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“If you have to be naked, you had better be buff.”



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Broom received B.S. ('63) and M.S. ('67) degrees from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. He began his career there as assistant extension editor. His work included an assignment as radio consultant with the U.S. Agency for International Development in Amman, Jordan.

He moved to Chicago in 1968 to work full-time for a client of his fledgling public relations and advertising agency, Concept Productions. That work led to part ownership of the Chicago-based management consulting and training firm, Applied Behavioral Science, Inc., where he served as vice president and director of public relations. He left the company in 1972 to return to academe.

Dr. Broom earned his Ph.D. in Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and joined the faculty in 1975 as head of the public relations sequence. He moved to San Diego State University in 1979 as head of the public relations emphasis, later serving as chair of the Department of Journalism. He taught as visiting professor at The University of Texas at Austin during the 1985-86 academic year. During fall semesters, he serves as visiting professor at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, and other universities in Australia .

He has written more than 35 scholarly articles and papers. In recognition of his research, the Institute for Public Relations Research and Education awarded Broom its 1986 "Pathfinder Award." He was selected as the outstanding journalism professor at San Diego State University in 1989. The Public Relations Society of America named him Outstanding Educator in 1991. In 1993 he was named outstanding professor and faculty commencement speaker for the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts at San Diego State University. Also in 1993, he received the Public Relations Society of America Foundation Jackson, Jackson & Wagner Behavioral Science Prize.

Dr. Broom co-authored the sixth through ninth editions of *Effective Public Relations* with Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center. Broom and SDSU colleague David M. Dozier co-authored *Using Research in Public Relations*, also published by Prentice-Hall.

Question 1: *The book “Effective PR” in the years has been viewed as “the Bible of PR” and often referred as simply “Cutlip and Center”. What was the feeling to become a part of such a legendary book?*

I had known both Scott Cutlip and Allen Center for many years before taking on the revision for the sixth edition published in 1985. Each of them approached me independently to invite me to take over the book. Naturally, I was flattered and pleased. I promised them that I would do my best to maintain the book’s standing as the field’s most authoritative text and reference. It has been both a serious challenge and a great deal of work, but I am pleased with the continuing success of the book and with how Cutlip and Center’s legacy continues worldwide.

Question 2: *In the ninth edition of the book you have changed significant part of the chapter about ethics and professionalism. Is this a reflection of the growing importance of the ethics in the PR profession?*

Ethics has always been a topic in my courses and work with students and practitioners. I worked professionally for 10 years before pursuing the Ph.D. and entering academic work. During those years, I sometimes saw what I considered questionable behavior and saw the consequences of unprofessional behavior on careers and lives. When I did the seventh edition, I added a new chapter on ethics and professionalism. In the tenth edition, I have reversed the order in the title to “Professionalism and Ethics,” as ethics is really at the core of what it means to be a professional committed to serving the public interest. As public relations continues to move toward professional status, ethics will be increasingly important to both the preparation of new practitioners and to the practice itself. To gain professional recognition in any country, those in the practice will have to abide by a strict and enforced code of ethics.

Question 3: *Another chapter with completely new content is that about “Legal Considerations”. How well PR practitioners deal with all these legal aspects of their profession?*

The chapter about legal considerations makes the point that public relations practitioners do not practice law. Rather, there are areas of the law that practitioners must know in order to comply with local, state and national regulations. Some aspects of the law are so straightforward that practitioners can avoid problems by simply knowing what is in the chapter. The chapter also alerts students and practitioners to other areas of the law that will require them to seek legal counsel.

Question 4: *In most of the cases people associate PR with media coverage. What were your motives to put emphasis on internal relations and dedicated one whole chapter?*

In the sixth and prior editions, there were two chapters dealing with internal relations—one on “The Internal Publics” and another on “Internal Communication Media.” In the seventh and eighth editions, I combined the discussions of internal and external media in one media chapter. By the time I did the ninth edition, internal relations/employee communication had re-emerged as a critical management concern. As a result, I reversed course and dealt with internal and external areas of practice in separate chapters. The critical importance of organizations’ human resources again called for special attention.

Question 5: *You have put in the new edition examples from different countries. Do you think that is time in the PR Bible do enter PR cases from Eastern Europe?*

Clearly, the rapid growth of public relations in Eastern European makes this part of the world a major player in the future of public relations. The same can be said about the growth in China. As the growing number of EPR examples and references to public relations in other nations illustrate, I am making an effort to broaden the book’s perspective and to introduce students to the practice worldwide. The tenth edition contains even more examples than did the ninth edition. I will welcome suggestions and contributions from you and your colleagues in other Eastern European countries when we begin to work on the eleventh edition in a couple of years.

Question 6: *You said that you are working on the tenth edition. Do you think that online communication will change the PR practice?*

The Internet has changed communication worldwide. For example, the two of us are half a world apart doing an online "interview." People exchange e-mail messages with almost the same speed of in-person discussions. Each of us can access information all around the globe in seconds. Stakeholders now seek information when they want it; they are no longer restricted to waiting for sources to decide if and when information will be made available. But most importantly, the Internet has all but eliminated "secrets." What happens in the New York governor's life is known about around the world within hours. What is happening in Tibet is shown on television around the globe because tourists gave videos to CNN. As the cover notes on the book, *The Naked Corporation: How the Age of Transparency Will Revolutionize Business*, said, "If you have to be naked, you had better be buff."

Question 7: *Do you think that time is come to dedicate to online communication a whole chapter?*

No, I do not plan to devote a separate chapter to online communication or any other development in technology. To do so would change the focus of the book to the level of tactics and techniques. Besides, how does one partial out the impact of new technology, new media and other developments from the other chapters. The same rationale applies to the suggestion to have a separate chapter on international issues. If public relations is really being practiced globally, how does one partial out the international aspects of each of the chapters and concentrate the content in one chapter? More importantly, why would one do that? There are other books devoted to online communication theory and practice, as there are books on international public relations, so those are not the primary topics of *Effective Public Relations*.

Question 8: *What do you think about all new social media? Are they going to change the principles of the PR profession?*

In my opinion, the new social media will not change the principles or theory behind the practice. Rather, just as when other new communication media have been introduced, new social media will change how programs are implemented. They give practitioners another set of "tools" to achieve public relations objectives and program goals.

Question 9: *You said in the preface that professional preparation goes beyond the limits of a single book or course. You have very close look at*

the PR education in USA. Which are the strengths of today PR education?

The major advance is the growing recognition that public relations education gives future practitioners specialized preparation. The majority of entry-level practitioners in the United States now are public relations majors. As the 1999 Commission on Public Relations Education said, as is the case in other professions, university education in public relations is now the "port of entry" for public relations practice.

This development appears to be attracting more and better qualified young scholars to public relations faculties. Many bring years of professional experience to the classroom, in addition to scholarly research agenda that promise to strengthen and expand the foundation of knowledge upon which the practice is based.

At the same time, the influx of large numbers of university students seeking admission to public relations programs means that we can be more selective when admitting to the impacted major. Limited resources means we must continuously increase the admission criteria in order to give students a high quality education. This in turn means that we are teaching better qualified students who have a greater chance for succeeding and for making contributions during their professional careers.

Question 10: *Do you participate in the PR blogosphere? Do you have a favorite blogs?*

I visit many Web sites regularly, but one of my favorites is ragan.com (Ragan Communications, Inc.). Several of the bloggers posted on that Web site address important issues, sometimes with great insight and humor.

Question 11: *Your book is translated for study in many languages. Bulgarian language is one of them. What makes "Effective PR" so special to the worldwide PR community?*

You are in a better position to answer this question than I am, as the answer is found in the eye of the beholder. It is my impression that *EPR* enjoys a longer history and legacy than any other textbook in the field, as it has introduced several generations to the ethical practice, and (if I may be so bold) has remained current and relevant over the years through serious revision and updating. And finally, the focus has always been on theory and practice principles, rather than trivia and techniques with the shelf life of an avocado.

Question 12: *What are the trends, that you notice, that will affect in PR profession in the near future?*

One of my concerns is the continuing confusion of public relations with marketing. In some cases, public relations is subsumed by the marketing function, making public relations simply tactical-level support to marketing. Organizations in which this occurs run the risk of falling victim of the tunnel vision focus on customers while other important stakeholder groups are ignored or given little attention. This telephoto lens view of stakeholders misses the many others that would show up in a wide-angle lens perspective that should be the view of public relations. This confusion is made explicit in the semantic tyranny of the term “integrated marketing communication.”

Another concern is the introduction of “pay-for-placement” and “low-cost-bidder” approaches to factoring public relations into organization management. In fact, it is a stretch to even suggest that this is making public relations part of “management.” Instead, these approaches reduce public relations to the level of commodities purchased by the weight, volume, etc. Missing is any semblance of a management role for public relations counsel.

On the positive side, I am most encouraged by the professionalization of public relations that is happening worldwide. Evidence of this movement is the growing number of professional associations and academic programs in universities.

Question 13: *As a PR professor, what is the most valuable advice that you give to your students?*

“Do not ring a bell that you cannot unring.” In other words, ethical and professional behavior is central to your reputation and effectiveness. If you engage in unethical behavior, even if directed to do so by superiors, you are unethical. You did it and others will know that you did it. That act—even if deviant—becomes part of who you are and how others know you. You cannot “unring that bell.”

Question 14: *A lot of people still think that PR is more craft, that occupation that can be learned at the university. What is your response to that statement?*

The quality of public relations education depends on the program and faculty. I agree that many programs are “training” people at the level of a craft or apprenticeship. Such programs employ primarily non-academic faculty and do not emphasize the acquisition of the body of knowledge underpinning the practice. Instead, these programs emphasize technical skills preparation and “case studies” of past practice. The shortage of academically prepared faculty in the United States and a naïve concept of university education as “news you can use” complicate the situation and slow progress.

Programs that combine solid preparation in theory and research with basic skills preparation, make public relations a valid part of the university. Programs that simply take over organizational training department roles in skills training relegate public relations education to the margin of the university. In too many universities, public relations “faculty” argue that they are “professionals in residence” and that they should not be held accountable on the same academic standards used for faculty in other units. At the same time, they wonder why public relations education is not respected on their campuses and does not receive the administration support enjoyed by other academic units.

Professional education can and should be based on acquiring the body of knowledge necessary to sustain a lifelong learning process. Skills training needs evolve as technology, systems, people, products, services, etc., change. University education cannot focus on those aspects of practice that are so susceptible to change. Rather, university education should provide the foundation for a lifetime as a productive citizen and effective professional able to adapt to an ever-changing environment.

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