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**ABSTRACT**

This guide offers Catholic Church professionals and school leaders background and basic tools for implementing a workable and effective public relations program in a local school setting. The first section, devoted to detailing the necessary preparations for beginning a public relations program, tells about the following: forming a public relations task force or committee; researching and analyzing the school, its publics, and present practices in communications; goal setting and action planning; selecting the personnel to implement the program; and setting up the public relations office. The subject of section 2 is the selection and use of appropriate media for delivering messages to various publics. It focuses on choosing an effective media mix, the how-to's of getting publicity, the use of radio and television, the use of the parish bulletin and school newsletter, the design of brochures and multimedia presentation, and other tools worth examining. Ten resources are listed, and four appendixes provide a sample press release, a sample public service announcement, a sample news-photo opportunity sheet, and some questions to help a school consider how everyday public relations opportunities are handled. (DCS)

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# Public Relations

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# Public Relations

*by Cathy Campbell, S.P.*

Planning and execution of a successful Public Relations program are essential to the success of Catholic institutions. Public Relations is made easy with the steps detailed in this booklet, which gives methods for use with all types of media and with all sizes of audience.



**National Catholic  
Educational  
Association  
Office of Development**



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# About the Author

*Cathy Campbell*, SP, a Sister of Providence from Saint Mary of the Woods, IN, is currently administrative consultant for public relations to the Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Chicago. She inservices and assists the 423 schools of the archdiocese in developing and implementing public relations programs. She also coordinates information and media relations for the Office of Catholic Education.

Sr. Cathy began her career in public relations in 1959 as the publicity coordinator for parish teen clubs in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. She has also been involved in public relations activities for Saint Mary of the Woods College in Indiana, at high schools sponsored by the Sisters of Providence, and has served on communications advisory boards for her religious community.

Since joining the Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Education staff in 1978, she has coordinated local coverage for several national conventions including the National Catholic Educational Association, the National Clown, Mime, Puppet Dance Ministry Conference, and UNDA/USA in addition to her work with the schools. She was co-director of local press sites during the visit of Pope John Paul II to the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1979.

She holds a B.A. in journalism from St. Mary of the Woods College, a M.S. in Radio-TV from the University of Illinois (Urbana) and is completing a M.P.S. degree at Chicago's Loyola University Institute of Pastoral Studies. She also has studied at the Institute of Religious Communications and is a certified Television Awareness Trainer.

Sr. Cathy has contributed articles on media and public relations to *Momentum* and *Living Light*. She is co-editor of the *Educator's Guide to Implementing the Peace Pastoral* published in 1983 by the Archdiocese of Chicago.

# Foreword

**P**ublic Relations is an integral part of a total enhancement effort for any institution. Catholic institutions have not recently been very conscious of the need to tell their story not only to constituents but also to the larger geographical area in which they exist. Catholic schools, in general, no longer have long waiting lists of clients. They are rapidly seeing the need for good marketing techniques to bring the gospel to a larger group of potential clients.

Sister Cathy Campbell is rapidly becoming a legend in her own life-time. She has planned and executed so many successful public relations activities that it is impossible to enumerate them here. Sister Cathy has worked with the National Catholic Educational Association on many occasions, but especially in conjunction with the 1982 NCEA convention held in Chicago. On this occasion the NCEA enjoyed major news coverage on the national level. All of us are delighted that we have the privilege of bringing the aids of this booklet from the background of Sister Cathy's practical experience.

The techniques in this book will succeed, if they are followed. There are no shortcuts. Successful public relations happens when these techniques are applied, evaluated and applied again. The name of the activity is "people involvement."

In the name of the National Catholic Educational Association, I thank Sr. Cathy for her generous sharing of time and talent. Our members can only be better because of her spirit.

Reverend Robert J. Yeager  
Vice President/Development  
December 15, 1984

# Acknowledgements

**M**any persons have influenced my understanding of public relations through the years. Several, however, Sr. Luke Crawford, SP, Judy Rosenbloom, senior associate of Janet Diederichs and Associates, Chicago, Rev. James Conlon of New York, and Rev. Miles O'Brien Riley of San Francisco deserve special mention because the ideas and challenges which they have given me at significant moments of my development lie at the heart of the ideas shared here.

—Cathy Campbell, SP



# Planning the PR Program

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**P**ublic relations is an art and a science. It is the art of enabling people to understand an organization, such as a school, and to stimulate their support of it in its mission. It is the science of choosing the appropriate media, formats and events to connect effectively with audiences or publics with which the school wishes to establish goodwill.

In recent years, as the tasks of recruiting and development have increased, mastering the art and science of public relations has become more important to church professionals and school leaders, especially those concerned about the future of Catholic schools. The purpose of this guide is to offer such professionals background and basic tools for implementing a workable and effective public relations program in a local school setting.

## *Definitions*

Public relations can be defined in a number of ways.

Fundamentally, one can characterize public relations as the sum of all that a school, person, firm, or institution does (or does not do) which affects how it is perceived and supported by various groups or publics in a community.

Sometimes PR is narrowly defined as the art of making a person, firm, institution (school) visible to its publics through various publicity efforts.

Defined in another way, public relations is a form of friendship-making and confidence-building carried on by a

person, firm, or institution (school) wishing to have a valued place in a specific community.

Regardless of which definition one chooses, several principal elements of public relations always seem to be present:

an *institution*, such as a school, exists that needs support to continue its life and mission;

a number of *publics* are present to whom the institution might look for support;

*conscious efforts* are necessary to connect the institution with its publics.

The key to developing a sound public relations program is to see how these elements relate to one another in a local setting. Before this relationship is examined here, however, the term, *publics*, must be defined.

A *public* is a distinct group of persons having a specific relationship with an institution. Publics are usually classified as *internal* when speaking of persons who are very closely connected with the operation and growth of the institution. *External* publics are persons in the larger community who

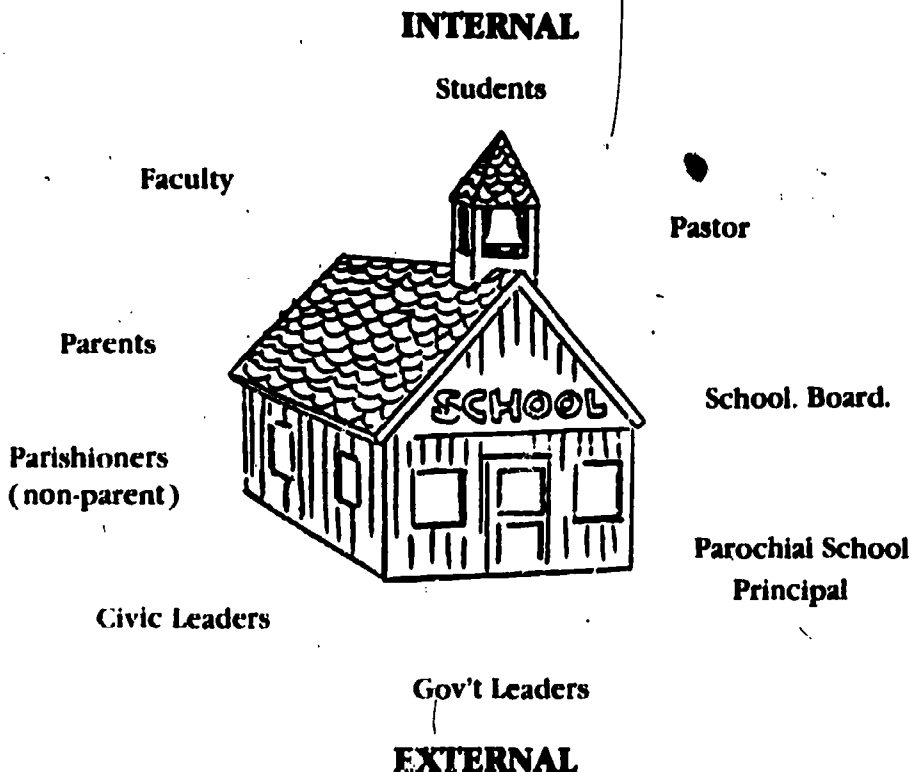


FIGURE 1 A School's Publics

are not self-invested in the institution but whose understanding and goodwill for the enterprise are sought.

Figure 1 illustrates some of the groups which might be placed in each category.

Laying the foundation for a public relations program requires research and analysis, goal setting, and the selection of personnel to implement the plan.

To accomplish these goals a number of tasks may either be completed by a small group of persons connected with the school or by a consulting firm with expertise in public relations or marketing. Because this is a self-help guide, the emphasis here will be on the local group completing the tasks.

### ***Form a Public Relations Task Force or Committee***

Those asked to be part of a public relations task force at the parish school level might include: pastor, principal, school board member, teacher, parent, and non-parent parishioner.

At the non-parish secondary school level, members of such a committee might be the principal, the development director, the publicity coordinator, a teacher, a parent leader, a graduate involved in the field of public relations or marketing, and the student council president.

### ***Research and Analyze the School, Its Publics, and Present Practices in Communications***

The goal of this phase is to study the interrelationship of the school with its publics by discovering:

- the strengths of the school which may be built upon in developing goodwill among its publics;
- the image of the school, or the way in which it is presently perceived in the community, so that positive and negative attitudes may be considered in designing publicity and programmatic efforts;
- the level of goodwill, loyalty, or confidence that the school currently has with various groups so that it may be increased;
- the strengths and weaknesses of methods now used by the school to connect with its publics;
- the publics which are not being reached.

The strategies used in this phase will vary in light of the concern being addressed. For example, to identify the strengths of the school, the task force might initiate a self-

study of the school's program in collaboration with visitors from a diocesan office, religious congregation, or neighboring university/college of education. They might also review recent test scores, school evaluation reports, patterns of student achievement, and community recognition. Other possibilities could include evaluating the energy—the point of enthusiasm—related to academic achievement or school life which seems to spread vitality throughout the school.

To learn the image of the school, and the level of loyalty, goodwill, and confidence already accorded it, the task force will probably need to do some surveying. Such research may include using total samples (surveying all persons who constitute a given public), significant samples, (choosing a limited number to be surveyed from each public on the basis of pre-determined characteristics), and a random sample (seeking opinions from a small number of persons representative of each public who are chosen more casually).

Commonly used techniques for such research include: the opinionnaire, the personal interview, and the small group interview.

To ensure that usable data is gathered, the instruments for such research ought to be designed around a carefully focused and worded problem statement. A useful guide to the design of such tools is Leon McKenzie's book, *Decision-Making in Your Parish* (Twenty-third Publications, Mystic, CT, 1980). In this book, McKenzie describes how to determine an appropriate sample for surveys, how to conduct interviews, how to handle non-response, and how to maximize the use of information gathered.

To assess the strengths and weaknesses of methods now used by the school to connect with its publics, the task force might study:

- the coverage given the school by the local press (newspapers, radio, television). How often were press releases sent? How many were used? What kinds of stories were told? Were photos used? Were reporters and radio-television news people willing/cooperative in covering events at the school?
- The specific channels for on-going communication with internal publics. Do messages reach their intended audiences? Do the messages sent create goodwill among staff, students, parents, and the leadership people in the parish? Do these publics feel well-informed about the

school? Could any of these channels be used more effectively?

- the specific channels of communication used to connect with external publics, Do persons in the parish, neighborhood or civic sector have appropriate information about the school when they should?
- the ways in which school personnel invite members of the parish, neighborhood, business or civic communities to share in and contribute to the life of the school. What is the response to these invitations?

Finally, the task force can assess the way in which school personnel use everyday PR opportunities to create goodwill among those in the school and those who visit it. For a checklist of such opportunities, refer to the final section of this booklet, "Resources and Appendices."

To complete this phase, the task force analyzes the data gathered from the various studies, surveys, and reflections they have undertaken. The group synthesizes its findings into conclusions and recommendations which will become the foundation for the school's PR efforts.

### **Goal Setting and Action Planning**

The goal of this phase is for the task force to arrive at a plan of action by setting goals, identifying objectives, and planning strategies. The task force begins by reviewing the conclusions and recommendations to determine:

- what goals related to image and improvement of school-community relations will be pursued;
- what channels or methods of connecting with various publics they will continue to use and what channels or methods they may add or drop;
- who are persons in the community with talent and expertise who could assist in implementing the final plan?

Goal setting requires the group to articulate its vision in broad terms. For example, the task force might offer the following goal statement:

*"To enhance the image of St. Egbert Academy as a center of learning rooted in Catholic tradition able to provide for children with a variety of needs"*

Studying the statement of vision, the task force then writes objectives that derive from it. Objectives point to something that is measurable and achievable. For example, the task

force, in relation to the above goal, might state an objective like this:

- *To feature stories in local newspapers spotlighting St. Egbert's classes for gifted students and the learning resource program for slow-learners*

The final part of the process is to state the specific strategy or action plan which spells out who will do what and by when. For example:

*The school board publicity chairperson will seek to place feature stories on St. Egbert Academy programs for special needs children in the Chronicle and the Clarion by January 1, 19 \_\_\_\_*

Goals, objectives, and action plans are written for each conclusion or recommendation upon which the task force wishes to act. When the task force has completed this step, it will have in hand the blueprint for a public relations program appropriate to the local setting. As actions are taken and successes and failures are noted, evaluation will yield the seeds for future planning.

**Selecting  
the  
Personnel  
to  
Implement  
the  
Program**

The persons needed to carry out a school's plan will vary depending on the scope of the plan and its components. Budget may also be a factor in determining whether those sought will be salaried or volunteers, full or part-time. Here are some suggestions:

- Seek a coordinator who can give the time required to achieve the goals. This individual ought to have competence and experience in written and oral communication as well as organizational skills. S/he ought to be able to work effectively with people, to handle crises calmly and thoughtfully, and to have some knowledge of how media professionals work. In addition it might also be useful for the coordinator to have a vision of school and church congruent with that present in the local setting.

The responsibilities of the coordinator might include: the implementation of the public relations plan devised by the task force; response to and facilitation of media requests; identification and preparation of appropriate spokespersons for media opportunities; preparation and dissemination of press releases, news-photo opportunity sheets, and public service announcements; developing special events; monitor-

ing school-community relations; advising school personnel on public relations matters; and editing school publications and designing promotional materials.

- Develop a talent bank of individuals involved with the school who have expertise or connections in communication design, graphics, photography, marketing, journalism, printing and the fine arts. Such persons might be invited to volunteer for specific projects.
- Encourage staff, students, and parents to be full-time goodwill ambassadors for the school by freely expressing their pride and belief in the school, whenever, wherever, and however possible.

After persons are chosen to implement the public relations plan, the task force may cease to exist or may continue as a standing committee of the school board or an advisory body to the principal. The special charge of such a standing committee would be to evaluate the outcomes of the strategies outlined in the plan and to develop future directions. If the task force decides to self-destruct, then the principal assumes responsibility for evaluation and on-going formulation of public relations efforts.

### ***Setting up the Public Relations Office***

Setting up the public relations office is the responsibility of the public relations coordinator. Hopefully space for such an office in a school might be in proximity to the administration offices to enable the coordinator to have ready access to appropriate school leaders and information at times of crisis.

Basic files that might be developed could include:

- biographical materials on the members of administration and faculty as well as key student leaders;
- photo files containing portrait shots (2x2 glossy black and white) of administrators, faculty members, and key student leaders, dynamic photos of cyclic school events such as awards assemblies, drama productions, and other student activities, single student and small group photos of classroom endeavors;
- media contact file with names, addresses, telephone numbers and guidelines and deadlines for each media outlet;
- future book or calendar with upcoming events noted as well as clippings from any previous coverages;

- 
- clipping file/logbook to demonstrate success in getting media coverage;
  - talent bank file listing resource persons and possible volunteers;
  - news tip forms which may be circulated regularly to members of the faculty, student and parent leaders to get ideas for stories.

No doubt, as the coordinator begins to set up the Public Relations Office and to implement the plan for which he or she is responsible, other files and forms to be created will become apparent. With a plan in place and with a coordinator at work, attention can be directed to the science of choosing and using appropriate media, formats, and events for connecting with the school's publics.



# Tools for the PR Program

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**T**he science of public relations involves the selection and use of appropriate media for delivering messages to various publics. This section will focus on:

- choosing an effective media mix;
- the "How-To's" of getting publicity;
- the use of radio and television;
- the use of the parish bulletin and school newsletter;
- the design of brochures the design of multi-media presentations;
- other tools worth examining.

## *Choosing an Effective Media Mix*

Because the media through which a message is channeled usually affect how it is received by the intended audience, it is important to do some thinking about which medium—newspapers, radio, television, parish bulletin, personal letter, group meeting—is most suitable for delivering a particular piece of information.

Here are some touchstone questions to consider when trying to match appropriate media with a particular message:

- Why do you want to communicate?
- What is the message to be shared?
- For which public(s) is the message intended?
- Which media is most suitable for carrying this message to the intended public(s)?

Figure II offers a brief schema for evaluating advantages and disadvantages inherent in the use of each medium.

**FIGURE II Matching Media With Messages**

<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>	<b>MESSAGES</b>
<b>INTERPERSONAL</b>			
Person to person	Can present a message with clarification, enthusiasm, personal credibility Can provide a climate for personal response	Time-consuming if you are trying to reach many	Those specific to a particular clientele Those with high emotional value
Small/large group meetings	Allows for process through which ownership is achieved Permits simultaneous sharing of information w/opportunity for clarification	Reliance on persons to come to meeting	Those with which you want constituency to identify
Representative meetings	Presents opportunity for recognition/development of community leadership Provides manageable size group which represents all sectors of the community	Possibility of negative response from those not chosen to participate Message may be blocked by representative who fails to report	Any of the above Any information
Telephone	As with person to person	Cannot detect body language	Any of the above
Letter/Note	Presents a personal touch and allows for concrete information as reference point	No opportunity for immediate feedback	Any of the above and those requiring more information/explanation/request for involvement
	Similar to letter but more businesslike than personal	As for letters	Informational

Weekly Bulletin	Good vehicle for ongoing communication with several constituencies with similarities to mass media	Delay in feedback and possibilities of misinterpretation	Informational Solicitation of involvement
<b>MASS MEDIA</b>			
Newspapers	Permanence Reaches a general audience	Undergoes an editing process	Those with news value
Radio	Immediacy	Transient	Promotion of upcoming events
Television	Immediacy Credibility Importance	Will be interpreted by reporter Will receive only surface coverage	High in significance Great visual possibility Depth of human interest
Magazines	Reach specialized audiences Indepth, personalized coverage	Time lag of coverage	Topics of some permanent value and interest
Church Bulletins	Easily gotten into Reaches a prime audience Allows for folksy style	Limited audience	Good for updates, requests for involvements, indication of support from pastor
Neighborhood Publications	Same as newspapers/church bulletins	Limit of space	General interest material/promos
Multi-Media Programs	Presents audio-visual view of your program/school	Requirements of talents/machines/suitable space for presentation	Any message of general interest

In many instances, when a message of interest and importance to several publics is to be communicated, a variety of media may be used.

In choosing to which publics a given message might be directed, ask yourself, "Who needs to know what, when?" For example, when national merit scholars are named, a school will probably want to broadcast the good news to all its publics and will use many forms of mass media. On the other hand, when a change in the religion textbook series is to be announced, a school would probably target that message more selectively to parents through the school newsletter or at a parent meeting or in a personal letter from principal explaining the rationale for the change.

Sometimes when a message is one which is particularly sensitive, a time-line for communicating it to various publics may have to be worked out. For example, the decision that a religious congregation makes to build a new wing on the school ought to be communicated to faculty, parents, and students before the information is released to the general public. Timing of such communications is best placed within a short period of time if the school wishes to control how the story is told.

Careful selection of media enhances the likelihood that your message will reach the intended publics. Using a professional approach with editors will further increase the favorable publicity which you may receive.

## ***The How-To's of Getting Publicity***

Publicity is defined as information with news value that is distributed through mass media to get public attention. For an institution, publicity may have both favorable and unfavorable results. Seeking favorable publicity is a key component of all public relations programs.

Favorable publicity makes your school visible to the community from which you hope to attract students. It acquaints potential supporters in the business and civic sectors with the contributions you make to the quality of life in the community.

Publicity is not hard to get if you develop a "nose for news" and a working relationship with reporters and editors in your area. What is newsworthy? A good place to search for the answer to this question is in the pages of the newspaper to which you plan to send your releases. What kinds of stories does this publication feature?

Another rule of thumb is that "names make news." Also, qualities of immediacy, interest, and importance are what an editor looks for when he or she is considering whether a press release will be used.

Every school has a natural cycle of activities which lend themselves to coverage. Some of these events include:

- announcement of new staff, class officers;
- promotions of staff, honor rolls;
- fundraisers;
- prominent visitors to the school;
- unusual school activities;
- involvement of students and/or staff in local, national, and state projects or competitions;
- fine arts programs.

As you look at the school's annual calendar, no doubt you can extend this list even further. The point is that a school is constantly generating newsworthy items. The task of the public relations coordinator is to get the story told. Here are some tips.

### **Make Yourself Known to Your Local Media**

Contact all the media outlets which the school hopes to use in getting publicity. The goals to be achieved through these contacts are:

- † identifying yourself as the public relations or publicity coordinator for your school;
  - † developing a mailing list of persons to whom press releases ought to be directed;
  - † discovering guidelines and deadlines for submitting information and photos to the publication.
- In the process you will communicate to media personnel, that you are a professional seeking to work with professionals.

### **Provide Each Media Outlet With a Packet of Materials About Your School and About Catholic Education**

Many editors and reporters have only limited experience of Catholic education; therefore, it is helpful to them to receive from you a packet which explains the current state of Catholic education as reflected in your school. Some items you might include would be: enrollment statistics showing

from which areas students come; names of staff and what they teach; some history of the school; brief descriptions of current course offerings and special programs; significant achievements of graduates; a comparison of the school's present state with the national picture of Catholic descriptions of current course offerings and special programs; significant achievements of graduates; a comparison of the school's present state with the national picture of Catholic education; a calendar of events.

You might hand deliver such a packet to the editor or reporter designated to handle education stories at each media outlet. Such a visit would provide you the opportunity to develop other stories which would be of mutual benefit to the school and to the reporter.

The packet of background materials described here ought to be revised annually.

### **Submit Professional Looking Press Releases**

Write clear, simple copy. In the first five words of the story, communicate its most interesting and important aspect.

In the first paragraph, answer the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW, WHY questions.

Use an inverted pyramid style. That is, write your story so that the least important facts are towards the end. This style gives editors the freedom to fit your story in a tight space and ensures that your primary message reaches your audience.

Type your releases on school stationery or press release forms which incorporate the school's logo. At the top of the first page, give the following information: date of release, your name and phone numbers where you can be reached for verifications, and the time of release, e.g. For immediate Release or Release Jan. 10 after 6 p.m.

Mark "-more-" at the bottom of each page if the release is more than on page. At the bottom of the final page use "-30-" or "-##-" to signal the end.

Use only one side of the page. Use only white stationery. Use a fresh typewriter ribbon or one that prints cleanly. Double-space your material and allow wide margins.

Never send a carbon copy to an editor; although good xerox copies are acceptable.

Be accurate. Proofread your copy to be sure that dates, places, and names are accurate and spelled correctly. Check consistency in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

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Model press releases are offered in the "Appendices" of this booklet.

To complement a press release, you may wish to include photos.

Submit 5" x 7" or 8" x 10" glossy black/white photos. These are most usable formats. Color snapshots and polaroid prints usually do not reproduce well. Newspapers will accept them only in the most dramatic situations when no other picture is available. When a portrait photo is requested, you may submit the 2" x 2" or 3" x 5" photo in a glossy format.

Send photographs that tell a story. For example, picture the science fair winner working in a laboratory rather than clutching her certificate and staring blankly into the camera.

Look for photos that capture a unique feature of the human condition.

Do NOT send group pictures of more than 4 - 5 individuals unless it is a championship team photo for the sports' page. Arrange the individuals in a dynamic setting that helps to tell the story.

Include a succinct caption which identifies those pictured and tells the story briefly.

Package your photos carefully to avoid damage in the mail.

For more aids on the subject of photos for news use, see the materials suggested in the "Appendices."

## **Always Be Professional In Working With Editors/Reporters**

DO ask yourself when preparing releases—is this really a story for this publication? Some stories may work really well in a small neighborhood newspaper but be inappropriate for a daily paper in a major urban area.

DO meet deadlines. Don't expect releases to be used if they are old news by the time they reach the editor's desk.

DO compliment editors and reporters from time to time on the way in which your stories are handled. However, you need not thank them each time they use one.

DO respond to reporters' questions honestly and with respect for their deadlines. Have facts and figures on hand. If you can't answer a question, admit you have to seek the information or cannot release it at this time.

DO treat media fairly. When you have news, give it to all your outlets at the same time. If you ignore a newspaper, it

may return the favor at some future date. Feature stories, on the other hand, may be developed selectively in light of the interests of specific reporters.

DON'T ask editors or reporters for clippings. This is something you can get for yourself. On the other hand, at times you may wish to buy extra copies of an edition and editors will love you for that.

DON'T complain about minor errors, such as misspellings or the omission of relatively minor information. However, if an error is serious and will result in confusion, do call it to the attention of the reporter and ask for a correction.

In this section, attention has been focused on getting favorable coverage in newspapers. But this is an electronic age as well, so how does one get coverage by radio and television?

## ***The Use of Radio and Television***

A school's access to coverage on radio and television may be limited by factors such as market size, a station's commitment to public affairs programming, and a station's philosophy about what constitutes news.

These negative factors, however, may be counter-balanced for a school by cooperating in diocesan-generated programming, by studying program formats and seizing opportunities to participate in various broadcasts, by using public service announcements, and by being prepared to handle both positive and negative news situations.

### **Cooperating in Diocesan Programming**

Most dioceses have established through their Diocesan Office of Communications (DOC) some form of working relationships with local radio and television stations. In some instances, the relationship may be minimal, with a station simply contacting the diocesan director of communications for clarifications about church news for the names of appropriate spokespersons on various topics. In other cases, a station may give the diocese a regular time slot for whatever kind of programming the diocese may choose to submit.

As a result of this latter arrangement, a diocese may choose to produce its own talk or news show, dramatic program or news-magazine, or it may elect to provide the station with



nationally syndicated materials supplied by the Paulists, the Franciscans, and similar production centers.

To benefit from these arrangements, a school public relations coordinator will need to get to know the diocesan director of communications.

There are several ways in which such a relationship can be developed. In very small dioceses where there are only a small number of schools, a school publicity coordinator might make an appointment to visit the DOC. The following topics would be covered in such a visit:

- An introduction of yourself as local school PR coordinator;
- the way in which the DOC works;
- ways in which you might support its efforts in school-related matters and vice versa;
- specific possibilities for collaborating in its on-going radio and television projects.

In larger dioceses, principals of schools in a particular region might form a public relations committee. The chairperson of that committee would approach the DOC. In a major urban archdiocese, principals may want to work in collaboration with personnel from the archdiocesan office of education to develop a systemwide communications plan for using major media and for collaborating with the DOC.

## **Studying Formats and Seizing Opportunities**

Every radio and television station has its own focus designed to appeal to audiences in its markets. Radio stations, in particular, tend to be identified in this way as country, rock, news-talk, easy-listening and so on. Each focus suggests a particular type of age-group and potential market being reached. For example, hard rock tends to be aimed at 16-30 year olds with upbeat contemporary interests. Therefore, these stations might be good ones for a high school to use in place public service announcements about some of its student-centered events.

Cable television stations also offer programming to more narrowly defined audiences. Publicity coordinators working in areas heavily serviced by cable television would do well to analyze opportunities for using this technology. In particular, it might be useful for such coordinators to become certified public access users which would enable them to produce and

## FIGURE III Radio Formats

FORMAT	CHARACTERISTICS	HOW TO PARTICIPATE
Morning/Evening Drive-time Celebrity hosted musical program	Program is aimed at commuters and a general adult audience. Opportunities are often provided for call-in comments on current issues, events in the local community, and for participating in trivia contests.	Call the number given by the host(ess). Identify yourself by name and school to the producer who screens calls. Have a succinct statement ready and be prepared for an impromptu interview with the host(ess) knowing every word you say will be heard by thousands.
Community Calendar	A public service format in which an announcer reads a listing of upcoming events.	A month before your scheduled event send a postcard or public service announcement (in accord with what the station asks) to the community affairs director. For a sample, see the "APPENDICES" of this book.
News-Talk Program	Interviews and conversation centered on a newsworthy issues are the key components of this format.	Guests are usually invited to appear on these programs. As such a spokesperson, study the issue, plan a theme to which you can always return, think through questions that could arise.  Opportunities sometimes are given for call-in comments. Be prepared to state your position succinctly.
Spot News	Programs focus on the news of the day and information that a community needs to know quickly, such as institutional closings.	Be prepared to respond to the reporter's questions succinctly and accurately. A whole radio news story is often handled in 20 seconds. Do not ramble. Emergency school closings must follow the station's procedures for submitting such information.

## FIGURE IV Television Formats

FORMAT	CHARACTERISTICS	HOW TO PARTICIPATE
News Programs	Generally focused on 30, 60, or 90 sec. pieces of "bad" news, such programs come to you at moments of crisis. On occasion may take note of such events as opening day of school or significant award winner.	Think of your message as a newspaper headline. When being interviewed by the news reporter, use short, simple statements framed in concrete language. Usually, only one or two of your sentences will be broadcast. Project confidence and concern in your appearance.
News-Feature Segment	Focused on human interest material. These run about 2-3 min. and are developed around points of high visual interest.	Alert news assignment persons or producers of local television magazines to stories with these dimensions at your school. Stress the visual dimensions . . . those aspects that will make good pictures. Prepare appropriate on-camera spokespersons.
Talk Shows	Involve a regular host(ess) with several guests discussing topics of controversial or current interest.	If you are asked to participate in such a program, study how it works by looking at several segments. Prepare your theme. Mentally rehearse answers to likely questions. Assess opportunities for using visual materials.
Locally produced children's programs	Use a number of children from the community sharing their ideas, talents, and hobbies.	Study the segments in such programming. Identify students who might be qualified to participate. Contact the producer to determine how placements are made. Prepare students selected to appear to project the image you want for your school.

to cooperate in producing school-centered programs for the public access channels on their cable systems.

Local VHF (channels 2-13) and UHF (channels 14 on up) tend to program for mass audiences in prime and special audiences in morning and afternoon periods. On VHF stations and network affiliates, time periods on Saturdays and Sundays are often used for public affairs and public service programs. Radio stations tend to broadcast such material late in the evening and on weekends. Many stations, in mid-size and smaller markets, such as Columbia, S.C., or Fargo, N.D., also air locally produced noon-time information programs mixing news, interviews, and local features. In major markets, such as New York or Chicago, softer features and interviews are sometimes included in early evening newscasts. Such programming offers possibilities for placing stories.

To maximize use of radio and television, a coordinator ought to study the formats of programs available in a local setting and contact the producers. Figures III and IV illustrate some of the most common formats.

## **The Public Service Announcement**

Public service announcements may be placed with both radio and television stations. These 20, 30, or 60 second spots are designed to spotlight the who, what, when, where, and how of upcoming events and programs of interest to the general public. Here are some tips for successfully placing your spots:

- † Contact the community service director at each station in your area and request guidelines and deadlines for submitting material;
- † Compress your message into a minimum of words. Here is a helpful guide;

For radio	For Television
10 sec. = 25 words	10 sec. = 20 words
20 sec. = 50 words	20 sec. = 40 words
30 sec. = 75 words	30 sec. = 60 words
60 sec. = 150 words	60 sec. = 120 words

- † For television supply a quality graphic (slide or artcard) which respects the horizontal format of television (4 units wide by 3 units high). Image quality should have

adequate contrast so elements of the visual can be clearly seen on black and white receivers as well as color sets;

- † Use a tag line to identify a contact person at your school from whom listeners or viewers may get more information.

Public service announcements, if used well, can be one of the most effective ways that schools can connect with their publics through radio and television. See the "Appendices" for sample scripts and more hints about visuals.

## **Handling Interview Situations**

As illustrated in Figures III and IV, the most common way, in addition to the Public Service Announcement, for school personnel to participate in radio and television programs is in interview situations. It is, therefore, very important for school publicity coordinators and those identified as spokespersons to prepare themselves to handle these occasions confidently. Here are some suggestions.

- † In face to face interviews, look your interviewer straight in the eye and answer the question posed with confidence and energy. If you are caught off guard, acknowledge your surprise at the question and then reflectively answer it.
- † For panel interviews, learn who the other panelists are. Observe the style of the panel moderator. Assess if there is interaction with a studio audience. List the primary points you want to stress. Develop a theme to which you may want to return as a refrain during the interview. Think through ways of supporting your theme with facts, anecdotes, and images with which the program's audience might identify. Remain calm and confident in giving your responses. Look for opportunities to hinge your remarks on those of others. Do not sit passively but energetically engage yourself in active listening and response to other panelists. Don't bluff. It's okay to say, "I don't know." or "That's an interesting question that needs study."
- † In on-location interviews, select a setting for television which will visually enhance your story. Avoid areas with lots of noise regardless of whether the interview is for radio or television. In these settings, the interviewer will

probably be seeking very brief comments to be inserted into longer portions, therefore, use simple, concise sentences of 10 - 20 concrete words which emphasize your points.

- † The telephone interview for radio is perhaps the loneliest format in which to engage. You are on your telephone talking to thousands of nameless listeners. Try to image someone with whom you especially want to communicate and frame your responses in language which will reach that person. Avoid long pauses but do not speak too glibly.

Each interviewer that a spokesperson will encounter will have a personal style. Here are some of the most common ways to work effectively with them.

- † A Rapid Fire Questioner usually presents the interviewee a number of questions in rapid order. Simply choose the one you would like to answer. This style indicates a desire to create controversy by backing the interviewee into a corner.
- † The Intervenor cuts the interviewee off in mid-sentence and poses another question. Calmly return to the point you were making and indicate you might get to the second question later in the interview.
- † The Professional usually is genuinely interested in what the interviewee has to say. This interviewer has done his/her homework and will engage the interviewee in a thought-provoking, stimulating conversation. Be prepared to think.
- † The Comedian often makes light of the comments by the interviewee. In situations like this, the interviewee ought to focus on the human interest elements of his story.
- † The Puffery Artist flatters the interviewee as a way of catching the person off guard for the purpose of creating controversy later. Be alert and avoid being trapped.
- † The Neophyte usually enters the interview situation with very little knowledge of the interviewee and the subject to be discussed. Such an interviewer relies on glibness to carry the interview. In such situations, the interviewee can seize the moment and use the occasion as a "teachable" moment for both the interviewer and the audience.

Finally, remember that the interview situation is a two-way communications opportunity. There should be good give

and take between interviewer and interviewee. By being carefully prepared for each situation, spokespersons will be able to make the most of such media coverage for their schools. By entering such situations unprepared, spokespersons risk bringing unfavorable coverage to their enterprise.

## **Handling Crisis Moments**

In the life of every school community, crisis moments occur. At these times media interest in the school increases. How such moments are reported can result in positive or negative publicity for the school. Here are some ways of handling such occasions.

### ***Emergencies Involving Serious Injury/Student Death***

These moments usually involve the police and fire departments of your city or village. Personnel from these agencies are usually the first ones approached by the media for their report of what actually seems to have occurred. The school publicity coordinator ought to be known to these personnel so that he or she may be knowledgeable about their assessments. Before the school makes any statements to the press, the administrator and publicity coordinator ought to contact diocesan officials to determine what issues related to liability may be involved. With this information, they then might formulate a statement of information that might be used in response to media inquiries. Emphasis in such statements would be on concern for the victims and for the victims' families. For other information, the media may have to be directed to the police or fire spokespersons or to persons at the diocesan level or to the pastor in the case of a parochial school. Photos of victims or other personal information should not be released to media without permission of the family. Personal, supportive contact with the family or families of victims is also important in demonstrating that the school which preaches a Gospel of love lives it as well.

### ***Announcements of Program Cutbacks, School Closings, Mergings***

Nothing is more emotional for a school community to endure than a major shift in its program or status. How such situations are handled will affect how the future of Catholic education in an area is perceived by a variety of publics. Therefore, it is important to manage the process carefully so

that each public has appropriate information when it should and has some access to decision-makers involved in the planning for the program shift or change of status. With a recognition that such changes by a school represent a kind of death and dying process for its publics, the following phased-plan was developed:

*Phase 1 — Involve key decision-makers and opinion leaders in the planning process.* Opinion leaders, in this context, are those persons a school or parish community who exercise influence on how decisions are received even though they may hold no official position. By involving key decision-makers and opinion-leaders in the planning, a school creates a group which will own and be supportive of the decision which is made.

*Phase 2 — Consult faculty, parents, students, in gathering information/data for decision-making.* By consulting faculty, parents, students in this way a school has an occasion to inform them of the planning process underway, what stimulated it, and the time-line for its completion. A time for sharing the materials gathered in the consultation also often leads members of these groups to independently arrive at the planning committee's decision. Thus, when the announcement is made, it will come as a less of a surprise to many.

*Phase 3 — Present the local group's decision to those who must approve its implementation.* Usually a decision to make a major shift in program or to change the status of a school by merger or closing needs approval from persons beyond the local group such as a pastor, an archdiocesan official, the archbishop, or a superior of a religious congregation before it may be implemented. Members of the local committee ought to meet with some persons face to face to discuss the conclusions which the group has reached and to present the plan of action to be followed. During the interview, the planners might test what support those giving approval to the plan will publicly offer it when it is announced in the media.

*Phase 4 — Announce the plan to internal publics.* Internal publics ought to know what is going to happen before they read about it in the newspaper. Personalized forms of communications, such as small group meetings, letters for parents, faculty, and students work well for such announcements. Information to be shared should include: a clear statement of the actual change to occur; a review of the reasons for the planned shift; details of the process which led



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to the decision; and ways in which each public will be involved in its implementation.

*Phase 5—Announce the plan to the external publics.* By telephone or in small group situations, share the information with neighboring pastors and principals whose schools may feel the impact of your decision. Contact key people who have supported the school through the years. Write a clear, concise press release which is given to all media simultaneously.

*Phase 6—Responding to the denial syndrome.* After the news of the planned change is made, there may be a grass-roots groundswell to maintain the status quo. Since the mass media loves controversy, they will respond well to covering such groundswell. It is important, therefore, for the local school to work quietly behind the scenes to enable persons to accept the decision by providing as many reassurances about the future as possible. If the story becomes a matter of public controversy, it is essential for the school's position to be articulated clearly, compassionately, and with a sense of hope for the future by a knowledgeable spokesperson.

*Phase 7—Celebrating the future potential.* In following up the outcomes of major changes made in a school, seek ways of celebrating the potential of the change for future growth. Use whatever media mix will be most effective in a particular local setting.

Although the focus in this section has been on handling information related to a negative change, the same phases can be adapted to the needs of a school planning the announcement of a major fund drive or building program.

### ***Response to Parent Concerns About Curriculum, Discipline***

The parent as the primary educator of the child has a right to challenge the school to provide the best possible education for his or her son or daughter. In recent years, parents have sometimes created coalitions around issues related to curriculum, orthodoxy in religious education, and discipline policies and orchestrated public challenges to a school's practices. The school publicity coordinator, along with administrators, has faced the dilemma of how to respond to these challenges without exacerbating the problem of compromising the school's position. Some ways of handling such situations:

- † Get a clear statement of the parents' concerns.
- † Evaluate current school practices in light of recent educational writings on the topic, including those from the National Catholic Educational Association, of current documents from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Vatican, of materials provided by the diocesan office of education.
- † Formulate a consensual position for the school spokesperson to articulate in public situations.
- † Meet with key parent leaders from the school who are supportive of the school's articulated position.
- † Meet with the concerned parents' group to reflect with them on the issues which they have presented. Hopefully, such an exchange would be carried on in an atmosphere of trust and openness and would provide for meaningful dialogue. If the issue cannot be resolved at such a meeting, suggest follow-up ways of handling the situation. Do not allow media to be present.

If the concerned parents choose to use a media campaign to muster public opinion against the school, be astute in how you respond. Provide qualified spokespersons—the school publicity chairperson as well as parents—who can articulate the school's position without being drawn into a no-win argument. Use occasions to spotlight the positive outcomes of the programs to which objections are being raised. If change is required, handle it gracefully. Avoid name-calling. In making public statements, do not get backed into a corner. Always leave room for negotiation.

The key to handling situations such as described here is careful planning, reflection, formulation of positions, and the ability to communicate with confidence and clarity. In this way, the school and its spokespersons will always be able to project to various publics a credibility which will gain support for the school. When human characteristics of compassion, vulnerability, and ability to grow are evidenced by an institution, it wins respect.

Often times, if a school is fostering on-going two-way communication with parents through bulletins and/or newsletters, problem situations do not arise. Therefore, it is important for school personnel to evaluate from time to time how such publications are used to connect with parents and parishioners.

## ***The Use of The Parish Bulletin and School Newsletter***

*The Parish Bulletin* is perhaps one of the most accessible, but often overlooked, vehicles of communication available to both elementary and secondary schools wishing to connect with parents and parishioners.

To use a Parish Bulletin effectively:

- Meet with the pastor to determine a regular schedule for school news to appear;
- Talk to the Bulletin editor about preferred length of stories and types of artwork and photos;
- Plan "good news" stories to be written in accord with the goals of the school's PR program and to demonstrate that the school's philosophy and practices are means for furthering the pastoral goals of the parish;
- Design a distinctive logo by which Bulletin users will be able to recognize school news each time it appears;
- Assign a staff or school board member to prepare the copy for each insertion.

In addition to sharing "good news" and announcements of coming events, schools can also use the Bulletin as a way of explaining changes or directions in curriculum, of encouraging and acknowledging contributions to support the school, and of spotlighting ways in which non-parent parishioners can benefit from the school's presence.

*The School Newsletter* may be a useful communications tool for reaching parents, alumni(ae), and community leaders. Here are some key ingredients for successful newsletters:

- Direct the publication to a specific audience, although it may be mailed to others if content has broad appeal. For example, if the school newsletter is intended primarily for parents but features stories about curriculum and school priorities in addition to reminders about rules and deadlines, then it would also be of interest to other audiences.
- Plan the look of the newsletter so that it immediately communicates its purpose to those who receive it.
- Select content so that readers will find something of value to them whether they have a few seconds, a few minutes, or a day to read it.
- Organize content so that readers will see and grasp the most important information first.
- Use graphics—artwork, headlines, photos, printing style, ink, paper stock, and layout—to reinforce the image of the school and to promote readability.

- Use large photos which feature action and dynamic poses. Accompany photos with captions that complete the story and identify those pictured.
- Use a writing style and language suitable to your readers. Don't overwhelm parents with "education-ese".
- Use action words in headlines. Set headlines in a contemporary type format which complements the type face used in body copy.
- Be a Copy Cat. Keep looking for fresh ideas in the newsletters which you receive. Use appropriate, non-copyrighted clip art to illustrate copy.

For further information on producing school newsletters, look for books on graphic design, yearbook publication, and newspaper design.

## ***The Design of Brochures***

Brochures are usually envisioned as a way of telling the school's story and attracting new students or new contributors. Such publications, therefore, may contribute to the public relations, marketing, and development efforts of a school.

To focus the purpose of the particular brochure being planned, ask these questions:

- Why are you communicating?
- What two goals do you wish to achieve with this brochure?
- What primary public are you trying to reach?
- What image does your school already have in the public mind?
- How is your present image appealing to your targeted public?
- What reasons, if any, exist for altering this image?
- How will this brochure fit into the overall public relations plan?
- What are key pieces of information you wish to communicate with this brochure?
- What desired action in the targeted public do you wish to stimulate? How can opportunity for that response be built into the publication?

With these questions answered, design the brochure with these ideas in mind:

- Set the school apart. Too many brochures communicate a generic message of Catholic Education—quality in-

struction, Gospel values, discipline. In stating your message, focus on what makes your school unique as a Catholic school in your community. What is the greatest appeal you have or potentially have for stimulating support from the targeted audience.

- Focus the brochure around a SINGLE concept. For example, St. Egbert prepares students with religious values for high tech challenges.
- Capture attention with the cover. Use a dynamic photo or striking graphic with a succinct headline capsulizing the single concept. If you don't catch the reader at this point, the rest of the message will be lost.
- Incorporate some element into the brochure which will give it a resemblance to other materials in your public relations effort. Logos and slogans are devices often used for this purpose.
- Use large photos that tell a story. Don't frustrate the reader with postage size group shots.
- Write copy which is clear, concise, and complete. Usually copy for brochures is informative and persuasive.
- Avoid cliches in content and graphics. Do not incorporate drawings based on cartoon or popular culture characters without obtaining required permissions from copyright holders.
- Make the brochure worth keeping. One way is to include a calender of important dates.
- Use quality paper and printing. With newer printing technologies, word processors, and desk-size headline machines, schools can create first class brochures for a minimal cost. The look and feel of a brochure also communicates something about the school.
- Tell the truth. Puffery usually backfires. Today's parents and contributors want to be dealt with honestly and fairly.
- Be direct in asking for the action you want. "Enroll now." "Send your check or money order."
- Envelopes can also carry messages. Incorporate a line such as "Planning for Tomorrow—Open this envelope for Help." The finest example of this was phrasing on an envelope which recently crossed my desk—"Be a survivor in a world gone mad!" Many of the suggestions already offered in terms of graphics and design may be applied to the task of creating brochures as well.

## ***The Design of Multi-Media Presentations***

Another format that many schools are now using to tell their stories is the multi-media presentation which is usually centered around the use of slides and tapes.

Putting together an effective presentation of this type is a group project requiring persons with skills in writing, photography, and audio production. One member of the group acts as director-producer and may ultimately pull the whole show together through all seven steps.

Step One, planning, begins by answering the questions suggested at other points in this booklet. Why communicate? For whom is the message intended? What is the key concept to be communicated? What does the audience already know / believe / want to know? How might sound and images be combined to communicate the message? What budget limitations exist? How skilled might those who use this presentation be in manipulating projectors and tape decks?

Step Two, script development, produces a document containing narration, visual suggestions, and audio elements.

Step Three is collecting the images and sound elements. Concentrate on slides which show action, have close-ups of persons expressing appropriate emotions, use close-ups of body parts or things which enhance the spoken word. Choose only those slides which are properly lighted and well-focused. Over-exposed and underexposed images may cause distractions. Soft-focused images may be used for artistic effect. Choose a speaker with a well-trained voice who will bring a quality of vibrancy to the spoken word. Use music which is not overly familiar to the audience but which carries forward the particular emotional mood you wish to create.

Step Four, doing the storyboard is a schema which enables the producer-director to follow union of image and sound as the production is being put together. Though this is a very helpful step, some choose to omit it and work simply from the original script.

Step Five is mixing the tape. If possible use a sound studio to achieve a good mix of voice, music, and sound effects. If this is not possible, use a reel to reel tape recorder which allows for recording on different tracks, has easily manipulated controls for fading in and out, and a counter for keeping track of points on the tape. Use a microphone that produces a good sound quality for the human voice. If possible, feed the music and sound effects to the tape deck from the other recorded source with a patch cord. Do not rely on making a

good recording for auditorium use on a small cassette recorder. To facilitate its use, however, the tape produced on the reel-to-reel recorder may be dubbed to a cassette format and played through an auditorium sound system.

Step Six is creating the environment for the presentation. Set up the area, if possible, to enable all present to see and hear well. Set the projector far enough from the screen to create a large image without bleeding off onto adjoining curtains, walls, or blackboards.

Step Seven—On with the show! Share your effort in a way which allows for a brief introduction and follow-up. In circumstances such as high school nights where a school may be using slide and sound in a small booth area, use recurring title slides which suggest ways in which more information about the school may be obtained because few persons will stand to watch a complete presentation.

### **Other Tools Worth Examining**

*Advertising* is a tool of both marketing and public relations. At times, a school may wish to place an advertisement in a local newspaper to draw attention to registration, an open house, or a significant anniversary or event at the school. Normally advertising is used to share information or affect attitudes. It is an expensive endeavor. Sometimes schools may find it more cost effective to cooperate in jointly sponsored advertising to communicate an image of Catholic education rather than a message from a single school.

Design advertising is an art. If a school decides to use this tool, it may want to tap its talent bank and draw on the expertise of professionals in the local community. The annual guide for *Catholic Schools' Week* published by the National Catholic Educational Association also contains a number of helpful directives for carrying out an advertising campaign in connection with that yearly event.

Often, corporations and local businesses are willing to underwrite an advertisement placed in connection with such observances. For resources, check with your local library and Chamber of Commerce.

*The Press Conference* is not often used by schools because such events are usually built around news of great significance. However, when a school is announcing a major fund drive or earns the state championship in academics or ath-

letics a press conference format may be a way of handling a number of reporters interested in the story at the same time. Choose a room for the conference which is large and has plenty of outlets for electronic media. Prepare press kits with background information, a press release summarizing the details of the story, and a personal biography of any significant persons related to the story. Choose a spokesperson who is articulate, has importance in relation to the story, and can handle rapid fire questions. Have the public relations coordinator open and close the press conference by introducing the participants, outlining procedures to be followed, and thanking the press for coming.

*In-House Publications* such as the school newspaper and yearbook may also be effective public relations tools for connecting with student audiences and their peers in the community. Such publications ought to reflect authentically the life of the school and concerns of the students within the bounds of good journalism and good taste.

*The Telephone* is the most frequently used tool of communications. Instruct those who answer school phones on how to handle calls and process requests for information and assistance. Use the telephone to communicate with parents and other publics in matters which are sensitive or in which evidence of great personal concern would be valued.

The science of public relations is still evolving as persons everywhere experiment with ways of connecting with their audiences. If practiced in a planned and professional way, public relations will enable Catholic school personnel to connect effectively with various publics and to create friendships and to develop confidence among those whose support will ensure the future of Catholic Education. Hopefully, this booklet will provide its users with a good foundation for shaping their programs and achieving such goals.



# Resources

- KOTLER, PHILIP. *Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations*. (Prentice-Hall, 1975)
- KODAK PUBLICATIONS. *The Best of Audio-Visual Notes from Kodak*. (Eastman Kodak Co., 1983)
- MAAS, JANE. *Better Brochures, Catalogues, and Mailing Pieces*. (St. Martin's Press, 1981)
- NATIONAL SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION. *Building Public Confidence for Your Schools*. (NEPRA, 1801 N. Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209)
- NCEA PUBLICATIONS. *Catholic Schools' Week Kit* (updated annually) (1077 30th Street, N.W., Suite 100, Washington, D.C. 20007)
- NOLTE, LAWRENCE W. *Fundamentals of Public Relations*. (Pergamon Press, Inc., 1974)
- O'BRIEN, RICHARD. *Publicity: How To Get It*. (New York: Barnes and Noble)
- MCKENZIE, LEON. *Decision-Making In Your Parish*. (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1982).
- ROMAN, KENNETH & MAAS, JANE. *How to Advertise*. (St. Martin's Press, 1976)
- WILLIS, F.H. *Fundamentals of Layout*. (NY: Dover Publications)

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\*In your local area, check for Media Directories compiled by local publicity clubs and take advantage of training seminars offered by local newspapers, radio and television stations, and cable franchisers. These are always good sources for tip sheets and useful forms.

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# Appendices

## A

### Appendix

The materials in this section are samples which schools may freely adapt for their own uses. They are presented solely as models.

#### **Everyday Public Relations Opportunities — How Do You Use Them?**

*Every school community has a personality which it reveals by how it handles everyday occurrences with its publics. Reflect on the following questions in light of present practices and the impact they have on parents, students, parishioners, neighbors, and inquirers.*

How are telephones answered?

How are visitors welcomed to the building? Do signs point the way to the school office?

How are halls decorated? Do they communicate something about the Catholic education happening there? What is their message?

How do office staff respond to visitors? When are parents welcome in the building? How are they involved in the school's life?

How are students recognized for achievements?

What kinds of orientation programs exist for new students, for new staff?

How many opportunities do you offer for neighbors, parishioners, and other members of the community to participate in the school's life?

How are concerns of parents handled by teachers and administrators?

How are concerns of neighbors voiced about students' behavior handled?

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**In what ways does the school secretary see herself as an important part of the school's public relations effort?**

**In what ways are students, parents, and faculty encouraged to be goodwill ambassadors for the school?**

**How would you rate parent-teacher conferences in terms of creating goodwill?**

**How are changes in schedule communicated to parents and faculty?**

**How do you gather the advice of experts in your community to improve instruction and other school activities?**

**What kind of image do your school handbooks convey?**

**How do you provide for feedback in your building? from parents? from graduates?**

# B

Appendix

## Sample Press Release

St. Egbert Academy

123 North School St. — Anywhere, USA 00001

(Date of Release) January 29, 198\_\_

(Name and telephone numbers for verifications) For further information, contact:

Mary Noitall  
555-1212 Days  
123-4567 Evenings

(Indicates when release may be used)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(who/what)

*Most Reverend Martin Bishop*, auxiliary bishop of Anywhere, *will dedicate* the new St. Egbert Academy computer center, *Feb. 14 at a 2 p.m. scripture service at the school, 123 North School Street.*

(when)

(how)

(where)

(explains significance of facility)

The new computer center expands the school's offerings in computer science for students at all levels. Funds to build the \$10,000 center were raised in recent walk-a-thons sponsored by the student council.

(acknowledges public support)

"Now all our students will be able to develop computer literacy," stated Sr. Mary, principal, "and older students will be able to write their own programs."

(quotes add a humantouch)

(details of event)

Student council officers Lisa Arnold, president, Tom Reynolds, vice-president, and Lynn Ostiak, secretary will present readings and an original hymn during the dedication. The Bishop will bless the new facility. Refreshments will follow.

(probably information that could be eliminated if needed)

Parent Club officers Mary and John Smith have extended an invitation to all the families and friends of St. Egbert Academy to attend the celebration.



## Sample Public Service Announcements

### *:10 sec. radio spot*

St. Egbert Academy invites families, friends, and graduates to dedication ceremonies at its new computer center, 123 N. School, Feb. 14 at 2 p.m. Bishop Martin Bishop will preside. For details, call 123-4567.

### *:20 sec. radio spot*

St. Egbert Academy invites families, friends, and graduates to dedication ceremonies at its new computer center, 123 N. School, Feb. 14 at 2 p.m. The ceremonies will begin with a scripture service. Bishop Martin Bishop will preside. Students will also demonstrate computer art. For details, call 123-4567.

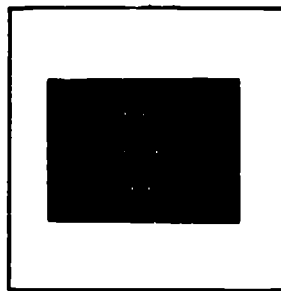
### *:30 sec. radio spot*

St. Egbert Academy invites families, friends, and graduates to dedication ceremonies at its new computer center, 123 N. School St., Feb. 14 at 2 p.m. The new facility offers students increased opportunities to use computers. The dedication services will begin with prayer led by Bishop Martin Bishop. Students will demonstrate educational uses of the computers. Refreshments will be served. For more details, call 123-4567.

\* \* \* \* \*

### *:10 Sec. Video Spot*

slide



*Voice Over:* St. Egbert Academy will dedicate a new computer facility, Feb. 14, at 2 p.m. Present students, families, friends and graduates are invited. For more details, call 123-4567.

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Appendix

## Sample News-Photo Opportunity Sheet

St. Egbert Academy

123 North School Street, Anywhere, USA 00001

For further information, contact:

Mary Noitall

453-0101 Days

123-4567 Evenings

**FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

### NEWS-PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

**WHAT:** Bright computer graphics designed by eighth-graders will fill the screens of 24 computers during the St. Egbert Academy computer art exhibit

**WHEN:** Feb. 14 beginning after the dedication services of the school's new computer facilities at 2 p.m.

**WHERE:** The computer center is located in the school at 123 North School.

**WHO:** Student computer artists will be available to explain how they created their designs. Bishop Martin Bishop, auxiliary Bishop of Anywhere will preside at the dedication ceremonies.

**WHY:** To celebrate the opening of the new computer center and to demonstrate one of the many ways in which the new facilities will enhance learning possibilities for St. Egbert students.

(With a news-photo opportunity, you are trying to capture the attention of television news assignment people and newspaper photo editors, therefore the emphasis is on what will make a good photo or :20 - :30 visual piece for a news cast. You may accompany a news-photo opportunity sheet with a longer press release.)

...BY AVAILABLE

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