

# THE HERITAGE LECTURES

84

Waging and Winning  
the War of Ideas

*By Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.*



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The key to Heritage's research effort is timeliness—providing the policy-making community, with up-to-date research on the important issues of the day. Heritage publishes its findings in a variety of formats for the benefit of decision makers, the media, the academic community, businessmen, and the public at large. Over the past five years The Heritage Foundation has published more than 900 books, monographs, and studies, ranging in size from the 1,093-page government blueprint, *Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration*, to more frequent “Critical Issues” monographs and the topical “Backgrounders” and “Issue Bulletins” of a dozen pages. Heritage's other regular publications include *National Security Record*, *Education Update*, and *Policy Review*, a quarterly journal of analysis and opinion.

The Heritage Foundation's 100-member staff—which includes several internationally recognized scholars and former government officials—concentrates on four areas of general study: domestic and economic policy; foreign policy and defense; the United Nations; and Asian studies. With some 1,600 individual scholars and research organizations working with its Resource Bank, The Heritage Foundation provides U.S. policy makers with the intellectual resources needed to guide America into the 21st century.

In addition to the printed word, Heritage regularly brings together national and international opinion leaders and policy makers to discuss issues and ideas in a variety of formal and informal settings. Through a continuing series of seminars, lectures, debates, and briefings, The Heritage Foundation provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and a laboratory for developing these ideas into practical public policy proposals.

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**The Heritage Foundation**  
214 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
202/546-4400

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Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.  
President, The Heritage Foundation

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## INTRODUCTION

For four days early in November more than 2,000 of the nation's leading institutional communicators--members of the Public Relations Society of America--met in Washington for their 39th National Conference.

The conference theme, "Public Relations: Democracy in Action" served to remind us that public relations is a vital and constructive force at all levels of our democratic society and is grounded in our First Amendment rights.

How vital and constructive was put into perspective by the President of The Heritage Foundation, Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., in a major address to PRSA members. In his talk, "Waging and Winning The War of Ideas," Dr. Feulner discussed the role of Heritage in the public policy arena saying, "We man the ivory towers as well as the trenches in this war of ideas. We define the objectives, devise the strategies, and manufacture the ammunition. The war of ideas is a war of words--a war of intellect. It is a war of great importance because, as Richard Weaver said, 'ideas have consequences.' Lenin put it this way: 'Ideas are much more fatal things than guns.'"

At an "off-site" Professional Development Seminar Heritage's public relations management team provided a standing room only audience in Heritage's Lehrman Auditorium a first hand look at Heritage's public relations program and the success it has experienced in selling the conservative vision in the marketplace of ideas. Herb B. Berkowitz, Vice President of Public Relations and Hugh C. Newton, President of Hugh C. Newton & Associates public relations agency and long-time counsel to Heritage, described the role of public relations at Heritage, its specific activities and results, including the program designed to introduce Mandate for Leadership II: Continuing the Conservative Revolution. This effort was awarded a Silver Anvil Award by PRSA, the industry equivalent of an "Emmy" or an "Oscar." Highlights of their presentations are included.

Dr. Feulner's speech and highlights of the presentations by Hugh Newton and Herb Berkowitz will give you an insight into the success of The Heritage Foundation and why it is winning the war of ideas.



## WAGING AND WINNING THE WAR OF IDEAS

by Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.

It is a pleasure to be with you all today. I should mention that our Vice President for Public Relations, Herb Berkowitz, told me to be candid with you--kind of like the bootlegger in one of President Reagan's favorite stories:

It seems that 25 of San Francisco's top bootleggers were arrested back in the days of Prohibition. And as they were being arraigned, the judge asked the usual question about their occupation. The first 24 were all engaged in the same professional activity. Each claimed he was in public relations.

When he got to the last one, the 25th, and said, "And what are you?" the last prisoner said, "Your Honor, I'm a bootlegger." The judge was surprised, but he laughed and he said, "Well, how's business?" And the last prisoner replied, "It'd be a lot better if there weren't so many PR men around."

Well, just like the bootlegger, I will try to be straightforward. And I should say that business at The Heritage Foundation is good because, unlike those PR men, we have not been shy about where we stand.

It was just a little more than a year ago that I had the pleasure of meeting some of you in New York at the PRSA banquet at which The Heritage Foundation was honored with a Silver Anvil Award, the public relations industry's mark of excellence. But winning such an award does not mean our work was done. Hardly. In the world of public policy, the war of ideas never ends. Tomorrow is another day, and there is always somebody ready to challenge you.

For example: this year Congress passed the most sweeping tax reform measure in contemporary history. Before the ink was even dry some congressional leaders were talking about the need for fine tuning. Others were more straightforward: in the 100th Congress, they admitted, efforts would be made to raise the newly cut tax rates. After all, they argue, Washington needs the money to finance the deficit.

Yet tax reform is hardly the most divisive issue facing Washington. On a daily basis Congress and the public policy community debate hundreds of different proposals that directly affect our businesses, our jobs, our families, and our future--whether we work for The Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit hospital, or a Fortune 500 corporation. As a result, you and your colleagues in the public relations profession are being called upon to play an increasing role

in the ongoing war of ideas that shape U.S. and world events. But unless you understand how to fight that war, you cannot hope to win.

And that is where organizations such as The Heritage Foundation come into the picture. We man the ivory towers as well as the trenches in this war of ideas. We define the objectives, devise the strategies, and manufacture the ammunition. The war of ideas is a war of words--a war of intellect. It is a war of great importance because, as Richard Weaver said, "ideas have consequences." Lenin put it this way: "Ideas are much more fatal things than guns."

The Heritage Foundation itself was just an idea not much more than a decade ago, when a small group of conservative activists and intellectuals incorporated Heritage as a nonprofit, public policy research organization dedicated to a renewal of traditional American values--free enterprise, capitalism, limited government, greater individual freedom, and a strong national defense to protect these liberties. What these men with a dream had in mind was a conservative think tank with the ability to deliver cogent and useful information to key policy makers in a timely fashion. Because they were politically involved, they understood that ideas do matter--if the ideas are available when an issue is being debated, not weeks or months after the debate has ended and the decision has been made.

In those days, we jokingly used to say a phone booth was big enough to hold a meeting of conservative intellectuals in Washington--those were the days when conservatives were seen as wedded to stale old ideas from the past. We were opposed to change, our critics charged. We were considered irrelevant by the opinion makers in the media and the power brokers in the Congress.

Times do change, and the dynamic physical and intellectual growth of The Heritage Foundation has reflected that change and been instrumental in bringing it about as well. The Heritage Foundation, by building a solid institutional base in those early years and establishing a reputation for reliable scholarship and creative problem solving, soon became a key player in the battle of ideas. As a result, many of the major initiatives on Washington's agenda can be traced to the work of Heritage--vouchers in education, the move toward privatizing many government services, efforts to streamline the Pentagon, an economic growth-oriented tax and trade strategy, and many others.

It was The Heritage Foundation, for example, that in 1981 funded a major \$100,000 research project on anti-missile technology. The results were published in 1982, and one year later, our vision of the future became President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative.

Not all new ideas are as dramatically revolutionary as a layered defense shield capable of shooting enemy missiles out of the sky. Almost all are more down to earth, both literally and figuratively:



the supply-side tax cuts of 1981 and 1986; the recent law to sell the government's rail freight system, Conrail, to the public through a stock offering; establishing "enterprise zones" in decayed urban areas, and so forth.

In December 1980, just weeks after the first Reagan election, in a public policy book called Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration, The Heritage Foundation offered the incoming Reagan Administration more than 3,000 such proposals. In later 1984, we published a follow-up volume with some 1,300 specific proposals. The special public relations program we put together to market this book to our target audiences won the Silver Anvil.

Since the late 1970s, in fact, we have published several hundred studies each year, offering Washington policy makers our ideas. Some are grand ideas, such as Star Wars. Others are less dramatic, such as proposals for reforming the tort liability system, how to end government involvement in agricultural production and marketing, or ways to get the private sector involved in the space satellite launch business. Today Heritage is looked upon as one of the key architects of public policy in Washington. We have an annual budget of more than \$12 million and a staff of more than 100 outstanding academics, researchers, and managers.

The important thing for this audience to understand is that public relations at Heritage has been part of the action from the very beginning. I came to Heritage as President in the spring of 1977, and from that moment on, public relations has played a key role both in terms of making institutional policy and in carrying out that policy. We were very aware from the start that ideas percolate up and filter down. Public opinion remains a powerful force in the American political system, and any organization that does not seek to cultivate it is fighting an uphill, probably losing battle.

Heritage's aggressive public relations effort has made it one of the most visible research institutes in the nation. But public relations at Heritage involves more than just institutional visibility or getting our name in the news. It is intended to focus the attention of the Washington policy-making community on the new ideas crafted at Heritage and to stimulate thoughtful discussion of those ideas at the very highest levels.

You must, of course, get their attention first. The competition in Washington is fierce. There are 100 Senators, 435 Congressmen, dozens of House and Senate committees, hundreds of lobbyists, trade associations, and labor unions, the many executive departments of government, and the White House itself, all competing on a daily basis for attention. It is the task of our public relations team to get as big a piece of the pie for our research product as we can.

Press attention, though, is a means to the end. The bottom line is getting results. Gaining the attention of the policy-making community is the critical first step. If you have their attention, they are more likely to actually take the time to read and consider what you have written. Then and only then can a research organization such as ours, which does no lobbying and makes no political contributions to any candidates or parties, hope to affect the decision-making process.

How effective have we been?

Just a few quotes: Commentary magazine said of Heritage that it "has come to be regarded as the most important think-tank in Washington." The New York Times Magazine referred to us as "The most aggressive and disciplined of the conservative idea factories." TASS, the Soviet government news agency, called us the "brain center" of American conservatism and New York's Village Voice characterized us as "The capital's most important think tank."

Comments such as these, as this audience knows so well, do not happen by accident. They are the result of hard work by an organization that has successfully waged, and is winning, the war of ideas in this country. And public relations--your profession--has played an important and integral role in the process.

At this point, let me go back to the early 1970s when I was working on Capitol Hill and became aware from first-hand experience that conservative ideas rarely worked their way into the public policy debate. Oh yes, we conservatives had the Hoover Institution. And in Washington were the American Enterprise Institute and the Center for Strategic and International Studies. But we lacked an institution to translate thought into action--an organization that could take pure research and apply it to the day-to-day questions facing our policy makers. What was lacking, from a conservative perspective, was an organization that could wage a war of ideas on a daily basis, in a generally hostile environment, with the energy and sophistication to win.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. In 1971 Congress was debating the SST (the Supersonic Transport), an issue that divided both conservatives and liberals in Congress. On the one hand, some conservatives argued that the government should get involved in the development of the SST because of technological spinoffs that could benefit the Pentagon. On the other hand, it could be argued that if there was indeed a market for the SST, the private sector would produce such a plane to meet the demand.

Debate was heated, votes were cast, and an excellent study arrived on my desk that thoroughly laid out these arguments. It brilliantly defined the debate, but it arrived a day after the

vote--one day late. I immediately telephoned the president of the organization that had produced the study, congratulated him on the excellent scholarship, and asked why we did not receive it until after the fight was over. His answer: they did not want to influence the vote!

That was when the idea for The Heritage Foundation was born. At Heritage--and today at many smaller institutions patterned after Heritage, liberal and conservative alike--we do want to influence the debate. We want to set the agenda. We want our ideas to prevail in Congress, in the media, wherever thinking people are involved in policy making.

Because of the vast number of issues facing Congress, there is a desperate need for concise studies, which cut through the rhetoric and lay out the arguments so Members of Congress can make informed choices on the issues before them. Early on, therefore, we decided on several operating principles:

- o The product has to be credible.
- o The product has to be produced and disseminated in a timely fashion.
- o The product has to meet the "briefcase test."
- o The product has to reach the right people.

Who are our target audiences? Congress (and congressional staff), the Administration, and the national news media. A typical Heritage paper goes to just 7,000 carefully targeted people.

But research and production of policy papers is not--as it might be elsewhere--where our job ends. It is only the beginning. That is where public and media relations, and similar programs targeting Congress and the Administration, come in. This is when we climb out of the ivory tower and into the intellectual trenches.

Unlike lobbyists on Capitol Hill, a policy-oriented think tank needs to stay in front of the power curve--to operate on the cutting edge of public policy. We are trying to shape tomorrow's policies today. Unlike a university, we do not see ourselves merely as a forum for pure research--where competing ideas can be debated. Our role is not to compromise or to consider only what is politically and pragmatically possible. Our role is to study, analyze, and apply innovative solutions to public policy problems and press for change. As the former chief economic adviser to Senator Edward Kennedy told The Wall Street Journal recently: "Heritage is a constant ideological presence." To us, that is high praise. Or as one of my colleagues says: "There are no pacifists in the war of ideas."

The Heritage Foundation's influence exists not just because Ronald Reagan is in the White House. And winning the "war of ideas" is not merely a matter of getting our candidates elected to office. Waging and winning such a contest involves commitment, talent, creativity, and patience--because there is a new battle every day and we are here for the long haul. It involves providing information, ideas, and people to help move the public policy debate in a certain direction; it involves gradual changes in structures, in the way we look at things, and ultimately in the way we are governed. All of this depends on the power of ideas.

Let me give you an example how my colleagues at The Heritage Foundation have taken an idea, applied it to a public policy problem, and gradually changed the way our policy makers in Washington operate--in this case, in the area of urban policy.

The idea of Enterprise Zones is a simple notion for greenlining the inner cities.

- o Peter Hall (British socialist) delivered a speech on Enterprise Zones to the Royal Town Planning Institute in 1977.

- o Stuart Butler wrote a Heritage International Briefing Paper in 1979.

- o In June 1980 The New York Times printed Butler's op-ed article.

- o Republican Jack Kemp and Democrat Bob Garcia started coalition building.

- o Heritage started sponsoring public policy forums, seminars, and roundtables.

- o Enterprise Zones was a 1980 campaign issue for Ronald Reagan and John Anderson.

- o In 1981, Heritage and the American Legislative Exchange Council sponsored a conference in Atlanta for state legislators and black entrepreneurs.

- o Stuart Butler's book Enterprise Zones: Greenlining the Inner Cities appeared in 1981.

- o Reagan referred to it in the 1982 State of the Union Message.

- o In the 1984 election, both Reagan and Mondale endorsed it during their televised debate.

- o This past June, Enterprise Zone legislation passed the Congress.

o In the six years it took the U.S. Congress to pass Enterprise Zone legislation, 32 states passed their own laws and created a total of 250 separate zones.

Every step of the way, the Heritage Public Relations team was involved in the effort--first focusing on the radical new idea itself and later keeping critical media and public attention on the issue as it moved through the policy process.

The bottom line is that Washington is now working from our agenda in this area. People are not talking about big government throwing more and more money at a problem that seemed to defy solution. Congress is now looking at additional market-oriented solutions to urban decay, such as Urban Homesteading--the privatization of public housing.

This very specific example shows how one man, with the right institutional base, can change the entire debate on a major public policy issue involving billions of dollars and major programs that have been around for decades.

The important lesson in the Enterprise Zone example is that ideas do have consequences, but just producing an idea is not enough. If that were the case, we could have stopped with Peter Hall's speech to the Royal Town Planning Institute--the pure research phase. To be successful, the idea had to be marketed by the right people to the right people during the applied research phase.

Institutions, such as the Institute for Economic Affairs and the Adam Smith Institute in London and The Heritage Foundation, Brookings Institution, and American Enterprise Institute in Washington, popularize ideas in a number of ways. All host conferences, lectures, and seminars and publish policy reports, books, and monographs, but in our case we carry a project a step further and aggressively market our policy proposals to the media elite and other opinion makers. In 1985 alone, we hosted more than 200 lectures, debates, and other public forums on issues facing Washington. In all, about 10,000 people attended these functions. We also published more than 250 background studies, monographs, lectures, and articles and arranged for dozens of expert witnesses to testify at congressional hearings. Through such programs--and the vigorous public relations effort that is involved in virtually every activity--we are able to promote various ideas on a continuing basis and press for change. But this takes time.

Selling ideas takes time. Procter and Gamble does not sell Crest toothpaste by placing one newspaper ad or running one television commercial. They sell it and resell it every day by keeping the product fresh in the consumer's mind. Organizations like The Heritage Foundation sell ideas in much the same manner. Or as The Wall

Street Journal recently commented, "Advocates of new ideas can't stop fighting, even after the ideas appear to be accepted."

To give you an example: between August 1977 and the passage of the first Reagan Administration tax cut in 1981, The Heritage Foundation published--and widely disseminated--a variety of different studies, articles, and monographs on the need for tax cuts. Following the 1981 tax cut, we published even more studies, articles, and monographs on the advantages of low personal and corporate tax rates. What have been the long-term results? Tax cuts are the law of the land. The new tax reform bill has a top rate for individuals of 28 percent. Only five years ago the top rate was 70 percent.

In the last four years we have published more than 20 papers on the theory of privatization--and how this theory can be put into practice. Simply put, privatization involves having private sector institutions provide services traditionally provided by a government bureaucracy. The British have privatized nearly two dozen government-owned entities, including: British Telecom, Jaguar, English Channel Hovercraft, British Aerospace, the National Bus Company--and British Gas is next. In the United States, privatization proposals have dealt with municipal services, the communications airwaves, public lands, air traffic control, Conrail, and even space. We have written op-ed page articles, and Stuart Butler has produced another book. The concept has successfully been made part of the public policy debate. The Washington bureau of The New York Times now has an economics writer assigned almost full-time to cover privatization developments. We have even fought--successfully I might add--to have the term included in the newer editions of most popular dictionaries. Communities all over the country are privatizing everything from parks to jails to waste disposal, and just a couple of months ago we won a major victory in Congress when the House of Representatives voted to allow some public housing tenants to buy the units they live in--a proposal that was again developed by our own Stuart Butler.

Privatization provides for greater choice of services at a reduced cost, and over time, is one of the few methods of cutting the budget which could gain popular support because it leaves the services intact. The point is, again, that we are now working from our agenda on these issues, instead of fighting a holding action against the other guys. As I hope I have indicated, winning the war of ideas involves more than coming up with innovative proposals. It involves moving these ideas into the public policy arena, and yes, marketing them effectively to change the focus of debate and to influence public opinion.

Why does all this attention to ideas matter? During the 1984 election campaign, Walter Mondale's issues director was quoted in the Sunday New York Times as saying that "Ronald Reagan won last time on the strength of ideas."

Democratic Senator Daniel Moynihan added that the Republicans simply left the Democrats behind. The Republicans, he said, "...became the party of ideas, and the Democrats were left, in Lord Macaulay's phrase, 'the Stupid Party.' There were ideas over there, so who ends up running the country? Politicians who know how to use ideas, that's who. The end product of government is laws--and laws emerge from ideas."

Ideas like supply-side economics, privatization, enterprise zones, and the flat tax do not just happen as if by magic. They start with an individual. Then it takes an institution to popularize an idea--to market it--to make it part of the debate.

Why should you care about the war of ideas?

Because whether you like it or not--whether you are a conservative or a liberal--this is where the action is. According to studies, today most chief executive officers are spending 50 percent of their time on public policy. As a result, dozens, perhaps hundreds, of trade associations have migrated to Washington. Most major corporations now have public affairs offices here. There are approximately 10,000 lobbyists in Washington. And D.C. has become the news capital of the world. The latest Hudson's Directory lists 3,900 Washington-area journalists.

It is important for all of you to realize, as we have, that you can do more than just react to the public policy agenda; you can help set it. I am a conservative. So are many of you. Some of you are liberals, and others probably describe yourselves as middle-of-the-roaders. All of you can and should be involved in the public policy debates.

For example, my conservative colleague, Walter Olson, of New York's Manhattan Institute, recently observed in The Wall Street Journal that we would be wrong to assume that the Ralph Nader movement is dead. Olson wrote: "The war on saccharin and junk food has given way to a far more intrusive war on smoking, drinking, racy magazines, and beltless driving." And then, "Tort litigation is driving more companies out of business than regulation ever did. As for regulation itself," he continued, "organized efforts to roll it back have ground to an almost complete halt."

Let us look at some other issues. The tax reform battle is far from over. The Strategic Defense Initiative will be debated all over again next year, as will foreign policy and defense questions. At Heritage, we have identified Mexico as an emerging critical issue. We will press Washington leaders to reform the absolutely unworkable federal budget process. We will be looking at new ways the United States can promote economic development and growth in the Third World. Expect to hear more of privatization next year. And watch for a major battle over proposals to include a sweeping new catastrophic health

care plan under the Social Security-Medicare umbrella. How will the recent elections affect a conservative agenda? Will the Democratic victory in the Senate signify a defeat of the Reagan Revolution and of conservatism in general?

I do not think so. Let me cite the Democratic pollsters Mark Penn and Doug Schoen who said in an op-ed in Sunday's New York Times that far from marking the end of the Reagan revolution, this year's Senate contest marked the institutionalization of the Reagan agenda in United States politics. "Virtually every successful Democratic candidate for the Senate made it clear from the start that he opposed wasteful spending on social programs, opposed using tax reform as a way to raise taxes and supported government policies to encourage economic growth and traditional American family values." According to Penn and Schoen, the Democrats demonstrated tactical skill in co-opting the President's message and institutionalizing an "anti-New Deal consensus in American political life...."

Let us also note that conservatives did well on most referendum items on November ballots:

- o Three radical/liberal judges in California were recalled.
- o Tax cut measures passed in California and Massachusetts.
- o English was made the official language in California by a 77 percent majority--even Hispanics backed it 2 to 1.
- o A Right-to-Work law was approved by Idaho voters.
- o The call for a nuclear free zone in Oregon lost 61 to 39.
- o The Republican Party loss was below average for the "six-year-itch party-in-power loss."

Obviously, Democratic control will make a big difference in the Senate Judiciary Committee where Strom Thurmond will be replaced as chairman by liberal Democrat Joe Biden, making future Reagan judicial appointments more difficult to confirm. And, of course, key elements of President Reagan's foreign policy, such as SDI and aid to the Nicaraguan freedom fighters or "contras"--which enjoyed narrow support in the Republican-controlled Senate--will have more difficulty in the new Senate.

The Senate's agenda and staff budgets also will be affected. This will show up in a move to put protectionist trade legislation on the fast track and in the Democrats' ability to respond to and challenge the President in his last two years. On the other hand, I believe that we will see a President who will not hesitate to veto for fear of offending Senate Republicans. The Democrats may not find it easy to push a liberal agenda without the cover of a Republican



Senate. They will now have to deal directly with Ronald Reagan--a President who is very popular and has the ability to command popular support and to control policy.

The thought I would like to leave you with today is that every one of you will be affected by the decisions made next year and in the future in Washington. Every one of you should be involved in this war of ideas--and should fight to win.

HUGH NEWTON: Let me turn back a moment to early 1978 because I think it sets the stage for what we have to say today about Heritage and its public relations programs. The 1978 annual report discussed some of the giant steps taken in 1977 in our effort to begin playing an important role in the continuing battle of ideas. Those steps were:

...revamped our research department by focusing its work on Washington's need for "quick response" on current policy issues;

...introduced Policy Review, a prestigious quarterly journal of analysis and opinion;

...stepped up the activities of our Resource Bank program to make Heritage a national clearinghouse of people, ideas and facts important to the policy community; and

...substantially upgraded and expanded our public information program. It is obvious that no matter how many studies are written, no matter how well they are constructed, the effort is wasted if it fails to reach those who influence, decide and implement policy--opinion writers, lawmakers and regulators," wrote then Chairman of the Board Ben Blackburn.

What I am saying is that public relations from the first day of Ed Feulner's presidency in 1977, has been a key part of the Heritage organization; its PR director and outside counsel are members of the senior management team involved in planning and carrying out policy. In Ed Feulner, Heritage has had as President a leader who understood not only public policy and the political process but also the importance of public relations and marketing in the war of ideas. And the war of ideas is what Heritage is all about.

But there is nothing at all new about grass-roots public relations. The techniques used at The Heritage Foundation in selling its ideas and causes in the marketplace of ideas have been around for decades. They were used in 1965 and 1966 in a program I carried out for the National Right-to-Work Committee to preserve Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act (the Right-to-Work section), a campaign honored by PRSA with a Silver Anvil. They were used again in a public information program in 1976 that convinced President Ford to veto another labor bill, a program that won a Thoth Award from the Washington chapter of PRSA for Herb, and they have been in many other successful grass-roots public relations programs. They are discussed in a chapter in Phil Lesly's Public Relations Handbook, first published in the early 1970s, and they were outlined to public relations practitioners in 1967 at a mid-Atlantic PRSA meeting.

Obviously, I am a firm believer in the concept that you can win public support for a position, that you can influence people. And you can convert that public support into legislative action. You can, and

public relations people and their programs have. As Ed Feulner said recently, "The harsh reality is that no matter how many studies are written, no matter how well they are constructed, the effort is wasted if it fails to have an impact on the thinking of those who decide and implement policy--our lawmakers and regulators."

My advice: Get to know the media and the individual newsmen and editors necessary to do your job. Who in the media do you need to communicate your story? Find out and keep in mind that the news person's time is at a premium--he is buried in news releases, background studies, and invitations to news conferences. If you expect him to listen to you, you must make a conscious effort to gain his attention, his confidence, and his respect. And keep in mind that, if you do not go that extra distance to introduce yourself to the media, to those people who you think will be interested in your materials, they are unlikely to find you on their own, for there are hundreds of other sources for information.

The best way to gain the attention, confidence, and respect of news people is through a combination of personal contact and being known as the source of useful material--intelligently prepared, accurate, and interesting.

At Heritage, the public relations program is, as it was put in last year's annual report, "one of Heritage's crown jewels" (of course, Herb and I write the annual report so it is likely to say that!). It is a sophisticated, multidimensional communications program that forgoes trendiness and very clearly challenges the doctrine that "the medium is the message." At Heritage the medium is a tool; the message is what counts. And we understand clearly that there is more than one way to influence public policy. Ideas trickle down but they also filter up. Think about that point for a minute the next time you have failed at a pitch for a feature or an editorial or an op-ed page essay with The New York Times. There are dozens, hundreds, of outlets for good ideas--more than one good idea began as a piece by one syndicated columnist or one feature writer for a small daily and filtered up to The New York Times or Washington Post or whatever.

Before we move on to Herb's presentation, which will cover the specifics of Heritage's programs and the techniques actually used to carry out our concepts, let me throw out a few other principles to add to the list of fundamentals that guide our public relations efforts:

For example, believing is not enough--you must fight to win. Second, do not mistake technology for sophistication. Far too often "new technology" is used by public relations practitioners as a crutch--they have learned how to use a word processor or distribute a TV news release, but they have not learned how to write, they do not know their audience, and they are unsure of the arguments on their side. This leads to another point--knowing, really knowing your

audience or public is important. A PR program without having "permanent" friends in the media means starting out every campaign with a strike or two.

Finally, there really is something to a phrase bandied about at public relations conferences for some years now--issues management. The most effective communications programs I know are carried out by public relations practitioners who are, from the beginning, part of the policy team. But let me add one caveat here. You will not become part of the policy team, or so my experience has taught me, unless you earn that spot, unless you prove to top management that you have the intelligence, skills, dedication, and intensity to belong on the policy team.

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HERB BERKOWITZ: Let me talk about the task that has probably brought you here today. I will pose it as a question: How can we get a media establishment, which is at best neutral and at worst openly hostile, to 1) pay attention to us and 2) present our views fairly both to the public at large and to U.S. policy makers?

Take my word that you can. Most of the time, when public relations people fail to do so, it is because they either did not try or went about it the wrong way. While there is no magic formula for success, here are the guidelines we use:

First, understand your message.

If you are trying to win support for an idea or cause, you must not only fully understand the story or message you are trying to get across, but you also should try to look at it as others will see it. If you can, remove yourself from the field of battle for a little while and analyze your story as you would expect somebody in the news media to analyze it. A) Is it of national interest, regional interest, or strictly local importance? Obviously, your marketing strategy will vary depending on the answer. B) Is it timely? Can it be made timely? C) Is it unique? Can it be made to appear unique? Is there something special about your story that sets it apart from everything else you have seen on the subject? If so, exploit it. D) Is it really news, or are you merely providing something to enhance the understanding of a subject? How you treat "news" will be different from how you treat background information.

Second, understand your role in the debate.

This is again something that requires some reflection. If your client or employer has a direct and obvious stake in the debate, the media will discount what you have to say to some degree. This does not mean they are necessarily hostile to your point of view. It does mean, however, that they see you as another special interest. You should at least keep this in mind as you plan and carry out your program.

What else should you know about yourself? A) Are you known, or unknown, to the media? B) Do you have an articulate spokesman? C) What is the personality or image you are trying to project--that of an activist player in the war of ideas, the thoughtful third party, the consumer advocate? What you say, how you say it, and to whom you say it all will be determined by your answers to these questions.

Third, understand the media.

"The media" are not just one big blob of ink and electricity. They generally fall in two broad categories: those who cover the news

and those who are actively involved in the public policy debate, the opinion media.

Those on the news side include newspaper and magazine reporters; trade publications, newsletters, wire services, and radio and TV news people. Those involved in opinion writing include editorial and column writers, nationally syndicated columnists, op-ed page editors, radio and television talk-interview shows, and journals of opinion such as American Spectator, National Review, The Nation, Policy Review, Commentary, The New Republic.

Each of these potential audiences has its own rules and requirements. Some general rules hold true for all, however. A) They are interested first in the five Ws of journalism: Who, What, When, Where, and Why (or How). B) They like it when you can make their jobs easier for them. So do not send them a book, a long, complicated report, or a detailed press kit and expect very many to read it. Prepare a summary. Spell the story out in crisp, clear prose. C) They do not appreciate it when you waste their time with something that is old, trivial, not in their area of interest. In other words, do not send a report on health-care costs to somebody whose only news interest is energy and the environment.

Remember, too, that if you are trying to influence the national debate, your real audience is the opinion media. That is where the debate is publicly conducted.

Finally, understand the news process.

A) Deadlines are critical. If you cannot provide needed information in a timely fashion, a journalist will find someone who can. B) Every news organization has a cadre of news managers. Generally, they determine what is and what is not "news." These decision makers make assignments: they decide whether a story will make it into the paper; they decide how much space will be given to the story; they decide where it will be located. A parallel process takes place in the broadcast media. Remember, however, that tonight's lead stories on the TV news will probably be a repeat of this morning's front page stories in your newspaper. The broadcast media are followers, not leaders. C) Remember there is considerable competition for space and attention. Every day in Washington, for example, The Heritage Foundation must compete for attention with The White House, the Cabinet-level departments of government, the various noncabinet agencies, 535 congressional offices, congressional committees, hundreds of trade associations, dozens of labor unions, various special-interest groups, the political parties and political action committees, and on and on. In other words, there are thousands of potential stories kicking around on any given day.

Do not be discouraged. Successful issue-oriented PR requires a lot of hard work and occasional good luck. Do your best to sell the

media your product--your ideas, your findings, your opinions. The rest will follow.