

ROI REPORT

Interviews, opinions, case studies, whatever from PR point of view

Monthly Journal

Issue VII, 2007

www.roibg.com

11/04/2007

TOP 10 PR MESSAGES IN MUSIC

Once upon a time I read somewhere that young people are influenced the most by the lyrics of the songs they listen to. I wasn't surprised at all, because personally I always love listening and understanding what I am told. That's maybe why I cannot understand the music of Ramshtain (I don't understand German)

Since then there has been a thought in my mind. In the every beginning it was a big one – to make a disc with songs which say useful for PR things. I have made a list, but it turned out that it is really difficult, as the authors' rights belong to different music companies. And so, step by step the idea has gone to the folder "Impossible". Soon after that though I found a test from the course "Basics of Public Relations" at an American University. One of the questions was: "Which is the only song mentioned in the Bible of PR - "The effective PR"?" I started asking the same the people around me who have read the book. Almost nobody answered me though. Then I took the idea out of the folder "Impossible" and as a beginning decided to write this article.

This Top 10 may be different in a way as the songs in it have not been classified by preference or by sales. It's just ten songs and everybody could choose their favourite one. And as The Bible is The Bible, I will start with the song, mentioned in it. This is:

"The Sound Of Silence", by [Simon And Garfunkel](#)

If we listen to it carefully, looking for PR Theory in it, we will see that the authors have very correctly described what happens in today's world which is packed with too much communication. But there is also the main PR problem, which consists of the perception and the distribution of information as a kind of communication. Everybody knows that this leads to a lot of failed strategies. That's why if you have time, listen to the song again. If not – here there are a couple of lines of it:

*People talking without speaking,
People hearing without listening*

Doesn't it sound familiar to you?

While you are thinking about it, I'll continue to Number 2. This is John Lennon's **"Imagine"**

Everything of it reminds me of the famous Theory of James Grunig about the four public relations models, and especially of the fourth one, the purpose of which is to achieve a mutual understanding between the participants in the communication. Most practitioners call this model “ideal” or even go further, describing it as “impossible”. On the other hand, the story shows that this is the model which could resolve the most serious crisis and to lead to high efficiency of the PR tools involved. So except for the dreamer John Lennon, both in the theory and the practice of PR there are dreamers who hope the same way, as it is said in the song, that *“someday you'll join us And the world will be as one”*

And now we have come to the third song in the classification: **“Words”**, by **Bee Gees**

I have always dreamt that somebody sing it especially to me. In all the textbooks it is written that the first and most important condition for success in PR is the ability for persuasive writing. Thus, every PR practitioner is exactly like the hero in the song. He has “only words, and words are all I have, to take Your heart away” Words and their correct use are more than essential about the practitioners today.

If we are not skilful at using the words, all of us in the field of communication would not be able to work. And the world would be very boring.

What exactly should the practitioners do with the words have been sung by **Tracy Chapman**: **“Baby Can I Hold You Tonight”**

And the simple truth is that the power of words is how to tell the right words to the right person in the right time. Today we call this targeted communication. If we cannot achieve it, we usually face up to the situation in the first song – we speak without

saying anything, somebody listens to us without hearing, because they don't care what we talk about.

But the communication specialists today face another problem too. The excessive communication makes people lose interest in everything and not to want to receive information of any kind. In other words – the lack of information and the excessive information lead to ignorance.

All the theories prove that people collect and process information selectively. Without trying to draw a general conclusion to all the theories, Madonna sang **“Frozen”**, and this is the fifth song in my classification. *“You only see what your eyes want to see”*. For those who have read “

The Public opinion” by Walter Lippmann it sounds painfully familiar. And it should be the most familiar to those who do political PR. They know perfectly well that the electors seek information for the candidate they have already decided to vote for, and the keenest electors see nothing but what their party does.

The same subject has been sung by another of my very favorite singers and it takes the sixth position here. This is **Phil Collins's “Great Spirits”**

With the analytical thinking which is typical for men, **Phil Collins** says that we very often think we know what we see, that we cannot know without learning. But we go further. He advises that the key to the real understanding is seeing the world through the others' eyes, through all the points of view and only after that you could see what lies under the surface. This means research. Every single campaign should start this way. And if made as it should be made, it finds out the real problems, not the obvious ones which flow on the surface. If people do not realize this, they look, but do not see. This idea is part of the chorus of

the song. Do we really want to see, though?

In this classification we couldn't do without U2. No matter which of their songs should we choose, it will definitely have something to do with communication. So what it is surprising is not that the group is included in Top 10, but the choice of a song – "**Pride in name of Love**". If we accept that we see only what we want to see, we gradually become immunized to what we don't want to see. And step by step, as if we want to prove that a hundred of years ago Walter Lippmann was right, we do as it is written in books and as U2 sing: we perceive facts as a fiction and the TV as a reality.

The replacement of the reality by the television is a matter of fact, which happened thanks to many people in the course of the years. Today though more and more people see this as a danger and fight to change the situation.

Here it is number 8 and the song: "**Dime La Verdad**" (Tell me the truth), by Marta Sanchez. There are so many questions asked in it that if you don't hear just the music all the time, you ask yourself if this is a song or a piece of a Noam Chomsky's new book. In the wonderful language of Márquez, Sanchez asks who pulls the wires, who tries to direct her thinking and to make it the same with that of the others. But the most important things she says are that all this happens secretly and nobody knows anything about it. In the end of the song she says: "*We use words only to confuse ourselves.*" How often have we been confused by the correct use of words? But we have to learn how to understand them right

and thus to reach the truth.

This cannot happen though if we don't try walking in the other's shoes. Yes, that's right – number 9 in the classification are **Depeche Mode** and their song "**Walking In My Shoes**"

I have recently seen the same collocation in a very good book about corporate communication. It seems that nothing can happen if we don't put on the shoes of others and see how it feels walking in them. We should do it, we should keep moving.

That's why the tenth position is for **Queen** and their song "**Show Must Go On**". The truth is that the show goes on. It is said in a unique way in this song that another hero comes, another victim, someone dies, someone's born, but the show must go on.

It is the same way with the media, the advertising, the marketing, the PR and wherever.

Something happens, something goes wrong, something succeeds...

But the show, called "The world of communication" must go on. The people in front of the TV screen, those in front of the computer, those listening to the radio expect their news.

So we cannot stop.

I hope I have made you think about that. If the idea appeals to you, we can prepare TOP 100 of the songs which teach us how to work better in the field of the modern communication. Well, it won't be a disc, but we can make a nice website with links to the songs.