Paper: Reflection on the Role of Strategy in Public Relations and Advertising

Arielle Valera
PR 508: Public Relations and Advertising Fundamentals and Strategy
Professor Dotty Diemer
September 9, 2024

Public relations and advertising strategies have always been used throughout millennia. There are numerous strategies that are in the media and society without being noticed. There are strategies I have both used and failed to use while creating advertisements for my class projects and internship. Strategy in public relations and advertising are constantly used in companies, organizations, and politics today.

There are different types of strategists who process information differently and use different strategies to reach their goals. These strategists range from professionals to the average person. There are three main types of thinkers; linear thinkers, intuitive thinkers, and strategic thinkers (Ohmae 1982; Lukaszewski 1998).

Linear thinkers are said to be logical and use little creativity when it comes to solving issues and reaching their goals (Lukaszewski 1998). A linear thinker I have met is my sister's boyfriend. For context, he is an accountant who mainly focuses on the data that he's provided and always researches before buying any item. Strategic thinkers are said to first evaluate their problem, dissect that problem, and develop a solution based on what they believe is best to tackle the problem and achieve their goals (Lukaszewski 1998). One strategic thinker I have met is my dad. My dad is a U.S. Navy veteran and has had a lot of life experience when it comes to reaching his goals and solving problems. He would always lecture me on how I should first analyze the problem, then research the possible solutions I could take, and then finally choose the solution I believe is best. Despite his efforts to drill that into me, I find myself to lean more towards being an intuitive thinker.

Intuitive thinkers are said to be more creative when it comes to reaching their goals and solving issues. As mentioned earlier, I consider myself to be more of an intuitive thinker. Reading Lukaszewski "How to Develop the Mind of a Strategist" made me realize that my way of thinking is one of the common ways of thinking and that I have sometimes jumped between being an intuitive and strategic thinker. I've encountered times where I would present a solution to both my sister and her boyfriend, and they would be confused as to how I ended up with that solution. When I describe my thought process, they both seem to not really understand, causing all of us to shrug it off and be content with the interesting and comedic conversation we had. According to Lukaszewski (1998), "... the intuitive thinker is simply driven by a deadline… With the intuitive thinker, no deadline, no progress" (p. 4). I've seen myself do things close to the deadline, which honestly infuriates me at times, yet I somehow manage to be more productive and get things done quicker when that deadline is near. For example, at my internship in the non-profit organization called Asian Business Association San Diego, I was constantly tasked to create print event flyers for them by the end of my shift. For context, since I was an intern and student at the same time, I worked only 20 hours a week, giving me 4 hours to come up with a flyer they approved of. This led me to think quickly on my feet, create flyers, and edit them so that they were available for them to post the same day they asked me to create them.

A strategy I always unconsciously used during my internship at the non-profit organization was identifying the target audience. This involved me brainstorming what group of people we wanted to target for the upcoming events that we'd host. This strategy helped me stay on task when making my flyers more suitable for the target audience to read and view. Since our target audience was mainly business leaders ranging from ages roughly 35 to 65, I had to constantly remind myself to make text and icons bigger for them to read as well as make the designs simple yet appealing. One thing that I wished I could've done at my internship was how our current members perceived our brand. Current audience brand perceptions allow us to know if the content we post is to their liking. I wished that we could've sent a survey to our members asking their perceptions about us with the main question being, "What do you think or feel when they

currently hear about or experience the brand?" (Tenderich p. 7). I think if I had this information, I would've adjusted our flyers more towards their target audience because sometimes our posts wouldn't have a lot of likes, making me wonder if something is wrong with our branding.

Another strategy that the organization I worked at used was hosting special events and, most recently, creating a giant sign as a publicity stunt. The organization would host events such as dinners, workshops, and live sports meet ups in hopes to retain and gather more members. The organization I interned at also managed to build a giant sign with the help of the San Diego city council to market both our organization and the Convoy District. One of my coworkers I worked with oversaw the organization's development. Prior to reading Cutlip and Center's chapter one of their book, I thought that her job title meant that she only helped come up with our strategies for the organization. According to "Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations (11th Edition), "Development is the specialized part of public relations in nonprofit organizations that builds and maintains relationships with donors, volunteers, and members to secure financial and volunteer support" (p. 18). After reading Cutlip and Center's chapter one of their book, my coworker's job title makes more sense because of how she would oversee events, donations, volunteers, and our finances.

While I was creating flyers based on what the non-profit has given me, I was also an undergraduate working on group projects where we had to create advertising campaigns for a company. We used many strategies that were mentioned in Tenderich's "The Strategic Integrated Planning Model Explained." For example, the class had to create a SWOT analysis for both the company and the company's competitors. My group collectively created a SWOT analysis for the company we were supposed to be representing, yet when we presented it to our professor, she pointed out that our Opportunities portion needs to be redone. According to Tenderich (2020), "A very common mistake in the SWOT analysis is the misinterpretation of Opportunities… people frequently interpret them colloquially as something the brand 'has the opportunity to do'" (p. 5). Knowing this now, it has become clear that our SWOT analysis was considered weak because we

were only thinking about ways the company could improve itself instead of audiences it could "exploit to its advantage" (Tenderich 2020, p.4).

Overall, strategies stemming from public relations and advertising are used constantly whether we know or not. Numerous strategies today are used and implemented into management and branding of companies and individual people. Even if we personally don't feel like we're strategists, we unconsciously are based on the way we think and organize ourselves when faced with an issue that needs to be solved. Without understanding and utilizing these strategies, we would not progress forward to new ideas and innovations.

###

Bibliography

Broom, G. M., & Sha, B. (2012). *Cutlip and Center's effective public relations*.

Lukaszewski, J. E. (2001). *How to develop the mind of a strategist*.

Ohmae, K. (1982). *The Mind of the Strategist: Business Planning for Competitive Advantage.*

Tenderich, B (2020). *The strategic integrated planning model explained.*