‘Your goal is to win the task of implementing a public relations campaign on behalf of the Newlandia Education Foundation’

Introduction: Situation and Proposal Overview

Pacific PR’s campaign proposal for the Newlandia Education Foundation (NEF) will focus on raising general awareness and building strategic partnerships and philanthropic relationships with key Newlandia institutions to achieve the ultimate campaign goals to: raise enough money so that the NEF can build 3 new schools in the Southern Region and have them functioning within 18 months; and to also raise sufficient money to provide additional support to the existing NEF schools in Rajan, Calina and Shalel in the form of books, furniture, stationery and teaching materials. To survive and achieve their desired goals in the relative short-term, philanthropic relationships must be established to satisfy the NEF’s immediate monetary needs. The longer-term success of the NEF relies upon raising the companies profile amongst the Newlandia adult population, especially in the affluent Northern region, and establishing the NEF as a national institution. The success story of Rangi, a graduate from Calina Village School, should be utilized to spearhead and focus the campaign. Raising awareness of the dire state of child education in the downtrodden South is critical, especially considering that research undertaken by the Pacific Research Company, commissioned jointly by WorldHelp and the NEF, shows that Newlandian’s are predisposed to supporting charitable organisations with seventy percent of survey respondents indicating they had donated to a charity within the last twelve months. However, the study also revealed the enormity of the task, with only one percent of respondents aware of the NEF’s charter to provide educational opportunities to all residents of Newlandia. Although, evidence suggested that messages promoting the NEF’s cause would be well received, with ninety-two percent of the survey respondents indicating that they felt supporting child-focused charitable organisations is important, and with ninety-five percent of the survey respondents agreeing with the statement, “it is every Newlandian’s right to have access to educational opportunities”. The theories of communication and persuasion discussed as relevant to the NEF campaign are: Models of Public Relations, Stewardship, Management by Objectives, Message pre-testing, Sponsorship Theory, Agenda Setting Theory, Semiotics,

**Models of Public Relations**

There are a number of prominent public relations planning models that can be used to guide the development of a campaign or program. There is Marston’s RACE model\(^1\); Hendrix’s ROPE model\(^2\); The ROSTE model as sited by Parkinson and Ekachai\(^3\); Crifasi’s ROSIE model\(^4\); Wilcox et al’s 8-step planning model\(^5\). They all advocate similar planning steps that can be condensed into four essential, basic phases, as outlined in Kendall’s RAISE model: Research, adaptation, implementation strategy, evaluation.\(^6\) So, therefore, for the purpose of this Pacific PR campaign, it is a singular unique aspect of the ROPE(S) planning model, as advocated by Kelly, - Stewardship – that will be of specific and particular importance.\(^7\) As a non-profit organisation struggling to create an identity and public awareness for its cause, relationship management is critical, and as Kelly advocates through the theory of Stewardship, “It is easier to keep a friend than to make a new friend.”\(^8\)

**Stewardship**

Stewardship is the concept of continuing to nurture existing strategic relationships even after their specific usefulness in a campaign or program is over, their support will probably be very helpful in future endeavours. Marketing studies indicate that it can cost around seven times

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\(^8\) Ibid, p. 279
as much to generate new customers than to maintain existing ones.\textsuperscript{9} Fund-raising theory states that “the best prospects are previous donors”\textsuperscript{10}, that the more an individual or group donates (time, money, etc) the more likely they are to give again\textsuperscript{11}, and “it’s very difficult to turn a non-giver into a giver”.\textsuperscript{12} On the same note, effects theory dictates that it is much more difficult to change ones behaviour than to reinforce a certain type of behaviour.\textsuperscript{13} These are all good reasons as to why maintaining existing relationships through stewardship is vitally important to any public relations activity, especially the not-for-profit sector. “How donors are treated after they make their gifts largely determines future success. It also costs less to raise gifts from past donors than from new donors.”\textsuperscript{14} Furthermore, Barlow adds that “it is these customers who we look after today who will be loyal to us tomorrow.”\textsuperscript{15} Greenfield states that the idea behind stewardship in the not-for-profit sector is to thank current/past supporters and to “establish the means for continued communication that will help to preserve their interest and attention to the organisation” and its various causes.\textsuperscript{16} Stewardship, as the additional fifth step to the ROPES programming model, is made up of four individual elements: reciprocity, responsibility, reporting, relationship nurturing.\textsuperscript{17} Reciprocity is the concept that states the organisation should demonstrate its gratitude for the support shown by stakeholders, key publics and strategic partnerships.\textsuperscript{18} Positive relationships need a system of give and take.\textsuperscript{19} Reciprocity maintains or restores the balance to a relationship,\textsuperscript{20} and according to Gouldner, establishes an obligation in the minds of supporters towards future efforts.\textsuperscript{21} Howe further attests that “the more prompt and personal the expression of appreciation, the more favourable the carryover toward further giving.”\textsuperscript{22} Responsibility is the concept that states an organisation has an obligation to act in a socially responsible manner towards supporters.\textsuperscript{23} Kelly argues the particular importance of

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid, p. 283
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, p. 282
\textsuperscript{11} Seymour 1988
\textsuperscript{12} Lord 1983, p. 85
\textsuperscript{13} Kelly, p. 282
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p. 283
\textsuperscript{15} Barlow 1998, p. 21
\textsuperscript{16} Greenfield 1991, p. 148
\textsuperscript{17} Kelly, p. 280
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, p. 283
\textsuperscript{19} Becker 1986, p. 83
\textsuperscript{20} Lombardo 1995, p. 297
\textsuperscript{21} Gouldner 1960, p. 173
\textsuperscript{22} Howe 1991, p. 32
\textsuperscript{23} Kelly, p. 283
responsibility in a very practical manner, highlighting that betraying the trust of supporters is expensive, whilst maintaining it saves resources.\textsuperscript{24} The third element, reporting, is described simply as being accountable, where organisations should keep supporters/key publics informed on developments affecting the organisation and particularly those directly related to the specific cause supporters have backed.\textsuperscript{25} As Kelly points out – “Relationships cannot be maintained if the organisation only communicates with friends when it seeks help.”\textsuperscript{26} The last element in stewardship theory, relationship nurturing, holds to the basic concept that relationship building is at the foundation of public relations, is what organisations rely upon to succeeded into the future and makes good business sense because “it’s easier to get a second gift from a donor who is treated well the first time than it is to get a new gift.”\textsuperscript{27}

Management by Objectives

Crucial to any theories of communication implemented during a communications campaign, is the theory or system of measurement used to determine the success of those communication and persuasion theories employed within the strategies and tactics of that campaign. The methods of measurement must match appropriately to the objectives outlined. If the aim of implementing a range of strategic tactical communication devices was to ultimately change the opinion of a target pubic, it is not much good simply counting the number of articles published or brochures disseminated.\textsuperscript{28} Quantitative methods of measurement can be used to assess the success of informational objectives, but motivational or behavioural objectives rely on qualitative data and means of evaluation to assess their success.\textsuperscript{29} As stated by Macnamara, this type of assessment is termed ‘measurement by kilogram’, as the collection of press clippings is a quantitative measurement, but to gauge the attitudes of the target public, qualitative means of evaluation are needed.\textsuperscript{30} “A public relations department that cannot demonstrate its value to the organization will not be in a

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\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, p. 285 \\
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, p. 285 \\
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, p. 286 \\
\textsuperscript{27} Dundjerski 1994, p. 22 \\
\textsuperscript{28} Niranjala Weerakkody, \textit{Research Methods For Media and Communication}, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 115 \\
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, p. 2
\end{flushright}
position to influence the policy decisions that affect its own fate.” Measurement in research must essentially address two key issues, the validity (does it measure what we say it measures?) and reliability (does it measure the same way every time?) Pacific PR will use the theory of measurement-by-objectives (MBO) to assess the success of its various communication and persuasion efforts. MBO in public relations involves preparing agreed statements on the desired outcome of certain communication and persuasion objectives, determines appropriate units of measurement to gauge the success of those individual objectives, and evaluates those objects’ success at a pre-determined time based on the expectations outlined in the planning stage. The achievement of all objectives in Pacific PR’s communications campaign is particularly crucial given the low budget and dire situation of the NEF. Therefore implementing theories of campaign evaluation from the inception of the campaign will aid in the establishment of SMART objectives.

The basic MBO principles to be adhered to include: Work group involvement (all members of the campaign are involved in setting the objectives); Manager-subordinate involvement (each team member should devise a set of individual objectives with the project manager that derive from the campaign’s overarching objectives); Determination of intermediate objectives (defines intermediary objectives on route to achieving the main objective – this can provide more precise in-campaign monitoring and allow for more successful mid-course corrections to be made if necessary); Determination of measures of achievement (The point at which the effort is considered complete should be specified in terms of either a time element or the achievement of a stated objective); Review, evaluation and recycling (Use information gathered during the evaluation of the success of each objective to improve the planning process of the next effort).

Lastly, Cloze Procedure is particularly useful for measuring the effectiveness of the delivery of key messages through a range of tactical devices in a public relations program or campaign, because it measures both readability and comprehension of spoken and visual messages.

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33 Baskin et al, p. 177
34 Betteke Van Ruler, Ana Vercic and Dejan Vercic, Public Relations metrics research and evaluation, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 125
35 Baskin et al. p. 178
Message pre-testing: Readability studies (Flesch Formula)

Key messages during PR Pacific’s communication campaign for the NEF will be distributed audiences of varying literacy competencies, from backgrounds of various different regional dialects and will contain information on what is a complicated and controversial issue. As such, message comprehension is of upmost importance. Therefore, theories of readability will be utilized throughout a comprehensive message testing phase. Readability tests can help tailor specific writing styles most appropriate for target audiences and publications during a public relations campaign.37 “The basic premise of these tests is that written copy will be ineffective if it is too difficult to read”.38 The point at which the “difficulty” level of the copy begins to inhibit the impact of the message depends on any given situation39 (given the aforementioned reasons, PR Pacific will have to maintain message simplicity as a high priority). There are a number of formulaic theories for determining the readability of publications. Pacific PR will use a combination of the following most common readability tests, as message testing will be a crucial step in the successful implementation of this campaign. The Flesch Formula which produces both a reading ease score and a human interest score.40 The Gunning Fog Index focuses purely on determining the reading ease of copy.41 The Dale-Chall Formula calculates sentence length and the number of infrequently used words to determine reading ease.42 Whilst these theories provide good guidelines and grounding for the development of clear and concise communications, material can be oversimplified and hence its meaning lost.43 The key is to “match the written message to the publication and audience for which it is intended whilst avoiding ‘talking-over’, or patronising them.44

37 Baskin et al, p. 180
38 Ibid, p. 179
43 Baskin et al, p. 180
44 Ibid, p. 180
**Sponsorship Theory**

Sponsorship theory will be a crucial element or ‘model’ of communication utilized in Pacific PR’s NEF campaign. “Sponsorship is an investment, where the sponsor provides financial assistance or stages an event to aid an organisation in attaining their goals in return for communicating a corporate message so that the sponsor can achieve” their goals.\(^{45}\) Benefits for the sponsored party include: substantial money to fund their cause; prestige of being a highly sought-after team or event; association with sponsor; public acknowledgement of standing (raise awareness: acknowledgement of themselves and the cause they are fighting for); the ability to gain considerable publicity.\(^{46}\) The benefits for the sponsor can include: the ability to create, reinforce or ‘fix’ a company/organisation name; shape public opinion and perception of a company/organisation; provide selling/promotion opportunities; improve their image generally; identify a company/organisation with a particular lifestyle or point-of-view (eg: noble cause); be a cost-effective option for self-promotion when compared to other avenues and forms of media.\(^{47}\) Chung provides a useful ‘checklist’ for preparing a sponsorship proposal and attracting sponsorship: Identify your project and define the benefits; Define the timeline, costs and resources required; Identify a potential list of sponsors and shortlist based on their ‘match’ to your organisation; Prepare a proposal based on your needs and the benefits the sponsor could derive; Personally present the proposal; Follow-up (Stewardship); Put what is agreed up between sponsor and sponsored in writing.\(^{48}\)

**Agenda Setting Theory**

Agenda setting theory was first identified in the 1970s by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw.\(^{49}\) “Agenda setting theory is concerned with the media and the way news is selected by

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\(^{46}\) Ibid, p. 199


\(^{48}\) Chung, p. 204

\(^{49}\) M.E. McCombs and D.L. Shaw. 1972. ‘The agenda-setting function of mass media’, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 1
media outlets for consumption by the public.”

That is, McCombs and Shaw contend that media content sets the agenda for public discussion. Public relations practitioners should be continually researching their operational environment (environmental scanning) to proactively anticipate the rise of potential issues, identify and solve them, before they become problems. This leads to the crucial role of agenda setting. If issues are proactively dealt with, this enables the public relations practitioner to frame the issue or ensuing discussion on their terms to avoid unfavourable media coverage and issue interpretation or misrepresentation by the media.

Conversely, public relations practitioners are often attempting to set the agenda by gaining positive and visible new coverage for their client. Agenda-setting theory can be used to shift the focus from potentially damaging situations. This is particularly true in the new digital age of news production, where the most prominent electronic media stories of the day are likely to be about the new agenda, rather than the old one, because of its instantaneous nature.

“Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue... that is, the media set the ‘agenda’ of the campaign.” As Mackey suggests, “although the news media do not tell you what to think, they do strongly influence what you think about.” The news media focuses public thought and opinion on certain issues, and simultaneously, issues that do not receive this coverage are forgotten and “drop off the public agenda”.

Because the NEF has failed to gain news coverage with its activities, it as an organisation had dropped off the public agenda. The use of Agenda setting theory is crucial in Pacific PR’s campaign to shape the NEF as a topic/institution of public interest and discussion. Agenda setting theory points out the relationship between the public relations sector and the news media and highlights the importance of a strategic communications effort where the correct message is sent to the correct public, through the correct media at the right time to achievement coverage.

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52 Stacks, p. 13
53 McCombs and Shaw, p. 176
54 Ibid, p. 176
55 Stephan Tanner, Journalism Investigation and Research, NSW: Pearson Education, 2002, p. 179
56 Ibid, p. 179
57 Ibid, p. 176
59 Ibid, p. 45
prominence, relevance and acceptance.  

‘Second-level’ agenda-setting effects, explored by Wanta, finds evidence that the media not only set an agenda, but also convey a set of attributes about the subject of the news. These positive or negative attributes are remembered and colour public opinion. For example, “a number of news stories regarding the disappearance of Alabama high school student Natalee Holloway have focused on the potential danger for tourists in Aruba, when indeed the island has a relatively low rate of crime compared to other countries in the region. This may lead to the public perception that travel to Aruba is ill-advised.” As public relations is concerned with gaining the maximum attention possible for a client or organisation, practitioners need to understand the news values (what makes news) that govern the media agenda and media routines and process to gain maximum achievable coverage. According to Gandy, public relations plays a major role in setting the media agenda by supplying information to the media: “Public relations represents one means of influencing the decisions of others by structuring the information environment in which those decision are made.”

Semiotics

Semiotics or semiology is a study of signs and symbols and their associated and derived cultural meanings and significance. The concept of semiotics in communication theory was developed in the 1960s and refers to the construction of textual meaning by the process of signification – the interaction of signs with their referents and with the readers/producers who use them. These symbols can be words, pictures, sounds and signs, or fashion items, etc. “These representations –these images, designs, words or sounds – all draw on the existing language understandings which we hold in our heads in order to deliberately cause us to

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60 Ibid, p. 45
61 Wilcox and Cameron, p. 221
62 Ibid, p. 221
63 Ibid, p. 221
66 Mackey, p. 48
67 Ina Bertrand and Peter Hughes, Media Research Methods: Audiences, Institutions, Texts, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 6
68 Mackey, p. 48
trigger certain thoughts.”69 The theory of semiotics explains how our understandings, views and thoughts towards issues, organisations, products and so on, can be manipulated through the use of certain cultural/language symbols.70 For example, use of certain colours or images can conjure particular associations, elicit feelings and thoughts. Using the colours of green and gold or the Boxing Kangaroo on the packaging of Australian goods can convey notions of national pride and patriotism. Also, western newsreaders are dressed in suits because they are cultural symbols that convey notions of respect, reliability and professionalism.71 These techniques will be vital to establish the NEF as a Newlandia institution by attaching feelings of nationalism to the organisation in order win wide-spread public support. Research is vital to use semiology successfully, as it is culturally sensitive and specific.72 The colour red has different political connotations in the west as opposed to eastern cultures. White is also the colour of mourning in some Asian cultures, as opposed to black for western cultures.73

Semiotics as a communication and persuasion theory, assumes that all communication occurs by the exchange of signs, with each sign having one or more signified (a mental concept) and at least one signifier (a physical aspect).74 For example, the signifier ‘dog’ (a word, written on a page or spoken) brings signifieds to the reader’s mind (associations which draw on previous experience).75 The theory of semiotic communication also states that signs operate on two levels: The denotation (as near as possible to a literal meaning), and the connotation (the value added to the literal meaning).76 For example, ‘green’ denotes a particular colour response of our retinas, and connotes nature, permission to move forward, the Irish, jealousy, illness, etc. You can change the connotation of a sign by changing the signifier while retaining the signified (for instance, a photo of the same girl in clear light and hard focus or in dim light and soft focus).77 In the end, culture (and ideology) is the deciding factor that determines our responses to signs.78

69 Ibid, p. 48
70 Ellen Seiter. 2004. ‘Semiotics, structuralism, and television’, in Sue Turnbull, Researching Media Audiences, La Trobe University, 2006, p. 35
71 Ibid, p. 35
72 Bertrand and Hughes, p. 6
73 Mackey, p. 50
74 Bertrand and Hughes, p. 202
75 Ibid, p. 202
76 Ibid, p. 204
77 Ibid, p. 204
78 Ibid, p. 204
Grunig and Hunt’s Four Models of Public Relations

Grunig and Hunt’s four models of public relations explain the different communications approaches that public relations practitioners and campaigns can take to reach their target publics. Press agentry/publicity (gaining attention for your client or organisation); Public information (one-way dissemination of information to target publics on behalf of the organisation); Two-way asymmetric (involves a two-way flow of information, but is designed to aid in developing more persuasive messages to deliver to the target public to convince them of the organisation point of view, rather than responding to messages from the target public); Two-way symmetric (the ideal form of public relations communication according to Grunig and Hunt – it promotes a balanced two-way communication flow between the organisation and publics in an attempt to adapt to each others needs). Grunig and Hunt describe the press agentry model of public relations as gaining exposure for an organisation’s cause via sensationalist means to attract attention rather than to communicate any meaningful information. This model does not seek any public feedback in terms of contributory dialogue. Grunig and Hunt describe the public information model as the “dissemination of information, not necessarily with a persuasive intent.” The objective here is to report information about the organisation to the target public(s), this is simple dissemination of information to create awareness about a situation, product or issue. Grunig and White in their paper – *The effect of worldviews on public relations theory and practice* – agree with many critics of the two-way symmetric model of public relations, stating that most public relations efforts operate at an asymmetric level, principally aimed at advancing the objectives and goals of the organisation or client to a greater extent than that of those of targeted publics. The two-way symmetric model is, in reality, optimistically idealist. However, Grunig still notes that when achievable, it is still the most effect and

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79 Mackey, p. 53  
80 Ibid, p. 53  
82 Ibid, p. 21  
83 Ibid, p. 22  
84 Ibid, p. 22  
86 Ibid, p. 46
ethical method of communication. Leitch and Neilson argue that the two-way symmetric model can only be truly practiced if all participating parties share equal power and status, and that in most situations, particularly those between large multinational corporations and unskilled labour forces in developing countries, this is simply unattainable. L’Etang argues that the very nature of public relations means that a symmetric model of communication cannot be achieved – “There is a problem in the attempt which some make to maintain the idea of ‘symmetry’ alongside the role of public relations as advocates. Surely symmetry and advocacy are in opposition.” Tench and Yeomans also warn of the cultural specificity of Grunig and Hunt’s four models of public relations, and that they are not necessarily adaptable to different cultural settings. Pacific PR will use all these forms of communication to implement various aspects of the NEF’s strategic communications campaign. The two-way models of communication will be particularly crucial for strategic relationship/partnership building.

Situational Theory

Situational theory, as posited by Grunig and Hunt, suggests that target public reaction to an issue, and hence the most appropriate/effective forms of communication to use in reaching them, can be determined based on the situation which they are in in relation to the issue in question. The theory can help classify target publics based on their level of involvement/care in relation to specific issues so that more effect messages can be crafted to groups of people on that basis. Grunig and Hunt in their 1984 text, Managing Public Relations, say that situational theory classifies publics into four distinct groups: Publics that are active on all issues of public concern; Publics that are apathetic on all issues; Publics that are active only on issues that involve nearly everyone in the population; Publics who are merely concerned with single/specific issues (often personalised – situations by which they

90 Tench and Yeomans, p. 148
91 Mackey, p. 62
92 Ibid, p. 62
are directly effected).\textsuperscript{93} Situational theory claims people/publics can be categorized as aforementioned on the basis three factors: Problem recognition (do they perceive and think about something as a problem that needs to be addressed); Constraint recognition (do they feel that there is little that they can do to address/solve the problem on an individually or reasonably accessible level); Level of involvement (the extent to which they are personally affected, or feel like they are affected, by the problem).\textsuperscript{94} Kirby points out that a more contemporary and popular categorization of target publics based on situational theory is to group them as: Latent publics (people affected by a situation created by an organisation's actions but do not realize it); Aware publics (those who know that a situation exists); Active publics (individuals or groups who are aware of the situation created, view the issue as concern worthy, and act on that concern to become actively involved).\textsuperscript{95} So, situational theory states that people’s level of problem recognition, issue involvement and their perceived ability to meaningfully affect the situation, determines their active and passive communication behaviour and classification as a target public – that is, whether and how they protest and whether and how they gather information on the problem.\textsuperscript{96} Kirby indicates that it “is wise public relations practice to address a situation when publics are at the latent or aware stage, rather than wait until the active publics have begun to react”.\textsuperscript{97} It is a far more labour intensive process to persuade active publics’ to an alternative point of view, as they have progressed to the belief stage of cognitive recognition and internalised their stance on the issue into their belief-system. This theory will be important in determining likely sponsors and philanthropists for the NEF, and for identifying the level of issue involvement of target publics (those directly involved and affecting in the South, and those removed from the immediacy of the issue in the North).

**Social Learning Theory**

\textsuperscript{93} Grunig and Hunt 1984, p. 160
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid, p. 160
\textsuperscript{95} Kirby, pp. 5-6
\textsuperscript{97} Kirby, p. 6
Social learning theory was developed by Stanford psychologist Albert Bandura in the context of television as an influence on children’s personality development from experiences and interactions with culture, subculture, family and peers. Bandura theorised that modelling played a uniquely important role in the child’s social development, stating that the best and most effective way to teach children novel ways of acting and their consequences is to show them the behaviour you wish them to learn and display. While playing with toys that stimulate imitation of adults, children frequently reproduce not only the appropriate adult-role behaviour patterns but also characteristics of idiosyncratic parental patterns of response, including attitudes, mannerisms, gestures, and even voice inflections, which the parents have certainly never attempted directly to teach. This theory can be extended to the general adult population.

Social learning theory suggests that people modify their attitudes and behaviour to fit in with a desired social group, and may also respect, modify or adopt their behaviour and attitudes to mirror respected opinion leaders or ‘idols’ who are analogous or seen as representative of their desired social group. “This theory deals with how people observe and model the behaviours, attitudes and reactions of others.” Social learning theory is a series of events that states people see a particular type of behaviour, see it as desirable, and so adopt it. If we like the adopted behaviour, “we integrate it into our being.” Television advertising employs social learning theory as a persuasive communication method, attempting to associate brands, products and services with socially desirable attributes such as popularity. Advertisers hope that consumers will “model the behaviour and buy the product in the advertisement.” Organisations also use celebrities frequently and effectively to gain support for causes or promoted products and is another prime example of social

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99 Ibid, p. 65
100 Ibid, p. 66
103 Mackey, p. 65
104 McElreath 1997, p. 155
105 Kirby, p. 8
106 Kearsley, p. 22
107 Mackey, p. 66
learning theory in action.\textsuperscript{108} Pacific PR will position Calina Village School graduate Rangi as a relatable model for the campaign and will further utilize the support of other credible Newlandian identities and associate them with the NEF’s cause. Kearsley highlights two key aspects of social learning theory: That individuals are more likely to “adopt a modelled behaviour if it results in outcomes they value”; and that the likelihood of someone adopting a modelled behaviour is greater “if the model is similar to the observer and has admired status and the behaviour has functional value.”\textsuperscript{109} As noted by Kearsley, the similarity of the model to oneself is likely to positively affect the likelihood of adopting the models behaviour or agreeing with their attitude. Burgoon, Dunbar and Segrin also indicate that the physical attractiveness of a model is likely to increase persuasiveness also.\textsuperscript{110} An advertising and market-research example is useful here.

Much research has focused around the potential of avatars as a key advertising and promotions creative strategy/tool to boost sales and sales potential. In traditional media, advertising agents will select a spokesperson to best connect with their target market. Advertising in virtual online worlds allows advertisers to personalise the spokesperson/salesperson to suit individual consumers.\textsuperscript{111} A review of the literature on digital commerce reveals that a lack of consumer trust is “the main reason why the enormous growth potential of end customer service has yet to be utilized by electronic commerce”.\textsuperscript{112} Therefore, without trust, development of online or virtual-commerce cannot reach its potential – one approach to combat this customer distrust with web-based shopping is to use avatars.\textsuperscript{113} Research indicates that people are most receptive to avatars that resemble themselves; and that avatars positively influence the trust of a consumer toward the supplier and consequently present themselves as an effective instrument for establishing trust within the context of online virtual worlds.\textsuperscript{114} An online experiment with 2,223 participants conducted by Bauer et

\textsuperscript{108} McElreath 1997, p. 155
\textsuperscript{109} Kearsley, p. 23
\textsuperscript{110} Kirby, pp. 450-451
\textsuperscript{111} T. Wood; Solomon Natalie; Michael R. Enliss and G. Basil. 2005. ‘Personalization of online avatars: is the messenger as important as the message?’, \textit{International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising}, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 143-161
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid, pp. 53-69
al found that using avatars increases the customer’s trust towards the supplier; The employment of an individually chosen avatar leads to a higher trust in the supplier than the employment of an assigned avatar; The employment of an avatar leads to a higher entertainment value of the website; The employment of an individually chosen avatar leads to a higher entertainment value of the website than the employment of an assigned avatar; The employment of an avatar leads to more positive attitude toward the product; The employment of an avatar leads to a higher buying intention; The employment of an individually chosen avatar leads to a higher buying intention than the employment of an assigned avatar. Holzwarth, Janiszewski and Neumann identify the impersonal nature of web-based shopping as the major impediment to sales. Their study on the usefulness of avatars in overcoming this hurdle shows that using an avatar sales agent lead to more satisfaction with the retailer; a more positive attitude toward the product and a greater purchase intention; that an attractive avatar is a more effective sales agent at moderate levels of product involvement and an expert avatar is a more effective sales agent at high levels of product involvement.

Hierarchy of needs: Self-interest

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a method that can be utilized to establish an individual’s or group’s self-interest; this particularly crucial to public relations message creation, as people generally pay closer attention to messages that appeal to their direct psychological and physiological needs. Abraham Maslow identified humans as having different motivating factors behind their actions, and so established a hierarchy of needs upon which appeals to self-interest can be constructed. Maslow’s five-level hierarchy that helps explain the origins of motivation, and therefore attitude change, is as follows: Physiological needs, the most basic level, includes an individual’s basic physical needs such as food, water, sleep, exercise and shelter; Safety needs, the second level, includes the need for protection, peace,
and security; Social needs, the third level, includes the need for peer-group acceptance, sense of belonging, love and friendship; Self-esteem needs is the fourth level and includes the need for status, success, recognition, intelligence and leadership opportunities; Self-actualisation is the highest level of attainment in Maslow’s hierarchy and is the need for self-development, reaching one’s potential for the purpose of challenge, accomplishment and self-satisfaction.\(^{120}\)

The theory states that individuals can only move upwards towards higher levels of needs once their lower preceding needs have been fulfilled – therefore basic physiological needs have to be satisfied before higher-level esteem issues can be affectively addressed.\(^{121}\) So public relations communications must appeal to target publics most basic relevant needs in any given situation to engage that audiences at the most effect level possible by tapping into their self-interest. If a target public is concerned with satisfying the basic needs of food and shelter, messages appealing to self-esteem will be ineffective.\(^{122}\) Recent research indicates that Maslow’s categorisation of needs is more crucial for developing target public communications than their particular order: whilst sex is categorised as a basic physiological need at the base of Maslow’s hierarchy, the urge can be suppressed or related to higher-order needs such as love and self-esteem.\(^{123}\) Understanding target public self-interest is crucial in a public relations campaign so that people can behave as desired. Additionally, whilst charitable organisations do not sell products, they do need donations and volunteers, so understanding the self-interest of self-gratification that persuades them to donate their money or time is vital.\(^{124}\) These motivating factors may include self-esteem, recognition from peers and the community and ego gratification.\(^{125}\) “Public relations people understand psychological needs and rewards, and that is why there is constant recognition of volunteers in newsletters and at award banquets.”\(^{126}\)

The Pacific PR campaign will communicate to a vast array of publics who are in very different comparative situations in terms of needs - The affluent Newlandians in the North as opposed to the poor in the South. Different appeals to self-interest will be appropriate for communicating the NEF’s position to those in the South to those in the North.


\(^{121}\) Ibid


\(^{124}\) Wilcox and Cameron 2009, p. 230

\(^{125}\) Ibid, p. 230

\(^{126}\) Ibid, p. 230
Communication Theory: Sender – Receiver

There are many theories of communication. The process, or linear, school of communication theory, as theorised by Lasswell in 1948, suggests that communication occurs when certain messages are created and pass between senders (encoders) and receivers (decoders) via a communication channel (signal), producing feedback, which may influence the transmission of the next message.\textsuperscript{127} This model also acknowledges possible interference or distortion of the message by outside forces, describing ‘noise’ within the model as any interference encountered between the sender and receiver, including actual noise or semantic noise (such as unfamiliarity with a specific dialect being used within a particular communication).\textsuperscript{128} Significant noise can result in the message being misread, and communication failure, where the decoder misunderstands the encoded meaning.\textsuperscript{129}

Conclusion

A strategic communications campaign firmly grounded in communication and persuasion theory will ensure that the scarce resources of the NEF are used with maximum effect and that the key objectives outlined in the planning stage of the campaign are deliverable and delivered.

\textsuperscript{127} J. Fiske, \textit{Introduction to Communication Studies}, London: Methuen, 1982, pp. 6-40
\textsuperscript{128} Bertrand and Hughes, p. 6
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid, p. 6
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