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ABSTRACT

The goal of this publication is to provide rehabilitation facilities with a guide to improve their image in the community and increase contract sales, job placements, donations, and client numbers. It is intended (1) to assist them in identifying individuals or groups that facilities should be trying to reach with their public relations efforts and (2) to list the types of public information messages or techniques that can or should be used when developing and transmitting public information to those identified groups. The first section addresses the need for facility public relations. Section 2 discusses planning of a public relations program, including administrative involvement, determining program directions, selection of public relations director, staff involvement, reviewing the past, and evaluating the results. The next three sections focus on the three major target groups the facility will want to reach: (1) handicapped persons and those individuals, groups, or agencies and organizations working with them; (2) business groups (including employers); and (3) community groups. In each section subgroups within the target group are discussed, and then the messages and techniques for developing the messages relevant to the client groups are considered. (YLB)

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PUBLIC RELATIONS
FOR
REHABILITATION FACILITIES

BY

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The majority of the workshops in the United States are in the private, non-profit category. As such, they generally receive financial support from community agencies such as United Way, county agencies, mental health agencies, VR agencies, and also from public donations. The agencies provide a service to the community and more directly to the handicapped individuals who are part of the community. Therefore, there exists a need for an appropriate program of publicity designed to inform and interpret the activities and financial expenditures of the agency.

For a workshop program to continue to receive support from the community, it must have tangible evidence that it is properly using the funds. Adequate documentation must exist regarding the services it provides to its clientele, and the property it maintains. The workshop must project an image which adequately and efficiently shows the operation of the agency and the dignity of the disabled worker. The workshop can contribute to a healthier understanding and acceptance of the disabled worker by seeking and obtaining the interest of industry, labor and civic leaders, and community members.

Public relations can further the objectives and goals of the agency. As a result, a community can gain confidence in the workshop and give its support. Without public relations, facts about whether the agency's objectives are adequately meeting the real needs of the community or whether the community understand and feel good about the agency may go unrelieved. Workshop administrators must familiarize themselves with the conditions which may result and the implications involved should they neglect to improve the facility public relations.

Alan D. Robertson, M.S.
Development Specialist
March, 1966

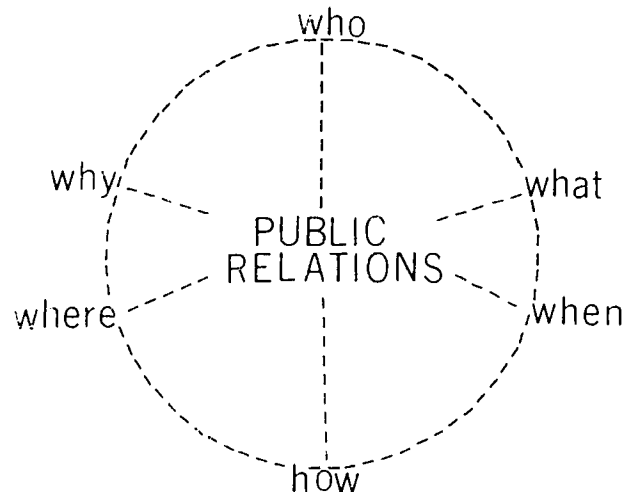
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The Need for Facility Public Relations

Why should rehabilitation facilities become more active in public relations functions? Robertson (1971) stated that in most nonprofit organizations, one of the basic reasons for public relations is to build the climate suitable to fund raising. Malone (1977) indicated that public relations is both relevant and necessary for rehabilitation facilities in terms of marketing and contract procurement. Other literature, including Loomis (1978) and Cull and Hardy (1974), suggested that the focus of public relations should be on informing and educating the public of workshop services and programs. Thus, public relations can be viewed as being necessary for the rehabilitation facility in several major ways - fundraising, contract procurement, and informing the public. Whatever the reasons, public relations is important to the rehabilitation facility.

Public relations is a daily occurrence within the rehabilitation facility. A secretary may greet customers on the telephone or in person, the shipping/receiving clerk may sign for deliveries to the facility, the administrator may meet with other business persons for lunch, and the employees will have outside contact with friends and others. Each person is directly involved with the facility's public relations efforts. If each is positive, the image left with others will build on the image the facility desires to project. This public relations circle shows the actions which occur during most public relations efforts:



- Who: Who do you want your public relations efforts to reach - parents, businesses, potential clients, or someone else?
- What: What is it you are trying to communicate to the public - the need for donations, invitation to the annual dinner meeting, contract work, or something else?
- When: When is it you want to reach the specific individuals or groups - tomorrow, next week or month, or continuously?
- Where: Where is the public relations effort to occur - within the facility or somewhere outside of the facility?

Why: Why are you reaching for this particular sector of the public - do you need more volunteers, more money, additional staff, more placements, or is it for some other reason?

How: How do you intend to accomplish your efforts - with brochures, newspaper articles, radio or television ads, in person, or by a combination of these approaches?

Public relations is a means by which a rehabilitation facility can successfully build its image. Regardless of the type of facility (sheltered workshop, activity center, transitional workshop), public relations, and more specifically, the techniques of public relations are important for developing that positive feeling or image with the public. Through a wide variety of public relations techniques, the attitudes of people can be positively reinforced. Likewise, negative images can be reduced through good public relations programming.

It has been established that public relations is important to building the image of the facility. But what does the term public relations mean? According to Cutlip and Center (1978), public relations is "the planned effort to influence opinion through good character and responsible performance, based upon mutually satisfactory two-way communication (1)." While the definition does stress the importance of influencing public opinion to have a good or positive attitude, it does not identify who is to take charge of such an undertaking. Marston (1963) places public relations into the administrative ranks by stating that:

it is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action and communication to earn public understanding and acceptance (p. 5).

The Work-Oriented Rehabilitation Dictionary and Synonyms (1976) has tied public relations to the rehabilitation facility by stating that it is:

a process through which the agency attempts to fulfill its social responsibility, and to secure the public recognition and approval necessary to success; includes everything that helps or hinders the understanding, knowledge, use, and support of the agency's program (p. 38).

By incorporating some of the key words and phrases from the above definitions, an all-inclusive definition of public relations as it relates specifically to the rehabilitation facility can be formulated. Public relations is the management function of developing and maintaining a planned effort to influence public opinion towards a positive understanding, acceptance, and support of the facility by identifying policies, procedures, and purposes. Further, it involves evaluating public attitudes and executes a program of action and communication to assure the continued success of the facility and ongoing communication with the public.

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) has established a standard on public relations. CARF (1980) implies that the rehabilitation facility must:

1. develop its public relations program based on the rehabilitation needs of the community, and with the cooperation of concerned community groups.
2. conduct a public information program with other agencies, groups, and individuals within the community to gain their understanding and support, and, maintain such contact.
3. designate someone within the facility as being responsible and in authority for the public relations program.
4. maintain ongoing communications with the press, radio, and television stations.
5. distribute written materials describing the services of the facility to agencies, groups, and individuals within the community.
6. continue its advocacy role (in the community) for the needs of those they serve.

While not all rehabilitation facilities are part of CARF, the points mentioned above should be considered by the facility which is intent upon improving its public relations program.

It is the goal of this publication to provide rehabilitation facilities with a guide which will (1) assist them in identifying individuals or groups that facilities should be trying to reach with their public relations efforts, and (2) list the types of public information messages or techniques that can or should be used when developing and transmitting public information to those identified groups. By identifying who it is the facility is trying to reach with its public relations, and the manner in which the recipients should be reached, the eventual outcome hoped for is that of the facility improving its image in the community, increasing contract sales, job placements, donations, and client numbers.

PLANNING FOR THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

To develop a sound public relations program for your rehabilitation facility, it is very important that you carefully identify who it is you are intending to reach with your program. But, before addressing this area, it is essential that the facility complete several preliminary planning steps. The planning of a sound public relations program includes: administrative involvement, determining program directions, selection of public relations director, staff involvement, and reviewing the past.

1. Administrative Involvement

The first preliminary step pertains to the administrative involvement of the facility. By administrative, reference is made to the board of directors (trustees) and the Executive Director (Superintendent, Administrator) of the organization. The public reputation of the organization is derived in substantial part from the public voice of these senior officials. As those with administrative responsibility and authority act and speak, they establish the objectivity of the facility and the subsequent interpretations by the public. Thus, public relations is, by nature and necessity, tied to the administrative function.

The extent to which the members of the board of directors have been selected to represent the entire community, the reputation of the members as individuals and their reputations in the community of the groups they represent constitute built-in public relations assets and liabilities at the outset. If possible, then, it is important that the members of the board of directors represent a wide array of groups or organizations within the community, and not just a few select groups.

There should also be commitment by the board of directors to acknowledge the importance of public relations and to work towards the accomplishment of a sound program. It is important that the facility vigorously advocate its relevant worth. Such a commitment is assumed by five characteristics:

- there is commitment and participation by management for a public relations program,
- there is competence in the public relations functionaries appointed by the senior officials,
- there is a centralization of policy making for the public relations function,
- there is communication from the public, to them, and laterally throughout the organization, and,
- there is a coordination of all efforts towards defined goals of public relations.

There is a need to have a good atmosphere within the facility, otherwise the public relations function will be poor in spite of any public relations project undertaken. A positive commitment by the board of directors for public relations is the beginning of establishing a good atmosphere.

Once the board of directors has made the commitment to establish a sound public relations program, it should carefully select a planning committee for the purpose of clearly defining the image the facility will want to project. This image should be consistent with the mission statements and goals set by the board of directors. Building a positive image is the goal of the public relations program. In order to clearly define the image the facility desires to project, it is important that the board of directors be sure of who it is trying to reach and for what purpose. Policies should be adopted by the board of directors pertaining to the development and continuance of a sound public relations program. The board of directors should strongly consider adopting a resolution pertaining to such a commitment, which will show their intent to staff and the community.

Board members should be selected to serve on a public relations committee. The responsibilities of such a committee could be assumed by the executive or personnel committee for smaller rehabilitation facilities. The key issue here is the designation of some board members as being responsible for directing or guiding public relations programming for the facility. It should be the responsibility of this committee, together with the approval of the entire board of directors, to strive for a clear understanding of workshop program and policy and the scope and limitations of the services it offers. Alternately, workshop services will be accepted, utilized, and supported by the community to the degree that they are understood by the community. The community must have confidence in the workshop spokesman before they can give their support.

2. Determining Program Directions

The second step in the planning of a sound public relations program pertains to that of determining program directions. This is, in part, tied to step one. The board of directors for the facility have established the overall policies pertaining to public relations and the facility. Now it becomes important to determine the more specific courses of action which should be taken by the public relations program. Everyone connected with the facility may have his or her ideas about what the public relations program should do and the direction it should head in. The board of directors have determined this last part when they established the policies for the program. Everyone else who is connected with the facility should have his or her opportunity to present ideas for the public relations program. It is quite feasible that many good things will come from such meetings with the staff and employees of the facility. By allowing them to share the input for the program, they will feel that much closer to the program, and will project an even more positive image of the facility to the community at large. With predetermined program directions, everyone in the facility will be more knowledgeable of what needs to be done in terms of public relations, and then be able to act in the proper manner.

3. Selection of Public Relations Director

The third step in the planning of a sound public relations program pertains to the selection of a public relations director, representative, or similarly titled individual. This position could be assumed by the facility director, or by someone else currently on staff. The position could be designated as being full-time or part-time, depending on the size and needs of the facility. If the position will be part-time, the responsibilities for the position could be assumed by someone who has other part-time responsibilities as well. Prior to the appointment of anyone, it is important that the facility develop a job description for the position. This will be a very valuable tool when selecting an individual as being responsible for the public relations program. The job description will identify the position. It will also lessen the chances that job duties will be in error as to the expectations that the facility had for the position. In other words, the job description pinpoints the duties of the position and leaves little room for error on what the individual is to do within the job.

4. Staff Involvement

The fourth preliminary step in the planning of a sound public relations program is that of the staff involvement of the facility. This includes the executive staff, the rehabilitation staff, the production staff, and employees of the facility. Facility staff are on the front line continuously when it comes to public relations. They project to the public what they feel about the facility, both as a place to work and as a place to seek help. The staff of the facility meet daily with clients, employers, business persons, referral agencies, and other human services professionals. Each of these groups requires its own approach and response, but the key here is how the staff feels about the agency, and what objectives and attitudes they reflect. Thus, it becomes important for the staff to know and understand the type of image which the facility is trying to build. Then, whenever they become involved in any public relations efforts for the facility, whether it is of a professional or social nature, they will be prepared to answer the call in an appropriate manner. A good understanding of the information the facility wishes to project reduces the risk that a staff member will relay conflicting messages. It is important that the facility maintain a united front. This means having staff involvement.

5. Reviewing the Past

During the development of a strong public relations program, the facility should review what has taken place in the past. The facility should gather brochures and other forms of communications materials which are currently or were formerly used in connection with the public relations program. The facility scrapbook is an excellent place to review the history of the facility, the programs it has been involved with, the public relations it has received from newspapers, and the special events it has been connected with. Some of the materials may still be relevant while others will serve only to remind the facility of the direction it was going at

the time, and the materials it used in its efforts of public relations. The idea is to know and understand where the facility was coming from and where it had intended to head. This is a good way to find out which public relations efforts worked best.

6. Evaluating the Results

The planning of a good public relations program also involves evaluating the results. The facility should determine how it intends to review the results of the program. The program could, for example, be evaluated according to the impact it has left with people, or by the cost/benefit relationship of advertisements and literature to contracts and referrals. Good program evaluation data should indicate strong and weak areas. Such information then provides the facility the opportunity to correct weak areas or eliminate them. This should result in a public relations program which is much stronger.

Based on the materials and information gathered, the facility should identify every group or individual with which they have had prior contact. This will provide insight for the development of current, useful materials. Many of the same groups and individuals will be reached in the future; however, from the established list, gaps may become visible to the facility. Perhaps new programs have been initiated within the facility since the development of the materials. These programs should be made known to individuals, groups, and/or organizations. New organizations or agencies may now be available in the community, which did not exist prior to the development of the materials, and which should be included when the new materials have been developed. Perhaps the types of handicapped persons being served has changed or been expanded, and individuals or organizations within the community have not been aware of this. The emphasis here is to:

- identify prior contacts of the facility
- list the methods employed in reaching these contacts
- review the materials used in connection with the methods and then list limitations or degree of effectiveness the methods and materials have had regarding the facility's public relations with these contacts
- list the reasons why the present public relations program is or is not working for each of these contacts
- consult the community to determine the gaps which may exist among the contacts the facility should reach with its public relations efforts
- prioritize the gaps and the prior contacts with regards to receiving the facility's public relations efforts, and
- develop appropriate materials and methods for reaching the prioritized contacts.

For example, the facility has identified all contacts which are currently, or in the past, have been reached by their public relations efforts. One such contact pertained to materials distributed to

businesses for the primary purpose of obtaining subcontract jobs. The facility prepared the following information based on its review of the contract materials and public relations.

Group: subcontractors in industry.

Materials developed: two brochures (1971 and 1974).

Limitations: outdated photographs in brochures; machinery and equipment purchases since 1974 unknown to the businesses; new job skills available at facility (since 1974) unknown to the businesses.

Reasons not working: businesses receiving brochures are unaware of workshop skills existing at facility regarding production capabilities; outdated brochures leave unfavorable impression with businesses.

Materials/p.r. needed: new photographs; new brochure mentioning capabilities, skills, machines and equipment; need to advertise on local radio and television and in newspapers; need more exposure at civic meetings such as Rotary, Jaycees, Lion's clubs, Chamber of Commerce and business meetings, etc.

Ranking: given the #1 priority - viewed as critical to the workshop as it is needed to improve financial outlook.

A good review of the past, along with a survey of present and future contacts, should determine a fairly large number of groups or individuals that could be reached with the public relations materials. The next section discusses these groups and individuals.

Identifying The Audience

Public support, client referrals, and contract work for rehabilitation facilities depends, in part, on how effectively the messages of public service from the facility can be conveyed to the general public. Public, as used here, refers to groups within the community as well as to the community as a whole.

Informing the public takes place through a wide variety of media communications. For instance, answering a telephone call or a letter from a private citizen is a public information activity. Speeches before civic organizations, appearing on community television or radio talk shows, and write-ups in the local newspaper are also public information activities. These and other forms of communication provide the facility many opportunities to bring its message(s) to the public. This, in turn, sustains and benefits the organization. If not done well, such communications can hurt the facility.

The public has an ever-increasing right to know what the facility is doing because many rehabilitation facilities are receiving public funding in one form or another, and subsequently are vulnerable to public scrutiny and accountability. Thus, it becomes increasingly

important for the rehabilitation facility to convey its messages to the public it sees as being necessary if the facility is to remain in operation.

Of course, not all techniques of communications are or should be used by each and every facility. A shotgun approach should be avoided. Reasons for not using certain techniques could be: the cost involved with using the technique, the limited scope of the method or the limited population which can be reached by the technique, or the lack of knowledge with or experience in using the technique.

CARF (1980) has, within its interpretation of Standard #8 - Community Involvement and Relations, stated that the techniques used by the facility in its ongoing public relations activities should include, but not be limited to ". . . annual reports, newspaper, TV, and radio coverage of special events, presentations to professional, business, civic, religious, and fraternal organizations, invitations to various interested groups to tour the facility, etc." (91) Two additional techniques which should be added to the above are: (1) brochures developed for clients, businesses, and the community and, (2) the development of a facility newsletter or newspaper.

As stated earlier, the goals and purposes of this publication are to assist the rehabilitation facility identify the recipients of its public relations efforts and the messages the recipients need to receive from the facility. The how-to's involved with using each of the communications techniques will not be discussed. Rather, the reader should refer to the many books and publications which discuss the types of public relations, the pros and cons of using each of them, and how they are meant to be used. Such information can be obtained from public libraries, bookstores, and from the various media themselves (radio, television, newspaper offices). Person-to-person contact with representatives of the various communications media can provide the facility with firsthand, grass roots information on what can or should be done if the facility is to wisely transmit its message(s) to the public.

As it is important to know and understand as much as possible about the information which the identified recipients of rehabilitation facilities need to receive, and the techniques used to convey the information, this next section of the publication will: discuss the relationship each category and individual group has with the rehabilitation facility and list the messages each category needs or is interested in receiving via the facility public relations, and the techniques which could be used for them.

Identifiable Recipients of Public Relations Efforts

There are three major target groups you will want your public relations materials or information to reach. Each group has several subgroups within them, and they may or may not be similar to any other in terms of what public relations information they need or the techniques used to deliver it to them. The groups are as follows:

1. Client Groups
 - a. clients themselves
 - b. parents or guardians
 - c. referral agencies
 - d. ancillary agencies
 - e. advocacy groups
 - f. staff and employees of the facility
2. Business Groups
 - a. subcontractors
 - b. service contractors
 - c. employers
 - d. those providing job site evaluations or on-the-job training positions
3. Community Groups
 - a. members or financial donors of the facility
 - b. foundations
 - c. news media
 - d. influential groups
 - e. general public
 - f. volunteers of the facility

CLIENT GROUPS

The first major target group concerns itself with the delivery of public relations messages, through a wide variety of techniques, to handicapped persons and those individuals, groups, or agencies and organizations working with them. Since one of the purposes of a rehabilitation facility is to assist handicapped persons achieve optimum levels of functioning, then in order to have a full compliment of clientele to work with, the facility must initiate and continue with a sound public relations program designed to reach such handicapped persons and those associated with them.

Before listing the messages which this target group needs to receive in terms of public information, it is important to discuss each of the subgroups and why they are important to the facility's cause.

Clients

This groups refers to those handicapped individuals who are often the clients of another agency such as vocational rehabilitation, mental health, or a public school district. This short-term group is usually in the facility for evaluation, vocational or personal adjustment training, job-seeking, and/or job-training skills. They are usually only temporary participants, and return to their parent agency once completed with their program(s). Since the future of the workshop may partly depend on the continued influx of this group, it is critical that this group be reached by a wide variety of public relations techniques. The information should be directed at two target groups of clients: current clients of the facility, and potential clients within the community.

Ongoing public information releases to clients currently enrolled in programs at the facility will be beneficial in keeping them informed of other facility programs with which they could be involved and informed of facility activities or function. Examples of information releases may include: facility newsletters, updated brochures on client programs, social activity bulletins, and daily announcements posted on bulletin boards.

It is presumed that positive public relations with clients will assist them in their decision as to whether to become involved with the program(s) offered by the facility. As already mentioned, many clients are referred to rehabilitation facilities by agencies such as vocational rehabilitation, mental health, or public school districts. For these clients, the referring agency usually is the sole or final determinant in whether the client will be referred to the facility. However, referring agencies do allow most groups of handicapped persons to have an active say in whether or not they desire or should be referred to a particular facility. Therefore, it is important for rehabilitation facilities to identify those groups of handicapped persons who are active participants in the decision making process of where they should be referred, the communication techniques they are capable of receiving, and the messages that should be sent to them. Facility communications directed towards the potential segment of clients should result in individuals who are more attuned to facility purposes and programs; therefore, they should be better able to make a realistic decision in whether or not they desire or want to be referred to the facility. Additionally, the rate of referral no-shows and program dropouts should be reduced as a result of the increased awareness to facility purposes and programs.

Besides agency-referred clients, there is also a small group of potential clients designated as self-referrals. This pertains to those clients who refer themselves to the facility for some type of programming, e.g., job seeking skills, evaluation. They do not have a referring agency to make them aware of the existence of the facility. Thus, this particular group of potential clients needs to receive as much information as possible to determine if they want to become involved in the facility programs.

Parents and Guardians

The second subgroup pertains to the parents or guardians of facility clients and potential facility clients. Of course, not every client has parents or guardians - some manage their lives without dependency on others. However, effective communication of facility information to parents or guardians of dependent individuals can be a plus for the facility.

Much of the information directed at facility clients and potential facility clients can also provide information to their parents or guardians. For those clients who are unable to read and/or understand information written in facility brochures/newsletters or broadcast over television/radio stations, the accessibility of parents or guardians for reading and/or interpreting the message(s) can be invaluable for the facility. A secondary benefit derived by this is that the parents or guardians simultaneously receive the message(s) of the

facility. But, parents and guardians may have further questions or needs of information regarding the facility, and the facility should respond with additional public relations materials, whether written or spoken. After all, they are placing the well-being and safety of their son/daughter/ward in the hands of the rehabilitation facility for seven to eight hours each day. They need to be reassured or kept informed of facility information so that they know that their decision to allow their child/ward to attend the facility was the correct thing to do. When important information needs to be sent to parents and guardians, and it directly affects the clients, the information should be sent to the clients as well. This is common courtesy. It also reduces the risk of appearing to "going over the client's head". This places the clients on an adult level and says that they are important.

Referral Agencies

Referral agencies are those agencies or organizations which are the purchasers of services for handicapped persons from the rehabilitation facility. The principal purchasers are governmental or public agencies. Of this group, the state rehabilitation agency is usually the largest purchaser. Other state government agencies which purchase services are public health, social welfare, mental health, and corrections departments. Federal agencies purchasing services includes the Veterans Administration. Local purchasers of services include the county welfare and health departments, and public schools. Private purchasers of services for handicapped persons include the families of the handicapped persons, voluntary health agencies, service clubs, worker's compensation carriers, lawyers, and insurance companies.

Referring agencies differ from facility to facility. Those that are providers or purchasers of service for a facility are designated as referring agencies while the remainder may be designated as ancillary rehabilitation, social service, or similar agencies, who would probably benefit by knowing programs, purposes, and general information about the facility.

Referring agencies may remain moderately stable for the facility with one or more agencies either dropping or being added (from time to time) to the list of purchasers of services to the facility. Thus, it is important that the facility continue with its public relations efforts to ancillary agencies as well as to referring agencies. There may come a time when an ancillary agency may wish to purchase services which do exist within the facility. A lack of public relations and limited exposure to ancillary agencies could negate any possibility of receiving future referrals.

Ancillary Agencies

This group involves those rehabilitation and social service agencies which keep their clientele informed on the existence of rehabilitation facilities, how they can be beneficial to the clientele, and how they may become involved with a specific facility. Such agencies do not, however, directly refer clients to facilities. Rather, they serve as an information resource center for the handicapped and

other groups they were formed to deal with and do offer suggestions on which facility(s) would be most appropriate for their clients. They may even make the initial contact for the client with the facility or with a referral agency who deals with the facility. It is then left to the client to refer himself or have some referring agency sponsor him in the facility's programs. For example: an agency formed to provide assistance to individuals with epilepsy may make suggestions on which rehabilitation facility may be beneficial to a particular individual and also contact the local VR agency to set up an initial interview for the person.

Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups become involved with rehabilitation facilities as a result of actions which they take on behalf of individual handicapped persons, or groups of handicapped persons, for insuring that their interests and legal and human rights are safeguarded. Therefore, the more information which they receive on facility programs and purposes, the better feel they will have for the facility and the work being accomplished by the facility. Advocacy groups can also be beneficial to facilities themselves. For instance, a facility planning to expand into a new program area dealing with a specific segment of handicapped persons may be able to gather important input from the advocacy group which works with those individuals.

Staff and Employees of the Facility

The final group within the category "Client Groups" consists of the facility staff and the handicapped employees of the facility. Staff of a workshop are continually in the spotlight when it comes to public relations. As such, they will project what they feel about the facility, both as a place to work and as a place for handicapped persons to be served. Staff meet daily with clients, business persons, employers, referring agencies and related organizations, and parents and guardians. The mere fact that they are an employee of the facility makes them a spokesperson for policies, programs, purposes, etc., of the facility. Therefore, the facility should supply this group with timely and accurate data or messages which they may in turn deliver to other individuals or groups in the community.

Handicapped employees of the facility also project their attitudes or feelings of the facility to the public. If the facility has benefited the employee, the employee in turn may praise the facility. The opposite can also happen. Thus, the facility should, in addition to making a good environment for the employee, inform the employee of the changes or modifications of improvement. Employees may then share this news with others in the community.

Messages and Techniques Relevant to the "Client Groups"

Having discussed the individual groups embodied in the "Client Groups" category, it now becomes necessary to discuss the messages which the facility must get across to these groups. The messages and techniques which can or should be used, have been consolidated and listed by category rather than by individual groups. This is due to

the fact that information of concern to one individual group within the category is also of importance to one or more of the other groups within the category.

If a facility decides that it wants to develop messages aimed at clients and potential clients as primary recipients and related groups as secondary recipients, then it must take into account such factors as age, sex, handicap, or education and comprehension of the clients the intended message(s) is to reach. Therefore, each individual facility must select those techniques and messages which it believes will accurately promote the facility to the "client" group. For example, a facility serving the blind would select techniques involving verbal, as opposed to written materials (e.g., radio and television announcements, not brochures or billboards). Related groups within this category could, however, receive written information and read it to individuals within the client group.

Clients (as a group) are usually made aware of the presence of the rehabilitation facility in a number of ways: they hear short advertisements on local radio and television stations; they view information booths set up in the local mall or department store; they attend facility sponsored functions such as annual dinner meetings and special events or shows; they receive brochures on the facility from referring agencies or related social service agencies; and they hear about the facility from friends, neighbors, or acquaintances who either are attending, have attended, or are employed by the facility.

The other groups within the "Client Groups" category receive information about the facility in much the same manner as clients. The specific information they receive, however, could be identical to what the client received or it could be altogether different. These groups may receive information in some additional ways, such as: hearing a facility representative speak at a civic group meeting, receiving annual reports and newsletters via the mail, or attending open houses or tours at the facility.

Considerations for Developing Messages

- (1) Develop materials directly aimed at clients with the idea that they are the ones which will be reading, observing, or hearing them. Use a vocabulary which is readable, understandable, and enjoyable. An attractive brochure written at the level of and for the clients will make more sense to them and will be helpful to them when they decide whether or not to attend the facility. Television or radio announcements using words at the level of the clients lessens the chance that the message will be tuned out because a higher level of vocabulary is used.
- (2) Develop materials for the related groups which are both readable and understandable. Newspapers generally write materials at a sixth grade level of reading ability. Facilities should consider doing the same. Of course, if

materials are being developed for a specific group, i.e., referring agency professionals, this could be an exception. The facility is urged to use caution when developing the materials as opposed to finding out later a mistake was made.

- (3) Keep the materials as short and as direct as possible. Lengthy oversell may discourage the targeted individuals from reading or listening to the materials as they may become bored with the lengthiness of the materials. Often, one or two well-written or well-spoken sentences mean and say more than a paragraph. A photograph can often replace the need for additional sentences. Fifteen and thirty second radio or television spot announcements can often get a good message across to the listener, especially if used more than once.
- (4) When developing materials specifically for clients, make them feel at ease while reading or listening to the materials by using the third person pronoun "you" rather than "client." This suggests that as a facility, you are genuinely interested in the client as an individual. This principal is demonstrated as follows: "The clients will have one hour for lunch, and they are expected to return to their assigned work stations promptly" vs. "You will have one hour for lunch, and you are expected to return to your assigned work station promptly."
- (5) Develop visuals for the materials which realistically portray the facility. If sheltered work plays a large role with the facility, have photographs which will show both detail and a wide portion of the work. Do not play upon one small job which occupies one small corner of the workshop and is done by one employee. This will do nothing but leave the impression with the reader (or viewer) that this is a major component of the facility. Clients coming to the facility may become discouraged when they realize they will not, nor cannot, perform the work because there is already an employee assigned to the task.
- (6) There are a number of informational facts that can be included within the various techniques used for transmitting public information. Which ones the facility believes pertinent to use will depend on the technique used, and the intended recipient of the information. Some of the more common informational facts are:
 - (a) the inclusion of an introduction or welcome to the facility by the chief executive of the facility. Within this statement could be an invitation to tour the facility, or to telephone the facility if there should be any questions or concerns on behalf of the reader or viewer. Include the name, title, and telephone number of an individual with whom the reader or viewer may contact should they have further questions.

- (b) information regarding geographic location, size of the facility (manpower or dimensions), types of handicapped persons served, accessibility, and types of transportation available (bus, taxi, facility vehicle) to get to and from the facility can provide the reader or viewer with a better image of the facility.
- (c) provide an overview for each of the various programs which are offered by the facility. If the public information message involves only one of the programs, then the message can be in the form of a more detailed overview. Additionally, define the terms which are used in connection with the various programs (e.g., work or vocational evaluation, work adjustment, job-seeking skills, placement, OJT, contract work). Such words may be very new to the clients and related groups, and could cause some anxious moments while they are trying to figure out just what they are about to get themselves into. While referring agencies may be familiar with the terms, their definition(s) may be totally different from those of the facility. Examples of what takes place during each program will help clarify the terms.
- (d) establish the general role of the various staff who are involved with the various programs. This clues the reader or viewer as to the authority, responsibilities, and the role of staff members.
- (e) provide a general policy statement pertaining to the facility's expectations of the clients while they are attending the programs and the consequences which could occur if these expectations are not met. This may provide the reader or viewer with the incentive to motivate clients and potential clients to strive to do the best job possible while at the facility.
- (f) provide related general information, such as facility policy toward absenteeism, tardiness, receiving incoming telephone calls, and dining facilities.
- (g) relate one or more success stories of former clients. This indicates that the facility has done what it said it would do and instills a positive attitude with the reader or viewer that perhaps it can happen again.

Techniques for Developing Messages

- (1) There are three major types of brochures which can be used to relay information to the public. They are: general purpose, specific, and professional brochures.

General purpose brochures are those which have been developed for clients, parents, staff and employees, and agencies, and outlines the various rehabilitation programs and other important functions of the facility, such as subcontract work. Photographs included in these brochures usually consist of an external picture of the facility, and interior shots of individuals on contract jobs, testing, and in counselor offices.

Specific brochures are those which, in more detail than general purpose brochures, describe one or more of the rehabilitation programs, such as: brochures on the evaluation program, sheltered employment. Photographs usually consist of the various tasks or parts of a program which the individual client will be assigned to while enrolled in the program,

Professional brochures are those which have been developed for use by referral agencies and related organizations and their professional employees, and outline the purposes and missions of the facility, programs offered, tuition schedules, eligibility requirements for admission, pre-enrollment information requirements, and facility contact person. Photographs are similar to those used within general purpose brochures.

- (2) A second technique for delivering public information is by the use of radio and television air time. Media time with radio and/or television stations may consist of one or more of the following for rehabilitation facilities: (a) spot announcements 15 to 60 seconds in length, (b) a weekly or monthly $\frac{1}{2}$ hour broadcast, and (c) a yearly weekend broadcast, usually from a local mall or department store, and frequently in connection with a fund raising or community awareness campaign.

Spot announcements, generally aired five or more times within a relatively short period of time, have the advantage of repeating the message to the listener and increases the chances that the facility's message was absorbed by the audience. With spot announcements, there is time for only one thought. Thirty seconds of air time is consumed by approximately seventy-five words. The facility name, address, and telephone number will use 15-20 words. This leaves approximately 55-60 words to present the thought. With such little, but valuable time, words must be carefully selected so that a complete and accurate thought is conveyed to the audience. Public service announcements for non-profit organizations may be available free of charge according to federal regulations. Since these free air-time spots are limited in numbers, competition to obtain the spots can be

very aggressive. The facility which has a well-prepared and important message will have the best opportunity of obtaining the free air-time. Facilities should try to obtain this free air-time. If unsuccessful at first, keep trying. The continued drafting of message(s) should eventually gain the air-time.

One-half hour broadcasts allow the facility to present detailed information regarding client rehabilitation programming. Such an amount of time on a radio station allows listeners the opportunity to telephone the station and ask specific questions of the speakers, or comment on some fact or statement. The television medium allows the facility to show slides/films on the facility to the audience. The inclusion of staff, employees and clients on such broadcasts allows them to become active participants. Broadcasts of this type will cost a great deal more than spot announcements and will take much preparation time.

Weekend broadcasts are generally held in conjunction with some special event, such as fund raising or increasing community awareness of the existence and purpose of the facility. Such a broadcast usually is held within a department store or mall where people can stop by, visit with the announcers or staff of the facility, and obtain written literature or view slide/sound or film programs pertaining to the facility event. A major advantage of the weekend broadcast is that much of the listening audience of the station will, at some point in time during the broadcast, tune in the station on their radio, and increase their awareness of the facility.

- (3) Local newspapers and magazines can be a good way for the facility to inform the public, provided the message is informative and has newsworthy value. Since newspaper articles are generally written at a sixth grade reading level, a large percentage of the community is able to read and understand the information. A shortcoming of newspaper and magazine articles is the brevity of time they are current. Most newspapers are published daily, read once, and discarded. Since few people read every article within the paper or magazine, the facility must do its utmost to make the message informative and interesting for the potential readers. This will increase the likelihood that the article will be read.
- (4) Billboards can increase the awareness of the facility by individuals within the community. Clients or their parents may learn of the existence of the facility merely by viewing a billboard which has been strategically located. Billboards are viewed daily by commuters and can be relatively inexpensive. As such, facilities increase public awareness by advertisement by repetitious viewing.

- (5) Direct mail sent to clients, staff and employees, parents, and other individuals in the community regarding facility programs or purposes can result in additional referrals, or simply inform the public of the good things being accomplished by the facility. Invitations to tour the facility or attend a special event can be included in direct mail literature as well.
- (6) Tours and open houses afford the public the opportunity to see firsthand what actually takes place within the workshop. Prospective clients and their parents or sponsoring agency increase their knowledge of the facility and what clients do during the day. Current clients, staff and employees take pride in "showing off" where they work.
- (7) Civic meetings and their attendance by staff, employees and clients improves public awareness of client programming, and may result in referrals.

Other techniques which can be used in reaching individuals or groups within the Client Group include: word of mouth by staff, employees, and clients to other individuals regarding the facility; a facility newsletter which can be mailed to members of the facility, parents, referral and related agencies, informing everyone of the facility and what is happening; and facility meetings, which inform employees of the facility and other interested individuals about the facility.

BUSINESS GROUPS

The second major target group that the facility will want its public relations materials or information to reach is that of Business Groups. Public information for this category focuses on the realm of work rather than people. Businesses supply work to the subcontract department of the facility; they provide realistic job sites within their place of work for the evaluation of clients; they hire handicapped clients for jobs within their organization; and, they contract with the facility to have certain jobs completed (i.e., janitorial or landscaping services). Businesses also make donations or contributions to the facility, whether in the form of machinery and equipment, money to purchase such machinery and equipment, or, in time invested by employees of the business to serve as consultants, volunteers or board members to the facility. Thus, it becomes important to discuss the information and messages which this category needs to receive in order to assist the facility in the above mentioned manners. But first, the groups within this category should be discussed.

Subcontractors

Businesses may contract out work (jobs) for a number of reasons:

- (1) They may find that additional facilities and labor are required in order to meet increased production demands, whether

due to an inadequate labor supply, insufficient equipment and machinery for the job(s), limited work or storage space, or untimely or emergency delivery schedules.

- (2) The work may not be within the scope of work which is normally performed by the business, and the business may not wish to add such a job which would interfere with his normal production routine.
- (3) The contractor may not wish to have his skilled and/or highly paid employees tied to a lower skilled level job.
- (4) Contracting out the work may be less than if the work were to be kept in-house. This could be due to the need to hire and train new employees for the new work, purchasing equipment and machinery for the job, and subsequent overhead expenses tied to the job.

Thus, subcontractors of the facility, in order to be a supplier of work, should have a picture of the facility as one which helps handicapped people, but which also runs a smooth, efficient shop - one which is clean, businesslike, and orderly. Brochures should include photographs of the contract department. The layout of the plant may indicate efficiency in operations to a potential subcontractor. Brochures, direct mail, and other forms of media may also list equipment and machinery currently available and in use. An emphasis on good quality control requirements will also provide positive impressions to businesses.

It is the responsibility of the facility, then, to promote its capabilities, expertise, manpower, and facility to businesses so that they have sufficient information to accurately judge whether or not they can make proper use of the facility as a work site. The emphasis should be placed on the business aspects of the facility rather than on the human services aspects.

Service Contractors

Service contractors contract for services for much the same reasons as subcontractors contract out work. However, instead of the work being completed at the rehabilitation facility, the work is completed at the contractor's place of business (e.g., landscaping, janitorial, or maid services). Also, the businesses may be one and the same (service contractor and subcontractors).

When a business is interested in having someone outside of the business provide a service on an ongoing basis, it may: (1) have an open bid for the service by anyone, (2) have a closed bid for the service by a selected few, or (3) ask that one particular individual or group submit a competitive bid. The method they choose can depend on who they may be. For example, federal governmental buildings must have open bids for service work, whereas a small, privately owned establishment may have only two individuals submit bids for the same type of service work.

Service contractors advertise their bids in a number of ways: they place ads in local newspapers/journals/magazines; they advertise by word of mouth; and, they contact potential bidders by mail or telephone. This latter method can only be used when the service contractor has some knowledge of the existence of the individual(s) and their abilities to complete the work desired by the contractor.

It is this last method with which the rehabilitation facility must concern itself. The facility must, within its public information and materials directed at the "Business Groups" category, describe the services that are available to business. Service contractors should have a picture of the facility as one which has the manpower, machinery and/or equipment, and efficiency to complete the service work. A positive impression of the facility's capabilities should in turn generate the request for a bid from potential service contractors. Once again, this takes public relations, planned and well executed!

Employers

Employers hire handicapped individuals not because they are handicapped, but rather because they can do the job! How long would businesses remain in business if they hired people unable to complete the job tasks? Not long! Thus, employers who hire the handicapped should view the facility as a reliable resource for finding good employees. The job placement personnel of the facility should know their clients' skills and capabilities, and do their best to locate appropriate job placements where their clients can succeed as employees. Employers of handicapped individuals may also be subcontractors and/or service contractors of the facility, or someone totally void of the rehabilitation facility.

It is critical that the public information and messages directed at potential employers of handicapped individuals stress work-related skills, abilities and behaviors rather than "good feelings from hiring the handicapped." The more background information a potential employer receives: pertaining to the job training and other skills taught by the facility, the better chance a client will have to become an employee.

Employers Providing Job Site Evaluations or On-The-Job Training Positions

Employers who provide job site evaluation or on-the-job training for clients of the facility, do so partly because they desire to help the handicapped but also because they have some work which needs to be completed. Clients within these positions are generally not full-fledged potential employees. They either are unsure of the type of work they are capable of doing, what they are interested in doing, and the quantity/quality of their work. They have been placed in these positions to determine the above factors, and also, to provide them with realistic training so as to become potential employees.

Employers face many risks when they agree to provide job site evaluation positions or job training. The client may injure himself

or someone else, the work or machinery/equipment used in the work may be ruined by the client, and the employer may run up against problems from unions or employees within his facility.

Thus, public information or messages directed at this group should discuss the benefits derived from providing job site evaluations or OJT, the responsibilities of the rehabilitation facility with these clients, and information pertaining to how clients are prepared and selected for such positions. The employer must be left with the feeling that he is an active participant in improving the handicapped client's work skills and not treading into the unknown. See Botterbusch (1978).

Messages and Techniques Relevant To The "Business Groups"

Having discussed the individual groups within the "Business Groups," it now becomes necessary to discuss the messages which the facility must get across to these groups. Again, the messages and techniques which can or should be used, have been consolidated and listed by category rather than by individual group. This is due to the fact that information of concern to one individual group within the category is also of importance to one or more of the other groups within the category.

As mentioned earlier, the groups within this category both need and are interested in receiving messages centering on work and work-related topics as opposed to people topics. The information they receive from the rehabilitation facility forms their impression of the facility as a place of business. The facility which presents itself as an efficient place of operation and being able to meet specifically stated needs of businesses has a much better chance of being contacted by businesses.

What is actually meant when it is said that the facility should present itself as an efficient place of operation? There are many factors which can or should be listed, as each business in the community has certain items that are of special interest to them. This could be due to the nature or type of work they do or to the individual preferences of the employee(s) who make the decisions regarding the release of work (contracts), hiring people, etc. Items of informational value to businesses include the following:

- Location of the facility - both geographically, and by specific address.
- Size of the facility - both in terms of available manpower and the square footage.
- Storage space - the square footage available, and types of merchandise accepted.

- Transportation - the number of trucks or vans available, including the size either in terms of square footage, weight or both.
- Machinery and equipment - types and sizes, and including pieces per hour if pertinent.
- Supervisory personnel - the number available, and the ratio of supervisors to employees (i.e., 1:12).
- Job skills - the specific skills or expertise which the facility has regarding jobs.
- The shipping/receiving area - number of loading platforms, accessibility, material handling equipment available.
- Quality Control - written procedures or guarantees of the facility.
- Expertise on-hand or available - Industrial Engineer or technician, electrical plumbing, construction, etc.
- Satisfied customers - businesses which have used the facility.
- Specialized services performed - janitorial, landscaping, maid services where facility supplies manpower, supervision, materials and supplies.
- Job related functions - inventory records maintained, shipping/receiving and billing records held for specified number of years.
- Quotes - handled by telephone, or in person, and by whom.
- Dependability - is the facility reliable in any and all endeavors?

Businesses are generally made aware of the presence and potential of rehabilitation facilities in a number of ways: they hear short advertisements on local radio and television stations concerning the facility's need for good contract jobs or for businesses to hire the handicapped; they read items of interest regarding the facility in the local newspaper or in magazine articles; they view information booths set up in malls or department stores; they may attend facility sponsored functions such as annual dinners or special events; they receive brochures and other pieces of literature in the mail; they are in contact with friends, employees, or clients of the facility; they may be contacted by telephone by a board member or procurement person of the facility regarding work; members of the rehabilitation department may contact them in regard to training or placement of handicapped clients; they attend and participate in civic meetings such as Rotary, Jaycees, Chamber of Commerce, and related groups; and they may play an active role in fund raising activities such as United Way, of which the facility is to be a recipient of funds.

As one can tell, businesses are made aware of the facility in many of the same ways as groups within the "Client Groups," however, businesses are primarily interested in the production or ongoing operations of the facility rather than in the people (human) aspects.

Considerations for Developing Messages or Techniques

1. The Chief Executive Official of the facility, his executive staff, and board members should actively seek out and give speeches to service clubs that are pinpointed directly to industrial representatives in a position to give contract work to the facility, provide job-site evaluation slots or work adjustment slots, establish and maintain on-the-job training programs for facility clients, and hire qualified handicapped persons ready to leave the facility. Such speeches should: explain the mission or purpose of the facility; jobs taken on and completed by them; specialized machinery or equipment; training that handicapped individuals receive at the facility and how this benefits the community.
2. There should be continued newspaper, radio, and television publicity that compliments the facility's program of contract procurement, job-site evaluations, service contracts, on-the-job training, and placement. Advertisements can also be placed with each type of media.
3. The facility should consider using billboards as a means of advertising. Dolnick (1963) mentioned that one contractor had furnished a billboard for a facility, and that the billboard carried large pictures of the interior of the workshop and information pointing out that the workshop did quality work for industry and provided industrial training for handicapped persons. The contractor benefited from donating the space on the billboard because the workshop also had "through the courtesy of" and the company's name printed on the sign. If strategically located, such a sign will be observed by many people while they are commuting to and from their places of employment.
4. The facility should prepare and distribute written literature to businesses and related groups. Materials could assume the form of brochures, newsletters, reports, etc., pertaining to the need for contract work, job-site evaluation and training slots within industry, hiring of handicapped individuals, donations (money) for capital improvements or another form, i.e., machinery or equipment for improving or updating existing facility production techniques, soliciting businessmen for consultations or becoming volunteers of the facility, etc. An important thing to remember is that the facility should not present itself as seeking charity. Rather, the facility should decide what type of message it wants to get across to the businesses and related groups, and then develop the literature accordingly. For example, if the facility is actively seeking contract work from a specific group or groups, then the brochures developed may be very specific in this area and not touch upon training or placement activities.

When disseminating written information to businesses and related groups, consider doing the following:

- a. Review some type of business/industrial directory to locate the specified industries that the facility desires information should reach.
- b. Address the material to a specified individual and not just to a title. Everyone likes to receive personalized mail, but few really read mail addressed "Director" or "Supervisor," etc. Take the time to find out who is behind the title.
- c. Keep the written information short and to the point. Businessmen are busy people and do not always have time to read several pages to find out what the purpose and intent was.
- d. Again, don't seek charity. Have a purpose in what you are doing and specify it clearly in the beginning!

COMMUNITY GROUPS

The third major target group is involved with the delivery of public relations information to subgroups through a wide variety of techniques. Groups within this category are vital to the rehabilitation facility. They may donate time, money, or materials. They may do nothing at all, beyond reading about facility activities in the local newspaper. BUT, they want and need to be kept informed! The individual groups within this category are concerned with the continuation and improvement of the facility itself. They are also concerned with the individual segments comprising the facility-client programming, work performed and placements. A facility which develops and transmits public information to groups within this category increases its chances of remaining open. While they do not supply client referrals or subcontract work, their backing in the community can assist in obtaining such work or clients.

Members or Donors

This group is identified as including board of directors (trustees), supportive members, and private individual contributors. Board members are often the most involved among all individuals or groups within the "Community Group." Perhaps this is because the responsibility for the overall policy direction of the workshop is in the hands of the board of directors. A responsible board is one which has confidence in administration and supports the goals of the organization through fund raising efforts, developing support in the community, and using influence to accomplish the facility's goals. Ongoing public relations with each of the three categories and the groups and individuals within each category keeps the board members informed on the directions, needs, and programs of the facility. Specific materials distributed to potential board members may also result in such individuals desiring to become an active board member of the facility.

In the supportive group, the members pay dues, attend meetings, elect officers, and serve as volunteers. By becoming members, they have indicated their willingness and desire to work for the cause of the facility. As such, it is important that the facility continue its public relations efforts with this group.

Private individual contributors are those who have donated money or other items of value to the facility. These individuals may know someone who has benefited from attending the facility, or an employee, and realize the worth of having such a facility within the community; or they may be seeking means of obtaining tax deductions on their upcoming taxes. Regardless of the reason, they have chosen to make a contribution(s) to the facility. Thus, if the facility is to continue to receive donations from these individuals or others like them in the community, then public relations must be ongoing.

Foundations

Foundations occasionally support rehabilitation facilities. They may either spread their grant monies to a number of organizations and causes or they may choose to support only one organization's cause. Every organization would like to receive "free" money from foundation grants - few achieve this however. Whether the rehabilitation facility is lucky enough to be one of the select few depends to a great extent on the public information that has been forwarded to the foundation center for review, screening, and processing. A facility should never sit back and wait for a foundation to ask for information. This may never happen. Foundations have too many organizations requesting funds as it is. Foundations, prior to releasing money to an organization, review financial and program records to determine the solvency of ~~the~~ organizations and the cause they are working for. They need to know if the organization will be able to use the money for the requested or stated purposes, and not to pay overdue bills.

Therefore, the rehabilitation facility must develop public information which will assist the foundation in its review process of whether or not to consider a grant to the facility. Again, this takes planned public relations.

News Media

Cutlip and Center (1978) have stated that news is "anything timely that is interesting and significant to readers in respect to their personal affairs or their relation to society (p. 1)." Basically, it is what people want to know. Thus, the news media should see the rehabilitation facility as being a cooperative, active community resource, and as a reliable source of news and human interest. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the rehabilitation facility to keep the various news media informed of items of public interest. The backing of the media can be a very positive attribute for the facility in fighting for its cause, receiving donations, or maintaining referrals.

In terms of the public relations program of the facility the news media should be thought of as the tools by which and through which the facility's story is told to the public. A carefully planned public relations program should know and be able to fulfill the individual requirements of each of the mediums available to or used by the facility. Check with the news media to learn their individual requirements and restrictions, and then build the public information on what has been learned. The facility may want to secure a board member with a media background and have him actively involved with the public relations committee. This can be a tremendous asset to the facility.

Influential Groups

Influential groups within the community should be represented on the governing board of directors and the body of volunteers. The image of the facility held by various influential or power groups within the community will depend upon who among them is actively involved in the facility, and by the results of the facility which can be pointed to. Groups which could be influential in assisting the facility in its endeavors include: Jaycees, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Lion's Club, Banker's Associations, Real Estate Associations, etc.

How can a facility determine who the influential groups within the community are? One way is to ask individuals within the community, staff and employees, board members, and other facility contacts. Within limits, perceived power is a real power - people who others believe have influence do tend to have and gain influence.

When a facility prepares and transmits public information about the facility to influential groups, the communications should be personal, and it should be selective. Messages, which are brought by various facility personnel directly to influential groups and which are perceived as being important, will most likely be well received and seen as being worthy of support.

General Public

Stated simply, the general public is the "man on the street." People included within this group seldom know much about any one agency in the community. An exception to this would be friends and acquaintances of facility clients or employees. These people may know more than most within the general public group because of their association with clients and/or employees.

If the individuals within this group know very little about the facility, and are not associated with any other group discussed thus far, then one may question why there is need to inform this group. It should be the goal of the rehabilitation facility to make their name mean something to as many people as possible, and for that something to reflect

positively and accurately the activities and objectives of the facility. It is most certain that someday a few of the individuals within the "general public" group may become attached to the facility directly, or indirectly via any of the other groups which have been discussed thus far.

It should also mention that this group pays taxes on earned income, real estate, etc. Some of that money may be returned to the facility in one form or another. Therefore, the facility should keep this group informed of how the money was used, if not for any other reason.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important audience for the rehabilitation facility. They give the facility their time and interest. The image which the volunteer has of the facility includes feelings about: the dedication and competence of staff and employees; how the clients appear to feel about the services provided to them; and how the facility appreciates the assistance they (volunteers) are providing to them.

Volunteers can save the facility money, if used in the right place. The best use of volunteers is where a specific job with specific times and clear lines of authority are indicated. The exception to this would be a volunteer who has had prior experience in that area, or who has worked previously with the facility and demonstrated his/her reliability and expertise.

The facility should be responsible for providing skilled supervision of any volunteer activities. A volunteer who is made to feel needed and useful will be an invaluable public relations asset to the facility. Those who feel their time has been wasted leave the facility with a negative view, one which could become a liability for the facility.

Therefore, the facility should provide ongoing public information and public relations with volunteers and individuals who are potential volunteers. This latter group could be anybody from any of the other groups. Thus, information developed for any group can be applicable to the volunteer group.

Messages and Techniques Relevant To The Community Group

Having discussed the various groups which comprise this third and final target group, it is necessary to discuss the messages which the facility must get across to these groups. Once again, the messages and techniques have been consolidated and listed by category rather than by individual group. The information may be of importance to more than one group within the category.

The Community Group contains the largest number of individuals, simply because the general public is included. Some individuals will know a great deal about the rehabilitation facility while others will not know of its existence nor even what the field of

rehabilitation concerns itself with. Thus, public information transmitted to individuals within this category may range from detailed, specific messages to generalized topics. Some pieces of information will serve to educate people to the field of rehabilitation and to the purposes of the facility. Other information will exist to seek donations (money, wills, insurance policies, etc.), grants or volunteers from the public. Regardless of the reason for providing messages to individuals or groups within this category, the facility must continue in its endeavors to inform the public of its activities, purposes, etc., if it is to make itself known. The messages and techniques used in reaching members of this category can be the same as or similar to those used in connection with the other two categories.

Considerations for Developing Messages and Techniques

- (1) Printed literature may consist of brochures, newsletters, annual reports, and billboards. The information can be either specific or general in nature, dependent on the intentions and purposes of the facility. Literature which has been developed for and distributed to each of the other two categories can be useful reading material for people within this category, if for no other reason than the fact that such people either do or may at some time, become a part of either of the other two categories. In addition to literature developed for the other two categories, this category should receive information on: endowment funds, wills and bequests, and living memorial funds, all of which can be assigned to the facility, and used either for the general operations of the facility, or for some specific purpose designated by the donor; volunteering services to the facility; and serving as a board member.
- (2) Messages carried by radio and television stations for individuals considered part of the Community Group should provide general public relations for the facility. In other words, they should be general and serve the purpose of informing the public of the good which is being done at the facility. Messages may include requests for donations - money, materials, insurance policies, endowment funds and wills. Messages may also address the benefit-cost of the facility regarding the rehabilitation of handicapped individuals. This is an important area for the general public since they contribute part of their taxable income to the facility and similar agencies throughout the community. A positive image of the facility which is indeed helping the handicapped to function in society will be in a better position to gain the acceptance of the public.

- (3) Verbal messages include those messages which are conveyed in person by the staff and employees of the facility to civic or community groups. They are an important means of communication for the facility. These facility individuals are in the public's eye and must present a positive image for the facility. These groups may be interested in listening to information which has been prepared for individuals and groups who are part of the other two categories as well as information prepared specifically for them. What messages are they interested in hearing about? This will depend on the individuals comprising the group, and the purpose or function of the group. Since many of the individuals within these groups are taxpayers, they will undoubtedly be interested in listening to the good which has occurred from the tax monies appropriated to the facility. They may also be interested in information pertaining to client programming, and results of the programs. Since many of these group meetings include a question and answer period, the staff or employees who are speaking to the group(s) must be prepared to answer the questions of the group(s). This means that the staff and employees must do their homework, and be prepared to answer the questions, no matter how terse or direct they are. Unanswered questions may leave doubt in the minds of individuals within the group, and possible hesitancy in supporting the facility in future causes. Complete and positive information transmitted to members of the group(s), then, should further the positive image of the facility, and may result in future assistance from the group(s).

SUMMARY

This publication has described the various groups which at sometime become involved with the rehabilitation facility, and thus, need and depend on public relations from the facility for obtaining an accurate image of the facility. The more accurate and more complete the public relations programming of the facility, the more positive an image the groups will have of the facility.

Early on in the publication, it was stated that public relations was a management function. Management of the facility must maintain authority and responsibility for the public relations programming, but it is the duty of everyone involved with the facility to implement and carry through with the public relations programs and messages.

A number of messages and/or techniques were mentioned within the publication, and each rehabilitation facility must decide for itself which are pertinent and important to its own cause. Perhaps the facility is not in a good financial picture so as to do considerable advertising on radio or television. Then, the facility should find ways to make itself known which are relatively low in cost. Perhaps future budgets can include additional amounts for public relations projects. BUT, the facility must start its public relations campaign somewhere. Then, it will be on the way to improving on its image with and in the community.

The more ways in which the rehabilitation facility can make itself visible to the community, the more positive an image it will project. Whether the facility is seeking donations, contracts, or jobs for the handicapped, public relations can be a positive factor in meeting the needs of the facility.

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