

# **Governmental Relations and Public Affairs**

## **Team 3**

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## Outline

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### **I. Case Summary**

- Our city has a series of embarrassing stories and small crises about poorly handled situations in our government and civil services.
- Our unintentionally humorous mistakes have even spread to the local level, picked up by the Associated Press and circulated nationally throughout papers and television coverage.
- Our city feels demoralized and embarrassed due to its hard-working city hall staff and business leaders. The city wants to do something to repair its reputation but has promised tax cuts and does not want to spend a lot of taxpayer money to repair the damages already done.

Our Team's Assignment:

To create and provide basic information about the city (that will reflect it in a positive light) including researching and writing news releases about city council activities and city departments, and providing info for the city's website. Our Public Relations organization is divided into two teams, one facing an internal challenge and the other addressing the external.

## II. Research

### Research: Governmental Relations & Public Affairs

Public Affairs defined:

*Public Affairs vs. Public Relations* (Article from the Publicity Club of Chicago website)

By Renee A. Prejean-Motanky

<http://www.publicity.org/rapdec03.htm>

- Five reasons why Public Affairs is more important than ever:
  1. Public Distrust is growing.
  2. Brands are valuable, but fragile.
  3. Big Government is here to stay. At all levels, the government's involvement in business is increasing, not decreasing.
  4. Life is not fair. Terrorism, trade wars, government deficits, frivolous lawsuits—all of these eternal challenges can have a big impact on a corporation or association.
  5. You can't go it alone. Every organization is tied to the communities it serves and governments that regulate its activities.

**The most important thing to remember when it comes to public affairs is that unless you can target the appropriate committees, CEO's and representatives directly, the changes you require may be overlooked.**

- Don Rashid, Director of Public Affairs at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County defines Public Affairs as:

- Relationship between an organization and the government or political entities
- PR is a component of Public Affairs. A **Public Affairs professional's task** is to influence government or organizational change(s) that, theoretically, are good for the masses while Public Relations speaks to targeted groups and individuals to educate or gain acceptance of an idea or product. In a nutshell, Public Affairs speak to institutions and/or organizations and seek to affect social change.
- Has various publics; must ensure that their (the client's) voice is heard by government and in the best possible climate.
- Works with various entities ranging from government, to media, and well as internal and external audiences on a variety of issues.
- Must ensure that the perceptions of both employees and constituents are similar; must educate employees to ensure their attitudes are consistent with our mission
- Emphasis of Public Affairs to provide information, training, and gauge best practices

#### MEMPHIS- Government & City Council

Structure of City Government broken down (from cityofmemphis.org):

City government is divided into districts. There are District Members (7-one for each district) and then there are Super Districts 8 & 9. Each District member has a committee (see **Committees** below). There are also Boards and Commissions for the city. The city of Memphis website offers pages for the community and an attractions page for visitors. I could not find anything about a Public Affairs department for the city of Memphis in general.

City of Memphis Poll (conducted November 19, 2007):

[http://www.cityofmemphis.org/pdf\\_forms/2008Poll\\_DistributeQuestionnaire111907.pdf](http://www.cityofmemphis.org/pdf_forms/2008Poll_DistributeQuestionnaire111907.pdf)

- Asks questions about how members of the community feel about issues and services in the city of Memphis.
- Conducted by Yacoubian Market Research of Memphis by telephone. 153 questions total.

**Committees:** Since we are trying to revamp our city's reputation, here are some committees I thought we would be most interested in, but there is a long list on the city's website if you want to see all:

**Memphis Landmarks Commission**

The general intent of the Commission includes the following specific purposes: a) To promote the educational and cultural welfare of the people of Memphis; b) To preserve and protect the historic and architectural value of significant resources; c) To ensure compatibility and to create an aesthetic atmosphere with local historic districts; d) To foster civic beauty and community pride; e) To stabilize and improve property values and to strengthen the local economy; f) To enhance the city's attractions to tourists and visitors and the support and stimulus to business and industry thereby provided

**Memphis City Beautiful Commission**

The goal of Memphis City Beautiful Commission is to keep Memphis a beautiful, healthy and safe place to live. Memphis City Beautiful Commission, through public education, programs and services, works to engage individuals to take a greater responsibility for improving their community environments

**Memphis and Shelby County Center City Commission**

**Web Site:** <http://www.downtownmemphis.com>

To market and develop downtown Memphis

**Memphis and Shelby County Music Commission**

<http://www.memphismusic.org>

To preserve and promote the musical heritage of this region, attracting new business investment, creating jobs, and maximizing strengths and competitive advantages.

**Memphis and Shelby County Sports Authority Board**

Develop a master plan for sports for Memphis and Shelby County and to serve as the vehicle to accept the state sales tax rebate for professional sports.

Note: I could not find anything about a Public Affairs or Governmental Relations Department in Memphis, but I found ways they use Public Affairs by developing commissions & such to help revitalize the city. One of the things I came across is the **Center City Commission**.

Note: Under TN state law, Memphis city government/City Council meetings are open.

City Council Resolution (Oct 3, 2007):

- States that all “government entities, agencies, boards, and commissions that receive significant funding from city of Memphis...must adhere to the Tennessee Open Meetings Law and Public Records Act
- WHEREAS, all meetings of any governing body, as defined by the T.C.A. 8-44-102, are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times subject to the Tennessee Open Meetings Law; and
- WHEREAS, certain documents of any governing body related to business of the City of Memphis may be subject to the Tennessee Public Records Act;

The Center City Commission (CCC)

- “Primary leader in the comprehensive redevelopment of Downtown (Memphis) & official partnership between the local and private business community in Downtown’s revitalization.”
- Mission of CCC: “to improve the economy of Memphis and Shelby County by coordinating an aggressive public/private program to promote the redevelopment and economic growth of the Central Business Improvement District (CBID)", the area referred to as "Downtown".
  - Further goals of CCC to accomplish its mission: Acts as a **public-interest developer**; Initiates plans and studies to **develop strategies** for revitalization.; Serves as an **information clearinghouse** for Downtown activities; **Informs the media and general public** of Downtown issues and activities; Coordinates **community programs**; Sponsors **special events**; Produces **marketing and promotional** materials
- They use many different strategies to achieve their goals, including:
  - Creating publications offering updates on different aspects of Memphis life, people subscribe to them

- *Living' It Up Newsletter*- highlights the social, fun aspects of downtown
- *The Downtown Developer Newsletter*- e-newsletter that gives updates on development projects, businesses, future plans, etc.
- *Destination Downtown!*- Memphis retail guide to fashion
- *Downtown Events Attendance Projection Report*- listing of events taking place in the next month that will attract more than 500 attendees; helpful to business owners that can plan for an influx of visitors during the events.
  - All of these publications are aimed at a specific audience and gives them positive information about the city. I think this is something we can try to implement in our case- keep key publics informed & show city in a positive light.
- *Definitely Downtown* TV Show
  - Airls the last Sunday of every month on ABC 24, Comcast Cable 7 & Fox 16 in Jackson, TN
- Good for tourism- “portraying the lifestyle of those who live, work and play Downtown, all the while promoting what Downtown Memphis has to offer for those looking for a great time in the city”
- Utilize partnerships to implement projects & administers financial incentives that can lower the cost of Downtown development projects

The City of Memphis also developed the Coalition for a Better Memphis to help the public learn more about candidates running for public office.

Coalition for a Better Memphis (CBM)

- Candidate Questionnaire Memphis City Council
- Kemp Conrad: “**Racial Divide**: I am the youngest member of the National Civil Rights Museum Board of Directors and have studied and penned several op-ed for

the Commercial Appeal about the income and education disparities that divide us – and ways to solve this challenge.”

- Using **Op-ed pieces** to lobby for his cause; this may be something we could have City Council members in our town do to gain public awareness about the issues we want to advocate
  - He says main areas of Memphis need to focus on are crime (ensure safety of citizens), focus on early childhood education & lowering the steep infant mortality rate, helping the black community gain equal education and income opportunities as whites
- [http://www.bettermemphis.org/cbm/files/2007/CC\\_D9\\_2/KempConrad\\_Q.pdf](http://www.bettermemphis.org/cbm/files/2007/CC_D9_2/KempConrad_Q.pdf)

The next part of my research is from other cities and some of the things they did to improve Public Affairs.

#### NASHVILLE

They use a public relations and government relations firm, named Hall Strategies for some aspects of public affairs.

One of the events they host is called **Mayor’s First Day Festival**, which I thought might be helpful to us to get some ideas on programs we can model after in our case. Here is an article from Hall Strategies website describing it:

We have worked with the Mayor's Office of Children and Youth since 2000 to organize the citywide celebrations that mark the beginning of the school year in Nashville.

The event annually draws more than 20,000 people to Nashville's Sommet Center, where parents and students are introduced to more than 100 organizations providing resources and support for public education. More than 300 volunteers are involved in staging the event, which includes educational activities and entertainment on four stages. The initiative remains a grassroots model for celebrating education, bringing together parents, educators and the private sector to make a difference in educating children.

<http://www.nashville.gov/mocy/firstday/2007/>



## DALLAS

*Public Affairs Program Gives Cities a Boost*

[http://www.utdallas.edu/news/2008/08/29-003.php?WT.mc\\_id=NewsEmails&WT.mc\\_ev=EmailOpen](http://www.utdallas.edu/news/2008/08/29-003.php?WT.mc_id=NewsEmails&WT.mc_ev=EmailOpen)

- UT Dallas created a program called “Master of Public Affairs in City Hall” in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences. It is a graduate program that gives students first hand experience working in Public Affairs. City employees from Dallas and surrounding areas helped with this program; it gave students real life experience and helped the city.
- The “City Hall Cohort” began in the spring of 2006. Students took 15 hours over the course of 18 months to earn their graduate certificates. Many will remain in the UT Dallas public affairs program to earn master’s degrees in public affairs.
- “I’m grateful to UT Dallas for working with city leaders to create this opportunity. As students we undoubtedly benefited from the experience, but it is the citizens who will benefit the most from this program,” said Deaton.

Here is a brief summary from a book to look at concerning how to overcome “mistakes” or bad press events in a city:

*Crisis Management in the Tourism Industry*

By Dirk Glaesser:

- The city of Southampton (England) took a blow after Titanic sank, but the city turned it around to a positive thing. They created a Titanic Walk where tourists could see the memorials and landmarks related to the Titanic.
- Advice on handling a crisis: avoid making the decision worse by becoming defensive. Use the post-active strategy and wait until the situation is no longer conflicting with the public or drawing attention to the negative. A negative influence could ruin the credibility and image of a company (or city). Basically, it’s better to wait until it dies down and then focus on positive things.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=zj8uE8UiGe0C&pg=PA170&lpg=PA170&dq=cit+y+council+crisis+management&source=bl&ots=oGhbhRWf20&sig=SYD96gSRJwQZ\\_DMmmFFBhK7O6Uw&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=7&ct=result](http://books.google.com/books?id=zj8uE8UiGe0C&pg=PA170&lpg=PA170&dq=cit+y+council+crisis+management&source=bl&ots=oGhbhRWf20&sig=SYD96gSRJwQZ_DMmmFFBhK7O6Uw&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=7&ct=result)

It was hard doing research on this because we don't have specifics about the "embarrassing" events that occurred in our city so I could not really research specific events. I did find examples of crises that occurred in towns, but they did not give any indication as to how their Public Affairs people handled it.

For our project, I think we can utilize some of the things I found. First, if we were really doing this, we could create a questionnaire like the City of Memphis poll to gauge how people in the town feel about the town and our City Council, Mayor, and local government. From that we can evaluate with a follow up survey after we implement our GOST.

Also, we can use the article about the program UT Dallas created to our advantage because it is similar to what we are doing with the local college students. When I researched the website about the program it didn't give much description at all about the ins and outs of their work but it is definitely something we can refer to and I can try to find out more in the next day or so.

The Center City Commission and Nashville government tactics will be helpful- they create positive image of the cities. Newsletters created for specific audiences, TV shows to gain tourism, creating a program to involve the Mayor and people in the community- they could see first hand what the local government is trying to do for education with the Mayor's First Day Festival.

It is important to remember that there is a difference in PR and Public Affairs. We need to delegate responsibilities with the class team we are creating from the local college. Our job is really to be aware of local government initiatives and activities so we can relay that information to our publics.

### III. Key Publics

- local townspeople/community
- mayor
- city council
- law enforcement
- local taxpayers
- local media
  - o print
  - o broadcast
  - o internet
- national media
  - o print
  - o broadcast
  - o national PR agencies
- our internal PR agency
- local businesses
- nearby suburbs, communities
- national government
- local government

### IV. SWOT Analysis

#### a. Strengths

- i. Our city has never had a public relations agency before, and this provides an excellent opportunity to generate positive impressions about our town.

#### b. Weaknesses

- i. The fact that our town has never had a PR agency also presents a challenge for the team, since we have no previous model within this city, other than outside examples, from which to draw evidence of successful and unsuccessful tactics.
- ii. It will be difficult to regain the communities trust quickly.

c. Opportunities

- i. We have an opportunity to really involve our local citizens in this endeavor of building our town's image. Many of the locals in our community are upset that their taxpayer money has seemingly been spent carelessly and without positive effects on the city's image. Although our plan does involve spending some money, we specifically targeted strategies and tactics that are cost-efficient but will be successful and leave lasting positive impressions on both locals and visitors.
- ii. With a PR agency we can show the community that we are taking positive steps to correct the errors we have made.

d. Threats

- i. The last thing we want to do is generate more negative opinions about the town. Although this is unlikely considering the extremely negative current situation, we must carefully think about all possible interpretations of our proposed strategies and tactics. We do not want anything to be misinterpreted as has happened with this town frequently in the past, even when city leaders held good intentions.
- ii. We don't want the community to think we are spending more money frivolously so we have to be careful how we implement the budget. We want our community to know we are spending taxpayer money wisely.

## V. GOST Team 1

The Internal Challenge: to design and implement a plan to reach the internal publics in our city's government, public affairs publics, and employees in offices who will use our services

### a. Goal

- i. To improve opinions about our town among the local communities and business leaders.

### b. Objectives

- i. To establish good working relationships with city departments and improve communication by 20% by the end of the month.
- ii. To build company morale and improve communication between employees and management by 50 % by the end of the month.
- iii. To keep mayor and city council members informed of our activities to assure them that they have used the limited taxpayer money for good use by sending daily emails, increasing public awareness of our agency by 50%.
- iv. To keep our tactics within a reasonable budget; we do not want to increase taxpayer burdens repairing a negative image of the city and risk further alienating them

### c. Strategies

- i. To tailor our message to have "one voice" so our message is not misinterpreted
- ii. To appoint a spokesperson
- iii. Utilize media outlets to convey positive news about the town for the people living in the communities

- iv. Establish Commissions such as the Memphis City Beautiful Commission, the Memphis and Shelby County Music Commission, and the Memphis, Shelby County Sports Authority Board, and the Center's City Commission to help serve as the vehicles for each area of the town's needs
- v. Engage the local media in the revitalization of our town

d. Tactics

- i. Mass text message alerts
- ii. Email alerts within company Intranet
- iii. Conduct a survey among local residents of our town in order to see what needs to be improved; follow up with survey at the end of the campaign to observe changes
- iv. Press Release detailing the exact allocation of the taxpayer money and what benefits it went towards this year/month
- v. Create newsletters for each newly created Commission in our town, explaining to donors and local inhabitants of the community what exactly each Commission does and why it helps to protect our city.
- vi. Create and post notices around town and online detailing the time and location for local city council meetings, explaining that they are by law open to the public. Another really great thing about this strategy and tactic is that not only does it encourage local participation in the city government, but also is not costly. Speaking one's opinion at a city hall meeting does not cost any tangible money, but is invaluable to our city's future.
- vii. Develop a downtown show such as the "Definitely Downtown" which airs the last Sunday of every month on ABC 24 in Memphis, TN, showcasing the positive aspects of our city
- viii. Offering free month subscriptions of local magazines and newsletters to engage the community in local events that they

might not otherwise know about (such as the Downtown Events Attendance Projection Report in Memphis discussed in our research)

- ix. Create myspace and facebook pages that allow locals to join and learn about events occurring within and community. This one is especially important to our campaign because it would not cost us money (something that is a concern with our mainly taxpayer budget).
- x. Maintain a city's website where locals and visitors can find information on what's going on in the city itself (different events, festivals), the schedules of the city council meetings, etc.
- xi. Implement a Mayor's Day Festival by the end of the month in which the townspeople can participate by volunteering their time and bring food to the picnic. This would generate a cost-effective solution to creating a more cohesive town unity.

## **VI. GOST Team 2**

The External Challenge: This challenge focuses on our town's relationship with national media and the rest of the country. We are going to focus mostly on the media channels we could use, because it is the best and most cost-effective (with our small budget) way to reach a large, widespread audience.

### **a. Goals**

- i. To create and establish a strong media relations program in our town
- ii. To increase tourism to our town

### **b. Objectives**

- i. To create and establish a strong media relations program in our town (since there are no PR agencies currently here) within the end of the month and generate awareness of it by 20 %.
- ii. To increase tourism to our town by 15 % by the end of the year.
- iii. To attract tourists to our town
- iv. To attract new businesses to our town
- v. To promote successful companies that already exist within our town
- vi. To promote the tourist attractions of our town i.e. Beale Street, Elvis.
- vii. To generate positive impact influencing tourism rates to our town.
- viii. Let the local population know about the work that our agency does.

c. Strategies

- i. Use national media channels to carry a positive message about our town
- ii. Use internet media channels (since they are free and quick to set up) to convey a positive, realistic image of the town
- iii. Use local media to generate information about our agency and its work
- iv. Partner with travel agencies to promote our town

d. Tactics

- i. Write and send several feature stories about interesting local people, events, charities, organizations that can be spread through the media
- ii. Create a Facebook/MySpace page which non-locals can also join to afford them a glimpse into what our town life is like
- iii. Create blogs for locals and outside visitors to comment on current issues, local community issues, and anything they wish
- iv. Send Press Releases to national news channels about local art, historical, and music events that our town is hosting.



- v. Host a free seminar to educate local artists or small business owners in our town about how to create a simple website on their own. This is a cost effective way to engage them in city hall meetings, as well as becoming involved in the town's character and charm. The pages can be subsequently linked to the new City Hall Main page, as well the MySpace and Facebook pages. This would also give outside viewers a chance to see some of the local talent that exists in our town, and encouraging them to visit. At the seminar we can explain to the businesses the benefits of opening up shop here. We can explain to the artist about the character of our town and how it is already rich in culture.
- vi. Create a partnership with an organization to host a large event such as a music festival with well-known artists and bands. This will attract many tourists that are interested in the talent of the event.
- vii. Send press releases to the media about the work that our agency does and the benefits of its involvement in the life of the city.

## VII. Timeline

- a. Immediate Actions: Implemented within two months
  - i. MySpace and Facebook pages
  - ii. Intranet set up within local businesses
  - iii. Flyers designed, printed, and posted for public city hall meetings
  - iv. Flyer detailing location and date for free website building seminar for locals
- b. Comprehensive Long-Term Actions: Implemented within one year.
  - i. Mayor's Day Festival
  - ii. Feature Stories for national circulation
  - iii. Press Releases for national/local events, covering mayor's day Festival

- iv. Weekly City Hall meetings
- v. Maintenance and updates of the city's website
- vi. Seminar
- vii. Partnerships with travel agencies

## VIII. Budget

Our budget was limited to begin with, so we tried to incorporate tactics and strategies that would be effectually significant but financially insignificant.

-30% of our budget devoted to local and national media channels, although we will ask our local city newsletters to donate time and flyers as much as possible.

-20% of our net budget devoted to Mayor's Day Parade and local events, although again, hopefully local small businesses will want to donate food, beverages, and time for the sake of encouraging prosperous tourism in the future.

-15% of our budget for organizing and sponsoring local city hall events

-35% of our budget for entertainment acts to play at local events