

Hispanics have become an important audience for most brands, but it takes special insight to design a public relations program that is culturally relevant to them. This was the challenge that Unilever and its public relations firm, Edelman Worldwide, faced in promoting its Suave Haircare products.

One insight was that Latinas don't just march to their own tune. They strut. They like to look their best in clothes, shoes, and make-up. They also place a great emphasis on their hair, so Suave Haircare and Edelman used this insight to introduce its 175 beauty products to a Hispanic audience with the theme, "Desfilando Contigo con Mas Estilo" (Strutting with you with more styles).

The strategy for Suave was to position its hair care products as access to achievable "red carpet" beauty by (1) partnering with top Spanish-language media Univision and People en Espanol to build strong on-side, online, TV, print, and in-store promotions, (2) using celebrity stylist Leonardo Rocco as an expert voice on the brand, and (3) enlisting "Hispanic America's sweetheart" Blanca Soto to build credibility for the products.

Celebrity stylist Leonardo Rocco and friends.

The program had several elements. One was being the official hair sponsor of Premios Juventud (Youth Awards), Univision's top-rated show hosted by Blanca Soto. The major event was when Blanca revealed her fan-voted winning hairstyle, created by Suave stylist Leonardo Rocco. In addition, a number of in-store retail events were held. Social media included real-time beauty advice from Rocco and Blanca on a Facebook page since surveys indicated that 84 percent of Hispanic moms are on Facebook.

The results, which won a PRSA Silver Anvil for excellence in 2012, were impressive.

- Awareness of Suave Haircare increased six-fold, including three editor choice awards for styling products.

- Sales increased almost 13 percent.

- Likes on Facebook increased by 43,000 and 36,000 requested free product coupons.

the most visible part of any plan. Tactics use various methods to reach target audiences with key messages. Chapters 13 through 16 discuss tactical communication tools in greater detail. To help the reader better understand the difference between strategies and tactics, several tactics of the campaign plan to promote Suave Professionals

beauty products (see the Intercultural World box) to Latina consumers are nested under the strategy that drove the campaign:

> **Strategy:** Partnering with top Spanish-language media Univision and People en Espanol to build out strong onsite, online, TV, print, and in-store promotions.
>
> **Tactics:** (1) Consumer Engagement—Suave secured the official position as Hair Sponsor of Univision's top-rated award show hosted by rising novella (soap opera) star Blanca Soto. A show highlight was Soto revealing her fan-voted winning hairstyle created by Suave stylist Leonardo Rocco.
> (2) Social Media—Facebook page, Belleza Suave, featured Rocco's real-time

Strategy establishes why something is being proposed and why it will achieve the purposes of the campaign. But it is in the tactics that the job gets done.

And a crucial part of detailed planning requires that the "marching orders" or action steps get into the hands of those who will do the work. Ketchum created a toolkit for local DoubleTree hotels to do their own marketing and event promotion consistent with the entire look and scheme of the CAREavan tour. Toolkits prove equally valuable for the people on the ground that may not be trained in public relations as well as the campaign planners who want a safe and coordinated effort by associates who are supportive of the effort.

Conceiving tactics requires a lot of creativity, which is often accomplished through a brainstorming session that can generate any number of ideas from the practical to the impractical. The goal is to generate many ideas that are innovative and unusual, but grounded in the objectives of the program (Table 6.1).

Calendar/Timetable

The next step is to determine a timetable for the campaign or program. Depending on the objectives and complexity of the program plan, a campaign may last less than three months. Other programs may take more than a year to implement all the strategies and tactics required to accomplish program objectives. The following are three aspects of establishing a calendar and timetable for a program.

The Timing of a Campaign Program planning should take into account when key messages are most meaningful to the intended audience. A campaign to encourage carpooling, for example, might be more successful if it follows a major price increase

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Table 6.1 **Tactics by Media Category**

A useful way to categorize tactics for disseminating messages is the four categories of media that can be used—paid, earned, shared, or owned. Given here is a simplified version of the planning matrix used by Fleishman Hillard.

	TECHNIQUE	AUDIENCE	INFLUENCE	DESIRED ACTION
Paid	Purchase ads to reach millions	Large media audiences	Ads often discounted as biased sales pitches	Remember message when voting or joining or buying
Earned	Pitch news stories to traditional media	Readers and viewers of news content	Credible coverage, but of both sides of a story	Change or reinforce position on an issue or event
Shared	Participate in social media	Other tweeters, bloggers, Facebookers, etc.	Engaging and personal, but preaching to a choir	Consider input from virtual friends and colleagues
Owned	Mount content on your own websites	Visitors to your websites	Satisfies information needs but pushes your view	Reinforce or even act on prior view of your organization

in gasoline or a government report that traffic congestion has reached gridlock proportions. Continuing news coverage and public concern about an issue or event also trigger public relations campaigns. Some subjects are seasonal. The rock 'n' roll concert series on the grounds of the Minneapolis Basilica takes place in the summer. A similar series in San Diego might be done in any month, but in Minnesota the series needs to happen when temperatures are pleasant. The timing also serves to raise funds that will help the homeless through the winter season to come. Charitable agencies, such as Second Harvest Food Banks, launch special campaigns around Thanksgiving and Christmas, when there is increased interest in helping the unfortunate.

Other kinds of campaigns depend less on environmental or seasonal context. For example, Home Instead Senior Care Service promotes its 40–70 rule year-round (children in their forties need to talk to their parents in their seventies about long-term care year-round). Similarly, the launch of the IBM 100-year anniversary commemorated the beginning of the company, but the celebration was a yearlong, worldwide effort to spur local volunteerism by employees, not a self-congratulatory fest.

on the job

ETHICS

Grassroots Environmentalism: Conflict of Interest or a Win-Win?

In response to record-high oil prices that were driving airlines into bankruptcy, a coalition of business and labor groups formed a grassroots campaign against oil speculation in commodity-trading markets. Two weeks of intense strategic planning resulted in a movement called SOS Now (Stop Oil Speculation Now). The plan included impressive tactics:

- ■ Broad coalition building
- ■ Clear, multilingual website
- ■ Airline Frequent Flier Call to Action
- ■ Grassroots advocacy to Congress
- ■ Coalition media toolkit
- ■ Coalition press conference
- ■ Congressional information packets

The campaign succeeded in building congressional interest in

THE GOOD OLD DAYS
NOT NECESSARILY SO GOOD FOR AIR TRAVEL
1941 VS 2012
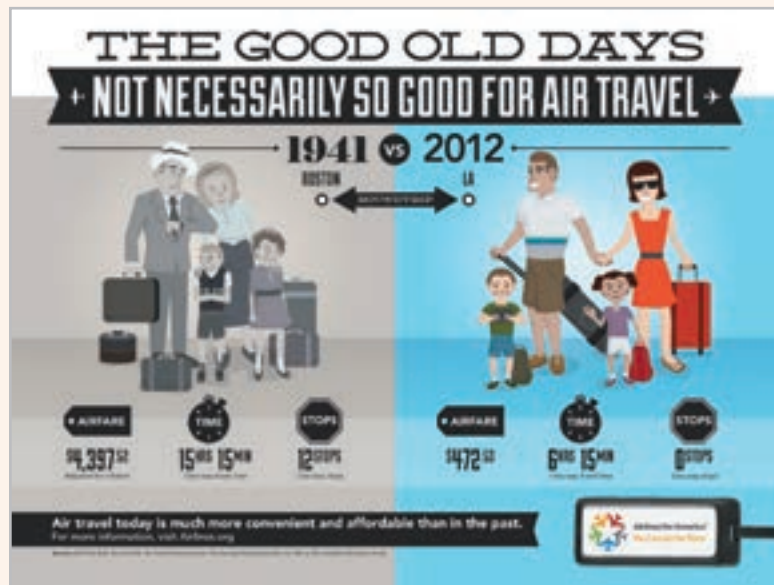
regulatory action, resulting in investors pulling $39 billion from commodity markets during the first seven weeks of the campaign. Public

opinion polls taken before and during the campaign showed a jump from 6 percent to 50 percent against speculative oil trading. Although

planning, execution, and outcomes of the campaign were impressive, several ethical questions need to be considered.

- The SOS campaign was motivated by skyrocketing fuel costs but didn't make it clear that SOS was instigated primarily by the airline industry. In 2012, this "oversight" was addressed through explicit support for airlinesforamerica.org. Is this effort really a grassroots movement? Is it ethical, according to PRSA ethical guidelines, to create what are called false-front organizations? What is needed

for such movements to be ethical? Is the more explicitly named airlines group more appropriate?

- Would it be ethical for the American Petroleum Institute (API) to undertake a similar campaign opposing SOS, based on API's conviction that free markets should exist and that the only way to ensure oil exploration and production is healthy oil markets, with strong oil prices responding to supply and demand pressures?

- Environmental activists argue that high fuel prices are good

for the environment because they curtail wasteful travel. Would such groups be doing the right thing to argue for oil speculation?

The point may be that in a free society, pluralistic voices often arise on opposing sides of an issue. (See Chapter 10 for explication of the idea of a wrangle of voices in the marketplace of ideas and that there is no single worldview or "truth.") The key may be to work for an organization that one personally believes in, whether, in this case, that is the airline, the petroleum, or the environmental group.

Source: @StopSpeculation on Twitter, 2013

Scheduling of Tactics   The second aspect of timing is the scheduling and sequencing of various tactics or activities. A typical pattern is to concentrate the most effort at the beginning of a campaign, when a number of tactics are implemented. The launch phase of a campaign, much like that of a rocket, requires a burst of activity just to break the awareness barrier. After the campaign has achieved orbit, however, less energy and fewer activities are required to maintain momentum.

Public relations campaigns often are the first stage of an integrated marketing communication program. Once public relations has created awareness and customer anticipation of a new product, the second stage may be a marketing and advertising campaign.
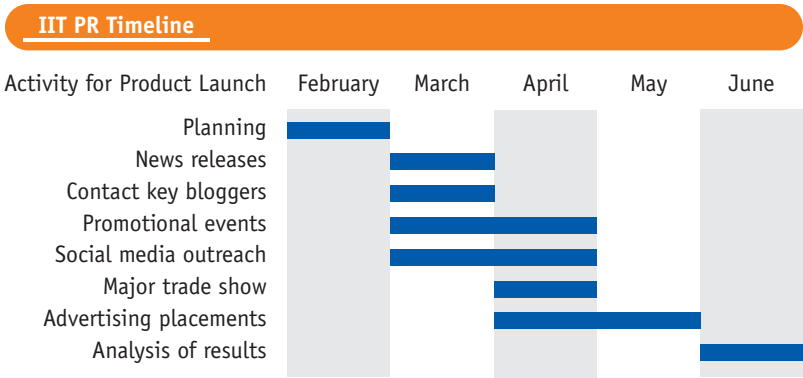
Apple serves as a paragon of suspense and anticipation in product development and launch. The iPad, Apple's dominant tablet computer generated thousands of news stories before it was available for purchase. Ads for the device didn't appear until several months after the launch of the new product. Apple kept buzz about the product going by rolling out new versions, dropping prices of earlier versions, and promoting the app store, the nifty applications for the iPad developed by inventive third-party programmers.

Currently, Apple CEO Tim Cook is signaling that an Apple "iWatch" receives serious thought and attention in the company. But in classic Apple form perfected by founder Steve Jobs, the current CEO is coy about a smart watch. "The wrist is interesting," Cook said, noting that it is more natural [than Google's smart eyeglass device]. "You still have to convince people it is worth wearing."

Compiling a Calendar   An integral part of timing is advance planning. A video news release (VNR), a press kit, or a brochure often takes weeks or months to prepare. Arrangements for special events also take considerable time. Practitioners must thus take into account the deadlines of publications. Monthly periodicals, for example, frequently need information several months before publication. A popular talk show may book guests three or four months in advance.

Figure 6.1   **A Typical Gantt Chart**

Basic Gantt charts can depict work flow, but tend to be spare in detail. An alternative is a more detailed timeline that includes key action items by month to accomplish the strategy and achieve basic objectives. A good example is an excerpt from Ketchum's DoubleTree Cookie CAREavan shown in Figure 6.2.

IIT PR Timeline

Activity for Product Launch	February	March	April	May	June
Planning					
News releases					
Contact key bloggers					
Promotional events					
Social media outreach					
Major trade show					
Advertising placements					
Analysis of results					

The public relations professional must think ahead to make things happen in the right sequence at the right time. One way to achieve this goal is to compile timelines and charts that list the necessary steps and their required completion dates. Calendars and timelines take various forms. One simple method is to post activities for each day on a large monthly calendar that indicates who has responsibility for a particular task. Gantt charts (see Figure 6.1) are popular for scheduling purposes and can be formatted easily using Microsoft Excel or an Office template.

Budget

No program plan is complete without a budget. Both clients and employers ask, "How much will this program cost?" In many cases, the reverse approach is taken, in which organizations establish an amount they can afford and then ask the public relations staff or firm to write a program plan that reflects the amount allocated.

A budget is often divided into two categories: (1) staff time and (2) out-of-pocket expenses. The latter often goes by the acronym OOP and includes such collateral material as news releases, media kits, brochures, VNRs, transportation, Web programming, and even video production. Staff and administrative time usually takes the lion's share, as much as 70 percent, of any public relations budget. Information about how public relations firms charge fees was presented in Chapter 4.

One method of budgeting is to use two columns. The left column lists the staff cost for writing a pamphlet or compiling a press kit. The right column lists the actual OOP expense for having the pamphlet or press kit designed, printed, and delivered. Internal public relations staffs, whose members are on the payroll, often complete only the OOP expenses. It is good practice to allocate about 10 percent of the budget for contingencies or unexpected costs.

Evaluation

The evaluation element of a plan relates directly back to the stated objectives of the program. As discussed earlier, objectives must be measurable in some way to show clients and employers that the program accomplished its purpose. Consequently, it's important to have a good idea what metrics you will use to evaluate whether the plan's objectives have been met. Again, evaluation criteria should be realistic, credible, and