The strategic construction of intended meaning in Australian public relations campaigns through the use of key messaging and positioning techniques

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to

The School of Design, Communication and Information Technology, Faculty of Science and Information Technology,

University of Newcastle, Australia.

by

Melanie Brigid James

BA (Hons) in Communication (UTS), MA in Journalism (UTS), Grad.Cert.PTT (UoN)

October 2010
Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed: _________________________     Date: ____________________________

Name:  Melanie Brigid James
Acknowledgements

I firstly wish to acknowledge the guidance and support provided by my primary supervisor, Associate Professor Marj Kibby from the University of Newcastle. I very much appreciate everything she has done in the course of the supervision of this thesis. Associate Professor Kibby provided a safe space for me to explore the new world of being a doctoral candidate, provided insightful feedback whenever it was required (often within short timeframes), and was a great support throughout. I thank her for her kindness and for the incredible encouragement to pursue this research.

I also wish to thank my two co-supervisors. Professor Patricia Gillard initially supported me on this path, introducing me to Associate Professor Kibby, and providing me with the “roadmaps” so I could navigate what was then a very new world of academia. After Professor Gillard’s retirement from the University of Newcastle, Associate Professor Christine Daymon, Murdoch University, agreed to co-supervise my doctoral work. I am most appreciative of her offer of supervision at a crucial time in the project. I am most grateful for the time she spent providing insightful critique and guidance when it was most necessary.

I must acknowledge the generous support of the University of Newcastle throughout this project. Through the support offered by internal grants I have been able to spend extended periods of time working on my research and have been afforded opportunities to travel to undertake field work and also to present my research in progress to my peers at conferences – a vital part of my ability to move through this project. I must particularly thank Professor Patricia Michie, Professor Bill Hogarth, Dr Brian Regan, Dr Anne Llewellyn and Professor Tim Roberts for providing guidance and support.

The generous support of my colleagues and fellow research students in the School of Design, Communication and IT throughout my doctoral project has been very much appreciated. I also wish to thank my undergraduate students, and particularly my honours students, who have challenged me and spurred me on to engage with new techniques and ideas.

Thank you to my husband, Stephen, and to my children, Alexandra and Patrick, for their understanding and support on this wonderful journey.
I must acknowledge the work of Kim Edmonds who provided professional editorial services in the latter stages of my thesis preparation. These services were limited to editing for consistency (Standard E, Completeness and Consistency of the Australian Standards for Editing Practice) and complied with the University of Newcastle’s Policy for Editing of Research Theses by Professional Editors.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Frank and Joan Skillen.
Abstract

The project aimed to determine the underlying purpose of Australian award-winning public relations campaigns and the means by which the purpose was achieved. It sought to explore the phenomenon of why a major part of public relations work, that of campaigns, is not well accounted for in the dominant normative theory of public relations—the two-way symmetrical model of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 22). This model does not accommodate much of the campaigns’ practice as reported in the literature and elsewhere and this has implications for teaching, researching and practising public relations. A qualitative thematic analysis of Australian public relations campaign practice, as reported in 57 national award-winning campaign entries and in 18 interviews with award-winning practitioners, was undertaken. The common purpose of the campaigns was identified as being to construct versions of social reality through having target audiences and publics construct particular meanings that would facilitate the achievement of stated organisational goals. Positioning and the use of key messages in campaigns emerged as key techniques in constructing these meanings. Drawing on the field of personal positioning in social psychology, a conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations was developed to begin to account for this practice technique which has previously been underexplored in the public relations literature. The framework requires further testing but indications from this project are that it will assist in the design of intentional positioning strategies and also provide a breakdown of the components of intentional positioning. This could facilitate researching and teaching this aspect of practice but may also provide a means by which this part of practice can be worked through with clients and appropriately billed. The framework also provides a rationale for why the use of key messaging techniques in public relations is central to many campaigns. This thesis suggests a more appropriate definition of campaign practice whilst questioning whether campaign responses to public relations situations and problems are always appropriate. It explicates intentional positioning techniques in campaign practice that have previously received little attention in the literature, and further supports the adoption of a social constructionist theoretical approach to teaching and research in public relations campaigns.

Keywords: public relations, strategic communication, positioning, key messages, meaning, campaigns, social constructionism.
Refereed publications resulting from this thesis work:

To date, I have published two journal articles, a textbook chapter and two conference papers largely drawn from this doctoral thesis work. All work has been peer reviewed prior to publication. The publications are:

Refereed journal articles


Refereed conference publications


Refereed chapters in books


Copies of these publications, apart from the book chapter, are included in Appendix G.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................... iii
Abstract ................................................................................................................................ v
Publications to date resulting from this thesis work: .......................................................... vi

1. Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Background and context ......................................................................................... 1
   1.2 Problem statement ............................................................................................... 4
   1.3 Statement of purpose and research questions ..................................................... 4
   1.4 Research approach ............................................................................................... 5
   1.5 Assumptions ......................................................................................................... 9
   1.6 Rationale and significance ................................................................................. 10
   1.7 Definitions of key terms used throughout this thesis ......................................... 11

2. Review of the literature - Conceptualising campaign practice ..................................... 12
   2.1 The challenges of defining the public relations field ........................................ 13
   2.2 The dominant normative definition of the field ................................................. 15
   2.3 The definition of public relations adopted for this research ............................ 16
   2.4 What is the state of play with Excellence Theory? ........................................... 19
   2.5 Why is the normative Excellence Theory worth challenging? ......................... 23
   2.6 Using public relations campaign practice to explore theory ............................ 26
   2.7 What campaigns tell us about practice and theory ............................................ 47
   2.8 Chapter summary ............................................................................................... 75

3. Methodology .................................................................................................................. 78
   3.1 Research approach: rationale for qualitative research .................................... 78
   3.2 The research sample ......................................................................................... 80
   3.3 Research design overview ................................................................................ 85
   3.4 Data collection methods .................................................................................. 87
   3.5 Data analysis and synthesis ............................................................................. 91
   3.6 Ethical considerations .................................................................................... 96
   3.7 A discussion of issues relating to trustworthiness ............................................. 96
   3.8 Situating myself in the research project ......................................................... 100
   3.9 The limitations of the research study ............................................................. 101
   3.10 Chapter summary ....................................................................................... 103
4. Major findings: furthering understanding of the purpose of public relations campaign and how it is achieved

4.1 Finding 1

4.2 Finding 2

4.3 Finding 3

4.4 Finding 4:

4.5 Chapter conclusion

5. Discussion and analysis of the key message data

5.1 Themes emerging from data:

5.2 Key message environment

5.3 Key message development

5.4 Key message attributes

5.5 Key message context

5.6 Chapter conclusion

6. The Positioning Framework

6.1 Background and context for the positioning framework development

6.2 A working definition of positioning in public relations

6.3 The Positioning Theory of Harré and van Langenhove

6.4 A provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations

6.5 Approach to testing the Framework

6.6 Results

6.7 Discussion of framework testing

6.8 Chapter conclusion

7. Applying and testing the Conceptual Framework for Intentional Positioning in Public Relations

7.1 Application of the framework to government agency campaigns

7.2 Applying the framework in campaign design

7.3 Chapter conclusion

8. Conclusion

8.1 Summary of the project

8.2 Answering the study’s research questions

8.3 Specific implications for public relations campaign practice

8.4 Specific implications for public relations teaching
8.5 Specific implications for public relations theory ........................................... 257
8.6 Final observations and reflections ................................................................. 258
Reference List ............................................................................................................... 260
“Designing and implementing campaigns fills the lives of public relations professionals around the world”

– Sheehan, 2009, p. 12
1. Introduction

This study seeks to explore the phenomenon of why a major part of public relations work, that of campaigns, is not well accounted for in the dominant normative theory of public relations—the two-way symmetrical model of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 22). The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and to identify the means by which that purpose was achieved. It was anticipated that a deeper understanding of campaign practice would afford new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorized and that this could further inform the development of practice and education in public relations. This could assist organisations in further refining public relations campaigns. In addition, if this aspect of practice becomes clearer, the debate as to who holds the power and wherewithal to influence and control the means by which the purpose of campaigns is achieved, and the ethics of doing so, could take place. This could assist the wider citizenry in being able to decode public relations practice and representations, and could also underpin the development of different ways in which practice could be taught and critiqued in academic settings. It could continue to move the public relations research agenda to one that considers wider societal and cultural aspects and this can only be to the benefit of the quest for social equity and social justice.

This chapter begins with an overview of the context and background that frames the study. Following this is the problem statement, the statement of the study’s aim/purpose, and accompanying research questions. This chapter introduces the research approach, and provides an outline of the thesis and my underlying assumptions. It concludes with a discussion of the rationale and significance of this doctoral research study and some key definitions used.

1.1 Background and context

This thesis originated from a quandary I found myself in when I was appointed in late 2006 to teach public relations in a university undergraduate program—normative definitions of public relations espousing two-way symmetrical communication that aimed to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes pointed in one direction and the examples of best practice campaigns I was drawing upon for my teaching pointed in
another. The underlying disparity between experiences and reports of public relations campaign practice and dominant normative definitions of public relations in the academic field provided the motivation for commencing this study. Normative definitions espouse that public relations comprises practices that achieve, or should aim to achieve, mutually beneficial outcomes (Moloney, 2006, p. 167). Although such definitions were at odds with public relations campaign practice as reported in award-winning campaign case studies, and with the campaign practices I had undertaken as a successful senior public relations practitioner, I noted that such definitions abounded within public relations circles. For example, in professional industry associations (e.g. CIPR, 2007; PRIA, 2009; PRSA, 1982), in many undergraduate textbooks and also in academic literature. These definitions included that the public relations function is about ensuring “inclusiveness of all voices that are affected by the organisation and thereby benefiting the publics as well as the organisation itself” (Holtzhausen, 2002, p. 255), that it is to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Huang, 2001; Ledingham, 2003), or that its “major role is to empower those with less power” (Grunig, 2006, p. 165). Public relations has also been defined as a rhetorical challenge in that “public relations is the management function that rhetorically adapts organisations to people’s interests and people’s interests to organisations by co-creating meaning and co-managing cultures to achieve mutually beneficial relationships” (Heath, 2001a, p.36) and has been defined within a co-creational perspective, which “places an implicit value on relationships going beyond the achievement of an organizational goal” where “publics are not just a means to an end” (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 652).

Such definitions are at odds with definitions of public relations campaigns which are seen as goal-directed, organisation-centred efforts to inform or persuade targeted audiences and publics to change attitudes or behave in certain ways (Gregory, 2010; Moffitt, 1999; Pfau & Parrott, 1993). A public relations campaign has the goal of identifying “significant publics”, determining “effective communication messages” and selecting “the most effective channels to deliver these messages to the public” (Hamilton, 1992, p. 123). It has been a common criticism of many academic definitions of public relations that they are “normative or prescriptive, rather than descriptive of public relations’ true function in contemporary commerce and politics” (Hutton, 1999,
p. 201). My own experiences aligned more with Moloney’s (2006, pp. 166-168) description of public relations as “competitive communication” and that “above all, it is communication designed to further the interests of its principals. They would not invest in PR if it were otherwise”. Van Ruler and Verčič (2005) questioned whether the propensity of the academic field to privilege normative definitions of public relations could be construed to mean that most of the top public relations practitioners were actually “unprofessional” (p. 240). This is the position in which I found myself – critical of the normative academic definitions of public relations because they did not resonate with my experiences, for which I’d received state and national awards. I began to wonder whether my experience as a practitioner was atypical.

I had primarily worked in government agencies, although had also spent several years in a marketing communications management role for a financial institution and have worked as an independent consultant on several commercial and government projects over the past four years. My government agency management-level roles, had involved managing programs that focused on establishing ongoing relationships with stakeholders. These in the main could be described as delivering benefits to all involved but whether there was equal/symmetrical/mutual benefit to all parties throughout the relationship is debatable; the government agencies invested time in the relationships because it facilitated them fulfilling their missions – e.g. conducting a successful census; securing organ donations; running elections; implementing climate change policy. This is the type of public relations that I have been involved with that comes closest to some of the normative definitions. However my managerial roles also involved, at times to a significantly greater degree, designing and implementing public relations campaigns which aimed to achieve specific organisational goals, within specific timeframes ranging from days to more than a year, and may or may not have benefited others impacted by the campaign – goal achievement, not mutual benefit was the primary reason for the activity. The campaigns I have managed over the years have included those aimed at increasing media and industry engagement in a solar car race, increasing sales of mortgages and other financial products, increasing attendance at large commercial music events, lobbying for a sport to be included in the Commonwealth Games, increasing participation in the national census, increasing customer numbers for small business, launching a new commercial venture, recruiting
nurses to the public health system and encouraging older people to become more active. This raised the question of how this significant part of public relations practice was accounted for in efforts to define the field. This was at the crux of my quandary and this was what my study set out to examine.

1.2 Problem statement

Campaign practice is not well accounted for in the descriptions of the dominant normative two-way symmetrical model of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 22), yet such practice comprises a significant proportion of contemporary public relations work (Moloney, 2006, pp. 130-131; Sheehan & Xavier, 2009, p. x). However, as educators, practitioners and researchers, we are encouraged to enact this normative theoretical approach that is seemingly at odds with a major component of practice. As a discipline this can be viewed as unsatisfactory as it perpetuates the disconnection of theory from practice, possibly to the detriment of both. There is little previous work that has specifically examined this situation from a campaign perspective.

1.3 Statement of purpose and research questions

The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and to identify the means by which that purpose was achieved in order to gain new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorized to further inform the development of practice, research and education in public relations. To shed light on the problem, the following research questions are addressed:

RQ1 Why do practitioners undertake public relations campaigns?

RQ2 Who primarily benefits from the outcomes delivered by public relations campaigns?

RQ3 What do practitioners do in order to achieve their desired campaign outcomes?

RQ4 What theoretical orientation towards public relations practice is evident in the way practitioners describe their campaign work?
RQ5 What are the possible implications for the field of this study’s findings?

1.4 Research approach

The project has been “journey-like” with the tensions between my understandings of practice and the academic field providing the initial impetus to commence. This thesis documents the journey undertaken as a researcher as well as reporting on the research. I felt that to write the thesis in a third person “scientific” style where I positioned myself as a distant, objective observer was inappropriate for the project. This aligns with the cultural studies approach taken for this project.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents a review of the academic literature that is relevant to conceptualising campaign practice in order to situate my study in the public relations academic field. The literature review was ongoing throughout the data collection, data analysis and synthesis stages of the study. In situating this doctoral research project in the public relations academic arena, I have examined what evidence there is in campaign literature to support the normative definition of public relations that espouses two-way symmetrical communication which delivers mutually beneficial outcomes for organisations and publics, known as the “Excellence Theory” (Grunig & Grunig, 2008, p. 327). This normative definition of public relations has dominated the academic field for several decades (Gower, 2006). The literature indicates that there are very few examples that demonstrate the two-way symmetrical model of public relations. The majority of the evidence suggests that the theory does not account for campaign practice but that campaigns can be accounted for when conceptualised as instances of strategic communication that are goal directed and purposeful in advancing the mission of the organisations (Botan, 1997, p. 188). Such a conceptualisation of public relations practice can be seen as an attempt to strategically construct specific meanings to advance the mission of the organisation commissioning the public relations. With this strategic construction of meaning as a central tenet of campaign practice, a social constructionist theoretical perspective is proposed as the perspective that could strengthen public relations as a legitimate field of academic inquiry whilst also providing frameworks for public relations practice and education.
In chapter 3, a description of this project’s research methodology is provided which includes discussions around the following areas: (a) research approach rationale, (b) the research sample, (c) research design overview, (d) data collection methods, (e) data analysis and synthesis, (f) ethical considerations, (g) a discussion of issues relating to trustworthiness, (h) situating myself in the research project and (i) the limitations of the research study. This research employed qualitative methodology involving the textual and thematic analysis of descriptions of Australian campaign practice from 57 award-winning campaign entry texts and the transcripts of 18 interviews with national award-winning Australian practitioners.

Chapter 4 reports on the findings of an examination of Australian public relations practice, as presented in award entry texts and in interviews with award-winning practitioners, to determine the purpose of public relations campaigns and by what means these purposes were achieved. It was found that the underlying purpose of all campaigns examined was to have target publics and audiences construct particular meanings that would facilitate the achievement of stated organisational goals. According to the information supplied in the award entry text, each campaign was deemed by the entry’s author/s as having been successful in constructing the intended meaning. Success measurements were linked back to the campaign’s goals and objectives which were a) invariably aimed at advancing the organisation’s agenda through delivering beneficial outcomes and b) in most cases could be interpreted as delivering some degree of benefit to targeted publics or audiences. There was little evidence of mutual benefit being the main goal of campaigns. The techniques and processes used by public relations practitioners in attempting to have targeted publics and audiences construct intended meanings were broadly categorised as media and messaging management; direct engagement; building awareness or understanding; positioning; informing or educating; issue management; marketing/sales/advertising; and, persuading or convincing. There was scant evidence found to support campaign practice being conceptualised as two-way symmetrical public relations as described by Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 22).

From this point, the thesis veers away from the traditional analysis and discussion chapters, picking up on the journey theme. The words of Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Less Travelled”, have often resonated in my professional and personal life and so,
on reflection, it came as no surprise to me that, at the fork in the doctoral research study road where there were two paths I could have taken, “I took the road less travelled, and that has made all the difference”¹. By this I mean that instead of analysing all the data I had collected, there were two key areas relating to the processes and techniques that practitioners used in their quest to have intended meanings constructed by target publics and audiences that warranted detailed further examination. In essence this examination forms the core of this doctoral research project. The first area was that of “key messages” and the second was “positioning”. The strong relationship of these two aspects of practice became very evident as the project progressed and this thesis will argue that together they form a central strategic core of public relations campaign practice. This is not to say that the other techniques and processes identified in the findings do not warrant further research. However, it was the fact that key messages came through so strongly as a theme in practice and that positioning came through as somewhat of a “surprise theme”, both in the data and in the ongoing literature review, that I was steered towards this project’s focus. Message development and management was evident in the vast majority of award entry texts and in the interview transcripts, often seeming to underpin an entire campaign. It was the prevalence of messaging as a technique or process in practice, and also the apparent assumptions about how key messages “worked” in a campaign, that warranted its inclusion in this project.

In Chapter 5, I return to the academic literature and to the data and, through this analytical work, identify themes in the key messages data. The chapter discusses the themes, intertwining pertinent points from the academic literature with examples from the data to examine the techniques and processes relating to key messages that practitioners use in constructing intended meanings and to provide some theoretical context for such practices.

The second area that is closely examined in this thesis is that of intentional positioning. Positioning emerged from the analysis of the award entries as somewhat of a surprise element in this project as, although it is an underexplored area in the public relations literature, it is a prominent theme in reports of public relations campaign practice. Through my analytical work on the two areas, key messages and positioning, the

¹ http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-road-not-taken/
beginnings of synthesis started to take place and I saw a way to begin to explicate the processes and techniques involved in intentional positioning in a public relations context.

Chapter 6 reports on the development of a conceptual framework for positioning and then reports on the findings when this framework is applied to the award entry data – in essence this became a study within a study. It was evident that key messages were not central to public relations practice; they were central to the technique and process of intentional positioning. It was positioning that played a central role in public relations campaign practice. This synthesis did not take place “overnight” but was the result of a research effort that stretched over many months wherein I examined the concept of positioning. I found commonly used marketing definitions of the concept inadequate to account for the positioning that took place in public relations campaigns and my research efforts eventually led me to the field of discursive social psychology, where I found Harré and van Langenhove’s (1999) work on personal positioning. I analysed and then adapted this work, developing the provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations and a working definition of positioning in public relations:

Positioning in public relations can be defined as the strategic attempt to stake out and occupy a site of intentional representation in the contested space where meanings are constructed, contested and reconstructed.

A paper based on the work presented in Chapter 6 was accepted for publication in the *Journal of Public Relations Research* in November 2009. The acceptance of this publication affirmed my decision to take “the road less travelled” and has given me the confidence to continue to research the possibilities offered by the framework and to further develop and test it. To this end, in Chapter 7, I apply the conceptual framework firstly to an analysis of a subset of the award entry and interview transcript data and secondly, to the provisional design work of a positioning campaign. This work led to further development of the conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations and demonstrated that it did have potential for a) analysing past campaign practices and b) designing positioning campaigns. It is acknowledged that there is
much more work that will need to be undertaken after the completion of this doctoral research project to develop the full potential of this framework.

The final chapter summarises this work and situates it in a wider context of the public relations theoretical field. I address the original research questions, providing the answers to the questions that have been gleaned from this research. I outline the implications of this research for practice, teaching and theory development. I conclude by reiterating the original contributions to the public relations field that this doctoral research project has made and present directions for further research.

1.5 Assumptions

The primary assumption made regarding this study is that Australian campaign practice is not atypical in the context of how campaigns are designed and implemented in Western countries around the world. This assumption is based on sources including the descriptions of campaigns and the guides to designing, implementing and evaluating campaigns found in textbooks used in tertiary level courses around the world. It is also based on the guidelines for entries into award/prize programs conducted by public relations professional bodies in many countries including Australia (PRIA), Singapore (IPRS), USA (PRSA), UK (CIPR), New Zealand (PRINZ), and the international association IPRA. This entry criteria guide from PRINZ (2010) is typical of such programs:

Your public relations project or programme will be judged on the results compared with the initial objectives. Judges will be looking for:

- Background
- Preliminary research
- Objectives
- Audiences
- Messages
- Strategy
- Implementation / tactics
- Problem-solving / creativity (Wow factor)
- Results including return on investment or “bang for buck”
- Evaluation / follow up
A similar suite of entry criteria can be found on the entry template of the International Public Relations Association Golden World Awards\(^2\). This assumption is also based on the similarities in the longstanding debate on professionalization of the industry across developed countries – questions such as ‘what comprises the public relations body of knowledge’, ‘what should ethical standard be and how should they be enforced’ and ‘should the path of certification and accreditation be pursued’ are debated widely (Wolf & de Bussy, 2008, pp. 2-4).

The second assumption I have made is that academics have a responsibility to serve their professional field, their university’s research goals and the needs of the wider community. This assumption is premised on the notion that academia exists not to build commercial wealth but to build and enhance knowledge in a multifaceted way to augment our understanding of our world and the way it functions. As Plato stated:

> an education which aims only at money-making, or at the cultivation of physical strength, or at some kind of cleverness without regard to justice or reason, is vulgar and illiberal, and is not worthy to be called education at all. (Plato, trans 1967, p. 181)

I firmly believe that in working to develop a deeper understanding and an enhanced theoretical approach that can explain and predict behaviours and knowledge in the area of campaign practice, I can contribute positively in all three areas – the professional field, the university’s research goals and the needs of the wider community.

**1.6 Rationale and significance**

The primary original contribution to the public relations field that this doctoral study makes is the development of the conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations which helps explain why the development and delivery of key messages are central to public relations campaigns. The rationale for this study emanates from my desire to theoretically conceptualise public relations campaign work in a way that will enhance research, practice and education, but that will also assist members of the wider community to understand and critique practice where it is warranted. Increased

\(^2\) Golden World Award template link: http://www.ipra.org/detail.asp?articleid=1427
understanding of the purpose, techniques and processes of campaign practice may facilitate the development of different teaching approaches in tertiary-level public relations courses that better incorporate consideration of organisational, societal, cultural and ethical issues. The conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations may provide further insights into the ways meaning is co-constructed between organisations and audiences and could equip members of the wider community with a better understanding of how such processes can be harnessed in the attempt to achieve communication goals.

**Definitions of key terms used throughout this thesis**

It is acknowledged that definitions in public relations, especially those pertaining to the concept of publics, and related terms, are contested (Chia, 2009, p5; Moffitt, 1999, pp. 12-18, Tindall & Vardeman-Winter, 2010, n.p.). Although an array of terms is used by various authors and respondents in different ways, I will use the following definitions in my text:

*Audience/s:* any individual or group who might receive or listen to campaign messages but may not be a stakeholder or specific public (Chia, 2009, p.6).

*Organisation/s:* used throughout this thesis “in its broadest sense” in line with previously published scholarly work (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič & Sriramesh, 2007, p. 4) to refer to for-profit and not-for-profit organisations, corporations, clients of public relations agencies and consultants, activist groups, nongovernment organisations, social change organisations, political entities, and government organisations and agencies.

*Public/s:* any group of people who share common interest or values in a particular situation (Chia, 2009, p.5).

*Publics and audiences:* a broad reference to those people who organisations interact with through communication programs and campaigns (Chia, 2009, p.6).

*Stakeholder/s –* A group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of an organisation’s objectives (Freeman, 1984, p. 25).
2. Review of the literature: Conceptualising campaign practice

The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and to identify the means by which that purpose was achieved. It was anticipated that a deeper understanding of campaign practice would afford new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorized and that this could further inform the development of practice, research and education in public relations. In addition, if this aspect of practice becomes clearer, the debate as to who holds the power and wherewithal to influence and control the means by which the purpose of campaigns is achieved, and the ethics of doing so, could take place. To carry out this study it was necessary to complete a critical review of the current literature. This review was ongoing throughout the study and explores campaigns, which are acknowledged as a major part of public relations practice (Moloney, 2006, pp. 130-131; Sheehan & Xavier, 2009, p. x) and can be viewed as examples of strategic communication (Botan, 1997, p. 188). In situating this doctoral research project in the public relations academic arena, I have examined what evidence there is in campaign literature to support the normative definition of public relations that espouses two-way symmetrical communication which delivers mutually beneficial outcomes for organisations and publics, known as the “Excellence Theory” (Grunig & Grunig, 2008, p. 327). This normative definition of public relations has dominated the academic field for several decades (Gower, 2006). The literature indicates that a two-way symmetrical model of public relations does not account for campaign practice but that campaigns can be accounted for when conceptualised as instances of strategic communication that are goal directed and purposeful in advancing the mission of the organisations. Such a conceptualisation of public relations practice could be seen as an attempt to strategically construct specific meanings to advance the mission of the organisation commissioning the public relations. With this strategic construction of meaning as a central tenet of campaign practice, a social constructionist theoretical perspective emerges as the perspective that could strengthen public relations as a legitimate field of academic inquiry whilst also providing frameworks for public relations practice, research and education.
2.1 The challenges of defining the public relations field

In order to situate this research, a definition, at least in broad terms, of what comprises public relations is required. This is because “language which communicates common understanding is needed as the basis for meaningful discussion” (Jaques, 2009, p. 280), but as Jaques states, “in many areas within public relations such agreed taxonomy is both elusive and illusory” (Jaques, 2009, p. 280). Public relations has “multiple meanings and muddied, conflicting interpretations” (Berger, 1999, p. 185) and does not have anything approaching consensus on the purpose for which public relations is employed. In not having “one set of unquestioned presuppositions that provides an intellectual framework”, public relations can be said to be “still in an evolutionary state, redefining itself, which affects its teaching, research and practice” (McDonald, 2008, p.3). This is not a new state of affairs, with debates over defining public relations active as far back as the immediate post World War II period (L’Etang, 2006, pp. 33-39).

Defining the field has especially drawn the attention of scholars in the public relations field since the mid-1970s (Jaques, 2009). Various definitions have been put forward for consideration but much of this work has contributed to a further deterioration in clarifying the situation (Jaques, 2009). Hutton (1999, p. 208) states that “if the field of public relations wishes to be master of its own destiny, it must settle on a definition”, and McDonald (2008, p. 15) adds that “until there is one widely accepted definition, public relations will remain vulnerable to other fields making inroads into its traditional domain”. Unfortunately, the development on an agreed definition still has not transpired and this situation presented a challenge in this literature review.

In responding to this challenge, the myriad of views on the definition of public relations has been conceptualised along a continuum of sorts – one that plots definitions in terms of who are the beneficiaries of public relations or to whose advantage is public relations practiced, as this is how many definitions have been framed. At one end of the continuum there are those who tell us that public relations is about “achieving mutually beneficial relationships” (Heath 2001a, p. 36), that “its major role is to empower those with less power” (Grunig, 2006, p. 165), or that the public relations function is to ensure the “inclusiveness of all voices that are affected by the organisation and thereby benefiting the publics as well as the organisation itself” (Holtzhausen, 2002, p. 255).
These can be defined as normative theoretical approaches in that they focus on ideals that inform prescriptions of how things should be rather than concentrating on explaining or predicting activities (Smith, 2008, p. 2). These normative approaches to public relations theory and research have not “dealt well with dilemmas offered by concepts of propaganda, dialogue or the public sphere, nor has it produced extensive and convincing explanations of the actual practice” (Pieczka, 2002, p. 322). At the other end of the continuum there are scholars who state that “modern PR is competitive communications seeking advantage for its principals” (Moloney, 2006, p. 165), that “above all, it is communication designed to further the interests of its principals. They would not invest in PR if it were otherwise” (Moloney, 2006, p. 168) and that public relations can be understood as the strategic attempt to control the agenda of public discussion and the terms in which discussion takes place. In these terms public relations practitioners are complicit in the attempt to gain, or maintain, social, political, and/or economic power for the organisations that they represent. (Weaver, Motion & Roper, 2006, p. 17)

At this end of the continuum, public relations is viewed as a tool “for the maintenance of hegemony” (Weaver, Motion & Roper, 2006, p. 17), or as a means for an organisation to advocate for a particular view or position in the court of public opinion (Mayhew, 1997, p. 203), or as the means by which a particular ideological world view is constructed (Berger, 1999, p. 186). L’Etang (2006) and Moloney (2006) both put forward that public relations is a form of propaganda, with both scholars outlining how the adoption of the term public relations was designed to distance the profession from the negative associations propaganda has with war communication. At this end of the continuum, especially when considering the views of critical scholars who situate public relations within “a world of organizations bent on dominating those of lesser power” (Toth, 2009, p. 53), one could question how anyone with a degree of social conscience could ever work in a public relations role.

On this continuum, the key aspect was the question as to whose benefit or advantage is public relations employed. Given that public relations is undertaken by entities such as businesses large and small, governments and public sector agencies, not for profit organisations, individuals and activists, it is impossible to define the nature of a singular
advantage or benefit that would be applicable across this spectrum. A corporation employing public relations may see advantage in returning maximum dividends to shareholders whereas a publicly-funded health organisation employing public relations may see advantage as having all pre-schoolers vaccinated. This indicates that the concept of the continuum of definitions based on the question of who benefits from public relations may be flawed and raises the question of why the normative definition based around two-way symmetrical communication delivering mutually beneficial outcomes has been the dominant definition for several decades.

2.2 The dominant normative definition of the field

By far, the most dominant of the normative theoretical approaches to public relations is the Symmetrical/Excellence Theory, or as it has become known – simply, the Excellence Theory (Grunig and Grunig, 2008, p. 329). It has been championed by James Grunig, the field’s most published academic author (Sallot, Lyon, Alzuru & Jones, 2003, p. 51), and the man who is “the most influential thinker about PR since Bernays” (Moloney, 2006, p. 54). According to Grunig and Grunig (2008, p. 331), the Excellence Theory equates with the “strategic management paradigm”, “focuses on the participation of public relations executives in strategic decision-making to help manage the behaviour of organizations” and, provides a “normative model for an ethical, effective, and both organizationally and socially valued approach to public relations practice”. Botan and Hazleton (2006) describe the Excellence Theory as the closest thing the public relations academic field has to a dominant paradigm.

Definitions of the field that privilege the framing of public relations around the notion of a two-way symmetrical model that aims to achieve mutual benefits for both the organisations commissioning the public relations activity and their publics, abound within public relations circles. According to Toth, (2009, pp. 55 - 56) it is “the symmetrical dimension” which has “become the most theoretically contentious (provocative) concept” of the Excellence Theory and it remains central to public relations discourses. A recent study of public relations scholarship by Pasadeos, Berger and Renfro (2010), which looked at authorship, publication outlets and citation during the first half of this decade, showed that “the largest category of most cited works in 2000–2005 is excellence theory” (p. 147). Although dominant in the academic domain,
especially in North America from where much of the academic literature emanates, this normative approach to public relations theory and research has been criticised by critical and post-modern scholars (e.g. Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Leitch & Neilson, 1997; L’Etang & Pieczka, 1996; McKie & Munshi, 2007) as being too organisation-centric and based in modernist and/or functionalist perspectives. It has also been criticised by scholars such as Stokes and Rubins (2010, p. 43), whose examination of a campaign led them to conclude that symmetrical communication and mutually beneficial outcomes were not desired outcomes in circumstances such as an anti-smoking organisation campaigning against a large tobacco company. They argue that there is a need to understand all public relations activity, not just particular types of practice. It is this concept of symmetrical communication and the delivery of mutually beneficial outcomes that this doctoral research project questions through the examination of descriptions of campaigns.

2.3 The definition of public relations adopted for this research

I have attempted to avoid situating my research on the continuum described above, where public relations is defined according to who benefits from its practice. I have instead taken a sociocultural perspective of the field, which enables me to examine how various theoretical approaches help in understanding and creating the meaning that is attached to public relations practices. This approach enables me to re-think the ways public relations is conceptualized both as a social phenomenon and as a socio-cultural practice, and to apply a critically reflective perspective that can facilitate the potential to effect change (Anderson, 2008, p. xxii). Others have raised possibilities for defining the public relations field differently. An example of this is where public relations has been called “symbol production” (Mickey, 1997, p. 273) as it relates to communication strategy where public relations text or events are produced for some pre-determined purpose. Such conceptualizations are interesting as they relate to Berger’s (1999) work on defining public relations in terms of its reason for being, rather than its functional or normative descriptors. Berger (1999) put forward what he said was a “tentative definition”, and suggested that public relations provides organisations with
dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation in contested sites in which information is exchanged, meaning constructed and
managed, and consensus, consent, and legitimation gained or lost with others.
(p. 186)

Berger (1999) went on to advocate for public relations to be conceptualized in terms of being a “process intended to construct ideological world view” which he defined as “a self-interested and partial representation of the world based on a particular set of beliefs, ideas, attitudes and objectives” (p. 186). He added to his “tentative definition” suggestion and defined organisational public relations as:

intentional practices and processes of representation with others in multiple, contested sites in which information is exchanged, meaning is mobilized and managed, and consensus, consent and legitimation won or lost. The character of such organizational representation is neither strictly functional nor intentionally symmetrical; the character is ideological, and it is this that substantially shapes and governs public relations practices and processes and explains their existence. (Berger, 1999, pp. 190 - 191)

It is at this point of conceptualising public relations around ideology that I diverge from Berger, although this could be more to do with defining the term “ideology” than anything else, a term that Berger agrees carries “multiple meanings and muddied, conflicting interpretations” and that could be off-putting for some given its “polemic nature” (Berger, 1999, p. 185). Instead, I have chosen to adopt Berger’s tentative definition for the purposes of this research thesis as it stops short of characterizing all public relations around the ideological. Public relations can play a large role in perpetuating organisation culture and ideologies of the entities that commission public relations, but it remains unclear from the evidence presented in the literature whether one can say that public relations does this in all cases.

Public relations practitioners in this study are conceptualised as “agents of culture”, who provide “actors both in the internal and external environments with the cultural tools necessary to successfully mediate their behavior when interacting with the organization” (Ristino, 2008, p. 63). This centres around placing the public relations function “at the center of the complex process of shaping, sustaining and transmitting organizational culture” (Ristino, 2008, p. 64), rather than talking specifically of ideology. Ristino
(2008) states that all that practitioners do as being “directly or indirectly focused on or driven by this one purpose” (p. 64) – transmitting organisational culture. He argues that this role is “vital” and “strategic” (p. 70) within an organisation because by being “agents and mediators of culture in organizational settings” (p. 70), practitioners “ensure the long-term survival and success of an organization by perpetuating its culture” (p. 71). The means by which practitioners perform this role is through the “skilful and artful use of symbols and language” to “shape, sustain, and transmit organizational culture for both internal and external actors in the environment” (p. 70).

Ristino has described public relations as being centred on attempts to control how meanings about the organisation and its activities are constructed by people within and external to the organisation. It places the organisation at the centre of public relations, but by concentrating on culture rather than ideology, issues of power are not the immediate focus. This is why Berger’s (1999) tentative definition, rather than his final definition, of the purpose of public relations better covers the gamut of reasons why public relations methods and processes are applied - for the purposes of intentional representation, where representation refers “to the purposeful expression of organizational voice(s) and appearance(s) to influence others” (p. 186).

The work of Schlunke (2008) is helpful here in further understanding that representation is “a re-presenting of something within culture and language in order to communicate or share meaning” (p. 262). The construction of meaning can be seen to require “an appreciation that we share certain cultural codes…and that communicating the meaning of any object uses language that itself depends on codes of grammar and styles of usage” (Schlunke, 2008, p. 262). From this perspective, public relations can be usefully conceptualized as the practice of representation, or meaning making, with strategic intent, i.e. with purpose; with an objective to be achieved. Wærass (2007) asserts that “public relations literature tends to focus more on practices and techniques rather than on the actual objective of the efforts” (p.201). This research project does focus on campaign practices and techniques, not as an end in itself, but as a way of examining how these work to help organisations that commission public relations activity to achieve their objectives and how the wider populations can better understand the ways in which communication is mediated and managed for various purposes.
2.4 What is the state of play with Excellence Theory?

Despite numerous studies on the four models of public relations as espoused by Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 21-22), “none has found predominant practice of the two-way symmetrical model across its sample. As a result, the two-way symmetrical model - an ideal for public relations practice - has seemed to be unattainable” (Kelly, Laskin & Rosenstein, 2010, p.192). In recent years, there is evidence to suggest that the field is taking a much more pluralistic view of theory and scholars such as Toth (2009, p. 50) write that this is advantageous to the future of discussion and learning about public relations. Toth (2009) and Grunig (2006) have both written of the tendency for some theorists to promote their approaches by exposing the flaws in others. However, such an endeavour, if approached on the basis of rigorous research practices and not on personal slurs, is helpful to scholars and practitioners. For example, Roper (2005b, p. 84) questioned whether it is honest for public relations practitioners and theorists to assert that initiatives couched as symmetrical communication should be taken in the spirit of open collaboration with all of an organisation’s publics. Curtin and Gaither (2005) believe that public relations researchers should again consider whether persuasion should be “part of the repertoire of legitimate practices, albeit while carefully examining the particular circumstances of their functioning within each articulation” (p. 109). Pfau and Wan (2006, p. 126) state that “controversy over whether public relations should operate from an asymmetrical or symmetrical model is misguided; that public relations is a form of strategic communication in which persuasion plays an intrinsic role”. L'Etang (2006, pp. 27 - 28) and Moloney (2006) have questioned the dichotomy of public relations and propaganda with both presenting arguments that lead to the conclusions that such a dichotomy is false and is dependent on definitions and conceptualisations of public relations. Porter (2010, p. 127) states that J. Grunig’s work focuses solely on the process of conflict management, “while at the same time vilifying one of the most important end goals of real-world public relations strategy, which is to persuade and ultimately influence behavior.” (p. 127). It is evident that especially in the last five years there has been a groundswell of critical questioning from academics as to whether Excellence Theory should continue as the most prominent theoretical approach used to conceptualise public relations. However, there are some scholars who are searching for ways to make the theory work in practice or who are reporting on
circumstances where the theory is already in practice, although published accounts of success are very few (e.g. Kelly, Laskin & Rosenstein, 2010; Lane, 2007).

Lane’s (2007) study is unique in that it describes the application of the two-way symmetrical model in practice in a particular case study. She drew in part on information in the submission to the Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target Awards 2005\(^3\), made by Melbourne-based public relations company, Socom, and on information from one of the company’s principals. Lane states that the “two-way symmetric public relations” (p. 73) is

> about balancing the communication equation, using creative approaches to facilitate the free and uniform flow of information, and thus, power, between organisations and publics. In this way public relations practitioners are able – potentially, at least – to empower all participants in the communication relationship. (p. 72)

She highlights the “lack of consideration given to its [the theory’s] practical application” (p. 74) and describes the debate around this model of public relations as “dismissive of the construct” and at worst, states that it is perceived as “an impractical, unrealistic, and ultimately ‘Holy Grail’ for practitioners” (p. 73). Lane (2007) suggests that one of the main challenges for the model’s application is that although public relations practitioners are competent at managing their role in preparing and disseminating information, “not enough is understood about how to manage the other half of the communication equation to produce predictable results” (p. 74). She proposes that the conduct of two-way symmetrical public relations could be undertaken by practitioners facilitating “the presentation of a case or information by stakeholder/s directly” or that they could “act as advocates to management on behalf of others” – both approaches which she states are deemed difficult and demanding for practitioners (2007, p. 75). Acknowledging that such a proposal is a “simplistic construction” that did not consider more than two participants in dialogue or where there are “conflicting points of views among publics” (p. 75), Lane (2007) states that the conceptualisation:

\(^3\) This award entry did not win its category (issues/crisis management) but was highly commended (see http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/?page=show&id=548)
does serve to suggest the ways in which the public relations function can act as a point of balance and facilitate different flows of information and power without actually involving or changing their own position on an issue. (p. 75)

Lane (2007) describes how Socom agency facilitated communication to and from its client, Becton (a property development company) and the Eastside residents (who were anti-development as proposed by Becton), instead of developing a strategy that aimed to help “Becton find ways of bringing its publics into line with organisational aims and objectives” (p. 77). The Socom senior management met with a wide range of stakeholders “who identified and clarified specific areas of concern in the previous plans”. Stakeholders were also invited to suggest solutions to identified issues. The Socom senior management then persuasively presented “the residents’ concerns to Becton in the hope of convincing the company of the benefits of changing its project design” (p. 77). The public relations efforts were successful in that Becton accommodated the residents’ concerns into the new design which, when presented to the stakeholders, received “an 87% approval rating” (p. 77). Lane (2007) acknowledges that this approach may not work in all situations and “relied heavily on the character and experience of Socom’s principals, and the nature of their relationship with the client” (p. 78), however, she states that the example “clearly shows the value and potential benefits” of the two-way symmetrical model in a commercial environment.

Of note is Lane’s efforts to apply the widely used RACE (research, action, communication, evaluation) framework (Marston, 1963) to the two-way symmetric model of public relations and suggests that this may “enable public relations practitioners to better understand how to anticipate and manage the entire process” (p. 78). She frames research (R) as responsive rather than as an information-gathering exercise; action (A) as where practitioners “apply their persuasive skills and techniques as much to the organisation as to the publics” (p. 81-82); communication (C) as where practitioners use their message construction techniques that are usually “intended to create persuasive presentations to publics” to “communicate stakeholder concerns to management” (p. 82); and, evaluation (E) as pertaining to attitudinal and/or behavioural change (p. 83). In providing a point of departure for further consideration of how this model of public relations can be applied to practice, Lane has made a significant contribution to the field which to date does not appear to have been taken further.
Lane’s (2007) work was not cited in a recent study by Kelly, Laskin and Rosenstein (2010) where they surveyed investor relations practitioners using an adapted version of the survey instrument used in the Excellence Study (developed by J. Grunig & L. Grunig in 1992) to ascertain the extent of use of two-way symmetrical public relations in the investor relations sector. Lane’s work could have added another aspect to their considerations and even influenced the survey design, especially had they pursued Lane’s applied RACE framework to further inform the questions asked of practitioners in the study. The aspect of a practitioner acting and communicating in a way that constructed management as another public and had the practitioner involved in presenting and advocating stakeholders’ views is not fully accounted for in the description by Kelly et al. (2010) of the purpose of the two-way symmetrical which they see is to

generate mutual understanding between an organization and its strategic publics. Understanding leads to the formation of relationships that help the organization succeed and survive. Two-way communication with a goal of balanced effects may result in either or both the organization and publics changing their behavior. This does not mean that organizations predominately practicing this model readily succumb to demands of publics; rather, they utilize dialogue and negotiation to reach agreement when possible. (p. 191)

Kelly et al. (2010) statistically mapped the results of the 145 returned survey questionnaires (45% response rate) across the four models of public relations and also to six of the eight dimensions of public relations as developed by L. Grunig, J. Grunig and Dozier in 2002. Kelly et al. found that,

whereas practitioners and organizations, in general, predominantly practice press agentry public relations, investor relations officers, and their publicly owned corporations, predominantly practice two-way symmetrical public relations with investor publics. (p. 199)

The researchers’ conclusions included that “building relationships with investors through two-way symmetrical practice has direct financial benefits for publicly owned corporations” (Kelly et al., 2010, p. 204). This was primarily because this approach
tended to foster longer-term investors which guarded against undesirable short-term stock price fluctuations. Kelly et al. stated that the study’s findings “provide evidence that the normative theory of how public relations should be practiced is, indeed, actually practiced in investor relations” (p. 200) and, further, that the findings “provide evidence that public relations practitioners specializing in investor relations have matured beyond press agentry practice” (p. 204). The evidence provided in the study supporting that normative theory is applied in investor relations consists of a high level of agreement with statements mapped to these dimensions on the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire in various adaptations has been used in studies previously and there is no reason to question its validity as such. However, the evidence could simply be an indicator that two-way symmetrical communication might be being practised and more in-depth research would be needed to ascertain the actual practices. The finding related to maturity of practice is open to questioning as it posits a progress model of public relations practice where those using promotional/press agent/publicity techniques are coined as being "immature" in their approach to practice whereas those applying a two-way symmetrical approach are “mature”. This finding is at odds with the review of Kelly et al. (2010, p. 192), earlier in the same paper, of the theoretical framework in which the researchers reported on the work of L. Grunig et al. (2002) as part of the IABC Excellence Study. This found that the models of public relations were related to the sub-functions of public relations such as media, internal/employee, consumer, investor, community, government, and fundraising/donor relations, and supports an argument that techniques and processes are applied in a “fit for the purpose” capacity rather than as an indicator of the maturity level of practice. Overall, however, this study and Lane’s (2007) study provide much needed examples of two-way symmetrical theory in practice, not necessarily because it demonstrates the moral superiority of one approach to public relations over another but because such studies enhance the knowledge and possibilities available to researchers and practitioners.

2.5 Why is the normative Excellence Theory worth challenging?

In the context of the Excellence Theory, public relations practice that involves persuasion can be seen as something less than “excellent” (Moloney, 2006, p. 54). However, award programs conducted by public relations professional associations from around the Western world can be seen to have awarded prizes for excellent campaign
practice that has utilized many different approaches, including persuasion. This sets up the fundamental question for this doctoral research that is seeking to understand the purpose of public relations campaigns and the ways by which that purpose is achieved in practice. The dominant academic discourse in public relations has been shown to be that of two-way symmetrical communication whereas this does not appear to be the case in campaign practice. This project is far from the first to question this dominant discourse with challenges to the normative definitions and approaches to public relations arising on many fronts in the literature. Gower’s (2006) work in conceptualising the academic field as being at a crossroads captured the major areas of concern:

Two-way symmetrical communication is a proscription for how we ought to practice public relations, but it does not provide a rationale for why an organization engages in public relations. Similarly, relationship theory explains what we do, but not why. (2006, p. 180)

Pfau and Wan (2006) agree and state that although “most academics define public relations as building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics”, such a definition “doesn’t go far enough” and “ignores many functions of public relations, above and beyond building and maintaining relationships, which contribute to organizational effectiveness (e.g. fundraising, lobbying, promoting organizational image, marketing)”, which are “largely suasory” in nature (p. 111). These are the types of public relations practices that can be seen to be in receipt of the prizes at the award ceremonies – this is clearly an example where practice and theory are at odds and this may not be in the best interests of scholars or practitioners. Okay and Okay’s, (2008, p. 303) survey of award winning practitioners led them to suggest that the “intersection of theory and practice is very important to the continued successful development of the public relations field”. Although their study was conducted with a small sample (n=16 survey response rate of 40%) the authors stated that the sample was representative of the spread of the categories of award winning entries in the 2002 Golden World Awards from the International Public Relations Association (IPRA). They found that practitioners included in their study, in general, were unfamiliar with the names of theories and with theoretical approaches, that few respondents were trained in theory and that less than half (43.8%) followed
developments in the field through books and journals. Okay and Okay (2008) believe that with those results, it is “not surprising that the practice is not following theoretical developments in the field” (p. 304). It could be argued that practitioners may have found much of the theory they have encountered to be so removed from their experiences of practice that to engage further may have seemed pointless. Van Ruler and Verčič (2005) questioned whether the propensity of the academic field to privilege normative definitions of public relations could be construed to mean that most of the top public relations practitioners were actually “unprofessional” (p. 240). This apparent alienation of practitioners from the theoretical endeavours of the public relations scholars cannot be to the advantage of public relations as an academic field nor as a field of respected practice.

Pfau and Wan (2006, pp. 110 - 111) have encapsulated why normative definitions should be challenged and have called for a definition that (a) includes some explanation about how public relations works, e.g., “how does public relations build and maintain relationships or perform other functions” and (b) that centres on communication and persuasive communication as “essential means/vehicle in this process”. They believe that continuing scholarship that focuses on communication context instead of communication theory will continue the isolation of the public relations academic domain. They agree with aspects of the findings of the Excellence Study such as public relations should take a strategic approach but disagree that “excellence should be operationalized as symmetrical practices that, in essence, eschew the role of persuasion in public relations” (p. 111). They state that the focus of the academic field on two-way symmetrical approaches has “stunted public relations scholarship” (p. 110) and mired “scholarship in a narrow niche, in what amounts to a scholarly ghetto” (p. 111). This has implications for the credibility of the discipline and its academics, especially in terms of scholars gaining tenure and promotion at leading universities (Pfau & Wan, 2006, p. 111). For some time there have been calls from what some have called the margins⁴ of public relations academia to question the dominance of the normative

---

⁴ In 2005, the Journal of Public Relations Research produced a special issue on alternative paradigms in public relations... “with the somewhat unfortunate title of ‘Public Relations from the Margins’. If one adopts a multiparadigmatic perspective, then one cannot defend the existence of one mainstream and several marginal approaches. In such a view, there is only more suitable and less suitable approaches” (Ihlen & van Ruler, 2009. pp. 3-4).
theoretical constructs, especially in terms of its impact on researching practice. In 1997, Pieczka was arguing for a “broadening of the conceptual and methodological basis for enquiry” to facilitate research into “everyday-life practice of public relations, which has been obscured by the current focus on dialogue as the organising principle” (p. 65). As Pieczka stated:

the study of public relations would benefit from a systematic attempt at understanding its everyday-life, mundane practices, together with the kind of knowledge that underpins them. The phenomenological concept of bracketing, the suspending of judgement, could perhaps provide some counterbalance to the normative approach, which is felt strongly in current public relations theory building. Practice is as valid a focus of interest as best practice. (p. 77)

This doctoral research focuses on campaign practice, which although it may be judged as best practice by practitioner peers does not fit the ideal of best practice within normative theory, as a way of challenging the normative approach.

2.6 Using public relations campaign practice to explore theory

2.6.1 What is a public relations campaign?

As the definition of public relations remains contested, it is hardly surprising that defining a public relations campaign is not a straightforward exercise. Scholars such as Gregory (2010), McElreath (1993) and Moloney (2006) distinguish between two areas in public relations practice – campaigns and programs:

A PR campaign is a planned concentration of communication resources directed at the achievement of a pre-defined goal in a limited time, after a distinctive launch. It promotes a product, service or cause through press conferences, a flow of media stories, celebrity endorsement and stunts. It is the opposite of continuous, unchanged, conventional PR. (Moloney, 2006, p. 131)

The distinction between a program and a campaign is subtle yet important; it’s determined by the initial mandate authorizing the set of public relations activities. A program is a sustained public relations effort that often has an
ongoing mandate, such as an employee communications program, a stockholder relations program, or a community relations program. A public relations campaign, on the other hand, has a fixed time period in which to accomplish its goals, such as a campaign to reduce employee absenteeism, a campaign to have drivers use their safety belts, or a campaign to influence legislation. Both programs and campaigns are composed of a variety of communication activities. (McElreath, 1993, p. 4)

However, in the literature this distinction is less clear with some activities called campaigns being less “time-prescribed” than these descriptions, some activities which seem to have all campaign attributes being described as programs, some activities which could almost be seen as sub-campaigns of larger campaigns, and some of these larger campaigns being clearly part of ongoing programs – so the line where campaigns end and programs begin is unclear and as such, public relations activities are not always easily classified as one or the other. As Pfau and Parrot (1993) state:

A campaign involves more than just getting someone elected to office or convincing a consumer to purchase new products, although both of these may be within the realm of campaigns. (p. 5)

They define a “persuasive communication campaign” as “a conscious, sustained, and incremental process designed to be implemented over a specified period of time for the purposes of influencing a specific audience” (p. 13). In identifying types of campaigns, Pfau and Parrott identified three types: the commercial campaign, the political campaign and the social issue campaign; and identified that campaigns by definition are sustained efforts rather the communicating of a single message (p. 12). Botan (1997, p. 189) breaks down these campaign categories further and suggests that “public relations and other strategic communication campaigns” can be conducted for many purposes including public diplomacy; litigation public relations; health promotions; development public relations; the support of social causes such as charities, religions, the environment, or activist organizations; the support of particular candidates or political policies; or to gain acceptance for a corporation’s or industry’s apologies, public policy views or products. Moffitt also (1999) builds on Pfau and Parrott’s three types of campaigns but writes that the concept of “campaign” should act as a guiding metaphor
for all business communication that an organisation undertakes. She states that a campaign can either inform or persuade and is

the strategic and carefully thought-out design of a series of messages sent to one or more targeted populations for a discrete period of time in response to an identified negative or positive situation affecting the organization. (1999, p. 3)

Campaigns are initiated by organisations of all types and sizes in response to situations that can be either crises or projects, and “the crisis or project can be any issue from a major problem or large project, or the causative factor can simply be to maintain business sales or image” (Moffitt, 1999, p. 3). A public relations campaign has the goal of identifying “significant publics”, determining “effective communication messages” and selecting “the most effective channels to deliver these messages to the public” (Hamilton, 1992, p. 123). What seems clear from the literature is that a campaign is a particular form of public relations practice which is a response to an identified situation or problem, is goal directed, in some way time constrained and heavily reliant on the development and dissemination of messages.

From the descriptions above, campaign practice fits with descriptions of three of the four models of public relations as espoused by Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 21-22) - press agent/publicity; public information; and two-way asymmetrical communication. It also fits with van Ruler’s (2004) one-way persuasive model of communication which she states equates with Grunig and Hunt’s two-way asymmetrical model. Van Ruler (2004, p. 127) points out that Grunig and Hunt's two-way asymmetrical model of public relations may be better described as "controlled one-way communication" as the receiver is not conceptualised as a "full participant in the two-way process" because he/she is "seen as an object who is only able to receive or, possibly, to answer the sender's questions". Even in the literature relating to public communication campaigns designed to deliver social good, evidence is very much indicative of intentions to use one-way promotional and persuasive communication techniques based on the assumed power of the mass media, such that, in transmitting information to large audiences this will somehow transform into positive attitudinal and behavioural changes (Wallack, 1989, pp. 366-367). There is little in these campaign definitions that indicates an intention to undertake a two-way symmetrical approach to public relations campaigns.
2.6.2 What percentage of work do campaigns comprise?

Campaigns are acknowledged as a major part of public relations practice (Moloney, 2006, pp. 130-131; Sheehan & Xavier, 2009, p. x) but because differentiating between campaigns and programs is not clear cut, it becomes impossible to ascertain the percentage of time practitioners spend on campaign-related activities. Much of what is engaged in by public relations practitioners relates to the specifics of organisational activities that are by nature fluid and complex (Dozier & Broom, 2006, p. 142), therefore, conceptualising and measuring roles, which can be viewed as “abstractions of the myriad activities of communicators in their day to day work”, is “inherently problematic” (Dozier & Broom, 2006, p. 145). In a 2009 study, Beurer-Zuellig, Fieseler and Meckel (2009, p. 275) reported on their survey of a sample of corporate communication professionals, which drew from 30 different European countries with 2225 respondents overall and 1410 fully completed replies. Professionals “allot most of their time” to press and media relations and “allot the better part of their time” to both advising and consulting with executive management, and strategic communication planning (p. 275). “Positioning the firm in the marketplace”, described as a marketing activity characterised by “tasks related to events, advertising and marketing communication as well as maintaining Internet presence”, was reported as receiving “an average share of time” (p. 275). There was no specific mention of campaign work, although the activities mentioned would be included in many campaigns. Overall, it can be concluded that within current definitions of campaigns, programs and public relations, it is the individual practitioners and researchers who ascertain what does and doesn’t comprise campaign work.

2.6.3 What campaigns in the academic literature indicate about theory and practice

In the course of undertaking this doctoral research project over the period from early 2007 to late 2010, very many accounts of campaigns in the literature have been read and analysed. This section reports on an examination of nine research articles from the academic literature that examine aspects of what I have either defined as campaigns in accordance with the range of definitions, or what the articles’ authors have called campaigns. It should be noted that none of the authors of the articles on the reviewed campaigns questioned the nature of public relations campaigns as valid examples or
sites of practice. The final selection chosen for this review are a mix of those which were most current or appeared foundational (e.g. Berger, 1999) in representing the types of campaigns as identified by Pfau and Parrott (1993). It should be noted that none of the campaigns examined in this review was described as a national award winning campaign. Although award winning campaigns are quite frequently examined in the literature as samples of data (e.g. Baskina, Hahna, Seamana, & Reines, 2010; Gregory, 2001; Walker, 1994; Xavier, Johnston, & Patel, 2006), it appears that individual award-winning campaigns are not often specifically chosen as the subjects for academic research. It is also noteworthy that the majority of the campaign literature reviewed examined campaigns that the authors were not involved in designing or delivering (the exception being Berger, 1999).

According to Danowski (2008), most campaign scholarship is concerned with “media coverage effects on audiences” (p. 287) and although the articles examined in this review take a variety of approaches to research, it seems that most are concerned with media coverage effects on audiences, as Danowski predicted. The next section provides an overview of this selection of campaigns which include campaigns designed to:


- Ensure global sales of a sleeping tablet (Berger, 1999), where public relations is presented as an effort to construct a certain ideology/world view favourable to the pharmaceutical manufacturing company – campaign categorisation: commercial (Pfau & Parrot, 1993).

- Build a favourable public opinion against terrorism and the removal of Saddam Hussein (Jo, Shim & Jung, 2008) in which “the war against Iraq is a global public relations campaign allowing the U.S. administration to build a favorable public opinion” (p. 64) – campaign categorisation: political (Pfau & Parrot, 1993).
• Promote breast self-examination amongst women in the Arab Emirates (Khaja & Creedon, 2010), where the public relations campaign is instigated along the lines of a strategic management-by-objectives style approach (Toth, 2009, p. 55) – campaign categorisation: social issue (Pfau & Parrot, 1993).

• Encourage teen-aged girls to be vaccinated with the anti-cervical cancer drug, Gardisil (Vardeman-Winter, 2010), where a public relations campaign is shown as having not sufficiently considered the particular cultural context of the target public – campaign categorisation: social issue/commercial (Pfau & Parrot, 1993).

• Advise fans that the National Hockey League (NHL) was back after a period of “lock-out” and that the game was better than ever (Batchelor & Formentin, 2008) in which public relations and marketing techniques were integrated to construct a promotional campaign which would “prod” (p. 160) fans to watch the sport – campaign categorisation: commercial (Pfau & Parrot, 1993).


• Enshrine no smoking in eating establishments in Colorado law (Stokes & Rubin, 2010), where the researchers demonstrated that at no time did the commissioning organisation, GASP, want to achieve two-way symmetrical public relations and mutually beneficial outcomes with tobacco company, Phillip Morris – campaign categorisation: social issue/commercial (Pfau & Parrot, 1993).

• Oppose genetic engineering (GE) in terms of GE testing and the importing of genetically modified foods (Henderson, 2005), where public relations can use “discursive strategies” in issues management campaigns “to obtain public consent and influence public policy” (p. 133) – campaign categorisation: social issue (Pfau & Parrot, 1993).
2.6.4 The campaign for Saint James and Spain

The longest campaign found is in Tilson’s (2006) exploration of “A thousand-year public relations campaign for Saint James and Spain”. According to Tilson, the “old Roman Empire was being reconstituted into new nations, with faith as a key building material in the process” (p. 177). As part of Spain’s liberation efforts from Moslem rule around 1000 years ago, Christian forces “needed to counter the spiritual power of Islam” (p. 174) and “Spanish forces found their ‘champion’ in St. James” (p. 175), whose tomb had been found in 813 AD. Tilson describes how this was the beginning of “building a distinctive mythology for Spain that would require Church-State promoters to interpret the finding of the tomb with stories and rituals that, over time, would shape the character of the nation” (p. 174). Tilson outlines many of the tactics used over the centuries including pilgrimages, promotional manuscripts, testimonials/third party endorsements and the promulgation of key messages by Church and government officials (p. 181), and describes that such efforts now include web-based tactics such as virtual pilgrimages (p. 184). He suggests that all these tactics have been implemented under the wider strategy of a “devotional-promotional campaign” (p. 184) within a “covenantal relationship” in which “the Church calls its various publics (Catholics, non-Catholics, nonbelievers, etc.) into a positive relationship with St. James, the Church, and ultimately, with God” (p. 169). This relationship is seen as delivering mutual “good” and Tilson states that within the context of this campaign, public relations uses both relationship-building and persuasive or promotional communication – these “two functions need not be mutually exclusive and may, in fact, serve to enhance each other” (p. 170). This supports the argument of L. Grunig et al. (2002) that techniques and processes are applied in a “fit for the purpose” capacity rather than a view that the relationship management perspective of public relations which scholars such as Jahansoozi (2006, p. 78) assert “has the potential to shift public relations practitioners away from using persuasive communication as a tool to manipulate public opinion toward building and maintaining mutually beneficial organization-public relationships”. Tilson (2006) has clearly articulated that both promotional and suasory efforts working within a relationship management approach have been the key to success in the long running campaign, concluding that the campaign has been integral to nation building for Spain. This seems to support Jahansoozi (2006), who went on to say that “by effectively managing the organizational-public relationship, the attitudes and behaviours of
members of strategic publics can be influenced” (p. 78). This statement seems to contradict somewhat the previous statement, although it is unclear whether Jahansoozi thinks that “influencing strategic publics” is necessarily different to being persuasive.

Tilson (2006), highlighting how religious public relations is under explored (p. 168), examined in detail an example of what he describes as “devotional-promotional communication” which aims “to inspire allegiance to an individual political entity, or religion” (p. 167). He examines the covenantal relationship between “the faithful and their God through the intercession of their clergy” (p. 169) on which the devotional-promotional campaign has been premised for centuries, and the way this was entwined with nationalism and persuasive communication to achieve a strong sense of identity around the nation, the particular geographical area of pilgrimage, the Saint himself (who is not only patron saint of Spain but of tourism – p. 184) and for the Catholic church. Tilson (p. 184) recommends further research exploring the co-orientation of the source of the communication efforts and their intended publics so as to gain a greater appreciation of both the formation of persuasive messages and the nature of the relationship. This would clearly be beneficial in terms of further theoretical development, especially as it pertains to the role of persuasion in relationship management approaches to public relations. Overall however, evidence presented from campaign efforts over the last thousand years indicates a primary reliance on promotional-style techniques – from what Tilson (2006, p. 180) calls “the most famous promotional manuscript” dating back from 1130 AD, to prayer cards distributed to cathedral visitors, which he (p. 181) describes as “in actuality, a promotional endorsement” (p. 181), through to having the members of the Rolling Stones rock band visit the cathedral in 1999, of which Tilson (p. 182) says “such visits are none other than advertisements, which are circulated to opinion leaders, the media...”. The campaign demonstrates the use of persuasive messages (p. 172), albeit with what Tilson views as the willing participation of all parties, which he sees as an essential part of the religious covenantal relationship established on the foundation of the clergy. This use of persuasive messages can be viewed through the lens of delivering advantage to the organisation/s that have commissioned and/or supported the public relations activity, e.g. the growth in devotional-tourism in the region (Tilson, 2006, p. 183). Given that the commissioning organisations are setting the strategic direction of the campaign and also
identifying which publics are strategic in the context of the achievement of specific goals, it appears that the main beneficiaries of these efforts have been Spain and the Catholic Church.

2.6.5 The Halcion sleeping tablet campaign

In another lengthy campaign example, although this one only spanning a period of decades rather than centuries, there was also some evidence of relational approaches in some components of its strategies and tactics. However, the main strategies related to the concept of positioning. The program was mounted by a pharmaceutical company, Upjohn, to promote and defend its sleeping tablet product, Halcion, with a view to helping create a supportive scientific world view for the product in the face of some criticism. It was set in the context of the science and technology field which, according to Baker, Conrad, Cudahy and Willyard (2009) poses particular public relations challenges:

To the extent that organizations can persuade stakeholders that their actions are designed to create “miracles” for the common good, they will have high levels of legitimacy. But, to the extent that they are seen as seeking profit at the expense of society, they lose the support necessary to maintain their independence. Conversely, as long as critics are viewed as protecting the public, their efforts to “rein in” high-tech organizations are likely to be appealing; to the extent that they can be cast as unnecessary or unproductive interference in the production of scientific “miracles”, they will be condemned. (p. 170)

The Halcion campaign was examined by Berger (1999) and he grounded a theoretical proposal in this case study that public relations be defined around ideology. As Berger outlines the campaign strategy and tactics, and discusses his conception of organisational public relations as attempts to “construct ideological world view” (p. 185), the tensions of the particular science and technology terrain, as articulated by Baker et al. (2009), were very evident. Upjohn had formed a “Halcion Steering Committee” comprised of “research, medical, sales, legal, health regulatory and public relations personnel” (Berger, 1999, p. 195), and it “was charged with supporting the
drug’s ongoing sales, marketing, and product registration efforts worldwide” (p. 195).

For example:

Following a review of the company’s own medical and research data, which suggested no scientific support for Van Der Kroef’s claims [that the drug was highly addictive, caused major side effects and should be banned], one of the first acts of the committee was to develop a “position” for the Halcion affair. (Berger, 1999, p. 195)

Berger described this process of positioning as a:

simple but particular representation of events, a company-constructed worldview, which subsequently would anchor and frame all Halcion-related communications (e.g. news releases, advertisement, medical and governmental presentations, and interviews). (p. 195)

Over the years, there was much contest over the drug’s marketing license and safety record in several dozen countries, and the positioning determined by the committee was represented consistently and persistently by company personnel and various ‘experts’ in thousands of print and electronic media interviews, numerous meetings with health regulatory officials in various countries, public and private conferences with researchers and physicians, discussions and briefing sessions with hospital pharmacists, speeches to community and consumer groups, briefings with financial analysts, and in the company’s own ongoing employee and shareholder communications. At each of these sites, this core Halcion position was repeated, elaborated, and articulated in a manner deemed most appropriate for the relevant others at the site. (Berger, 1999, p. 196)

Berger described the strategies and tactics devised to ensure such efforts were effective, which involved capitalising on existing opportunities but also creating “new opportunities and sites for representation to articulate particular message frames within the overall position frame and then to repeat these articulations” (1999, p. 196). The positioning strategy also required that supportive coalitions be built with science writers
and medical experts “to fight the Halcion war in two primary spheres: in the media and in the offices of regulatory decision makers” (p. 198). The strategy also involved positioning the lone Dutch scientist and his supporters as “scientifically insignificant and even disinformative” (p. 199). In terms of the success of this long global campaign, Berger (1999) states that it depends on one’s point of view but in terms of the company’s success, the drug revenues were pleasing and in 1997, eighteen years after Upjohn had developed its positioning strategy, the Institute of Medicine Committee of the National Academy of Sciences “concluded that ‘the sleeping pill Halcion, if taken as prescribed, is safe and effective’ ... a pronouncement that bears strong similarities to Upjohn’s framing statement of 1979” (p. 202). Public relations activity such as that described by Berger (1999) throws into question the differentiation between campaign and program as proposed by McElreath (1997). It seems clear that the Upjohn Halcion case study fits with the campaign definition of having specific goals to achieve such as increasing sales and influencing legislation, but the timeframe for achieving them was not fixed – it was a campaign in response to an extended crisis. Interestingly, Berger does not believe this protracted timeframe changes the kind of public relations practices that may be used but may alter the intensity with which they are practised (1999, p. 200). This raises a question as to whether some new defining concept for campaign work is needed to accommodate these longer term programs. Most campaigns examined in this review occurred over much shorter timeframes.

From a theoretical perspective, Berger (1999) used the campaign case study to support his defining of organisational public relations. He demonstrated through the processes of distortion and legitimation, and the aspect of terrain of struggle, that public relations as organisational representation is “neither strictly functional nor intentionally symmetrical; the character is ideological, and it is this that substantially shapes and governs public relations practices and processes and governs their existence” (p.191). Berger’s analysis of both two-way symmetrical and functional applied approaches to public relations leads him to conclude that both ignore ideological aspects (p. 188) which see public relations as a process intended to construct ideological world view, defined here as a self-interested and partial representation of the world based on a particular set of beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and objectives. (p. 186)
He acknowledges that the field may not embrace this thinking given the polemic nature of the term ideology but points out that public relations needs to examine the “ideological roots...of [its] organizational practices and processes ... as corporations enhance their already considerable economic and political power in a increasingly globalized and mediated world” (p. 202). This in his opinion would lead to a better understanding of the nature of ideological power and the role public relations plays in society but it is clear that such an approach to defining public relations in terms of it being a credible and suitable subject to teach in academic settings might be challenging. Berger’s ideas do however remove the veneer of mutual benefit and understanding that is prevalent in normative definitions and could enable practices and processes to be better understood.

2.6.6 A campaign to influence public opinion to support war

A campaign aimed at favourably influencing world public opinion towards the war in Iraq was mounted by the US administration. A study by Jo, Shim and Jung (2008) undertook a survey of college students from the USA, UK and South Korea to ascertain their views towards the war as a way of evaluating the effectiveness or otherwise of the campaign. This approach aligns with examining media coverage effects on audiences with which Danowski (2008, p. 287) suggested most campaign scholarship is concerned. Jo et al. (2008) wrote that “the war against Iraq is a global public relations campaign allowing the U.S. administration to build a favorable public opinion against terrorism and to remove Saddam Hussein” (p. 64). The results of their study showed that the U.S. respondents perceived the war more favourably than that of Britons and South Koreans. “Overall the public of the U.S. and the U.K. formed similar evaluations of the war; whereas South Korean opinion was lay [sic]on the opposite side of the continuum” (p. 65). The conclusion included the statement, “the failure to get favorable public opinion in abroad [sic] may have been increased through propaganda rather than through the public relations campaign” (p. 65) which raised the question of where the boundaries of propaganda and PR campaigns are:

It appears that the distinctions between propaganda and public relations within the psychology of persuasion often become blurred during international power struggles. The war experience may misrepresent the value of public relations,
mainly focusing on propagandistic metaphors and generating intentional framing in the mass media. (p. 65)

This study concluded that opinion was favourably influenced within the USA and to some extent in the UK, but outside the USA the campaign failed to generate favourable opinions and that this was due to the fact that the tenet of paying “attention to the voices or concerns of the public in order to build mutual relationships” (Jo et al., 2008, p. 65) was not followed. The authors’ main assertion was that by not taking the approach to build mutually beneficial relationships, the US administration was not in a position to hear relevant information:

Failure to listen to the public’s voices may often yield unwanted outcomes such as self-serving information searches instead of mutually beneficial gathering of facts. (p. 65)

It is unclear from the research what the authors are recommending should happen as a result of their study and it raises more questions than it answers in terms of whether the US administration should not bother with such campaigns at all for audiences in countries like South Korea, or whether they should undertake more audience research in such areas so that messages can be better framed. There is no evidence that the campaign was ever designed to build mutual relationships and from the study’s description of the US administration’s public relations campaign, the main approach in the campaign was to influence the nature of coverage of the war in the media. The findings suggest that students from the UK and USA had similar readings of the media messages but that the South Korean students focused on what they saw as boasting, the killing of innocent civilians and what amounted to US tyranny. This was obviously not what the USA had been aiming for. This study suggests that organisations should be wary about the potential for media campaigns that appear to be aligned with a one-way press agent/publicity model to generate meanings among some audience members that are far from those intended. It is evident that such an exercise by the US Administration was highly ideological in nature when viewed through the theoretical lens described by Berger (1999) but this campaign lost the battle for meaning construction on the “terrain of struggle” – which Berger indicates can happen when, in spite of any power advantages of the commissioning organisation, “the array of checks and balances” (p.
such as the influence of media interpretations of representations and the counterveiling influence of social movement groups etc., intervenes and powerful organisations “do not always win” (p. 201).

2.6.7 Breast cancer awareness campaign

Another campaign that looked at the media effects on audiences was the first ever breast cancer awareness campaign conducted in the United Arab Emirates (Khaja & Creedon, 2010). This campaign aimed to increase awareness, alleviate fear of consultation and treatment, inform men about the issues, and promote and teach self-examination to women. The campaign was based on research and it included communication tactics such as having a catchy slogan, “United Against Breast Cancer, We Will Win”, and developing “Arabic and English press releases, magazine articles, media interviews, videos shown at universities and the hospital, advertising, billboards, shopping mall events and a Pink Ribbon Day” (Khaja & Creedon, 2010, p. 2). A survey of 500 women was conducted and the study found that although 86% of women were aware of the campaign, its success in terms of attitude and behavioural change was quite poor. Respondents were asked what the most important communication message was. The results for the message about having a yearly breast examinations were 20% (the highest) and for yearly mammograms and regular self-examination were 10% or less. Researchers concluded that more culturally acceptable communication was required in such campaigns in order to achieve better results. This raises questions as to what would be done differently – more research to find out what tactics might be more culturally acceptable or a different campaign approach. It can be seen that this campaign followed a standard RACE (research, action, communication and evaluation) approach to its development and implementation. It epitomises the two-way asymmetrical model of public relations in that the campaign used “what is known from social science theory and research about attitudes and behaviour to persuade publics to accept the organization’s point of view and to behave in a way that supports the organization” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 22). However, the results indicate that the success of this campaign was limited in terms of target publics adopting the organisation’s point of view regarding breast cancer detection or adopting the actual breast examination behaviour. The researchers in this exercise were trying to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign strategies and to make recommendations regarding a future campaign.
This essentially addresses applying Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) two way asymmetrical model more effectively. What is interesting is that the authors stated that

gradual persuasion is often used in order for UAE government officials to transmit messages and achieve wide and diverse social system communication. Also, gifts, free services, visits of officials and elite television appeals are resources of considerable interest and are used. (Khaja & Creedon, 2010, p. 1)

It is not articulated by the authors as to why this type of approach was not used instead of the one chosen. There was no questioning as to whether a campaign was an appropriate response in this cultural context, the recommendation being that strategies and tactics used next time be based on better research so they will be more culturally appropriate.

2.6.8 The Gardisil vaccination campaign

In another health education-related public relations campaign which aimed to increase vaccination of young teenaged women with the anti-cervical cancer drug, Gardisil, Vardeman-Winter (2010) took a cultural studies approach to help determine “what meanings does a teen girl public make about an HPV/cervical cancer campaign?” (p. 2). The cultural studies approach was seen by the researcher as being able to “help campaign designers better understand how publics make decisions” (p.1). Vardeman-Winter used a combination of interviews and focus groups to ascertain the views pertaining to the campaign of thirty-nine American teenage girls aged 13-18 years from a cross-section of racial backgrounds. The girls recruited for the study were also shown a television commercial promoting the vaccination that carried the key message of the campaign: “I wanna be one less” (Vardeman-Winter, 2010, p2). The study found that factors such as “reaffirmations of self-image, cancer knowledge ambiguity, barriers to routine screenings, and social differences” created the context by which these girls made all decisions (p.3). Vardeman-Winter concluded that “these factors often times compound one another, which makes segmentation of publics limited as well as publics’ abilities to seek information and act on their health needs extremely difficult.” (p. 3). It was interesting to note that only 12 out of the 39 girls in the study had been wholly or partially vaccinated, although another 18 indicated some intention to do so. This could
indicate that to date the campaign has had limited success in terms of the pharmaceutical company’s attempts to get girls vaccinated with their drug, Gardisil. The campaign as described by Vardeman-Winter appeared to fall into either the press agent/publicity or two-way asymmetrical models of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 21-22). The findings of this research could be used by the pharmaceutical company to perhaps better target their future campaign efforts or could be a catalyst to re-think the promotional campaign approach and perhaps consider a more appropriate strategy for this target public. From a research perspective, it can be concluded that taking a cultural studies approach delivered richer information than that delivered by the survey method used in the previous study discussed (i.e. the US Administration’s media campaign re the Iraq war), but it is clear that such an approach would be cost prohibitive for most organisations if conducted on a larger scale, indicating that perhaps for campaign design purposes a combination of both methods would be appropriate.

2.6.9 My NHL campaign

This research reports on a campaign case study examining promotional efforts undertaken by the National Hockey League (NHL) “to promote itself to both fervent and casual fans” (Batchelor & Formentin, 2008, p. 156). The campaign aimed to rebrand and promote hockey after a season was lost due to a dispute between the national body and players. Multiple external public relations and marketing agencies were contracted to assist with the campaign’s delivery, and publics included not only external ones but also internal publics who were seen as traditionalists and not inclined to embrace change. For external audiences, a “series of advertisements and related promotional materials were [sic] designed to send a central, unified message” (Batchelor & Formentin, 2008, p. 158), that promised to deliver great hockey for fans and sponsors. Batchelor and Formentin (2008) argue that it may be around the concept of a single brand position that public relations and marketing may share a boundary and that within this context, “public relations is actually the dominant vehicle used to communicate with stakeholders” (p. 147).

The campaign effort included national material developed by the national body but also material that could be tailored around the overall campaign themes and messages to local teams and fan bases – it was designed to remind people that hockey still existed
and to “prod fans into watching” (Batchelor & Formentin, 2008, p. 158). The campaign was based on extensive research which indicated that if the NHL delivered the right product, the fans would return to the games.

The opinion on whether the campaign was a success varies according to the researchers. Ticket sales and television viewer numbers increased but overall television ratings fell and other evaluations were collected through somewhat fragmented efforts such as some content analysis of media reports about the campaign. Batchelor and Formentin (2008) conclude that if the NHL is to build on the success of this campaign and make it “shine”, attracting new fans and rising “back to a position among the “Big Four” sports, it must continue to create attention-grabbing initiatives while aggressively promoting the league, players, and the game that it has worked so hard to improve” (p. 160). This campaign is clearly situated in the model of public relations which is using research with publics to hone its communication initiatives to better reach target publics i.e. two-way asymmetrical. It was based around a central theme and supporting key messages and it could be presented, to students for example, as a typical example of a campaign that has used the RACE approach to campaign design.

2.6.10 Campaign to restore the image in the USA of Saudi Arabia post 9/11

This campaign was launched in response to what the Saudi government saw as an image crisis in the post 9/11 era where research of American citizens’ views of Saudi had plummeted such that many Americans saw Saudi Arabia as supporting terrorism and not supporting the USA war in Iraq. Zhang and Benoit (2004) report that the Saudi government spent more than $5 million by the first September 11 anniversary and “hired prominent U.S. public relations firms, law firms, consultants and a media-buying firm” (p. 162). The campaign employed American political campaign techniques to restore its image: hiring a publicity team, being more accessible to the press, sending officials on speaking tours, cultivating research organizations and polling Americans on their opinions. The Saudi government ran hundreds of television and radio spots in America, placing ads in publications like People magazine and Stars & Stripes. (Zhang & Benoit, 2004, p. 162)
Zhang and Benoit (2004, p. 162) applied Benoit’s Image Restoration Theory (which argues that there are five general options available for self-defence: denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification) to analyse the message strategies of the Saudi image restoration campaign after September 11 and concluded that the campaign was partially effective. The researchers used rhetorical criticism which they stated, allows for the examination of the relationship of context and message, unlike content analysis, and enables the critic to make a judgement of the importance of the elements of the message – such as “placement, development, and relationship of ideas in the persuasive message(s)” (p. 163). Texts from the Saudi government website and the US media were analysed and elements of the image repair strategy were identified including wide use of “denial” by the Saudi government in regards to supporting terrorism and this denial was supported by statements by the then President of the USA. Components of “evading responsibility” and “reducing offensiveness” through the attacking of accusers and bolstering were also identified by the researchers as major components of the image repair effort, whereas components such as defeasibility, good intentions and differentiation “received scant emphasis in the defense” (p. 166). It was concluded that this image repair effort was partially effective with Zhang and Benoit stating that the case study “shows that countries can have modest success improving their reputation through the use of image repair discourse” (p. 165). Again this research aligns with Danowski’s (2008) assertion that most campaign research examines the media effect on audiences. It was unclear from the article whether the firms hired in the USA by the Saudi Government performed research to inform their campaign development. As such this campaign can be classified as an example of the press agent/publicity model of public relations where “practitioners spread the faith of the organization involved” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p.21) although it would stand to reason that the hired US firms would have conducted research among the US citizenry to help tailor messages. In this case, it would sit within the two-way asymmetrical model of practice. In applying Benoit’s Image Restoration Theory, the researchers can be seen to have explored another dimension of message design in a quest to construct particular meanings among target audiences.
2.6.11 The GASP anti-smoking campaign

Stokes and Rubin (2010) analysed a campaign run by a Colorado anti-smoking activist group, GASP, against tobacco company, Phillip Morris. What is notable about this campaign is that there was absolutely no desire to compromise or accommodate any of the views of Phillip Morris. GASP had the stated goal of extinguishing all Phillip Morris’s smoking related activities, a situation which is not accounted for in two-way or symmetrical models of public relations and necessitated the consideration of a new theoretical approach to such campaign activity (Stokes & Rubin, 2010). The researchers used “rhetorical criticism” (p. 32) to analyse the language used in 500 documents retrieved from the Tobacco Archive and 300 documents made available through the GASP organisation, in order to explore “the dominant themes and ways that each group’s interests were served by discourse” (p. 32).

The analysis of the documents side-by-side revealed “patterns of Phillip Morris thrusts apperceived and then thwarted by an activist parry” (Stokes & Rubin, 2010, p. 34). In the campaign, each side was reported as having attempted to form symmetrical relationships with three key publics but having maintained an adversarial relationship with each other, with each strategy showing “the organizations working to respond to what each public might find important” but evincing “a clear effort to not change goals or behaviors in light of their adversary’s position” (p. 35). Both sides developed messages that tried to align with the core values of Colorado residents – Phillip Morris drove personal and liberty and autonomy themes and GASP drove home citizens’ rights to breathe clean air, emphasising that they didn’t object to smokers but did object to the smoke (p. 36). Both sides worked with their internal audiences to prepare them to defend against arguments from the opponent. Stokes and Rubin (2010) stated that this showed that “asymmetrical techniques are again evident, as the organizations relied on the other side’s position to bolster support” (p. 37).

Both sides were shown to appeal to the bottom line of the hospitality industry. GASP used television commercials, produced a Dining Guide booklet, a 25 Reasons brochure for eating establishments, a sticker for use in smoke-free environments and provided scripts for members with suggested wording to use in restaurants to drive consumer demand for non-smoking eateries. Phillip Morris similarly produced materials but these
tacitly promoted that if eateries went “non-smoking” that smokers would take their business to those establishments that still accommodated smokers. The company also used restaurant associations to bolster its fight against non-smoking legislation. According to Stokes and Rubin (2010), these tactics provided “more evidence of the sides using knowledge of each other for competitive, rather than collaborative, advantage” (p. 38). GASP claim that their campaign contributed to the advancement of the non-smoking agenda in Colorado - “although Excellence Theory argues that excellent organizations employ two-way symmetrical public relations to balance the needs of their organization and their publics, this analysis has shown benefits that occur from not accommodating some publics” (Stokes & Rubin, 2010, pp. 43-44). This relates to the efforts described by the authors that although organisations work to respond to what each public might find important, each organisation “evinces a clear effort to not change goals or behaviors in light of their adversary’s position” (p. 35), i.e., they are attempting not to be forcibly repositioned by the opponent. This research on the campaign strategies employed by GASP and Phillip Morris shows evidence of a variety of public relations strategies being applied throughout the campaign, mostly in a concurrent fashion. It shows that messaging and promotional tactics were being used alongside the development of strategic relationships with those who would provide further support for their efforts. The approaches to GASP and Phillip Morris to each other remained adversarial throughout the campaign period. Both campaigns can be seen to use techniques that could be regarded as symmetrical and asymmetrical but they could not be said to fit into the “mixed motive” model of public relations where parties work as “cooperative protagonists in the struggle to satisfy their own self interests, with the knowledge that satisfaction is best accomplished through satisfying each other’s interests as well” (Plowman, 2007, p. 87). Instead, Stokes and Rubin (2010) propose an alternative rhetorical theory of activist public relations to account for groups that refuse to accommodate opponents within which “activists rhetorically stimulate asymmetrical approaches that can be effective in winning public support against deceptive, probably harmful, organizations” (p. 32). What is notable here is that this approach is very similar to that used in the other campaigns reviewed where asymmetrical approaches to communication are dominant. This lends weight to Berger’s (1999) argument that such efforts work to construct an ideological world view.
2.6.12 Campaign against Genetic Engineering

In this article, Henderson (2005) discussed "how a coalition of environmental interest groups called “GE Free” campaigned to increase public awareness and to influence government policy about issues surrounding genetic engineering. The coalition was formed in 2001 in response to the findings of a Royal Commission on Genetic Modification and it “commenced a deliberate and unified political campaign for a genetic engineering-free New Zealand both to represent the viewpoints of the wide member base and to generate further support for their position” (p. 127). The campaign took place between July and October 2001 and argued against the introduction of commercial field trials of genetically modified products in New Zealand (p. 118). Henderson reports that the campaign centred on identity management in which the strategies were drawn from the tension around the multiple identities of New Zealanders in terms of their tourism promotional campaigns situating the country as “pure” and “paradise” but also as a modern technologically advanced economy. Three main strategies were employed in the campaign – “communicating with publics in an unmediated way” including the provision of factual information through websites and public meetings; “second, encouraging public lobbying of government” by “sending letters to local media, or phoning newstalk radio programs, and by sending preprinted postcards to five ministers”; and “third, creating media events to gain media attention” (p. 127). Three key messages permeated the campaign and these were to ban all field trials and commercial releases of genetically engineered organisms into the environment, to keep GE-foods out of the country, and to restrict genetic engineering to contained laboratories. Henderson undertook

a critical discourse analysis to analyse the texts, the discursive practices (the ways in which messages were communicated to publics), and the social practices (the ideologies underlying the strategies evident in the campaign). (p. 126)

This qualitative methodology sought to examine rich data to gain new insights into the discursive social construction of genetic modification by activist groups, emphasising the role of language in constructing meaning (Henderson, 2005). This approach, involving “a combination of document analysis and semistructured interviews” (p. 126),
enabled her to capture the campaign’s complexities. The GE Free campaign was “relatively successful from a public relations perspective” (p. 133) in that relationships with key publics were established, and concerned parties were given “a voice” and were encouraged to participate in the debate. It was “partially successful in influencing government policy” with the voluntary moratorium on genetic engineering commercial field trials being extended, ensuring that there could be “continuing debate about the regulatory environment” and contestation of “the dominant discourses about genetic engineering” (p. 133). The campaign used techniques to undertake what could be classified as one-way press agent/publicity type communication campaign but also mixed this with opportunities for dialogue and for establishing and developing relationships with supportive stakeholders. This approach echoes the anti-tobacco campaign strategy of being dialogic and relationship focused with those who can enhance the campaign effort but remaining adversarial with the opponent. The campaign could be described as having striven to construct a position against genetic engineering and then used strategies to develop and promulgate messages which would support and strengthen the positioning. Again, Berger’s (1999) contextualisation of public relations as a means of constructing a particular world view can be seen as relevant in this case. The GE campaign can be seen as an exercise to represent the organisation’s claims that would secure stakeholder attention and secure support in what amounted to a complex and competitive site where public relations efforts to construct and manage meaning were paramount (Berger, 1999, p. 200).

2.7 What these campaigns tell us about practice and theory

2.7.1. The purpose of public relations campaigns

The most significant unifying point is that all campaigns intervened at a time where identified groups of people, that may or may not have had an existing relationship with the organisation, held a view or performed a behaviour that was not aligned to that which the organisation wanted, i.e. regulators weren’t approving sleeping tablets for sale, citizens didn’t hold the right attitude towards the Iraq war, women weren’t self-examining for breast cancer, fans weren’t attending or watching hockey games, government agencies weren’t regulating genetic engineering correctly, legislators weren’t legislating against smoking in eating areas and so on. It can be seen that the organisations’ desire for a change in people’s views and/or behaviours arose from a
wide variety of drivers. According to Botan (1997), this is typical of strategic communication campaigns in public relations where the common purpose, no matter what the stated purpose of the campaign, is to influence “individuals groups, organizations, even whole societies” (p. 189). There was little evidence to support any purpose other than the campaigns were all trying to get targeted publics and audiences to construct particular meanings related to developing attitudes or behaviours that would assist the organisation that commissioned the public relations to achieve its stated goals.

2.7.2 The beneficiaries of public relations campaigns

As mutually beneficial outcomes is a central tenet of the normative two-way symmetrical theoretical approach to public relations, one of the key factors that must be addressed in these campaigns is the question as to whose benefit or advantage was the public relations campaign employed. In this review, although there was scant evidence that organisations were striving for symmetrically beneficial outcomes, this does not indicate that targeted publics and audiences were not in receipt of some benefits as a result of some of the campaigns. The campaigns were across a range of sectors including religious/tourism, commercial, political, activist and health, and it is impossible to define the nature of a singular advantage or benefit that would be applicable across this spectrum – e.g. the pharmaceutical companies want to sell more medicines to maximise profits for shareholders, the health promotion campaigns want to achieve healthier environments and people, and the National Hockey League wants more people to watch the game in order to sell advertising. Ascertaining who benefits from campaigns requires engaging with the evaluation practices of the campaigns.

In public relations generally, campaigns have been found to be focused on evaluating outputs and not outcomes and this is reported as remaining predominant in practice (Xavier, Johnston, Patel, Watson & Simmons, 2005). This is confirmed in recent studies such as that done by Veil, Littlefield and Rowan (2009) who lament that campaign success in US national awards for emergency management campaigns was seen as successful message transmission rather than behavioural change or awareness raising (p. 451). Overall, campaign success may well be as it is reported by Batchelor & Formentin (2008) and Berger (1999) - dependent on whose view is considered. In a campaign such as the anti-smoking campaign (Stokes & Rubin, 2010), GASP could claim success
because anti-smoking laws were introduced into Colorado, but the Phillip Morris tobacco company would view their involvement in the same campaign arena as entirely unsuccessful in terms of its final outcome. If outputs had been the measure of success, Phillip Morris may well have been reported as having had a successful campaign because they produced more documents (Stokes and Rubin, 2010).

Overall, the campaigns reviewed in this study had the outcomes examined rather than the outputs, possibly reflecting both the available resources to conduct evaluation activities and/or the areas of interest to academic researchers as compared to practitioner researchers, whose focus may be somewhat different in terms of reporting campaign results. The range of evaluations in the reviewed campaigns was clearly different, e.g. in the campaign for Spain and Saint James, the level of engagement with the physical shrines, the Catholic religion and the online pilgrimages was a factor in evaluation (Tilson, 2006). The successful outcomes in terms of the organisations conducting the campaigns were reported as driving future campaign development so that continuing increases in visitation would continue into the future. This is quite different to what was being evaluated in the Gardisil study (Vardeman-Winter, 2010) where the focus was on what meanings were being constructed by young women about the vaccination program and how social and cultural factors impacted on this process. This evaluation could be seen as being helpful to the pharmaceutical company in delivering more effective campaigns resulting in more sales but could also be helpful for those working to improve the health outcomes for young women in a wider range of areas – it had wider application than just one pharmaceutical company.

Notably, there is no discussion in the campaign literature reviewed of the ethical component of a campaign being in any way a determinant of success. Given that most campaigns are “monological in nature” and as such are “ethically problematic” (Botan, 1997, p. 200), and campaigns such as those designed to improve public health openly admit to being “designed to manipulate people to do something other than what they were initially inclined to do” (McGuire, 1989, p. 62), this oversight remains challenging. It has only been in recent years that a public relations model that offers a step-by-step process that integrates ethics with existing campaign activity enabling practitioners to “measure, clarify, communicate, and manage an ethical compliance strategy at micro- and macrolevels, transforming ethics from an abstract concern into a
standard reporting line, alongside financial, behavioral, attitudinal, sales, inquiry levels, or any other measurable outcomes in typical public relations campaigns” has been developed (Tilley, 2005, p. 305). However there is little indication, in the most recent literature, that the model or any other systematic approach to ethical considerations has been adopted at all. The campaigns reviewed show how communication has been strategically applied in order that that the mission of the organisation that has commissioned the public relations activity has been advanced, and the ethics of this process have not been addressed. It is envisaged that this doctoral research study may provide the insights into processes and techniques used in campaigns that could indicate where ethical models, such as that proposed by Tilley (2005), could be more readily integrated into the processes and techniques of practice.

Interestingly, the outcomes achieved, as reported in the literature, have not always been as favourable as the commissioning organisation would have wanted. For example, in the Gardisil campaign, Vardeman-Winter (2010) found that less than half of the teenage girls interviewed had been vaccinated; and, in the US Administration’s efforts to cultivate positive views about the War in Iraq, it was found that although partly successful in the USA and UK, results were decidedly lacklustre in South Korea (Jo et al., 2008). However, it appears that less than successful campaigns may be described infrequently, especially outside the academic literature – the most readily accessible source of campaign descriptions are online databases of campaigns submitted to the various awards programs (e.g. PRIA Golden Target Database and the IPRA Golden World Award database) and these by definition are all reported as highly successful campaigns. This may be a serious oversight in terms of the expectations of success that a campaign response to a public relations situation could deliver. It was reassuring to see that in a textbook by Sheehan and Xavier (2009), recently released in Australia, a few less than fully successful campaigns were included to emphasise the value for practitioners of learning from mistakes.

2.7.3 The activities undertaken to achieve desired campaign outcomes

Overall, the strategies reported as being used in the campaigns were primarily promotional in nature, fitting with the one-way press agent/publicity model of public relations and most could be viewed as suasive-type efforts i.e. persuading, influencing
or convincing people to do something or adopt a view. The tactics of developing promotional materials presenting the topic of the campaign in a positive way, developing and disseminating key messages and using selected media to reach publics and audiences were uniformly used across the campaigns. The overriding strategies were built around messaging techniques and an acknowledgement that messages needed to be crafted and disseminated in ways that would reach and resonate with targeted publics and audiences who were not necessarily that interested in engaging with the organisation commissioning the public relations activity. Several of the campaigns referred to attempts to position an organisation or its offering in a particular way but only one campaign (Berger, 1999) articulated in any way what this positioning effort involved. This flagged an area that warranted further investigation. Firstly, however, I will discuss the role of messages in campaign work.

Key messages and “messaging”

It was evident in the reviewed campaigns that media relations/media management, “an important tool in the practitioner’s skill set” (Zoch & Molloida, 2006, p. 280), was one of the most prominent means by which public relations practitioners worked to have target publics and audiences construct the meanings practitioners intended for them. Amongst the variety of media management techniques employed by practitioners, the concept of “messaging” and using key messages emerged repeatedly, although it wasn’t just in media relations that messages were prevalent, but also in materials designed to directly engage publics and audiences. Moloney (2006, p. 131) states that it is an “axiom of communications planning” that “attitudes and behaviours only change after many rounds of messaging”. Hallahan (2000) states that “creating effective messages to reach strategically important audiences is a critical function in public relations” (p. 463) and descriptions of campaign practice support this statement. As Lane (2007) said:

Public relations practitioners and academics know a lot about how to make information flow outwards to publics. They know how to court publicity, how to transmit factual information, and they have well-developed ideas and plenty of practical instruction about how to gather feedback from publics and fine-tune organisational messages to achieve strategic objectives. (p.72)
This supports views such as Pratt (2004) when he stated, when giving examples of successful “talking points”, that “they were not uttered off the cuff, but were planned carefully, presented strategically, and grounded firmly in science” (p.15). It is clear that constructing messages is seen as a vital component of campaigns (Pfau & Parrott, 1993) and some academics have suggested definitions of key messages in a public relations context. For example, Mahoney (2008) states that, “messages are the information that organisations want target publics to know” (p.54). Courtright and Smudde (2010) expand this and see key messages as a component of a strategic communication plan, stating that key messages are comprised of “two basic things”. The first thing is “a theme, thesis or slogan that is the single idea around which all communications revolve” and the second is “copy points that serve as the basic proof or substance for detailed arguments that support the theme/thesis/slogan” (p.66). Several campaigns were reported as being based around key messages (e.g. Henderson, 2005; Zhang & Benoit, 2004) or a slogan (e.g. Khaja & Creedon, 2010; Vardeman-Winter, 2010) or a “central, unified message” (Batchelor & Formentin, 2008 p. 158). Messages can be seen as organisational communication tools working to achieve three goals – to inform, to advocate and to persuade (Pratt, 2004). Evidence of the pursuit of all three of these goals is present in the campaigns. According to Courtright and Smudde (2010), public relations practitioners incorporate key messages into their campaigns and “public relations discourse genres” which include news releases, media advisories, prepared statements, fact sheets, backgrounders, white papers, meetings, speeches, pitch letters, advertorials, reports and websites and this was also evident in the campaigns where specific tactics were discussed (p. 68).

According to Jeffrey, Michaelson and Stacks (2006), since the founding of public relations as a discipline “practitioners have intuitively believed in the power of positive unpaid media to affect the cycle of awareness, knowledge, interest and intent that is needed to achieve behavioral goals” (p. 3). This intuitive belief appears to be based on a mix of anecdote and experience in the main and could be viewed as being underpinned primarily by a media effects model of thinking. Whilst there is no agreement in the wider communication field on a unified theory of media effects, Olson (2001) defines media effects to generally include “any of the psychological or sociological outcomes following mass media consumption” (p. 269), stating that the media can on one hand
have a substantial effect but on the other have a very limited effect, in essence a very “inexact science” (p. 271). In 2006, Jeffrey et al. published a study that explored the link between the volume of media coverage generated by public relations activities and business outcomes. Their findings concluded that media coverage which included at least one of the business’s key messages, rather than simply just mentioning a brand or product name, resulted in a correlating increase in sales. The researchers did not lay claim to proof of causation in any of the cases but stated that it “appears there is a preponderance of evidence that suggests a strong relationship between the two” (p.10). The campaigns reviewed indicate that practitioners subscribe to this way of thinking in terms of their media strategies. There appears to be a link from this way of thinking to the theoretical underpinnings for public relations practice as suggested by Berger (1999), in that public relations practices “occur in a place, the site, in which practices of representation (in the forms of message, images and symbols) meet an ‘other’” (p. 189). The sites, according to Berger, include “locations, forums, channels and contexts wherein virtually every form of human interaction and communication is conducted” and are invariably “congested, with multiple messages and appearances that are contested, fluid, and changing, thereby complicating meaning and understanding” (p. 190). Recognising that the environment into which messages are sent by public relations practitioners is congested, public relations practitioners prepare carefully crafted key messages as part of their campaigns, especially in media relations campaigns or crisis management situations (e.g. Coombs, 2001; Fortunato, 2000; Lundy & Broussard, 2007). Fairly typical is the advice given by Smudde (2004) for crafting such messages and preparing for an interview with a journalist:

Beyond the basic story, you should also develop a few key messages that you’d like to see in the journalist’s final report. And remember, the journalist will work hard on using your story for the one he/she wants to produce, so your focus on certain messages (even with a little strategic repetition) will help them stand out so they get included in the final piece. When you write key messages, think in terms of sound bites of important ideas that pique journalists’ interest and are easy for journalists’ audiences to grasp. Key messages also give you fodder for what to say in answer to the usual end-of-interview question, ‘Is there anything else you’d like to say?’ (p. 30).
Embedded in such advice is an array of underlying assumptions and understandings about how and why key messages work. The campaigns examined suggest that practitioners are working from within a similar framework of assumptions and understandings. The type of advice provided by Smudde (2004) for practitioners very much supports Moloney’s (2006) definition of public relations as “weak propaganda” which he equates with “manipulative communications…with a selection of supportive facts and some appeals to emotion in the message, presented many times without the source being identified”. He states that the

intention of the PR message producers towards their audiences is to construct messages that are manipulative and propagandistic. They are messages of ‘tell’ rather than ‘say’; constructed to get compliance from their audiences. (Moloney, 2006, p. 41)

We live in a “promotional culture” which Moloney (2006) defines as “when the majority of messages circulating in it are self-interested” (p.32). There is little in the campaigns that would contradict this assertion but the question of what comprises self interest is raised when campaigns are run for what appears to be the greater good of particular communities or populations e.g. the breast self examination promotional campaign (Khaja & Creedon, 2010). It was unclear from the literature exactly who was funding or sponsoring the campaign so it is impossible to evaluate motive in this instance. It is clear that this is a necessary component of evaluating the concept of self interest. However, there is evidence in the campaigns that the environment in which messaging and counter-messaging is being undertaken by public relations practitioners is congested with other organisations trying to do the same thing. Moloney (2006) suggests that public relations is “conducive to at least one public good” and that is “the sustained and intense scrutiny by third parties of public wrangling amongst PR voices” which “can produce more accurate fact and truth statements in public life” (p.39). However, he goes on to point out that “while accurate fact and truth statements may or may not be delivered by PR messages, their accuracy and truth components will invariably only be demonstrated to third parties after competitive public challenges from other messages” (p.39). There is some evidence in the campaigns examined to suggest that practitioners expect to have their messages challenged and that they apply resources and effort to minimise or circumvent these challenges. The evidence
presented in the literature indicates that the majority of campaign strategies and tactics were designed after research had been conducted with identified publics and audiences but because there were few details of what the research entailed in the reviewed articles, it can only be assumed that such research assisted in practitioners’ efforts to tailor messages and attempt to circumvent challenges.

Positioning in public relations campaigns

Four of the nine campaigns examined mentioned the concept of positioning in public relations (Batchelor & Formentin, 2010; Berger, 1999; Henderson, 2005; Stokes & Rubin, 2010) however, it was only Berger (1999) who in any way explained or explored what this pertained to, the others seemingly assuming that readers would know what was meant. Berger’s (1999) description and the fact that a significant number of campaigns were mentioning positioning but providing little insight into what this activity involved provided the impetus to explore the phenomena further.

The Encyclopedia of Public Relations defines positioning as something that “depends on how a consumer compares a product to the competitor’s product” (Pompper, 2004, p. 629), however, this definition does not define positioning in the context it was being used in the reviewed campaigns and is embedded in a sales-focused marketing model. Positioning as described in the public relations campaigns studied in this research project indicates it is something quite different, albeit not entirely unrelated. It is in the field of marketing that models of positioning invariably address how consumers perceive products in a given market with a view to increasing sales. Marketing literature on positioning is mostly found in the corporate communications or marketing communications publications and primarily relates to brand and product positioning or to identity, profile and image (e.g. Butler & Harris, 2009; Egan, 2007; Holm, 2006; Knox & Bickerton, 2003; Porter, 2008;). The concept of positioning in marketing is centered on the “4 Ps” of marketing – product, place, price and promotion (Egan, 2007) and primarily builds on the work of Porter (1980; 2008, pp. 44 - 45) and Ries and Trout (1981). Porter (1980) outlined guidelines for broad positioning for companies focusing on either product differentiation, being the lowest cost product or being a niche product, and this model offers little for public relations campaigns. He discusses positioning in terms of “wooing customers from established positions or drawing new customers into
the market (2008, p. 44). Ries and Trout (1981) define positioning as starting with a product, such as:

A piece of merchandise, a service, a company, an institution, or even a person. Perhaps yourself. But positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect. That is, you position the product in the mind of a prospect. (p.2)

They state further that:

The basic approach of positioning is not to create something new and different, but to manipulate what’s already up there in the mind, to retie the connections that already exist. (p.5)

The marketing literature on positioning is extensive, most often drawing from the original propositions put forward by Ries and Trout (1981), but focusing almost exclusively on increasing sales of products and services. O’Shaunessy and Butler (2009) state that “many in marketing regard positioning as how to formulate a message in advertising” (p. 231) For example, Stanton, Miller, Layton and Rix (1995) state that “a position is the image that a product or organisation occupies in a consumer’s mind relative to other products in the same category” (p. 92) and Rossiter and Bellman (2005) state that “brand positioning is an attempt to create and maintain a unique representation of the brand in customers’ minds, a representation that is expected to stimulate choice of that brand” (p. 42).

While there is some surface applicability of this view of positioning for some public relations campaigns, it fails to provide a useful conceptualization beyond marketing communications, and even in this specialty, doesn’t account for many of the circumstances that practitioners work with in campaigns across differing sectors. It is notable however, that there are moves within marketing theory to apply semiotic approaches such as Derridean deconstruction to positioning (Baines, Fill & Page, 2008; O’Shaunessy & Baines, 2009). O’Shaunessy and Baines (2009) have developed a positioning triad which can be applied to texts to assess the semiotic strategy of the authors with a view to interrogating their intentions and this may prove to have some
Another interesting view of positioning is Chew’s (2005) work on the role of strategic positioning for not-for-profit organizations which focuses on the need for differentiation from other organizations in the quest for funds. She identified that much of the literature related to this sector also contextualised positioning along the lines of the commercial marketing literature. Seeing a lack of guidance for this sector in the literature, Chew (2005) put forward a model “comprising of three interrelated components: choice of target audience/segments to serve, choice of generic positioning strategy, and positioning dimensions to differentiate the organization/offerings from other service providers” (p.6-7). She identified positioning dimensions as including a unique combination of quality service, benefits, responsiveness, speed to market and low price. Although of interest to the charitable fundraising sector, and possibly the marketing communications sector, its relevance to the wider public relations field appears limited.

Roper’s (2005a) examination of identity and positioning in a political context found that political parties and candidates were constantly altering their identities and that voters were “identifying themselves with the discursive constructions of their potential representatives” (p. 142). Roper stated that the evidence in her study “strongly proposed that discursive repositioning is a key function of public relations” (2005a, p. 145). Although Roper’s work specifically explored the political sector, she did propose that it had broader application:

If a market place were to be theorised as having the same attributes as a political field, a public relations professional would do well to consider the range of positions available within that marketplace and the extent to which consumers can identify with and thus legitimise a position taken. (p. 146)

Although Roper (2005a) herself did not make the connection, it can be seen that her analysis indicates that public relations practitioners are working within the broad parameters of Ries and Trout’s (1981) definition, trying to “to manipulate what’s already up there in the mind, to retie the connections that already exist” (p.5):
The discourse technologists who construct political discourses use data from opinion polls, focus groups and demographic sciences to articulate campaign messages with voter discourses and concerns. (Roper, 2005a, p. 142)

Moffitt’s (1994) discussion of Stuart Hall’s articulation model of meaning is helpful in furthering understanding of Roper’s statement in that meaning is not only determined by someone’s position in terms of social, political or gender factors but is also determined by multiple factors (that could include race, class, work and family, various environmental, cultural and historical factors, etc.) intersecting, or articulating, and thus creating the possibility at each intersection of a factor over determining the others to impact on what the meaning is at any moment. Roper (2005a) states that practitioners must be aware of the positions taken or that are likely to be taken by opposition parties or candidates. This elucidates the importance of stakeholder analysis both in the campaign planning and monitoring stages. Wu (2007) has been working on a widely applicable model “to identify the stakeholders and position them into a dynamic public relations context”, because he has identified that within the public relations field, people have used the term “stakeholder” uncritically and that scholarship within the field related to stakeholders has lagged behind other fields such as public policy, marketing and management. Wu (2007) states that the underlying reason for stakeholder analysis is to identify, position, understand and predict those conflicting and often contentious relationships among various constituents. If everyone shares the identical point of view with each other in a community, there is no need to conduct public relations practice in the first place. (p. 417)

He states further that “one of the real objectives of stakeholder analysis should be to construct and position the interrelations and interactions of different stakes as well as their holders” (Wu, 2007 p. 417), which highlights to the practitioner the need for a positioning strategy and underpins why research should always be the starting point of public relations campaign planning.

Wang’s (2007) work on the effects of priming, framing and positioning on corporate social responsibility activities (CSR), although not examining positioning as such,
sheds light on how public relations practitioners could work more strategically to position publics in relation to a wider scope than CSR. Wang states that “public relations practitioners must assure that the structure of the communications themselves are primed or framed properly to facilitate favorable attitudes” (2007, p. 141). He states that:

In developing programs, public relations professionals fundamentally operate as prime and frame strategists, who strive to determine how situations, attributes, actions, and issues related to CSR practices should be communicated to publics that have different positions to achieve favorable outcomes for clients. Strategic uses of priming, framing, and position are perhaps the most important strategic choices made in a public relations effort. (p. 141)

His analysis of the effects of priming and framing and how these are impacted by a person’s position held give a detailed insight into how practitioners could work with these two strategies to achieve intended outcomes for their campaigns. This again relates to trying “to manipulate what’s already up there in the mind, to retie the connections that already exist” (Ries & Trout, 1981, p. 5). It also aligns with attempts by practitioners to construct “zones of meaning” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 55) wherein actions are undertaken to support positioning such as priming, framing, key message development and message dissemination. These are undertaken in ways that are interpretable by audiences in terms of narratives that are operating in the communities into which the messages are being sent (Heath, 2001a, p. 47-48). Hallahan (1999) also made the link between framing and positioning with framing focusing attention on the elements within the frame, effectively “delimiting the subject matter” (p.207). He described framing as a process not just of inclusion but also of exclusion and of adding emphases to specific elements. This shows the strategic nature of positioning and sheds light on some of the ways that public relations works to co-construct particular meanings in the minds of publics and audiences, especially, it seems, through the use of messaging techniques.

Waymer and Heath’s (2007) work identified framing as a tool used to both position an issue and reposition opposing views, even if those with opposing views didn’t want to be repositioned. They made a link between the position taken, the framing of an issue
and the ability to reposition others, thus enabling other story frames to be heard and other actions to be taken. This is an example of the type of positioning that cannot be adequately explained by the marketing conceptualization. In all the above explorations of positioning it appears that the underlying premise, proposed by Ries and Trout (1981) of working to construct meaning in the minds of people and making the connections that tie new concepts to those that are already known, is still at the crux of any notion of positioning.

With marketing-oriented definitions of positioning deemed inadequate, the challenge then becomes defining positioning in a public relations context. As detailed previously, Berger described this process of positioning as a:

- a simple but particular representation of events, a company-constructed worldview, which subsequently would anchor and frame all Halcion-related communications (e.g. news releases, advertisement, medical and governmental presentations, and interviews). (1999, p. 195)

Only one specific, non case-related, public relations positioning definition was found (Motion, 1997) and this definition takes a discourse approach, stating that:

- …positioning is a subjectifying process of locating and being located within discourse sites or spaces…involves the struggle to create what may be known and how it may be known….Positioning may be either a strategic manoeuvre or ploy by an individual, or the result of the discourses one is situated within as a subject of particular institutional relations, power relations, and social relations. (p. 7)

As the evaluation that may have been undertaken by the practitioners was not detailed in most of the reviewed campaigns, it is difficult to determine whether the process as detailed by Motion (1997) is what has taken place. The evaluation which was reported focused on the amount and nature of media coverage and to a lesser degree on the level of attitudinal change among targeted publics and audiences and the success or otherwise of sought after legislative changes. This lack of data indicated that this was an area that my doctoral research should explore further.
2.7.4 The theoretical orientation towards public relations practice in descriptions of campaign work

Several of the scholars (Berger, 1999; Henderson, 2005; Stokes & Rubin, 2010; Tilson, 2006; Zhang & Benoit, 2004) used the campaign as a site for the development or examination of theoretical concepts and not just as a means to describe practice and its effects. There is little in the reviewed campaigns which provides evidence that two-way symmetrical approaches to public relations are being practiced. This could either support an argument that such a normative theory is inappropriate to describe campaigns as practiced or could indicate that a campaign may be an inappropriate response to a communication situation/problem as was shown in the discussion of the case study by Lane (2007).

Overall, it can be seen that there were two key aspects in the reviewed campaigns that must be accounted for in any theoretical approach. The first is that the environment in which campaigns are implemented is a contested space, congested with competing messages, in which public relations practitioners must apply a strategic approach if they are to achieve their intended goals. If the environment where campaigns was not a contested space, there would logically be no need for campaigns. The second aspect that must be accounted for is the construction of meaning, and specifically, the construction of the intended meanings of the organisation that has commissioned the public relations campaign e.g. that St James is integral to the identity of Spain (Tilson, 2006); that Halcion tablets are safe when used as directed (Berger, 1999); that the War in Iraq was justified (Jo et al., 2008); that hockey games are worth watching (Batchelor & Formentin, 2008); that Saudi Arabia does not support terrorist activity (Zhang & Benoit, 2004); that Gardisil vaccination is good for teenage girls (Vardeman-Winter, 2010); that breast self-examination should be undertaken (Khaja & Creedon, 2010); that eating establishments in Colorado should be smoke-free (Stokes & Rubin, 2010) and that genetic engineering may not be the best way forward for New Zealand (Henderson, 2005).

The concept of contested space

The concept of a site wherein public relations seeks to operate with strategic intent is identified by Berger (1999) as one of the fundamental characteristics that must be
accounted for in conceptualising public relations. It can be seen that in public relations, the concept of contested space is not a physical space as may be the case in a military operation, but the space wherein meaning is constructed, where meaning is managed in all kinds of interactions with internal and external stakeholders (Zerfass & Huck, 2007). Berger (1999) describes what takes place in this contested site as being when “practices of representation (in the forms of messages, images, and symbols) meet an ‘other’” (p. 189). His description of sites includes the locations, forums, channels and contexts wherein virtually every form of human interaction and communication is conducted and he points out, that organisations are most often practising public relations in multiple sites simultaneously (p. 190). This was supported in the reviewed campaigns where public relations activities were seen to be occurring in some instances across different countries, through different channels and toward multiple target publics and audiences. For Berger (1999), these sites are “congested with multiple messages and appearances that are contested, fluid, and changing, thereby complicating meaning and understanding” (p. 190). The descriptions of campaign practice indicate that it is within these contested sites, where meanings can be seen to be constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed (Berger, 1999), that public relations practitioners conduct their campaigns.

Public relations is rarely articulated in the literature or texts of the field as being about “intentional representation in contested sites” as Berger puts forward. However, the concept of there being a site wherein there is some contest over meaning has not been entirely ignored - it just has not been at the centre of how public relations is conceptualised in dominant theoretical discourses of the field. For example, Mayhew (1997) showed no such reluctance to define public relations in terms of the need for strategic approaches in order to be heard in the ‘court’ of public opinion:

> Public relations professionals are not responsible for balanced, objective presentations, or even for scrupulous avoidance of misleading implications, for their role is advocacy before the ‘court’ of public opinion. They are no more bound by detached, disinterested approaches to the facts than attorneys who argue on behalf of clients in courts of law. Providing selected truths in support of clients is entirely appropriate; it is up to the other side to present its own truths. (Mayhew, 1997, p. 203)
Defining public relations in terms of its advocacy role is public relations being conducted in accord with what Mayhew calls, a “concept of honesty” which “implies a framework for a species of objectivity”⁵ (Mayhew, 1997, p. 208). Mayhew’s “‘court’ of public opinion” can be seen to equate with the concept of a contested site where different “sides” present their “own truths” (1997, p. 203). This resonates with Heath’s (2009) rhetorical approach to public relations where he sees organisations seeking to advance their prerogatives in an arena of collective and competing interests through “constructive dialogue, a wrangle in the marketplace of ideas, preferences, choices and influence” (p. 23). Heath is the scholar who has advocated for two decades for this particular approach to public relations.

Although there is some agreement in the public relations field that there is a space where meaning is constructed or contested, it is what happens in this space that gives rise to some disagreement. For Heath (2001a, p. 32), the space wherein a “wrangle of the marketplace” takes place is a space for rhetorical dialogue, although he acknowledges that rhetoric can and is used as a monologue rather than as a dialogue. He advocates using rhetoric in a dialogical way, stating that to do so is ethical as it empowers participants to engage in either private or public dialogue.

Statement and counterstatement – dialogue – constitute the process and shape the content of rhetoric. It is a means for seeking truth, knowledge, good reasons, sound choices, and wise policies. It is ethical because individuals use dialogue to define and advance their interests within the limits or others’ concerns about those matters. (2001a, p. 32)

Heath espouses that it is through dialogue that participants co-create meaning with one side winning because the arguments are more compelling (2001a, p. 35). He places faith

⁵ This approach raises many questions about disclosure, ethics and power, and Weaver, Motion and Roper (2006) point to the fact that lawyers operate to represent their clients in the courts which exist to serve the public interest, and that public relations has no such structure. It could be argued that over the last century the Fourth Estate held this function but clearly with huge changes in media ownership and control in recent decades and the ever decreasing resources devoted to investigative journalism, or even basic fact checking (Davies, 2008), the ability for the Fourth Estate to have a meaningful role in maintaining civil society is in question.
in the marketplace and the public policy arena to test advocated positions and states that “wise advocates know they will be tested” (2001a, p. 36). Heath states that it is only those rhetorical propositions that are ethical and justifiable, that can sustain themselves against the scrutiny of counter-rhetoric. However, there appears to be an underlying assumption that the ability and resources required to participate in this dialogue are available to all those holding or seeking a stake in the matter at hand. Heath warned that audiences would become sceptical if irresponsible and empty communication became the norm and they would “come to doubt the value of using words to solve problems and to create a reasonable society” (2001a, p.37). This warning went on to say:

Slick and facile discourse cannot replace insightful, well-informed statements without harming a society that assumes that thoughts and policies should be shaped through informed discussion. (p. 37)

In all his writing, Heath continues with this theme of what public relations should be doing, seemingly more interested in advocating for the positive aspects of rhetoric and resurrecting respect for rhetorical practice, than examining public relations as practised. Heath advocates a definition of public relations that melds rhetoric and public relations (2009, p. 19). This has seemingly been his quest for many years. For example, in 2001, he stated that

each organisation should strive to be moral and to communicate to satisfy the interests of key markets, audiences, and publics that strive to manage the personal and public resources, make personal and socio-political decisions, and form strong and mutually beneficial relationships (p. 39),

and, in 2005, that rhetoric

consists of a well established body of strategic guidelines regarding how messages need to be provided, structured, framed and worded. (p. 749)

However, with Heath’s insistence that public relations not only can but should work towards making society more fully functioning (2009, p. 7), his work drifts into the mire
of debate around who should benefit from public relations practice. No-one denies that public relations methods and processes can be applied to moral causes and actions, but it is well documented that it has also been applied to achieve morally questionable outcomes (e.g. Burton, 2007; Moloney, 2006). Heath (2009) in the main marginalises the concerns of some scholars (e.g. Parsons, 2004; Pfau & Wan, 2006) about access to the means to conduct public relations activities and where the ethical imperative of public relations sits, placing all faith in correctly practised rhetoric:

...it offers an excellent rationale for understanding the ethical practice of public relations which has the responsibility to serve communities of interest, and not merely one interest, of the organization paying for the professional service. (Heath, 2009, p. 20)

Rhetoric as espoused by Heath (2001a) is one way that people come to know and form opinions and is one way of conceptualising what occurs in the contested space where public relations operates. Berger (1999), on the other hand, conceptualised the contested space as a terrain of struggle wherein ideology is elaborated (p. 193). He states there are three aspects to the terrain of struggle – firstly, are the processes of maintaining ideology, acknowledging that “an ideological world view is unstable and always under construction”; secondly, there is “the competition and interplay for meaning between differing world views, representations and discourses”; and thirdly, there are the “places and sites of contest in which ideologies and representations intersect our minds, social formations, and cultures and play a role in the construction of meaning, values, beliefs, and practices” (p.193). Berger’s interpretation of public relations representation relating to ideology and construction of organisational world view can be seen as diametrically opposed to what Heath (2001a) has put forward. Berger (1999) summarises three aspects of ideology as relevant to public relations:

Firstly, ideology viewed as distortion is a process whereby organizations attempt to create a certain self-interested but nevertheless meaningful representation of the world for their members and others by shaping and limiting world view and construction of reality. Secondly, ideology as legitimation is a process through which organizations attempt to gain justification and consent for their positions, actions, beliefs, and representations of the world from strategic others...Third,
the processes of distortion and legitimation are enacted, and must be sustained, on a terrain of struggle, consisting of multiple sites, in which competing world views intersect to establish meaning and gain consent for particular outcomes. (p.194)

There seems little doubt that both Heath and Berger agree that there is a contested space wherein public relations operates – Heath (e.g. 2009) sees it as a marketplace where there is wrangling over the various messages and the meanings they are attempting to construct in the rhetorical tradition and Berger (1999) sees it as a terrain of struggle where the ideology of organisations is elaborated through the competition to establish meaning. There is agreement that the construction of meaning is at the core of activity within the contested space, but there is no consensus within the field about what happens in practice in this contested space. The evidence, as it is presented in accounts of practice and evaluations in the campaigns reviewed for this chapter, suggests that Berger’s conceptualisation rather than Heath’s is what is happening in practice.

_The centrality of the construction of meaning to strategic approaches to public relations practice_

At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, there is undoubtedly some agreement within the field that meaning is central to public relations (Heath, 2009, pp. 1 - 10). However, views diverge at the point of “for what purpose”, “in whose interest” or “to whose benefit” is the construction and interpretation of meaning being managed at all. Taking a socio-cultural perspective, public relations is conceptualized around managing the interpretation of meanings, working to apply “dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation in contested sites” (Berger, 1999, p. 186) in ways that facilitate people constructing one meaning instead of another, as could be seen in the reviewed campaigns. Methods and processes include practitioners devising “interpretative frames” and “positioning their organizations amid compatible, conflicting, and competing interpretative frames” (Heath, 1993, p.142) as could be seen, for example, in the anti-smoking campaign (Stokes & Rubin, 2010) and genetic engineering campaign (Henderson, 2005). Methods and processes also include working “to shape the interpretative potential” (Neff, 2008, p. 92) of texts that are produced as could be clearly seen in the National Hockey League campaign where
national promotional material was being tailored for use at local levels (Batchelor & Formentin, 2008). Numerous recommendations of the scholars examining the campaigns related to the need to be more culturally appropriate (e.g. Khaja & Creedon, 2010) or to be more thorough in campaign research (Jo et al., 2008), in an effort to improve performance in what could be seen as shaping the “interpretative potential” (Neff, 2008, p. 92).

Such efforts can be viewed as relating to a social-cultural perspective, in which texts do not contain “finished and fixed meanings” (Lehtonen, 2000, p. 86) but instead offer meaning potentials. This perspective links back to the writings of Barthes (1977) where he argued that there was not a single true meaning in any text and that meaning did not sit within the text itself or in what the intended meaning of the author happened to be. Schlunke (2008) summarised Barthes’ stance:

Genre and grammatical conventions will of course organise the meanings given to particular texts and potentially limit the possibilities of what it could mean, but it is the act of reading/interpreting those possibilities that produces the ‘meaning of the text’. (p. 261)

So a public relations text, when conceived as an offering of a meaning potential instead of as a container holding a prescribed meaning can be seen as a dynamic and not a static conception. As Lehtonen (2000) states:

There are no ready-made meanings in a text. There are only meanings that must be produced, that are an outcome of the encounter and negotiation between the text and the reader’s (con)textual knowledge and placing. Text does not provide its reader with meanings, but meanings are born in the interaction where text, context and reader all have their say. (p. 90)

This is not to say that one cannot attempt to limit the readings someone can make of a text, but that these attempts can never be presumed to have a guarantee of success (Lehtonen, 2000, p. 97). I suggest that the literature on campaigns indicates that part of the skill of an expert public relations practitioner is to apply the methods and processes of public relations to shape the probable meaning that could be constructed from a text.
that is offered to publics and audiences. It is in this work of devising or limiting possible “interpretive potentials” (Neff, 2008, p. 92), where the practitioner attempts to bring together the text, context and the audience in a particular way to facilitate the achievement of his/her goal that the co-construction of meaning is strategically undertaken – the co-construction being a result of the interplay between the practitioner, the text and the audience.

Lehtonen (2000) states that “nothing automatically guarantees that readers will take the positions they are offered in texts. A reader addressed by a text can embrace the position h/she is offered, but also reject it” (p. 102). This was evident in campaigns such as that advocating the self-examination for breast cancer (Khaja & Creedon, 2010) or the US Administration’s efforts to construct support for the War in Iraq (Jo et al., 2008) – both instances where publics and audiences in part rejected the meaning potentials offered. The context plays a large role in the construction of meaning, as meanings of texts change from context to context, i.e. texts “obtain their meaning in interaction with contexts” (Lehtonen, 2000, p. 105). This does not however mean that any meaning at all can be read in or onto texts. As Morley (1992) states,

> Audiences do not see only what they want to see, since a message...is not simply a window on the world, but a construction. While the message is not an object with one real meaning, there are within it signifying mechanisms which promote certain meanings, even one privileged meaning, and suppress others: these are the directive closures encoded into the message. (p. 21)

This is where the work of public relations can be said to take place – for the meaning potentials to be taken up, the messages or texts of the practitioner must be connected to some of the reading contexts of the intended audience in order for the meaning to have a chance of being actualized. This supports the findings of the campaign scholars such as Vardeman-Winter (2010) and Khaja & Creedon (2010), where cultural context appeared not to have been sufficiently accounted for in the campaign design.

This construction of meaning was also explored by Botan and Soto (1998) who linked the interpretation of meaning and public relations. Public relations campaigns in their view are the quintessential example of strategic communication given that they are
about being planned and goal directed and are “characterized by their intended role in positioning an organization or group to negotiate relationships with relevant environmental forces” (p.23). The reviewed campaigns show that, in the main, public relations practitioners work with the realization that people are not passive message receivers and, conceiving campaign practice within a socio-cultural theoretical approach, readily positions actual and potential publics and audiences as “creative meaning-makers” (Schlunke, 2008, p. 262). The products or texts produced as part of the campaigns, what could be called the “discourse genres” of public relations (Courtright & Smudde, 2010), can be conceptualised as the “catalysts which set potential meanings in motion” (Lehtonen, 2000, p. 106). These can be seen as needing to proceed to connect to the contextual and cultural practices of the target publics and audiences for the formation of meaning to take place. Mickey (1997) states that public relations practitioners must “speak in the codes of the culture” (p.280) and it can be seen in the scholarly assessments of Vardeman-Winter (2010) and Khaja and Creedon (2010) that when this did not take place, campaigns were not fully successful. Both scholars indicate that this was where the skills of the public relations practitioners could come to the fore in future campaigns - in researching the contextual and cultural practices of audiences and structuring the texts to be offered to those publics and audiences to best fit with the findings of that research, with the aim of opening up more pertinent potential meanings for them to construct.

The link to the Co-creation of Meaning Theory of public relations, first put forward by Heath in 1994 (van Ruler, 2005a), becomes apparent here. This theory states that meaning “is not an attribute of a message or a recipient but of the interaction itself” (p. 136). According to van Ruler, the quest for practitioners therefore, is to “manage the interactions in such a way that ‘compatible zones of meaning’ are created with stakeholders” (2005a, p. 136), and it is evident that this has inspired, in recent years, “some scholars to take a constructionist view of reality” (van Ruler, 2005a, p. 137). This has only recently received attention in the mainstream public relations literature (e.g. Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008; Heath, 2009; Heide, 2009; James, 2009; Schultz & Raupp, 2010; Stokes & Rubin, 2010). Drawing on van Ruler’s description of the Co-creation of Meaning Theory of public relations (2005a, p. 135-138), and the review of the campaigns undertaken for this chapter, it is suggested that a practitioner’s role in
campaign work is to deliberately undertake actions to facilitate interactions with others within the contested space, what Berger (1999) calls the “terrain of struggle”, to construct new intended meanings, or maintain the construct of current intended meanings, in the minds of target publics and audiences. It is further suggested that this is undertaken with the express intention of forwarding the agenda or achieving the goals of the organisations that have commissioned the public relations campaigns, and that these agenda or goals may or may not be related to mutually beneficial outcomes for all parties impacted by the campaigns’ activities.

2.7.5 The questions and possible implications for public relations raised in this review

In 2005, van Ruler (2005b) stated that constructionist approaches had “not yet significantly influenced theories of public relations or communication management” (p. 184) but recently this has begun to change. Heath (2009) has now linked rhetorical approaches “intellectually and ethically” to social constructionism, discourse analysis and critical studies (pp 3-5) – a notable change from what was in the mainstream public relations literature at the commencement of this doctoral research in early 2007. Social constructionism stems from the assertion that “reality is socially constructed” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 13). Social constructionism contends that “reality is a social construction that is created, maintained, altered, and destroyed through the process of human interaction” (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008, p. 105). A social constructionist orientation to public relations focuses on the “making of meaning through human interaction” (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008, p. 104). Gordon and Pellegrin draw on the foundational work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) acknowledging that it was their book, *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*, that saw the “theoretical perspective known as social constructionism matured to its current definition” (p. 106). Berger and Luckmann concluded that:

> In the dialectic between nature and the socially constructed world the human organism itself is transformed. In this same dialectic man produces reality and thereby produces himself. (1966, p. 204)

Language is central to social constructionism, not as a reflection of the knowable world but as an artefact of social interaction (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008). Berger and
Luckmann (1966) state that “language builds up semantic fields or zones of meaning that are linguistically circumscribed” (p. 55). Public relations practitioners can be seen to work with the medium of language to convey meaning and this work “often concerns itself with advocating specific meanings” (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008, p. 114). The reviewed campaigns indicate that practitioners formulate and transmit words to create meaning and knowledge, but it can also be seen that they lose all control once these words hit “the marketplace of ideas” with publics and audiences able to “redefine the pieces of knowledge crafted by the practitioner in any way they choose” (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008, p. 115). This can be seen in the recent work of Heide (2009) who has applied a social constructionist approach to a sub-field of public relations, crisis communications, stating that “practitioners must acknowledge that people always create meanings in different situations, and their interpretation will inevitably be dissimilar to the sender’s original meaning” (p. 56). He concludes that public relations is an institution that constructs certain world views and realities through communication activities. Public relations can be seen as a process of strategic disseminations of texts to maintain, develop certain sociocultural practices and the preferred values of an organization. (p. 57)

Heide’s (2009) definition here aligns with that of Ristino’s (2008) sociocultural definition of public relations and Heide’s observations lend weight to the appropriateness of a wider consideration of the emerging social constructionist approaches to public relations. I suggest it may be possible to draw together the various strands of previous scholarly work and overlay the concept of strategic intent onto Hall’s Articulation Model of Meaning (Moffitt, 1994); cultural topoi (Leichty & Warner, 2001); dialogical theory (Kent & Taylor, 2002); sense-making (Walker, 2006); sociodrama (Mickey, 2008), and many other theories that offer frameworks for examining how intended meaning might be constructed. This could offer ways of conceptualising strategic intent in the construction of meaning under a social constructionist umbrella. This approach may also counter the criticism of scholars such as J. Grunig and L. Grunig (2008, pp. 330-331), who argue that what they call an “interpretative paradigm” devotes “excessive attention to their role in negotiating meaning and not enough attention to their role in negotiating behaviour of both organizations and publics”. They relegate practitioners who “follow the interpretative...
paradigm” as those who “emphasize publicity, media relations and media effects... [which] relegates public relations to a tactical role” (p. 331). I would argue that working within a social constructionist theoretical approach offers more than representing “the wishful thinking of many practitioners who still seem to believe that messages alone (and managed meaning) can protect organizations from publics and who promise clients and employers what they want to hear” (Grunig & Grunig, 2008, p. 331), which is the mind-state within which those working in an interpretative paradigm are stuck, according to that these scholars.

Interestingly, this approach may not rule out applying a two-way symmetrical approach to public relations as espoused by J. Grunig and applied in practice as reported in this review by Lane (2007) and Kelly, Laskin and Rosenstein (2010). In a discussion where J. Grunig (2001) laments the way both “disciples of the symmetrical theory and critical scholars who debunk it seem to have reconstructed the theory inaccurately in their minds – to the extent that the theory appears to be ridiculous” (p. 18), he puts forward the following which would support his symmetrical approach being an approach through which the strategic construction of meaning in a social constructionist framework could take place:

Symmetrical public relations does not take place in an ideal situation where competing interests come together with goodwill to resolve their differences because they share a goal of social equilibrium and harmony. Rather, it takes place in situations where groups come together to protect and enhance self-interests. Argumentation, debate, and persuasion take place. But dialogue, listening, understanding and relationship building also occur because they are more effective in resolving conflict than are one-way attempts at compliance gaining. (p. 18)

Grunig has provided an example of public relations’ terrain of struggle, the contested site where meaning is constructed with strategic intent. This construction of meaning by publics and audiences can be seen to be facilitated by public relations practitioners. Interestingly, those examining public relations through a media studies lens have primarily understood public relations through the pursuit of its clients’ interests (Pieczka, 2002) – but it remains to be seen whether public relations can itself stomach
doing the same. A client’s interest is not always profit driven but it is goal driven and there is little evidence in the campaign literature to support the notion that public relations techniques and practices are ever employed without such strategic intent. Kearns (1994, p. 51) states that the “intention of an act is the purpose the agent intends to achieve by performing the act” and public relations campaigns, without exception in this review, purposefully, i.e. with strategic intent, undertook public relations to manage communication and the construction of meaning to achieve a stated goal and advance the commissioning organisation’s mission.

If strategic intent is not included in theoretical frameworks for public relations, such as dialogical, relational and co-creational perspectives, efforts could be seen to be an attempt to develop theory to support normative definitions of public relations that espouse that public relations is about mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics or other iterations of non-strategic mutuality in terms of benefits to all parties involved. Byrne (2007) found that dialogic approaches such as relationship management stem from a “perceived ethical superiority of such models” (p.19). In her Australian study she found such approaches were not “legitimate operational definitions of the field in Australia” (p. 19) and the evidence in this review of the campaign literature suggests such approaches could be judged as self-serving to the field – essentially “PR” for public relations. From the earliest days of James Grunig’s work, there has been a rejection of persuasion, influence and related areas as inherently manipulative and unethical (Pfau & Wan, 2006). Much theoretical work in the recent decade seems to have focused on developing normative approaches to public relations which are in essence, non-strategic and designed seemingly for the betterment of society at large, perhaps thinking that this would improve the reputation of the public relations field. Heath (2006, p. 96) believes that attempts to divorce public relations “from what is found offensive” has postponed being able to fix what is wrong. Heath (2006, p. 96) suggests that “the future of the discipline may rest with attention focused on the good of society instead of the communicator or organization” but that approach could be seen as an attempt to turn public relations into something that it is not. What is absent from many normative theories of public relations is the concept of “strategic intent”.

When one considers that the dominant discourse within public relations is that of public relations being a management function, it seems odd that strategic intent is often absent
in public relations literature. McDonald (2008) suggests that public relations will need to focus more on the strategic aspects of practice such as crisis counselling and fostering community support, and not just on communication aspects, if practitioners want to work in senior advisory roles in organisations (p.14). Some have questioned whether it is honest for public relations practitioners and theorists to assert that initiatives couched as symmetrical communication should be taken in the spirit of open collaboration with all of an organisation’s publics (Roper, 2005b, p. 84). Given that strategic management is about actions that adapt an organisation to its changing environment to ensure survival and growth of the organisation (Steiner & Steiner, 2003), and that public relations is widely held to be a management function, one could ask why mainstream definitions of public relations are not more overt as to what public relations aims to achieve, i.e. to contribute to achieving the goals of an organisation - whether that organisation be a company, corporation, government, not-for-profit organisation or activist group.

When public relations is defined or theorised as something other than purposeful communication to advance the organisation’s mission, it could be conceptualised as a move into a different field, one that is by definition not public relations. Instead it would be a space wherein would exist the Habermasian public sphere, identified as the public realm of civil society, which is concerned with issues of politics, but also as a realm distinguished by open discourse between individuals, with personal interests set aside, that allows for the rational formation of public opinion (Habermas, 1992). Roper (2005b) states that within this realm, as articulated by Habermas, “the necessary basis of communicative action is that dialogue is free of strategic intent, and, as a consequence, resulting public opinion is collaboratively negotiated” (Roper, 2005, p. 71).

The literature indicated that all campaigns were undertaken with strategic intent but it should be noted that this does not equate with definitions of "strategic action" from a Habermasian perspective. Mayhew (1997, p. 36) defined such strategic action as that which is "designed to achieve ends at the expense of other people". The literature shows that a public relations campaign does not have to operate at the expense of other people, but it also shows that there are times when it does do this.
Public relations activities, whatever their aims, are strategic acts that can be seen as attempts “to exert power and control over the organisational environment” wherein the goals are being aimed for, which it has to be said is “a deeply political act on behalf of the organization” (Holtzhausen, 2002, p. 255). Public relations campaigns as reported in the literature are political, by way of being intrinsically partisan and impacting somehow, whether negatively or positively, on the citizenry of wherever they are implemented. Attempts to strategically construct a version of social reality for the purposes of achieving an organisation’s mission, whatever that mission may be, is a deeply political act and the theoretical framework of social constructionism may offer a sound way to explore such acts. Within social constructionism, “the intellectual domain of public relations is concerned with the study of socially constructed meaning” (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008, p. 115) and I am suggesting that the evidence in the literature indicates that this underpins public relations campaign practice. Gordon and Pellegrin see practitioners “offering publics a particular meaning – promoting a particular way of understanding the world” (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008, p. 115). This is where strategy and the construction of intended meanings come together – a potentially new theoretical approach within a social constructionist epistemology and it is here that I situate my doctoral research project.

2.8 Chapter summary

Evidence has been presented which suggests that the normative description of public relations, that espouses two-way symmetrical communication as delivering mutually beneficial outcomes for organisations and publics and audiences, does not account for much of the campaign practice as it is described in the literature. Campaign practice is reported as primarily being comprised of strategies and tactics that could be classified within Grunig and Hunt’s (1984, pp. 21-22) press agent/publicity, public information and two-way asymmetrical models of public relations but not within the two-way symmetrical model of public relations. Evidence of a relational approach to public relations was only evident in a minority of campaigns and the relationships were formed with other like-minded organisations to strengthen the campaign against an opposition – there was no goal of mutual understanding or benefit.
The conceptualisation of campaigns as examples of strategic communication that are goal directed and purposeful in advancing the mission of the organisations that have commissioned the public relations activity is supported. Two examples from the literature are examined that demonstrate a non-campaign type response to a public relations situation/problem. The outcomes of these public relations responses were reported as being positive for all parties involved and although there is little in the way of this kind of response reported in the literature, it does indicate that a campaign response may not always be the most appropriate response to a situation or problem that at first appears to require a campaign. This may further indicate that the options that practitioners consider when contemplating a campaign response should be broadened, but more research would be required before formulating any recommendation, and this was outside the scope of this current project.

From a theoretical perspective, it is clear that the Grunig and Hunt (1984) two-way symmetrical model of public relations does not account for campaign-style public relations practice as reported in the academic literature. Through campaigns, evidence in the literature suggests organisations strive to influence publics and audiences to construct in their minds the meanings that the organisation intends for them rather than other meanings. These meanings can relate to attitudes and/or behaviour but in all cases, prior to the campaigns being instigated, targeted publics and audiences were not thinking and/or acting in the ways organisations wanted them to – hence the perceived need to implement a campaign style response. Such a conceptualisation of public relations practice could be seen as an attempt to strategically construct specific meanings to advance the mission of the organisation commissioning the public relations. With this strategic construction of meaning as the central tenet of campaign practice, a social constructionist theoretical perspective strengthens public relations as a legitimate field of academic inquiry whilst also providing frameworks for public relations practice and education.

The following chapter outlines my methodology and overall approach to this research project.
3. Methodology

The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and to identify the means by which that purpose was achieved. It was envisaged that this could provide new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorized to further inform the development of practice, research and education in public relations. The study addressed five research questions: (a) Why do practitioners undertake public relations campaigns? (b) Who primarily benefits from the outcomes delivered by public relations campaigns? (c) What do practitioners do in order to achieve their desired campaign outcomes? (d) What theoretical orientation towards public relations practice is evident in the way practitioners described their campaign work? (e) What are the possible implications for the field of this study’s findings?

This chapter provides a description of this project’s research methodology and includes discussions around the following areas: (a) research approach rationale, (b) the research sample, (c) research design overview, (d) data collection methods, (e) data analysis and synthesis, (f) ethical considerations, (g) a discussion of issues relating to trustworthiness, (h) situating myself in the research project and (i) the limitations of the research study. The chapter culminates in a brief concluding summary.

3.1 Research approach: rationale for qualitative research

My research approach can be described under the umbrella term of “constructionism” which asserts that I do not subscribe to views that there is a reality that exists independently of our knowledge of it, meaning social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision (Bryman, 2001, p. 18). This thesis project was undertaken from my social constructionist epistemology. Weinberg (2008) defines social constructionist researchers as those who “seek to demonstrate ... how certain states of affairs that others have taken to be eternal and/or beyond the reach of social influence are actually products of specific socio-historical and/or social interactional processes” (p.14). Constructionist research can be said to typically deal with the practical aspects of
what is constructed and how that construction process unfolds (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008, p. 5). The task in this case was to examine aspects of public relations theory and practice in the context of completing a research higher degree and making an original contribution to the body of knowledge within the public relations field. According to Linder (2008) all constructionist projects share a commitment to:

- documenting how some aspect of reality is constructed through the efforts of social actors; that is, to trace the process whereby some element of social life - meanings, institutions, identities, norms, problems, routines, and all other conceivable aspects of social reality-comes into being, emerges, takes shape, becomes understandable acquires visible and meaningful boundaries, and takes on constraining and/or facilitating characteristics (Linder, 2008, p. 468).

This is what I aimed to do with public relations practice – to document how a major area of practice, that of public relations campaigns, was constructed. Through this work, I aimed to increase understanding of practice and develop relevant theory. In order to achieve my aim a qualitative research approach was selected because qualitative research has the following characteristics:

- A theoretical interest in human interpretational processes;

- Is concerned with the study of socially situated human action and artefacts;

- Uses human investigators as the primary research instruments (and all involve the application of reflexive analysis); and

- Relies primarily on narrative forms for coding data and writing the texts to be presented to audiences (Lindlof, 1995).

This project has taken a broad cultural studies perspective, which is relatively uncommon in public relations research, and as such encapsulates a social constructionist (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008) framework acknowledging however that “there is no single, let alone authorized, cultural studies view” (Alasuutari, 1996, p. 371). In contrast to other qualitative approaches which are often designed to illuminate general systems
or mechanisms, in cultural studies and other social constructionist approaches, the aim is to “particularize understandings” to better understand the local and “figure out a local structure of meanings” (Alasuutari, 1996, p. 372). This project set out to examine what individual practitioners were doing in their campaign work, i.e. to seek the local explanation which is “at the heart of qualitative analysis in cultural studies” (Alasuutari, 1996, p. 378), with a view to then discussing the findings in a larger (albeit historically and culturally specific) framework - a process that is “comparable to generalization in survey research” (Alasuutari, 1996, p. 378). Cultural studies research projects do not aim to generate theory that operates as a universal mechanism to explain local phenomena, but aim to generate theory as a different framework which can provide a different viewpoint to social reality. Alasuutari (1996) states that:

Qualitative research is indeed a theorizing process, because the whole point in social research is to come up with new viewpoints to the mundane reality organized by the natural attitude, and in doing so to find out new things about it. (p. 372)

In taking this approach I hope to have achieved what Alasuutari (1996, p. 373) has described as the desired results of such a research approach - both gaining a better understanding of an aspect of public relations practice whilst simultaneously developing a theoretical framework that can also be applied to other areas.

3.2 The research sample

The whole concept of sampling is problematic in qualitative research as a “sample” is a concept that is “designed to function as a representation of the whole” (Gray, 2003, p. 101) and refers to a quantitative research model. The endeavour was to undertake purposeful “strategic sampling” (Gray, 2003, p. 101) which concentrates on a “few situations where the theoretical yield should be high” – in this project the sample comprised public relations campaigns. Within organisations, public relations managers are employed to manage programs and campaigns. This aligns with the dominant perspective of public relations approaches that focus on solving management problems (Ihlen & van Ruler, 2007, p. 244; 2009. Given my experience in designing and managing campaigns, the stated goals apparent in many campaign case studies and
McElreath’s definition of a campaign being timebound and goal directed, an examination of campaign work seemed most likely to highlight the inadequacy of normative definitions to define what is known as public relations.

There were two samples in this doctoral research project – a collection of award entry texts and the accounts of award winning practitioners.

3.2.1 Award entry texts

The use of award-winning entries as data in public relations research is well established (e.g. Baskina, Hahna, Seamana, & Reines, 2010; Gregory, 2001; Walker, 1994; Xavier, Johnston, & Patel, 2006). The Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA) hosts annually the Golden Target Awards for outstanding public relations campaigns. The awards cover 16 categories of campaign, across the range of public relations and communications disciplines and they broadly align with industry award programmes in Asia, the United Kingdom and the USA (PRIA, 2010). The entrants into these awards are those campaigns that have been submitted through a state and territory award program and have won their category at that level. The award entry texts that have been submitted to the national awards are publicly available through a website hosted by the University of Technology, Sydney. They are searchable by various categories including, level of award (e.g. winner, highly commended, commended, etc.), type of entry (e.g., crisis management, community relations, marketing communication, etc.), year of entry and so on. Each award entry is presented in a template style that includes the following headings for which entrants are generally required to provide a textual response: title, client, PR company, category, award type, call number, year, executive summary, situation analysis, goals and objectives, research, target publics, communication strategy, implementation, results and evaluation.

For this study, a sample was chosen of award entries that had won a national award in their category between 1999 and 2008 and that were available online. Fifty-seven entries were selected into the sample as this was (a) the total number of awards that met this criteria at the time of commencement of this project and (b) the total number that had complete, or close to complete, information for each award template heading. The full list of award entries included in this study can be viewed at Appendix E. This
provided a sample of accounts of practice from across sectors and across the time period of a decade which would serve to minimise any bias that might have occurred in a single year or from within one industry sector judging panel. This particular time period was chosen also because it reflected the time period of entries that were available online – prior to this period there are only hard copies, many of them incomplete. Linders (2008,) states that the selection of documents for analysis from within one type of documents can present issues for constructionist researchers. She explained that generally, three strategies are used when undertaking the document selection – (i) proportionate selection in the form of random or weighted samples; (ii) targeted selection pertaining to the emergence, persistence, and/or evolution of a particular social construction; and (iii) an “anything you can get your hands on” approach. In using a targeted selection, it was understood that there needed to be “clearly defined and conceptually meaningful boundaries around the particular documents to be included” whilst avoiding picking only documents that fit with any preconceived ideas of the researcher (p. 475).

It should be noted that during this period, categories for entries changed from time to time and the award entry process for submissions also changed. However, the final presentation of the award entries in terms of the template structure presented online remained unchanged. It should also be noted that the online database is incomplete, as it was not a requirement to submit digital copies of entries in the early years of the study’s sample. In light of this, it was initially thought better to access the hard copies of the award collection which are available onsite at the main library of the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). The collection was visited in 2008 and it was found to be “well-thumbed” with some material having been mislaid or removed from the award entry submissions, meaning that it was also an incomplete collection. Given this fact and that accessing the data online would be more geographically convenient (it is three hours by car to this library from my home) and more economical in terms of time and money available to complete this project, it was decided to use the online award entry data for the purposes of this project.

The main issue considered in selecting the award entry texts in my sample was whether this data set could help answer my research questions. Given that the project involved the examination of accounts of practice, it seemed like a good place to start. It also was
a collection of texts that could be said to represent what is valued in Australian public relations as award winners are selected by panels of peers from the Public Relations Institute of Australia and entries can be viewed as examples of best practice. According to Heath (2001b), “best practices evolve through experiences and judgements of leading practitioners” and “may be defined and researched by practitioners and academics” (p.441). He acknowledges that “some best practices arise from the research and theory of academics” and states that “it is in the practice where practitioners and academics ultimately meet each other” (p. 441). My experience in practice and in academic research and teaching led me to agree with Heath’s view and this underpinned my rationale for choosing to examine these accounts of practice in this project, i.e. the award entries seemed appropriate and useful to the task of revealing or identifying processes of social construction in public relations campaigns.

It must be noted that there are limitations to this sample selection, one being that not all “excellent” campaigns or other public relations activities are submitted to the Golden Target Awards or any other awards. I know this from what practitioners have told me anecdotally but also from my own experience. In 2006 I was employed as a specialist consultant for a high profile government agency client. I was given a specific campaign brief and specific objectives to meet. All requirements of this consultancy were met or exceeded and I asked if the agency would agree to my entering the work into the Golden Target Awards. The agency would not agree to my request fearing a possible political backlash if the award entry detail was subject to public scrutiny. I believed that I had acted ethically and that the campaign would withstand public scrutiny but as the agency head stated at the time, why risk it? It is unclear how many possible entries are thwarted each year in similar circumstances.

3.2.2 Award-winning practitioners

The interviewees were selected from the winning award entrants but, by necessity due to budgetary constraints and interviewee availability, were selected subjectively, but purposefully, by the researcher. Gray (2003) states that it is common for graduate students carrying out studies for doctoral degrees to work within limitations such as geographical location and cost. Although the award texts were analysed for the period 1999-2008, the interviewees were limited to those who had won awards in the period...
2005-2008. This reason being so the campaigns would be recent enough to be conducive to practitioners remembering what they had undertaken in their campaigns. In approaching the potential pool of interviewees, the lists of winners of awards that are publicly available online through the UTS library website were consulted. An online search for their work-related contact details was undertaken and an interview request and project information sheet was emailed to each one for whom contact information was found. Interviews were scheduled with a total of twenty practitioners and interviews were conducted in their cities of work. The number of interviews was not intended as a representative sample but as a way to access a range of practitioner viewpoints in relation to the themes that were emerging in the project. Eighteen interviews in total were conducted during the period May – July 2009 as two practitioners were repeatedly unavailable due to work commitments. Sixteen interviews were conducted in the workplaces of the practitioners, and at the request of the interviewees, one was conducted in a coffee shop and one in a hotel bistro. The breakdown of respondents was as follows:

Table 3.1
Breakdown on interview respondents by state/territory, practice sector and award entry category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City and State/Territory of Australia</th>
<th>Sector of practice</th>
<th>Category of award entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perth, Western Australia</td>
<td>In-house, state government</td>
<td>Consumer marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth, Western Australia</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Health organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth, Western Australia</td>
<td>In-house, corporate</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne, Victoria</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Government sponsored campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne, Victoria</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Community relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne, Victoria</td>
<td>In-house, state government</td>
<td>Employee communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne, Victoria</td>
<td>In-house, state government</td>
<td>Issues/crisis management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne, Victoria</td>
<td>In-house, NFP</td>
<td>Public affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, New South Wales</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Issues/crisis management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, New South Wales</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Public affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, New South Wales</td>
<td>In-house, corporate</td>
<td>Internal communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, New South Wales</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Business to business marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, New South Wales</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Business to business marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra, Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>In-house, government agency</td>
<td>Government sponsored campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Queensland</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Community relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Queensland</td>
<td>In-house, NFP</td>
<td>Issues/crisis management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Queensland</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Marketing communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Queensland</td>
<td>In-house, government corporation</td>
<td>Issues/crisis management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Research design overview

This research project is very different to that which was envisaged when an application was first made to the University of Newcastle for entry into a doctoral research program in early 2007. As an initial review of the literature for my doctoral research was undertaken, it became clear that there were central questions to be answered and so my research project began to evolve into what it has become at this point. This is typical of qualitative inquiry – the questions and the initial framework change or develop during the project (Alasuutari, 1996, p. 381). In this project, award-winning Australian public relations awards entries were examined using textual and thematic analysis to identify whether practitioners sought to construct specific meanings that would primarily deliver benefits to their organisation and if so, how and why this was done. Emerging patterns, commonalities and areas of difference were sought along with evidence that would support either normative definitions of the purpose of public relations or the more functional definition, i.e. that the main role of public relations is to strategically construct meaning to achieve intended outcomes and representations. The award winning entries were taken from across all sectors of practice – business, government, not-for-profit and activist sectors.

The first stage of the exercise was to examine the award entry texts for evidence of two-way symmetrical approaches to public relations campaigns that did not place the achievement of organisation goals at the forefront of their campaigns. As this examination yielded little evidence that would support these normative definitions of the purpose of public relations, an examination of the award entry texts was then undertaken to determine the purpose of the public relations campaign. This exercise could have looked at goals, objectives or communications strategies and/or tactics but it became apparent that there was not a standardised application of these terms in the award entries, and like could not be compared with like. Similar problems with category content classifications in the Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target award entries have been reported by other researchers who have used this method of data collection in their research (Xavier, Johnston & Patel, 2006). To overcome this problem, evidence was sought that would indicate whether there was an intended meaning that the organisations were trying to construct/co-construct in the minds of publics and audiences. I drew from the textual elements within the award entries that
pointed to the “dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation” that Berger (1999, p. 186) suggests comprise the practice of public relations. I synthesised the descriptions written in the executive summaries, situational analyses, goals and objectives, communication strategies and tactics sections of each award entry in the sample to determine whether or not there was an intended meaning that the organisation wanted their identified target publics and audiences to construct. There was ample evidence present and a summary statement of what meaning the award entry intended to construct was formulated. When I had interpreted and recorded an intended meaning that organisation and clients wanted target publics and audiences to construct, the results and evaluation sections of the entries were examined to determine if practitioners reported that the desired outcome had occurred i.e., that the intended meaning had been constructed in the minds of target publics and audiences.

The content of the awards that was deemed to point to efforts to have target publics and audiences construct the intended meaning was coded according to themes emerging from the data. The data were revisited several times and over fifty coding themes emerged. These coding themes were then thematically grouped into categories that indicated techniques and processes used to have publics and audiences construct particular meaning in a public relations campaign context.

Following the analysis of the award entry texts, over the period May to July 2009 eighteen semi-structured interviews with public relations practitioners who had won a Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target Award in the period 2005-2008 were conducted. Each interview ran between 35 and 85 minutes, with the average being 55 minutes. Interviewing is an appropriate method in qualitative research as it enables the researcher/interviewer to understand the constructs upon which interviewees base their opinions and beliefs about public relations (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). This was in line with my social constructionist approach to the research interview which shifts the focus from “mining individual minds to the co-construction of (temporarily) shared discourses” (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008, p. 429). These practitioners have been acknowledged by their peers as worthy of winning national awards for their work. It should be noted that as the researcher, I am also a past recipient of a Golden Target Award (2001) and as such have practitioner insight into the award process.
Practitioners were interviewed to gain an understanding of their perspectives of strategy and intent in public relations, to retrieve their professional experiences related to these areas, to gain expert insights and information, to obtain descriptions of and background to practice, especially pertaining to their award winning campaign, and to gain insights into the discourse of discussion of professional practice (Lindlof, 1995). My agenda as the researcher and the aims of this research project guided the interview process (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). The interviews were recorded by me onto a Marantz recorder in Mp3 format, stored on my university-issued, password-protected laptop, backed up onto CD-ROM, and transcribed. I undertook ten of the transcriptions, and a professional transcription service was engaged to complete the transcriptions for the other eight interviews. Analysis of the transcripts was then undertaken. This data was added to that gathered from the analysis of the award entries and was used to support or detract from the findings of the initial award entry analysis.

3.4 Data collection methods

My research questions guided the selection of data collection methods. There were two primary data collection methods in this project. For the first phase of the project an analysis of award entry texts was conducted and in the second phase, semi-structured research interviews with award winning public relations practitioners were undertaken. Both can be seen as examples of different discourses within which public relations practitioners conceive of and organise their professional practices. Conducting a survey of award winning practitioners was considered but surveys involve predetermined questions and question ordering and are often comprised of closed questions or, at best, short answer style questions. They ignore the context in which the information is produced by the respondent; ignore the “expressive richness of respondents’ own language and do not allow the interviewer and respondent to explore and negotiate mutually the meaning of the objects of inquiry” (Lindlof, 1995, p. 164). After examining what this method offered it was deemed an inappropriate approach to obtaining the information needed to answer my research questions.

3.4.1 Award Entry Texts

This data was comprised of accounts of practice as presented in award entry texts. In collecting the data the website http://lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ was visited and award entries
that fitted the criteria as described in the sample were located. Once onscreen, each award entry was cut and pasted each into a Word document and saved along with its URL onto a file created for this purpose. Once all award entries were collected, the files were converted into a single PDF file and printed in hard copy to facilitate note taking and annotations.

In terms of this document being my data, I acknowledge that “documents, like other forms of data, do not speak for themselves but must be made to speak by the analyst” (Linders, 2008, p. 479). I needed to read and understand what had been written and then write a new document, as in this thesis, placing the original document and my reading of it into an interpretative context. As the issue of accuracy can impact the persuasiveness of a researcher’s account (Linders, 2008, p. 469), the fact that the client/organisational representative in each case must sign off a practitioner’s entry into the awards process prior to submission was seen as one check point for accuracy. Another was the fact that the entries become documents accessible to public scrutiny, and practitioners and clients are aware of this. However, the issue of bias, rather than notions of accuracy, is more significant for social constructionist researchers. This does not relate to the biases themselves as it would be expected that different people present different accounts in this approach. The main issue relates to:

(1) How particular biases push reality constructions in distinct directions, (2) which particular aspects of reality, if any, are subject to conflicting interpretations (or, in the absence of conflict, which are generally agreed upon), and (3) where the sources of interpretative divergence are located (e.g. in collective interests, in documentary conventions, or in the setting in which documents are produced). (Linders, 2008, p. 469)

The award entries themselves were not unproblematic, and as a particular type of representation of practice, comprised a “genre of professional discourse” (Pieczka, 2007, p. 334), as Jaques (2008) has stated:

Inevitably, such “author generated” cases are prone to self-praise and wisdom after the event, and they tend to focus on successful outcomes (especially when the author is a consultant using an award program to promote work done for a
client organization). More importantly they generally lack independent review and are deficient in objective analysis. (p. 195)

In acknowledging that the award entries were a retrospective narrativisation of the public relations activities undertaken by the entries’ authors, and would be composed in a way that showed the activities in the best light in the hope of winning an award, it is clear that the entries would also demonstrate what is valued in public relations practice and how public relations practitioners talk about their practice. Pieczka (2007) states that the competition format, the judging process and the annual scheduling of the competition is more about “producing an account of the practice that suits the group’s professional ambitions” (p. 353) than explicating what may comprise best practice. What I was concerned with however, was to understand how the practitioners used “discourse as a device to construct their version” of practice (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p. 143) and what meanings were constructed about practice as a result.

3.4.2 Research Interviews

Research interviews are one of the most widely used techniques, enabling researchers to obtain information not available through observation or other methods (Berger, 2000). Simply put, an interview is a “conversation between a researcher (someone who wishes to gain information about a subject) and an informant (someone who presumably has information of interest on the subject)” (Berger, 2000, p. 111). However, from a social constructionist perspective, research interviews can be seen as “dialogical performances, social meaning-making acts, and co-facilitated knowledge exchanges” (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008, p. 429). With these understandings, I approached my research interviews as a way of understanding public relations practitioners’ perspectives on practice, to retrieve their experiences from the past, to gain insight into their expertise and to gain information, to obtain their descriptions of the award winning practice (recognising that it is impossible to observe past actions), to foster trust, to understand the relationships they work within and to analyse discourse and related techniques (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Both Lindlof and Taylor (2002) and Koro-Ljungberg (2008) conceive the research interview as an active process where both interviewer and informant are actively
engaged in the construction of knowledge and meaning in the interview. Berger (2000) refers to interviews as a “conversation with a defined purpose” (p. 117) – the purpose usually being determined by the researcher (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The fact that the research interview is conducted for a specific purpose and is not naturally occurring conversation is problematic for some discourse researchers. Taylor (2001) points out that the main areas for concern centre on the fact that the researcher “controls the interaction and influences the talk” and “that the researcher incorrectly assumes that the talk is about the official topic of the interview, imposing her or his own interpretation on the talk” (p. 28). However, taking a constructionist view of the research interview conceptualises it as a collaboration, not just looking at the content produced but also at how content and meaning is produced, thus treating “interview narratives as situated, constructed reports, not actual representation of facts of ‘true’ experiences”; the focus shifting from “mining individual minds to the co-construction of (temporarily) shared discourses” (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008, p. 431). This goes some way to addressing the concerns highlighted by Taylor (2001) because through this reconceptualisation, the goal of interviewing became an examination of “how knowing subjects (researchers and study participants) experience or have experienced particular aspects of life as they are co-constructed through dialogue” (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008, p. 431).

Prior to the interviews, respondents were provided with information about me as a university researcher but also as a practitioner and as a past winner of a Golden Target Award. Conducting the interviews, I found that respondents seemed very forthright with me and in the main treated me as an equal. I felt most spoke to me as a fellow-practitioner rather than in any other capacity and when I was transcribing some of the interviews, and then reading through all of the interview transcripts, I was struck by the detail and frankness with which they spoke of their practice. I strove to capture this aspect of the interviews in the following chapters by including at times quite lengthy pieces of transcript.

It would be true to say that I approached these interviews with some trepidation relating to my own performance as a research interviewer and how any sub-standard performance, as perceived by the interviewees, would reflect badly on me from a professional point of view but also on the University of Newcastle’s public relations courses. This concern derived especially from my having an active role in the Public
Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA) and also from the perspective of my coordinating the application for PRIA accreditation of the University of Newcastle’s degree program. The fact that I had previously been a national PRIA Golden Target award winner was both a plus in terms of my insights into the processes but also presented challenges in terms of the expectations that interviewees could hold that my expertise as a public relations practitioner would carry across to research, where I am still at the early stages of my career.

3.5 Data analysis and synthesis

The formal process of data analysis began as indicators were sought within the award entry texts and interview transcripts that pointed to the “dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation” that Berger (1999. p. 186) has stated comprise the practice of public relations. Berger states further that “dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation” are used “in contested sites in which information is exchanged, meaning constructed and managed, and consensus, consent, and legitimation gained or lost with others” (p.186). This process of examination of the data enabled me to identify and interpret how a variety of public relations practices were accomplished, constructed and reproduced.

The texts were examined and the descriptions of practice analysed. One of the areas looked at was the use of language in both the award entries and interviews. According to Gray (2003), language and its uses are arbitrary. Language is not linked to the specific objects that it describes but operates as a system “and its use relies on shared social and cultural convention” (p. 20). Thematic and textual analysis was undertaken as part of the analytical process, and particular discourses that threaded through the descriptions of practice were identified. It should be noted that textual analysis differs from content analysis, which is “a method for the systematic and quantitative analysis of communications content” (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998, p. 123) in an attempt to measure the accuracy of content or test it against positivist notions of reality (McKee, 2002, pp. 15-16). Textual analysis can be understood as meaning analysis (Truex, 1996) and McKee (2002) states that “when we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text” (p. 1).
Texts can be seen, from a cultural studies perspective, as the “material traces that are left of the practice of sense-making – the only empirical evidence we have of how other people make sense of the world” (McKee, 2002, p. 15). According to Aronson (1994), in thematic analysis of texts a valid argument must be built for choosing the themes and this is undertaken by referencing the related literature which enables the researcher to gain information in order to make inferences from the data. Thematic analysis is essentially a “way of seeing” and what is seen by one person is often not seen by another (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 1). It is a “process for encoding qualitative information” enabling “scholars, observers, or practitioners to use a wide variety of information in a systematic manner that increases their accuracy or sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations about people, events, situations, and organizations” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 5). In this project theme statements were formulated that were then interwoven into the findings and the literature to construct a story which could “stand with merit” (Aronson, 1994,), enabling readers to comprehend my processes, understanding and motivations. Categories and instances of phenomena within the data were identified by desegregating the textual data into a series of fragments which were then regrouped under a set of thematic headings (Goulding, 2005, p. 300). This style of qualitative thematic analysis is a widely used approach in qualitative analysis which generally treats textual accounts as a resource for finding out about the experiences to which they refer (Seale, n.d.).

Through taking such an approach, topics such as public relations campaigns and activities are not seen “as abstract structures or as being separate from the interactions, conversations, and textually mediated practices that are an intrinsic part of their makeup” (Nikander, 2008, p. 415). In the role of analyst, I searched for patterns in the language in use, building on and referring back to the assumptions being made about the nature of language, interaction and society and the interrelationship between them (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001). In this project, the award entry texts provided me with evidence of how practitioners made sense of the campaigns they had implemented; texts that the practitioners themselves sometimes acknowledged as presenting the campaigns as if they ran very smoothly and coherently, even if they did not. The texts provided evidence of what was valued in practice and what was seen to be best practice rather than a “true” description of an objective reality of a campaign.
It would, however, be misleading to write as if all the data was collected at one time and then analysed in a block session. The process was ongoing and self-reflexive in that as themes emerged from the data, they provided clues as to what further information needed to be gathered and raised issues that had not been previously been considered. This often necessitated a return to the literature to find ways of explaining and contextualising the findings. Alasuutari (1996) states that such an approach is necessary because “if a researcher is not informed about different perspectives to qualitative data...it is obvious that he or she will not be able to see many things in the data” (p. 373). He goes on to explain that it is necessary to be theoretically informed in one’s approach to one’s data, viewing theoretical frameworks as “additional lenses enlarging and contextualizing the natural attitude not as blinders that may systematize but nonetheless amplify the everyday life view of the world” (1996, p. 373). In the introductory chapter to this thesis, I wrote that the project was journey-like and the entire approach to research design and analysis was also like this.

3.5.1 The process described

The departure point for the journey was the award entry texts. A total of 57 award entry texts were included in the overall study. Copies from the publicly accessible website were downloaded and each one was read. Specifically, as each award entry was read, I found fragments of text that described techniques and processes employed by practitioners. Each fragment was examined and the technique or process it described was determined. This determination was the basis for the thematic categories that emerged from the data. I then headed up an Excel spreadsheet column with that category name and pasted that segment of text into that column. On occasion more than one theme emerged from the same piece of text in which case the same piece of text was placed in multiple columns. In naming the thematic categories, the literature and my extensive knowledge of the field of practice was drawn upon. This process was continued and repeated for all of the award entry texts in the study and new thematic categories were added as they emerged from the data. As the process went on, fewer and fewer new categories emerged and most text was being coded under the themes that had emerged from the previously examined award entry texts.
Once this was completed, I returned to the first award entry text and recommenced reading to see whether anything in the entry could be coded into any of the other categories that had emerged during the first stage of the exercise. Summary notes about each of the award entries were prepared as this process was repeated for each of the award entries. In the summary note an attempt was made to encapsulate what the purpose of each campaign had been. When this was completed there were over fifty thematic categories that had emerged from the data. From this initial categorisation, there were clearly overarching themes that some of the categories fell within. Whereas the coding process fragments the data into these separate categories and themes, which enables one to look at each in detail, the process of synthesis “involves piecing these fragments together to reconstruct a holistic and integrated explanation” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 85). Subsequently, the initial categories were grouped under these overarching themes. There were some overarching themes with numerous categories clustered underneath and others with much fewer.

The threads and patterns within the data within each category were considered and then the threads and patterns across categories examined. The findings were then situated within the broader context of the literature and the issues it had raised. In thinking about the broader implications of this initial exercise, I wrote up my findings and analysis which, in addition to the following chapter in this thesis, appeared in a refereed paper that was presented and subsequently published in the proceedings of the Australia and New Zealand Communication Association Conference in Brisbane in 2009. I was keen to present my research for peer reviewed conferences and journals throughout the doctoral process in order to obtain feedback on my work. This was primarily to test how my work was being received by the academic field. As I outlined in my introduction to this thesis, my stance in terms of the purpose of public relations is more aligned with alternative views rather than the dominant perspectives espoused in the literature and I felt I needed to address any issues and criticisms about the various stages of my project as it evolved. The feedback I received from the ANZCA conference in Brisbane was constructive and encouraging, and so I continued.

In my return to the literature in order to further contextualise some aspects my findings, a significant gap in the literature was found on intentional positioning in public relations. Through further explorations of literature outside the communication and
marketing fields, I was eventually able to contextualise my findings through the adaptation of a theoretical approach used in discursive social psychology (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). This stage of the work was written up in an article for the *Journal of Public Relations Research* which was accepted for publication in late 2009. Although the description of this analysis and synthesis process makes it appear that each component of the process was separate, they were in fact what Bloomberg and Volpe (2008, p. 85) call “interlocked and iterative” throughout this initial phase. Based on this first phase of analysis and synthesis, I was able to determine what further information was needed and in what ways this should be collected. The subsequent research interviews with award-winning practitioners were the result of these deliberations.

In the next stage of the project the research interview transcripts were read through. I did not wait until all interviews were completed and transcribed, but commenced the transcription and preliminary analysis process as soon as I had finished my first few interviews. Once all interviews and transcriptions were completed, a similar process to that which was undertaken with the award entry texts was followed. However instead of using manual systems based around Excel spreadsheets, I attended QSR NVivo software training and used this software for my work. It was essentially the same process of reading through the transcript texts and looking for evidence of techniques and processes together with reflections on practice, coding the fragments of the texts into categories that emerged from the text, repeating the process and then arranging the categories into overarching themes. NVivo software just made the data management aspect of the process more streamlined.

Once this phase was completed, similarities and differences across themes that had emerged from the award entry texts and the interview data were sought. I returned to the award entry texts and entered the data into NVivo so it could then be more readily compared and contrasted across categories and thematic content. It was this process that enabled the development of a holistic and integrated explanation of the key techniques and processes being employed by public relations practitioners. I was able to proceed and consider the broader implications of my research and several conclusions and recommendations, including a reconsideration of the meta-theoretical structures within which the public relations academic field is currently situated, were formulated. This work was presented in late 2009 and published in February 2010 in the 2009 edition of
the Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal. Further exploration of the theoretical aspects of the project that had emerged through the first phase was undertaken and the synthesis that took place was demonstrated in the development of a refereed conference paper. This was presented at BledCom, Slovenia, in July 2010 and was published in the proceedings.

3.6 Ethical considerations

As a researcher, I am morally bound to conduct my research in a way that minimises harm to anyone involved in the studies I conduct (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 76). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002, p. 90), it is the welfare of the human participants in our research studies that must be paramount. In line with the recommendations suggested by Lindlof and Taylor (2002, p. 90), I considered the issue of informed consent. In this project, all participants who were interviewed were voluntary participants who agreed to participate after being approached by me directly and provided with information about the project. Participants were assured that all information that could identify them in terms of their personal details, employers, clients and campaigns would be stripped from the data that was presented in the thesis and related publications. Consent forms were signed by all participants who were interviewed and they were clearly advised that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

A comprehensive application to proceed with the research was approved by the University of Newcastle’s Human Ethics Committee and the study proceeded in accordance with the approved application. The ethics approvals are included at Appendix A.

3.7 A discussion of issues relating to trustworthiness

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) relate issues of trustworthiness to more traditional quantitative issues of validity and reliability. Validity relates to the nature of one’s findings (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998, p. 19) and is the degree to which something measures what it is purported to measure; and reliability is “the consistency with which it measures over time” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 85). These do not apply well to the interpretative assumptions made in qualitative research as the
“interpretative paradigm recognizes the constantly changing character of cultures, perceptions and forms of actions” (Lindlof, 1995, p. 238). According to Lindlof (1995), because what can be observed of a scene is profoundly contingent on time, and on the individual human-as-research-instrument..., little is gained from trying to achieve reliability. Applying the concept of validity to qualitative research is also difficult. A world consisting of multiple, constructed realities does not permit the researcher to identify any single representation as the criterion for accurate measurement. And because the inquirer operates reflexively as a participant, it is doubtful whether the usual way of conceiving internal validity has much relevance (p. 238).

However, qualitative researchers do want to undertake research that is valued and to that end, credible and dependable data was sought. In qualitative research one searches for possible plausible interpretations rather than a single correct interpretation. Using techniques such as triangulation, member checks, searching for negative cases, thick description and reflexivity can assist in this quest (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, pp. 95-101; Lindlof, 1995, p. 238).

### 3.7.1 Triangulation

Triangulation involves a comparative assessment of more than one form of evidence about an object of enquiry (Lindlof, 1995, p. 239), meaning that “accounts produced from one source can be contrasted to those from another...in pursuit of deeper, more valid, interpretations (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998, p. 44). In this project, both interview transcripts and the award entry texts were used. The evidence in these two forms was weighed against accounts of practice in the literature and my own understandings of practice acquired in my professional work over the last twenty years or so. In line with what Lindlof (1995, 2002) asserts about one method of the triangulation process perhaps carrying greater credibility and other methods being more complimentary as they enrich or impose qualifications on explanations arising from the primary source, most emphasis of the analysis was placed on the award entries, interview transcripts and academic literature. Efforts to triangulate were not related to notions of reliability but to providing viewpoints on public relations practice through...
different lenses. Readers can read my accounts and explanations of practice and compare them with other accounts reported by others, or they can go and conduct their own research on practice to compare with those recorded in this project. This is not about being able to replicate the study but being able to gain deeper understandings of the social construction of public relations practice and the social constructions of meanings that practitioners attempt in their work.

### 3.7.2 Member checks

Throughout this project, the emerging concepts, findings, interpretations and theory developments were checked with members of the local culture, i.e., public relations practitioners and researchers (current or past). Lindlof (1995) states that member checks “constitute critiques from individuals who are both ‘insiders’ (to the culture) and ‘outsiders’ (to the project)...and can be important situations of interpretative validation” (p.241). For this purpose, as previously mentioned, I presented my research proposal, work in progress and provisional findings at forums and conferences, and also in academic papers which were peer reviewed, enabling me to get feedback and in essence check on my findings. I was also keen to obtain feedback and checks on the interview transcripts from the interview participants themselves. Carrying out such checks with them would increase the likelihood that their point of view was being accurately presented in my research (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). In the project information statement and also in the thank-you letters to all 18 interview respondents, I offered copies of the interview recordings and transcripts for their records and the opportunity to provide feedback/changes to me. Unfortunately for the project, no-one responded that they wanted this material and such checks were unable to be carried out. However, I feel that the feedback obtained from the other forums and my thesis supervisors guided my research sufficiently. Member checks were very helpful, whilst recognising that each person providing such checks brought their own views and biases which “surely affect what he or she can authenticate” (Lindlof, 1995, p. 241). Most feedback was very constructive and many of the checks were from current academics in the field, who had quite recent or contemporaneous public relations practice experience through consultancy work and similar.
3.7.3 Negative cases

According to Daymon and Holloway (2002, p. 98), the credibility of qualitative research is enhanced when discrepant data or what is known as negative cases are identified and analysed. In this project, such discrepant data was sought but only small amounts of such data were found. Where such accounts were found, they have been included. It was the case that the findings from both the award entries and the interviews strongly supported a particular approach to practice, which aligned strongly with my own experiences of professional practice. I do not believe this was due to my selective use of the available data. The award entry texts were revisited many times seeking negative cases and, as they are publicly available documents to anyone with an internet connection, any reader may also examine them for such a purpose. Other people may interpret the texts differently, but I am also confident that under such potential public scrutiny the analysis and justifications for my decision-making in the project are credible. As stated in the description of the research interview sample used in this project, particular practitioners were not singled out for the views that they might offer but were selected on the basis that they met the criteria for the sample and on their availability.

3.7.4 Thick Description

I have included in the following chapters extensive samples of participants’ quotes from the interviews and also relevant sections of text from the award entries to “provide the details and substantiate the story” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 107) that I’m telling about public relations practice. Such accounts allow “users to compare them to the known attributes of other sites of social life” (Lindlof, 1995, p. 239). This is known as thick description and is essentially the provision to the reader of a detailed description of “the process, context and people in the research, inclusive of the meaning and intentions of the participants” which helps to establish the quality of the research that has been done (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p. 100).

3.7.5 Reflexivity

I have endeavoured to situate myself in the research in order to reflect on the findings and also to provide a high degree of transparency. I am not a disinterested observer in this project as its outcomes potentially have implications for my future career in
teaching and research, as well as for the field more generally. In providing the information in the following section of this chapter and being reflexive throughout the project, I have tried to acknowledge that I am part of this research and have made all efforts to be as open and honest as possible.

3.8 Situating myself in the research project

As a researcher, I recognise that my life and professional experience have influenced the selection of my research topic. Taylor (2001) suggests that chosen topics are likely to be those that resonate with the interests and beliefs of the researcher and that the identity of the researcher also impacts on the process of data collection, interpretation and analysis through factors such as beliefs, general world view and the experience one brings to the project. I commenced this research project with extensive experience as a public relations practitioner and limited experience as an academic researcher. I know that I cannot claim to be able to capture the “truth” of public relations in this research but instead I aimed to produce what Gray (2003, p. 21) calls a “version of the truth…which we present modestly for others to consider” (p.21).

The main concern I took into this project was whether having so much experience in the industry could cloud areas of questioning or analysis. Many public relations researchers have worked in the public relations industry (e.g. Berger, B; Chia, J; Glenny, L; Howell, G; McDonald, L; Tilley, E.) as have I – whether this was an advantage or disadvantage is debatable. Having knowledge of the chosen field of study and operating within the same overall cultural framework as the respondents is one of the things that sets cultural studies methodology apart from that used in sociology and anthropology (Gray, 2003). Gray (2003) outlines some of the disadvantages that the researcher’s familiarity with the field of study may bring including being “blind to different aspects of it” (p.84), identifying too closely with participants and failing to “critically analyse their activities, accounts or practices” (p. 84). A researcher’s abilities and potential depend on his or her competencies and available repertoires, and as a researcher I must reveal these to myself to enable me to be reflexive about my position within my own work (Gray, 2003). Gray (2003) states that, “to do this is to begin to ‘denaturalise’ our own assumptions and prejudices as they are revealed within our research” (p. 86).
By way of background, my first public relations work was in designing and implementing nursing recruitment campaigns for major Sydney public hospitals in 1986. My professional life as a practitioner culminated in my holding senior public relations management positions, at state or national director level, from 1998 – 2006. I continue to accept occasional high level consultancy roles and serve as a member of the marketing sub-committee of the Board of Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism. I have insight into the Public Relations Institute of Australia’s Golden Target Award processes having previously prepared entries and taken out two state awards and one national award for outstanding public relations campaigns. I bring to this project, as a result, an in-depth knowledge of the practices of the professional field having worked in government, not-for-profit, financial services marketing communications and health communications sectors. I also worked as a freelance feature writer in the 1990s with work published in major Australian daily newspapers and national magazines.

I was born in Sydney in 1962, am a female of Anglo-Celtic heritage, and was brought up in a middle-class suburb in a two-parent family with one younger brother. I am married with two teenage children and having spent most of my life living in capital cities, now live in a rural town of around 2000 inhabitants. It is within 60km of a major regional city and 170 km from a state capital city. I have a first class honours degree in Communication, with a double major in Social and Political Studies and Textual Studies (UTS), a Master of Art in Journalism (UTS), a Graduate Certificate in the Practice of Tertiary Teaching (UoN) and am working towards a PhD in Communication and Media.

3.9 The limitations of the research study

Detailing the limitations of a qualitative research project is one way a researcher can control for such limitations. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 79). This can also provide readers with a reminder that a project is situated within a specific context which can assist them in making decisions about the usefulness of the study for other settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 79). In this study, one of the limitations is that the research concentrated on examining award entries which were national award winners in their category and have been acknowledged by the Australian public relations industry as examples of best practice. It also focused on the data generated by interviews with practitioners who have all been acknowledged by their peers, through
winning national awards, as practitioners who have demonstrated best practice. Berger (2005) highlighted the essential dissonance in public relations practice and how a practitioner’s role and “whom one serves or how one is defined” (p. 23) creates difficulties in determining “what public relations will be and how it will be used in an organization” (p. 24). The descriptions of practice in this study address this dissonance in some cases, articulating some of these tensions and detailing how they were resolved, e.g. PRIA award entry call no. 2000 A17. This is surprising in some respects, especially as the award entries are publicly available online, with the degree of conflict or the highly politically-charged environments being described in the situation analysis sections of the award entries, in detail in some instances. This research does not specifically analyse this aspect of the texts, but it would be an interesting exercise to do so in the future. In acknowledging that this study essentially examines depictions of best practice in an Australian context, it is also acknowledged that a sample of practice descriptions detailing something less than best practice, or any other collection of data detailing best practice, for example, collections of award entry texts from other countries, might have resulted in different findings.

It is also noted that this research does not examine public relations practice from the perspectives of publics and audiences and does not presume to know the intent, wherewithal or any other characteristic of the publics and audiences who engaged or did not engage with the various public relations campaigns which have been described in this project. Reports of campaign results and evaluation data included in the award entries have been authored by award entrants who are public relations practitioners. I have relied on the fact that the entries went through the judging processes and that entries would have been authorised by sponsoring organisations to support the veracity of information presented.

Other limitations include the sample sizes (in that larger or smaller samples may have led to different findings), the reliance on the selected techniques for gathering data and issues of researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 79). The limitations described are not unique to this study, are common to much qualitative research methodology and are mainly centred on the issue of researcher subjectivity, that is, the fact that the analysis “ultimately rests with the thinking and choices of the researcher” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 87). All these limitations underpin the reasons why I have, for
example, labelled my proposed conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations as a “provisional conceptual framework” – I hope that the framework will be further tested and developed to become useful in public relations practice and research. I anticipate that the overall work that I have invested in this project to maximise its credibility helps readers to assess my work for its applicability and to apply it appropriately in other settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 88).

3.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed description of my doctoral research methodology. I have taken a cultural studies perspective which is broadly social constructionist in its research approach, encompassing the methods of textual and thematic analysis, to examine some of the key processes and techniques that public relations practitioners strategically employ to have target publics and audiences construct specific intended meanings. The research sample comprised 57 PRIA Golden Target Award entry texts and 18 PRIA Golden Target Award-winning practitioners. The data collection methods were primarily the examination of award entry texts and the conducting of semi-structured long interviews. The data was reviewed against the relevant literature in addition to the themes emerging from the research itself. Credibility and issues of trust were addressed through strategies including triangulation, member checks, thick description and reflexivity. In detailing the research design and data analytical processes, I have described how the project was undertaken and how the resulting conclusions were drawn.

In the following chapter I will report on the research findings.
4. Major findings: Furthering understanding of the purpose of public relations campaign and how it is achieved

The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and to identify the means by which that purpose was achieved. Gaining new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorized was seen as a way to further inform the development of practice, research and education in public relations. This chapter reports on an examination of Australian public relations practice, as presented in award entry texts and in interviews with award-winning practitioners, to determine the purpose of public relations campaigns and by what means these purposes were achieved. It was found that the underlying purpose of all campaigns examined was to have target publics and audiences construct particular meanings that would facilitate the achievement of stated organisational goals. From this point, an examination of how the campaigns tried to achieve this underlying purpose was performed.

Overall, four major findings emerged:

1. All the campaign practice examined in this project could be described as efforts to strategically construct the intended meaning of the organisation that commissioned the public relations activity, that is, to construct a version of social reality, a version that facilitated the organisation that commissioned the public relations campaign achieving its stated goals.

2. Success measurements were linked back to the campaign’s goals and objectives which were invariably aimed at advancing the organisation’s agenda/mission. Although evidence suggested there were varying degrees of benefit to some audiences and publics as a result of campaigns, there was little evidence of mutually beneficial outcomes being a measure of success.
3. The means by which the construction of the organisation’s intended meaning was achieved was through the application of a variety of processes and techniques which were selected, tailored and implemented on the basis of campaign research results. The processes and techniques included media and messaging management; direct engagement; building awareness or understanding; positioning; informing or educating; issue management; marketing, sales and advertising; and, persuading or convincing.

4. The theoretical orientation of campaign practice as presented in the award entries aligned with Grunig and Hunt’s (1984, pp. 21-22) two-way asymmetrical communication. There was scant evidence of the application of the two-way symmetrical public relations model.

Following is a description of the findings with details that support and explain each finding. A range of experiences in the form of excerpts of text from the award entries and transcripts of interviews with practitioners has been included to enable readers to engage with this study and better understand the nature of public relations campaign practice. To facilitate ease of reading, the longer versions of data tables are included in the appendices and these are referenced throughout this chapter. The emphasis in this chapter is allowing the data to “speak for itself” in an attempt to portray multiple perspectives and to capture some of the richness and complexity of the subject matter. Where appropriate, insights from the academic literature are woven in with the data to enhance the discussion and facilitate further insight.

4.1 Finding 1

All the campaign practice examined in this project could be described as efforts to strategically construct the intended meaning of the organisation that commissioned the public relations activity, that is, to construct a version of social reality, a version that facilitated the organisation that commissioned the public relations campaign achieving its stated goals.

There were no instances where an organisation could be identified as not wanting target publics and audiences to construct an intended meaning for the benefit of the client or
organisation that had commissioned the public relations activity. Table 4.1 shows an excerpt from the summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics and audiences. The full list can be viewed at Appendix B.

**Table 4.1**
*Excerpt from the summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics and audiences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.</th>
<th>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics and audiences</th>
<th>Achieved?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005 A4</td>
<td>Positioning Alcan as credible and capable in terms of the proposed development.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 B7</td>
<td>To enhance the meaning of Australia Day</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 G2</td>
<td>The Trust was credible and worthy of support, was not like other agencies and was an important adviser to government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6 - 25</td>
<td>That groundwater was a logical, safe and well tested alternative water supply and testing was not wasting water</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 – 4</td>
<td>That therapeutic cloning has the best chance of success, Australia should not to fall behind in this and it was a matter for a conscience vote.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 – 2</td>
<td>With increasing need for services with the ageing population the Ear and Eye Hospital is best geographically situated to meet that need</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* “Call nos. are those listed on the database of award entries at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ and can be used to retrieve the award entries included in the study.

All award entry texts had stated goals and/or objectives as this was part of the award entry template but, it was noted that no goal or objective was expressed in a way that would support a normative two-way symmetrical model of public relations. The following table provides an excerpt of goal and objective statements from the award entries (a summary of goal and objectives statements from all 57 entries is available at Appendix C):
Table 4.2
Excerpt from the summary of statements of goals/objectives from award entries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.</th>
<th>Statement of goals/objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004 H25</td>
<td>Achieve the Sands of Gallipoli national sales target of $500,000 by creating a positive environment for sales through: National and state media coverage which achieves big impact with a low budget; Effective management of anticipated issues surrounding the sensitivity of the Gallipoli legend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 G11</td>
<td>Raise Sentek's profile in South Australia, and nationally, positioning the company as a leader and innovator in research and development. Objectives: 1. Create an opportunity for Sentek to engage independent researchers and industry influencers, building stronger collaborative relations and harnessing their support to reinforce the credibility of its technology; 2. Raise awareness among primary producers about Sentek and its technology, and how it will help manage salinity and fertiliser; 3. Generate immediate and widespread media coverage targeting key influencers and primary industry sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 C9</td>
<td>Enhance the reputation of the Faculty with alumni, students, staff and supporters; Re-establish relationships with Faculty alumni; Assist in locating Faculty alumni; Titillate visually and intellectually; Engage intellectually; Provide opportunities for interaction; Reinforce advantages of continuing contact with UNSW; Encourage participation in broader alumni activities; Solicit ideas re: types of possible interaction/relationship; communicate development activities and seek support; Promote post-graduate courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 F8</td>
<td>To restore, protect and even enhance Shell's reputation, brand and 'licence to operate'. Objectives: Ensure communications to key audiences were timely and empathetic; Communicate company's decision to take moral responsibility for the spill; Maintain the trust of stakeholders; Ensure Shell's Gore Bay terminal continued to operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C11 - 3</td>
<td>To diversify the core reasons people give for attending the Show beyond the traditional three of animals, Showbags and Carnival. To achieve this, the Sydney Royal Rodeo was established as an integral part of the public relations, advertising, marketing and media sponsorship campaigns. Objectives: 1. Increase the number of people who cited NAB Arena entertainment as a reason to visit the Show by 5%; 2. Increase the number of people who cited rodeo as a reason to attend the Show by 5%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 B14</td>
<td>The central goals of this project were to raise awareness of availability of redress to Australian-based survivors of residential abuse in Ireland and to put survivors who were interested in applying for redress in contact with legal advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 A20</td>
<td>Raise awareness among livestock producers about emergency animal diseases, the need to check livestock regularly for unusual symptoms, and to report these symptoms quickly through the right channels. Specific objectives: 1. Help AHA build stronger and more active relationships with government and industry partners...2. Secure media coverage ... with the aim of involving more than 50% of program &quot;champions&quot; in media liaison. 3. Raise awareness among two specific industry sectors...and build relationships with key industry groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 H8</td>
<td>The overall goal of the print communication campaign was to rebrand Southbank Institute of TAFE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a Call nos. are those listed on the database of award entries at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ and can be used to retrieve the award entries included in the study.
The nature of campaigns being driven by the desire to achieve the organisation’s goal was supported in the interview data with no interview respondent indicating that public relations was ever undertaken without the express intention of achieving their organisation’s goals:

The goal is your end state, so what’s your client really wanting here? So, is the client wanting to improve their share price or sell more products or retain and recruit the best talent? What is it, what’s the end state that your client wants, and that’s your goal. Clients most often come to us with an outcome in mind and so long as they perceive they’ve got their outcome, they are happy with that, they don’t need the documented evidence to back it up, which is quite interesting. The objective to us is how is communication is going to help them achieve that goal, so what are the outcomes that we want to get from our communication program that will help that client achieve that goal? INF17 interview

Well, our objective was very, very simple: we wanted to change the law, and we did, and we were able to demonstrate through, I suppose the submission that we made, the steps that we took to achieve it and that was not an either/or in terms of our direct lobbying, but it also, you know, suggested how we addressed constituents and members and corralled a coalition of interest to act in a unified way, how we used the media to deliver messages, how we did our research to identify the likely voting patterns of MPs and senators, how we identified, I suppose, arguments that might appeal to different interests and applied those directly as well as our more broad-based messaging. So it was all those things...I mean, if you think about how you want to, you know, win somebody over and do something, I mean this is not rocket science. INF10 interview

Respondents, when discussing the achievement of goals, invariably brought to the fore the need to conduct campaigns strategically, for example:

A strategic approach is essential for everything we do. I think in the last couple of years it’s something that we’ve actually been refining further, that typically, in the past if you looked at a list of target publics, there would just be a list of
them, naming them. The first step was to look at, how do we want to influence
them, like what’s their current perception versus what we want it to be at the end
of this program...like those sorts of elementary types of analysis...But with
major programs like any issues based program is very advanced now in terms,
from our perspective, in terms of the depths that we go to, to really understand.
A couple of things; one is the environment that the business is working within.
So that could be political, financial, competitive markets and so on, to get a
really solid picture of that environment for whatever we are doing with the
client, and then from a stakeholder perspective, a lot of detail about their
motivation and their interests, what are they wanting to know in detail, and then
the way that plays out. Once you have all that information at hand, you can
better determine what’s the strategy that we need to employ to communicate to
these people and in this situation, and based on the understanding that you’ve
got, this also influences your tactics and methodology of how you reach them. -
INF17 interview

You could have a message strategy, an audience strategy or an implementation
strategy. So, for example, a message strategy might be that everything we do
has to position this company a certain way, or everything we do has to promote
a product in a particular light, or whatever the case might be, but it’s a message
that would then pervade everything that we do. The audience strategy is, is
there a particular audience that we are going to leverage to achieve the outcomes
that we want to get? And the implementation strategy is something simple
around, it could be, is this going to be a three phased strategy or is it going to be
broad and encompassing, is it going to be targeted, what’s the overall approach
to implementation that we are going to take that will guide strategies...then
comes to the other point about strategy that we are trying to get people to think
about more is, what is the campaignable concept in everything that we do. So,
while you’ve got your message and audience and implementation strategies,
how you wrap that into a concept so it’s like the military analogy ... it’s the
shock and awe campaign. That’s the campaignable concept there. You can see
how that concept pervades everything that we do. - INF17 interview
We said very much our messaging will focus in and it was about what motivates them. Incentives motivate them and if they’re time poor then we’ll give them resources to help them find things, if it’s that children are nagging their family we’ll give them a school prize to get them involved ... so that's how we sort of did the strategy - by seeing what would resonate with that community. Not the other way around - I do think you do have to find out what the target public wants so it resonates. - INF4 interview

So what we decided to do, and this was a dangerous strategy, but it paid off, we reckoned, and you know how media coverage tends to develop and start off with the news and then you have the implications, then you have the human dimension, and I don’t know how bigger crises this is, this goes over a longish period. We decided to compress all this and so we were very available for the media in the first 24 hours and we reckoned by doing that, we could probably kill the issue within 72 hours and in fact we did so in 48 hours. - INF9 interview

One respondent indicated that in economic boom times, there might have been time and resources to undertake public relations that was less directly linked to the organisation’s bottom line:

Well, these days it’s all about how do you increase sales? It’s very sales-oriented as opposed to reputation-oriented. That’s the big shift when a recession hits... So I think that’s the real, I find that to be the real challenge for us now in the next wave, because this is all the boom and good times PR campaigns. You’ve got some luxury there and buffer, but in the ROI sales-driven times I think we’ve got a real challenge to communicate to clients how we can help with sales enablement by influencing influencers, especially where decisions need to be made, and a lot of research goes into a consumer decision, and how also reputation helps sales. So I think that’s a very big image, it’s just been coming up a lot in the pitches that I’ve been involved in lately. Prove to me; give me a case study that shows me how you lifted sales with this campaign. - INF13 interview
The data overwhelmingly shows a functional perspective to campaigns in that “publics and communication” are being used as “tools or means to achieve organizational ends” where the focus is “generally on techniques and production of strategic organizational messages” (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 14). The award entry data indicate that organisations want targeted audiences and publics to construct particular intended meanings that will result in the targeted people acting or thinking in ways that they did not prior to the campaign activity.

4.2 Finding 2

Success measurements were linked back to the campaign’s goals and objectives which were invariably aimed at advancing the organisation’s agenda/mission. Although evidence suggested there were varying degrees of benefit to some audiences and publics as a result of campaigns there was little evidence of mutually beneficial outcomes being a measure of success.

Results statements could be interpreted as substantial evidence of the primary pursuit by practitioners of functional goal-oriented outcomes - mainly to have publics and audiences adopt the understanding or position intended for them, or to have target publics and audiences carry out an intended behaviour. Of the 57 award entries examined, all reported success in their campaigns, which in the context of national award winning campaigns was to be expected. In this study, success was measured and reported in a variety of ways by award entrants but could be broadly classified into four major areas:

1. Media content analysis results
2. Stakeholder perception analysis results
3. Support from third parties
4. Increased profile or level of engagement from publics and audiences

The following statements taken from a random selection of the award entries sample gives some insight into how award entry results were presented:
Table 4.3
Award entry data excerpts – reporting of results

1. Media content analysis
- “100% of key messages in monitored media” (Rowland Communication Group, 2004)
- “The influence of CAMRA’s campaign is clear from a review of the sample media clips” (CAMRA 2007)
- “88% of print and online news articles contained two or more of KRC key messages” (Rowland, 2007)
- “Extensive media coverage highlighted the high calibre of Cryosite’s directors and the nature of the company’s business” (Westbrook, 2003)

2. Stakeholder perception analysis
- “research undertaken 3 months into the positioning campaign showed improved perceptions/awareness” (Rowland Communication Group, 2005)
- “no objections were received…inquiries instead related to offers of assistance to locate existing bores…” (Marcom, 2007)
- “Interviews with members and an analysis of media coverage after the campaign showed that members were pleased” (WCG Public Relations, 1999)
- “the Mufti of Australia…believed the campaign set up an atmosphere in Baghdad conducive to negotiating successfully with the kidnappers” (Smail, 2005)

3. Support from third parties:
- “third party endorsements from NT government and Opposition” (Rowland Communication Group, 2005)
- “the op-ed pieces in favour of therapeutic cloning heavily out-weighed the anti-lobby” (CAMRA, 2007)
- “all pig farmers remained with KRC” (Rowland, 2007)
- “launched…with high level political endorsement” (Cox Inall, 1999)

4. Increased profile or level of engagement:
- “Invited to sit on two project teams and one panel during the preparation for new Department of Child Safety” (Rowland Communication Group, 2004)
- “recruited 12 new members” (WCG Public Relations, 1999)
- “The percentage of respondents who had come to the speedway with their families increased from 64% to 77%” (Creative Territory, 2007)
- “Over 85% of people stayed with factory until final closure” (Rowland, 2007)

Even when an entry outlined a goal that was seemingly in the public interest, such as in award entry call no. 2007 C6-26, where there was a clear desire by the Council to get the solution to a traffic problem right and extensive consultative opportunities were arranged, the intent behind the processes and techniques employed could be interpreted as strategic:

The overarching consultation goal was to gather feedback and identify a clear preference to inform Council’s upgrade decision-making. A secondary goal was
to demonstrate Council’s genuine commitment to community involvement.

(2007 C6-26)

A council that is consultative is seen to be creating goodwill and as responding to community preferences, and is more likely to be elected - a solution put forward by a majority group of road users and ratepayers is less easily criticised than one unilaterally decided upon by the council. This award entry is one of a few that move toward the symmetrical model of two-way communication but given the initiative is controlled at all points by the Council, it must be concluded that it is asymmetrical. Bowen and Heath (2005) have stated that

the relationship between company and publics is not mutually beneficial or dialogic when it advantages the company because it operates on this premise: ‘I will perform. Then I will grade my own performance and announce that I have excelled’. (p.90)

This way of operating can be seen in every award entry, but it is evident that the balance between serving communities and serving “self” in organisations that exist to meet community needs is challenging. The ultimate goal for such organisations, according to Heath (2001b), is being able to meet the expectations of the community by “positioning institutions to meet community constituent needs” (p. 443). However it could also be argued, that if the organisation did not meet community constituent needs, the community institution would be decommissioned or changed, potentially negatively impacting on management staff, who may be enjoying their careers and the benefits that a successful career in such an institution delivers. Evidence suggests that it is always a juggling act of sorts.

Overall, there was little evidence to suggest that organisations were looking for any public discussion or wrangling where arguments would be challenged. Evidence indicates that success is equated to instances where there is as little challenge to key messages as possible – as seen in the media content analysis where examples of when media reported messages are issued by the organisation as a sign of success. The data supports a successful campaign being defined as one which achieves the goals and objectives the organisation has set for itself in order to advance its mission.
4.3 Finding 3

The means by which the construction of the organisation’s intended meaning was achieved was through the application of a variety of processes and techniques which were selected, tailored and implemented on the basis of campaign research results. The processes and techniques included media and messaging management; direct engagement; building awareness or understanding; positioning; informing or educating; issue management; marketing, sales and advertising; and, persuading or convincing.

4.3.1 Campaign research

All award entries showed evidence of attempting to scope the pre-campaign terrain and to gain understanding of target publics and audiences. This was reported in the “Campaign Research” sections of the award entries and it should be noted that this section was a mandatory requirement for completion in the award template. The text of the various sections of the award entries, including situational analysis summaries and research and executive summaries, indicated that prior to the campaign activities instigated by the award entrants, target publics and audiences had not created the specific intended meanings listed above, or had not created them to a sufficient degree that would lead to the achievement of the organisation’s goal. The campaign research conducted varied from desk research which examined past campaigns, or gathered information on stakeholders or competitors, through to surveys and focus groups to “test-drive” ideas or draft materials, to name but a few, for example:

A focus group was held to test the feasibility of a regular journal for our Faculty's graduates as well as explore content options and preferences...
Following the report from the focus group, it was agreed to form an Editorial Board to develop the concept further and produce the journal twice a year initially. (2000 C9)

A SWOT analysis and anecdotal research was undertaken to identify the specific internal and external issues that may impact upon the national communication strategy. (2003 B7)
The following snapshot shows an excerpt from the “research” section of award entry 2004 G 2, which shows the nature of the research and its purpose:

Table 4.4
2004 G2 Excerpt of research and its purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of media coverage, independent research reports, government policy</td>
<td>Assess media tone, commentators and editorial opportunities, key issues and government priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Trust’s collateral material</td>
<td>Understand current positioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder and issues audit</td>
<td>Identify stakeholders, relationships, issues, communication channels and tools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* From Golden Target Award call no. 2004 G 2 Rowland Communication Group (2004), (see Appendix E). Call nos. are those listed on the database of award entries at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ and can be used to retrieve the award entries included in the study.

The data in the award entries suggest practitioners were invariably using research to develop the campaign strategy and inform decision-making for all aspects of the campaign. As well as being evident in the award entry texts, the theme of basing the development of the tactics and strategies on the research findings also emerged strongly in the interviews with practitioners, for example:

I think that from a consultancy perspective the clients have always got to see there’s value in the action that we are recommending they take. So if you are clearly communicating with them that if we do this research, here’s the outcomes we are going to get for it and that’s how we are going to use the findings in our strategy, if you can show that logical link between doing the research and having a more effective strategy with better outcomes, they are more receptive to it, if it’s research for the sake of it, then I don’t think anybody would go for it. - INF17 interview

As a practitioner you craft a message and you put a lot of work into crafting that message so it can be understood, that’s the first step so these people take this message and they understand it within their own frame of reference so you’ve got to understand what their frame of reference is likely to be so that it’s understood in the way you intend it to be taken. - INF4 interview
We go through target audiences and influencers and we kind of do a bit of a map now with the social media space, and then a very clear kind of overview of the strategic approach and the vision and the campaigns, the audiences, the messages. Then it’s very ROI-oriented, so again it goes back to what objective is it, what kind of PR is it, what kind of tactics are we doing, what’s the goal, how do we measure it, and what resources will it require, timeline, critical success factors and that’s the bit that covers our arse when, sorry, it’s about the client’s role, what they’ve got to sign up to as well, budget, and background research. So it’s a fairly, I mean... so it’s a fairly thorough and strategic process.

- INF13 interview

It did take a little bit of lateral thinking and without doing my research on that I would have gone down the same path as everyone would go down in assuming it was the parents who made the decisions for the kids and in the biggest government department here almost everything we do about schools would be to the parents because they will decide, but these kids are actually huge decision makers in their own schooling so, if we had done what we always did to get the results we always got, we would have missed the kids altogether.

- INF1 interview

I can think of a number of projects where the use of qual and quantitative research has produced far more powerful strategies because you really understand. I can think of some recent projects we've done on genetically modified foods where we did 500 quant surveys and then we did 4 focus groups with particular groups who were identified and it gave us a much more powerful strategy in terms of not just segmenting messages in that case but also understanding male voters. For example, the quantitative survey showed, you know, tertiary educated women between 40 and 45 were a real issue and probably 40-50 as well, so we did some focus groups and we started to hear well, we don't trust government because of, you know, issues with thalidomide and the female contraceptive pill and breast cancer and so don't craft a message about ‘trust the government’ because we've been there and we're living with the consequences of these types of things.

- INF5 interview

That bit about finding where they are currently and bring them along...if you just
try and push a message and you haven't thought about somebody's frame of reference, they'll just walk out the room and go ‘oh whatever’, but I think if you can come back to their frame of reference and build on that and bring them along then I think that's the bit about where is there true understanding. - INF6 interview

The following two examples are provided to shed light on the link between research, strategy and the implementation of the various factors – all award entries showed similar links. For example, in one award entry, call no. 2000 A17, research findings were reported as:

There was strong interest in taking advantage of free prisoner labour, which could help appeal to, and help overcome opposition from, those with prejudices or fears about having criminals in their neighbourhood…participating in prisoner rehabilitation would not be a strong selling point…people’s strongest concerns related to fear of the unknown about prisoners and the prison system. (Ministry for Justice, 2000, Research Findings)

The communication strategy subsequently focused on altering the usual government processes and aimed to:

Establish one [a process] where enough interest was created throughout regional Western Australia, to inspire bids for the right to host prisoner work camps. Essentially the challenge was to make work camps highly sought-after opportunities rather than an imposition on a community. (Ministry for Justice, 2000, Communication Strategy)

The factors introduced into the environments of the target publics and audiences (which included local shires, councillors and communities; local residents in general vicinity of proposed camp sites; key community representatives - community spirited opinion leaders; local community groups; Municipal Association; Members of Parliament; news media; Prison Officers Union; prison officers; minimum-security prisoners) - were tailored according to the identified needs of each group, e.g. “tailored media releases…tailored information brochures…tailored video presentation” (Ministry for
Justice, 2000, Implementation). In this award entry, it was presented that target publics and audiences had constructed, prior to the campaign’s commencement, a particular meaning about prisoner work camps which was negative and did not bode well for the introduction of the camps. Public relations activity that aimed to have target publics and audiences construct a different meaning, one that repositioned camps as a positive asset to a community, that is, the intended meaning of the Ministry for Justice, was instigated. The campaign goal and objectives were reported as having been achieved.

In another example award entry (call no. 2005 A4), Alcan’s research had identified that some stakeholders “wrongly thought Alcan only recycled aluminium cans and made alfoil” (Rowland Communication Group, 2005, Situation Analysis). This lack of understanding amongst stakeholders, including key political decision-makers, would clearly not assist Alcan in achieving its stated goal of helping “secure stakeholder approval of the Gove refinery expansion, while managing expectations” (Goals and Objectives).

The strategy developed a clear positioning for Alcan in Australia, reinforcing its credibility and capability. It positioned the expansion as beneficial and proactively managed issues that could potentially impact stakeholder perceptions. (Executive Summary)

The stated strategic approach was to “communicate positioning via national communication strategy” with the rationale being to improve perceptions, build reputation and ensure consistent messaging (Rowland Communication Group, 2005, Communication Strategy). Alcan employed tactics that would help stakeholders create the meaning intended for them – that Alcan was credible and capable, positioning “the expansion as beneficial” (Executive Summary). The results of the campaign reported that

Alcan in Australia went from a company with little profile and perceived by some to only recycle cans and make alfoil to an acknowledged leader in Australia’s aluminium industry and a significant contributor to the Australian economy. (Results)
These descriptions all point to the attempts to identify where the practitioner should intervene with techniques and processes of public relations in order to achieve the desired outcome. The subsequent descriptions of the way these techniques and processes were employed by practitioners further illuminate the goal-directedness of the public relations campaign work undertaken.

**4.3.2 Techniques and processes of meaning construction**

All award entries reported introducing a range of factors into the environments of their target publics. These factors included a variety of initiatives ranging from created events, media content, publications, opportunities for discussion, direct contact, product sampling, sponsorship of events, product or service modifications, paid advertising, submissions, promotional handouts and combinations of these. From the award entry textual data analysis the coding categories showed that all campaigns used a combination of processes and techniques from at least two through to a maximum of eight (see Appendix D). The data was then analysed to ascertain whether there was one process or technique that could be seen to be the main one used in each campaign. Media and messaging management was the most prevalent technique or process used, with others progressively decreasing in prevalence:

a) Media and messaging management (including media relations processes and techniques; key messages; media training; spokesperson selection) (28%)

b) Direct engagement (i.e. unmediated communication) with publics/audiences/stakeholders (17%)

c) Positioning (12%)

d) Building awareness or understanding of something (12%)

e) Informing or educating (7%)

f) Issue management (6%)

g) Marketing (product/distribution/price), sales and advertising (6%)

h) Persuading or convincing (6%)

i) Other various themes unable to be grouped into above (6%)
The following excerpts from the award entry texts are indicative of the descriptions of these techniques and processes.

**Table 4.5**
*Processing and techniques – excerpts from award entry data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process/technique</th>
<th>Examples from award entry text data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Media and messaging management           | • The media was used to promulgate key campaign messages. Media releases were targeted to individual media by type (press, radio and television), style (formal or informal, news or talk show) and geographic location. (2004 G11)  
  • Research provided the basis for a very successful strategy and shaped our campaign materials, messages and tactics...In particular we gained...a head-start on likely advocates/antagonists; an insight into key messages to address/attract community sentiment; a basis for more effective tactics to counter the opposition campaign. (2006 C15-3)  
  • The TPN training session focused on why PR was important, and how each DFM and branch could become involved. This included training on how regional media works, how to handle interviews, liaising with local media, and developing ideas for a local branch launch or promotional event. Impromptu on-the-spot interviews helped sharpen key marketing messages and how to convey them clearly to clients or the media. (2001 G 15) |
| Direct engagement                        | • Shell staff contacted senior advisers for the relevant ministers and government departments on the night of the spill. The next day, personal briefings by Shell senior management were instigated, including a briefing for the NSW Premier by Shell's CEO. Follow-up letters with additional background information were sent to all government contacted. (2000 F 8)  
  • A range of external stakeholders was engaged and reassured about the facility in the face of the opposition campaign. A community forum was held to engage interested members of the community and local groups in the service planning for the new unit. (2006 C15-3)  
  • The use of the RCH redevelopment website and online feedback mechanisms provided Socom with a greater reach into the broader community, including people in rural and regional Victoria. Expos were open to the general public to encourage greater participation. Simple-to-use feedback forms were available at all public expos, workshops and online so that |
| Positioning | To ensure that messages were captured in news grabs and metropolitan and regional programs Alan Schaefer and Kevin Darke participated in radio interviews across the country on talk/news programs. Media opportunities and updates were provided to ensure SB's position and messages were communicated following the announcement of the total recall. (2001 F2)  
- Twinings needed to reinvigorate its position as a specialist tea blender to protect its brand equity. (1999 E8)  
- Objective: Position Woolworths as a proactive, innovative and respected corporate citizen. (2007 C11-3) |
| Building awareness or understanding of something | Objective: To create awareness amongst industry member organisations of the process to create a single service entity, its importance and the benefits to be gained. (1999 E8)  
- Objective: Increase the awareness of the competition through media coverage. (2006 C13-3)  
- Objective: Increase awareness of Mt Atkinson Olive Grove & Café. (2005 D3) |
| Informing or educating | It sought to speak directly to this audience by offering regular updates on achievements and progress, keeping all staff informed of decisions in real time and highlighting tangible achievements as they occurred. (2007 C7–7)  
- Explain the validity of the business plan for a start up business to build annuity-like revenue from cryogenic storage, to be achieved by information dissemination and media coverage. (2003 E3)  
- Communicate directly to cotton growers about their responsibilities when using endosulfan. (1999 B3) |
| Issue management | A brochure addressing the same issues as the video was also given wide circulation, as was a Q&A document containing responses to issues likely to be raised by environmental groups, the media and the public. This included the most controversial aspects of the project, clarifying them and allaying potential concerns before they could be raised by the project's opponents. (1999 A16)  
- Develop issues management plan (particularly about more public money being spent on another government bureaucracy. (2007 C7-7)  
- Without the opportunity to pre-brief staff or involve them in the process prior to the launch of the White Paper, it was |
imperative to anticipate their concerns and be prepared with responses. Significant preliminary work was done in developing perceptual and issues maps of stakeholders impacted by the White Paper, which was grouped into relevant and meaningful information for staff. (2004 C3)

| Marketing          | • Objective: Achieve 50% or more of egg products on shelf with NHF Tick. (2006 C15-6)  
                     | • To encourage new members and referrals from existing members, existing members were given the incentive of half price membership if they recruited a new member. - To add to the existing member benefits, new benefits were sought including discounted liquor and discounted accommodation. (1999 E16)  
                     | • This was used to drive audiences to other campaign elements. Television and press advertising the week before the letterbox drop asked the audience to look in your letterbox next week. Radio and press were used in the days leading up to information days and to remind people of enrolment days. (2003 G11) |

| Persuading or convincing | • The message Don't Let Another Year Go By was designed to play on a public feeling of it’s already June, where has this year gone. This message was particularly relevant to the older target audiences of mature-age professionals and parents of teenagers, who are more likely to believe that time is passing them by. (2003 G11)  
                        | • Both the Attorney General and executives within the Ministry of Justice had to be convinced that location selection by consultation was the best option and that Public Affairs should be involved with decision-making from the outset. (2000 A17)  
                        | • Objective: To convince State Government and Ipswich City Council leaders of the benefits of the merger. (2001 E3) |

| Other various themes unable to be grouped into above | • Objective: Achieve 100 per cent compliance by retailers to Council's Graffiti Prevention and Control of Aerosol Spray Paint Local Law No. 3. (2003 A6)  
                                                          | • Advocate for additional bus services, extended operating hours, weekend services and increased service frequency. Allies were selected due to the compatibility of their agenda with that of the Nolink campaign, the Public Transport Users Association is a key example. The Interface Councils sought to join with these groups to create a chorus of voices advocating for similar outcomes building pressure on government decision makers. (2006 C2-4)  
                                                          | • Our primary objective was to identify a qualified group of |
Much of the interview data shows practitioners talking about the various processes and techniques used to achieve their goals but usually these descriptions of practice were described in a strategic context. This description of trying to control the media space illuminates the typical way practitioners discussed their work:

Well what we tried to do was keep the media busy with stories, we drove the stories as if we didn’t fill the media, the media would fill it themselves. So we tried to find personalities, like each day or each couple of days when we thought it was timely that people were going to be interested again. We would find different personalities that we could make a story around and we would go and give that to the media and they would use that. And we invited the media in and we brought a specialist in, who was also more of a regional person, but we brought him in and we made a story about him. He was a specialist to do some technical stuff and MB went out and did media for us and worked with us to get the story of some of the local aspects of the event out - so we just kept filling the media space with constructive, you know, constructive stories. - INF18

Another interviewee clearly saw a military analogy in her issues management work. This long quote has been included in its entirety to show the level of strategic contextualisation in this particular agency:

It was bringing together a group of companies that currently operate under different brands and trying to bring them under the one umbrella master brand. Because of the history of those companies there was likely to be a lot of resistance to that so the need for a strong issues management aspect and pre-emptive action to anticipate that push back was key. The extent that they were going was just mind blowing, and I kept feeling like I was on the back foot all the time, so I went to the military guys, I said, how do you guys plan for working against an opponent, and they took me through the military process that they go through in terms of the environmental scan, the assessment of the
opponents and their strengths and their weaknesses and the impact that they can play and their vulnerabilities, the assessment of what’s their centre of gravity, what’s the strongest weapon in their arsenal that they are going to keep coming back to, and anything to do with indigenous, its emotional kind of thing, so how do we then combat that, you can’t fight an emotional argument with a logical argument, and it was that kind of thing. And then looking at it, yeah ok, if that’s our centre of gravity, what are the tools that we need then to arm ourselves, but it was fantastic, and I’ve used it on a couple of occasions now and it’s just so applicable to what we do in issues management, that within the situation, if you’ve got an opponent, you are never going to change their mind, they are always going to be against you, but more than that they are going to campaign against you forever, what do you do? Yeah, and anticipating different paths that it could take. So if they did this, what would we do? And what do we need to do beforehand to make sure they don’t do that. It’s that pre-emptive attack as well. So I think it’s fascinating. We’ve been developing an issues management kind of approach that’s based around Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War* and understanding your opponents and people who are going to campaign against you no matter what and looking at what’s their artillery and what do we need – it’s all that. - INF17 interview

Nor was there any ambiguity in the language used in the following campaign discussion which again indicates a clear intent to control the positioning of the project and key personnel in order to construct the desired meaning:

So there had been a few challenges with the W organisation which we'd worked on - so while the organisation wanted to rebuild, the minister was going to be very exposed to any community views about it, particularly with the left leaning minister and a lot of active community members, you know, working in the university, the uni is right here and they're all living locally. So it was a highly politicised project and I guess that's the thing that's not really in the award entry but that's what was really driving it - what did we need to do to position the Minister and how did we get Cabinet to basically calm her to the point where we could get the project up. That's where it started, so the organisation wasn't silly
and they knew it was going to be a long and drawn out process so that's kind of where that started. It was very much about how the, how we run a campaign for a new building that basically says this is the place we have to be. - INF5 interview

These respondents reported taking a pragmatic approach to applying the tactic with the campaigns worked on:

I think also in terms of tactics we didn’t waste energy trying to win over unwinnable ground. There was a percentage of people that we were never going to win over, so again we asked what did we need to do to achieve the business objective and that’s where we spent our energy. - INF2 interview

Well part of the job is to be mercenary...I say that to the young ones here sometimes, they can get a bit um...a bit uptight about some projects we take on but...hey it pays the bills. - INF5 interview

The selection of the introduced factors, techniques and processes seemed in most cases directly linked to the reported findings of the campaign research activities. There is little ambiguity evident in the language used in the award entries text or in the interview transcripts and this shows a clear strategic intent to use the processes and techniques of public relations in order to get targeted audiences and publics to construct the organisation’s intended meaning rather than any other meaning.

4.4 Finding 4

The theoretical orientation of campaign practice as presented in the award entries aligned with Grunig and Hunt’s (1984, pp. 21-22) two-way asymmetrical communication. There was scant evidence of the application of the two-way symmetrical public relations model.

The evidence in all the award entries examined suggests that public relations campaign practice overwhelmingly could be conceptualised as two-way asymmetrical communication. Data indicate that public relations, as practiced in Australian campaigns, employs the first two of Grunig and Hunt’s (1984, p. 21-22) models of press agent/publicity and public information, often concurrently. The award entry data
indicate that goals and objectives are set for the campaign from an organisation-centric perspective. The practice in all campaigns could be described from what Botan and Taylor (2004) call a “functional perspective” which they describe as a perspective which sees publics and communication as tools or means to achieve organizational ends. The focus is generally on techniques and production of strategic organizational messages. Research plays a role only insofar as it advances organizational goals. (p.14)

Interestingly, Botan and Taylor (2004) continue in their description to state that the “major relationship of interest is between the public relations practitioner and the media with a corresponding emphasis on journalist techniques and production skills” (p.14) and this is congruent with the findings of this study in that the most prominent process or technique used in all campaigns was media and message management. However, it should be noted that there were three of the 57 campaigns where media management was recorded as not being used at all. These campaigns were as follows: call no. 1999 A13 which was the direct engagement campaign with indigenous elders to design a cultural awareness training package; call no. 2000 C9 which was a member engagements program; and, call no. 2006 C7 - 2 which was an employee communication initiative.

In spite of all campaigns using asymmetrical communication approaches in the main, there were campaigns, primarily from the not-for-profit and public sectors, but also from the large corporate sector (e.g. Rio Tinto), that could be interpreted as working to achieve benefits for targeted publics and audiences. The question remains as to whether such benefits could be interpreted as mutual to the organisations and the publics. The award entry by Rio Tinto (call no. 2006 C16 – 2) is worth noting in this respect – it had four stated goals, namely:

- To assist in facilitating a stronger and more sustainable Western Australian community.
- To enable Rio Tinto to share business success, skills, knowledge and resources.
- To achieve reputational benefits for Rio Tinto in Western Australia.
To assist Rio Tinto to engage with stakeholders outside of the usual channels of communications.

There are two goals which are seemingly community-oriented and two goals that are clearly organisation-oriented. These goals could be interpreted as seeking to deliver mutual benefit to both Rio Tinto and the communities in which the company operates in Western Australia but depending on the interpreter’s viewpoint, could also be alternatively interpreted either as a genuine commitment to doing good in the community, as a way of “paying off” communities who might otherwise resist the company’s activities, or as a way of connecting with new business opportunities. It could be argued that a company like Rio Tinto would need to invest in the communities in which it operates in order to maintain the communities’ support for its activities. If this can be done in a way that delivers “reputational benefits” and access to networks “outside of the usual channels of communications” it would seem logical from a business perspective for a company to proceed in such a way.

One interview respondent stated that even when some benefit was delivered for the target publics there was always a strategic element to the campaign that was linked to achieving the organisation’s goals:

At the end of the day you’ve always got a client who’s paying you and they wouldn’t be doing it if they didn’t have some sort of strategic objective from it. I mean even if you look at the Make a Wish Foundations and the pure charity ones, even their campaigns have a strategic goal in terms of increasing donations, or increasing awareness or whatever. So I think, I don’t think you can get away from that strategic element because PR wouldn’t exist if there wasn’t a strategic reason for it, but I think certainly and probably community engagement lends itself more to this, you can still have that mutual benefit, excuse me, you can still have that mutual benefit even though there is that strategic element of achieving what the organisation needs. - INF15 interview

One interview respondent stated that even if a client was trying to build goodwill with target publics and audiences there was still a strategic intent underpinning such actions:
You’re doing it for a political end, or a communal end, an outcome. But you are actually trying to do that, you are actually trying to create goodwill, but goodwill I guess, I don’t know what the textbook definition of goodwill is, but maybe there is enough elasticity in that word to cover commercial gain and improving your share price... No one’s got money to do a campaign to create goodwill. No one would pay for that.... So it is creating goodwill, but to do what? That’s not the end goal. It’s to create goodwill to do something else... But it’s still a business goal. - INF13 interview

Another respondent stated that the delivering communication outcomes that benefited publics were about securing the future operational capacity of the organisation that was giving to the community:

Look I think, I think the catalyst for it to happen was like actual social licence to operate. I think the whole community relations program, which is global may I say, it’s not just here, really came from (pause) it’s an unmitigated (pause) it really came from (pause) there (pause) there’s still a lot of pain in some indigenous communities where I mean like the xyz mine for example (pause) we just said well like, you know, (pause) the government said that you (pause) I mean they like just bulldozed ,you know, so (pause) and so just the absolute pandemonium and distress (pause) it was a hideous process for all the xyz people involved at the time, and hideous for the indigenous people and many of them you know (laughs ironically) have long memories (pause) which they should (pause) so I think that whole kind of well we’ve got to do something otherwise we’ll get kicked out of here was certainly a catalyst (pause) I think that’s the point of it, yes, I think you start from the point of oh my god they’re going to kick us out of town if we don’t do something. INF3 interview

It would be patently untrue to say that targeted publics and audiences did not benefit as a result of any campaign included in this study but what seems unambiguous is that the primary purpose of the public relations activity was to help the commissioning organisation achieve its overarching purpose – to have target publics and audiences construct the meaning intended for them. The absence of evidence pointing to two-way
symmetrical approaches being taken was also inherent in the way campaign results were presented in the award entries.

Scant evidence of what has been defined as two-way symmetrical public relations – where publics and organisations “debate the merits of issues and determine the best course of action through discussion, negotiation and collaboration” (Bowen, 2001, p. 839) is present in the data. There was award entry content that included consultation with community members or stakeholders but little to indicate that symmetrical public relations was being undertaken. This was an area that was explored in the interviews with practitioners and there was no data that indicated co-creational approaches, as described by Botan and Taylor (2004, p. 652), were being taken, even when two-way communication or dialogue was discussed. Little emerged that supported anything other than an approach to public relations that aligned with Moloney’s (2006, p. 168) definition of public relations – “above all, it is communication designed to further the interests of its principals. They would not invest in PR if it were otherwise”. Byrne (2007, p. 19) found that normative definitions are not “legitimate operational descriptions of the field in Australia” and this has been confirmed in this study, at least in terms of award-winning campaign practice.

4.5 Chapter conclusion
This chapter has reported on an examination of practice as described in award winning public relations campaign texts and in interviews with award-winning practitioners. It has shown that the commonality across all campaign work examined was that the primary purpose of the campaigns was to work to have target publics and audiences construct the meanings intended for them by the organisation that commissioned the public relations activity. Public relations practitioners applied a range of processes and techniques of intentional representation including media relations, direct engagement, positioning, issues management, education, marketing and persuasion. All campaigns reported success which was to be expected in award winning examples. Success was measured by reporting on four main areas – the tone and amount of media coverage, the tone of stakeholders’ perceptions, the amount and tone of third party endorsement, and the degree of increased profile or level of engagement. It has been shown that in these examples of practice, decisions regarding strategy and tactics were underpinned by research that was primarily aimed at facilitating the tailoring of the design of messages
and other tactics to better achieve desired outcomes. There is scant evidence in the data
to support an assertion that public relations in a campaign context aligns with Grunig
and Hunt’s model of two-way symmetrical communication. There is evidence to
support that public relations, as practised in Australian campaigns, employs all of the
other three models of public relations to various extents, often concurrently. This
supports what was found in the literature that was reviewed on campaign practice and
the assertions relating to practitioners using models that were fit for purpose. Public
relations practice as reported in examples of best practice articulated in award winning
campaign entry texts and interviews with award winning practitioners, aligns with
Moloney’s (2006,) definition that “above all, it [public relations] is communication
designed to further the interests of its principals” (p.168) rather than other definitions
espousing mutual benefit and understanding. The content of the examined award entry
texts demonstrate what Berger (1999) called the “dynamic and comprehensive methods
and processes of intentional representation in contested sites” (p.186). There are two
key areas relating to the processes and techniques that practitioners used in their quest to
have intended meanings constructed by target publics and audiences that warranted
further examination. The first area is that of “key messages” and the second is
“positioning”. This is not to say that the other techniques and processes identified in my
initial review of the award entries do not warrant further research. However, it was the
fact that key messages came through so strongly as a theme in practice and that
positioning came through as somewhat of a “surprise theme” that steered me towards
this focus. The next chapter will explore key messages, as developing, promulgating
and evaluating delivery and reception of key messages was common to a majority of the
campaigns.
5. Discussion and analysis of the key message data

The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and to identify the means by which that purpose was achieved. It was anticipated that a deeper understanding of campaign practice would afford new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorised and that this could further inform the development of practice, research and education in public relations. In addition, if this aspect of practice becomes clearer, the debate as to who holds the power and wherewithal to influence and control the means by which the purpose of campaigns is achieved, and the ethics of doing so, could take place. This chapter examines the themes that emerged from the data relating to the use of key messages and messaging strategies in light of the public relations academic literature on key messages in public relations campaigns. It draws on the extant literature to ascertain why key messages featured so prominently in descriptions of practice and also in the descriptions of how practitioners worked with key messages. This chapter does not set out to review all the academic literature relating to messaging in public relations and the wider communication field, as this would clearly be beyond the scope of this thesis. The data that emerged from this study relating to key messages was extensive, and relevant excerpts have been included in this chapter. However, a fuller account of the relevant data is presented and organised by the same themes covered in this chapter at Appendix F should readers wish to explore data further.

Analysis of the 57 public relations campaigns 1999-2008 that won a national Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target Awards showed that developing, promulgating and evaluating delivery and receipt of key messages was common to a majority of the campaigns (82%). In those that didn’t specifically mention the words “key messages”, there still appeared to be intent to get a specific message through to target publics and audiences. Subsequent interviews with a sample of authors of these award entries supported this finding.

5.1 Themes emerging from data:

The themes identified are grouped under three broad categories that emerged from the data:
• Key message environment
  o The environment into which messages are sent and received is cluttered
  o Message dissemination
  o Repetition of Message
• Key message development
  o Research must underpin message development
  o Tailoring messages for target publics and audiences
  o Number of messages
• Key message attributes
  o Message delivery – the spokespeople
  o Credibility
  o Constructed, conveyed but not “spun”
• Key message context
  o Key Messages “do” something
  o Linking new information to that which is already understood
  o Messaging is part of the strategic communication mix
  o The evaluation of public relations through key message reporting
  o Key messages in positioning

5.2 Key message environment
The need for strategy in public relations can be seen as centring on the concept of a congested and contested space. If it were otherwise, and the space was clear and uncongested, ostensibly anyone could just send any information into the space and no-one would need to employ any specialist techniques or processes such as those seen in professional public relations.

5.2.1 The environment into which messages are sent and received is cluttered
The data and the academic literature indicate that the site/s wherein public relations and its practices of intentional representation operate can be seen as congested and contested. Berger (1999) suggested that as “meaning at the site is both emergent and complicated”, “consistent and persistent representation” is required if public relations
practitioners are to have any success in having their intended representation accepted by target publics (p. 190). The award entry texts suggest that award-winning practitioners work with the understanding that multiple messages are competing for attention at these sites. The messages are considered in relation to each other and as such, they must employ a strategic approach, acknowledging the competitive environment in which they are operating, for example:

> With so many options available and various messages flooding the marketplace, it was difficult for Southbank Institute to make their message heard by potential purchasers of training services. (1999 H8)

The interview data from this project suggest that amongst the sample of senior, award-winning public relations practitioners, this is almost certainly the case, for example:

> We also try and then put ourselves in the middle of that to the media and think, ‘Well, is this something they’ve heard a thousand times before? Are they going to be bored senseless by this?’ How do we make it new and how do we make it interesting because if we don’t cut through here, it doesn’t matter how good the message is; over here is never going to hear it. - INF12 interview

Many approaches to dealing with these congested sites are apparent in the data and the literature also advises on a variety of aspects that practitioners need to consider in designing messages. Wilson (2001) states that “to be successful in developing tactics that get messages noticed in the deluge of information encountered every day by our key publics takes great innovation and creativity” (p.217). The data that point to the efforts made by practitioners to be innovative and creative is most tellingly in descriptions of practice where practitioners are attempting to work with their organisations to find what it is that will make them stand out from the crowd – to find a “campaignable concept” (INF17 interview). In addition to creativity and innovation, public relations textbooks for years have espoused, and continue to espouse, the need for clarity and consistency in messaging, advising practitioners to keep to just a few key points in interviews or media releases (e.g. McLean & Phillips, 2009; Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee, 2007). This is presumably to “cut through the clutter” – a phrase
commonly used in discussions of practice and “how-to” courses in public relations (e.g. PRSA, 2010). Similar language was used by practitioners, for example:

How do we make it new and how do we make it interesting because if we don’t cut through here, it doesn’t matter how good the message is; over here is never going to hear it. - INF12 interview

There’s a lot of clutter in the media and if messages are not kept simple and consistent across the various media then the message will get mixed up or diluted. - INF17 interview

Confusions and dilution of key messages in a sales campaign may have negative impact on the number of sales being achieved by a company. But because key messages are used by practitioners as a technique in a wide range of non commercially-oriented campaigns, including those issuing civil safety messages or health information, any dilution or confusion in messages can potentially impact on the functioning of societies and governments. Lundy and Broussard (2007) highlighted in their analysis of lessons learnt from public relations professionals in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which hit the USA, the importance of “conveying credible, clear, and consistent messages” as they found that such messages were guiding “publics making decisions prior to a crisis and during the recovery phase” (p.222). Palenchar and Heath (2002), in taking a rhetorical approach to studying risk communication which included analysing words and other symbols about risk in communities with high concentrations of chemical facilities, found that different groups had constructed different zones of meaning related to risk and that “if groups have such zones of meaning, then it should be imperative for risk communicators to understand each stakeholder’s zone of meaning (p. 134). Further it was found that practitioners should respond proactively to different stakeholders’ zones of meaning in order to effectively communicate risk, tailoring messages to resonate with the various zones of meaning if communication had any chance of being effective. There was evidence in this project’s data that practitioners used research to gain various degrees of understanding about stakeholder groups’ perceptions so that messages could be optimally constructed, although no practitioner used the terminology “zones of meaning”. Concepts such as clarity and consistency that are emphasised in textbooks and how-to guides and are seen by practitioners as essential
in ensuring the communication strategy works but research such as Palenchar and Heath (2002) indicates that practitioners may be more effective if their prescribed rhetorical approach to messaging were adopted.

The whole notion of needing a messaging strategy can be seen as centring on the concept of a congested and contested space. If it were otherwise, and the space was clear and uncongested, ostensibly anyone could just send any information into the space and assume the message was received as intended, no-one would need to employ any specialist techniques or processes such as those seen in professional public relations.

5.2.2 Message dissemination

It is notable that of itself, this theme is given little emphasis in the research literature in relation to key messages. Heath (2006a) is one of the few who did briefly consider this in his discussion of messages in the context of taking a rhetorical approach to issues management. He suggests the tools of dissemination “include the gamut of mediated communication options” (p. 95), including books, articles, talk show appearances, videos, movies, billboards, advertising, news releases, congressional hearings, lawsuits, and websites. He also states that other communication tools include organisations “inviting critics to engage in planning and positioning dialogues” or creating and sustaining “public decision-making” sessions (p. 95). Dissemination issues were a significant theme in the data, for example:

So it’s understanding the communication networks within the target audience that you’re trying to reach and crafting your key messages to go through those channels and networks, again it’s making sure that they’re delivered. - INF18 interview.

Media releases were targeted to individual media by type (press, radio and television), style (formal or informal, news or talk show) and geographic location. 2004 G11

It was evident in the data that many of the dissemination tools, as articulated by Heath, (2006a) were used, including the collaborative approaches when this was deemed to be an effective way of message dissemination. It is acknowledged in the literature that the
issue of where messages should be placed and the channels by which they should be disseminated emerges as an area which can pose a dilemma for practitioners and in order to “maximise effectiveness”, public relations practitioners, when designing messages, should “exploit the formal features of the chosen medium” (Olson, 2001, p. 275). This relates to both research for message development and tailoring the message themes as knowledge of the channels of dissemination is a prerequisite for being able to design and package the messages to best meet the needs of message receivers, many of whom practitioners hope will further disseminate the key message/s. There is evidence in the data that such knowledge is part of the research activities for the campaign as practitioners work to ensure that the materials containing their key messages are as valuable as possible to those controlling the conduits and channels to intended publics and audiences. It was clear that an important part of implementing this tactic was effective briefing of the media commentators, for example:

Because a number of them were also talkback and commentary based, it meant that anybody that had a concern, rang A or J’s radio program and said, what the hell is x organisation doing? It meant that these guys were already well briefed on it, so they could have an informed conversation with people about it and say, well look actually, I know about this, and they’ve sent us the information and I’ve looked into it and I think it’s ok, and a good initiative for these reasons. And it did actually occur, that somebody rang A’s program and he did go into bat for us, which was fantastic. - INF17 interview

Providing key messages in formats that were useful for conduit controllers was not just employed in media relations aspects of the campaigns, as can be seen in this example where schools were the conduit by which the target audience of children could be reached:

Giving schools simple information that was easy and an ad for them to photocopy and put in the newsletter that we sent them and provide posters and they were very targeted, very much at primary school students so they were fun and engaging and you know colourful and had all those key messages in ...and that sort of thing worked very well. - INF4 interview
All award entries detailed their target publics, as this was part of the requirement of the entry process, and many also detailed the means by which they aimed to reach those publics. The media was by far the most prominent channel that practitioners aimed to use but there was an array of other channels for which key messages were central, including direct mail, events, promotional collateral, call centres, personal networks and word of mouth.

It is interesting that the issue of the credibility of the media channels with different audiences was a consideration in some campaigns but it was more to do with whether specific people would read a certain publication over another, rather than any other issue. Although not identified in the data for this project, it may be advisable for practitioners to keep abreast of developments in the wider media environment in light of Taylor’s (2009) work, which stresses that the credibility of the media in which messages appear impacts on the credibility of the message being reported – “without a credible media system, all messages from all sources are suspect in the minds of the public” (p.29). If the media outlet loses credibility with a target public, the key message that a practitioner has orchestrated to have appear in that media may also suffer from a perceived lack of credibility. Although beyond the scope of this paper, this is emerging as a significant challenge for media relations as there are indications that trust in mainstream media continues to decline (Edelman, 2010, p. 5). The challenges and opportunities of media relations work in the domain of social media and the overall interactive web environment (Macnamara, 2009) did not come to the fore in the data examined for this project. Even in the most recent campaigns examined (e.g. from 2007-8), only one practitioner mentioned working with any interactive social media as part of their campaign efforts.

5.2.3 Repetition of the message
Repetition was seen as a necessary part of the campaign by a majority of practitioners interviewed, for example, one respondent (INF7) believes practitioners presume that when people hear the same message repeated in the media they start “getting it into their heads” that what is being said is the actual situation. Others stated:

I think generally, you know, on big projects like X, I think it's repetition really. I'm just looking through the issues and the messages and we had kind of five
messages and they’re what we rammed home again and again and again. - INF5 interview

I could say something here, you could interpret one way and five other people can interpret another but I guess it’s the art of it and it’s repetition and it’s support of facts. - INF15 interview

I make it clear that we need to keep repeating that in different ways. - INF1 interview

People need to hear the message over and over again for it to stick in their heads. I think that goes to campaign key messages as well, that if you repeat it often enough people will believe it. Maybe it’s as cynical as that, but tactically I think more for us...when there’s a whole lot of content about a particular subject matter, it’s so easy for people to get lost in the content. - INF17 interview

Several practitioners used words such a “getting it into their heads” and “ramming it home” when discussing repetition of messages. Repetition could be seen to relate to the theme of the cluttered environment where people potentially are exposed to so many messages that it’s only when some are repeated that notice is taken of them. Repetition can also be seen to relate to the importance of the issue, a presumption that if people are exposed to something frequently they might start to think it worth noticing.

Structuring campaigns to support message repetition has been part of public relations practice since early in the twentieth century. Explorations of propaganda use in the Second World War by Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels found that “scientific methods” akin to those recommended by early public relations practitioner, Edward Bernays, were used to “psychologically manipulate the propaganda audience through means such as the constant repetition of a few relatively simplistic points” (Weaver, Motion & Roper, 2006, p. 10). Research into the use of repetition continued throughout the twentieth century and it was in the late 1940s - 50s that studies were undertaken to examine the degree of meaningfulness of messages and the number of times people heard messages in relation to the likelihood of its information being retained and understood. Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1953) reported on various studies which showed
that repeating certain sentences increased retention but how that after three or four repetitions, additional effects were minimal. They concluded that

Repetition does not influence the retention of the information content of a communication in a simple manner. While the usual effect is to increase retention under some circumstances, too frequent repetition without any reward leads to loss of attention, boredom, and disregard of the communication. (p.247)

Research continued to build in the area and one interesting study that is relevant to what could be seen as popular understandings in public relations about the need to repeat key messages was that done in 1979 by Cacioppo and Petty, who went on to develop the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Numerous studies had been conducted in the field of social psychology on message or stimulus recall and repetition but Cacioppo and Petty worked specifically with messages that were designed to be meaningful to the audience. They suggested that

the processes mediating the attitudinal effects of repeated stimulus presentations differed when using meaningful rather than meaningless material, with the former involving a more active and constructive role by the recipient than does the mere exposure effect. It was further suggested that, for instance, moderate levels of repetition enhance people’s ability to attend to the appeal; to access relevant associations, images, and experiences from memory; to elaborate more upon the externally provided message arguments in light of the associations from memory, to draw inferences about the merits of the arguments; and consequently to consolidate their attitude toward the recommendation. (1979, cited in Cacioppo and Petty, 1989, p. 9)

Cacioppo and Petty tested their findings further in 1989 and this showed that moderate repetition should enhance thoughts most when recipients have some prior knowledge about the topic, when the topic and ad execution are sufficiently relevant and interesting that recipients are motivated to devote the cognitive resources to thinking about the issue, and when the associations and
implications evoked by the message arguments are sufficient rich that their pool is not easily exhausted. (p. 11)

The findings from studies such as these underpin the day to day thinking and practices in public relations as articulated by the practitioners in this study. It was notable that one respondent talked about amplification rather than repetition:

You have to use every opportunity that you can to reinforce your messaging and that’s what I mean by amplification. - GM interview

This seems to relate to how many times a message may need to be repeated in order that a particular person or group hears it three or four times. Mayhew (1997) reports the advice of one communication adviser to the Republican Party spokespeople as “repeat it until you vomit” (p. 276).

5.3 Key message development

The development of key messages was a factor in the majority of campaign award entries and the in-depth interview data again reinforced that this aspect of the campaign was critical.

5.3.1 Research must underpin message development

The development of messages by public relations practitioners can be viewed as sitting within the two-way asymmetrical approach “which utilises research to develop messages meant to persuade publics to the organisation’s point of view” (Berger, 1999, p. 187). This was shown repeatedly in the data, for example:

Research provided the basis for a very successful strategy and shaped our campaign materials, messages and tactics. (2006 C15-3)

The research was invaluable in planning effective messaging. (2008 C2-5)

Research allows you to fine tune the strategy …it gives you a chance to look at your messages and say well, you know this is where we need to work more; we
need more of this type of message and less of this type of message. - INF5 interview

This data suggests that messages are developed on the basis of research in order to facilitate target publics constructing the organisation’s point of view or meaning. This relates again to Heath’s (2001a, p. 45) discussion on zones of meaning – the research being undertaken to establish what the understandings or attitudes of target publics and audiences are before the public relations activity, so that the campaign messages can be designed in a way that will blend or meld with those understandings or attitudes.

This is seemingly embedded in public relations culture, practice and education. For example, all practice examined in this project refers to research being undertaken in this capacity; in Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target Award entry templates during the period of this research project, award entrants had to complete the section describing their campaign research; and for years, students of public relations have been advised to conduct research to determine what particular messages will be most salient with target publics and audiences (e.g. Wilcox, Ault & Agee, 1999; Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee, 2007). Scholars, practitioners and commentators on public relations would be well advised to examine closely the processes at work in the case referred to by Mayhew (1997) in which he offers an extremely insightful view of the message refinement process, especially as it applies to political communication. He describes how pretesting of message concepts can head off negative judgements that would be made if they were released without testing into the marketplace (p. 215-216). In a particular example, he described US politician Newt Gingrich’s efforts to develop the right message wording for the 1995 Medicare debates, as outlined in a lengthy Washington Post feature article⁶. This process initially involved political leaders and consultants and then a process of focus group research with target publics and audiences, such as seniors, to try out different forms of words until a final form of

---

⁶This article provides one of the best descriptions of the message refinement process and is recommended reading for those wanting more insight into the complexities of this process. Although over a decade old, it remains relevant to today’s practice: ‘Republican leaders win battle by defining terms of combat - Medicare pitch became ‘preserve and protect’ Washington Post - Sunday, October 29, 1995 by Michael Weisskopf and David Maraniss. Retrieved March, 7 2010 from NewsBank on-line database (Australia’s Newspapers).
“summary phrase that could be used constantly and consistently by all Republicans”
was agreed upon (pp. 275-6). There is much evidence in the data that similar processes
are still followed in contemporary public relations practice in all types of campaigns.

5.3.2 Tailoring messages for target publics and audiences

It is notable that all award entry campaigns examined as part of this research project
identified “target publics” in their campaigns and, in fact, were compelled to do so by
the award entry process. The segmentation of publics is seen as essential in public
relations “to allow a communicator to identify which publics need to be addressed, and
to avoid the waste of resources of attempting to communicate with a whole population”
(Walker, 2006, p. 398). It is acknowledged that there are many ways in which audiences
and publics can be segmented and defined, for example, situationally (e.g. Grunig,
1984, 1997; Veričič, 2008; Walker, 2006) and semiotically (Botan & Soto, 1998), and it
is understood that not all people, however defined and segmented, will be receptive to
all messages. A situational defining of publics is most evident in the data, although at no
stage is such academic language used in descriptions of practice by practitioners in
interviews or award entry texts. Messages were clearly tailored for identified publics in
many instances which is not surprising as the tailoring of messages for target publics
and audiences, including the media, is standard advice for public relations practitioners
(e.g. McLean & Phillips, 2009, p. 313), for example:

Key messages were tailored to suit both metropolitan and regional audiences.
(2008 C4 - 3)

Preparation and highly targeted and tailored messages were key to achieving the
objectives. Without the opportunity to pre-brief staff ...it was imperative to
anticipate their concerns and be prepared with responses. Significant preliminary
work was done in developing perceptual and issues maps of stakeholders
impacted by the White Paper, which was grouped into relevant and meaningful
information for staff. (2004 C3)

In outlining best practice for tailoring messages for specific audiences, Pratt (2004)
contends that this tailoring:
does not imply inconsistency in messages; rather, it means that the same issue should be framed differently for supportive and unsupportive audiences, for friendly or hostile groups. (p.18)

Much has been written on framing in public relations literature (for example see: Cho & Boster, 2008; Danowski, 2008; Hallahan, 1999; Ihlen & Nitz, 2008; Knight, 1999; Lim & Jones, 2010; Meisenbach, 2008; Reber & Berger, 2005; Weissman, 2007; Zoch, Collins, Sisco, & Supa, 2008) and “the basic idea is that a frame provides context and promotes a certain understanding of a phenomenon” (Ihlen & Nitz, 2008, p. 1). Zoch et al. (2008, p. 351) state that it is those with the ability to shape messages, and the money and power to get their messages into the media that are the most often seen and heard. Hallahan's (1999) description of how framing works serves to encapsulate the key concepts of framing used in public relations:

As a property of a message, a frame limits or defines the message's meaning by shaping the inferences that individuals make about the message. Frames reflect judgments made by message creators or framers. Some frames represent alternative valencing of information (i.e., putting information in either a positive or negative light, or valence framing). Other frames involve the simple alternative phrasing of terms (semantic framing). The most complex form of framing is storytelling (story framing). Story framing involves (a) selecting key themes or ideas that are the focus of the message and (b) incorporating a variety of storytelling or narrative techniques that support that theme. Framing operates by biasing the cognitive processing of information by individuals. (p. 207-8)

Framing is a “strategic communication process that organizations use to ‘make meaning’” (Reber & Berger, 2005, p. 192) which in turn “can be regarded as a metaphor for cognitive structure building that allows actors to reduce complexity and to select or emphasize certain events, and that is used to influence interpretations and constructions of reality” (Schulz & Raupp, 2010, p. 113). These descriptions and the work of the vast majority of scholars exploring framing indicate that the construction of reality is at the core of framing efforts in communication (Lim & Jones, 2010, p. 296). No award entry or interview respondent specifically mentioned applying framing theory to their practice however, there were occasional mentions of “frames of reference”, for example:
If you just try and push a message and you haven't thought about somebody's frame of reference, they'll just walk out the room and go, 'oh whatever', but I think if you can come back to their frame of reference and build on that and bring them along then I think that's the bit where there is true understanding. - INF6 interview

When you’ve actually got people who get it and can have a sophisticated conversation about the issues and how it could be taken and how it could be better framed then they’re completely committed and behind and believe in what they’re doing. Your outcome is just infinitely better. - INF18 interview

While not always as overt as these examples, the data shows that the techniques of framing as described by Hallahan (1999) are widely used and could be said to be embedded in key message development. The process, techniques and theory of framing are underpinned by a social constructionist view of public relations where public relations practitioners work to construct a particular version of reality in the minds of target audiences and publics (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008; Hallahan, 1999; Heide, 2009). According to Hallahan (1999), framing “is conceptually connected to the underlying psychological processes that people use to examine information, to make judgments, and to draw inferences about the world around them” (p. 206).

Public relations practitioners use framing in ways that “involves processes of inclusion and exclusion as well as emphasis” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 207), and this can be seen in the ways the tailoring of key messages for specific publics is discussed by practitioners, for example:

I mean obviously you’re going to have a much more generic suite of messages for the community as a whole..., whereas if you were communicating to an acquisition property owner, then you’ve got messages that are very specifically tailored to them. - INF15 interview

Socom developed and tested key messages to support advocacy activities. These were tailored for different stakeholders. (2007 C2-2)
Wilson (2001) advises that in message design, primary and secondary messages should be identified for each key public “taking care to incorporate each public’s self-interest” as it is this self interest that will motivate the target publics to do whatever it is that will help achieve the campaign’s objectives and goals (p.218). Evidence that the research activities undertaken as part of the campaign development strive to do this is frequently seen in the data, for example:

Elders undertook comprehensive preliminary qualitative research to identify the needs of agribusiness, including farmers, in relation to the banking sector. This research was used by TPN to develop key messages. (2001 G15)

To achieve the goal … key messages were linked to the issues that had been identified during the early research phase. (2004 C4)

That type of research allows you to fine tune the strategy and also allows you to then to select your best tactics. - INF5 interview 2009

It is clear that public relations practitioners put considerable effort into the area of message design and tailoring as they try and design a message that will be best able to deliver its intended effect. This effect would involve the people engaging with the message and thinking about the information it presented. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) define this process as message elaboration or “the extent to which a person thinks about issue-relevant information” (p. 7). According to Lundy (2006), it may be possible for public practitioners to apply framing techniques to “raise the level of issue involvement that individuals possess and, in turn, possibly influence cognitive processing and attitudes” (p. 300). One way this can be achieved is by relating issues to individuals’ local area, specialization, or clientele groups (Lundy, 2006). The data shows numerous examples of messages being tailored to meet the audience need based on such classifications – regional versus metropolitan audiences, professional versus community audiences and so on.

Olson (2001) states that “public relations efforts can have wildly successful and powerful outcomes when content is carefully matched to an audience” (p. 277). This packaging or tailoring of information for specific audiences relates specifically to the
concept of the information subsidy, best described by Zoch and Molleda (2006), who draw on the work by Gandy (1982). From the data, public relations practitioners can be seen, in the vast majority of cases, packaging information in ways that promotes their organisation’s view on issues and that communicates these views to publics. Practitioners are known to also package information to meet legal demands of financial disclosure, to influence legislation, and...to publicize organizational actions and operations that could have an impact on the minds of their publics. Gandy (1982) describes the packaged information generated by public relations professionals as *information subsidies.* (Zoch & Molleda, 2006, p. 284)

This is because such information can be seen as subsidised by the organisation that provides it to the media, as the media organisation doesn’t have to outlay resources in order to gather the information. The value of the subsidy resides in the worth placed by journalists and editors on the information received. Key messages that are crafted to meet the information needs of specific media outlets, and through the conduit of the media, the needs of target publics and audiences, would have more likelihood of being included in a journalist’s story. As Zoch and Molleda (2006) state:

> When media outlets are provided a carefully framed message, perhaps even arranged into an organised media package to help facilitate their newsgathering, the benefits to a practitioner’s organization increase geometrically. (p. 287)

The benefits that practitioners perceive that such information subsidies deliver are reported extensively in the awards entry data. However, in light of the changing media landscapes and the advent of the massive expansion of social/interactive media that “enable two-way dialogue and conversation” (Macnamara, 2009, p. 11), whether such practices will continue to be successful is debatable. Macnamara (2009) concluded in his recent study of current media training guides and related public relations practices, that practice remains “grounded in a control paradigm focussed on one-way top-down monologue” (p.11) and he identified the need for new practices to be developed to accommodate new media. Recent work on tailoring key messages from King (2010), who advocates an approach to message design than is iterative, based on her observation
that “communication strategies will emerge based on audience response and situated context” (p. 35), may provide a way forward:

Rather than designing once and executing a finished communication strategy, practitioners might design a series of pre-messages for sample target audiences, establishing a design/test cycle to better achieve communicative goals and inform future messages...this iterative approach can be standardized as a series of ongoing feedback mechanisms, which will help promote a culture of sensitivity to the dynamic interaction between readers/hearers, situated context, and discursive patterns. (King, 2010, p. 35)

Being sensitive to the culture of audiences through this process of “iterative design and testing encourages a practice of continual inquiry rather than best-guess assumptions about audiences” and can contribute to communications departments operating more strategically, becoming “a valuable and critical partner in developing broader business policy and strategy” (King, 2010, p. 35). There was some evidence of research activities being undertaken throughout campaigns which appeared to indicate that tactics would have been changed if such monitoring had indicated key messages were not being reported by the media (e.g. 2006 C4-3) and this seems to relate in the main to the desire to better the odds of reaching the campaign goals. The potential offered by continual inquiry practice in accommodating the demands of the changing media landscape and its convergence with interactive social media is certainly worth further investigation.

However, in a recent article by Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2010), questions were raised about the continuing validity of the concept of multiple publics continuing to exist in the face of changes to the traditional media and the explosion of the user-provided content on the internet:

A difficult-to-explain-and-predict chaos theory has ensued as professional media have lost their monopoly of knowledge to an immense number of purveyors of seemingly infinite user-provided content traveling on inexpensive and easily accessible electronic channels of communication. (Kruckeberg & Vujnovic, 2010, p. 117)
The authors argue that much of user-generated content is ideological in nature and requires consumers to be more active in determining the veracity of messages and information with which they engage (Kruckeberg & Vujmovic, 2010, p. 122). Strategic publics can form instantly and globally, making it almost impossible for practitioners to identify publics in advance of them forming in many cases.

Perhaps it is time for communication scholars and communication practitioners to realize that the time no longer exists in which we could strategically design a message for targeted audiences or publics (Kruckeberg & Vujnovic, 2010, p. 123).

If Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2010) are correct in their assessment that “the only truly strategic public that can be identified with any certainty is the general public” (p. 124), there will need to be a fundamental re-think of practice in public relations. There was no evidence in this project’s data that any practitioner was thinking along such lines.

5.4 Key message attributes
The attributes of key messages emerged as being issues focused on credibility.

5.4.1 Message delivery – the spokespersons
In a public relations practice context, key messages must be delivered, articulated and attributed. In a media interview or meeting with stakeholders, for example, a spokesperson/spokespeople must be available to undertake this role. In text communication such as an annual report or media release, key messages are often attributed to the person who would be put forward to do a media interview if requested as a follow-up by a journalist or producer. Most public relations textbooks and how-to guides advise students that when putting forward spokespeople for interview by journalists, they would be best served if that spokesperson had been trained in media interviewing techniques. In the data, having the right spokesperson, someone who had been appropriately trained, was primarily linked to credibility issues, for example, one interview respondent stated:

X was involved as an MC for an event, again to give that credibility for somebody who had written passionately about it, and it was all about getting this emotion into the story…One of the key messages that we tried to promote was
the fact that for many Australians...they would still want to feel some connection … so these products gave you the only opportunity to do that… so that whole emotional element was something which we deliberately wanted to pull into the promotion. - INF17 interview

The award entry data also put forward that the choice of spokesperson was an important aspect of the campaign:

Based on thorough research, a strategy was developed which employed...a 'champions' program, recruiting more than 300 individual credible advocates to deliver the messages. (2001 A20)

Work was undertaken to prepare John Knispel as Nippy's only public spokesperson on the issue. Knispel was advised to build on the company's strengths and refer to the company's proud (South) Australian heritage, its immaculate safety record, its 32-year celebrated history and vast industry experience. (1999 C7)

As McLean and Phillips (2009) clearly state, “media interviews can, at times, be harrowing for the person being interviewed, particularly if that person has had no experience of being in the spotlight” (p. 319). This infers that if a flustered, unprepared spokesperson appears, she or he will not serve the interests of their organisation. In one award entry, research was undertaken to survey audiences as to whom they thought was the appropriate spokesperson:

The research revealed that the MasterFoods CEO, Andy Weston-Webb, gave the most confidence to consumers. This assisted the crisis team’s decision as to who should announce that the products were safe and available for purchase. (2006 C4-3)

Media training was seen as one way of preparing people for the role of spokesperson and was reported as being used in many examples of practice examined in this project. Reber and Berger (2005) suggest that media training assists spokespeople in maintaining the integrity of message frames. Media training is offered by an array of companies in most developed countries and the offerings are fairly similar in content.
As a public relations practitioner, I have undertaken various media training programs, including programs in Australia and in Singapore; I have arranged for others in my employing organisation to undertake such training; and I have also delivered media training to clients on a consultancy basis. Based on this experience over two decades and a read through of the websites of trainers, I suggest that the following type of pitch is not atypical of training programs being offered in 2010:

In today’s evolving media marketplace where every cell phone is a camera, every member of the audience at an event is a potential newsman, and every Internet site and blog is a publisher, awareness isn’t enough. Executives and spokespeople in corporations, associations and public affairs organizations require traditional and new media skills and media interview training more than ever before. (Commcore, 2010, About Us, para.1)

Or this from Microsoft’s Small Business advice page:

Every time an executive looks into a camera, clips on a microphone or speaks at an event covered by reporters, the company's standing is on the line. (Krotz, 2010, para. 2)

Media trainers are most likely making claims such as these to encourage more business but such claims are based on the themes explored in this chapter. Krotz (2010) quotes Mike Paul of MGP & Associates in New York:

One of the tools I use with corporate leaders is 'OSTA': objective, strategy, tactics and audience... everything communicated should have an OSTA plan of attack. Plan to hammer home your key messages. (para. 11).

This is consistent with Macnamara’s (2009) analysis of media training programs. His key findings included that “all media training programs and guides examined recommend preparing ‘key messages’ and staying ‘on message’...” (p.6). It seems practitioners in many cases have heeded the training advice and work according to this process. The language use of practitioners during the research interviews in describing this process was notable in some instances, mirroring the pitches of the media training...
companies relating to “hammering home” messages, albeit using “push” and “ram” rather than hammer:

I think but I think that for media its often the case, that you’ve only got an opportunity to get a few points across, so ram home your messages and a couple of facts to support it. - INF17 interview

We had kind of five messages and they're what we rammed home again and again and again. - INF5 interview

When you define your key messages, you push them out to the media and you constantly push, push, push, push. - INF12 interview

These examples demonstrate attempts to control what message reaches audiences and a one-way push model of communication. Macnamara (2009) reported that most significantly in his study, the majority of the material he examined “prominently claim to help interviewees and PR practitioners control and/or manage media interviews” and also to control the messages they disseminate (pp. 6-7). Keeping control and managing the interview essentially relates to the spokesperson’s perceived ability to deliver the key messages so the media will report them accurately. Macnamara (2009) concludes that such continued practice needs re-thinking, not just from a technological change perspective but from the perspectives of social and cultural changes that accompany the technological change. He suggests ways that the “control paradigm practices” could be replaced with “alternative interactive PR strategies” but there is little evidence of these practices in data collected for this doctoral research project.

5.4.2 Credibility

Two main factors relating to the theme of credibility emerged from the data and these were that the spokesperson/s delivering the message had to seem credible and that the consistency of messages being delivered contributed to perceptions of credibility.

The credibility of the spokesperson delivering the message was shown in the data to be an intrinsic part of message development and delivery and this links to the need for training in the skills that portray and convey perceptions of credibility. The literature
generally supports this with scholars, such as Lundy and Broussard (2007), suggesting that key messages must be delivered by credible spokespeople who have been trained for such a role. Lee, Woeste and Heath (2007) also highlighted that lack of training of spokespeople could compromise the effectiveness of the message, especially in specific instances such as crisis management. These statements and the evidence presented in the data are tied to three factors that practitioners must consider when putting forward a spokesperson, that of expertise, sincerity and charisma (Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee, 2007, p. 226). For example, expertise in message delivery, being consistent and staying on message were seen as vital by this practitioner:

The other thing is the consistency of message for your spokespeople… with a media who is trying to chase down any inconsistency, if you have an inconsistency of your own making, you’re just making more work for yourself…Because if the Minister says you don’t need to do x and the Chief Officer says you do, then you’ve created a serious problem for yourself as it starts to undermine credibility and then undermines the belief in everything else that you’re saying. - INF7 interview

There were no references in the data that specifically referred to sincerity or charisma in the context of key messages, although these attributes may relate to reputational factors that can also play a part in how messages are received. Recent findings indicate that what chief executive officers (CEOs) do on an ethical personal level can have a “ripple effect on potential consumers and employees” and “negative news about the CEO negatively affects attitudes, behavioural intentions, and brand selection” (Sohn, Lariscy & Tinkham, 2009, p. 15). This could mean that the CEO may not be the best spokesperson on an issue if he or she has been the subject of some negative news. This raises the vexed question of whether it is the source’s credibility, that is, the organisation or person from which the message is emanating, or the credibility of the message itself that is at the crux of the credibility issue. Verčič, Verčič, & Laco (2008) state that credibility is self-referential and a direct consequence of the communication process. Avery (2010) found the “perceived expertise, transparency, and knowledge of the source were the most central criteria to audience evaluations of credibility” (p. 82). The work of these scholars suggests that perceptions of credibility could be a co-
construction between the public relations practitioners and audiences as a result of all factors involved in the development, delivery and reception of key messages.

These reputational factors were at the fore in one award entry (2004 G 2) that detailed the predicament the organisation found itself in when not being able to gain share of voice in the media. These included the reputation of the wider sector the organisation was working in, the wide array of competing organisations seeking media attention and the lack of appropriate spokespeople within the organisation. The award entry detailed how, by applying public relations processes and techniques around gaining share of voice in the media and being seen as a credible source, the desired result was delivered:

The resulting media and government relations strategies were highly effective in positioning the Trust as a reliable, well-informed and credible source of information and an important adviser to the Government on an issue with high electorate appeal. (2004 G2)

The issue surrounding not having a credible spokesperson on hand for message delivery was a cause of frustration for one interviewee:

We didn’t have a lot of media talent within the organisation unfortunately, big unfortunately, and that took a lot of time in coaching on how to deliver a message enthusiastically, to show passion in your face. - INF15 interview

Such coaching is supported by recent research studies, with Avery (2010) suggesting that practitioners should incorporate “indicators of these traits [expertise, transparency, and knowledge] into their messages to enhance the perceived credibility of the sources they use” (p.82). The data indicates that the crafting of the message is where most of a practitioner’s energy is expended but its delivery is dependent on having a credible spokesperson.

The issue of whether having multiple spokespeople delivering messages was preferable to a single or a few spokespeople was researched by Duhe’ (2005), who stated that “it is important to have a wide variety of people communicating and carrying a similarly themed message” as “multiple faces add credibility when communicating with multiple
audiences” (p.8). Multiple spokespeople (i.e. more than one to three) was evident in only 2 of 57 award entries with most campaigns having only one or two spokespeople. Interestingly, these were both campaigns designed to reach audiences spread over a wide regional/rural geographical area and were relying on small media outlets who wanted very local story angles and on personal networks for message dissemination.

The second factor that contributed to the credibility theme was that of consistency. Consistency was noted in award entries and interview data as being an important component of key messages in that it was mentioned frequently, but also mentioned across a range of other themes. Humans are driven towards consistency and, according to Festinger’s Cognitive Dissonance Theory, people “avoid information that is likely to increase dissonance” (Griffin, 2006, p. 205), preferring instead to engage with people, material and opinions that are consistent with their existing beliefs. The data indicates that public relations practitioners recognise this and so tailor and Disseminate messages to blend and meld with audiences’ existing “zones of meaning” (Heath, 2001a, p. 45).

Inconsistencies in messages were defined in the data as either being errors in factual content, a mismatch between what was being said and what could be seen by publics and audiences, changes in what was being included in messages over a period of time, or differences in what was included in messages being delivered by different spokespeople or through different channels. The key problem identified in the data with inconsistency in key messages was its potential to “undermine” or “erode” credibility or believability, for example:

- It [inconsistency] starts to undermine credibility and then undermines the belief in everything else that you’re saying. - INF7 interview

- It undermines your credibility and introduces distrust and cynicism. - INF18 interview.
This would seem to impact on the ability of the message to achieve its intended action. According to Bruce and Tini (2008), a consistent message supports believability. If inconsistency were present in a message designed to provide vital information to inform decision-making in an investment decision or crisis situation, it seemed from the data that this could have negative ramifications, for example:

It could also potentially make the community angry if it then doesn’t gel with something else that’s been put in the paper last week or something that the organisation had said at a public meeting. - INF15 interview.

This linked to the issue raised by several practitioners of inconsistencies making for more work for both the agency and organisational spokespeople as they had to spend time “trying to recover to get back on the right road” (INF18 interview). It was evident that practitioners worked to avoid this and there were numerous references to how public relations practitioners worked with executives and staff of their organisations to achieve consensus on the key messages. This practice supports Coombs’ (2007) assertion that consistency is promoted when all spokespeople from an organisation are unified in the manner in which to deliver messages. The other aspect of consistency of key messages that emerged was that it facilitated the training of the spokesperson delivering the messages:

If you are trying to brief a spokesperson, and they’ve got to think about messages that are different for everybody, it’s like impossible, but it’s easier for a spokesperson to remember, here are the three key points I need to make irrespective of who I am talking to, and you tailor the detailing in the answers based on the facts that are relevant for that media or whoever is asking the question. - INF17 interview

This was found not to have been explored as such in the academic literature, but the need for message consistency is a standard inclusion in media training guides.

5.4.3 Key messages – constructed, conveyed but not "spun"

It was in the interview data that the intention of some practitioners to construct messages that did not present things more positively than they were became evident –
essentially there was nothing to indicate that practitioners worked to create “spin”. There was little in the data that referred to “ethics” specifically, however, some practitioners clearly had what could be called ethical considerations in mind when discussing their practice relating to key messages, although the majority did not raise this aspect in the interview responses. Only one award entry (2001 G15) expressly mentioned working according to the Public Relations Institute of Australia’s code of ethics\(^7\). Ethics was specifically mentioned by only two interviewees:

The bulk of our projects we do want that genuine engagement, and it’s a bit of an ethics call that we make if we think there’s a client who’s wanting to call it engagement, but not do it, then we won’t do it. - INF15 interview

Look you can talk about integrity and ethics and all of that but I think if you’re not honest with how you deal with it, it’s going to come through. - INF1 interview

The need to ground the message in the reality known by the intended audiences was seen as important by this practitioner:

Your message has to be - you have to think that people are going to be prepared to accept your key message and when we talk about key messages we also - we have the formula we use which - a key message is a claim plus a fact plus an example. So what we do is we talk about - to make that key message receivable by the audience, you can’t just have the claim, you’ve got to have the fact and the example as well otherwise - I’m just trying to think if I can give you an example of it. I think - I can’t think of anyone off the top of my head. Yes, I can: Coca Cola last year and their Kerry Armstrong campaign, “Coke, we’re good for you. We’re all natural” that’s just stupid. It’s a - I mean, they can make that claim but people are not ready to accept it because it’s a crock. Just because you hire the left-wing actress doesn’t make it real. So you’ve got to think about the reality of the key message that you’re going to fire out. - INF12 interview

\(^7\) The PRIA Code of Ethics can be accessed through the home page at www.pria.com.au
These practitioners raised the need to align what was being said in key messages to what was happening within view of intended audiences, cautioning against doing otherwise:

Going back to key messages, it’s not just what you say, it’s all got to line up, what you do has to absolutely reflect what you’re saying. The minute what you’re saying and what you’re, what you’re seen to be doing are not the same, you’re sunk. Again, it’s the credibility issue. Unless you have credibility in your messages, you’ve got nothing. - INF18 interview

We're trying to construct messages so they resonate with what they can see on the ground...I think there is a great risk in key messages that just sit out there and there's no relationship to anything on the ground ...I mean I think, the more time I spend time talking to government and say ‘don't expect to just, to use the phrase, to have someone like me spin you out of this - you actually have got to be demonstrating what you're doing - don't talk about transit cities and then don't deliver and talk about a regional hospital and do nothing, you've got to actually demonstrate what you're up to’. I think that's what people are starting to look for more now. - INF5 interview

This practitioner highlighted the tensions between portraying the client in the way they want to be portrayed and the limits of what public relations techniques can achieve:

There’s no point us developing up a whole heap of key messages if they don’t, if it doesn’t portray the project the way the client wants it portrayed. Within reason, I mean we’re not going to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear to coin that phrase…There’s no point putting out a message, or positioning something in a way that it’s not because our stakeholders will always find out. There’s no point us saying okay we’re going to address something and then nothing ever being done about it because then that’ll result in a bigger furore at the end of the project than you ever had at the beginning. - INF15 interview

Notable here is the reason for not making the “silk purse” – the thinking that stakeholders would find out which would result in more furore than was present before the strategy was implemented. Ostensibly, this could have been about ethical
considerations but possibly was more about avoiding the work involved in managing a larger furore.

Only one practitioner indicated that work would be refused on the basis of ethical considerations although it should be noted that this was not a particular focus of this study. According to Moloney (2006), practitioners need to be able to reconcile their relationship with their employer and the messages they produce for them in terms of messaging being primarily about self-advantaging communication where attention is drawn to the positive values and behaviours of the interest they represent and not the negative ones (p.10). The ethics of when such self-advantaging communication is acceptable or not is unclear and in essence comes back to the way individuals interpret the code of ethics they work within and their personal values systems. Of course, not all practitioners subscribe to membership of professional associations and these people would not be bound by any code. Moloney makes the point that public relations practitioners have to confront both their relationship with public relations and propaganda and also their relationship with their client or employer in determining whether they are able to communicate in good conscience. That is, given that messaging falls into the realm of what Moloney (2006) calls “PR propaganda”, it is always self-advantaging communication and the public relations practitioner needs to be “morally comfortable with this imbalance” or “they should not enter public relations work” (p.115). This struggle to find a balance was at times evident in the data. Although acknowledging the need to get the best results public relations results possible for their clients or employers, no practitioner advocated being untruthful. Interestingly, this seemed to be related more to the fact that it was likely that attempts to be untruthful would be discovered by the media or stakeholders, rather than deep ethical commitments.

5.5 Key message context
It seems clear that key messages operate in a societal and cultural context and the data indicates key themes about how practitioners think key messages work and what they can achieve, how they integrate into other communication activities, how they link to intended audiences’ current situations and understandings and how practitioners know whether key messages do what they intend.
5.5.1 Key messages “do” something
The award entry data indicated that messages had specific roles to play in campaigns. In
one instance, promulgating key messages were seen as the way to “fuel a debate in the
media regarding public transport options” (2006 C2-4), in another a key message was
“designed to play on a public feeling” (2004 G11) and as part of one campaign
“implementation plan”, “key messages were developed to bring the objectives to life in
communication materials and activities" (1999 B3). One interview respondent was clear
about what a clear message was aiming to achieve:

A key message really is a tool of persuasion, you’re trying to persuade people to
your point...It’s not necessarily spinning them something, you might have done
something wrong so you might be ‘fessing’ up and then telling them this is what
we’re going to do so it’s not going to happen again - so it’s not always, the key
message isn’t always good news but you’re wanting media to convince your
audience that they want to align with your message and accept your message. -
INF18 interview.

Throughout this research project, interview data indicated there is little ambiguity about
the intent of key messages being used to do something specific, for example:

They [key messages] are the hook that you hang everything else from. That’s
what I want people to remember upon reading the material. - INF16 interview

So, from our perspective, messages, while they’re there to promote the benefits
of a project as the client sees them, their more important function is to give
people an accurate understanding of what’s being planned so that they can then
give feedback based on that accurate understanding. If you don’t give them that,
you’ll get feedback that doesn’t even relate to what you’re talking about. Ninety
percent of the time, the messages or the positioning we put out is done to call
people to action to do something. - INF15 interview

This data also indicated that key messages worked on a level that helped their clients
sharpen their focus, for example:

“I think for clients the key message is also about deciding what they are going to
stand for because we often go to clients where they’re like, ‘We do a bit of this
and we do a bit of that and we can talk about this and we can talk about that and
we’ve got all these ideas’ and, at the end of the day, that’s a hopeless campaign - it’s a hopeless ad campaign and it’s a hopeless marketing campaign, it’s a hopeless PR campaign because they haven’t defined who they are and what they have to sell. And at the end of the day, a key message workshop can be as much for the client and getting their act together as it is for the publics who are going to receive those key messages. - INF12 interview

Key messages as discussed and described in the data were ascribed the power to undertake an array of tasks, from dispelling myths to allaying concerns, from fuelling debates, from honing client’s focus through to instilling confidence. There is also discussion in the academic literature that key messages can do things or enact certain conditions. Pratt (2004) states that key messages can “increase organizational valence in the public domain, to nudge their companies back into the good graces of their primary stakeholders, and to improve or maintain organizational reputation”, and that “using the right words can help purify an organization's image” (p.15). Wilson (2001) clearly agrees with this capacity of messages to do things, stating that messages “are useless if they are not delivering a specific message to a target public so that the public will act to help us meet our objectives and accomplish our organisations’ missions” (p. 217). There is also a consensus across many textbooks that this is the case. For example, Mahoney (2008) states that messages “are written to inform, build understanding, or persuade people to act” (p. 54) and has an entire chapter in his book on public relations writing devoted to developing and writing messages. Wilcox, Cameron, Ault and Agee’s (2007) public relations text for students devotes some ten pages to the role of messages in persuasive communication and how to construct messages for maximum effect (pp. 224-235). Treadwell and Treadwell (2005) state that “public relations writing always has an agenda” and always aims “to inform, persuade or influence behaviour...the public relations writer shapes words (and sometimes graphics) to achieve these aims” (p. 26). The efforts practitioners have expended, as described in the data, on researching intended audiences and crafting the right key messages for them, indicates that most practitioners ascribe to these views – as if a correctly crafted message will operate to deliver the desired outcome.

There is clearly a media effects model of thinking at work in these instances and Macnamara (2006) has described how such thinking still predominates in much public
relations practice. Olson (2001) states “knowing that the audience was exposed to one’s message in the media is no guarantee that it will produce the desired effects” (p. 271), but the evaluation practices of practitioners, who still in many cases use media evaluation of whether key messages were included in media content as a predominant way in which to measure the success or otherwise of their campaigns, (Xavier, Johnston, Patel, Watson & Simmons, 2005) are still focused on outputs and not outcomes. This approach was clearly articulated in the data and will be explored more fully later in this chapter. However, rather than sitting in the media effects camp, the role of key messages may sit in the camp of speech-act theory and be a key part of the organisational storytelling that plays a part in the intentional positioning activities of public relations practitioners; this is explored in the next chapter. This approach is more aligned to a cultural studies perspective which suggests that texts “are not immobile objects but active agents which place themselves in relation to other active agents” (Lehtonen, 2000, p. 16) as part of the continuous contest of meaning that plays out in our world “regarding how reality is understood and what can be said about it” (Lehtonen, 2000, p. 15). This may offer a more plausible explanation as to why key messages seem to play such a large role in public relations campaigns.

5.5.2 Linking new information to that which is already understood

From the interview data, and to a lesser extent the award entry data, it was clear that practitioners work to construct their messages to overlay what they believe to be already understood by target publics and audiences; the practitioner’s understanding often being gained through research undertaken or commissioned by the public relations practitioners, for example:

You could construct a campaign that links into their understanding of the good work the x organisation does and if they believe what they know about the x organisation, that it's good, then that kind of translates to being able to build, well, a message that this must be okay too. - INF17 interview

In one instance, a respondent outlined in detail the way the messages were crafted to link with audience understanding levels and language use:
The issue, it was so complicated, so on one hand we had to create meaning because it was something that was brand new - it wasn’t there and nobody understood what the concepts were, but on the other hand, we had to start with the concepts that people already understood, you know? If you don’t go back to where they were and pick them up and bring them along with you, you know, you’re going to have a disconnect forever. So we really needed our staff who were out and about with these people to say to us, this is the way it’s being discussed, this is the language being used, the questions being asked of us that we’re not able to answer. Then we then went to the controlling agency and said here are the things we need to be able to answer, here’s the way we need to be able to describe it. We then crafted the messages to give them back, to equip them with, so it was a bit of…it was a bit like scripts for the staff, like words they could use, like concepts. - INF6 interview

The respondent summarised as follows:

It's about finding where they are currently and bringing them along...if you just try and push a message and you haven't thought about somebody's frame of reference, they'll just walk out the room and go, ‘oh whatever’, but I think if you can come back to their frame of reference and build on that and bring them along then I think that's the bit where is there is true understanding. - INF6 interview

Another respondent stated that the key messages, for audiences, have to resonate with the known:

It would have to resonate with the known…It’s the same thing as persuasion really and if you try to persuade somebody or convince them that something is such, it has to line up with what they think is reasonable with their values, with their existing knowledge and with wider community norms that they perceive for it to have any chance of being effective. - INF18 interview

This is also explored in the literature. For example, Bostdorff and Vibbert (1994) discussed how through organisations disseminating messages that attempted to align organisational values with those values held by target publics and audiences, practitioners hoped to perform three distinct functions: (1) to enhance the organisation's
image; (2) to deflect criticism of the organisation and/or its policies, products, and services; and (3) to establish value premises that can be used in later discourse. This relates back to the understanding in the field that key messages “do” something and this alignment of values may assist in this process. Hoger and Swem (2000, p. 432) put forward that the approach of public relations specialists to message construction relies on language that is familiar and evokes desired responses, reaches for “the telling metaphor or narrative”, is creative in approach and relies on audiences making implied connections between parts of a message. They state that “messages are chosen with some hope of creating control over how a message is understood, although that can never be completely controlled” (p. 435). Organisational public relations practices and processes could be said to aim to control this process as much as possible through being “concerned with the production, distribution, and evaluation of messages, symbols, and images to and from others” (Berger, 1999, p. 190). This relates to the concept that target publics synthesise and articulate the various messages and factors with their current understandings (Moffitt, 1994; Berger, 1999), with public relations practitioners attempting to construct “zones of meaning” (Heath, 2001a, p. 45). Practitioners can be seen to work to construct their messages to overlay what is already understood by target publics and audiences, this understanding often being gained through research undertaken by the public relations practitioners, for example:

If you don’t go back to where they were and pick them up and bring them along with you, you know, you’re going to have a disconnect forever. So we really needed our staff who were out and about with these people to say to us this is the way it’s being discussed, this is the language being used, the questions being asked of us that we’re not able to answer. Then we then went to the controlling agency and said here are the things we need to be able to answer, here’s the way we need to be able to describe it. We then crafted the messages to give them back. - INF6 interview.

One way of viewing successful public relations outcomes could be when the zone of meaning within which the community members are operating and that which is constructed by the public relations practitioner could be said to have blended or melded. In this way, practitioners are working to co-construct meaning in tandem with the publics and audiences to whom messages are offered. The data suggests that what
public relations practitioners are aiming for in this co-construction process is that the resultant meaning is that which will advance the self-interest of their organisation, essentially a strategic co-construction of meaning that works primarily to advance the interests of the organisation, but may also benefit others.

When a public relations practitioner disseminates key messages, they expect their messages to be evaluated by target publics and audiences. They anticipate or perhaps hope, given the work they have put into researching, developing and tailoring the messages, that this evaluation will be favourable. Heath (2001a) states that

Reasoning from evidence through evaluative premises leads individuals to know and test each other’s analysis of reality and preferred expedient modes of action. Each stage in this progression is open to contest. (p.47)

In Heath’s (2001a) rhetorical perspective of public relations, all parties (or rhetors) “challenge one another and compete for adherents” with evidence being “contestable according to accepted standards that are used to judge the accuracy of empirical observations” (p.47). This means, in practice, that if what is put forward by an organisation in terms of ideas and messages is found to be unacceptable by the target publics and audiences, then those messages and ideas may need to be reconsidered; adjustments to what is being put forward may need to be made so that zones of meaning can be better blended or melded with those of the target publics and audiences. In the data, there is evidence that campaign monitoring was undertaken in some instances to do just this. However King (2010) states:

To better understand how or why a reader responds to an organizational text in a particular way, an analyst can focus on the ways in which the audience may or may not identify their interests with those being forwarded in a text. Importantly, even if a particular discursive pattern can be said to represent the interests of its author, there is not necessarily a correlation between what the pattern evokes in a reader and what the author may have planned for. ( p. 25)

This leaves open the possibility that the best-crafted messages may not be successful in achieving the construction or co-construction of an organisation’s intended meanings.
The reasons for this may link closely to the concept of positioning, where messaging is just one aspect, and this is explored further in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

5.5.3 Messaging is part of a strategic integrated communication mix

There were no instances in the data where the development and dissemination of key messages could be said to be the sole tactic in a campaign. This is hardly surprising given that the data was drawn from national award winning campaigns from the last decade; as Botan and Soto (1999) stated, “both public relations practice and scholarship long ago passed beyond the stage of focusing our attention just on the message (p. 31).

Integrated communications can be defined as

the notion and the practice of aligning symbols, messages, procedures and behaviours in order for an organisation to communicate with clarity, consistency and continuity within and across formal organisational boundaries.”

(Christensen, Fırat & Torp, 2008)

It was evident in the award entries and came across strongly in much of the interviews that key messages were integrated into a wider communication strategy. It was clear that many practitioners had firm views on where key messages integrated into the overall strategic campaign work however these views were not uniform. One award entry stated that "key messages formed the basis of all communication to target publics" and that the "External Affairs team implemented a communications plan focused on delivering timely and credible key messages" (2000 F8). One respondent stated that in her agency, a message strategy was broken down into components, and then worked into a “campaignable concept”:

A message strategy might be that everything we do has to position this company a certain way, or everything we do has to promote a product in a particular light, or whatever the case might be, but it’s a message that would then pervade everything that we do. The audience strategy is, is there a particular audience that we are going to leverage to achieve the outcomes that we want to get? I think it’s quite tempting for people, particularly working in a consultancy environment, you are just trying to work as fast as you can so, I think sometimes it’s quite tempting to work superficially, and think okay, I need to do all this
stuff, but what we really need to do is tease down to a deeper level of thinking, because that’s where the real value is in what we can do, and that’s what the client is expecting as well. That if they are coming to a consultancy, they are expecting a deeper level of analysis or thought that they can get elsewhere, and that then comes to the other point about strategy that we are trying to get people to think about more is, what is the campaignable concept in everything that we do? So while you’ve got your message and audience and implementation strategies, how do you wrap that into a concept? So it’s like the military analogy again, it’s the shock and awe campaign. That’s the campaignable concept there. - INF17 interview

A similar approach was evident in the response of this respondent who showed clearly that messaging was part of a wider process of strategy and campaign development:

And then we go through target audiences and influencers and we kind of do a bit more of a map now with the social media space, and then a very clear kind of overview of the strategic approach and the vision and the campaigns, the audiences, the messages. Then it’s very ROI-oriented, so again it goes back to what objective is it, what kind of PR is it, what kind of tactics are we doing, what’s the goal, how do we measure it, and what resources will it require, timeline, critical success factors and that’s the bit that covers our arse when, sorry, it’s about the client’s role, what they’ve got to sign up to as well, budget, and background research. - INF13 interview

The linking of the wording of the key message to reputation risk management was made by this respondent:

In pretty much everything we do in our group within our organisation it’s under an umbrella of reputation risk management, so it’s looking at everything that we do and ensuring that whatever path we take or whatever advice we recommend that it’s robust and it’s not going to pose a risk to our reputation. For key messages, every word is important. They have to be succinct; they have to be understood; they have to be absolutely applicable to the target audience. - INF18 interview
Finally, there was little evidence of anything related to key messages that could be termed “dialogic” in terms of the co-creation of meaning by both organizations and their publics. There were two notable award entries that actively sought a dialogic exchange in messaging and meaning-making. The first was one whose subject was child abuse survival (2004 B 14) and the second was the case when a communications team was essentially sent “back to the drawing board” after a textbook communications approach (like that reported in the majority of the data in this chapter), did not work when working with indigenous communities in remote Australia (1999 A13). These were the only two award entries that approached a two-way symmetrical perspective in their communication strategies. However, the extent of the “symmetry” and the delivery of mutual benefit to all concerned would be debatable as the strategic interests of those initiating the campaigns, namely a multinational mining company and an Irish law firm, were profit-driven rather than anything else.

5.5.4 The evaluation of public relations through key message reporting

According to Stacks (2006), “public relations effectiveness” is “the degree to which the outcome of a public relations program is consonant with the overall objectives of the program as judged by some measure of causation” (p.7). Media evaluation is one of the primary methods used in evaluating public relations campaigns and whether an organisation’s key messages were carried by the media appears to be one specific and commonly used measure of public relations success (e.g. Murphee & Rogers, 2004; Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee, 2007; Xavier, Johnston, Patel, Watson & Simmons, 2006). There was little in this project that would dispel this assertion.

This state of affairs is seen as less than satisfactory in many quarters of public relations academia and within the industry’s professional associations. Jeffrey, Michaelson and Stacks (2006) highlighted case studies that illustrated “the fallacy of considering a campaign a success if one gets lots of overall pick-up, and even ‘key-message’ pick-up, without checking that the messages delivered were accurate and resonated well with the targeted audience” (p.10). This has implications for practice, perhaps opening up practitioners to accusations of false claims of success if they do not undertake such checking and merely report on the “pick-up” of key messages by the media. However,
the majority of the data indicated some attempt to report on the tone of reporting rather than just whether the key message has been covered in the media, for example:

The quantitative and qualitative research was supplemented by an analysis of local, national and international media reports. This was used to determine how the media were interpreting the key messages. Throughout the campaign, the media team recorded that, in 92% of cases, the media interpreted the key messages and facts correctly. (2006 C4-3)

There was evidence in the award entry data of some survey work of media audiences that addressed evaluation issues, but instances were isolated, for example:

To determine cut-through of the strategy key message and attitudes towards the meaning of Australia Day, a Newspoll survey was conducted. (2003 B7)

If such evaluation was done, it was perfunctory and generally involved a survey. There was no evidence of in-depth studies of media audiences. However, the overall dilemma in such evaluation was summarised by one of the interviewees:

With clients, the thing that is really hard to get them to do is to pay for research or evaluate our programs at the end. They are happy upfront to understand how it influences projects but they don’t necessarily want the whole KPI analysis benchmark research at the end of the day… So long as they perceive they’ve got their outcome, they are happy with that; they don’t need the documented evidence to back it up, which is quite interesting…We would normally do a level of evaluation for clients just based on deliverables and our quick analysis of did we get key messages across and that kind of thing, but we wouldn’t do proper quantitative and qualitative research unless it was engaged by the client. INF17 interview

The reception and interpretation of key messages remains a somewhat neglected area of public relations research, which is a significant oversight given that meaning is the primary concern of public relations and interpretation is a central process within public relations activities (Leichty & Warner, 2001). The issue of publics and audiences as
receivers of messages, and research into how they process messages and construct an image of an organisation, requires attention as, according to Moffitt (2001), no longer is image something that is a relatively singular construct of an organisation. Instead this has been “given up in favour of a concept of corporate image as multiple “images” that are also determined by the receiver and that always are open to change within the individual receiver” (Moffitt, 2001, p. 348). There is little if any evidence in this project data that a receiver-centred campaign evaluation culture has been taken up in public relations practice. The evidence of success in this project’s data was seen primarily through positive media mentions and third-party endorsements, but there was also evidence of success being evaluated through increased levels of engagement by target publics and audiences and through the measurement of perceptions of stakeholders. However, the means by which such receiver-centred evaluations were undertaken could be seen as rudimentary.

### 5.5.5 Key messages in positioning

It was clear that there was some connection between the employment of key messages and the positioning efforts of public relations practitioners, for example, in the messaging strategies used to increase “share of media voice” in the following award entry:

> Increase the Trust’s share of media voice on child abuse issues by achieving 3 metropolitan feature stories and a minimum of 20 significant news stories to reinforce its position as an independent advocate. (2004 G2)

The public relations consultancy conducted a “positioning workshop with Board and Executive” to “obtain consensus on positioning, strategy and issues” which included ensuring consistent messaging as part of developing “a clear and unique positioning to reinforce the Trust’s credibility and advocacy role” (2004 G2). The evaluation for this award entry included examining key message penetration and it was reported that in print coverage, “95% positioned Trust as an independent body” and “88% positioned Trust as expert on child abuse and neglect issues” (2004 G2). This was seen as an excellent outcome by the client. The following example also indicates work was undertaken to determine desired positioning and the messaging that was needed:
The Hospital Board had identified a common vision for the Hospital’s redevelopment, but it needed to be clear on a preferred organisational position on the redevelopment. Socom took this vision and developed the following key messages that underpinned all communications activities. (2007 C2-2)

In another example, key messages to counter concerns about groundwater safety were used to help position Council as responsibly managing the city’s future water supply (2007 C6-25). Research was also undertaken to determine the way forward in both messaging and positioning in this example:

The RAS commissioned four focus groups among its target markets to inform the positioning of rodeo as an event, and develop key messages for public relations and marketing materials. (2006 C11–3)

Other awards also made the connection between repositioning and messaging, for example:

The Prime Minister immediately recognised the mood, shifted his position and decided to allow a conscience vote on a Private Member’s Bill....The influence of CAMRA’s campaign is clear from a review of the sample media clips in the appendix, both in terms of CAMRA’s role in commenting and in terms of delivering the agreed key messages. (2007 C2-4)

So soon after the Commonwealth Games Athletes Village was built on Royal Park, the new RCH could be positioned as another ‘land grab’. The RCH had a history of bad blood with its neighbours... Key messages about the rebuilding of the RCH and the consultation process were an essential part of the communication strategy. (2006 C6-5)

In the interviews, practitioners spoke about positioning and the role of key messages, for example:

I’m not that formal and I’m not that dogmatic about it, saying these words in these ways, although there are some times I would, but generally speaking there are the themes rather than a key message in my case…the theme is that these will do these things for you, so I’m more likely to stick to the themes and I make it clear that we need to keep repeating that in different ways…this is how we are
positioning ourselves about it and this is what we believe and when you speak about it, you represent that view. - INF1 interview

We tend to work on three key messages that are your main themes of how you want to position this initiative and then the supporting facts that back up each of those, would probably vary for audiences. - INF17 interview

So part of the key message … is to position yourself as the utmost - you know, the ultimate spokesperson and, in my case, ST is the ultimate spokesperson, so don’t bother talking to M from the other company. - INF12 interview

You could construct a campaign that links into their understanding of the good work the x organisation does and if they believe what they know about the x organisation, that it's good, then that kind of translates to being able to build, well, a message that this must be okay too. And then if they believe that the x say it’s okay then it must be okay - so those two things coming in together position it as being okay. - INF17 interview

One interviewee used messaging and positioning almost interchangeably, for example:

Ninety percent of the time the messages or the positioning we put out is done to call people to action to do something” and “there’s no point putting out a message, or positioning something in a way that it’s not because our stakeholders will always find out. - INF15 interview

No practitioner defined their understanding of positioning, the meaning was seemingly obvious.

The evidence points to the use of messaging as a way of undertaking intentional positioning and repositioning as described in the Halcion case study undertaken by Berger (1999). It can also be seen to link to positioning through discursive strategies as articulated by Motion (1996). Positioning in public relations has only been infrequently addressed in the public relations literature to date. Positioning and the role of key messages will be explored more fully in the next chapters.
5.6 Chapter conclusion

I have concluded that key messages feature prominently in descriptions of practice primarily because practitioners recognise the milieu in which public relations operates as contested and congested. Drawing on the work of Moloney (2006, p. 56), the focus of thinking behind strategic messaging as part of public relations could be defined as a core part of the communicative mode designed to enhance the chances of publics and audiences constructing the meanings intended for them by those commissioning the public relations services.

From descriptions of practice, public relations practitioners can be seen to develop key messages based on organisational need, research and the perceived role for the message. Practitioners crafted versions of a message in ways that would facilitate publics and audiences constructing the intended meaning of the organisation; they disseminated messages via media and communication channels that they thought would best reach target publics and audiences; they used spokespeople who would be perceived as credible and these spokespeople were trained for their role of delivering key messages; they saw the need for consistency and repetition in their quest for message success; and they evaluated campaigns to a significant extent through the reporting or, less commonly, recall of key messages. It was clear in all but two cases of practice examined as part of this project that key messages either underpinned or were an integral component of a wider public relations strategy. The data support the view of Pratt (2004) when he stated when giving examples of successful “talking points”, that “they were not uttered off the cuff, but were planned carefully, presented strategically, and grounded firmly in science” (p.15). In the data, it was evident that messages were planned and presented strategically, but it was not clear which science such messaging techniques were grounded within nor was it clear that practitioners knew or cared much about such science. Pfau and Wan (2006,) suggest that the active message processing model that “assumes thinking is information processing” and “elevates messages to centre stage” guides “many, perhaps most, public relations practitioners” (p. 112). Practitioners working in this way can be seen to be operating “from an implicit premise that information is the key: that it triggers cognitive responses in people, thereby affecting attitudes and behaviours” (p. 112). The data indicates that such thinking permeated practices around key messages in what is deemed by the public relations
profession in Australia as examples of best practice. The data also indicated that key messages played a role in intentionally positioning an organisation, product or service and this will be explored more fully in the next chapter.
6. The Positioning Framework

The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and to identify the means by which that purpose was achieved. It was envisaged that this could provide new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorised to further inform the development of practice, research and education in public relations. In this chapter, I describe how, through my analytical work on the two areas, key messages and positioning, the beginnings of synthesis started to take place and I saw a way to begin to explicate the processes and techniques involved in intentional positioning in a public relations context. In the absence of a specific organising framework for positioning in public relations, I developed a provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning. I report on this development process and on the findings when this framework is applied to the award entry data – in essence this became a study within a study. The application of the framework suggests that key messages are not central to public relations campaign practice as such, but they are central to the technique and process of intentional positioning. This work indicates that positioning plays a central role in public relations campaign practice.

6.1 Background and context for the positioning framework development

A review of 57 award winning public relations campaign texts (Appendix E) showed that 42 percent of the campaigns had “positioning” mentioned as a component of their activities. Positioning was not defined in any of these texts but was simply stated as if readers would know what was meant by the term. Other award entries had what could be interpreted as positioning elements, although the word “positioning” was not actually used. I have reported that some practitioners specifically reported using key messages as part of their positioning work. From this work there appeared a direct link to the concept of the contested space where meaning is constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed in practitioners’ efforts to intentionally represent something in a certain way in order to achieve a goal. This chapter reports on the first part of the investigation of that link.

The fact that positioning emerged from this public relations research data at all raised questions for me about the nature of positioning in public relations. As a practitioner,
I’d worked as the Census Communications Director for the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1999 -2002) to position the Australian National Census of Population and Housing as something worthwhile, that contributed to the betterment of the nation and that completing the census was part of people’s civic duty. In my work as Director of Communications for the agency now known as the Department of Climate Change (2002 - 2003), I worked to position energy efficiency as something that should be inherent in building, renovation and design work, not just an afterthought if one could afford it. This resulted in the then leading Australian television lifestyle program, *Better Homes and Gardens*, integrating energy efficiency into all their subsequent stories. In my position as Marketing Communications Manager for a regional financial services provider (2003 – 2005), I worked to position the organisation as community-minded, unlike “greedy” banks, and offering good value to its customers. Prior to seeing in this research project that other public relations practitioners talked about positioning as something quite routine, I’d never examined this aspect of my own practice – I’d just done it. This raised questions relating to what it was public relations practitioners were doing when they positioned something.

6.2. A working definition of positioning in public relations

With marketing-oriented definitions of positioning deemed inadequate, the challenge then becomes defining positioning in a public relations context. Only one specific public relations positioning definition was found (Motion, 1997) and this definition takes a discourse approach, stating that:

…positioning is a subjectifying process of locating and being located within discourse sites or spaces…involves the struggle to create what may be known and how it may be known…Positioning may be either a strategic manoeuvre or ploy by an individual, or the result of the discourses one is situated within as a subject of particular institutional relations, power relations, and social relations. (1997, p. 7)

Although this definition is very apt to what I have observed in this research, I am suggesting that there is a need for a definition to align with what could be termed mainstream public relations practice rather than critical theoretical approaches. I have
drawn from the work of Berger (1999) where the environment in which public relations is practiced can be conceived as a contested site, a site of competing messages and factors where target publics and audiences are encouraged, through the application of techniques and processes to construct the intended meaning of the organisation commissioning the public relations activity. As such, I am defining positioning in public relations as:

The strategic attempt to stake out and occupy a site of intentional representation in the contested space where meanings are constructed, contested and reconstructed.

It is suggested that this conceptualization of positioning could be of greater benefit to public relations than that of a marketing conceptualization, which asserts that positioning/repositioning is achieved through a manipulation of three of the “4Ps” of marketing – namely product, price and place (distribution) (Egan, 2007). This definition could serve as part of an heuristic for positioning in public relations and embraces a more social constructionist theoretical perspective because, when positioning in public relations is defined in this new way, one can draw from the small amount of literature within the field to identify key areas that play a role in public relations positioning. These are a) the use of stakeholder analysis to identify actual or potential positions, b) the position held by the organisation commissioning the public relations activity is enacted, often through activities undertaken by public relations practitioners (noting that the commissioning organisation may also be attempting to position other stakeholders simultaneously) and, c) particular storylines (i.e. key messages) are developed by the organisation commissioning the public relations activity.

6.3 The Positioning Theory of Harré and van Langenhove

Within the field of psychology over the last decade or so, positioning has emerged as a new theoretical area and it is specifically the Positioning Theory of Harré and van Langenhove (1999) that potentially offers further insights into positioning within the field of public relations.

The marketing concept of positioning has had a primary influence on the development within psychology of the Positioning Theory of Harré and van Langenhove (1999) who
view positioning as a discursive practice which has as its main dimension, “the degree to which the initiator of an exchange is capable of imposing positions upon others or refusing those which he or she has been assigned” (p.10). van Langenhove and Harré (1999) point out, that positions are not fixed but change, with fluid positionings being used to cope with different situations. Their work concentrates mainly on the way individuals position themselves within conversations but they also extended the theory’s conceptual apparatus to apply to societal and cultural issues. Slocum-Bradley (2008) applied their Positioning Theory to explore identity constructions at the US-Mexico border and states that Positioning Theory is “a conceptual and analytical model that illuminates the discursive construction of meaning” (p. 104). Slocum-Bradley had to make some adjustments to the theoretical framework to increase its relevance to her overarching research on promoting peace or conflict through identity, and this indicates that although Positioning Theory may be useful, adjustments may be required to make it more pertinent to fields outside psychology. This was found to be the case in applying the theory to public relations.

According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999), positioning can be either tacit or intentional. Tacit positioning is described as that which occurs unintentionally without conscious intent. Intentional positioning invariably is linked to having a specific goal and this is the positioning most relevant to public relations campaigns. Four distinct forms of intentional positioning have been identified (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) and I have indicated the relevance of each form for public relations through an explanation (highlighted in italics) and examples from amongst the 57 award entries that are the subjects of this study:

i) Situations of deliberate self positioning – *where an organisation wishes to occupy a particular position for a specific reason*; e.g. where IBM Australia’s goal was to “assume a thought leadership position” in order to increase engagement with small and medium sized enterprises (Text 100, 2006)

ii) situations of forced self-positioning – *where forces outside an organisation’s immediate control necessitate the organisation repositions itself*; e.g. where the Australian Wheat Board’s (AWB) “single desk” (through which all Australian wheat exports were negotiated) was under pressure from both government and
market forces and needed to “build a groundswell of support for the Single Desk and create a “united front” of growers and grain industry bodies, championing the Single Desk to government” (Red Agency, 2004);

iii) situations of deliberate positioning of others – *situations where an organisation deliberately positions other entities for a specific reason*; e.g. where the Department of Community Development of Western Australia campaigned to position young men needing counseling and support following the Bali terrorist bombings as not being weak or unmanly so they would more readily take up counseling (Dept of Community Development, 2003); and

iv) situations of forced positioning of others – *situations where forces outside an organisation’s immediate control necessitate the organisation positioning other entities* e.g. where shipping company WWL persisted, in the face of heated political debates occurring in Australia, in using non-political words such as “survivors” instead of “boat people” or “refugees” to try and keep the focus on the humanitarian aspects of the rescue (Financial and Corporate, 2002).

Harré and van Langenhove (1999, p. 10) put forward that positioning is underpinned by a mutually determining “positioning triangle” of position (of various actors), act-action (the social force of what is being said and done) and storylines (narratives about things, events or people). They asserted that deliberate intention could be introduced at any of the three poles and it is proposed that this has implications for positioning in public relations campaigns. For example, a positioning triangle might see a) a government department health promotion program intending to adopt a certain position (position); and (b) that government department declaring its position by implementing a course of action such as launching an appealing promotional campaign or issuing a statement arguing for a case for changes in legislation (act-action); and (c) particular narratives being developed and delivered – key messages developed or a framed story to be told to target publics and audiences (storylines). It is the interplay of the three poles that determine the positioning at any given time. The positioning strategy could potentially be changed at any of the three poles and this would change the overall positioning. van Langenhove and Harré (1999 p. 18) state that:
Sometimes an initial seizure of the dominant role in a conversation will force the other speakers into speaking positions they would not have occupied voluntarily. Initial positionings can be challenged and the speakers sometimes thereby repositioned. One can position oneself as a commentator upon the positions, social acts and storylines generated in one conversation by creating a higher order conversation in which the conversation commented on is merely a topic. Since actors may conceive their positions differently it is not unusual for the very same words and actions to be bearers of more than one conversation.

This conceptualisation of positioning could be of greater benefit to public relations than that of a marketing conceptualisation. Drawing heavily on the above words of van Langenhove and Harré (1999, p. 18), I am suggesting a description for positioning activity in public relations campaigns (the changes from the original wording are in bold):

Sometimes an initial seizure of the dominant role in a campaign will force the other stakeholders into positions they would not have occupied voluntarily. Initial positionings can be challenged and the stakeholders sometimes thereby repositioned. An organisation (organisation or spokesperson) can position itself as a commentator upon the positions, social acts and storylines generated in one situation by creating a higher order campaign strategy in which the situation is merely a topic to be commented on rather than something in which the organisation itself is directly involved. Since actors may conceive their positions differently, it is not unusual for the very same words and actions to be bearers of more than one campaign message.

This description of how positioning works is congruent with my definition for public relations positioning which has the concept of contest for meaning construction and position at its centre, that is, positioning in public relations can be defined as the strategic attempt to stake out and occupy a site of intentional representation in the contested space where meanings are constructed, contested and reconstructed.

The next section of the chapter will further explore how such positioning activity would work within a specific framework.
6.4 A provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations

In suggesting a provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations, four domains have been identified as highly relevant. These are:

a. The positioning triangle domain – positioning determined, enacted and supported
b. The positioning type domain
c. The positioning purpose domain
d. The positioning goal domain

a) The positioning triangle domain – the first domain

The positioning triangle is the first domain to be considered. The positioning triangle as put forward by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) can be readily translated in a public relations context as in Figure 1. In this first domain the positioning is determined, enacted and supported.

![Public Relations Positioning Triangle](image)

**Figure 6.1. Public Relations Positioning Triangle**

*Note. Adapted from Harré and van Langenhove (1999).*

Each pole of the triangle can be said to mutually define one another - what Harré and van Langenhove (1999) call a “dynamic stability” (p.10). The first positioning triangle
pole is *position*, i.e. the organisation’s point of view of its own and its stakeholders’ actual and potential positions e.g. the organisation determines the desired position. This desired positioning would be informed by research and stakeholder analysis informing the campaign’s design and/or implementation.

The second positioning triangle pole is *speech-act/action*, that is, the organisation’s course of action chosen from among various possibilities. There is a clear link in this pole with Speech Act Theory. Essentially, at this pole of the triangle, the position is declared and enacted by what is said and/or done (i.e. the speech act/action) by the organisation commissioning the public relations. Speech acts are “intentional, meaningful acts performed with an expression or expressions… out loud, in writing, or ‘in one’s head’” and they are performed by “both speakers/writers and their audiences (when they understand the speakers/writers)” (Kearns, 1994, p. 50). Speech Act Theory’s fundamental tenet is that “all utterances state things but also do things”, that is, that “all utterances have a meaning and a force” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 17). Austin (1962) referred to this force as the *illocutionary force*. Austin (1962) pointed out that traditionally statements were viewed as things that described something and could be decreed as true or false. He saw fault with this and identified that there “is a class of sentences which are principally important for what they do, not because they describe things” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 15). Neff (1998, 2008) is one of the few public relations scholars who has explored the possibilities of speech act theory for the field, but to date there has not been an appropriate framework within which it can make sense for public relations. Neff (2008) states that speech act theory “focuses on creating language for action” (p. 96) and once placed in the positioning triangle, the relevance to what practitioners undertake in public relations becomes clearer – the speech-act/action is to achieve desired positioning. Hornsby (1994) provides more insight into this term “speech act/action” in that “acts” will “denote things people do, and “actions” relates to “particular doings” (p. 187). The speech-act is more than the “propositional content” but also includes the concept of “illocutionary force” – the two together comprising the “illocutionary act” (Searle 1979, vii). An illocutionary act is “an act which a speaker performs in saying something” (Davis, 1994, p. 208). The most important part of illocutionary force is what Searle calls the “illocutionary point” (1979, p. 3), that is, what is the point or purpose of what is being said, as Searle (1979, p. 2) explains:
The point or purpose of an order can be specified by saying that it is an attempt to get the hearer to do something. The point or purpose of a description is that it is a representation (true or false, accurate or inaccurate) of how something is. The point or purpose of a promise is that it is an undertaking of an obligation by the speaker to do something.

In general situations, most illocutionary acts are not intended to have specific perlocutionary effects, but I would argue that in the context of public relations campaigns, the findings in this doctoral study indicate that they are intended to have such effects, that is, to have target publics and audiences construct the meaning that public relations practitioners intend for them. Bach (1998) states that “the perlocutionary act is a matter of trying to get the hearer to form some correlative attitude and in some cases to act in a certain way” (n.p.). Speech-acts/actions have the “power to shape certain aspects of the social world” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 6) and are selected by public relations practitioners for their abilities to achieve a desired goal or positioning, that is, speech-act/actions have a force that is designed to cause a consequence – to inform, to persuade, to promise, to announce, and so on. Slocum-Bradley (2008) states that it is through speech acts that positioning is enacted and storylines invoked.

The third positioning triangle pole is *storyline*, that is, what is the storyline that the organisation has chosen to promulgate through its public relations activities including what is said and done, for example, the organisation attempts to construct meaning through storylines about the position it has declared. However, the storylines available or invoked are in large part determined by the first two poles. If, for example, the organisation self positions, or is forced to self position, as being an environmentally responsible organisation, the speech act/action would declare this positioning, essentially claiming the space where this meaning would be constructed, for example, a company announces itself to be an environmentally responsible company – this is the speech-act. The storylines available to the organisation from these two poles would be those relating to its positioning as environmentally responsible – to invoke other storylines would undermine the overall positioning strategy and the dynamic stability of the triangle would be disrupted. A storyline is essentially a style of narrative that contains firstly, a conventional flow of events and secondly, characters (van...
Langenhove & Harré, 2009). The public relations practitioner plays a role in developing and delivering various narratives that a) support the desired positioning and b) are consistent with the other two poles of the positioning triangle. As narrative has the ability to reach out and connect with audiences, it is effective for engagement with internal and external stakeholders (Gill, 2009). A company that has declared itself to be environmentally responsible has only certain storylines open to it – those that support the desired positioning. To pursue other storylines, e.g. narratives about the pursuit of maximum return to shareholders without due regard for environmental issues, would be incongruent with the positioning triangle and the desired positioning would not be achieved. This links back to the role of key messages in public relations campaigns and the importance placed by practitioners on consistent messaging in supporting believability (Bruce & Tini, 2008).

It is the position of a particular character or actor in the chosen storyline that will “influence the rights of that actor to position others: an actor who is positioned as authoritative will have greater positioning rights than one who is not” (Slocum-Bradley, 2008, p. 107). It is clear that this relates to the legitimacy of the organisation commissioning the public relations campaign to operate but also to the perceived legitimacy of the spokespeople acting on behalf of the organisation. The importance of the spokesperson in delivering key messages came through strongly in the data analysed in the previous chapters and it can be seen that the positioning framework offers further insights as to why this is the case. This has the potential to enhance understanding about how meaning is negotiated and what comprises some of what Berger (1999) called the “dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation in contested sites” that underpin public relations practice (p. 186).

So to summarise this first domain, it can be said that there is a positioning triangle – its three poles are that positioning is determined, enacted through a speech act/action and then supported through storylines, being in the main the key messages which this research suggests underpins much of the practice in public relations campaigns.

**b) The positioning type domain – the second domain**
The four distinct types of intentional positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 23) were brought together as the second domain of the framework – namely:

- situations of deliberate self positioning;
- situations of forced self-positioning;
- situations of deliberate positioning of others; and
- situations of forced positioning of others

This domain helps determine the communication strategy as it indicates whether the positioning campaign is being undertaken proactively or defensively. This could have implications for practitioners in terms of campaign planning, resourcing and timing.

c) The positioning purpose domain – the third domain

The third domain of the framework considers the purpose of intentional positioning. This domain relates to Jones and Pittman’s (1982, cited in van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 25) description of the ways individuals could present themselves in a positioning context, that is, ingratiation, intimidation, self promotion, exemplification and supplication. This has been adapted to a public relations campaign context as a way of examining the purposes for which an organisation may wish to position itself or others. I have adapted Christopher, Morgana, Marek, Kellera, and Drummond’s (2005, p. 139) definitions of the five descriptions for the organizational context in guiding classification of purpose, namely:

- Ingratiation – entities want to be perceived as likeable and agreeable, and will do favours for, compliment, or flatter others. Of course, such behaviors may lead ingratiators to be perceived as “brownnosers”;

- Intimidation – entities want to be seen as strong, threatening, or dangerous, and emphasize their ability to bring about negative consequences to others. Entities that intimidate run the risk of appearing bossy, or if they are unable to enforce negative consequences, as ineffectual;
• Self-promotion – Entities that use self-promotion want to be seen as competent and emphasise abilities and accomplishments. However, entities who self-promote may be viewed as conceited, or should claims of competence be unsubstantiated, as fraudulent;

• Exemplification - Entities who use exemplification go above and beyond the normal call of duty to appear dedicated, upstanding, and highly moral. However, if exemplifiers fail to live up to these standards, others may perceive them as hypocritical; and,

• Supplication- Indicative adjectives that tapped into supplication included “weak” and “dependent”.

It is acknowledged that this domain, that of positioning purpose, may not fit comfortably with all readers’ understandings or definitions of public relations as it does not necessarily support normative theories that focus on the purpose of public relations being related to something other than the attainment of an organisation’s strategic goals, e.g. the co-creational perspective which “places an implicit value on relationships going beyond the achievement of an organizational goal” (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 652). It can however be seen to be relevant to campaign practice as described in the academic literature reviewed for this project and also in this study’s data. The domain of positioning purpose draws from Berger’s (1999) conceptualization of intentional representation and more critical definitions such as “public relations communication can be understood as the strategic attempt to control the agenda of public discussion and the terms in which discussion takes place” (Weaver, Motion & Roper, 2006, p. 17). This domain is central to the purposive construction of meaning with the strategic intention of an organisation achieving its strategic goals.

**d) The positioning goal domain – the fourth domain**

The fourth domain of the framework is that of intentional positioning being related to the desire to achieve a specific goal and this is the final factor to be considered in the
framework which is proposed for public relations. If there is no clear goal, it would be pointless to expend resources on positioning.

Figure 6.2 below encapsulates the four domains into the conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positioning triangle domain</th>
<th>Positioning type domain</th>
<th>Positioning purpose domain</th>
<th>Goal domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of first positioning triangle pole of position, i.e. organisation’s point of view of its own and stakeholders’ actual and potential positions e.g. determine the desired position</td>
<td>Evidence of second positioning triangle pole of speech act/action, i.e. language/action used to achieve a specific consequence or outcome e.g. declare the desired position</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate self positioning</td>
<td>Evidence of intended positioning related to a desire to achieve a specific goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of the third positioning triangle pole is storyline i.e. a style of narrative that the organisation has chosen to promulgate through it public relations activities i.e. construct meaning through storylines about the position declared</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced self positioning</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate positioning of others</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of the third positioning triangle pole is storyline i.e. a style of narrative that the organisation has chosen to promulgate through it public relations activities i.e. construct meaning through storylines about the position declared</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced self positioning</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate positioning of others</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of the third positioning triangle pole is storyline i.e. a style of narrative that the organisation has chosen to promulgate through it public relations activities i.e. construct meaning through storylines about the position declared</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced self positioning</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate positioning of others</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate self positioning</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced self positioning</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate positioning of others</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.2. Provisional Conceptual Framework for Intentional Positioning in Public Relations Campaigns – Mark I

6.5 Approach to testing the Framework

An examination of public relations campaigns as presented in award-winning entries judged by peers to be examples of best practice was undertaken. The purpose was to test the application of the factors within the four domains of the provisional conceptual framework. This was viewed as a first step to test the framework and see whether it
could be used to identify positioning efforts and techniques in public relations campaigns.

6.6 Results

6.6.1 Positioning triangle domain

All award entries (n=57) could be presented by way of the applied positioning triangle.

Table 6.1
Positioning triangle domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence present</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of first positioning triangle pole of position, i.e. organisation’s point of view of its own and stakeholders’ actual and potential positions</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of second positioning triangle pole of action, i.e. language used to achieve a specific consequence or outcome</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of third positioning triangle pole of story, i.e. a storyline that the organisation has chosen to promulgate through it public relations activities</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The positioning triangle model of position – action – story was successfully applied to all campaigns. The following quotes demonstrate examples of the evidence of position – the first positioning triangle pole of position:

position Council as responsibly managing the city’s future water supply.
(Marcomm, 2007, Goals and Objectives)

we had to show our audience that we offered an extensive product listing in a way that people who had never studied with us could easily understand.
(Northern Territory University, 2003, Situation Analysis)

Evidence of second positioning triangle pole of speech-act/action:

A summit was perceived as a unique opportunity for growers from throughout the country to participate as a national group in a consultative forum on the

IBM launched the new-look and restructured A/NZ Intranet to employees, positioning it as a key workplace tool. (IBM, 2004, Implementation)

Evidence of third positioning triangle pole of storyline:

To raise people’s knowledge and understanding of what we celebrate on Australia Day by providing them with information on the people, values, ideals, achievements and qualities that make Australia great. (National Australia Day Council, 2003, Evaluation)

ensure that lobbying and media relations efforts were coordinated, so there was a consistent delivery of messages. (CAMRA, 2007, Implementation)

Heathgate’s Project Manager and Vice President, Mr Chuck Foldenauer, was given media training and continuing schooling to help him respond to emerging issues, while environmental groups were continually provided with up-to-date information. This enabled their more outrageous claims to be discredited since they had been informed of the facts and ignored them because they did not suit their agenda or philosophical opposition to uranium mining. (Middleton, 1999, Communication Strategy)

An example of the three positioning poles within one of the award entries best illustrates how this positioning triangle domain works. A clear example of the first positioning pole can be seen in the award entry where Alcan has the stated goal of developing “a clear positioning reinforcing Alcan’s credibility and capability in Australia” (Rowland, 2005, Goals and Objectives). Research and stakeholder analysis was reported in the award entry which led to a positioning workshop being held to “understand perceptions of Alcan, identify key challenges, strengths and weaknesses” (Rowland, 2005, Research). Both Alcan as a company and the project expansion were being positioned, with Alcan seeking to position itself to reinforce “credibility and
capability” and the expansion being positioned as “beneficial” (Rowland, 2005, Goals and Objectives).

The second positioning pole can also be seen in the Alcan case study, where Rowland (2005, Communication Strategy) reported that the following were undertaken as part of their tactics: development of key messages and Q&As, media alert and media release for a press conference, phone scripts for frontline staff, script for introduction to media conference, fact sheets, information briefs, site notices, notices to other Alcan business units and letters to stakeholders. All these actions (speech-act/actions) are selected for their abilities to achieve a desired goal, they have a force that is designed to cause a consequence – to inform, to persuade, to promise, to announce, and so on. The storyline of the third positioning pole is evident in this campaign as it positioned the expansion as “beneficial” and the campaign “proactively managed issues that could potentially impact stakeholder perceptions” (Rowland, 2005, Executive Summary). The key messages and subsequent narratives worked to support the positioning efforts of the company.

The positioning triangle can also be seen at work as the Shell campaign “focused on delivering timely and credible key messages” (Shell, 2000, Communication Strategy) through the media and directly to stakeholders. The channels included “letterbox drops, personal briefings, staff updates and a pro-active media campaign” (i.e. the action) so that “Shell’s key messages were reinforced across a variety of mediums” (i.e. the story) (Shell, 2000, Executive Summary). Media relations formed a major part of the strategy and operated according to stated principles (i.e. the position):

Communicate quickly so bad news is delivered from the source and incorrect or misleading reports are minimised or eliminated. Vacuums must be filled before the media do so; The public always has 'a right to know'; Be transparent and honest at all times; Provide spokespeople to maintain open and regular communication (Shell, 2000, Communication Strategy).

In another example, the IBM internal communications campaign, it was reported that the public relations team had positioned the new intranet as “a key workplace tool” (IBM, 2004, Implementation) and in the communication strategy acknowledged that for
“the Intranet to become an important and trusted source of information, all audiences had to be catered for” (IBM, 2004, Target Publics). This could be seen as the position – the first pole of the positioning triangle. The award entry explained how research was undertaken to identify the issues and concerns of employees and management staff and that this research “underpinned the redevelopment program and provided the basis for the development of key messages and communications initiatives in the re-launch campaign”. The communication initiatives become the second pole, action, of the positioning triangle and the key messages become the third pole, story. It is evident that by altering what was occurring at any one of the poles would then necessitate an adjustment of the other poles – thus the positioning could be changed for strategic purposes.

6.6.2 Positioning type domain

All award entries showed evidence of deliberate self-positioning (n=57) and in addition to self positioning, 33% (n=19) showed evidence of forced self positioning, 84% (n=48) showed evidence of the deliberate positioning of others and 12% (n=7) showed evidence of forced positioning of others.

Table 6.2
Positioning type domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate self positioning</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced self positioning</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate positioning of others</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The type of positioning domain showed deliberate self-positioning in all campaigns, for example:

Promoting the integral role played by WAFF throughout the campaign and providing opportunities for farmers to take up WAFF membership. (WAFF, 2001, Executive Summary)
A comprehensive public relations campaign turned around all the potential negatives relating to the expansion of the work camp program in WA. (Ministry for Justice, 2000, Executive Summary)

Leverage the 300th year anniversary to position the company as the expert tea blender. (Impact, 2007, Evaluation)

However, there were instances where the first self-positioning was forced upon an organisation, usually through the potential for or an actual occurrence of a crisis, for example:

If WWL had chosen not to communicate developments, its reputation could have been harmed. (Financial and Corporate Relations, 2002, Situation Analysis)

With this merger approaching, it was imperative for the QGGA to maintain a strong membership base to remain powerful in merger negotiations. (WCG, 1999, Situation Analysis)

On June 10 2005, it was announced via the Al Jazeera television network in the Middle East that an Australian engineer, Douglas Wood, was being held by unknown people in an unknown place in Iraq. (Smail, 2005, Situation Analysis)

The campaigns then showed efforts to take a proactive stance and regain control of the situation by deliberate self positioning. For example, as “animal welfare activist groups had been actively campaigning against other Australian rodeos and had made negative commentary about RAS Rodeo competitions in the past”, it was necessary for the Royal Sydney Rodeo “to manage any negative perceptions of rodeo as a sport and its impact on the ‘stock’, the bulls, horses and steers involved in the competition” (Cox Inall, 2006, Communication Strategy). Another example demonstrates that WWL’s position of not providing interview to talk-back radio during what became known as the Tampa Crisis was forced to change “when credibility was questioned”. This situation arose when the then government minister questioned the ship’s master’s version of events during an interview – “as it appeared the master’s credibility could be undermined, we
altered our strategy and the following day arranged for Peter Dexter [from WWL] to be interviewed on several leading current affairs programs” (Financial and Corporate, 2002, Implementation).

A large majority of the campaigns (84%) showed evidence of the deliberate positioning of others, many positioning others as third-party advocates for their campaign goals and others deciding where they’d like a target public to be situated, for example:

The December 1998 campaign launch in Goondiwindi brought together the Premiers of Queensland and New South Wales, and the Federal Minister for Agriculture as a public demonstration of the industry’s commitment to being a better neighbour. (Cox Inall, 1999, Executive Summary)

Appoint Geoff Jansz as egg Ambassador in support of eggs - provide new egg recipes and new usage solutions. (Reed Weir, 2006, Implementation)

Objective: making employees feel part of the company. (Star City, 2006, Executive Summary)

In one award entry, supporters of a merger between companies were labelled as “white knights” and the campaign encouraged “white knights to submit letters to the editor to local press in particular” (BBS, 2001, Implementation). In the Shell oil spill crisis response campaign, the position taken was that “the public always has ‘a right to know’” (Shell, 2000, Communication Strategy). This shows the deliberate positioning of others which informed the campaign and led to a specific course of public relations action and particular storyline being promulgated.

Only 12% (n=7) showed evidence of situations of forced positioning of others and this in large part was driven by crisis or some legislative aspect impacting on the campaign, for example:

Supreme Court ruling that 75% of members had to agree to merger... presented a monumental challenge to convince stakeholders the merger was in their best interests. (BBS, 2001, Situation Analysis)
Achieve 100 per cent compliance by retailers to Council’s Graffiti Prevention and Control of Aerosol Spray Paint Local Law. (City of Casey, 2003, Communication Strategy)

Response was driven by urgency-Western Australians were suffering and needed support. (Department for Community Development WA, 2003, Executive Summary)

6.6.4 Positioning purpose domain

Only 7% (n=4) of award entries showed evidence of an organisation positioning for the purposes of ingratiation; 2% (n=1) showed evidence of an organisation positioning for the purposes of intimidation; 81% (n=46) showed evidence of an organisation positioning for the purposes of self promotion; 42% (n=24) showed evidence of an organisation positioning for the purposes of exemplification; 2% (n=1) showed evidence of an organisation positioning for the purposes of supplication and 9% (n=5) showed evidence of an organisation positioning for other purposes.

Table 6.3
Positioning purpose domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of ingratiation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of intimidation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of self promotion</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of exemplification</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of supplication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for other reasons</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that positioning is undertaken for the purposes of self promotion in the majority of entries (81% n=46), for example:
Involve BHP as a trusted part of the indigenous landscape and create strong links between the miner and community. (Queensland Corporate Communications Network, 1999, Goals and Objectives)

Create a positive image for the new maternity unit – through use of positive media coverage and the development and delivery of a wide range of communications materials. (Mills Wilson, 2006, Goals and Objectives)

Utilise topicality of stem cells and focus on Cryosite’s non-controversial adult stem cells. (Westbrook, 2003, Communication Strategy)

Some entities appear to carry out positioning for more than one reason, such as in the campaign where the cotton industry aimed to self-promote by turning “community sentiment expressed through the media from overwhelmingly negative messages to 50% positive messages” whilst also aiming to exemplify by aiming to “improve community perception of the cotton industry by demonstrating a significant culture change in on-farm decision making and practices aimed at reducing the impacts on surrounding neighbours” (Cox Inall, 1999, Goals and Objectives).

Evidence of an organisation positioning for the purposes of exemplification was seen in 42% (n=24) of campaigns but many of these included positioning for self promotion as well, for example:

Announce to the public, with the NSW Police, that the products were immediately being withdrawn from sale and that no person should consume a Mars® or Snickers® product until advised it was safe to do so. (Socom, 2006a, Communication Strategy)

Nippy’s commissioned an independent management systems consultancy to help identify the source and demonstrate that it was doing everything possible to resolve the problem. (Hughes, 1999, Goals and Objectives)

This effort was supported by an intensive communications response that turned a potentially damaging situation into one that strengthened relationships with
target publics and resulted in strong stakeholder endorsement and commendation. (Powerlink Qld, 2007, Executive Summary)

Examples of the 7% (n=4) of campaign award entries that showed evidence of an organisation positioning for the purposes of ingratiation include:

As part of the Aboriginal program, Stephen Middleton led a group of Native Title claimants and the Environment writer from the Adelaide Advertiser on a tour of American ISL uranium mines in mid-1998. The ten-day tour of mines in Texas and Wyoming gave them first-hand knowledge of the low-impact nature of the process, plus the chance to meet representatives of the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. It proved to be critical in securing Aboriginal approval to proceed with the project. It also demonstrated to The Advertiser that Heathgate Resources was committed to Aboriginal participation and that the ISL process is less environmentally intrusive than the alternatives. This helped minimise negative mainstream media reporting of the project and Heathgate’s Aboriginal relations. (Middleton, 1999, Communication Strategy)

The objective of reaching out to these stakeholders was to demonstrate Woolworths’ commitment to suppliers and rural and regional communities – Farming associations, many of who are fresh produce suppliers for Woolworths, were also a stakeholder group as they had active involvement and understanding of issues surrounding drought in rural and regional communities, and may have viewed ‘National Drought Action Day’ as a self-serving initiative. (Edelman, 2007, Target Publics)

Demonstrate Council’s genuine commitment to community involvement in decision-making. (Marcom, 2007, Executive Summary)

In categorising one award entry as positioning for the purposes of supplication, the special circumstances of this campaign, being one aimed at freeing a hostage (Smail, 2005), must be considered as not in the everyday suite of campaigns conducted. There was only one campaign element that was categorised as intimidation and again, as this
project is interpretive in nature, it is acknowledged that other researchers may have classified the element in a different way.

It is notable that five award entries could not be categorised under the purposes of ingratiation, intimidation, self promotion, exemplification or supplication, for example:

Advocate for additional bus services, extended operating hours, weekend services and increased service frequency. (SOCOM, 2006b, Goals and Objectives)

They were concerned about awareness levels among livestock producers in relation to EADS and the role producers must play in preventing their spread. (Turnbull Porter Novelli, 2001b, Situation Analysis)

The target public was encouraged to think about these suggestions when determining for themselves what is great about Australia and being Australian. (NADC, 2003, Communication Strategy)

In examining this “other” there was a clear theme which was tentatively labelled “facilitation”. This was further investigated in the process of additional testing of the framework and was eventually formally added as a sixth purpose for positioning – this will be further reported on in the next chapter.

6.6.4 Goal domain

All award entries (n=57) showed evidence of intended positioning action being related to a desire to achieve a specific goal.

Table 6.4
Goal domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of intended positioning action related to a desire to achieve a specific goal</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All campaigns aimed to achieve specific goals and the results suggest that positioning played a role in all the campaigns, for example:

To expand the enrolment campaign image to create a recognisable and consistent brand image for the corporate and international markets. (Medialink, 1999, Goals and Objectives)

To demonstrate to target audiences that SB acted ethically and responsibly and in the interests of public safety at all times. (Burson-Marsteller, 2001, Executive Summary)

Create a platform to position and promote Telstra products and services. (Telstra, 2006, Goals and Objectives)

6.7 Discussion of framework testing

The application of the provisional positioning framework indicates that all public relations campaigns in this study’s sample have positioning elements within them. The judgments as to the categorization of positioning elements in the campaign award entries are based on the subjective textual analysis of the award entry texts and it is noted that this is a limitation of this study. It is acknowledged that another researcher may not, for example, find evidence of ingratiation in the award entry texts and may have categorized these as positioning for some other purpose – it is evident however, that intentional positioning for some purpose was being undertaken.

The overall findings indicated that positioning happens at various stages of a public relations campaign. The findings suggest that campaign research is undertaken to find out “what’s already up there in the mind” (Ries & Trout, 1981) and that the strategy then aims through public relations activities to retie “the connections that already exist” (Ries & Trout, 1981) in ways that better serve the organisation and help it achieve its overall campaign goal. This ties in the influence of the marketing positioning field in the development of Harré and van Langenhove’s (1999) Positioning Theory. It also opens the door to further investigation of how the intended positioning meanings are co-constructed by both the organisation commissioning public relations activity and the subjects of the public relations activity, that is, target publics. Harré and van
Langenhove (1999) state, “it can be easily seen that the social force of an action and the position of the actor and interactors mutually determine one another” which further underpins the concept of fluidity of positioning and the construction of meaning within public relations campaigns (p.17).

Whenever positioning is occurring, several other forms of positioning will be occurring at the same time as by positioning one’s own organization, for example, other organisations’ positions may be altered or compromised in some way, necessitating a response such as a repositioning on their part (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). This notion of fluidity is one of the most important aspects of the theory for public relations and may help explain why public relations campaign plans need to be adjusted to accommodate changes in internal and external environments as the plan is implemented, what Mintzberg (2007) calls emergent strategy. Applying Mintzberg’s discussion of emergent strategy to public relations, King (2010) defines an emergent communication strategy as “a communicative construct derived from the interaction between reader/hearer response, situated context, and discursive patterns” (p.20). But it appears that the work of Mintzberg (2007) and King (2010) could be contextualized for public relations within a framework of positioning to assist in explaining why some campaigns are unsuccessful in spite of the best planning and design efforts – a failure to recognise and/or respond to emerging patterns in audience and stakeholder response; a failure to accommodate the fluid nature of the positioning environment that our publics inhabit (situated context), and a failure to pay due regard to the negotiation of meaning that is taking place (discursive patterns) as positioning and repositioning occurs. It was clear that this framework required further testing and exploration.

6.8 Chapter conclusion

Through my analytical work on key messages and my research into the concept of positioning, the beginnings of synthesis started to take place. A way to begin to explicate the processes and techniques involved in intentional positioning in a public relations context emerged from this process. In the absence of a specific organising framework for positioning in public relations, I developed a provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning. I reported on this development process and on the findings when this framework was applied to the award entry data – in essence this
became a study within a study. The application of the framework suggested that key messages were not central to public relations campaign practice as such, but they were central to the technique and process of intentional positioning. This work indicated that positioning played a central role in public relations campaign practice. On the basis of the results and analysis in this part of the project, it was concluded that the provisional conceptual framework for positioning in public relations campaigns offered a more comprehensive approach to positioning than found in marketing models and also brought together elements identified by other public relations researchers in a single framework. It was clear that further testing and refinement was needed but this initial study’s findings showed that positioning was a significant part of public relations campaign practice. The provisional positioning framework for public relations showed potential application in two areas – as an heuristic for analysis of public relations activities and as a practical framework for designing positioning strategies in public relations programs and campaigns. The next chapter will examine the framework’s potential as an heuristic and report on its potential as a design framework.
7. Applying and testing the Conceptual Framework for Intentional Positioning in Public Relations

The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and to identify the means by which that purpose was achieved. It was envisaged that this could provide new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorised to further inform the development of practice, research and education in public relations. In the last chapter, I proposed a provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations. This chapter reports on further testing and development of the framework and for this purpose I have taken two approaches. In the first approach, as a way of testing whether public relations positioning was different to commercial marketing positioning, the framework was applied to government agency/publicly-funded organisation campaigns, because marketing as a rule is not generally associated with such government communication. I set out to investigate whether government agencies’ and other public sector organizations’ communication campaigns in Australia employed public relations positioning techniques, as defined in the previous chapter, in their quest to achieve communication goals.

In the second approach, I report on an exercise where I sought to apply the positioning framework to the design of a draft public relations positioning campaign for an organisation, The Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment, based at the University of Newcastle, Australia. The aim of the exercise was to ascertain whether the framework could be helpful to practitioners in campaign design, specifically in positioning organisations or activities/programs in ways that assist to achieve their public relations goals. In undertaking this exercise I drew on my academic and practitioner knowledge of the public relations field, my knowledge of the environmental partnerships culture gained from my work with the Australian Government and my understandings of the local socioeconomic and geographical terrain of the greater Hunter Valley region, wherein the University of Newcastle is located.
7.1 Application of the framework to government agency campaigns

Whilst politicians may use marketing positioning techniques in their electoral campaigns or to advance their progress through the political party system (Roper, 2005a), there was no literature that addressed if and how government agencies and public sector organisations employed public relations positioning techniques. Glenny (2008) has researched aspects of government agency communication and found that although political communication has received extensive attention in the literature, “there has been less focus on the apolitical function of communication undertaken by governments and the public servant’s role within it (p.153)”. Government agencies in Australia enact the political agenda of the elected government and are staffed by public servants “committed to notions of professional neutrality” (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2007, 12). Public sector organisations in Australia are funded by governments and generally deliver services such as education and health but also include public corporations such as government-owned utilities delivering power and water services. The use of positioning by these organisations may, at first glance, seem at odds with this notion of professional neutrality and general service delivery but, when not defined through the lens of commercial marketing positioning, such use seems appropriate. This part of the thesis project shows that positioning undertaken by such government agencies and organisations is something quite different to that which is seen in marketing contexts.

The framework for intentional positioning in public relations campaigns has four domains as shown in Figure 7.1 below. It is proposed that for successful positioning to occur, the three poles of the positioning triangle should be aligned (the positioning triangle domain), it should be clear as to the type of positioning that is occurring (the positioning type domain) and for what purpose it is being undertaken (the positioning purpose domain). In Harré and van Langenhove’s (1999) Positioning Theory, five purposes for positioning were articulated, however, in adapting their work for a public relations context, I identified a possible need for another purpose category – positioning for the purposes of facilitation. It should be noted that the framework presented in this chapter has been labeled “mark II” as the sixth purpose for positioning, facilitation, has been added in light of the results of this further analysis. The final domain of the
Positioning framework is the goal domain, that is, there should be a clear overarching strategic communication goal to which the positioning aligns.

### Positioning triangle domain

| Evidence of first positioning triangle pole of *position*, i.e. organisation’s point of view of its own and stakeholders’ actual and potential positions e.g. determine the desired position | Evidence of second positioning triangle pole of *speech act/action*, i.e. language/action used to achieve a specific consequence or outcome e.g. enact the desired position | Evidence of the third positioning triangle pole is *story* i.e. a storyline that the organisation has chosen to promulgate through it public relations activities e.g. construct meaning through storylines about the position declared |

### Positioning type domain

| Evidence of situations of deliberate self positioning | Evidence of situations of forced self positioning | Evidence of situations of deliberate positioning of others | Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others |

### Positioning purpose domain

| Evidence of positioning for the purposes of ingratiation | Evidence of positioning for the purposes of intimidation | Evidence of positioning for the purposes of self promotion | Evidence of positioning for the purposes of exemplification | Evidence of positioning for the purposes of supplication | Evidence of positioning for the purposes of facilitation |

### Goal domain

Evidence of intended positioning related to a desire to achieve a specific goal

---

**Figure 7.1. Conceptual Framework for Intentional Positioning in Public Relations Campaigns – mark II**

Possibly the most challenging part of the framework is the positioning triangle domain, and specifically, the second pole of the positioning triangle - speech act/action. At the first pole, the desired positioning is determined through analysis of research findings, including stakeholder/stakeseeker analysis. It is at the second pole of the positioning triangle where the desired positioning is enacted and this process draws on Speech Act Theory, a theoretical area with which few public relations scholars, apart from Neff (1998; 2008) have engaged. Searle (1979), who built on the work of Austin (1962), suggests five ways of using language or “five general categories of illocutionary acts” (Searle 1979, p. viii):
We tell people how things are (Assertives), we try to get them to do things (Directives), we commit ourselves to doing things (Commissives), we express our feelings and attitudes (Expressives), and we bring about changes in the world through our utterances (Declarations). (Searle 1979, p. viii)

The method I used in the exercise of further examining the framework aligns with Searle’s approach which he states is “in a sense empirical” (1979, p. viii), but which I view as interpretative. It involved (a) looking at the uses of language in 21 of the award entries in what could broadly be classified as government communication, which were part of the overall sample for this doctoral research project, and (b) identifying evidence of one or more of the five general categories of speech act/actions in the context of the discourse within which the award entry is situated. I then classify particular speech-acts/actions under these headings. This approach is more than just looking for verbs in the text such as “announce” or “proclaim”, which Searle states is the most common error people make with Speech Act Theory, but looks at the illocutionary act in its entirety. This can only be done by looking at the wider context, especially, in the case of public relations campaigns, that of stated strategic goals and the authority of the organisation and its spokespeople to perform the illocutionary act.

7.1.1 Applying the framework to the government agency entry data – findings and discussion

Of the 21 award entries examined, 19 illustrated intentional positioning being undertaken when the framework was applied to the award entry data, that is, the three positioning triangle poles were evident and were aligned, the positioning type and positioning purpose were identifiable and the positioning occurred within the context of the organisation’s desire to achieve a specific goal. The two entries that were not included in these findings (2000 C9 & 1999 H8) were ambiguous as to whether they did or did not demonstrate positioning techniques, so were omitted from this discussion.

The next section will discuss the results in more detail and will primarily use two of the award entries to illustrate the findings. The section to follow will apply the positioning framework to each of the award entries to further demonstrate the applicability of the framework. These two initial award entries were randomly selected as examples of a large and a relatively small scale campaign. Pertinent comments from the interview
transcripts of those practitioners working in the public sector in Australia, a subset of the overall sample for the doctoral research project, will also be included when they further illuminate how positioning is undertaken in government communications.

**The positioning triangle**

The three poles of the positioning triangle were evident and were aligned in each of the 19 award entries.

*Pole 1 of the triangle - Position determined*

Each of the award entries showed evidence of having a desired position as part of their campaign and the determining of this desired position was informed by research in all cases. This is not surprising as the Golden Target Award entry template dictates that the campaign research be detailed by the entrant; however, it was very clear that in the research, regard was given to the overall campaign goal and the relative actual and potential positions of publics and audiences and stakeholders. Wu (2007) states that “the underlying reason for stakeholder analysis is to identify, position, understand and predict those conflicting and often contentious relationships among various constituents” (p. 417). This is illustrated in the case of the lead up to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games where the Olympic Roads and Transport Authority (ORTA) listed two “top line” objectives: positioning ORTA as a credible, professional organization and bringing the Sydney community from a position of apprehension about Olympic transport to a level of public confidence in transport strategies (1999 A11). Thus ORTA had determined its desired position but had also determined the position of a key public – the transport users.

However, it should be noted that a number of campaigns did not include the words “position” or “positioning” in the text but there was ample evidence that positioning was being undertaken when the framework was applied. For example, the City of Casey set out in a community relations communication program (2003 A6) to eradicate all graffiti from its precincts. The program had three elements – “eradication, education and enforcement”. Graffiti was positioned as “not cool”, as “senseless vandalism” and was subject to “harsh penalties”. Although the word “positioning” was not used in the award
entry, there were clear positioning elements evident when analysed using the framework for intentional positioning.

**Pole 2 of the triangle - Position enacted**

The second pole of the positioning triangle is when the desired position of the organisation initiating the public relations activity is enacted through a speech-act. A speech act performs several acts simultaneously with the intent of the speaker being a key distinguishable factor. A speech act encompasses a) the act of saying something, b) what is being done by what is being said (such as declaring, requesting, promising), and c) how one is trying to affect one’s audience (Bach, 1998). Each of the award entries had a clear strategic intent to persuade, educate, motivate and otherwise get target publics and audiences to co-construct meanings intended for them. Organizations, once having determined what position they desired, undertook some kind of speech act/action to enact that position, most often through statements to target publics and audiences made through direct communication channels or the media. All 19 enacted their positioning through the use of Assertives, which tell people how things are (Searle 1979, p. viii). For example, in the ORTA award entry (1999 A11), the positioning was enacted via the delivery of a series of set-piece announcements, “each self-contained but designed to collectively provide a consistent and coherent picture of Olympic transport arrangements” (ORTA, 1999, Communication Strategy, Implementation).

However, in addition to using Assertives, in other cases the positioning was also enacted through requests, orders or propositions to target publics and audiences, in what could be termed Directives (Searle, 1979). There were 14 of the 19 award entries that could be identified as having used Directives in their positioning efforts. Six of the 19 award entries showed evidence of using what Searle (1979) described as Commissives – where organizations committed to do something; 4 of the 19 award entries illustrated elements that could be identified as Expressives, where feelings and attitudes are expressed; and only two of the 19 award entries could be shown to have used Declaratives – these were both instances where laws were introduced to declare behavior illegal – one related to the City of Casey’s anti-graffiti campaign (2003 A6) and one to the Victorian Department of Primary Industry’s control of Equine Influenza campaign (2008 C4-3). Only one award entry demonstrated all five of the speech act
categories and this was in the City of Casey graffiti eradication campaign (2003 A6). The positioning was enacted at the second pole through Assertives – stating the way things were regarding graffiti, its image, its consequences and the City’s eradication program; Directives – the City was trying to get young people to stop doing graffiti; Commissives – the City committed to removing all graffiti reported within 24 hours; Expressives – the attitude was expressed “graffiti is not cool” and, Declaratives – new local law restricting “the availability of aerosol spray cans”.

**Pole 3 of the triangle – Position supported through storyline**

The third pole of the positioning triangle is the storyline, that is, what storylines about the organisation’s declared position will support the holding of that position. Harré and van Langenhove (1999) tell us that with certain positions come the rights to use certain storylines and that positioning will fail if storylines do not align with the position determined at the first pole and enacted at the second pole of the positioning triangle. Storylines in a public relations context are in large part the key messages developed and disseminated through various channels and tailored to the needs of particular audiences, for example,

> We tend to work on three key messages that are your main themes of how you want to position this initiative and then the supporting facts that back up each of those would probably vary for audiences. - INF7 interview

One interview respondent disagreed that it was about key messages, stating it was more about keeping to particular themes:

> I’m not that formal and I’m not that dogmatic about it, saying these words in these ways, although there are some times I would, but generally speaking, there are the themes rather than a key message in my case…the theme is that these will do these things for you so I’m more likely to stick to the themes and I make it clear that we need to keep repeating that in different ways…this is how we are positioning ourselves about it and this is what we believe and when you speak about it you represent that view. - INF1 interview
The following example indicates the process of determining the positioning of the organisation and how this led to the positioning enactment and the development of the supporting storyline:

The Hospital Board had identified a common vision for the Hospital’s redevelopment, but it needed to be clear on a preferred organisational position on the redevelopment. Socom [a PR agency] took this vision and developed the following key messages that underpinned all communications activities. (2007 C2-2)

The success outcomes reported in the results and evaluation of this particular campaign could be attributed to this strong underpinning – everything in the positioning triangle aligned. One local government interview respondent talked about the potential for issues and problems when the messages did not align with the rest of the campaign:

Messages needs to gel with everything else that’s being put out there…because while the project manager may say okay this is what we want people to know, if you’ve got the mayor or the chairperson or somebody in the paper saying something completely different, it just, it erodes your credibility as a project team, but it also puts that councillor or mayor or whoever in a difficult position, because they’ve then got to explain why. - INF16 interview

It is evident that inconsistent storylines start to “derail” the positioning strategy as the positioning triangle loses its stability. When Harré and van Langenhove (1999) discuss certain positions opening up the possibility of certain storylines, it also means that other storylines will be closed off. You can’t run storylines about being an environmentally friendly organisation if you’ve determined a public position of profit maximization at any cost. It won’t “gel”. The respondent expanded on this point:

There’s no point putting out a message, or positioning something in a way that it’s not because our stakeholders will always find out. There’s no point us saying okay we’re going to address something and then nothing ever being done about it because then that’ll result in a bigger furore at the end of the project than you ever had at the beginning. - INF16 interview
The respondent was indicating that such a tactic wouldn’t make sense and it would raise questions in the minds of the media and other target publics and audiences – the positioning wouldn’t hold. Another interview respondent reinforced that the various aspects of the positioning must align:

You could construct a campaign that links into their understanding of the good work the x organisation does and if they believe what they know about the x organisation, that it's good, then that kind of translates to being able to build, well, a message that this must be okay too. And then if they believe that the x say it’s okay then it must be okay - so those two things coming in together position it as being okay. - INF7 interview

This alignment of the storylines across various channels can be seen in the ORTA example (1999 A11) - once announcements had been made about particular transport arrangements, spokespeople went on radio to explain what the arrangements were, how they’d be organized and how people could access transport across the city; media events and launches were held to show people the new fleets of buses coming to town; brochures were developed and distributed; homes along the Olympic routes were direct mailed information about impacts; community group information sessions were held and so on. In the City of Casey graffiti campaign (2003 A6) the storylines were delivered via key messages through media channels and education sessions with school students – telling people how to report graffiti, and educating about the costs and consequences of graffiti. This was supported through key messages in advertisements, fridge magnets, websites, visual displays and direct marketing. One prominent tactic was the development of a four-page comic and “pay if you spray” stickers distributed to school students. It can be seen that all poles of the triangle were aligned and this held the desired position for these organisations.

**The positioning type**

**Table 7.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positioning type domain</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate self positioning</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced self positioning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is evidence in all award entries that deliberate self positioning was occurring, however, there were also other types of positioning occurring concurrently in many cases. It is clear that in the ORTA award entry, the effort was primarily to deliberately “self-position” the organization as credible and professional and to deliberately position Sydney-siders (“others”) as needing to be patient - “ORTA has been careful to stress the difficulties to be faced and the need for public cooperation and patience” (1999 A11, Communication Strategy). In the award entry text, it was clearly stated that the strategy to reposition Sydney-siders from a position of apprehension to one of confidence was about under promising and over delivering. The City of Casey deliberately self-positioned graffiti in order to facilitate its eradication but deliberately positioned others, such as the shop owners, as having a part to play in the program due to the fact that they had sold spray paint in the past but were now prevented from doing so by the introduction of the new legislation.

**Positioning purpose**

**Table 7.2**

**Positioning purpose domain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of ingratiation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of intimidation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of self promotion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of exemplification</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of supplication</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of position for the purposes of facilitation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study of government agency/public sector communication campaigns confirms the need for the additional category of facilitation – many of the award entries could not be categorized as primarily self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, intimidation or ingratiation. In the original analysis reported in the previous chapter, only five award entries were categorized as positioning for some other purpose, possibly facilitation. In
this exercise, it became clearer that alongside positioning for self-promotion or exemplification, many more than first identified were also positioning for the purposes of facilitation. In most cases, organisations in this study were aiming to facilitate an outcome – better transport, use of support services, secure water supply. For example, in the Brisbane Aquifer project (2007 C6-25), the Council did carry out positioning for the purposes of self-promotion (to better ensure re-election of Councillors) and possibly even exemplification (of best practice in water management) however, positioning for the purposes of facilitation, that is, facilitating the provision of a safe water supply, seems to be the primary purpose.

**Positioning goal**

Each of the positioning efforts in the award entries was related to specifically stated goals and objectives. The positioning was never undertaken in a “vacuum” but always occurred in the context of the organisation’s strategic intent to achieve the stated goal/s.

7.1.2 How the positioning framework was applied to government communication award entries

This section reports on how the framework was applied to the other award entries in the sub-sample.

**Positioning a national public holiday**

In the Australia Day campaign (2003 B7), the words “position” and “positioning” were not mentioned, although it seemed evident that positioning was occurring - Australia Day was being positioned as more than a holiday. At the first pole of the positioning triangle domain, the desired position is agreed. For Australia Day 2003, “the National Australia Day Council (NADC) developed an unprecedented, comprehensive campaign to enhance the meaning of Australia Day, to encourage Australians to celebrate what’s great about Australia and to enjoy January 26 with more purpose and national pride than ever before”. To enact the agreed positioning, which is the second pole of the positioning triangle, the enacting speech acts fell into three categories – Assertives, Directives and Expressives. The award entry stated that the NADC wanted to tell people how things are (Assertives), in this case, by providing them with “information on the
people, values, ideals, achievements and qualities that make Australia great”, and also wanted to try and get people to do things (Directives), in this case to make “an emotional connection to the brand”. NADC also made statements about its own attitude and feelings about Australia Day (Expressives) – “On Australia Day we celebrate what’s great”.

The third positioning triangle pole, storyline, was evident in the stated key messages for the campaign which were communicated by using “images and words that represented what was great about Australia and being Australian – images that all Australians invest in emotionally and that tug at our heartstrings” (2003 B7). The messages were promulgated through an array of channels including television community service announcements profiling the Australian citizenship pledge; two radio series featuring comedians using Australian humour and testimonials from Australian personalities about what they thought was great about Australia; websites with downloadable resource kits and information; and, media kits including releases, backgrounders and campaign materials.

In analysing positioning type there was evidence of deliberate “self-positioning” in that Australia Day was positioned as something worthy of engagement. There was also evidence of the deliberate positioning of others – in this case the Australian people were positioned as not considering Australia Day to be sufficiently meaningful therefore this required the interventions of a public relations campaign. The positioning purpose domain could be categorised as one of facilitation, which I have identified as a sixth purpose for positioning, beyond the five put forward by Jones and Pittman (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 25) as descriptions of the ways individuals could present themselves in a positioning context, i.e. ingratiation, intimidation, self promotion, exemplification and supplication. By positioning Australia Day in a particular way, the enhanced engagement of the Australian people was being facilitated by the NADC. The final domain of the framework, that of positioning being related to a stated strategic goal, was expressed clearly – “to inspire national pride by educating Australians about the meaning behind what we celebrate on Australia Day to inform and encourage active citizenship”. The award entry stated this goal was achieved as a result of the public relations campaign: “Upon completion of the campaign Australia Day was viewed as more than a public holiday by 84 per cent of people, a result which meant that for most
Australians, Australia Day had significant purpose and meaning”. In this instance the conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations which I have developed can be seen to identify evidence in each of the framework’s domains. This indicates intentional positioning was being undertaken in the award entry, even though positioning was not mentioned as a desired outcome of the campaign.

**Positioning water management**

In the Brisbane Aquifer Project (2007 C6-25), a specific objective was to “position Council as responsibly managing the city’s future water supply” but there was evidence of other positioning taking place in the campaign relating to the positioning of groundwater as safe for drinking. This was described as “perception management”. In applying the provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations, elements of positioning become evident. In the positioning triangle domain the agreed position was that the Council must be seen as responsibly managing water supplies and that groundwater is safe to drink. This positioning is enacted at the second through various speech-acts directed to specifically targeted publics and audiences. Firstly there was the use of Assertives – people were told how things were, that is, that drilling would be taking place nearby at a specific time; that ground water had been tested and shown to be safe to drink. Secondly, there was the use of Directives – the Council tried to get targeted publics, such as environmental groups, to support the project. The third positioning triangle pole, storylines, was evident in the award entry with the development and dissemination of consistent messages to stakeholders and mass audiences through tactics such as door-knocking individual homes being impacted by drilling operations through to free-call telephone lines, media articles, site signage, meetings and the dissemination of fact sheets and letters.

The type of positioning being undertaken was deliberate self-positioning – the Council and the quality of the water were being intentionally positioned by public relations activities funded by the Council’s arm, Brisbane Water. There were several positioning purposes occurring concurrently, in that the council was positioning for the purposes of exemplification – wanting to exhibit best practice in responsible water management, but
it could be argued that there was also an element of self-promotion in terms of wanting future electoral success. There could also have been an element of facilitation in that by positioning the project as responsibly managed, the water drilling could proceed. The overall goal for the campaign was to “proactively manage impacts and perceptions” and the campaign evaluation reported success as “outstanding” with no negative media coverage, no concerns voiced about groundwater safety and only three complaints in over a year to Council re the project. The positioning was effective and could be mapped to all four domains of the framework.

Positioning a move to new government agency

The aim of this campaign was unambiguous – the campaign was called “Converting Staff Perceptions” (2007 C7-7) and its “overriding goal was to shift staff perceptions, building a positive, motivated and dedicated workforce which would ensure the new Department of Water was able to open to the public, ready for business as scheduled”. This was taking place in an environment where “staff morale was very low”, where there was “active resistance to the formation of the new agency” from the existing two agencies, and where it was acknowledged that staff were experiencing “change fatigue”. Applying the framework, it can be seen that an agreed position had been reached in that the new department was being formed and staff needed to not only move to the new department, they needed to feel positive and enthusiastic about the move.

The enactment of the positioning through speech-acts was evident through the use of Assertives – the staff is told the way things are going to be, that is, that there is going to be a new Department of Water; Directives – management tries to get the staff to do things e.g. “use staff who were positive about the formation of the new department to influence and inspire those fatigued by constant change”; and, Commissives – management committed to doing things, for example, avoiding “at all costs, long-winded and poorly-defined statements of corporate values” instead, “setting out to give staff clear direction, to set concrete goals and to deliver on time, every time”.

Supporting key messages and actions were consistent, clear and delivered through a variety of channels including emails, bulletins, personalised letters, newsheets and
face-to-face presentations. The other channels were the use of staff “who were positive about the change process” as ‘brokers’ to assist in building the new organisation", brochures and leaflets about the new department, media relations tactics and advertorials. Interestingly, resistance from outside the staff was also anticipated and an issues management plan was developed “particularly about more public money being spent on another government bureaucracy” as part of the campaign implementation.

This could be seen as an effort to maintain the agreed or desired positioning of the move to a new department against efforts by others to forcibly reposition the project as less positive. This is consistent with the previous chapter’s discussion wherein I defined positioning “as the strategic attempt to stake out and occupy a site of intentional representation in the contested space where meanings are constructed, contested and reconstructed”. Positioning is not only about the initial efforts to establish a position, it also involves the successful defence of maintaining that position while it continues to deliver positive outcomes. This campaign exhibits characteristics of deliberate self-positioning and can be seen to position for the purposes of facilitation – it needs to get a new department up and running. The positioning was undertaken with a specific strategic goal and, according to the award entry, the goal was met with the new department opening on schedule and with staff survey results less than a year after the move, indicating that the staff were “among the most engaged and committed to their jobs in the country – placing the Department in the top 25 per cent of organizations in Australia”. Although positioning was not mentioned in the award entry, when the framework is applied, positioning activity is apparent and was a significant component of the campaign.

*Positioning a commencement time for tertiary study*

Northern Territory University’s campaign “Don’t Let Another Year Go By” (2003 G11) stemmed from a need to fund expansion and amalgamation plans through mid year enrolments into its courses, which are traditionally lower than early year enrolments. Applying the framework to the campaign, it can be seen that although positioning is not mentioned, there was a clear positioning of the middle of the year as a good time to start
a course at university. The funding imperative determined the first pole of the positioning triangle – midyear commencing students were needed. This position was enacted through with speech-acts including Assertives and Directives. The Assertives told people how things were – that time was passing them by and that it was time to act. These aimed to “impart a sense of urgency among potential students”. The Directives tried to get them to enrol in the courses. The overall campaign message “Don’t let another year go by” was “designed to play on a public feeling of ‘it’s already June ... where has the year gone?’”. This message was seen as particularly relevant to “mature-age professionals and parents of teenagers, who are more likely to believe that ‘time is passing them by’”. The campaign message was promulgated through letterbox deliveries, websites, media and advertising and was supported by a comprehensive follow through communication plan implemented through call centres, university “info shop” and information days.

The campaign could be interpreted as deliberately self-positioning but it was also deliberately positioning others, i.e. potential students, as perhaps being left behind for another year in order to invoke the urgency that was desired in the campaign. The positioning type could be seen as self-promotion primarily in an effort to “sell” courses in order to secure income for the university. The campaign had clear goals in driving enrolment inquiries and the targets set were exceeded, seen as an excellent result.

*Positioning staff as a trusted source of information*

Water is a prime concern to the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and when another department developed a White Paper on water resource management, a campaign to “engage relevant DPI staff as trusted sources on the White Paper for Water (WPW) as the first phase of a broader goal to manage DPI stakeholder concerns about water reforms” (2004 C3). Applying the positioning framework to the campaign indicates that positioning was an element in delivering the campaign’s success as reported in the award entry. The agreed positioning of the DPI was that certain staff needed to be positioned as trusted sources for the department’s stakeholders when they sought information about the WPW. Interestingly, this worked in a two-way
communication flow as the same staff members were also used as sources of information from stakeholders to the DPI project management group to provide “intelligence about how the issue was tracking”. This positioning was enacted through the use of Assertives – where the DPI management informed staff of the content of the WPW and advised them of what the implications of the WPW were for their stakeholders; and, through Directives – where DPI management tried to get staff to take up the information and engage with the situation. The storylines were evident in the statement: “preparation and highly targeted and tailored messages were key to achieving the objectives”. It is notable that there was also another positioning exercise taking place concurrently with the project management group, and its activities also needed to position in a way that was seen “as credible and reliable to staff to increase their acceptance, adoption and promulgation of the key messages about the White paper reforms to DPI stakeholders”. The positioning framework could also have been applied to that exercise.

The positioning type was to deliberately self-position staff as trusted sources of information but interestingly the DPI itself could be seen to have been forced to self position in this way due to another government agency releasing the WPW which had ramifications for the DPI. The positioning purpose was clearly to facilitate the flow of information to stakeholders so they could participate in the policy development processes. The positioning occurred in the context of a wider strategic campaign goal and this was reported in the award entry as having been met by way of campaign objectives being met or exceeded.

Positioning a disease threat

The award entry “Equine Influenza – Victoria” (2008 C4-3) describes a multi-pronged campaign to help keep Equine Influenza (IE) (aka horse flu) out of the state of Victoria. Positioning was not mentioned as part of the award entry, but it is evident that the disease threat was being positioned as serious, and one that warranted people behaving differently to usual practices. The agreed positioning – that EI was a serious threat – was evident through the descriptions of the possibility of the Spring Racing Carnival,
especially The Melbourne Cup, not proceeding and the subsequent financial loss to the state of some $630 million. Conveying the seriousness of the situation was stated as the thinking behind all branding and messaging for the campaign. The agreed positioning was enacted through speech-acts including Assertives delivered by the Chief Veterinary Officer, who established and explained the situation with horse flu, Directives which tried to get people to comply with biosecurity measures, and Declarations – where it had been declared an offence to partake in certain activities and behaviours, for example, transporting horses in prescribed areas.

The storylines were delivered through highly tailored key messages, which essentially sought to develop the speech-acts into zones of meaning. Within these zones of meaning, actions such as message development and dissemination are undertaken in ways that are interpretable by audiences in terms of narratives that are operating in the communities into which the messages are being sent (Heath, 2001a, pp. 47-48). The storylines supporting the Assertives were delivered through information packs distributed to media and to people attending public meetings; those supporting Directives were included in advertising materials and included lines such as “Horse flu. Take it seriously before it takes its toll”; and those supporting Declarations included messages such as “Cross the line and you’ll pay the fine” at border crossings on billboards, and so on.

The type of positioning was forced self-positioning – the emergence of the disease threat in adjacent states of Australia had forced the state of Victoria to take action. The purpose of the positioning was to facilitate the implementation of the biosecurity measures that would protect the state and ensure horse flu did not take hold. The campaign goal was achieved with no cases of EI detected in the state and very high levels of awareness amongst surveyed audiences of the key campaign messages.

*Positioning a new maternity unit*

As stated in the award entry (2006 C15-3) the challenge was “to establish Kaleeeya Hospital’s new unit as a credible and trusted facility in an extremely short timeframe –
in the face of significant operational challenges and enormous opposition from a “Save Woodside” group led by a former Labor party MP.” Again, there was no specific mention of positioning, but it was evident within the context of the positioning framework. The positioning triangle domain can be clearly seen in that the first pole is the desired positioning as articulated in the challenge – to position Kaleeeya Hospital’s new unit as a credible and trusted facility in an extremely short timeframe. This desired position was enacted through Assertives – the Minister announced that the old maternity unit would close and the new one would open; Directives – trying to get local residents and staff to support the new unit; Commissives – committing to providing a modern facility; and Expressives – acknowledging feelings and attitudes about the old facility. The storylines at the third pole of the positioning triangle were developed to “stay positive” and were delivered through media campaigns, information materials, public meetings and tours, and “information circulated about the new unit was factual, clear and accurate across all materials” to “counter rumour and misinformation”.

The positioning type was deliberate self-positioning for the purposes of self promotion so that people would become aware of the name, location and facilities of Kaleeeya and also for the purposes of facilitation of the opening of the new maternity unit. The positioning was undertaken within the context of the campaign goal which was “to secure support for the move and instil confidence in the new maternity unit”. The outcome was unambiguously reported - “results were outstanding. The opposition campaign failed and the new maternity unit opened on April 3 with an established identity”. The positioning of the new unit was clearly effective.

*Positioning a city as liveable*

The campaign aimed to encourage people to relocate to Australia’s capital, Canberra (2006 C1-5) and the award entry stated, “what we really needed to achieve was to position, and provide for, a positive alternative to living in Sydney”. Positioning was evident when the positioning framework was applied with the first pole of the positioning triangle – the determined position – which was that Canberra “was a great place to live and work”. This was enacted at the second pole through Assertives –
telling people what Canberra was and what it offered and Directives – directing people to seek information and assistance. The storylines were developed and promulgated through advertisements, websites, seminars, information lines, postcards and brochures. Personal stories of people who’d made the move were part of the campaign, for example, “Testimonials from new Canberrans played an important part” in the brochure publication. Interestingly, although the target audience comprised Sydney-siders, the decision was taken not to focus on the negatives of living in Sydney such as “traffic congestion, road tolls, high crime, bars on windows, house prices, racial conflicts etc.” but to talk about the “positive alternative to living in Sydney”.

This was a campaign that deliberately self positioned a city for the purposes of self promotion and facilitation. The positioning was conducted within the wider strategic goals of determining “whether there was a strong opportunity to encourage people o move to Canberra, and if so, to identify the triggers that stimulated that move, so that subsequent promotional activities could harness that knowledge”. The campaign reported success in terms of numbers of inquiries received about the opportunity and the numbers of people who were being facilitated in investigating jobs and housing etc. in Canberra. A family was reported as moving to Canberra within ten weeks of the campaign.

**Positioning a school**

The Perth Modern School was being reintroduced as an academically selective school after operating as a regular school for nearly 50 years (2006 C9-1). Private schools had filled the gap in providing for academically gifted students in the meantime but the state government wanted to have a state-funded selective school. The agreed positioning was that it was an elite school providing free education for academically gifted students and this was evident in the statements, “It was an obvious progression to position Perth Modern School as another choice in the public education market” and “promotional material was designed with a traditional, formal style so that it presented like one of the perceived elite private schools”. The positioning was enacted through the use of Assertives, for example, a new positioning statement, ‘Exceptional schooling.”
Exceptional students’ was established; Directives – telling people how to apply; and, Commissives – committing to providing “excellent education for the most able students”. Information and key messages to support the positioning were delivered via a prospectus and a website. The school “hosted events for parents of gifted and talented students, including presentations by world authorities on selective education, such as Professor Francois Gagne and information sessions led by the Deputy Director General” and “a media relations strategy resulted in news stories in external and internal media”.

This was clearly deliberate self-positioning for the purposes of self-promotion of the school to encourage parents to enrol their children. The positioning strategy was at the core of the public relations campaign and was aligned with the campaign goal. The results were reported as highly successful and the objective of achieving enrolments was achieved, indicating that the positioning was successful.

Positioning a need for transport services

This campaign was undertaken by a collective of eight local government councils known as the Interface Councils and aimed to influence the state government to provide “an additional $50 million annually to provide a minimum level of public transport service”. The agreed position of the councils was that improved transport services were needed. This positioning was enacted through Assertives – stating the situation and the solution needed. The storylines were articulated through key messages such as a minimum level of public transport was being sought; that this lack of public transport was a key contributor to social disadvantage in outlying areas of the capital city; and that the state government must provide $50 million annually to fund these minimum levels. The storylines were delivered to the target publics such as local members of state parliament, state ministers, senior transport policy bureaucrats and targeted advocacy groups through briefing sessions, annual reporting presentations, regular contact and annual submissions. As the campaign developed, the key messages were also included in a media strategy and storylines were further developed with case studies “to provide a human element for media reporting”.

220
This campaign could be viewed as a forced self-positioning because if transport services had been adequate for the community’s need, no campaign would have been necessary. The purpose of the positioning was clearly for the facilitation of better transport services. The positioning took place under the broader campaign goal and the results were reported in terms of the amount of funding committed by the state government, which was greater than that requested. This indicates that the campaign was successful.

*Positioning a consultation process*

In the Promising our Children a World Class Hospital campaign (2006 C6-5), the Royal Children’s Hospital (RCH), a public hospital in Melbourne, Australia, commissioned a local public relations agency to devise a public consultation process that would canvas the views of a wide range of stakeholders regarding the rebuilding of the hospital. As stated in the award entry, “its current location in inner-Melbourne parkland was ideal for sick children, but a vocal range of environmentalists and local residents wanted to move the hospital out of the park”. It was clear that the Hospital management itself wanted to rebuild on the same site but as it was “situated in a pocket of inner city parkland, the rebuilding was contentious” and “the new RCH could be positioned as another ‘land grab’”. The RCH “had a history of bad blood with its neighbours” and one of the stated challenges was to negotiate a site for the RCH that “would not compromise its position as a world class hospital”. The situation forced the hospital to take a path of action that saw it position the consultation process as genuinely seeking the best solution for sick children and the wider community. This positioning was enacted through Assertives in that options for the rebuilding were presented along with the advantages and disadvantages of each; Directives were used to try and get stakeholders, both those within the identified publics of “environmentalists and local residents” and wider community members, to take part in the consultation process; and, Commissives were used to highlight the transparency of the process. Then the third positioning pole of storylines to support the position is clear in the six key messages listed in the award entry. These were promulgated through a range of channels including media, letterbox drops, direct mail, workshops, exhibitions and advertising.
The positioning was forced self-positioning because without the vocal opposition of the “environmentalists and local residents” such an exercise would not have been required. The purpose of the positioning was to facilitate a desirable outcome for the hospital. This all occurred in the context of the strategic goal of determining “how the best children’s hospital could be built in the best location with maximum community support”. One of the reported results was that 84 percent of media reports “reflected positive aspects of the new hospital” and in the evaluation it was reported that the state government would rebuild the RCH on its existing site.

**Positioning another consultation process**

Brisbane City Council was keen to promote its “genuine commitment to community involvement in decision making” and commissioned a “fact finding” community consultation program to inform the future use of a road called Sir Samuel Griffiths Drive (2007 C6-26). The road was very busy with conflicting uses – tourism traffic, cycling, walking and general access to community services and facilities. The word “positioning” was not used in the award entry but applying the positioning framework indicated that it was being undertaken. All poles of the positioning triangle were identified – the council wanted to position itself in the minds of the ratepayers that it had a “genuine commitment to community involvement”. This was enacted through Assertives – stating that there were identified problems, stating that Council wanted input and feedback; and, Directives – trying to get people to become involved. The third pole, storylines, was evident in the council providing “background information and upgrade options to generate comment” in communication vehicles such as newsletters and a website. The availability of feedback links was also promulgated through the media, consultation sessions and direct mail.

Positioning in this instance was deliberate self-positioning in an effort to be seen as consultative. The purposes were mixed – facilitation of feedback from road users was one purpose but there was also evidence of self-promotion and exemplification. The positioning occurred in the context of the wider goals for the campaign and the
evaluation was reported as “pure consultation – pure success” which “demonstrated Council commitment to community involvement”.

**Positioning a power-restoration effort**

Powerlink Queensland is a government-owned corporation that owns, develops and operates Queensland’s high voltage electricity transmission network and supplies electricity to Ergon Energy’s (also government-owned) distribution network and its customers across regional Queensland. Following a storm, the only working transformer supplying the town of Collinsville was severely damaged and the inability to repair/replace it immediately “increased the potential for negativity and suspicion among stakeholders” as a similar incident had happened in recent history. It was identified that a strong public relations campaign (2007 C4-1) was needed “to cultivate and maintain mutual understanding with target publics”. There was going to be a lengthy period of days or weeks without power and so the power-restoration effort was positioned by Powerlink in a way that demonstrated to stakeholders that all that could be done was being done, that it was being done as quickly as possible and that is was a “highly complicated power restoration effort”. This positioning was enacted through Assertives – telling people about the situation, communicating “honest and accurate messages to instil realistic expectations”; Commissives – committing to providing practical support to reduce hardship; and Expressives – expressing understanding about the hardship. Supporting storylines were evident as “Powerlink and Ergon Energy worked closely from both an operational and communications perspective to identify solid key messages designed to inform and instil confidence in stakeholders”. Notably, there was no media outlet specific to this remote town and so communication was “on the ground” and designed to “cultivate a ‘human face’ and down-to-earth image for Powerlink and Ergon Energy”. This included tactics such as door knocks, public meetings, community blackboards and direct mail. The media was used to promulgate key messages and individual briefings were held for ministers, the mayor and other key stakeholders.
It is clear that this is forced self positioning as a result of a major transformer outage and the positioning was for the purposes of self promotion, facilitation and exemplification. It could be interpreted that there was possibly positioning for the purposes of ingratiating as well – ensuring the community was onside and that “negative perceptions were mitigated” and reputations “protected”. The overarching goal and all objectives were achieved or exceeded as the following evaluation statement shows: “negativity towards Powerlink and Ergon Energy was mitigated and importantly, organizational reputations were protected, and in fact strengthened”.

*Positioning a prison work camp*

The task for the Western Australian Ministry for Justice (2000 A 17), although not expressed as a positioning task, was to position prison work camps as “highly sought-after opportunities rather than an imposition on a community”. Applying the framework to this award entry illustrates that positioning techniques were intrinsic to the design of the program. Public relations staff operated in a role of highlighting anticipated public reactions if certain actions or program styles were initiated. They suggested alternative program designs that the public relations staff anticipated would be more acceptable to the wider community. Staff advised the Attorney General and Ministry staff to “alter that process and establish one where enough interest was created throughout regional Western Australia, to inspire bids for the right to host prisoner work camps” (Ministry for Justice, 2000).

The Ministry decided to position prison work camps as “highly sought-after opportunities”. This positioning was enacted through Assertives – announcements by the minister; and Directives – calling for communities to express their interest in the work camps. The storylines were those that promoted the opportunity and also fostered competition between communities who were bidding for a work camp. The focus was on “the ‘what’s in it for you’ message” and also on promoting “the concept of work camps as an opportunity for prisoners to repay their debt”. One tactic employed was to continually use the media to highlight the interest shown by other regional communities. This strategy “proved effective in fostering competition between communities and focusing on the positives that other communities had identified”. Information was
“tailored” for various target publics and included media releases, videos, brochures and posters.

This was deliberate self positioning of the work camps by the Ministry for the purposes of exemplification and facilitation. This positioning occurred within the context of the stated goals and objectives of the campaign, which was reportedly very successful with all objectives met or exceeded.

(Re) Positioning a support service

As part of the wider Western Australian state government response to the 12 October 2002 terrorist bombings in Bali, in which 88 people from that state lost their lives, support services were established for those people impacted by the incident, and the availability of the services communicated to the community (2003 F5). It was identified that many people impacted were young men (a group of people from a local football club were amongst those killed), who were “not likely to ordinarily seek support and counselling”. This was confirmed through feedback from the Bali Support telephone service and those working in the field that “young men in particular were reluctant to seek help”. By applying the positioning framework to the award entry it can be seen that a re-positioning of the support services took place. At the first pole this was evident in the decision to undertake the repositioning to make the service more suitable for young men. This was enacted through Assertives – stating the new name of the service which changed from Bali Support Line to the Bali Counselling and Information Line “to better target those reluctant to seek support” and providing tailored information on a website and in a football club newsletter. The storyline was delivered primarily through a website with the website content developed in consultation with the Department’s senior psychologist. The website delivery was viewed by the communications staff as being “an anonymous and less threatening service strategy” for young men.

The positioning was forced self-positioning as a result of the feedback from the field that the original position was inappropriate for the purpose of providing support to young men. The purpose of the repositioning was to facilitate the delivery of
information and support for this group. The positioning occurred within the context of
the wider strategic goal of delivering “the welfare response required under the Western
Australian emergency management arrangements”. Results were reported as very
positive with hundreds of calls being received and many of those people channelled into
support groups and/or individual counselling.

*Positioning a royal visit*

The Department of Premier and Cabinet of South Australia was responsible for the
public relations campaign (2002 A17) associated with the visit of Her Majesty Queen
Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh to the state. The visit was
challenging in that it had been rescheduled due to the World Trade Centre bombings in
the USA; it coincided with a visit by Bill Clinton and a major world IT congress; it
occurred following an inconclusive state election result, and in an environment when
the republic debate was still hot, and finally, in the midst of a child-abuse cover up
controversy around the Queen’s representative in Australia, the Governor-General.
Positioning was not mentioned in the award entry but upon application of the
positioning framework, can be seen to have occurred.

The visit had to be positioned as worthy of the public’s and the media’s attention. The
second pole of the triangle was enacted through Assertives – the public were told where
they could view the royal visitors; Directives – efforts were made to try and get the
public to go and see the visitors and also the media “had to be contacted personally and
exhorted to promote extensively the royal itinerary”. Storylines were evident in the
information provided to the media by the public relations practitioners – “exhaustively
researched media information was prepared...a national/international media kit and a
regional media pack were developed” and guidelines were given to media crews to help
them cover the visit in line with protocol and security requirements. Essentially, the
media was given everything they needed in order to be able to provide coverage of the
routes and the actual visit so they could feed quality stories to the public, which aimed
to encourage them to turn up to see the royal visitors.
The positioning was deliberate self positioning for the purposes of facilitation and exemplification. The positioning of the visit was successful in the context of the overall campaign goals with “huge public turnouts”, high levels of positive media coverage, minimal negative stories, and praise from Buckingham Palace and Federal Government security who stated “media management was the best they’d ever seen”. It was clear in the award entry that everything possible was done to ensure that media coverage was as the public relations plan intended.

Positioning a position

This campaign (2007 C2-2) is essentially positioning a particular point of view that the publicly-funded Eye and Ear Hospital in Melbourne held about its redevelopment, which was completely at odds with the state government’s stated policy on the issue. The hospital commissioned a public relations agency to lobby the state government to change its position. There was no ambiguity in what the hospital wanted to achieve: “Secure state government commitment to redevelop the Eye and Ear Hospital on its current site”. This positioning was enacted through Assertives – advocating the position of the hospital directly to the decision-makers and having third parties do the same on the hospital’s behalf. These speech acts carried more force than they might normally have as the campaign took place in the lead up to a state election and no politician would want to refuse requests if they could possibly avoid doing so. The third positioning triangle pole was the storylines – not only the information presented to the decision-makers in government but those fed to the media, thus adding additional pressure on politicians to adopt the hospital’s position:

The target publics for this campaign were split into two main categories, decision makers and influencers. The campaign was developed so that the hospital could provide relevant information to identified influencers, thus enabling them to undertake dialogue with identified decision makers. (2007 C2-2)
The storylines were developed by the public relations agency in consultation with the hospital’s management and were manifest in a set of six key messages which were tested prior to release. They were then tailored to individual publics and audiences.

The positioning was deliberate self-positioning for the purposes of facilitation — they were facilitating a change in the government’s position. The positioning was central to the campaign goal. The campaign was reported as successful in that “the State Labor party announced it would support the redevelopment of the Eye and Ear Hospital on its current site” which was a clear change in policy. This campaign was clearly not an attempt not to achieve consensus, or mutual benefit, but to get the decision-makers to change their policy, that is, for decision-makers to co-construct the meaning intended for them.

7.1.3 Section Summary

Through the application of the positioning framework, it can be seen that the communication campaigns of the government agencies and public sector organizations intended to position their idea/s, their offering or their service in a particular way in the minds of target publics and audiences and that they employed a range of techniques to enact the intended positioning. The application of the provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations to these examples of practice in government communications indicates that the framework can provide a useful tool for analysing campaigns. Even in cases when there was no mention of the word “position” or a stated aim that positioning was being attempted, by applying the framework to a particular campaign, it can be determined whether positioning is taking place in a public relations context.

Positioning activities were employed to facilitate target publics and audiences constructing the meaning that the government agency/public sector organization intended for them – for example, that the local council is listening to its constituents; that living in Canberra would be a great thing to do; that building a new hospital on the current site would be the best outcome for all; that moving maternity services to a new location is safest for mothers and babies; that sending children to a particular government school saves parents money; that farmers need to consider their water
needs; that it’s acceptable for young men to need support following disasters and that equine influenza outbreaks require certain measures to be taken by the community. These are in the main not marketing communication campaigns but campaigns designed to construct an “interpretive potential” (Neff, 2008, p. 92) with a view to persuading or influencing identified target publics and audiences to view something a particular way or undertake a certain action, thus facilitating the achievement of specific organisational goals. In the next section, I will demonstrate how the framework could be used to help design a strategic communication campaign.

7.2 Applying the framework in campaign design

In the previous section, I investigated whether the communication campaigns of government agencies and other public sector organisations in Australia employed public relations positioning techniques in their quest to achieve communication goals. I found that applying the conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations was an effective way of identifying where positioning was being implemented in campaigns as described in the Public Relations Institute of Australia’s Golden Target Award entries. This indicates that the framework could be of use to practitioners and academics wanting to analyze past campaign practice for the purposes of practice evaluation, academic research or teaching.

In this section I report on an exercise where I sought to apply the positioning framework to the design of a public relations strategic plan for an organisation, The Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment. The aim of the exercise was to ascertain whether the framework could be helpful to practitioners in campaign design, specifically in positioning organisations or activities/programs in ways that assisted them to achieve their public relations goals. In undertaking this exercise, I drew on my academic and practitioner knowledge of the public relations field, my knowledge of the environmental partnerships culture gained from my work with the Australian Government and my understandings of the local socioeconomic and geographical terrain of the greater Hunter Valley region.
7.2.1 The Project Brief

The Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment was established within the University of Newcastle in 2006. It aims to (a) draw together the University’s expertise in quality research and teaching in the natural and built environment and innovative approaches to understanding the interactions of people with the environment; and b) to engage with the community in an integrated way while coordinating a whole of University approach. It was seen that this engagement of the University's expertise with the region's environmental, social and economic needs was critical for the maintenance and repair of environmental assets and the implementation of sustainable development strategies to accommodate and employ the growing population. However, now in its fifth year of operation, its overall profile, within and external to the university is low and the level of funding and number of partnerships established through the Institute disappointing. With the appointment of a new Director, Professor Tim Roberts, it was seen as an opportune time to design a public relations campaign strategy that would position the Institute to be able to better meet its stated mission, which is:

- Build University and community partnerships to meet the environmental challenges of the future;
- Advance the development and application of environmental knowledge; and,
- Integrate cultural, social and economic values into environmental solutions.

7.2.2 Situational analysis

The Institute had a stated mission, but it was difficult to get a clear understanding of exactly what kind of entity it was from the documentation it produced. There had been no overall strategic plan for the Institute in the past and there was little evidence of meaningful segmentation of publics or stakeholders having ever been undertaken. Any person or organisation within the Hunter region that had an environmental focus was listed as targeted. There was no specific communication strategy and messages conveyed in texts such as the website, annual report and brochures were mixed, with no
key narrative through line that gave any clear indication of what the Institute aimed to do or what it would like others to do. On hearing that Professor Tim Roberts had been appointed as the new Director for the Institute, I thought it opportune to approach him about developing a positioning strategy for the organisation. I had worked with Professor Roberts previously when he had been Dean of the Singapore campus of the University of Newcastle and knew him to be open to suggestions and keen to foster my research efforts. I provided Professor Roberts with an overview of my thesis work and the conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations and requested the opportunity to apply the framework in developing a strategy for the Institute. Professor Roberts agreed to my request and I received approval from the Human Ethics Committee of the University of Newcastle to proceed with the project.

From discussions with the new Director it became clear that a possible position for the Institute was for it to act as a “gateway” that could (a) channel interest in the environment from communities or businesses into the university and (b) share innovations and knowledge from the university to communities, governments and industry.

7.2.3 Research

Research undertaken included interviewing Professor Roberts about what outcomes needed to be achieved by the Institute, reviewing current documentation relating to the Institute and reviewing communication audits of the Institute that had been undertaken by students under my supervision in 2008 as part of the assessment requirements for the undergraduate course, Public Relations Issues and Strategies in the Bachelor of Communication program. This research indicated that communication up until the current time had been uncoordinated and inconsistent with no dedicated resources allocated to public relations. The website http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/tfi/ is the key channel for communication, but at the time of writing was quite out of date, for example, listed scholarship closing dates were already eight months past. There was no formal social media strategy and no media relations program with only occasional radio interviews having been held with the past director and those usually
related to a specific event. Outreach to publics and audiences had been irregular and had been done on a reactive basis.

In terms of potential positives, the Institute does have an extensive mailing list which had only been intermittently used. There was no immediate competition with other organisations as no other organisations provided the same service as the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment.

### 7.2.4 Applying the framework

In applying the framework for intentional positioning for analysing past practice as detailed in the previous section, I worked through the domains of the framework systematically looking for evidence of practitioners having employed positioning techniques. In applying the framework to the design of a positioning strategy, I again worked through the domains but in reverse order, in effect, reverse engineering the previous approach to construct a campaign rather than deconstruct a campaign for analytical purposes. This application of the framework therefore addressed the domains in the following order:

- Goal – specific goal the intended positioning should achieve
- Purpose – positioning purpose
- Type – positioning type
- Triangle – position determined, position enacted and storylines developed and activated.

**Positioning goal domain**

The specific goal was to position the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment in such as way as would facilitate the achievement of its mission.
Positioning type domain

It was determined that the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment needed to deliberately position itself. There was no force involved in the self-positioning but a recognition that a lack of clear positioning was contributing to the overall low profile of the organisation.

Positioning purpose domain

The purpose of positioning was agreed to be firstly to “self-promote” the organisation in terms of raising its profile but was seen as needing to position to “facilitate” the partnering of community, government and industry needs with the expertise and knowledge of the University of Newcastle.

Positioning triangle domain

Position determined – as a result of the research undertaken for this exercise it was proposed that the strategy centre on positioning the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment as the University of Newcastle’s environmental gateway – a gateway that would exist to channel expertise, funding and non-financial resources that would contribute to the Institute achieving its mission into and out of the university.

Position enacted - Drawing again on the five ways of using language or “five general categories of illocutionary acts” (Searle 1979, p. viii), that is,

We tell people how things are (Assertives), we try to get them to do things (Directives), we commit ourselves to doing things (Commissives), we express our feelings and attitudes (Expressives), and we bring about changes in the world through our utterances (Declarations) (Searle 1979, p. viii),

I determined that the use of Assertives, Directives, Commissives and Expressives could be used to enact the positioning. The Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment is not authorised to make utterances that would fall into the Declarations category, as these most often change the legal status of a person or situation as in the case of an authorised
marriage celebrant declaring a couple to be married or a local council passing a new regulation.

It is at this positioning enactment stage that the strategy and tactics for implementation started to emerge. It became clear that the third pole of the positioning triangle domain, supporting storylines, would emerge from the positioning enactment stage (second positioning triangle pole) and these could not be developed until that work had been undertaken.

7.2.5 Development of the positioning strategy

The strategy centred on communicating that the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment was the University of Newcastle’s environmental gateway, that it could be used by publics and audiences that were internal and external to the university as such and that the Institute would facilitate the movement of “traffic” through the gateway in line with its mission and philosophy.

Having determined a possible position for the Institute as being a “gateway”, the following questions were posed as way to developing the enactment of the positioning:

How would we tell people the ways things are, that is, that the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment was the University of Newcastle’s environmental gateway? (Assertive)

How would we get people to do things that enacted our positioning, that is, to use the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment as the University of Newcastle’s environmental gateway? (Directive)

How would we commit the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment to do anything, that is, to make the “gateway” operational? (Commissive)

How would we express the attitude of the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment, such as the Institute’s vision, commitment and philosophy, to internal and external stakeholders and potential publics? (Expressives)
Communication tactics – positioning implementation

How would we tell people the ways things are, that is, that the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment was the University of Newcastle’s environmental gateway? (Assertives)

- Identify the people/organisations that need to know about the position of the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment

- Develop key propositions that encapsulate or underpin the positioning – consider developing these in consultation/partnership with key stakeholders; consider testing them out with a focus group/s; make further adjustments to the key propositions; obtain Board member agreement to the key propositions

- Tailor these propositions into generic key message statements

- Identify the channels by which communication could occur with targeted publics – general audience e.g. website, newspapers, radio interviews, Twitter; business community - e.g. business pages of newspaper, radio interviews/segments, presentations at business group meetings, articles in business newsletters; community volunteers – e.g. newsletter, mail, email, Facebook group page, meetings; university stakeholders – e.g. one on one meetings, small group presentations, email, newsletter

- Tailor key messages for priority publics, using appropriate language

- Promulgate the key messages via identified channels and created opportunities

How would we get people to do things that enacted our positioning, that is, to use the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment as the University of Newcastle’s environmental gateway? (Directive)
• Use third party endorsement, that is, have someone who has made a partnership through the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment tell their story through the identified communication channels – use appropriate testimony for intended audience.

• Invite people to use the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment as an environmental gateway to the University – include this as one of the key propositions that feeds into key message development – promulgate through the communication channels

• Direct people to use the gateway to offer their expertise, time, non-financial resources and funding to help the environmental mission of the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment

How would we commit the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment to do anything, that is, to make the “gateway” operational? (Commissive)

• Promote the ways one can access the gateway – website, email, Facebook, Twitter, phone all, personal appointment, personal touch-points at events

• Commit to developing relationships in order to support volunteers who offer their time and expertise to the Institute

• Commit to working in partnership with local organisations to achieve common goals

• Commit to promoting the philanthropic contributions of individuals and organisations if this is what they desire

How would we express the attitude of the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment, such as the Institute’s vision, commitment and philosophy, to internal and external stakeholders and potential publics? (Expressives)
• Commit to behaving in ways that align with the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment philosophy and mission, including the way decisions are made and enacted, the way inquiries and complaints are handled, the way the Institute presents at events and within the University environment, the way in which the Institute operates, that is, using best environmentally-friendly practices wherever possible.

• Development of key messages from the underpinning propositions that run through all communication activities of the Institute

This was the point at which the draft strategy for an intentional positioning campaign for the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment was given to the Director for his consideration. It is envisaged that in the 12 – 18 month post-doctoral period, more work will be undertaken to further develop the strategy and to commence its implementation.

7.2.6 The framework in practice – testing summary

What has emerged from this initial work in applying the framework to campaign design is that, in practice, there appears to be two parts to the framework – the first being related to strategic direction and the second being related to planning and implementation. It became clear that working through the first three domains, that is, knowing what goal the client needed to achieve, what type of positioning we were doing and for what purpose the positioning was being undertaken, clarified the direction for the strategy’s development. It was in the final positioning triangle domain that the strategy and tactics for the positioning were to be developed. All three poles of the triangle needed to be addressed and aligned to enable the positioning to have any chance of success. What was notable was that once the desired position had been determined, it became evident that enacting the positioning had whole-of-organisation implications, not just those immediately related to the communication area. This relates to the point that everything that an organisation does can be viewed as conveying meaning and the role of the publics and audiences is to interpret, for the purposes of creating meaning, everything an organisation does and says (Heath, 2005, p. 752). In this initial work phase, it was identified that more information was needed regarding the stakeholders and also those who were seeking to have a stake in the Institute’s work. It is envisaged
that Wu’s (2007) model for stakeholder analysis will be applied to this part of the exercise but that Co-orientation Theory, which “examines how groups see each other and what they believe the other groups think about them” (Taylor & Kent, 2006, p. 352) would also be applicable to establishing the desired positioning at the first pole of the positioning triangle.

It is evident that using Searle’s (1979, p. viii) five ways of using language or “five general categories of illocutionary acts” is a useful tool for conceptualizing what possibilities are available to enact the desired position at the second pole of the positioning triangle. It appears that this second pole – enactment – may have been previously overlooked in much of the public relations literature. There is much literature on the concept of publics and their natures, which can be seen to relate to the first pole of determining positioning, and much literature relating to messaging and framing which can be seen to relate to the third pole of storyline. Further work on the concept of enacting meaning in a positioning context will be required and Speech Act Theory, building on the work of Neff (2008), is one possible avenue for pursuing such research.

I am continuing to further develop and test the provisional conceptual framework and this work is ongoing. Some of the challenges posed by the inclusion of aspects of Speech Act Theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1979) into the framework are not straightforward, especially as they relate to the concept of perlocutionary effects and the active role of publics and audiences in the co-construction of meaning. Some of the limitations of Speech Act Theory have been articulated (e.g. Taillard, 2000) and other scholars have added to, adapted or revised the Theory (e.g. Bach & Harnish 1979; Gu 1993; Hornsby 1994), but the tenet of Austin (1962), that words do not only describe things but that they also do things, remains central to this concept of enactment.

It was also identified that more insight into the nature of existing messages disseminated by the Institute’s actual and potential partner organisations was needed because there was little information available as to what the competing discourses were in the “contested space” (Berger, 1999) in which the Institute would be conducting its communication campaign. It is envisaged that applying a rhetorical analysis methodology as articulated in the study by Stokes and Rubin (2010), in their analysis of messages and meaning in the anti-tobacco campaign, would provide the means to better understand the broader terrain on which future Institute campaigns would take place. It
is anticipated that this will form the basis for further research into positioning in public relations in the immediate post-doctoral period.

7.3 Chapter conclusion

Two approaches were taken to further test and development the framework. In the first approach, as a way of testing whether public relations positioning was different to commercial marketing positioning, the framework was applied to government agency/publicly-funded organisation campaigns, because marketing as a rule was not generally associated with such government communication. I set out to investigate whether the communication campaigns of government agencies and other public sector organisations in Australia employed public relations positioning techniques in their quest to achieve communication goals. In the second approach, the positioning framework was applied to the design of a draft public relations positioning campaign for an organisation, The Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment based at The University of Newcastle, Australia. The aim of the exercise was to ascertain whether the framework could be helpful to practitioners in campaign design, specifically in positioning organisations or activities/programs in ways that assisted in the achievement of their public relations goals. From the work in applying the framework to practice reported in this chapter, it can be concluded that the framework offers a more comprehensive approach to positioning than found in marketing models and also brings together elements identified by other public relations researchers in a single framework. The framework will need further testing and refinement but the findings in the first section show that positioning is a significant part of government agency and public sector communication campaign practice. It also confirms that positioning is a significant part of public relations practice across sectors. It shows that the prominence given by public relations practitioners to messaging techniques – developing and disseminating key messages – is warranted in the context of the second and third poles of the positioning triangle domain of the framework. The framework for intentional positioning in public relations provides a rationale for practices undertaken in the professional field. In the second section, the framework provided a useful way to approach the development of a plan to position an organization in a public relations context. The framework’s application to practice highlighted that there appears to be two parts to the framework – the first being related to strategic direction and the second
being related to planning and implementation. It became clear that working through the first three domains, that is, knowing what goal the client needed to achieve, what type of positioning we were doing and for what purpose the positioning was being undertaken, clarified the direction for the strategy’s development. It was in the final positioning triangle domain that the strategy and tactics for the positioning were to be developed. All three poles of the triangle needed to be addressed and aligned to enable the positioning to have any chance of success. Overall the analysis in this study suggests that conceptual framework is a promising tool and that further efforts to test and develop it would be warranted.

The next chapter will summarise the overall research project, discuss the major findings and conclusions drawn from this research and will include my recommendations and final reflections on the study.
8. Conclusion

The aim of this doctoral research project was to identify the underlying purpose of public relations campaigns and the means by which that purpose was achieved. It was envisaged that this could provide new insights into the ways campaign practice could be theorised to further inform the development of practice, research and education in public relations. In this chapter, I address the original research questions, providing the answers to the questions that have been gleaned from this research. I outline the implications of this research for practice, teaching and theory development. I conclude by reiterating the original contributions to the public relations field that this doctoral research project has made and present directions for further research.

8.1 Summary of the project

8.1.1 The literature review

The literature suggested that the normative description of public relations, that espouses two-way symmetrical communication which delivers mutually beneficial outcomes for organisations and publics, does not account for campaign practice. Campaign practice was reported as primarily being comprised of strategies and tactics that could be classified within Grunig and Hunt’s (1984, pp. 21-22) press agent/publicity, public information and two-way asymmetrical models of public relations but not within the two-way symmetrical model of public relations. The literature did support a conceptualisation of campaigns as examples of strategic communication that are goal directed and purposeful in advancing the mission of the organisations that have commissioned the public relations activity. There were only two examples from the literature reviewed that demonstrated Grunig and Hunt’s (1984, p. 22) two-way symmetrical public relations model in practice. The outcomes of these public relations responses were reported as being positive for all parties involved and although there was little in the way of this kind of response reported in the literature, it does indicate that a campaign response may not always be the most appropriate response to a situation or problem that at first appears to require a campaign. This may further indicate that the options practitioners consider when contemplating a campaign
response should be broadened, but more research would be required before formulating any recommendation, and this was outside the scope of this current project.

From a theoretical perspective, it was clear that the Grunig and Hunt (1984) two-way symmetrical model of public relations did not account for campaign-style public relations practice as reported in the academic literature. Through campaigns, evidence in the literature suggested that organisations strove to influence publics and audiences to construct in their minds the meanings that the organisation intended for them, rather than other meanings. These meanings could be related to attitudes and/or behaviour but in all cases, prior to the campaigns being instigated, targeted publics and audiences were not thinking and/or acting in the ways organisations wanted them to – hence the perceived need to implement a campaign style response. Such a conceptualisation of public relations practice could be seen as an attempt to strategically construct specific meanings to advance the mission of the organisation commissioning the public relations. With this strategic construction of meaning as the central tenet of campaign practice, the literature indicated that a social constructionist theoretical perspective could be a way of strengthening public relations as a legitimate field of academic inquiry whilst also providing frameworks for public relations practice and education.

8.1.2 Methodology

This project took a cultural studies perspective which was broadly social constructionist in its research approach. It applied the methods of textual and thematic analysis and examined some of the key processes and techniques that public relations practitioners strategically employed to have target publics construct specific intended meanings. The research sample comprised 57 PRIA Golden Target Award entry texts and interviews with 18 PRIA Golden Target Award-winning practitioners. The data was reviewed against the relevant literature in addition to the themes emerging from the research itself. Credibility and issues of trust were addressed through strategies including triangulation, member checks, thick description and reflexivity. In detailing the research design and data analytical processes I described how the project was undertaken and how the resulting conclusions were drawn.
8.1.3 The findings

The examination of practice as described in award winning public relations campaign texts and in interviews with award-winning practitioners showed that there was a commonality across all campaign work examined. This was that the primary purpose of the campaigns was to work to have target publics and audiences construct the meanings intended for them by the organisation that commissioned the public relations activity. Public relations practitioners applied a range of processes and techniques of intentional representation including media relations, direct engagement, positioning, issues management, education, marketing and persuasion. All campaigns reported success and this success was measured by reporting on four main areas – the tone and amount of media coverage, the tone of stakeholders’ perceptions, the amount and tone of third party endorsement, and the degree of increased profile or level of engagement.

It was shown that in these examples of practice, decisions regarding strategy and tactics were underpinned by research that was primarily aimed at facilitating the tailoring of the design of messages and other tactics to better achieve desired outcomes. There was scant evidence in the data to support an assertion that public relations campaigns aligned to Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) model of two-way symmetrical communication. There was evidence to support that public relations as practised in Australian campaigns employed all of the other three models of public relations to various extents, often concurrently. This supported what was found in the literature reviewed on campaign practice and the assertions relating to practitioners using models of public relations that were fit for purpose. The findings aligned with Moloney’s (2006, p. 168) definition that “above all, it [public relations] is communication designed to further the interests of its principals” rather than other definitions espousing mutual benefit and understanding.

The content of the examined award entry texts demonstrated what Berger (1999) called the “dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation in contested sites” (p.186). There were two key areas relating to the processes and techniques that practitioners used in their quest to have intended meanings constructed by target publics and audiences that were identified as warranting further detailed examination. The first area was that of “key messages” and the second was “positioning”. This was not to say that the other techniques and processes identified in
the initial review of the award entries did not warrant further research. However, the
fact that key messages came through so strongly as a theme in practice and that
positioning came through as somewhat of a “surprise theme” was the impetus that
steered me towards this study’s focus.

It was found that key messages featured prominently in descriptions of practice
primarily because practitioners recognised the milieu in which public relations operated
as contested and congested. From descriptions of practice, public relations practitioners
were seen to develop key messages based on organisational need, research and the
perceived role for the message. Practitioners crafted versions of a message in ways that
would facilitate publics and audiences constructing the intended meaning of the
organisation; they disseminated messages via media and communication channels they
thought would best reach target publics and audiences; they used spokespeople who
would be perceived as credible and these spokespeople were trained for their role of
delivering key messages; they saw the need for consistency and repetition in their quest
for message success; and they evaluated campaigns to a significant extent through the
reporting or, less commonly, recall of key messages. It was clear in all but two cases of
practice examined as part of this project that key messages either underpinned or were
an integral component of a wider public relations strategy. The data supported the view
of Pfau and Wan (2006), when they suggested that the majority of public relations
practitioners are guided by the active message processing model which assumes
“thinking is information processing” (p. 112) and that this thinking in turn places
messages at the centre of practice. Practitioners working in this way can be seen to be
operating “from an implicit premise that information is the key: that it triggers cognitive
responses in people, thereby affecting attitudes and behaviours” (Pfau & Wan, 2006, p.
112). The data strongly indicated that such thinking permeated practices around key
messages in what was deemed by the public relations profession in Australia as
examples of best practice. The data also indicated that key messages played a role in
intentionally positioning an organisation, product or service but it was found that within
the public relations literature, there was no theoretical framework to explain how this
was occurring. Drawing on the work of Moloney (2006, p. 56) and Moffitt (1999, pp.
139-171), the focus of thinking behind strategic messaging as part of public relations
campaigns could be defined as a core part of practice designed to enhance the chances
of publics and audiences constructing the meanings intended for them by those organisations commissioning the public relations services.

8.1.4 The development of the positioning framework

Through my analytical work on key messages and my research into the concept of positioning, the beginnings of synthesis started to take place. A way to begin to explicate the processes and techniques involved in intentional positioning in a public relations context emerged from this process. In the absence of a specific organising framework for positioning in public relations, I developed a provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning. I reported on this development process and on the findings when this framework was applied to the award entry data – in essence this became a study within a study. The application of the framework suggested that key messages were not central to public relations campaign practice as such, but they were central to the technique and process of intentional positioning. This work indicated that positioning played a central role in public relations campaign practice. On the basis of the results and analysis in this part of the project, it was concluded that the provisional conceptual framework for positioning in public relations campaigns offered a more comprehensive approach to positioning than found in marketing models and it also brought together elements identified by other public relations researchers into a single framework. It is clear that further testing and refinement will be needed, but this initial study’s findings showed that positioning was a significant part of public relations campaign practice. The provisional positioning framework for public relations showed potential application in two areas – as an heuristic for analysis of public relations activities and as a practical framework for designing positioning strategies in public relations programs and campaigns.

8.1.5 Testing of the framework

Two approaches were taken to further test and develop the framework. In the first approach, as a way of testing whether public relations positioning was different to commercial marketing positioning, the framework was applied to government agency/publicly-funded organisation campaigns, because marketing as a rule was not generally associated with such government communication. I set out to investigate whether the communication campaigns of government agencies and other public sector
organisations in Australia employed public relations positioning techniques in their quest to achieve communication goals. In the second approach, the positioning framework was applied to the design of a draft public relations positioning campaign for an organisation, The Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment based at The University of Newcastle, Australia. The aim of this exercise was to ascertain whether the framework could be helpful to practitioners in campaign design, specifically in positioning organisations or activities/programs in ways that assisted in the achievement of their public relations goals.

It was found that the framework offered a more comprehensive approach to public relations positioning than that found in marketing models and also brought together elements identified by other public relations researchers in a single framework. The framework will need further testing and refinement but the findings in the first section showed that positioning was a significant part of government agency and public sector communication campaign practice. It showed that the prominence given by public relations practitioners to messaging techniques – developing and disseminating key messages – is warranted in the context of the second and third poles of the positioning triangle domain of the framework. It was found that the framework for intentional positioning in public relations provided a rationale for practices undertaken in the professional field. It was also found that the framework provided a useful way to approach the development of a plan to position an organization in a public relations context. The framework’s application to practice highlighted that there appeared to be two parts to the framework – the first related to strategic direction and the second to planning and implementation. It became clear that working through the first three domains, that is, knowing what goal the client needed to achieve, what type of positioning we were doing and for what purpose the positioning was being undertaken, clarified the direction for strategy development. It was in the final positioning triangle domain that the strategy and tactics for the positioning were to be developed. All three poles of the triangle needed to be addressed and aligned to enable the positioning to have any chance of success. Overall, the analysis in this study suggested that the conceptual framework is a promising tool and that further efforts to test and develop it would be warranted.
8.2 Answering the study’s research questions

RQ1 Why do practitioners undertake public relations campaigns?

Public relations practitioners undertake public relations campaigns in response to a situation or problem. Working as situation analysts and problems solvers, public relations practitioners in this study responded to identified situations and problems with a campaign response or solution. It is unclear why public relations responds in this way from the research findings as the data sample was restricted to the study of award winning entry texts and descriptions of practice that comprised campaigns. Further research would be required to ascertain why a campaign response was deemed as most appropriate and what other options were or could have been considered.

The campaigns examined in this study were invariably designed with the express purposes of achieving specific goals that are related to the overall mission of the commissioning organisation. The campaigns with very few exceptions were designed as one-way persuasive communication exercises designed to change the target audience/publics' cognition and behavior (van Ruler, 2004, p. 128). All campaigns had the common purpose of creating in the minds of targeted publics and audiences the intended meaning of the commissioning organisations which was designed to help achieve that organisation’s goals, however altruistic they may be. This supports Moloney’s assertion that “that “above all, it [public relations] is communication designed to further the interests of its principals. They would not invest in PR if it were otherwise” (2006, p. 168). Practitioners in this study can also be described as having used their campaigns in the attempt to intentionally position an organisation, product or service in the minds of target publics. There is evidence of desired positions being determined and enacted, and strong evidence of the use of messaging techniques to support the positioning. It can also be seen that a number of campaigns were undertaken to prevent further escalations of identified issues and problems. These organisations could be seen to have invested money in campaigns in an effort to preclude having to spend more money if issues escalated further. This was clearly evident in award entries including campaigns designed to counsel people impacted by Bali terrorist bombings, to prevent graffiti from being applied to buildings, to attract more skilled workers to a capital city and to provide modern maternity facilities for a community.
RQ2 Who primarily benefits from the outcomes delivered by the public relations campaigns?

All campaigns examined in this project were designed to primarily deliver specific benefits to the organisation that commissioned/paid for the campaign, that is, in all cases in this study the campaign was designed to advance the organisation’s mission. However, there were cases, primarily in the not-for-profit and government sectors, where the organisational mission was related to assisting people in various ways. Outcomes in these circumstances can be seen to be related to the mission of the organisation itself rather than to any intrinsic attribute of the public relations activity specifically delivering benefits to people external to the organisation. In the main, the benefits could not be described as mutual or symmetrical because when such campaigns are examined, such terminology is quite inappropriate. It is too simplistic to talk about mutual benefits, even in cases where there is a seemingly altruistic motive behind the campaign’s delivery. This is because of the complexity involved in weighing up what entails a benefit and what level of such a benefit equates with another. For example, it becomes a question of how one would weigh up the social benefit of a government agency providing a counselling service for people impacted by a terrorist attack with the political leverage and electoral success gained from such as an action for the government in power at the time. Add to that, the vested interest of the staff of that government agency to keep their jobs and so by delivering a successful program the agency is permitted to continue to exist. In addition, there are even more intangible benefits to the wider community, whose own concerns and feelings of helplessness following the terrorist attack are allayed because the government is seen to be “doing something” to help, other government agencies are “let off the hook” from having to act if someone else is doing so, the media has another angle on a story and can talk of doing good for the community in promoting the service, psychologists receive an unexpected income stream from government paid counselling service outsourcing, and so it goes on. This points to the inadequacy of public relations being defined around questions of “who benefits” from public relations activity and the findings in this study have further demonstrated that such a definitional framework is flawed.
Not all public sector organisation campaigns were completely altruistic and some public sector campaigns seemed to be advocating specific positions to other government agencies or representatives. This can be seen in those campaigns designed around hospital redevelopment/relocation proposals – in both cases, the hospitals achieved redevelopment on current location outcomes rather than moves to outer suburbs of their capital city, which was the outcome the hospital management teams wanted. Even in the for-profit organisation campaigns that had stated goals around helping local communities, for example, Rio Tinto Future Fund and Woolworth Drought Action Day, the award entries also had stated desired outcomes centred on reputational benefits. These cases could be used as campaign examples that demonstrate public relations practice around mutual benefit but in both these cases, it could be argued that these organisations were forced into a position where they had to invest back into communities as not to have done so, in the light of such large profits being reported, could have impacted on their social licence to operate.

There was a clear distinction between outcomes reported in some campaigns examined in the literature and those examined in the data sample comprising the award winning campaigns from the PRIA Golden Target Awards. Not unexpectedly, campaigns included in the award winning data sample all reported outstanding success against their stated objectives, albeit evaluation measures were often of questionable value, for example, amount of media coverage obtained. The campaigns examined in the literature did not always deliver optimal results, for example, the breast cancer awareness campaign conducted in the Arab Emirates delivered low levels of self-examination by women (Khaja & Creedon, 2010). This raises the concern that if an organisation wants to deliver public relations outcomes that benefit people external to the commissioning organisation, even a well-intended campaign may not be the appropriate solution.

**RQ3 What do practitioners do in order to achieve their desired campaign outcomes?**

Practitioners designed, implemented and evaluated methods and processes of managing the way meaning was constructed by target publics. In essence, they generally implemented campaigns very much along the lines of what is suggested in most university public relations textbooks. They identified a goal that needed to be achieved
that would help the organisation achieve its larger mission; they set objectives; they conducted research to ascertain the environment or terrain the campaign would be conducted within and also to gain an understanding of the current meanings that were circulating amongst people in various settings; they identified priority target publics; they developed a communications strategy and then designed tactics that would implement the strategy; they measured results to varying degrees and evaluated their campaigns. This structure was largely determined by the template of the award entry process that each campaign followed but most textbooks advise a similar functional approach. The way practitioners discussed their campaign practice did not indicate that other approaches were prevalent, although practitioners did report that the retrospective “narrativisation” of the award entry campaign made the campaigns sound more linear and straightforward than they were. The main techniques and methods reported as being used were

a. Media management (including media relations processes and techniques; key messages; media training; spokesperson selection)
b. Direct engagement with publics/audiences/stakeholders
c. Positioning
d. Building awareness or understanding of something
e. Informing or educating
f. Issue management
g. Marketing (product/distribution/price), sales and advertising
h. Persuading or convincing

All campaigns used a combination of some or all of these techniques and processes. The use of key messages emerged strongly across the data in all these categories and was seen by practitioners to underpin much of public relations practice, often providing the core around which the campaign was designed. Further analysis of the data strongly indicated that the desire or need to position or reposition an organisation or some aspects of its personnel, products or services was the force behind the use of key messages and indeed many of the other techniques. Positioning has not previously been regarded as a core area of practice in public relations according to the literature but
evidence of the application of positioning techniques was found in all campaign award entries and positioning was mentioned in both the award entry and interview data. It is therefore a conclusion of this project that one of the primary techniques used by practitioners in their campaign practice is positioning, which I have defined as:

the strategic attempt to stake out and occupy a site of intentional representation in the contested space where meanings are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed.

It is suggested that this conceptualization of positioning could be of greater benefit to public relations than that of a marketing conceptualization which asserts that positioning/ repositioning is achieved through a manipulation of three of the “4Ps” of marketing – namely product, price, promotion and place.

**RQ4 What theoretical orientation towards public relations practice is evident in the way practitioners described their campaign work?**

In line with the work of Byrne (2007), Australian practitioners in this study demonstrated a strong client-centric focus in the research data. However, Byrne’s work (2007, p. 31) found that Australian practice was most closely aligned to that of Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) press agent/publicity model, whereas, if I were to align the key approach of practitioners in this study to one of the models of public relations put forward by Grunig and Hunt (1984), it would be to align practice to the two-way asymmetrical model of public relations. This is where communication and information gleaned from target publics and other people and sources were designed to feed into better targeted strategic communication efforts for the achievement of the organisation public relations goals. The practice reported in this study supports the definition of strategic communication by Hallahan et al. (2007, p. 4) as “communicating purposefully” to advance an organisation’s mission. This is how I have always viewed “public relations” and this view comes through strongly in this study’s data. Ristino (2008, p. 56) draws on the 1992/2002 work of scholars J. Grunig, L. Grunig and Dozier and discusses how terms such as public relations, organisational communication and communication management are used interchangeably and that particular interpretations are often determined by the perspective of the practitioner. To my mind, strategic
communication, communication management and public relations are one and the same thing. Hallahan et al. (2007 p. 10) state that public relations is “merely grounded...in establishing and maintaining mutually satisfactory relationships” and, as a focus, is a necessary condition, but insufficient for organisations to achieve strategically important goals. I disagree with this definition of public relations but believe that this is testimony to the public relations field’s inability to define itself – some leading scholars, organisations and others have moved to define what many practitioners call “PR” as strategic communication – they no longer want to be caught up with a field that cannot adequately define itself or develop relevant theoretical frameworks for practice.

For example, there is little in this study to support any assertion that public relations as practised in campaigns, aims for, or achieves, two-way symmetrical communication with the aim of achieving mutually beneficial outcomes. In some cases, such outcomes might be achieved, but this is not a driving theoretical force in practice and as such this study does not support a two-way symmetrical theoretical approach to public relations. Also, in this study, there were indicators of relationships being formed and managed as part of some campaigns. Practitioners worked to gain an understanding of the needs of those outside the organisation often through existing or newly forged relationships. The data indicated that this was primarily done so that public relations practitioners could better deliver key messages and achieve desired organisational outcomes. There was little in this study to indicate that public relations campaigns were primarily concerned with relationship management and as such this study does not support an overarching relationship management theoretical approach to public relations as it does not account for campaign practice.

There was a strong current of the transmission model of communication being the key driver throughout the descriptions of practice relating to key messages. This was however very much tempered with the efforts of practitioners to create zones of meaning where new meaning could be constructed in the context of what was already known. Research was the preeminent method used to discover what was already understood by target publics and others, so that public relations strategies could be more targeted, and tactics tailored to specific audiences. Through the construction and dissemination of key messages, it was evident that there was some alignment in practice to the rhetorical theoretical approaches. Certainly there was evidence of some
“wrangling” when messages were disseminated into the “marketplace” where other messages were also present in this contested space. However, it appears that the majority of public relations practitioners in this study do not think this wrangling is a desirable state of affairs and there is no evidence of intent to embrace a rhetorical approach as espoused by Heath (e.g. 1993, 2006a, 2009). Success was not seen as having organisational viewpoints challenged in informed debate by an engaged society. Success was more frequently measured in terms of not having organisational messages challenged and by the “take up” of key messages by media and in other channels, ideally in the form in which they were constructed by the organisation that commissioned the public relations activity. Success was seen as having key messages appearing in the media, having third parties disseminate and endorse key messages and having stakeholders’ perception measurements showing that meaning has been created in the way the organisation wished it to be, which resulted in an increased profile for the organisation or increased level of engagement with the organisation by targeted publics and audiences.

The theoretical orientation that was most evident in the research data was a social constructionist perspective. This was not mentioned by practitioners, but all practitioners could be conceptualised as having worked actively to construct particular meanings in attempts to have target publics and audiences construct particular versions of reality. This will be discussed further in the forthcoming section of this chapter, implications of this research for theory.

**RQ5 What are the possible implications of this study’s findings?**

This study’s main finding is that public relations campaign practice is comprised of a complex set of methods, techniques and processes that can be used to manage communication and the construction of meaning to various degrees for an array of purposes. The campaigns and related practices in the sample examined in this thesis indicate that public relations methods, techniques and processes such as positioning and media management can be used to increase sales, prevent the moving of hospitals, facilitate a product recall, make people think that large companies care about them, influence parliamentary voting outcomes on issues of conscience, increase the uptake of public transport during major events, improve reputational measures, garner support for
particular models of business, get people to think it’s a great idea to have convicted criminals working in their communities instead of sitting inside jail, subscribe to buying shares in new companies, allay fears in times of crisis and even move house from one city to another. All these campaigns used “public relations” to achieve their stated goals even though the stated goals were vastly varied. The findings support Moloney’s (2006, p. 176) assertion that “PR techniques do not have integral to them moral values. They are communicative modes” and as such, the main implication of this project’s findings is that it supports, at least in terms of public relations campaign work, Berger’s (1999) “tentative definition” where he suggested that public relations provides organizations with:

dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation in contested sites in which information is exchanged, meaning constructed and managed, and consensus, consent, and legitimation gained or lost with others (p. 186).

There is little evidence in this project that can support definitions of public relations in terms of who benefits from public relations activity or in whose interests public relations is undertaken. Those questions are important ones to be addressed but they should not be used to define the field. This research lends weight to defining public relations campaign practice around the strategic management of the construction of meaning. For what purpose this is done, by what means this is done and who possesses the resources to be able to do it are questions to be addressed through the various theoretical lenses that examine the ethical, sociological, psychological and cultural issues and impacts of what public relations methods and processes enable organisations to achieve.

The second implication is that award entry case studies as can be found in various databases and books, may not be as helpful as first appears. This is because such case studies help perpetuate the thinking that campaigns are the correct response to public relations situations or problems, and this may not be the case. The literature points to the fact that campaigns have varying levels of success and it also has some practical examples of non-campaign responses to what first appeared to be situations where a campaign may have been warranted. One of the best examples of a non-campaign
response is that of Lane (2007), which ironically was a candidate for a PRIA Golden Target Award but was not a national winner and thus not included in this project’s data sample. The question remains as to why more non-campaign work is not included in the PRIA Golden Target Awards and this will require additional research as to whether it is the nature of the awards, the entry template structure or whether campaigns comprise such a large percentage of what practitioners do in Australia, that it is just a reflection of the state of practice.

It would be helpful for practitioners to be able to learn from less than fully successful campaigns and to be able to draw on more non-campaign examples of practice in order to commence a widening of the scope of responses available to public relations situations and problems. The fact that these seem to be located primarily in academic literature may be an issue as Okay and Okay (2008) assert that “many public relations practices appear to be based on intuitive or experimental learning rather than academic knowledge” (p.300). Anecdotally, it is reported that many practitioners do not have the resources or inclination to access academic databases or to subscribe to academic journals.

8.3 Specific implications for public relations campaign practice

The significant implication for practice from this doctoral project is the development of the conceptual framework for intentional positioning which may assist practitioners to analyse why past campaigns have or have not worked. This framework could also prove to be helpful in designing future positioning strategies and provisional work indicates this may be the case. I intend to undertake further research to explore this possibility. This doctoral research indicated that public relations practitioners use positioning techniques in most campaign work, even if they don’t realize what it is they are doing. The framework provides an heuristic for practice but importantly, makes one of the key methods and techniques used in public relations more transparent, breaking the techniques of positioning down into component parts. Just as marketing has a “marketing mix”, the positioning framework may see public relations developing a “public relations mix”. This may make the design of campaigns more streamlined but may also deliver benefits by way of being able to explain to clients/internal stakeholders the steps through which practitioners work to deliver desired outcomes. This could help
break down misconceptions from those outside of the public relations field that “PR” is not underpinned by practical, proven theory and is somehow a poor cousin to Marketing. This is not just about the reputation and understanding of the public relations field but also relates to the way public relations work is credited to the workload of employees and billed to clients.

8.4 Specific implications for public relations teaching

Hallahan et al. (2007) state that “the challenge confronting the field today is to more closely draw the vital linkages between how communication is taught in academia and how it is practiced strategically” (p.18). This study supports the view of Hallahan et al. (2007) in that the findings indicate that academics should consider placing strategic communication management and the concept of contested space at the centre of undergraduate public relations courses rather than concepts of symmetrical communication, mutual benefit and the betterment of society. I believe this would assist in removing the somewhat ridiculous situation of teaching functional approaches to public relations practitioners while couching them in normative theories that have little application to a major area of practice – that of campaigns. To teach public relations as a set of methods, processes and techniques that focuses on managing the construction of meanings is a more honest approach in that it does not pretend public relations is something it is not.

This opens the possibilities of examining how such strategic management of the construction of meanings impacts on all realms of life - the operation of governments, enterprise, and social reality. Courses could introduce the introductory concepts of practice in a framework of strategy and use case studies to examine how a set of methods, processes and techniques can be applied to goals as diverse as promoting healthy lifestyles to covering up major environmental disasters – the same set of techniques put to vastly different uses. In most public relations textbooks and courses, the basic starting point is to develop a public relations plan for a campaign-style response but taking this revised theoretical approach would allow students to consider when a campaign-type response is appropriate and when it is not. This would be the type of course framework that aligns with the findings of this study. If we are to believe

256
that theory informs practice and practice informs theory, it is disingenuous to continue promulgating what is clearly inappropriate.

8.5 Specific implications for public relations theory

The research findings lend strong support to the field taking a social constructionist approach that places the concept of contested space, where meaning is negotiated, constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed (Berger, 1999), at its centre. This approach lends itself to examination of a) the issues related to the ethics of what is being undertaken in public relations, b) the issues related to power and resources available to those contesting meaning constructions in the space, and c) the issues related to the means by which communication is managed and executed by public relations practitioners and others. It may be that social constructionism will provide the mechanism for driving forward public relations scholarship causing a fundamental realignment of the discipline where the study of socially constructed meaning becomes the intellectual domain (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008, p. 115). This study’s findings supports such an approach, as all public relations practice examined saw practitioners “offering publics a particular meaning – promoting a particular way of understanding the world” (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008, p. 115). This suggests that the social construction of particular meanings for strategic purposes should be considered as underpinning definitions of public relations campaigns.

Perhaps this concept could unify a diversity of theoretical voices. Leichty (2003) wrote that the diversity of theoretical voices is not a “sad commentary on the state of public relations” but “is a starting point for characterising public relations theory and practice” (p. 300), but I disagree. This is because although differing theoretical lenses permit the examination of phenomena from different perspectives, surely there needs to be an underlying epistemology within which this makes sense. Toth (2009, p. 58) proposed that, what she has identified as the rhetorical, critical and Excellence perspectives of public relations, “may be becoming more intertwined in the sharing of commonalities in meanings of concepts, units of analysis, and efforts to build theory and connect to practice”. I believe this study’s findings support Toth’s proposition and further, lend weight to adopting a broad social constructionist epistemology to unify the various theoretical strands of the field. The debate as to who holds the power and wherewithal
to influence and control the meaning construction process, and the ethics of doing so, could then take place. The field could acknowledge its practice as always being advocacy-focused – whether one is advocating for immunisation and clean water for children or for the expansion of uranium mines, the techniques and processes of intentional representation and the construction of versions of social reality are the same. The popular public debates could move from “Is public relations all about spin?” to examinations of how and for what purposes intended meanings are being constructed by parties. This acceptance could possibly bring more respect to the field as we no longer pretend to be something we are not.

8.6 Final observations and reflections

In completing this research project I trust that I have contributed to the body of knowledge in the public relations field in a way that will help advance future research amongst the global community of scholars. I believe I have made an original contribution to the public relations field through this doctoral research project; namely, I have developed a conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations which has established a link as to why the development and delivery of key messages is central to public relations campaigns.

I have put forward for consideration an argument for the field of public relations to further consider that the intentional construction of meaning for strategic purposes is at the heart of public relations campaign practice. More research is needed to shed light on the methods and processes of strategic meaning construction used in campaign and other practice so that the findings could assist both practitioners and critics of public relations to better present their cases and pinpoint those areas of concern. Different approaches to research may be needed, as stated by van Ruler (2005b, p. 171):

In the community of management scholars, anthropological methods and action research are emerging as important and valuable research methodologies for certain practical questions. In view of the kind of problems that confront public relations practitioners, we also might need to reconsider our methodology and find methods that are more in line with public relations planning than the normal, classical social-sciences methods.
The understandings gleaned from such research could provide insights into how decisions are made to position and intentionally represent an organisation or an organisation’s view. This could assist organisations in further refining public relations programs. It could also assist the wider citizenry in being able to decode public relations practice and representations. Such research could also underpin the development of ways in which practice can be taught and critiqued in academic settings. My thesis, I trust, contributes to the foundations on which new approaches to examining public relations can be built in the future.
Reference List


Plowman, K. (2007). Public relations, conflict resolution and mediation. In E. Toth (Ed.), *The future of excellence in public relations and communication*


Thank you for your Response to Conditional Approval submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) seeking approval in relation to the above protocol.

Your submission was considered under Expedited review by the Chair/Deputy Chair.

I am pleased to advise that the decision on your submission is Approved effective 16-Apr-2009.

The full Committee will be asked to ratify this decision at its next scheduled meeting. A formal Certificate of Approval will be available upon request. Your approval number is H-2009-0033.

If the research requires the use of an Information Statement, ensure this number is inserted at the relevant point in the Complaints paragraph prior to distribution to potential participants.

You may then proceed with the research. Best wishes for a successful project.
## Funding Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding body</th>
<th>Funding project title</th>
<th>First named investigator</th>
<th>Administering institution</th>
<th>Uni of Newc G Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNI_NCLE</td>
<td>Constructing visual meanings...</td>
<td>Ms Melanie James</td>
<td>University of Newcastle</td>
<td>G0187728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix B - Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</th>
<th>Achieved?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005A4</td>
<td>Positioning Alcan as credible and capable in terms of the proposed development.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003B7</td>
<td>To enhance the meaning of Australia Day</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004G2</td>
<td>The Trust was credible and worthy of support, was not like other agencies and was an important adviser to government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6 - 25</td>
<td>That groundwater was a logical, safe and well tested alternative water supply and testing was not wasting water</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 4</td>
<td>That therapeutic cloning has the best chance of success, Australia should not to fall behind in this and it was a matter for a conscience vote.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 2</td>
<td>With increasing need for services with the aging population the Ear and Eye Hospital is best geographically situated to meet that need</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 16</td>
<td>QGGA is a member-oriented, service-providing organisation with members’ needs at the forefront</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C17-3</td>
<td>Speedway is great family fun and is exciting to watch – come and try it</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C3 - 9</td>
<td>The closure is necessary, the company needs your ongoing support until the closure, and the company will support employees through the process and will continue to value all stakeholders.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 8</td>
<td>That the process was valid and worth participating in, that the changes were worthwhile and that money was not being wasted.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C7 - 7</td>
<td>That the move to the new department was worthwhile and would benefit all, that the feelings of employees were being considered.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 E 3</td>
<td>This is a new business that is worth investing in.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Call nos. are those listed on the database of award entries at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ and can be used to retrieve the award entries included in the study.*
## Appendix B - Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>G 11</td>
<td>That time is passing by and people don’t have to wait until next year to enrol</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>J3</td>
<td>To portray Douglas Wood in a manner which might influence his captors to free him unharmed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>G15</td>
<td>That the credibility and appeal of Elders other business interests were now available in the new banking venture and that deposits and investments were invited from rural and metropolitan populations.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Water Project Management Group (WPMG) and its activities were credible and reliable and that staff should accept, adopt and promulgate key messages about the White Paper reforms to DPI stakeholders.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>D6</td>
<td>The Summit is a unique opportunity for growers from throughout the country to participate as a national group in a consultative forum on the direction and vision for AWB International – The AWB deserves ongoing support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>That BMP was the way to go for cotton growers and that cotton growers were being responsible to the wider community</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C15 - 6</td>
<td>Eggs won’t raise your cholesterol and previous ideas about eggs doing so have been proven wrong.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>E2</td>
<td>This is a new product delivering good returns at some risk but is better than previous CDOs offered previously by others.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>The best way to get info and communicate is through the intranet – even though it was previously unwieldy it is now good.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C10 - 3</td>
<td>IBM is not just about big business but also very relevant to SMEs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C7 - 2</td>
<td>Star City is taking staff communication needs seriously and management is committed to getting it right.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C15 - 3</td>
<td>That moving the maternity unit it the right thing to do and that people can be confident in the services of the new unit.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C1 - 5</td>
<td>Canberra is more than just a boring government town, is a great place to live and offers solutions to problems experienced when living in Sydney.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix B - Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Co-created?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C4-3</td>
<td>Snack items may not be safe now and we’re protecting you until all is okay – come back and buy then - Masterfoods is grateful for your understanding</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>B13</td>
<td>That McDonalds is making a valuable contribution to the 2000 Olympic Games.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C9-1</td>
<td>This state government selective high school can meet the educational needs of your gifted and talented children and you should apply.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Nippy’s will do all it can to protect the public and if Nippy’s has done anything wrong they’re open to due process and inspection. Then, Nippy’s is okay to drink again.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C2-4</td>
<td>Bus services were urgently needed in the outer suburbs for social, economic and environmental reasons.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>ORTA is providing effective Olympic public transport arrangements - fostering a public and media conclusion that “it’s not as I thought it would be”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C6-5</td>
<td>We really want to get the best outcome for the hospital development and we want your input.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>A20</td>
<td>Just because Australia was disease free, farmers couldn’t be complacent and must remain vigilant.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>B14</td>
<td>If you were abused in an Irish institution you can /are invited to seek redress from the Irish government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>C4-1</td>
<td>That the restoration is a complex task but that the companies are doing all they can to restore power asap and are working around the clock to do so.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C16-2</td>
<td>Rio Tinto is committed to facilitating a stronger and more sustainable Western Australian community by establishing and supporting a Future Fund</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>A17</td>
<td>This was a special visit, a positive for SA and everyone (public, media, venues etc) would get an appropriate level of access to the royal couple</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>H25</td>
<td>Only chance to legally own Gallipoli sand - the merchandise relevant and desirable, particularly given that for many, a trip to Anzac Cove is not feasible.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>G11</td>
<td>Sentek is a leader and innovator in research and development and has a great product coming onto the</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B - Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>C9</td>
<td>This journal is worth subscribing to as it is specifically tailored for your interests and tastes.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>C6-26</td>
<td>Brisbane Council wants to get this right and need user input.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>F8</td>
<td>Shell is quickly responding, is investigating, cooperating with authorities and will do all it can to ensure it doesn’t happen again.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C11 - 3</td>
<td>That rodeo is fun and exciting suitable for extreme sports lovers and families, will be run in the main arena at RAS show and will be humane to animals.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>H8</td>
<td>Southbank Tech is cool and could provide the training you want.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Vote for the merger as this is the best way forward for building society customers.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>A16</td>
<td>The Beverly Uranium mine is good for Australia and local communities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>You can trust the Panadol brand and that the company will do the right thing throughout this crisis – returning the product to the shelves when absolutely safe to do so.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>Tampa did what it had to do according to International Safety of Life at Sea convention</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C13 - 3</td>
<td>Telstra is committed to regional Australia and is supporting this competition for aspiring country musicians in order to launch their careers.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>Graffiti is not cool, will not be tolerated and will be removed.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>C9 - 11</td>
<td>Twinings has the best teas, the best tea blenders and is worth purchasing.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Come to the Olive Festival and try olive products and find out what you can do the olives in a beautiful farm environment.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>That welfare and counselling services were available and it was acceptable and normal to access them in the situation. That the Government was responding</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B - Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2001 D8</th>
<th>2000 A17</th>
<th>1999 A13</th>
<th>2007 C11-3</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 D8</td>
<td>WA farmers need help and deserve assistance. WAFF is doing all it can to get this assistance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2000 A17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A13</td>
<td>BHP wants to get cross-cultural education right and will be guided by the local communities as to what should be included.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>2000 A17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C11-3</td>
<td>Farming families affected by drought need assistance as they are doing it tough – shopping at Woolworths will help farmers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1999 A13</td>
<td>1999 A13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C Results linked to goals/objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Excerpt from goals/objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005A4</td>
<td>To help secure stakeholder approval of the Gove refinery expansion, while managing expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003B7</td>
<td>To inspire national pride by educating Australians about the meaning behind what we celebrate on Australia Day to inform and encourage active citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004G2</td>
<td>To redress the severe imbalance in public perception and position the Trust for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6 - 25</td>
<td>To proactively manage the impacts of an extremely fast-moving and ever-changing investigative program. Equally important was the need to correct perceptions around groundwater safety and potential concerns around investigation management. A secondary goal was to present the project as a responsible Council initiative, ensuring the city's future water supply...Communication objectives focused on stakeholder awareness and perception management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 4</td>
<td>To persuade the Government to support a conscience vote; to secure the passage of Federal legislation ... to legalise therapeutic cloning for medical research purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 2</td>
<td>Secure State Government commitment to redevelop the Eye and Ear Hospital on its current site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 16</td>
<td>Reduce the number of members who do not renew in 1998/99. Currently about 10 percent of members do not renew...Maintain QGG's leadership and focus on agripolitics while undertaking additional membership marketing activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C17-3</td>
<td>Our overall goal was to increase the number of spectators at the Darwin Speedway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C3 - 9</td>
<td>Communicate the transfer of production from Toowoomba to Castlemaine as clearly as possible to stakeholders, while minimising the negative impact of the announcement on KRC’s reputation, brand and business operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 8</td>
<td>To create awareness amongst industry member organisations of the process to create a single service entity, its importance and the benefits to be gained; To actively engage industry member organisations in discussion of the options for the new entity and elicit formal submissions; To inform individual levy paying members of the process and encourage participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C7 - 7</td>
<td>The overriding goal was to shift staff perceptions, building a positive,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 Call nos. are those listed on the database of award entries at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ and can be used to retrieve the award entries included in the study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Excerpt from goals/objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Motivated and dedicated workforce which would ensure the new Department of Water was able to open to the public, ready for business, as scheduled on January 2, 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 E 3</td>
<td>To establish an understanding of the Cryosite business with the media, investors and the investment community; achieve widespread media coverage ...; establish an ongoing relationship with potential media followers; attract wider interest in the prospectus and ongoing story ...; explain the validity of the business plan ... to be achieved by information dissemination and media coverage; contribute to a fully subscribed prospectus by raising Cryosite's profile; contribute to a successful ASX listing on debut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 G 11</td>
<td>The campaign goals and objectives were: To drive targeted enquiries... and to communicate with new markets to attract interest from potential students who had never studied at the university before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 J3</td>
<td>There was one goal for the family's media and communication activities - free Douglas. Objectives: Use the Iraqi media to portray Douglas in a manner which might influence his captors to free him unharmed; Use the Australian and other media to present a positive message about Douglas Wood and his family to put further pressure on the captors; To maintain good relations with the Australian media through providing ready access to factual information to reduce the likelihood of reporters seeking other Wood stories that might move the focus away from the key objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 G15</td>
<td>The overall goal of the program was to launch Elders Rural Bank to metropolitan and regional Australia, and help secure $150 million in deposits within the first 12 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 C4</td>
<td>To engage relevant DPI staff as trusted sources on the White Paper for Water (WPW) as the first phase of a broader goal to manage DPI stakeholder concerns about water reforms. Communication Objectives: To build understanding by at least 75% of staff working with water stakeholders of the main implications of the WPW implications for their stakeholders; To build awareness of the role of staff in helping DPI stakeholders to understand the WPW by at least 75% of staff working with DPI water stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 D6</td>
<td>Ensure the Single Desk Summit is a credible and valid event through the comprehensive involvement of growers and the grains industry... AWB hoped to build a groundswell of support for the Single Desk and create a 'united front' of growers and grain industry bodies, championing the Single Desk to government...Use the Summit to demonstrate to industry, competitors and government a very high level of grower support for the Single Desk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 B3</td>
<td>Improve community perception of the cotton industry by demonstrating a significant culture change in on-farm decision making and practices aimed at reducing the impacts on surrounding neighbours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C15 - 6</td>
<td>Present the scientific evidence in a way that would change the knowledge, understanding and acceptance of Australia’s healthcare professionals regarding scientific evidence debunking the link between eggs and blood cholesterol levels. 2. Generate national media coverage to widely publicise the fact that eggs have the Heart Foundation ‘Tick’ and educate healthcare professionals and the public on the science behind this endorsement. 3. Change consumer opinion so that the consumption of eggs is not something they are worried about in relation to controlling or reducing blood cholesterol levels 4. Achieve 50% or more of egg products on shelf with NHF Tick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 E2</td>
<td>To help develop aspects of the product and a marketing campaign that: created a new identity for a new investment product and the company issuing it; avoided the criticism that Nexus Bonds had suffered; would fill the issues of HY-FIs in Australia and New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 C4</td>
<td>The goal of the A/NZ Intranet is to be a trusted source of relevant, timely, easy to access information, - allowing employees to do their jobs better, while creating an open and informed employee climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C10 - 3</td>
<td>Shift market perception concerning IBM’s relevance and offering to SMEs; Assume a thought leadership position in the key mid-market sector; Establish and promote relationships with key industry influencers and SME representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C7 - 2</td>
<td>To improve Star City communications as measured by the annual Employee Opinion Survey by at least 10 per cent per annum; To educate and engage employees on a range of major issues including the promotion of Responsible Gambling and Responsible Service of Alcohol, reporting Illegal and Undesirable Activity and Customer Service. Success would be measured by surveys; Improve Customer Service levels by engaging staff so they improve their performance in the workplace. The aim was to lift patron advocacy of Star City by at least 20 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C15 - 3</td>
<td>The goal of this campaign was to secure support for the move and instil confidence in the new maternity unit at Kaleeya Hospital. Our objectives were to: create a positive image for the new maternity unit – through use of positive media coverage and the development and delivery of a wide range of communications materials; prevent the counter-campaign gaining traction and causing a re-think on the move; ...communicate clear and accurate information to counter rumour and misinformation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C1 - 5</td>
<td>Our primary objective was to identify a qualified group of prospects that we could follow up with. Our secondary objectives were to: ‘Sow the seed’ that Canberra is a great place to live and work. And to identify: Whether there was an opportunity to entice people to move to Canberra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C4 - 3</td>
<td>Recall all Mars® and Snickers® products quickly and safely in NSW whilst protecting the reputation of MasterFoods. Objectives: 1.Protect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>public safety. 2. Ensure 90% of the key messages are contained in the media coverage. 3. Return the products to shelf when it was safe, with at least 80% public support. 4. Return product sales to normal levels within four weeks of return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 B13</td>
<td>To position McDonald's as a valuable contributor to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and to communicate the benefits the sponsorship will bring to our employees and the communities in which we operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C9 - 1</td>
<td>The goal of the strategy was to educate and inform the parents of gifted and talented students of the benefits of selective schooling and the capacity of the public education system to deliver it. The campaign objective was to achieve 400 applications from students to sit the selection examination with an expectation that 160 of them were of the calibre to be eligible to be offered a place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 C7</td>
<td>The objectives were: Present Nippy's as concerned for the safety of its customers, rather than its own future; Minimise media criticism and speculation and manage media interest; Minimise the loss in sales; Prevent further infections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C2 - 4</td>
<td>Influence the Victorian Government to spend an additional $50 million annually to provide a minimum level of public transport service in Interface Councils. Objectives: Relationships - Build constructive dialogue with government decision makers and influencers... Partnerships: Join with two other allied advocate groups to proliferate discussion about public transport...Media: Influence 20 stories in local and metropolitan press to convey messages and generate public debate regarding the issue. Advocacy: Advocate for additional bus services...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A11</td>
<td>To position ORTA as a credible, professional organisation; To bring the Sydney community from a position of apprehension about Olympic transport to a level of public confidence in transport strategies; and To progressively educate the community about Olympic transport arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C6 - 5</td>
<td>Determine how the best children’s hospital could be built in the best location with maximum community support. Objectives: Ensure that rebuilding the RCH poses no threat to its reputation and major fundraising efforts; Secure 90% support for the new hospital among stakeholders...Attain 500 participants for the consultation; Manage media so that 70% of coverage contains key messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 A20</td>
<td>Raise awareness among livestock producers about emergency animal diseases, the need to check livestock regularly for unusual symptoms, and to report these symptoms quickly through the right channels. Specific objectives: 1. Help AHA build stronger and more active relationships with government and industry partners...2. Secure media coverage ... with the aim of involving more than 50% of program &quot;champions&quot; in media liaison. 3. Raise awareness among two specific industry sectors...and build relationships with key...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 B14</td>
<td>The central goals of this project were to raise awareness of availability of redress to Australian-based survivors of residential abuse in Ireland and to put survivors who were interested in applying for redress in contact with legal advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C4-1</td>
<td>To communicate promptly and effectively to stakeholders that Powerlink and Ergon Energy were committed to working around the clock as quickly and safely as possible to complete a highly complicated power restoration effort. Objectives: 1. Educate target publics about the complex challenges associated with restoring power and empower them to make informed decisions about their own situation in relation to power supply 2. Mitigate negative perceptions about the incident and ensure balanced or positive media coverage 3. Protect reputations...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C16</td>
<td>To assist in facilitating a stronger and more sustainable Western Australian community; To enable Rio Tinto to share business success, skills, knowledge and resources; To achieve reputational benefits for Rio Tinto in Western Australia; To assist Rio Tinto to engage with stakeholders outside of the usual channels of communications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 A17</td>
<td>Set a national benchmark in successfully managing the public impact of the 2002 Royal Visit by producing a result that will exceed Government expectations, delight the public, and present all media with an experience noted for its professionalism and innovation. Objectives: 1. Optimise positive public interest in the event; 2. Satisfy demands of regional, metropolitan, national and international media; 3. Manage overlapping requirements of protocol and security; 4. Satisfy the differing needs of host venues and Government; 5. Identify and maximise opportunities with long term residual value to the State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 H25</td>
<td>Achieve the Sands of Gallipoli national sales target of $500,000 by creating a positive environment for sales through: National and state media coverage which achieves big impact with a low budget; Effective management of anticipated issues surrounding the sensitivity of the Gallipoli legend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 G11</td>
<td>Raise Sentek's profile in South Australia, and nationally, positioning the company as a leader and innovator in research and development. Objectives: 1. Create an opportunity for Sentek to engage independent researchers and industry influencers, building stronger collaborative relations and harnessing their support to reinforce the credibility of its technology; 2. Raise awareness among primary producers about Sentek and its technology, and how it will help manage salinity and fertiliser; 3. Generate immediate and widespread media coverage targeting key influencers and primary industry sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 C9</td>
<td>Enhance the reputation of the Faculty with alumni, students, staff and supporters; Re-establish relationships with Faculty alumni; Assist in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locating Faculty alumni; Titillate visually and intellectually; Engage intellectually; Provide opportunities for interaction; Reinforce advantages of continuing contact with UNSW; Encourage participation in broader alumni activities; Solicit ideas re: types of possible interaction/relationship; communicate development activities and seek support; Promote post-graduate courses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6-26</td>
<td>The overarching consultation goal was to gather feedback and identify a clear preference to inform Council’s upgrade decision-making. A secondary goal was to demonstrate Council’s genuine commitment to community involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 F8</td>
<td>To restore, protect and even enhance Shell's reputation, brand and 'licence to operate'. Objectives: Ensure communications to key audiences were timely and empathetic; Communicate company's decision to take moral responsibility for the spill; Maintain the trust of stakeholders; Ensure Shell's Gore Bay terminal continued to operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C11 - 3</td>
<td>To diversify the core reasons people give for attending the Show beyond the traditional three of animals, Showbags and Carnival. To achieve this, the Sydney Royal Rodeo was established as an integral part of the public relations, advertising, marketing and media sponsorship campaigns. Objectives: 1. Increase the number of people who cited NAB Arena entertainment as a reason to visit the Show by 5%; 2. Increase the number of people who cited rodeo as a reason to attend the Show by 5%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 H8</td>
<td>The overall goal of the print communication campaign was to rebrand Southbank Institute of TAFE. Objectives: To provide Southbank Institute of TAFE with a cohesive, flexible and memorable image, which is reflected through all promotional materials; To expand the enrolment campaign image to create a recognisable and consistent brand image for the corporate and international markets; To raise awareness of Southbank Institute's new image both internally and externally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 E3</td>
<td>To achieve the required 75% vote in support of the merger at member and shareholder meetings; Motivate Queensland communities... to embrace Bendigo Bank and maintain accounts. Objectives: To convince State Government and Ipswich City Council leaders of the benefits of the merger; To reassure staff their jobs would be safe...; To prepare messages that would anticipate likely questions or concerns of stakeholders; To write and produce collateral that would support the key messages of the merger; To co-ordinate an announcement that would be inclusive of both metropolitan and national media outlets and key regional media.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1999 A16 | Create an environment in which Beverley could proceed to commercial development, notwithstanding a hostile anti-nuclear lobby and general public ignorance about the resource and the mining process to be employed. Objectives: (i) educate and inform key target publics; and (ii) give comfort to politicians who would be required to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Excerpt from goals/objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 F2</td>
<td>The goal of the campaign was to demonstrate to target audiences that SB acted ethically and responsibly and in the interests of public safety at all times. It was essential to take control of the situation by proactive announcement rather than reactive comment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 F5</td>
<td>To protect WWL's reputation by managing communication in a way that met four objectives: Provide timely information to customers, media, other interested groups and the general public and maintain media goodwill and respect, even when commercial imperatives made it appear that WWL was withholding information; Communicate WWL's humanitarian concern while ensuring the group remained politically neutral; Maintain the goodwill of customers, port authorities and others important to the company's Australian business, assuring them that the company and ship's master were attempting to resolve the situation and would deliver cargo as expeditiously as possible; Retain public respect for the company and the ship's master.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C13 - 3</td>
<td>Reinforce TCW’s commitment to the Tamworth Country Music Festival and showcase the TRTT as Australia’s most comprehensive country music talent quest; Create a platform to position and promote Telstra products and services; Highlight TCW’s commitment to regional Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 A6</td>
<td>Eradicate 100 per cent of graffiti from private and public-owned assets....Develop and implement a broad media and communication campaign to encourage the community to use a 24-hour graffiti reporting hotline...Educate young people in years 5 and 8 of the consequences of graffiti and the message that 'graffiti is not cool'...Achieve 100 per cent participation rate by primary and secondary schools in Casey in the graffiti education workshops....Achieve positive action by retailers who sell aerosol spray paint ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C9 - 11</td>
<td>Reinvigorate Twinings positioning; generate media coverage about Twinings; create events that would allow consumers to engage with the Twinings brand and learn about specific tea blends; support sales of Twinings tea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 D3</td>
<td>The major goal of the festival was to attract visitors from within the local community and profile Mt Atkinson Olive Grove as a key attraction in the region. Objectives: increase awareness of Mt Atkinson Olive Grove &amp; Café; To establish a media profile of Mt Atkinson Olive Grove; Sub objective: To increase visitation to Mt Atkinson Olive Grove by 20% in comparison to the previous year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 F5</td>
<td>To deliver on the welfare response required under Western Australia's emergency management arrangements. Objectives: 1. ensure immediately affected individuals knew who to contact for support and what support they could access; 2. overcome potential barriers among victims and their families to seeking help; 3. ensure the wider community was informed of services to help them deal...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with trauma; 4. keep stakeholders, particularly the government, government and non government organisations and the media, informed of responses and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 D8</td>
<td>Increase awareness of the issue amongst State and Federal politicians and the general public; Develop a desire to resolve the issue amongst State and Federal politicians; Increase awareness and recognition of WAFF's achievements on behalf of farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 A17</td>
<td>Raise awareness that the Ministry was seeking to liaise with communities that may be suitable for a work camp; Gain the support of interested communities and councils to facilitate development of new camps throughout the State; Glean ideas for suitable community projects for new work camps; ... Increase the pool of prisoners eligible to participate in work camps; Increase the pool of prison officers to manage the work camps; Continue to promote work camps, their good work and their successes through the media and direct liaison with relevant communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A13</td>
<td>Consult broadly with all Aboriginal groups in the region to develop a workable structure in which the project could proceed; develop a workable approval process for the project - bringing together all parties to reach consensus; Develop a workable course, including supporting video and physical materials; Bring Aboriginal parties, then in conflict with each other, to a shared vision for the region; Involve BHP as a trusted part of the indigenous landscape and create strong links between the miner and community; Develop and undertake a phased handover to an indigenous management agency; Develop a portable methodology for community consultation in remote areas which BHP may modify and apply in other regions and other indigenous peoples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C11-3</td>
<td>1. Raise awareness of the immediate issues of drought in rural and regional Australia; 2. Initiate positive action across business and community to help alleviate hardships experienced by farmers; 3. Build staff interest, morale and involvement in the campaign; 4. Encourage long-term support and development of sustainable farming practices; 5. Position Woolworths as a proactive, innovative and respected corporate citizen; 6. Achieve set target of $3 million profit for the day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX D – SUMMARY DATA TABLE TECHNIQUES USED IN AWARD WINNING CAMPAIGN TEXTS

Key: Shading indicates primary technique used in campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Campaign Title</th>
<th>Media/Message</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Engage</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Educate</th>
<th>Issue Management</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Persuade</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No. Of techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 A 11</td>
<td>A Prescription For (Disaster) Success</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 A 17</td>
<td>Adult Prisoner Work Camps-Community Communications</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 A 4</td>
<td>Alcan - Local Expansion, Global Reach</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003B7</td>
<td>Australia Day - Celebrate What's Great</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 F 5</td>
<td>Bali bombings: Supporting Western Australians after the tragedy</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 G 2</td>
<td>Breaking the Cycle of Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6 - 25</td>
<td>Brisbane Aquifer Project</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 4</td>
<td>Campaign to Legalise 'Therapeutic Cloning'</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 2</td>
<td>Can you see and hear us?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 8</td>
<td>Celebrating 300 Years of Twinings Tea</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C17-3</td>
<td>Chariots of Thunder</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C3 - 9</td>
<td>Closure of a Queensland Icon</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key: Shading indicates primary technique used in campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Campaign Title</th>
<th>Media/Message</th>
<th>Direct Engage</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Educate</th>
<th>Issue Management</th>
<th>Marketing/Sales</th>
<th>Persuade</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No. Of Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 8</td>
<td>Consulting with Levy-Paying Members</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C7 -7</td>
<td>Converting Staff Perceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 E 3</td>
<td>Cryosite - Creating Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 G 11</td>
<td>Don't Let Another Year Go By</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 J 3</td>
<td>Douglas Wood Hostage Crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 G 15</td>
<td>Elders Rural Bank Launch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 C 3</td>
<td>Engaging DPI Staff in the White Paper for Water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 D 6</td>
<td>Get Behind The Desk!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 B 3</td>
<td>Good Neighbours Campaign</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C15 -6</td>
<td>Heart Foundation Tick Awarded to Eggs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 E 2</td>
<td>HY-FIs Strike a Rich Chord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key: Shading indicates primary technique used in campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Campaign Title</th>
<th>Media/ Message</th>
<th>Direct Engage</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Educate</th>
<th>Issue Management</th>
<th>Marketing/Sales</th>
<th>Persuade</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No. Of techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004 C 4</td>
<td>IBM Intranet Relaunch</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C10 - 3</td>
<td>IBM Small to Medium Enterprise Campaign: Shifting Industry Perceptions</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C7 - 2</td>
<td>Interactive Internal Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C15 - 3</td>
<td>Kaleeeya Hospital Maternity Unit</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C1 - 5</td>
<td>Live in Canberra Campaign</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C4 - 3</td>
<td>Mars and Snickers extortion threat</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 B 13</td>
<td>McDonalds &amp; The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C9 - 1</td>
<td>New students for Old Modern School</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX D – SUMMARY DATA TABLE TECHNIQUES USED IN AWARD WINNING CAMPAIGN TEXTS

**Key:** Shading indicates primary technique used in campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Campaign Title</th>
<th>Media/Message</th>
<th>Direct Engage</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Educate</th>
<th>Issue Management</th>
<th>Marketing/Sales</th>
<th>Persuade</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No. Of techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 C 7</td>
<td>Nippy’s - A Salmonella Outbreak &amp; Company Under Threat</td>
<td>x x x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C2 - 4</td>
<td>NoLink! Sorry, no service for outer Melbourne</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C6 - 5</td>
<td>Promising Our Children a World-Class Hospital</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 A 20</td>
<td>Protect Australian Livestock Week 2001</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 16</td>
<td>QGGA - Changing the Direction of the Grain</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 B 14</td>
<td>Raising Awareness of Redress for Irish Abuse Survivors in Australia</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX D – SUMMARY DATA TABLE TECHNIQUES USED IN AWARD WINNING CAMPAIGN TEXTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Campaign Title</th>
<th>Media/Message</th>
<th>Direct Engage</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Educate</th>
<th>Issue Management</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Persuade</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No. Of techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 C4-1</td>
<td>Returning Power to Collinsville</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C16 - 2</td>
<td>Rio Tinto WA Future Fund</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 A 17</td>
<td>Royal Visit To South Australia By Her Majesty The Queen And His Royal Highness The Duke Of Edinburgh</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 H 25</td>
<td>Sands of Time Keep Memory Alive</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 G 11</td>
<td>Sentek - Salinity Campaign</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 C 9</td>
<td>Show Cause</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6-26</td>
<td>Sir Samuel Griffith Drive Operation Review</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 F 8</td>
<td>Sydney Harbour Oil Spill August 1999</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX D – SUMMARY DATA TABLE TECHNIQUES USED IN AWARD WINNING CAMPAIGN TEXTS

Key: Shading indicates primary technique used in campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Campaign Title</th>
<th>Media/Message</th>
<th>Direct Engage</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Educate</th>
<th>Issue Management</th>
<th>Marketing/Sales</th>
<th>Persuade</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No. Of techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006 C11 - 3</td>
<td>Sydney Royal Rodeo</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 H 8</td>
<td>Take Control</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 E 3</td>
<td>The Best Way Forward</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A 16</td>
<td>The Beverley Uranium Project-Getting it Over the Line</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 F 2</td>
<td>The Panadol Crisis</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 F 5</td>
<td>The Tampa Crisis</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C13 - 3</td>
<td>The Telstra Road to Tamworth 2006</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 A 6</td>
<td>The Writing’s on the Wall - Casey stamps out graffiti</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 D 3</td>
<td>Victoria’s Annual Olive</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 (s’hip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 D 8</td>
<td>WA Farming - An Exceptional Case For Communication</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A13</td>
<td>What do you want to tell the people?</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key: Shading indicates primary technique used in campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Campaign Title</th>
<th>Media/ Message</th>
<th>Direct Engage</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Educate</th>
<th>Issue Management</th>
<th>Marketing/Sales</th>
<th>Persuade</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No. Of techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 C11-3</td>
<td>Woolworths National Drought Action Day</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Call numbers can be entered into the search facility of the database found at [http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/](http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/)

Key: Shaded square indicates technique that was judged by the researcher to be the most predominant in the campaign.
### Appendix E – List of Award Winning Entries in data sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Campaign Title</th>
<th>Client</th>
<th>PR Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 A 11</td>
<td>A Prescription For (Disaster) Success</td>
<td>Olympic Roads and Transport Authority (ORTA)</td>
<td>Olympic Roads and Transport Authority (ORTA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 A 17</td>
<td>Adult Prisoner Work Camps-Community Communications</td>
<td>Ministry For Justice</td>
<td>Ministry For Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 A 4</td>
<td>Alcan - Local Expansion, Global Reach</td>
<td>Alcan</td>
<td>Rowland Communication Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003B7</td>
<td>Australia Day - Celebrate What's Great</td>
<td>National Australia Day Council</td>
<td>The National Australia Day Council Communications and Marketing Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 F 5</td>
<td>Bali bombings: Supporting Western Australians after the tragedy</td>
<td>Department for Community Development WA</td>
<td>Department for Community Development (Jane Machin-Everill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 G 2</td>
<td>Breaking the Cycle of Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>Abused Child Trust</td>
<td>Rowland Communication Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6 - 25</td>
<td>Brisbane Aquifer Project</td>
<td>Brisbane Water</td>
<td>Marcom Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 4</td>
<td>Campaign to Legalise 'Therapeutic Cloning'</td>
<td>CAMRA</td>
<td>CAMRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 2</td>
<td>Can you see and hear us?</td>
<td>SOCOM</td>
<td>Eye and Ear Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 8</td>
<td>Celebrating 300 Years of Twinings Tea</td>
<td>Twinings</td>
<td>IMPACT Communications Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C17-3</td>
<td>Chariots of Thunder</td>
<td>Tracy Jones</td>
<td>Creative Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C3 - 9</td>
<td>Closure of a Queensland Icon</td>
<td>KR Castlemaine</td>
<td>Rowland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 8</td>
<td>Consulting with Levy-Paying Members</td>
<td>Cox Inall Communications</td>
<td>Horticultural Industry Alliance Steering Committee (HIASC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C7 - 7</td>
<td>Converting Staff Perceptions</td>
<td>Department of Water, Western Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 E 3</td>
<td>Cryosite - Creating Understanding</td>
<td>Cryosite Limited</td>
<td>Westbrook Financial Communications Pty Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 G 11</td>
<td>Don't Let Another Year Go By</td>
<td>Northern Territory University</td>
<td>Northern Territory University (Tracy Jones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 J 3</td>
<td>Douglas Wood Hostage Crisis</td>
<td>The Wood Family</td>
<td>N. Smail FPRIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 G 15</td>
<td>Elders Rural Bank Launch</td>
<td>Elders Limited</td>
<td>Turnbull Porter Novelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 C 3</td>
<td>Engaging DPI Staff in the</td>
<td>Department of</td>
<td>Department of Primary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix E – List of Award Winning Entries in data sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Entry Name</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>D 6</td>
<td><strong>Get Behind The Desk!</strong></td>
<td>Primary Industries</td>
<td>AWB Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>B 3</td>
<td><strong>Good Neighbours Campaign</strong></td>
<td>Australian cotton industry</td>
<td>Cox Inall Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C15-6</td>
<td><strong>Heart Foundation Tick Awarded to Eggs</strong></td>
<td>Australian Egg Corporation Limited</td>
<td>Reed Weir Communications P/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>E 2</td>
<td><strong>HY-FIs Strike a Rich Chord</strong></td>
<td>ABN AMRO Bank NV</td>
<td>Financial &amp; Corporate Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>C 4</td>
<td><strong>IBM Intranet Relaunch</strong></td>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>IBM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C10-3</td>
<td><strong>IBM Small to Medium Enterprise Campaign: Shifting Industry Perceptions</strong></td>
<td>IBM Australia</td>
<td>Text 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C7 -2</td>
<td><strong>Interactive Internal Communications</strong></td>
<td>Star City</td>
<td>Star City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C15-3</td>
<td><strong>Kaleeeya Hospital Maternity Unit</strong></td>
<td>South Metropolitan Area Health Service</td>
<td>Mills Wilson Communication Consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C1 -5</td>
<td><strong>Live in Canberra Campaign</strong></td>
<td>ACT Government</td>
<td>ACT Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C4 -3</td>
<td><strong>Mars and Snickers extortion threat</strong></td>
<td>Masterfoods Australia New Zealand</td>
<td>Soecom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>B 13</td>
<td><strong>McDonalds &amp; The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games</strong></td>
<td>McDonalds</td>
<td>PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C9 -1</td>
<td><strong>New students for Old Modern School</strong></td>
<td>Dept of Education and Training (WA)</td>
<td>Dept of Education and Training (WA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>C7</td>
<td><strong>Nippy's - A Salmonella Outbreak &amp; Company Under Threat</strong></td>
<td>Knispel (Nippy's) Fruit Juices</td>
<td>Hughes Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C2 -4</td>
<td><strong>NoLink! Sorry, no service for outer Melbourne</strong></td>
<td>Interface Councils</td>
<td>Soecom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C6 -5</td>
<td><strong>Promising Our Children a World-Class Hospital</strong></td>
<td>Royal Children's Hospital</td>
<td>Soecom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>A 20</td>
<td><strong>Protect Australian Livestock Week 2001</strong></td>
<td>Animal Health Australia (AHA)</td>
<td>Turnbull Porter Novelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>E 16</td>
<td><strong>QGGA - Changing the Direction of the Grain</strong></td>
<td>Queensland Graingrowers Association, QGGA</td>
<td>WCG Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>B 14</td>
<td><strong>Raising Awareness of Redress for Irish Abuse Survivors in Australia</strong></td>
<td>Campaigning Irish Legal Firm</td>
<td>Professional Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>C4-1</td>
<td><strong>Returning Power to Collinsville</strong></td>
<td>Ergon Energy</td>
<td>Powerlink Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C16-2</td>
<td><strong>Rio Tinto WA Future Fund</strong></td>
<td>Rio Tinto</td>
<td>Rio Tinto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>A 17</td>
<td><strong>Royal Visit To South</strong></td>
<td>South Australia,</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Client/Institute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>H 25</td>
<td>Sands of Time Keep Memory Alive</td>
<td>The Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) (QLD Branch)</td>
<td>Rowland Communication Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>G 11</td>
<td>Sentek - Salinity Campaign</td>
<td>Sentek</td>
<td>Porter Novelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>C 9</td>
<td>Show Cause</td>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>C6-26</td>
<td>Sir Samuel Griffith Drive Operation Review</td>
<td>MarCom Communication</td>
<td>MarCom Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>F 8</td>
<td>Sydney Harbour Oil Spill August 1999</td>
<td>Shell Company of Australia</td>
<td>Shell Company of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C11 - 3</td>
<td>Sydney Royal Rodeo</td>
<td>Royal Agricultural Society of NSW</td>
<td>Cox Inall Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>H 8</td>
<td>Take Control</td>
<td>Southbank Institute of TAFE</td>
<td>Media Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>E 3</td>
<td>The Best Way Forward</td>
<td>Bendigo Bank</td>
<td>Brumfield Bird &amp; Sandford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>A 16</td>
<td>The Beverley Uranium Project-Getting it Over the Line</td>
<td>Heathgate Resources Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Stephen Middleton MPRIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>F 2</td>
<td>The Panadol Crisis</td>
<td>SmithKline Beecham (SB)</td>
<td>Burson-Marsteller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>F 5</td>
<td>The Tampa Crisis</td>
<td>Wallenius Wilhelmsen</td>
<td>Financial and Corporate Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C13 - 3</td>
<td>The Telstra Road to Tamworth 2006</td>
<td>Telstra</td>
<td>Telstra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>A 6</td>
<td>The Writing’s on the Wall - Casey stamps out graffiti</td>
<td>City of Casey, Victoria</td>
<td>City of Casey, Victoria (Ros Weadman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>D 3</td>
<td>Victoria’s Annual Olive Grove</td>
<td>Mt Atkinson Olive Grove</td>
<td>JAM Publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>D 8</td>
<td>WA Farming - An Exceptional Case For Communication</td>
<td>Western Australian Farmers Federation</td>
<td>Western Australian Farmers Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>A13</td>
<td>What do you want to tell the people?</td>
<td>BHP</td>
<td>Queensland Corporate communications network P/L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

A summary of the data pertaining to the use of key messages in public relations campaigns examined in this project

An initial read through of 57 public relations campaigns 1999-2008 that won a national Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target Awards showed that developing, promulgating and evaluating delivery and receipt of key messages was common to a majority of the campaigns (82%). In those that didn’t specifically mention the words “key messages” there still appeared to be intent to get a specific message through to target publics. Subsequent interviews with a sample of authors of these award entries supported this finding.

1. Themes emerging from data:
An initial content analysis was conducted to see whether the words “message” or “key messages” were present in the award entries. The entries containing these words were then more closely examined and the ways in which the words were used was coded using codes that emerged from the data together with the categories suggested by the literature. The award entries that did not contact the words “message” or “key messages” were also examined to determine whether there was content present which indicated the use of key messages in spite of those exact words not being used. If this was identified, then the entry was again, more closely examined.

The themes identified are grouped under three broad categories that emerged from the data:

- Key message environment
  - The environment into which messages are sent and received is cluttered
  - Message dissemination
  - Repetition of Message

- Key message development
  - Research must underpin message development
  - Tailoring messages for target publics/audiences
  - Number of messages

- Key message attributes
  - Message delivery – the spokespeople
  - Credibility
• Constructed, conveyed but not “spun”

• Key message context
  o Key Messages “do” something
  o Linking new information to that which is already understood
  o Messaging is part of the strategic communication mix
  o The evaluation of public relations through key message reporting
  o Key messages in positioning

1.2 Key message environment
The need for strategy in public relations can be seen as centring on the concept of a congested and contested space. If it was otherwise, and the space was clear and uncongested, ostensibly anyone could just send any information into the space and no-one would need to employ any specialist techniques or processes such as those seen in professional public relations.

1.2.1 The environment into which messages are sent and received is cluttered
This notion of a cluttered, contested environment was evident in both award entry and interview data and underpins many of the subsequent themes that emerged from the data, for example:

> With so many options available and various messages flooding the marketplace, it was difficult for Southbank Institute to make their message heard by potential purchasers of training services. 1999 H 8

> We also try and then put ourselves in the middle of that to the media and think, ‘Well, is this something they’ve heard a thousand times before? Are they going to be bored senseless by this?’ How do we make it new and how do we make it interesting because if we don’t cut through here, it doesn’t matter how good the message is; over here is never going to hear it. INF12 interview

One respondent (INF7) believed practitioners presume that when people hear the same message repeated in the media they start “getting it into their heads” and that “what is being said is the actual situation”. Further, the respondent stated that practitioners assume that “there’s a lot of clutter in the media and that if messages are not kept simple and consistent across the various media then the message will get mixed up or diluted” thus negatively impacting on the message “getting into their heads”. The respondent concluded:
In terms of repetition and awareness the shorter the message the more likely people will be to remember it and the more impactful the message the more likely they’ll be to remember it. INF7 interview

These statements supported the concept of public relations practice taking place in the contested, congested space – Berger’s (1999) “terrain of struggle”.

1.2.2 Message dissemination
The need to consider dissemination of key messages was articulated most clearly by one interview respondent:

The other thing with key messages is choosing the medium in which they’re delivered. So we could have had fabulous key messages and stuck them on the internet and they would have gone nowhere. We used a blackboard frequently there. We had a blackboard that we would go and write information on and stick outside the worker’s club because that was the way that they communicated. So it’s understanding the communication networks within the target audience that you’re trying to reach and crafting your key messages to go through those channels and networks, again it’s making sure that they’re delivered. So that’s something that people need to give a lot of thought to as well I think. INF18 interview

The need to “get the message out” to target publics came through strongly in the award entries and interviews, for example:

New health messages regarding eggs needed to filter out to the wider public who have no particular need to restrict their diet to reduce blood cholesterol levels, but nevertheless tend to take note of general health advice in their daily eating habits.

2006 C15 – 6

Most of the campaigns worked to have the media be the main disseminator of their key messages, for example:

The media was used to promulgate key campaign messages. Media releases were targeted to individual media by type (press, radio and television), style (formal or informal, news or talk show) and geographic location. 2004 G11

Several award entries alluded to the need to take up any opportunities with the media as a chance to disseminate key messages. This was expanded upon by one interview respondent:
It was interesting actually that there was a response, I think it was from x at the time, that was quite negative. I think he saw it as a bit of a threat so he threw in the old stereotype which gave us the opportunity to do some media. His comment probably more than quadrupled the interest and impact through free media, so x did us a favour… So even if it was from x, a negative comment was actually getting the message out … which is great. INF14 interview

Other campaigns targeted high profile media commentators and radio/TV program hosts to convey their key messages, for example:

Going to the commentators like A and K and so on, was effective on a number of fronts, one was, it got the biggest bang for the buck because they got the biggest audience share of any media. So at the time A was doing the Today Show commentary in the mornings as well as his radio program, and K had her programs and so on. So by going to those media, we were going to major audiences to get our message across. INF17 interview.

It was clear that an important part of implementing this tactic was effective briefing of the media commentators, for example:

Because a number of them were also talkback and commentary based, it meant that anybody that had a concern, rang A or J’s radio program and said, what the hell is x organisation doing? It meant that these guys were already well briefed on it, so they could have an informed conversation with people about it and say, well look actually, I know about this, and they’ve sent us the information and I’ve looked into it and I think it’s ok, and a good initiative for these reasons. And it did actually occur, that somebody rang A’s program and he did go into bat for us which was fantastic. INF17 interview.

Much of the focus of dissemination was on getting the key messages to target audiences through the media however numerous award entries detailed the different channels the practitioners used to convey their key messages directly to stakeholders and target publics, indicating that key messages are not just a media tactic, for example:

Direct mail: A renewal invoice accompanied the annual review with a message promoting benefits of membership” 1999 E 16
Publications: Introductory pages [of the prospectus] will immediately explain the product and summarise the main messages. 2004 E 2

Events: Red Agency were tasked with conveying four key AWB messages to participants and the broader audience…Every aspect of the Summit was designed to convey and reinforce these messages… The effect was to link all Summit collateral and support the Summit's key messages. 2004 D 6

Telephone: A Call Centre (Salmat) was contacted four days prior to the decision to recall, to alert them to the possibility that an information line would be required as well as a large number of staff at short notice...Once the decision was made to recall, Salmat had over 60 operators ready...Within 24 hours there were over 180 operators. B-M developed guidelines, scripts and potential Question & Answers for Salmat operators. To ensure consistency of messages, B-M along with a Salmat trainer, briefed the operators prior to the public announcement. 2001 F 2

Word of Mouth and personal networks: Key messages and meetings times were communicated directly to the broad regional community via WAFF's zone network. WAFF local representatives phoned, faxed and emailed their friends and neighbours, encouraging them to become involved. Local representatives were kept aware of key messages and developments via media releases and briefing notes emailed orfaxed to them. They were encouraged to stay in touch with WAFF communications department ensuring they were on top of issues and presenting a consistent message. 2001 D 8

There were also internal employee communication campaigns and organisational communication campaigns that also strived to disseminate key messages, for example

"Star City’s Public Relations team was given the task of finding innovative new ways to improve communications – and deliver key messages to staff." 2006 C7 – 2

Interestingly, the Star City team developed a series of themed events in the staff cafeteria to engage staff and deliver the key messages. Whereas in other campaigns, established modes of communication were used, for example:
"Follow up email sent [to staff] the next day communicating DPI’s key messages for the White Paper, advising of media protocols and details of briefing sessions. 2004 C

In another campaign, an interview respondent outlined how by providing easy to use tools and resources containing the key messages, conduits to target audiences (in this case schools as a conduit to reach children) were used effectively:

Giving schools simple information that was easy and an ad for them to photocopy and put in the newsletter that we sent them and provide posters and they were very targeted, very much at primary school students so they were fun and engaging and you know colourful and had all those key messages in, and that sort of thing worked very well. INF4 interview

This respondent was also one of the few that referred to social media as a means of disseminating key messages:

We had over 500 people in a Facebook page … so that was really good. I don't think it added too massively to the registrations but it added to the experience and it helped spread the message. INF4 interview

It was clear in numerous cases that getting the dissemination of the messages right was important in terms of recognising that there were many competing messages in the media space and also limits to the media for particular stories, for example:

We talk about this model that we call the push-pull model which is, you know, we have these very scientific names (laughs) but, basically, when you define your key messages, you push them out to the media and you constantly push, push, push, push, ‘We’re the best. We’re the best. We’re the best. We’re the best.’ And when you’ve established yourself as the thought leader then the media begins to pull you back in so, ‘You’re the best so I want you to answer X for me”. The thing about that is that, I mean, that’s great just for your own client but there is a limited number of your product stories that are going to run in a given year and - which was, you know, a challenge with that. Anyway, there’s a very limited number of stories that will appear so what you’re going to do is make sure that you get those stories and, in doing that, you’re actually locking your competitor out of the space. INF12 interview
The City of Casey award entry (2003 A 6) was notable due to the nature of the campaign, graffiti-related crime prevention. Not only was dissemination of the key message important through the media but also an education campaign was instigated in schools - "Getting students to embrace the message that 'graffiti is not cool' was critical in helping to minimise the future incidence of graffiti." This campaign had the additional element of "enforcement" i.e. "The police are active partners in helping to reinforce the messages associated with the consequences of graffiti." It is perhaps a rare public relations campaign that has the police on the beat reinforcing one’s key messages and enforcing the law on those whose actions are not aligned to the key message!

Message dissemination relates to the need to get the messages from the place of message production to intended receivers. Practitioners used mass media, specialist media and a range of other channels to disseminate messages. Practitioners seemed to conceptualise that channels that can be used to disseminate messages were not clear or guaranteed conduits to intended receivers and that chances of having messages received would increase if direct channels could be used. This is an area clearly embedded in a transmission model of communication.

1.2.3 Repetition of Message
Repetition was seen as a necessary part of the campaign by a majority of practitioners interviewed, for example one respondent (INF7) believes practitioners presume that when people hear the same message repeated in the media they start “getting it into their heads” that what is being said is the actual situation. Others stated:

I think generally you know on big projects like X I think it's repetition really. I'm just looking through the issues and the messages and we had kind of five messages and they're what we rammed home again and again and again. INF5 interview

I could say something here, you could interpret one way and five other people can interpret another but I guess it’s the art of it and it’s repetition and it’s support of facts. INF15 interview

I make it clear that we need to keep repeating that in different ways. INF1 interview

People need to hear the message over and over again for it to stick in their heads. I think that goes to campaign key messages as well, that if you repeat it often enough people will believe it. Maybe it’s as cynical as that, but tactically I think more for
us... when there’s a whole lot of content about a particular subject matter, it’s so easy for people to get lost in the content. INF17 interview

The repetition and clarity of the message results in action. INF4 interview

Another respondent stated it was more than repetition, and that it was amplification of the message that was needed:

We’re using the media and others hopefully to amplify the message. By the time you’re sick of saying it, people are just about getting the message. So it’s consistent reinforcement of the same point if you’re doing media… But you’re saying it again in quite a lot of different forms and you know in some instances somebody might be hearing it for the third or fourth time, but a lot of people will only be hearing it for the first time…You can’t say, ‘Well, I talked to the media last month so the job is done’. You have to use every opportunity that you can to reinforce your messaging and that’s what I mean by amplification. GM interview

The use of repetition was reportedly widespread but in the interviews there was no reasoning behind this apart from the need to get messages into the heads of intended audiences.

1.3 Message development
The development of key messages was a factor in the majority of campaign award entries and the in-depth interview data again reinforced that this aspect of the campaign was critical.

1.3.1 Research must underpin message development
The use of research was identified in the data as an important factor in the development of key messages both in the development stage and the refinement stage as the campaign was implemented and adjusted to accommodate changing circumstances. Award entries in all cases detailed what campaign research was undertaken as it was part of the proforma template for PRIA Golden Target award entries but much of the research did relate to key message development. This was consistent across all types of campaigns, for example:

"Research provided the basis for a very successful strategy and shaped our campaign materials, messages and tactics...In particular we gained...a head-start on likely advocates/antagonists; an insight into key messages to address/attract community sentiment; a basis for more effective tactics to counter the opposition campaign."

2006 C15 – 3
"These initial findings were influential in reinforcing our simple biosecurity messages in the second phase of the campaign and recognising the efforts and sacrifices of the recreational horse sector in all communications." 2008 C4 – 3

"In order to debunk the widely held and persistent myth linking eggs and blood cholesterol levels, scientific evidence supporting eggs as a heart-healthy food was used to secure third party endorsement and then generate awareness of this new message amongst health professionals and the public." 2006 C15 - 6

"Elders undertook comprehensive preliminary qualitative research to identify the needs of agribusiness, including farmers, in relation to the banking sector. This research was used by TPN to develop key messages for the communication program, and to identify target publics." 2001 G 15

"Develop a corporate story from the prospectus and research, perpetuating it in news releases, corporate profile, investment presentations and key messages for verbal presentation." 2003 E 3

“Investigation into existing groundwater use identified that over 100 cities and towns across Australia currently use groundwater either totally or partially for drinking water supply. This allowed the team to develop key messages specifically promoting groundwater as a logical, safe and well tested alternative water supply” 2007 C6 – 25

"Research commissioned … involving telephone surveys … was also used in developing support communication materials for staff and key messages that would be targeted to relevant DPI stakeholders." 2004 C 3

“To achieve the goal … key messages were linked to the issues that had been identified during the early research phase." 2004 C 4

The use of focus groups as a means of gaining information about target publics and using this feedback and information to develop the key messages in ways that they would have the best chance of resonating with target publics was evident in several award entries:

"The research was invaluable in planning effective messaging…Oxfam conducted focus group research, testing key messages and statements planned to be used in the campaign. Given the sensitivities and the complexity of the issue, it was critical to define what would best resonate with the public (i.e. not overly negative angles,
inclusion of success stories etc). The name of the campaign was hotly debated - the term “Close the Gap” proved to be an extremely popular choice and effective as it summed up the essence of the issue in a way that the public and decision makers could both relate to.” 2008 C2 – 5

“The RAS commissioned four focus groups among its target markets to inform the positioning of rodeo as an event, and develop key messages for public relations and marketing materials.” 2006 C11 - 3

In one interview, a respondent (INF5) discussed how focus group results had led to a rethink about the development of key messages based around the concept of trust:

“We started to hear ‘well we don't trust x organisation because of you know issues with yyy and xxx’ and so don't craft a message about trust because they've been and are living with the consequences of these types of things…...that type of research allows you to fine tune the strategy and also allows you to then to select your best tactics. So how are we going to engage or how are we going to deliver messages and then obviously, it gives you a chance to look at your messages and say well, you know this is where we need to work more, we need more of this type of message and less of this type of message” INF5 interview.

An iterative approach can also be seen in this example although it is unclear whether the research at different times of the campaign had any input into changes to messages:

"we also did some market research to test the effectiveness of messages, mid campaign and again toward the end and we found the recollection of messages, particularly those we targeted was quite strong …maybe not about the details but the key points got through fairly clearly" INF7 interview

The use of research to inform the development of aspects of the campaign could be seen align with Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) two-way asymmetrical model of public relations.

**1.3.2 Tailoring messages for target publics/audiences**

The need to tailor a key message emerged strongly in much of the data. There were several aspects to this tailoring. One was in the use of language – having a broad key message that needed to be delivered to different people in different ways so that they could understand what was being delivered or conveyed, for example:
Key messages were tailored to suit both metropolitan and regional audiences. 2008 C4 - 3

Socom developed and tested key messages to support advocacy activities. These were tailored for different stakeholders. 2007 C2 - 2

Another aspect to the tailoring was from the perspective of issues management – by applying the research that may have identified potential antagonists, key messages were developed in an attempt to circumvent or minimise any possible opposition to the primary intended meaning being constructed by publics, for example.

The greatest value we bring to projects is that we’ll sit there and look at a plan that a client puts in front of us and we’ll go okay well those people will be worried about that, and these ones will be worried about this and we do a fairly thorough issues assessment at the beginning of each project and then the messages are tailored from that. So if we identify that there’s a big green area over here, okay there’s this environmental group they’ll be worried about the spotted quoll or the swift parrot or whatever, then firstly it will inform who our stakeholders are that we’re targeting, but secondly it will then inform what information we need to give them to be able to engage them effectively. INF15 interview

As well as to manage anticipated issues, practitioners were also keen to proactively address concerns that publics might have, for example:

Preparation and highly targeted and tailored messages were key to achieving the objectives. Without the opportunity to pre-brief staff or involve them in the process prior to the launch of the White Paper, it was imperative to anticipate their concerns and be prepared with responses. Significant preliminary work was done in developing perceptual and issues maps of stakeholders impacted by the White Paper, which was grouped into relevant and meaningful information for staff. 2004 C 3

One respondent worked for a government agency that reported to a larger government agency and discussed the need for specific key messages for specialised audiences, especially in terms of providing information needed for decision-making:

They [the larger agency PR team] were preparing their messages that were for a much broader audience so we were a little worried that if the only messages that were going
out to the community were the ones that they were preparing it wasn’t going to help the government’s position with our stakeholder group but worse, our stakeholder group weren’t going to get enough detail that would really help them understand what it meant for them and help them to make decisions about their future based on that information. INF6 interview

In response to a question about whether messages have to be tailored for different groups, another respondent replied that:

It depends on the group. I mean obviously you’re going to have a much more generic suite of messages for the community as a whole, so for example that you put in a newsletter or whatever. Whereas if you were communicating to an acquisition property owner, then you’ve got messages that are very specifically tailored to them …they do get tailored depending on what the stakeholder needs are, and that’s generally informed by what the impact of the project is on them, or what the level of interest they have in the project is. INF15 interview

Another respondent’s reply centred on the need to tailor a message so that an intended audience would not ignore it:

I think if you don’t hit the mark with your message you’d just be ignored and again, it’s like in product advertising, like it’s the same thing, like if you were advertising men’s products in a feminine way or something. You’re never going to get to your target audience for a men’s deodorant in Dolly magazine…yes and for us we actually had different things to say to different audiences, especially with the split between the industry and the recreational users. INF7 interview

Interestingly, one interview respondent stated that it was not the key messages that were tailored to different audiences but the supporting facts:

"So the key messages, we don’t tend to break them down for every audience. We would have a master set of key messages, and really that’s it. And it’s really the supporting facts that would vary for different audiences. So we tend to work on three key messages that are your main themes of how you want to position this initiative
and then the supporting facts that back up each of those, would probably vary for audiences. INF17 interview

Tailoring of messages relates to both language used in the messages but also to the content itself, with some data pointing to the use of tailored key messages in issues management.

1.3.3. Number of messages

Many of the campaigns reported developing a small number of key messages – most frequently two to four messages only, or a single main message and then a more detailed message, for example:

So the key message, like the reason this campaign existed, was “We’re 300 years old” but the next layer of that message was, “We have 300 years of expertise”. INF12 interview

The maximum number of key messages articulated in any single campaign was six. Limiting the number of key messages primarily centred on structuring the information for the media, for example:

You don’t often get a chance to get all your content across. Sometimes it is just the three key points that you want to portray. I mean politicians do it ad infinitum to the point of boredom I think but I think that for media its often the case, that you’ve only got an opportunity to get a few points across, so ram home your messages and a couple of facts to support it. INF17 interview

However, this respondent felt that even in organisational communication campaigns, limiting the number of key messages was important:

If you are going into a room with people where you are about to tell them they are going to lose their jobs, the company is moving and all that goes with that, once people are hit with the initial impact of the announcement and the emotion of that, they are not going to remember a lot more than you say. But if they leave that room with the impression that the company was compassionate and that they were empathetic with the situation, that they are going to look after me and I am going to be nurtured through this horrible process and that all my entitlements are going to be paid, if they just take away those three things, then that is pretty good. So I think it really depends on situations. But I think in reality, peoples propensity to remember
and grasp onto concepts, it’s best that you can keep it thematic and keep it direct to a couple of messages. INF17 interview

Issues surrounding limiting the number of key messages to be developed seemed to centre on there being limited capacity for people to take in too many messages and on channels such as the media offering only limited time to convey any information to intended audiences.

1.4 Key message attributes
The attributes of key messages emerged as being issues focused on credibility.

1.4.1 Message delivery – the spokespeople
Having the right spokesperson who had been appropriately trained was primarily linked to credibility issues, for example, one interview respondent stated:

X was involved as an MC for an event, again to give that credibility for somebody who had written passionately about it, and it was all about getting this emotion into the story…One of the key messages that we tried to promote was the fact that for many Australians…they would still want to feel some connection … so these products gave you the only opportunity to do that… so that whole emotional element was something which we deliberately wanted to pull into the promotion because it was appealing to peoples sense of belonging. INF17 interview

The award entry data also put forward that the choice of spokesperson was an important aspect of the campaign:

Based on thorough research, a strategy was developed which employed...a 'champions' program, recruiting more than 300 individual credible advocates to deliver the messages. 2001 A 20

Prepare John Knispel as Nippy's only public spokesperson on the issue. Knispel was advised to build on the company's strengths and refer to the company's proud (South) Australian heritage, its immaculate safety record, its 32-year celebrated history and vast industry experience. 1999 C 7

The research revealed that the MasterFoods CEO, Andy Weston-Webb, gave the most confidence to consumers. This assisted the crisis team’s decision as to who should announce that the products were safe and available for purchase. 2006 C4 - 3
The right spokesperson in many of the award entries was the head of the organisation but the primary theme emerging was that whoever the spokesperson was, they needed to be trained in this role and advised on message selection and delivery, for example:

We didn’t have a lot of media talent within the organisation unfortunately, big unfortunately, and that took a lot of time in coaching on how to deliver a message enthusiastically, to show passion in your face. INF15 interview

The TPN training session focused on why PR was important, and how each DFM and branch could become involved. This included training on how regional media works, how to handle interviews, liaising with local media, and developing ideas for a local branch launch or promotional event. Impromptu on-the-spot interviews helped sharpen key marketing messages and how to convey them clearly to clients or the media. 2001 G 15

There was some evidence that the credibility issue was also linked to reputation management, for example:

The prominence of organisational spokespeople helped communicate the right messages and defuse what may have otherwise been damaging coverage. 2007 C4-1

This was also very evident in the way The Panadol Crisis (2001 F 2) was managed in Australia with the award entry detailing the involvement of senior management figures in delivering key messages to key stakeholders directly, as well as to the wider public through the media:

Armed with strong key messages, SB Senior Management contacted the Department of Health, key State and Federal politicians as well as senior figures within the major industry and regulatory associations. 2001 F 2

The training was also described:

Alan Schaefer and Kevin Darke (Director of Business Development) undertook comprehensive media training to test their capacity to deal with media interviews. Rehearsals were as close to “real life” as possible and involved “ambush” interviews over the phone and door-stops with a camera crew outside SB’s headquarters and on the street. 2001 F 2
They then put this training to use, for example,

To ensure that messages were captured in news grabs and metropolitan and regional programs Alan Schaefer and Kevin Darke participated in radio interviews across the country on talk/news programs. 2001 F 2

Outside of the crisis situation, having the right spokesperson was also seen as a positive in terms of claiming the media space on a particular subject or issue, for example:

So part of the key message … is to position yourself as the utmost - you know, the ultimate spokesperson and, in my case, ST is the ultimate spokesperson so don’t bother talking to M from the other company. INF12 interview

The addition of a celebrity to the spokesperson mix was detailed in a few entries, for example:

Edelman also enlisted Australian celebrities with ties to regional communities, including former Australian Idol contestant, Shannon Noll and country music star, Lee Kernaghan, to spread the ‘National Drought Action Day’ message...Secured Sunrise [TV] segment on the launch day with Woolworths CEO Michael Luscombe at a Woolworths store and Lee Kernighan at the drought affected Wivenhoe Dam, outside Brisbane to reinforce the key messages. 2007 C11-3

One interview respondent encapsulated the usefulness of working with spokespeople who knew what they were doing from a public relations perspective:

We’ve got them so well trained now sometimes they’ll want to debate us on what they think the right message is or what they think the media issues are because they’ve had a lot of experience and that’s fabulous. Sometimes they have really good, valid points, like it’s super to have someone who is thinking from the right frame of reference. You can actually then have a much more sophisticated conversation that actually gets you a better outcome as well, rather than having to try and convince someone who is then a non-believer and just does it because you’ve told them to where you’re not going to get such a good outcome. When you’ve actually got people who get it and can have a sophisticated conversation about the issues and how it could be taken and how it could be better framed then they’re completely committed and
behind and believe in what they’re doing. Your outcome is just infinitely better.

INF18 interview

Spokespeople appeared to play a role in the way intended audiences would construct meaning when they engages with the message.

1.4.2. Credibility and Consistency of Message

Consistency of message was noted in award entries as being an important component to the success of the campaign as shown in a selection of these examples from the award entries:

NCC's primary role was media management and strategic adviser to the Wood family. This was undertaken by one staff member only - Neil Smail FPRIA - throughout the six weeks of the crisis. This approach was chosen to ensure consistency of message, a one-stop central point and ready availability. 2005 J 3

“Consistent messages across all project required to present a single, well-planned Council vision” and “Frequently Asked Questions document: provided to all project personnel to ensure consistent project message” 2007 C6 – 25

"We also established CAMRA as the central co-ordinating vehicle for all supporters of therapeutic cloning, including the scientific and research community, to ensure that lobbying and media relations efforts were coordinated, so there was a consistent delivery of messages and optimum allocation of our combined resources." 2007 C2 – 4

“Key messages” along with other “key communication materials” such as media statements, Q&As, employee notices, government briefing notes, union briefing notes, announcement day scripts and speakers notes helped ensure “consistency in messaging” 2007 C3 - 9

"Another important aspect of the strategy was to ensure consistency in messages and the quality of material used to promote the Bank, whether it was a media release for a small local newspaper, or a television interview being networked across south-eastern Australia." 2001 G 15

Consistency of message also emerged as a theme from the interview transcript data. A key point being that journalists are alert to inconsistencies in messages and will “jump on” any
that they detect. This was seen by some practitioners as having the potential to undermine credibility, for example:

The other thing is the consistency of message for your spokespeople… with a media who is trying to chase down any inconsistency, if you have an inconsistency of your own making you’re just making more work for yourself…Because if the Minister says you don’t need to do x and the Chief Officer says you do then you’ve created a serious problem for yourself as it starts to undermine credibility and then undermines the belief in everything else that you’re saying.” INF7 interview

Messages needs to gel with everything else that’s being put out there…because while the project manager may say okay this is what we want people to know, if you’ve got the mayor or the chairperson or somebody in the paper saying something completely different, it just, it erodes your credibility as a project team, but it also puts that councillor or mayor or whoever in a difficult position, because they’ve then got to explain why. INF15 interview

One respondent reinforced that, as well as the credibility issue in terms of meaning-making, the inconsistency would create more work for the public relations practitioner:

If it isn’t consistent well there’s I guess distrust, there’s cynicism from your various audiences when you’re delivering one message to one person and another message to the other and one and one adds up to four. It undermines your credibility and introduces distrust and cynicism and instead of managing the situation proactively and trying to drive it to the end point you’re aiming for, you’re trying to recover to be able to get back on the right road. INF18 interview

Notably, being consistent didn’t always mean saying exactly the same thing in exactly the same way:

I think it’s more inconsistency in fact that journalists jump on. I think that different spokespeople might have slightly different ways of saying the same thing but so long as the general theme is there that’s okay. It’s more the facts that I think media would jump on, so if someone said, it’s 300 people affected versus 180 people affected, that’s the sort of thing media would jump on. INF17 interview.
Being consistent was also seen as important in terms of the responsibility of public relations practitioners not to confuse their audiences or to cause them additional concern, for example:

“So we could go out and say look these changes are being made, this is why they’re being made and try and explain it away. But if it isn’t what the organisation wanted people to know, then that would firstly make the client angry because the wrong message would get out there, but it could also potentially make the community angry if it then doesn’t gel with something else that’s been put in the paper last week or something that the organisation had said at a public meeting or whatever. So it’s making sure that you’ve got that consistency of message through your project, but then up through the client organisation as well. INF15 interview

The other aspect of consistency of key messages that emerged was that it facilitated the training of the spokesperson delivering the messages, for example:

I guess the messages are consistent for everybody, they are more thematic, it’s the facts that are different for each public, that’s the approach that we tend to take, because otherwise, if you are trying to brief a spokesperson, and they’ve got to think about messages that are different for everybody it’s like impossible, but it’s easier for a spokesperson to remember, here are the three key points I need to make irrespective of who I am talking to, and you tailor the detailing in the answers based on the facts that are relevant for that media or whoever is asking the question. INF17 interview

Practitioners also reported in many instances that they worked with other members of the organisation to develop the key messages. This was primarily undertaken to ensure that there was “buy-in” from across the organisation commissioning the public relations, meaning that people from various areas agreed with the key messages’ content. This was seen as lessening the risk of people within the organisation articulating different messages that would be inconsistent with those agreed upon, for example:

Regular meetings were conducted between the Heart Foundation, AECL, RWC and other relevant third parties (such as ENAG members and launch partner egg farmers) to ensure planning and preparations, key messages and joint promotional activities were running on time and according to plan…These meetings also ensured that the key messages were carefully refined and agreed to by all parties involved in the launch. 2006 C15 – 6
The Hospital Board had identified a common vision for the Hospital’s redevelopment, but it needed to be clear on a preferred organisational position on the redevelopment. Socom took this vision and developed the following key messages that underpinned all communications activities. 2007 C2 – 2

This was again reinforced in the interview data, for example:

It is really around the creation of the messaging and strategy. So it’s about actually forcing, going through a process that forces our clients in this workshop to come up with distinctive messages that are then, that in other words can be differentiated, so it’s not something, if you replace the name with any other one of your competitors can say the same thing. Sometimes it can only just be one thing and then it has to be authentic, so it has to have proof points. Then it has to actually resonate with your target market, and then be able to engage with them through a PR plan which is that process then. INF13 interview

I mean, if we look at the basics, the key message is the thing you really want to get across so…so part of our key messages - our key messages are, “What do we need to tell people about us?” and, “What do we not want to tell them about us?” and the idea is that it keeps everybody honest, it keeps us all on the same path and it stops our spokespeople going, ‘Yes, antioxidants’ blah, blah, blah. Because that’s not what we’re about. INF12 interview

When I have staff with me who are taking on any type of briefing I still make them do the situational analysis, I still make them work through their target audiences, what your key messages are and I ask them to go back to the client and ask is this what we agreed. INF1 interview

Consistency contributed to perceptions of credibility through creating a sense of unity in the information or perspective being presented in messages. Consistency also contributed to understanding within organisations as well as with external audiences. Practitioners believe that inconsistencies invite journalists and other people to question not just the message content but wider contexts of the organisation or campaign.

1.4.3 Messages constructed, conveyed but not "spun"
The majority of data indicated that messages were purposefully constructed based on the situation at hand and the mission to be achieved; no-one advocated including untruthful
information in messages. In the award entry data, only one award entry expressly mentioned applying an ethical approach:

Turnbull Porter Novelli’s communications strategy for Elders Rural Bank strictly adhered to the PRIA’s Code of Ethics. The campaign fully complied with each of 15 elements of the code, particularly in relation to the treatment of confidential information, and dealing fairly and honestly with the client, communications media, and general public. (2001 G 15)

Ethics was specifically mentioned by only two interviewees:

The bulk of our projects we do want that genuine engagement, and it’s a bit of an ethics call that we make if we think there’s a client who’s wanting to call it engagement, but not do it, then we won’t do it.” INF15 interview

Look you can talk about integrity and ethics and all of that but I think if you’re not honest with how you deal with it it’s going to come through. INF1 interview

The need to ground the message in the reality known by the intended audiences was seen as important by this practitioner:

Your message has to be - you have to think that people are going to be prepared to accept your key message and when we talk about key messages we also - we have the formula we use which - a key message is a claim plus a fact plus an example. So what we do is we talk about - to make that key message receivable by the audience, you can’t just have the claim, you’ve got to have the fact and the example as well otherwise - I’m just trying to think if I can give you an example of it. I think - I can’t think of anyone off the top of my head. Yes, I can: Coca Cola last year and their Kerry Armstrong campaign, “Coke, we’re good for you. We’re all natural” that’s just stupid. It’s a - I mean, they can make that claim but people are not ready to accept it because it’s a crock. Just because you hire the left-wing actress doesn’t make it real. So you’ve got to think about the reality of the key message that you’re going to fire out. INF12 interview

These practitioners raised the need to align what was being said in key messages to what was happening within view of intended audiences, cautioning against doing otherwise:
Going back to key messages, it’s not just what you say it’s all got to line up, what you do has to absolutely reflect what you’re saying. The minute what you’re saying and what you’re, what you’re seen to be doing are not the same you’re sunk. Again it’s the credibility issue. Unless you have credibility in your messages you’ve got nothing. INF18 interview

We're trying to construct messages so they resonate with what they can see on the ground...I think there is a great risk in key messages that just sit out there and there's no relationship to anything on the ground ...I mean I think, the more time I spend time talking to government and say ‘don't expect to just, to use the phrase, to have someone like me spin you out of this - you actually have got to be demonstrating what you're doing - don't talk about transit cities and then don't deliver and talk about a regional hospital and do nothing, you've got to actually demonstrate what you're up to’. I think that's what people are starting to look for more now. INF5 interview

This practitioner highlighted the tensions between portraying the client in the way they want to be portrayed and the limits of public relations techniques can achieve:

There’s no point us developing up a whole heap of key messages if they don’t, if it doesn’t portray the project the way the client wants it portrayed. Within reason, I mean we’re not going to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear to coin that phrase…There’s no point putting out a message, or positioning something in a way that it’s not because our stakeholders will always find out. There’s no point us saying okay we’re going to address something and then nothing ever being done about it because then that’ll result in a bigger furore at the end of the project than you ever had at the beginning. INF15 interview

Notable here is the reason for not making the “silk purse” – the thinking that stakeholders would find out which would result in more furore than was present before the strategy was implemented. Ostensibly this could have been about ethical considerations but possibly was more about avoiding the work involved in managing a larger furore.

1.5 Key message context
It seems clear that key messages operate in a societal and cultural context and the data indicates key themes about how practitioners think key messages work and what they can
achieve, how they integrate into other communication activities, how they link to intended
audiences’ current situations and understandings and how practitioners know whether key
messages do what they intend.

1.5.1 Key Messages “do” something
The award entry data indicated that messages had specific roles to play in campaigns. In one
instance promulgating key messages were seen as the way to “fuel a debate in the media
regarding public transport options” (2006 C2 – 4), in another a key message was “designed to
play on a public feeling” (2004 G11) and as part of one campaign “implementation plan”,
“key messages were developed to bring the objectives to life in communication materials and
activities” (1999 B 3). There are many examples in the award entries detailing the role the
key message/s are intended to play, for example:

- **To counter concerns**: Stakeholder workshops led to the development of
targeted communication strategies and messages to ensure all drought
programs were consistently messaged and key messages to counter concerns
about groundwater safety 2007 C6 - 25

- **To counter myths**: A regular stream of press releases and media briefings was
employed to amplify our messages and to counter many of the myths being
pedalled by some high profile opponents of therapeutic cloning. 2007 C2 – 4

- **To guide briefings**: Devise key messages to guide [media] briefing. 2003 E 3

- **To instil confidence**: Powerlink and Ergon Energy worked closely from both
an operational and communications perspective to identify solid key messages
designed to inform and instil confidence in stakeholders. 2007 C4-1

- **To influence appearances**: “The messages were proactive and in every case
identified what WAFF was doing and what it wanted to achieve...Where
possible emotive images were used, using real people to develop greater
sympathy. Various WAFF spokespeople were used in the campaign each
sending the same messages, making the organisation appear large and strong
but united.” 2001 D 8

One of the most interesting award entries in terms of the perceived role of key messages was
that when the Australian and other media was used in the Douglas Wood hostage situation in
Iraq “to present a positive message about Douglas Wood and his family to put further pressure on the captors.” 2005 J 3

Even when there was nothing new to be said, a set of words was worked up so that each day there were new quotes for reporters. Variations of the words were provided to different media outlets. The family gave Neil Smail the freedom to develop the words on their behalf. This was considered essential as a way to gain the media's trust and to keep them using the official spokesman rather than reverting to the family or using gossip or other dubious information from unnamed sources. Gaining trust also meant that the media did not become dissatisfied and seek to find other stories which would take away from the key messages. 2005 J 3

One interview respondent was clear about what a clear message was aiming to achieve:

A key message really is a tool of persuasion, you’re trying to persuade people to your point... It’s not necessarily spinning them something, you might have done something wrong so you might be ‘fessing’ up and then telling them this is what we’re going to do so it’s not going to happen again - so it’s not always, the key message isn’t always good news but you’re wanting media to convince your audience that they want to align with your message and accept your message. INF18 interview.

Throughout this research project, interview data indicated there is little ambiguity about the intent of key messages being used to do something specific, for example:

They [key messages] are the hook that you hang everything else from. That’s what I want people to remember upon reading the material. INF16 interview

So, from our perspective messages, while they’re there to promote the benefits of a project as the client sees them, their more important function is to give people an accurate understanding of what’s being planned so that they can then give feedback based on that accurate understanding. If you don’t give them that you’ll get feedback that doesn’t even relate to what you’re talking about. Ninety percent of the time the messages or the positioning we put out is done to call people to action to do something. INF15 interview

This data also indicated that key messages worked on a level that helped their clients sharpen their focus, for example:
“I think for clients the key message is also about deciding what they are going to stand for because we often go to clients where they’re like, ‘We do a bit of this and we do a bit of that and we can talk about this and we can talk about that and we’ve got all these ideas’ and, at the end of the day, that’s a hopeless campaign - it’s a hopeless ad campaign and it’s a hopeless marketing campaign, it’s a hopeless PR campaign because they haven’t defined who they are and what they have to sell. And at the end of the day, a key message workshop can be as much for the client and getting their act together as it is for the publics who are going to receive those key messages. INF12 interview

It is apparent that there are several assumptions about what key messages can do as part of a public relations campaign – from initiating actions and being a hook to hang a campaign from, through to filling potential holes in news stories so they are not filled with some other message from another source.

1.5.2 Linking new information to that which is already understood
From the interview data, and to a lesser extent the award entry data, it was clear that practitioners work to construct their messages to overlay what they believe to be already understood by target publics and audiences; the practitioner’s understanding often being gained through research undertaken or commissioned by the public relations practitioners. One interview respondent explained how by linking a key message to existing positive understandings or attitudes about an organisation, one could achieve a positive outcome for the campaign:

You could construct a campaign that links into their understanding of the good work the x organisation does and if they believe what they know about the x organisation, that it's good, then that kind of translates to being able to build, well, a message that this must be okay too. And then if they believe that the x say it’s okay then it must be okay - so those two things coming in together position it as being okay. INF17 interview

In one instance, a respondent outlined in detail the way the messages were crafted to link with audience understanding levels and language use:
The issue, it was so complicated, so on one hand we had to create meaning because it was something that was brand new - it wasn’t there and nobody understood what the concepts were but on the other hand we had to start with the concepts that people already understood, you know? If you don’t go back to where they were and pick them up and bring them along with you, you know, you’re going to have a disconnect forever. So we really needed our staff who were out and about with these people to say to us this is the way it’s being discussed, this is the language being used, the questions being asked of us that we’re not able to answer. Then we then went to the controlling agency and said here are the things we need to be able to answer, here’s the way we need to be able to describe it. We then crafted the messages to give them back, to equip them with, so it was a bit of…it was a bit like scripts for the staff, like words they could use, like concepts. INF6 interview

The respondent summarised as follows:

It's about finding where they are currently and bringing them along...if you just try and push a message and you haven't thought about somebody's frame of reference, they'll just walk out the room and go oh whatever, but I think if you can come back to their frame of reference and build on that and bring them along then I think that's the bit where is there true understanding. INF6 interview

Another respondent stated that the key messages have to resonate with the known for audiences:

It would have to resonate with the known…It’s the same thing as persuasion really and if you try to persuade somebody or convince them that something is such, it has to line up with what they think is reasonable with their values, with their existing knowledge and with wider community norms that they perceive for it to have any chance of being effective. INF18 interview

And further:

I guess it’s two steps. As a practitioner you craft a message and you put a lot of work into crafting that message so it can be understood, that’s the first step. So these people take this message and they understand it within their own frame of reference so you’ve got to understand what their frame of reference is likely to be so that it’s understood in the way you intend it to be taken. Then the next step is once they
understand it, they’ll judge it and they judge it on what they know, what your actions are and what they see is happening - so the battle isn’t just having your message understood the way you intended it to be within somebody else’s frame of reference it’s also having them judge it to be a fair and true statement and then they might accept it. INF18 interview

This was supported by another respondent:

I worked on a whole range of international appeals, whether it’s national disasters or conflicts or whatever, and you know what resonates with people. In order to get the serious message across, you need to find something that may not be as serious. We had to extrapolate something that people could actually relate to. And it’s always the case of trying to ensure, if you will, that the person that reads the message, or the billboard, or sees the ad, or hears the interview, or hears the ad on radio, or sees the viral email that we were doing as well, says, ‘damn this could happen to me’ and that’s what resonates. Also, that’s what resonates with the media, they operate like that. VO interview

One interview respondent discussed how key messages were about persuading an audience to your desired point of view:

You want to persuade somebody to a viewpoint, do it by appealing to them in a way that you think that it’ll work not - you don’t try and challenge deeply-held beliefs along the way. I mean, that’s just not commonsensical. So I don’t think there is anything complicated about it but I think it’s worthwhile pointing out that, you know, our job is persuade to your point rather than necessarily convey your convictions and your beliefs and explain why you find the other side’s beliefs may be not tenable. That’s not what it’s about, it’s just basically persuading people and, in that sense, you should use the arguments that best achieve that purpose. GM interview

This sense of having to link to what is already understood appeared to be “common knowledge” among practitioners. There was no discussion of any underpinning theory as to why the need to make these links might be necessary.

### 1.5.3 Messaging is part of the strategic communication mix

It was clear that many practitioners had firm views on where key messages fitted into strategic campaign work however these views were not uniform. One award entry stated that
"key messages formed the basis of all communication to target publics" and that the "External Affairs team implemented a communications plan focused on delivering timely and credible key messages" (2000 F 8), but it was in the interview data that insight was gained into how practitioners work with key messages. One respondent stated that in her agency, a message strategy was broken down into components, for example:

a message strategy might be that everything we do has to position this company a certain way, or everything we do has to promote a product in a particular light, or whatever the case might be, but it’s a message that would then pervade everything that we do. The audience strategy is, is there a particular audience that we are going to leverage to achieve the outcomes that we want to get? INF17 interview

She went on to articulate that it was more than just coming up with key messages but that this must be worked into a strategy, a “campaignable concept”:

I think it’s quite tempting for people, particularly working in a consultancy environment, you are just trying to work as fast as you can so, I think sometimes it’s quite tempting to work superficially, and think okay, I need to do all this stuff, but what we really need to do is tease down to a deeper level of thinking, because that’s where the real value is in what we can do, and that’s what the client is expecting as well. That if they are coming to a consultancy, they are expecting a deeper level of analysis or thought that they can get elsewhere, and that then comes to the other point about strategy that we are trying to get people to think about more is, what is the campaignable concept in everything that we do? So while you’ve got your message and audience and implementation strategies, how do you wrap that into a concept? So it’s like the military analogy again, it’s the shock and awe campaign. That’s the campaignable concept there. INF17 interview

A similar approach was evident in the response of this respondent who showed clearly that messaging was part of a wider process of strategy and campaign development:

And then we go through target audiences and influencers and we kind of do a bit more of a map now with the social media space, and then a very clear kind of overview of the strategic approach and the vision and the campaigns, the audiences, the messages. Then it’s very ROI-oriented, so again it goes back to what objective is it, what kind of PR is it, what kind of tactics are we doing, what’s the goal, how do we measure it, and
what resources will it require, timeline, critical success factors and that’s the bit that covers our arse when, sorry, it’s about the client’s role, what they’ve got to sign up to as well, budget, and background research. INF13 interview

The linking of the wording of the key message to reputation risk management was made by this respondent:

In pretty much everything we do in our group within our organisation it’s under an umbrella of reputation risk management so it’s looking at everything that we do and ensuring that whatever path we take or whatever advice we recommend that it’s robust and it’s not going to pose a risk to our reputation. For key messages, every word is important. They have to be succinct, they have to be understood, they have to be absolutely applicable to the target audience. INF18 interview

This respondent discussed how sending key messages to the media was a supporting tool for wider campaign tactics:

Our organisation is the whipping boy of most of the media in this city so if you relied on it to get your message out there, you wouldn’t get that message out there. They, yeah most of the local papers in particular look for negative stories about what we’re doing to the community, so we can’t rely on the media to give us, to put the messages out there that we want. But we always use it as a supporting tool because it still does have a role to play, and if we’ve got newsletters and web material and displays and information sessions and whatever happening, it’s good to have that media there then to say well here’s all the stuff that’s happening, here’s the displays you can go to and put the messages out that way. They still won’t necessarily put all of our messages in their articles, but at least it tells people where they can go for information and we’re able to correct it or they’ve already seen the correct information if the paper does take a negative slant. INF15 interview

1.5.4 The evaluation of public relations through key message reporting

Evaluation statements based on whether key messages were covered by the media were plentiful in the award entries from all years examined for this project. There were numerous
examples in the award entries where key messages were mentioned in the statement of campaign objectives in terms of having them mentioned in the media coverage, for example:

Objective: At least one key message conveyed in each piece of resulting coverage. 2006 C10 – 3

The campaign result was reported as:

All coverage was positive, with key messages about IBM included. Coverage targets were surpassed, achieving 18 feature pieces. 2006 C10 – 3

In another example, award entry 2004 G 2, it was stated that “key message penetration” would be a measure of how the campaign would be evaluated. The results were reported as “100% coverage of key messages in monitored media”, clearly seen as a success for the campaign.

This desire to see key messages appearing in the media as a measure of success is again seen in one of the objectives for another campaign which states

Ensure KR Castlemaine is the lead spokesperson and key messages are incorporated in media reports. 2007 C3 – 9

It was reported in the evaluation of the campaign that 88% of print and online news articles contained two or more of KRC key messages, 51% contained three or more key messages and that 70% of television and radio broadcasts contained two or more key messages. This was viewed as a very successful outcome. Similar examples in the data set abound, for example:

A media briefing was held off-site. The pre-announcement rehearsal session supported the President of KRC in presenting at the briefing. Key messages were visible in media reports. 2007 C3 - 9

The influence of CAMRA’s campaign is clear from a review of the sample media clips in the appendix both in terms of CAMRA’s role in commenting and in terms of delivering the agreed key messages. 2007 C2 – 4
The program succeeded beyond expectations in generating immediate and widespread media coverage, securing reports containing the key messages in priority media and reaching the target publics. 2002 G 11

Positive coverage was received in all the state rural weekly newspapers, on the ABC Country Hour, in horticultural regional media and in the main industry publication Good Fruit and Vegetables. In all accounts the process was reported as a step forward and all key messages on increased industry ownership, control and accountability were depicted. 1999 E 8

One measureable result was reported as the "establishment of key messages and the corporate story, especially in the form of the corporate profile" (2003 E 3) and one interview respondent shed light on why the coverage of key messages in the media or recall of key messages by audiences was seen so often in campaign evaluations:

> With clients, the thing that is really hard to get them to do is to pay for research or evaluate our programs at the end. They are happy upfront to understand how it influences projects but they don’t necessarily want the whole KPI analysis benchmark research at the end of the day… So long as they perceive they’ve got their outcome, they are happy with that, they don’t need the documented evidence to back it up, which is quite interesting…We would normally do a level of evaluation for clients just based on deliverables and our quick analysis of did we get key messages across and that kind of thing, but we wouldn’t do proper quantitative and qualitative research unless it was engaged by the client. INF17 interview

Similar examples of this type of evaluation in the award entries are plentiful, for example:

> Evaluation highlighted that all media material featured key messages and strong branding in photographs, headings and text. 2001 G 15

> The opposition campaign was stalled by clear, powerful and accurate responses and outweighed by the positive messages promoted about the new unit. 2006 C15 – 3

The quantitative and qualitative research was supplemented by an analysis of local, national and international media reports. This was used to determine how the media were interpreting the key messages. Throughout the campaign, the media team
recorded that in 92% of cases, the media interpreted the key messages and facts correctly. 2006 C4 – 3

As well whether key messages were covered in media, the tone and other aspects of the coverage was often evaluated as well, for example:

The tone of most coverage was rated ‘positive’ with the majority of media coverage delivering three or more key messages from each media release. 2006 C15 - 6

To evaluate the change in community sentiment towards the cotton industry expressed through the media, a media message analysis was conducted by Cox Inall Communications. The analysis covered 177 separate media items from print, radio and television during the period December 1998 to July 1999. 1999 B 3.

Media found it difficult to report negatively on Shell's activities during the spill as all Shell comments related back to key messages. For example, of the 59 newspaper articles printed during the crisis, 51 percent contained positive comments about Shell's involvement, 28 percent were neutral and 21 percent were negative. 2000 F 8

In another campaign (1999 B 3), the media analysis measured and cross referenced: “voice” as in who was speaking in the media item, “categories” as whether it was the cotton growers, cotton industry or the cotton community, “key message” being whether the three key messages were mentioned and also “message orientation” being whether the message could be viewed as positive, negative or neutral in its attitude to the cotton industry.

There were occasional instances of evaluative research to ascertain what meaning audiences were constructing through engagement with key messages encountered through the media, for example:

To determine cut-through of the strategy key message and attitudes towards the meaning of Australia Day, a Newspoll survey was conducted. 2003 B 7

Coverage in the media of key messages was however not the only measure of success. In an internal employee communication campaign, it was stated as a positive result for the campaign that “KPMG reported that more than 90 per cent of staff retained the key messages” (2006 C7 – 2).
In one internal communication campaign, the fact that campaign messages were reflected back through the qualitative research data conducted as part of the campaign evaluation was seen as a measure of success:

The results of the post-briefing survey indicated that 92% of respondents felt the sessions were handy or vital in helping them to understand their role in communicating the impacts of the White Paper. Qualitative responses in the surveys included a number of comments that reflected messages regarding their role. 2004 C 3

In discussing a lobbying campaign evaluation, one practitioner provided insight into how he knew when he’d done the job he’d be hired to do:

It would be criminal to assume or presume that because they read about it, heard about, et cetera, et cetera, that the message has been delivered. That’s why, you know, the direct contact is so vital; you know so, so important. You know, at least then you can walk away and say, ‘I’ve done my job as well as a communications professional can do.’ If you’ve done all that amplification and you’ve had that direct contact and you’ve asked all the questions that you can think of to determine whether or not person X understands everything, has all the information he needs and has heard from everybody that you think might persuade him to your point of view. GM interview

Perhaps a lobbying campaign, when the target public comprises one person, a politician, is one of the few that lends itself to thorough evaluation and testing of whether that person has constructed your intended meaning – especially when this is demonstrated by a change in intention on a parliamentary vote. Such in-depth evaluation of a single person is nowhere near as resource intensive as evaluating the reception and understanding of messages amongst mass audiences.

1.5.5. Key messages in positioning
It was clear that there was some connection between the employment of key messages and the positioning efforts of public relations practitioners, for example, in the messaging strategies used to increase “share of media voice” in the following award entry:

Increase the Trust’s share of media voice on child abuse issues by achieving 3 metropolitan feature stories and a minimum of 20 significant news stories to reinforce its position as an independent advocate. (2004 G 2)
The public relations consultancy conducted a "positioning workshop with Board and Executive" to "obtain consensus on positioning, strategy and issues" which included ensuring consistent messaging as part of developing “a clear and unique positioning to reinforce the Trust’s credibility and advocacy role” (2004 G 2). The evaluation for this award entry included examining key message penetration and it was reported that in print coverage, “95% positioned Trust as an independent body” and “88% positioned Trust as expert on child abuse and neglect issues” (2004 G 2). This was seen as an excellent outcome by the client. The following example also indicates work was undertaken to determine desired positioning and the messaging that was needed:

The Hospital Board had identified a common vision for the Hospital’s redevelopment, but it needed to be clear on a preferred organisational position on the redevelopment. Socom took this vision and developed the following key messages that underpinned all communications activities. 2007 C2 - 2

In another example, key messages to counter concerns about groundwater safety were used to help position Council as responsibly managing the city’s future water supply (2007 C6 – 25). Research was also undertaken to determine the way forward in both messaging and positioning in this example:

The RAS commissioned four focus groups among its target markets to inform the positioning of rodeo as an event, and develop key messages for public relations and marketing materials. 2006 C11 - 3

Other awards also made the connection between repositioning and messaging, for example:

The Prime Minister immediately recognised the mood, shifted his position and decided to allow a conscience vote on a Private Member’s Bill....The influence of CAMRA’s campaign is clear from a review of the sample media clips in the appendix both in terms of CAMRA’s role in commenting and in terms of delivering the agreed key messages. (2007 C2 - 4)

So soon after the Commonwealth Games Athletes Village was built on Royal Park, the new RCH could be positioned as another ‘land grab’. The RCH had a history of bad blood with its neighbours... Key messages about the rebuilding of the RCH and the consultation process were an essential part of the communication strategy. (2006 C6 – 5)
In the interviews, practitioners spoke about positioning and the role of key messages, for example:

I’m not that formal and I’m not that dogmatic about it, saying these word in these ways, although there are sometimes I would, but generally speaking there are the themes rather than a key message in my case…the theme is that these will do these things for you so I’m more likely to stick to the themes and I make it clear that we need to keep repeating that in different ways…this is how we are positioning ourselves about it and this is what we believe and when you speak about it you represent that view. INF1 interview

We tend to work on three key messages that are your main themes of how you want to position this initiative and then the supporting facts that back up each of those, would probably vary for audiences. INF17 interview

So part of the key message … is to position yourself as the utmost - you know, the ultimate spokesperson and, in my case, ST is the ultimate spokesperson so don’t bother talking to M from the other company. INF12 interview

You could construct a campaign that links into their understanding of the good work the x organisation does and if they believe what they know about the x organisation, that it's good, then that kind of translates to being able to build, well, a message that this must be okay too. And then if they believe that the x say it’s okay then it must be okay - so those two things coming in together position it as being okay. INF17 interview

One interviewee used messaging and positioning almost interchangeably, for example: "Ninety percent of the time the messages or the positioning we put out is done to call people to action to do something” and “there’s no point putting out a message, or positioning something in a way that it’s not because our stakeholders will always find out" (INF15 interview). No practitioner defined their understanding of positioning, the meaning was seemingly obvious.
1. 6 Cases where key messages were not central to campaigns

There were only two award entries that took a different approach to others and took what could be termed a more dialogic approach. The first was one whose subject was child abuse survival:

When faced with such significant challenges, it was decided that a multi-faceted communications program was required in order to communicate effectively with each different target public - rather than simply deliver a message, we needed to work closely with each target public to ensure that full and sensitive communications were delivered and that with the help of our target publics, survivors could also open a dialogue with us…Contact was made with each group and they were very co-operative in communicating our key messages and information to both relevant survivors and to their contact network. This relationship worked very well as it identified survivors and also interested media who covered the story. 2004 B 14

The second was the case when a communications team was working with indigenous communities in remote Australia (1999 A 13):

A traditional European model of community consultation was developed - including interviews, focus groups and structured survey work, and a scoping trip undertaken to the region. This trip proved immediately that European models of community consultation were inappropriate to this project and would not generate the outcomes sought. We developed The Question - "What do you want to tell the people at BHP Cannington about you, your culture, your community and your land?" as a basis for the project. The team returned to the North West five times, adopting an Aboriginal model of research - sitting, talking, listening, forming relationships, and waiting - followed by a consensus-based approval process. Over two years, the project has created a workable training package which has been well received by participants and has been on-sold to other government and corporate users. More importantly, the project has cemented a link between miners and traditional owners - bringing them to a single table to work for a joint purpose. Five communities, seven tribes and a myriad of clan groups put aside their personal, political and other differences to develop with us the Cannington Indigenous Awareness Course. This bipartisan and collaborative communications approach short-circuits much of the potential acrimony in issues like native title and indigenous employment - saving everyone resources and
avoiding damage on all sides. The methodology for this project has been further developed into a workable and portable program for implementation by BHP in other regions and with other peoples.”

Interestingly these dialogical approaches both advanced the missions of the organisations that commissioned the public relations activity – both organisations being “for-profit” entities. However both cases indicated that employing key messages and a transmission model for the campaign was either tried or considered before pursuing a more collaborative approach.
The construction of intended meanings: furthering understanding of the purpose of public relations

Melanie James
University of Newcastle
melanie.james@newcastle.edu.au

Melanie James (BA (Hons) Communication, MA in Journalism, Grad Cert PTT) worked as a public relations manager in both the government and financial services sectors prior to joining the University of Newcastle, Australia, as a lecturer in public relations in 2006. She is a member the Public Relations Institute of Australia and has won state and national awards for her campaigns. She is currently enrolled in a PhD program and her research interests include public relations strategy and public relations education.

Abstract

This paper reports on the first step in addressing the research question: is the primary purpose of public relations to have target publics construct an intended meaning in order to attain strategic goals. This research question stems from the tensions around the purpose of public relations in terms of my knowledge acquired as a senior practitioner and that which is presented in much of the academic literature of the public relations field. This research reports on an initial examination of public relations practice as presented in award winning campaign entry texts to determine whether the construction of intended meanings were central to the campaign’s purpose. The research also examined whether the campaigns intended outcomes were primarily aiming to achieve the commissioning entity’s goals or some other goal. This was a way of examining whether my own experiences had been atypical and would inform my further research direction. This project, although exploratory in nature only, found that my own experiences of practice where public relations activity was undertaken with the express intention of achieving the strategic goals of the entity for whom I was working was not atypical. Further, all campaigns can be interpreted as having worked to have target publics construct the intended meaning of the commissioning entity rather than any other meaning.

Keywords

public relations, construction of meaning, theory and practice
Introduction

This paper reports on the first step in addressing the research question: is the primary purpose of public relations to have target publics construct an intended meaning in order to attain strategic goals.

The research question stems from a quandary within which I find myself working in academia as a teacher and researcher in the field of public relations. This quandary has arisen from attempting to reconcile aspects of the academic literature with my own experiences working for many years as a public relations practitioner. During these years, without exception, all public relations activity I managed was undertaken with the express intention of achieving the strategic goals of the organisation or individual for whom I was working. Much of public relations academic literature, especially that relating to the purpose and definitions of the field, is at odds with my own experiences as a practitioner. Many definitions centre on mutual benefit or improving society as the purpose of public relations. Such definitions abound within public relations circles - in professional industry associations (e.g. CIPR, 2007; PRIA, 2009; PRSA, 1982), in many undergraduate textbooks and also in academic literature, for example, that the public relations function is about ensuring “inclusiveness of all voices that are affected by the organisation and thereby benefiting the publics as well as the organisation itself (Holtzhausen, 2002, p. 255), that it is to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Huang, 2001; Ledingham, 2003), or that its “major role is to empower those with less power” (Grunig, 2006, p. 165). Public relations has also been defined as a rhetorical challenge in that “public relations is the management function that rhetorically adapts organisations to people’s interests and people’s interests to organisations by co-creating meaning and co-managing cultures to achieve mutually beneficial relationships” (Heath, 2001, p.36). Even Botan and Taylor’s (2004) vision for the co-creational perspective has mutual benefit as its underlying purpose.

These definitions did not define my own experiences of public relations as practiced. My own experiences aligned more with Maloney’s (2006, p.168) definition of public relations – “above all, it is communication designed to further the interests of its principals. They would not invest in PR if it were otherwise”. Hutton (1999) states that it is a common criticism of many academic definitions of public relations that they are “normative or prescriptive, rather than descriptive of public relations’ true function in contemporary commerce and politics” (p.201). This is the position in which I found myself – critical of academic definitions of public relations for the reasons Hutton suggested. I began to wonder whether my experience
as a practitioner, which spans some 20 years in sectors as varied as government, not-for profit, tourism, small business and financial services, was atypical. The research begins an examination of other examples of practice to begin to determine whether the campaigns I had undertaken as a practitioner differed in their underlying purpose of having target publics construct an intended meaning from other practitioners’ campaigns.

As an initial way of examining other practitioners’ campaigns I turned to a readily available source of reported campaign practice, that of the Public Relations Institute of Australia’s Golden Target Award database, publicly available online through the University of Technology, Sydney. I looked at 57 award entries that had won a national award in their category between 1999 and 2007. I determined whether there was a meaning that the commissioning entity, i.e. the company, organisation or individual, wanted their identified target publics to construct. I then determined, according to the information supplied in the award entry text, whether the campaign was successful in constructing the intended meaning. The findings of this exploratory research would inform which direction I took subsequent lines of inquiry.

**Why look at meaning?**

I agree with many other public relations scholars that the construction of meaning is central to public relations practice (Berger, 1999; Berger & Reber, 2006; Gordon, 1997; Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008; Heath, 2001, 2006; Leitch & Neilson, 1997; Taylor & Kent, 2006) and Berger’s (1999, p. 186) “tentative answer” to the question of why do organisations practice public relations at all best captures this centrality:

> public relations provides organizations with dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation in contested sites in which information is exchanged, meaning constructed and managed, and consensus, consent, and legitimation gained or lost with others. (p.186)

This was a definition that resonated with both my own social constructionist epistemology and my experiences as a practitioner. Berger (1999) states that “representation refers to the purposeful expression of organizational voice(s) and appearance(s) to influence others” (p.186). This again resonated with my own experiences. I examined the award entries for evidence of the application of the elements of Berger’s definition; a) methods and processes of intentional representation, which could be said to comprise the practice of public relations and b) the contested sites in which information is exchanged, meaning constructed and
managed, and consensus, consent, and legitimation gained or lost with others, which could be said to comprise the purpose of public relations. From my practitioner perspective, I always viewed the environment in which I practiced public relations as a contested site, a site of competing messages and factors where target publics were encouraged, through my application of techniques and processes, to co-construct¹ the intended meaning of the entity I was commissioned to work for. I worked to have target publics construct meanings such as donating organs after death was a good thing to do, that completing a census form was in the country’s interest, that women could be excellent firefighters, that nursing offered wondering career opportunities, that taking out a no frills mortgage with a particular institution would save them money, that visiting a particular destination would revitalise a relationship and so on. There was a meaning that the commissioning entities wanted their target publics to construct rather than any other meaning, and my work was to facilitate this process.

In defining meaning, it is difficult to move beyond circular definitions, such as meaning is what something means, and the term itself has more than one meaning in the academic literature (Alasuutari, 1995) but Rosengren (2000, p. 59) explained meaning as the "whole way in which we understand, explain, feel about, and react towards a given phenomenon". This explanation of meaning seems particularly relevant to public relations. Wicks (2005) believes that “mass communication research is rapidly moving beyond effects research into what has become known as the meanings paradigm” (p. 333) and the academic literature supports the notion that the public relations field is moving in tandem with this development in mass communication research. For example, Gordon (1997) advanced that “public relations is the active participation in social construction of meaning” (p.64) and asked the field to consider the opportunities for reassessing and redefining the field using symbolic interactionism which would cast the organisation as “one player among many in a larger social dynamic that continually forms meanings” (p.64). Botan and Soto (1998) found deficits in the traditional ways of explaining the construction of meaning in public relations and advocated a consideration of Piercian semiotics as a way to “help reconceptualize a public as an ongoing process of agreement upon an interpretation” (p.22). Leichty and Warner (2001) stated that “public relations is first and foremost concerned with meaning” (p.61) and that “meaning and interpretation are the central processes of all public relations activities” (p. 61). Van Ruler’s (2005) description of the Heath’s Co-creation of Meaning Theory stated that

¹ Given the current interpretations of the terminology of cocreation in the public relations literature at this time, I have chosen to use the term co-construct rather than co-create.
meaning “is not an attribute of a message or a recipient but of the interaction itself” (p. 136). Other scholars have proposed an array of approaches such as Hall’s Articulation Model of Meaning (Moffit, 1994); a discourse approach to concepts of publics (Leitch & Neilson, 1997); cultural topoi (Leichty & Warner, 2001); dialogical theory (Kent & Taylor, 2002); sense-making (Walker, 2006); a Foucauldian perspective on public relations (Motion & Leitch, 2007); social constructionism (Gordon & Pellegrin, 2008) and sociodrama (Mickey, 2008). Although approaching the concept of meaning from different angles, all have the construction of meaning at their core.

The co-creational perspective, defined as one that

sees publics as co-creators of meaning and communication as what makes it possible to agree to shared meanings, interpretations and goals. This perspective is long term in its orientation and focuses on relationships among publics and organizations. Research is used to advance understanding and the perspective embraces theories that either explicitly share these values (e.g., relational approaches or community) or can be used to advance them. The major relationship of interest is between groups and organizations, and communication functions to negotiate changes in these relationships. (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 652)

has emerged as a dominant perspective over the last decade. Botan and Taylor (2004, p.659) state that

the future of the field of public relations lies with whichever co-creationist model emerges as the most useful, the most theoretically valuable, and perhaps, the one that situates public relations theory as a foundational member of the field of communication.

Interestingly, Botan and Taylor’s (2004) vision for the co-creational perspective of public relations states there is more than the achievement of an organisation’s goals in its underlying purpose:

the cocreational perspective places an implicit value on relationships going beyond the achievement of an organizational goal. That is, in the cocreational perspective, publics are not just a means to an end (p. 652).
However, not all public relations scholars who work to further understanding of how the construction of meaning occurs in relation to public relations practice have fully embraced Botan and Taylor’s view of the “co-creational perspective”. Would it not be possible, if not always ethical, to overtly or covertly manipulate the process of co-creating meaning with publics? Could it be that any public relations activity, wherever it sat on the symmetrical-asymmetrical continuum, could still aim to have a target public construct an intended meaning and that this could be through a process of co-creation, albeit not how envisaged by Botan and Taylor (2004)? If the commissioning entity creates messages and introduces factors, that may or may not include opportunities for dialogue, into the environment of target publics and those target publics synthesise this and articulate the various messages and factors with their current understandings (Moffit, 1994) does this not warrant consideration as a version of co-creation? If publics ignore or resist a public relations practitioners efforts does this not also co-create a particular, if not an intended meaning? At the very least these questions place cocreational approaches to public relations into the wider social constructionist perspective.

Methodology

For this project, award winning entries into the Public Relations Institute of Australia’s Golden Target Awards were viewed as examples of what the public relations industry in Australia holds up to be best practice as judged by peers across the country. The award entries included in the data collection were 57 entries from the database that can be accessed via the University of Technology, Sydney library at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ and that have been awarded a Golden Target Award between 1999-2007, the years that the database at the time of the data collection covered. This number of entry awards was arbitrarily selected by the researcher but represents all entries that were recorded as a winner and provided sufficient detail for the purposes of the research, i.e. executive summary; situational analysis; goals and objectives; research; target publics; communication strategy; implementation; results; and, evaluation. There were 58 entries recorded as winners but only 57 provided sufficient detail to work with. The sample provides a cross section of entries from across industry sectors and campaign types. It is not designed to be a representative sample but a sample of award entries judged by peers as being worthy of winning a national award. Not all entries that have won a Golden Target Award in this period are available on the database. The 57 selected award entries are all presented in the same template style. The award entries themselves were not unproblematic, as Jaques (2008) has stated:

2 On the database at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ “target publics” is erroneously headed “target policies”. 
Inevitably, such “author generated” cases are prone to self-praise and wisdom after the event, and they tend to focus on successful outcomes (especially when the author is a consultant using an award program to promote work done for a client organization). More importantly they generally lack independent review and are deficient in objective analysis.  (p. 195)

In acknowledging that the award entries are a retrospective narrativisation of the public relations activities undertaken by the entries’ authors, and would be composed in a way that showed the activities in the best light in the hope of winning an award, the entries also demonstrate what is valued in public relations practice and how public relations practitioners talk about or present their practice. The award entries do not necessarily describe accurately what “really” happened and “use discourse as a device to construct their version” of practice (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p. 143). The award entries are used to examine what is valued by the professional association as demonstrated through its peer judging processes and to explore the research question.

This methodology takes an interpretative approach to data collection and analysis and the researcher does not claim to present empirical data that point to indisputable conclusions. The analysis was based on an examination of all aspects of the award entry texts including the stated goals, objectives, strategies and tactics and other entry content. The researcher has attempted to glean what the strategic intent of the award entry was by way of determining through discourse analysis if there was an overarching meaning that the client desired the target public to construct. Discourse analysis is embedded in a strong social constructionist epistemology and has been variously described as theoretical perspective, methodology, method, or as a form of scholarship (Nikander, 2008). For this project, discourse analysis is being used to interrogate the nature of public relations practice by dealing with how actions and/or meanings are intended to be constructed through the award entry texts which have been authored by public relations practitioners. An examination of whether there was evidence in each award entry of an intended meaning that was trying to be constructed was undertaken. If this evidence was present, a summary statement of what meaning the award entry intended to construct was formulated (see Appendix 1). The results of this task were then examined in light of the research question. Indicators within the award entries were identified that pointed to the “dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation” that Berger (1999. p.186) has stated comprise the practice of public relations. When I interpreted and recorded an intended meaning to be constructed by target publics, the results and evaluation sections of the entries were examined to determine if practitioners reported that the desired outcome had occurred.
In determining the purpose of the campaigns in the research sample I could have looked at goals, objectives or communications strategies and/or tactics but it became apparent that there was not a standardised application of these terms in the award entries and like could not be compared with like. Similar problems with category content classifications in the PRIA Golden Target award entries have been reported by other researchers who have used this data in their research (Xavier, Johnston & Patel, 2005). As a way of taking the project forward, I determined by synthesising the descriptions written in the executive summaries, situational analyses, goals and objectives, communication strategies and tactics sections of each award entry in the sample whether or not there was an intended meaning that the commissioning entity wanted their identified target publics to construct.

The content of the awards that was deemed to point to efforts to have target publics construct the intended meaning of the commissioning entity (content indicators) was coded according to themes emerging from the data. The data were revisited several times and over fifty coding themes emerged. These coding themes were then thematically grouped into categories that indicated techniques and processes used to construct meaning in a public relations campaign context. The categories were:

a) Building awareness or understanding of something  
b) Direct engagement with publics/audiences/stakeholders  
c) Informing or educating  
d) Issue management  
e) Marketing (product/distribution/price), sales and advertising  
f) Media management  
g) Other various themes unable to be grouped into above  
h) Persuading or convincing  
i) Positioning and perception management

Limitations of this research approach

The collection of award entry texts which comprised the data for this project was subject to only one form of analysis and it is clear that this data lends itself to multiple analytic angles and points of interrogation. The research looks at practice through the award entry narratives and it is acknowledged that further research would be needed to look at award winning campaign practice through other lenses to mitigate some of my personal biases gained through my research activities and extensive experience as a practitioner, or before conclusive rather than indicative findings could be argued. It is acknowledged however that my experience as a practitioner also brings specific insights which could be advantageous.
The award entries are national award winners in their category and are acknowledged by the Australian public relations industry as examples of best practice. Berger (2005) highlighted the essential dissonance in public relations practice and how a practitioner’s role and “whom one serves or how one is defined” (p.23) creates difficulties in determining “what public relations will be and how it will be used in an organization” (p. 24). This indicates that a sample of practice descriptions detailing something less than best practice or any other collection of data detailing practice might result in different findings.

It is also acknowledged that this research does not examine public relations practice from the perspectives of publics and does not presume to know the intent, wherewithal or any other characteristic of the publics who engaged or did not engage with the various public relations campaigns which are described in the award entries. Reports of campaign results and evaluation data included in the award entries have been authored by award entrants who are public relations practitioners and the researcher relied on the fact that the entries had been through the judging processes which would have confirmed the veracity of information presented. This project is the preliminary step in what is envisaged to become a larger study and does not presume to be more than this.

Results

There were no instances where an entity could be identified as not wanting target publics to construct an intended meaning for the primary benefit of the commissioning entity. The target publics constructed the meanings intended for them by the public relations practitioners in all cases examined (see Appendix 1 for details). Of the 57 award entries examined all reported success in their campaigns. Success was measured and reported in a variety of ways by award entrants but could be broadly classified into four major areas:

1. Media content analysis results
2. Stakeholder perception analysis results
3. Reported support from third parties
4. Increased profile or level of engagement from publics

The following statements in table 1 are taken from a random selection of the award entries sample gives some insight into language used by practitioners in reporting success and into how award entry results were presented:

Table 1:
1.1. Media content analysis

- “no negative media or community comment was received” (Marcom, 2007)
- “100% of key messages in monitored media” (Rowland, 2004)
- “The influence of CAMRA’s campaign is clear from a review of the sample media clips” (CAMRA 2007).
- “88% of print and online news articles contained two or more of KRC key messages” (Rowland, 2007)
- “Extensive media coverage highlighted the high calibre of Cryosite’s directors and the nature of the company’s business” (Westbrook, 2003)
- “media exposure was enormous” (Smail, 2005)
- “secured enormous media coverage” (Turnbull Porter Novelli, 2001)
- “64% of all media items reported positive messages” (Cox Inall, 1999).
- “Media interest in the program was overwhelming”…”There was only one media article that focussed on the issue of companies ‘paying for’ the NHF Tick symbol and expressed cynicism” (Reed Weir, 2006)

1.2. Stakeholder perception analysis

- “research undertaken 3 months into the positioning campaign showed improved perceptions/awareness” (Rowland, 2005)
- “no objections were received…inquiries instead related to offers of assistance to locate existing bores…” (Marcom, 2007)
- “Interviews with members and an analysis of media coverage after the campaign showed that members were pleased” (WCG Public Relations, 1999).
- “the Mufti of Australia…believed the campaign set up an atmosphere in Baghdad conducive to negotiating successfully with the kidnappers” (Smail, 2005)
- “Following the launch, two-thirds of employees surveyed believed the Intranet was critical to performing their jobs and saved them time” (IBM, 2004)
- “Through this forum IBM has had an opportunity to directly address misconceptions about its relevance to the SME sector and positively build its brand as a SME-centric organisation” (Text 100, 2006)

1.3. Support from third parties:

- “third party endorsements from NT government and Opposition” (Roland, 2005)
- “the op-ed pieces in favour of therapeutic cloning heavily out-weighed the anti-lobby” (CAMRA, 2007)
- “according to external consultants…the Department performed outstandingly” (Department of Water, 2007).
“a survey showed 100% of DFMs believed that tailored local media releases play an important role in raising the bank’s profile” (Turnbull Porter Novelli, 2001)


“launched…with high level political endorsement” (Cox Inall, 1999)

1.4. Increased profile or level of engagement:

“Invited to sit on two project teams and one panel” (Rowland, 2004)

“recruited 12 new members” (WCG Public Relations, 1999)

“The percentage of respondents who had come to the speedway with their families increased from 64% to 77%” (Creative Territory, 2007)

“Oversubscribed prospectus a direct outcome of a successful IPO campaign” (Westbrook, 2003).

“83% of all enquiries had come from people in this target group” (Northern Territory University, 2003)

“Greater interest in and concern about the fate of Douglas Wood among Iraqis than had been evident on previous similar occasions” (Smail, 2005).

“87% of people who used the call centre rang because they had ‘read an article’” (Turnbull Porter Novelli, 2001)

All award entries showed evidence of attempting to scope the pre-campaign terrain and to gain understanding of target publics. The content of the various sections of the award entries including situational analysis summaries, research and executive summaries of the award entries indicate that target publics had not created these specific intended meanings, or had not created them to a sufficient degree, prior to the public relations activities instigated by the award entrants. All award entries reported introducing a range of factors into the environments of their target publics. These factors included a variety of initiatives ranging from created events, media content, publications, opportunities for discussion, direct contact, product sampling, sponsorship of events, product or service modifications, paid advertising, submissions, promotional handouts and combinations of these. The content indicators coded into the thematic categories showed media management to be the most prevalent technique or process used:

a) Media management (including media relations processes and techniques; media training; spokesperson selection) - (28% of content indicators)

b) Direct engagement with publics/audiences/stakeholders (17% of content indicators)

c) Building awareness or understanding of something (12% of content indicators)

d) Positioning and/or perception management (12% of content indicators)
e) Informing or educating (7% of content indicators)  
f) Issue management (6% of content indicators)  
g) Marketing (product/distribution/price), sales and advertising (6% of content indicators)  
h) Persuading or convincing (6% of content indicators)  
i) Other various themes unable to be grouped into above (6% of content indicators)  

**Discussion and examples**  
The selection of the introduced factors, techniques and processes seemed in most cases directly linked to the reported findings of the campaign research activities. Attempts to reach target audiences with constructed key messages either through media channels or through direct engagement predominated for the purposes of building awareness/understanding or to intentionally position something in the campaign. The following two examples are provided to shed light on the link between research, strategy and the implementation of the various factors – all award entries showed similar links. For example, in one award entry, call no. 2000 A17, research findings were reported as:

“There was strong interest in taking advantage of free prisoner labour, which could help appeal to, and help overcome opposition from, those with prejudices or fears about having criminals in their neighbourhood… participating in prisoner rehabilitation would not be a strong selling point… people’s strongest concerns related to fear of the unknown about prisoners and the prison system” (Ministry for Justice, 2000)

The communication strategy subsequently focused on altering the usual government processes and aimed to:

establish one [a process} where enough interest was created throughout regional Western Australia, to inspire bids for the right to host prisoner work camps.  
Essentially the challenge was to make work camps highly sought-after opportunities rather than an imposition on a community (Ministry for Justice, 2000).

The factors introduced into the environments of the target publics (local shires, councillors and communities; local residents in general vicinity of proposed camp sites; key community representatives - community spirited opinion leaders; local community groups; WA Municipal Association; Members of Parliament; news media; WA Prison Officers Union; prison officers; minimum-security prisoners) (Ministry for Justice, 2000) - were tailored
according to the identified needs of each group, e.g. “tailored media releases…tailored information brochures…tailored video presentation” (Ministry for Justice, 2000). In this award entry it was presented that target publics had constructed a particular meaning about prisoner work camps which was negative and did not bode well for the introduction of the camps, that public relations activity aimed to have target publics construct a different meaning, one that repositioned camps as a positive asset to a community – the intended meaning of the Ministry for Justice – and that this was reported as having been achieved.

In another example award entry (call no. 2005 A4), Alcan’s research had identified that some stakeholders “wrongly thought Alcan only recycled aluminium cans and made alfoil” (Rowland, 2005). This lack of understanding amongst stakeholders, including key political decision-makers, would clearly not assist Alcan in achieving its stated goal of helping “secure stakeholder approval of the Gore refinery expansion, while managing expectations” (Rowland, 2005).

The strategy developed a clear positioning for Alcan in Australia, reinforcing its credibility and capability. It positioned the expansion as beneficial and proactively managed issues that could potentially impact stakeholder perceptions (Roland, 2005).

The stated strategic approach was to “communicate positioning via national communication strategy” with the rationale being to improve perceptions, build reputation and ensure consistent messaging (Roland, 2005). Alcan employed tactics that would help stakeholders create the meaning intended for them – that Alcan was credible and capable, positioning “the expansion as beneficial”. The results of the campaign reported that

“Alcan in Australia went from a company with little profile and perceived by some to only recycle cans and make alfoil to an acknowledged leader in Australia’s aluminium industry and a significant contributor to the Australian economy (Rowland, 2005).

The strategies and tactics employed by practitioners on all entries clearly aimed to achieve intended outcomes of the commissioning entity, however some award entries did show evidence of aiming for mutual benefit, for example the award entry by Rio Tinto (call no. 2006 C16 – 2) had four stated goals, namely:

- To assist in facilitating a stronger and more sustainable Western Australian community.
- To enable Rio Tinto to share business success, skills, knowledge and resources.
To achieve reputational benefits for Rio Tinto in Western Australia.
To assist Rio Tinto to engage with stakeholders outside of the usual channels of communications.

These goals could be interpreted as seeking to deliver mutual benefit to both Rio Tinto and the communities in which the company operates in Western Australia but depending on the interpreter’s viewpoint, could also be alternatively interpreted either as a genuine commitment to doing good in the community, as a way of “paying off” communities who might otherwise resist the company’s activities, or as a way of connecting with new business opportunities. It could be argued that a company like Rio Tinto would need to invest in the communities in which it operates in order to maintain the communities’ support for its activities. If this can be done in a way that delivers “reputational benefits” and access to networks “outside the usual channels of communications” it would seem logical from a business perspective for a company to proceed in such a way.

The evidence in all the award entries examined suggests that public relations was not primarily intended to create mutual understanding or deliver mutual benefits for organisations and publics alike. This does not mean that publics did not benefit as the result of any campaign but that the primary purpose of the public relations activity was to help the commissioning entity achieve its wider goals – to have target publics construct the intended meaning. There was little evidence of what has been defined in the public relations academic literature as dialogical or co-creational approaches to the construction of meaning although some award entry content was unclear as to what processes such as consultation involved. This is an area that would be best addressed in further research, perhaps through interviews with the practitioners who managed the campaigns and ideally with members of publics targeted in the campaigns.

There is little ambiguity evident in the language used in the award entries texts which indicates a clear strategic intent to have publics construct the intended meaning of the entity commissioning the public relations activity rather than any other meaning. This can be seen throughout the award entry texts and especially in the reporting of results and in evaluation statements (see Table 1). There is substantial evidence that there are attempts by the entity commissioning the public relations to have publics adopt the understanding or position intended for them, or to carry out an intended behaviour. Even when an entry outlined a goal that was seemingly in the public interest, such as in award entry call no. 2007 C6-26 where there was a clear desire by the Council to get the solution to a traffic problem right and extensive consultative opportunities were arranged, the intent behind the processes and
techniques employed could be interpreted as strategic. A council that is consultative and seen as responding to community preferences is more likely to be elected, and a solution put forwarded by a majority group of road users and ratepayers is less easily criticised than one unilaterally decided upon by the council.

Conclusion

It would be premature to answer the research question based only on the results of this initial exploratory study. However indications are that my own experiences of practice where public relations activity was undertaken with the express intention of achieving the strategic goals of the entity for whom I was working was not atypical. The results, whilst not at all conclusive, seem to support Maloney’s (2006, p.168) definition that “above all, it [public relations] is communication designed to further the interests of its principals” rather than other definitions espousing mutual benefit. The content of the examined award entry texts demonstrate what Berger (1999) called the “dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation in contested sites” (p.186). As such a tentative answer to the research question is that on the basis of this initial data analysis it would seem that the primary purpose of public relations is to have target publics construct the intended meaning of the entity commissioning the public relations in order to attain strategic goals. The indications are that most commissioning entities in this study are undertaking public relations to achieve benefits primarily for themselves. This does not preclude public relations activity delivering benefits to publics but it appears that this process involves the commissioning entity getting identified publics to construct their intended meaning rather than any other meaning.

This paper does not claim to have captured the “truth” of public relations but instead the author has aimed to produce what Gray (2003, p.21) calls a “version of the truth…which we present modestly for others to consider”. It begins the exploration of whether the field of public relations should consider that the construction of meaning for strategic purposes is at the core of public relations activities such as campaigns. The initial results indicate that further research is warranted and it is hoped that this could eventually contribute to the development or enhancement of theory. I believe that if the purpose of public relations becomes clearer the debate as to who holds the power and wherewithal to influence and control the meaning co-construction process, and the ethics of doing so, could take place. The popular debates could move from “is public relations all about spin?” to examinations of how and for what purposes intended meanings are being constructed by parties.
More research is needed to shed light on the methods and processes of meaning construction and co-construction/cocreation used in the practice of public relations so that the findings could assist both practitioners and critics of public relations to better present their cases and pinpoint areas of concern. The understandings gleaned from such research could provide insights into how decisions are made to intentionally represent an organisation or an organisation’s view. This could assist organisations in further refining public relations programs. It could also assist the wider citizenry in being able to decode public relations practice and representations. Such research could also underpin the development of ways in which practice can be taught and critiqued in academic settings. It could continue to move the public relations research agenda to one that considers wider societal and cultural aspects in a global context and this can only be to the benefit of the quest for social equity and social justice.

Appendix 1 – Intended Meaning to be constructed by target publics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</th>
<th>Achieved?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005A4</td>
<td>Positioning Alcan as credible and capable in terms of the proposed development.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003B7</td>
<td>To enhance the meaning of Australia Day</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004G2</td>
<td>The Trust was credible and worthy of support, was not like other agencies and was an important adviser to government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6 - 25</td>
<td>That groundwater was a logical, safe and well tested alternative water supply and testing was not wasting water</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 4</td>
<td>That therapeutic cloning has the best chance of success, Australia should not to fall behind in this and it was a matter for a conscience vote.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 2</td>
<td>With increasing need for services with the aging population the Ear and Eye Hospital are best geographically situated to meet that need</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 16</td>
<td>QGGA is a member-oriented, service-providing organisation with members’ needs at the forefront</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C17-3</td>
<td>Speedway is great family fun and is exciting to watch – come and try it</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C3 - 9</td>
<td>The closure is necessary, the company needs your ongoing support until the closure, and the company will support employees through the process and will continue to value all stakeholders.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>E 8</td>
<td>That the process was valid and worth participating in, that the changes were worthwhile and that the money was not being wasted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>C7 - 7</td>
<td>That the move to the new department was worthwhile and would benefit all, that the feelings of employees were being considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>E 3</td>
<td>This is a new business that is worth investing in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>G 11</td>
<td>That time is passing by and people don’t have to wait until next year to enrol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>J3</td>
<td>To portray Douglas Wood in a manner which might influence his captors to free him unharmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>G15</td>
<td>That the credibility and appeal of Elders other business interests were now available in the new banking venture and that deposits and investments were invited from rural and metropolitan populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Water Project Management Group (WPMG) and its activities were credible and reliable and that staff should accept, adopt and promulgate key messages about the White Paper reforms to DPI stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>D6</td>
<td>The Summit is a unique opportunity for growers from throughout the country to participate as a national group in a consultative forum on the direction and vision for AWB International – The AWB deserves ongoing support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>That BMP was the way to go for cotton growers and that cotton growers were being responsible to the wider community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C15 - 6</td>
<td>Eggs won’t raise your cholesterol and previous ideas about eggs doing so have been proven wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>E2</td>
<td>This is a new product delivering good returns at some risk but is better than previous CDOs offered previously by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>The best way to get info and communicate is through the intranet – even though it was previously unwieldy it is now good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C10 - 3</td>
<td>IBM is not just about big business but also very relevant to SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C7 - 2</td>
<td>Star City is taking staff communication needs seriously and management is committed to getting it right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C15 - 3</td>
<td>That moving the maternity unit it the right thing to do and that people can be confident in the services of the new unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C1 -</td>
<td>Canberra is more than just a boring government town, is a great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place to live and offers solutions to problems experienced when living in Sydney.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C4 - 3</td>
<td>Snack items may not be safe now and we’re protecting you until all is okay – come back and buy then - Masterfoods is grateful for your understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 B13</td>
<td>That McDonalds is making a valuable contribution to the 2000 Olympic Games.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C9 - 1</td>
<td>This state government selective high school can meet the educational needs of your gifted and talented children and you should apply.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 C7</td>
<td>Nippy’s will do all it can to protect the public and if Nippy’s has done anything wrong they’re open to due process and inspection. Then, Nippy’s is okay to drink again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C2 - 4</td>
<td>Bus services were urgently needed in the outer suburbs for social, economic and environmental reasons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A11</td>
<td>ORTA is providing effective Olympic public transport arrangements - fostering a public and media conclusion that “it’s not as I thought it would be”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C6 - 5</td>
<td>We really want to get the best outcome for the hospital development and we want your input.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 A20</td>
<td>Just because Australia was disease free, farmers couldn’t be complacent and must remain vigilant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 B14</td>
<td>If you were abused in an Irish institution you can /are invited to seek redress from the Irish government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C4-1</td>
<td>That the restoration is a complex task but that the companies are doing all they can to restore power ASAP and are working around the clock to do so.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C16 - 2</td>
<td>Rio Tinto is committed to facilitating a stronger and more sustainable Western Australian community by establishing and supporting a Future Fund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 A17</td>
<td>This was a special visit, a positive for SA and everyone (public, media, venues etc) would get an appropriate level of access to the royal couple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2004 H25 | Only chance to legally own Gallipoli sand - the merchandise relevant and desirable, particularly given that for many, a trip to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>G11</td>
<td>Anzac Cove is not feasible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>C9</td>
<td>Sentek is a leader and innovator in research and development and has a great product coming onto the market to help farmers manage salinity that has the backing of scientists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>C6-26</td>
<td>Brisbane Council wants to get this right and need user input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>F8</td>
<td>Shell is quickly responding, is investigating, cooperating with authorities and will do all it can to ensure it doesn’t happen again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C11-3</td>
<td>That rodeo is fun and exciting suitable for extreme sports lovers and families, will be run in the main arena at RAS show and will be humane to animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>H8</td>
<td>Southbank Tech is cool and could provide the training you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Vote for the merger as this is the best way forward for building society customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>A16</td>
<td>The Beverly Uranium mine is good for Australia and local communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>You can trust the Panadol brand and that the company will do the right thing throughout this crisis – returning the product to the shelves when absolutely safe to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>Tampa did what it had to do according to International Safety of Life at Sea convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>C11-3</td>
<td>Telstra is committed to regional Australia and is supporting this competition for aspiring country musicians in order to launch their careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>Graffiti is not cool, will not be tolerated and will be removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>C9-11</td>
<td>Twinings has the best teas, the best tea blenders and is worth purchasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Come to the Olive Festival and try olive products and find out what you can do the olives in a beautiful farm environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>F5</td>
<td>That welfare and counselling services were available and it was acceptable and normal to access them in the situation. That the Government was responding appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>D8</td>
<td>WA farmers need help and deserve assistance. WAFF is doing all it can to get this assistance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A work camp is an opportunity for a regional town to get vital community work done and for prisoners to repay their debt to society. Yes

BHP wants to get cross-cultural education right and will be guided by the local communities as to what should be included. Yes

Farming families affected by drought need assistance as they are doing it tough – shopping at Woolworths will help farmers. Yes

*Call nos. are those listed on the database of award entries at [www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/](http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/) and can be used to retrieve the award entries included in the study.

References


The Use of Intentional Positioning Techniques in Government Agencies’ Communication Campaigns

by Melanie James

INTRODUCTION

Positioning, as a concept in academic literature, is most frequently associated with marketing studies. Positioning in a public relations sense is underexplored with only a relatively small amount of works relating to positioning in any sense published in the public relations literature1 (e.g. Hallahan 1999; Motion 1997; Roper 2005; Wang 2007; Waymer and Heath 2007; Wu 2007). However in recent studies (Beurer-Zuellig, Fieseler and Meckel 2009; James 2009) positioning has been shown to be a not insignificant aspect of public relations practitioners’ roles. James (in press) identified that marketing definitions of positioning, which primarily relate to the four “P’s” of marketing – product, price, placement and promotion (Egan 2007), are insufficient to define positioning in the context of public relations practice and has put forward a provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations.

This paper reports on further testing and development of the framework and applies it to government agency/publicly-funded organizations’ campaigns as a way of examining whether positioning in public relations was different to that seen in commercial marketing, as marketing as a rule is not generally associated with government communication. This project set out to investigate whether government agencies’ and other public sector organizations’ communication campaigns in Australia employed public relations positioning techniques, as defined by James (in press), in their quest to achieve communication goals.

Whilst politicians may use marketing positioning techniques in their electoral campaigns or to advance their progress through the political party system (Roper 2005), there is no literature that addresses if and how government agencies and public sector organizations employ public relations positioning techniques. Glenny (2008, 153) has researched aspects of government agency communication and found that although political communication has received extensive attention in the literature, “there has been less focus on the apolitical function of communication undertaken by governments and the public servant’s role within it”. This paper is a contribution towards filling this void. Government agencies in Australia enact the political agenda of the elected government and are staffed by public servants “committed to notions of professional neutrality” (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2007, 12). Their use of positioning may, at first glance, seem at odds with this notion of professional neutrality. Public sector organizations in Australia are funded by governments and generally deliver services such as education and health but also include public corporations such as government-owned utilities delivering power and water services. This study shows that positioning undertaken by such

---

1 See a review of the published literature in James (in press).
government agencies and organizations is something quite different to that which is seen in marketing contexts.

**POSITIONING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Only one specific public relations positioning definition was found (Motion 1997) apart that that put forward by the author (James, in press). Motion take a discourse approach and states that:

... positioning is a subjectifying process of locating and being located within discourse sites or spaces...involves the struggle to create what may be known and how it may be known...Positioning may be either a strategic maneuver or ploy by an individual, or the result of the discourses one is situated within as a subject of particular institutional relations, power relations, and social relations (1997, 7).

Although this definition is very apt to what the author has observed in her research, another, albeit related, definition that aligns more with what could be termed mainstream public relations practice rather than critical theoretical approaches was suggested by James (in press):

Positioning can be defined as the strategic attempt to stake out and occupy a site of intentional representation in the contested space where meanings are constructed, contested and reconstructed.

This definition could serve as part of an heuristic for positioning in public relations and embraces a more social constructionist theoretical perspective. It draws on the work of Berger (1999, 186) where he suggested that:

public relations provides organizations with dynamic and comprehensive methods and processes of intentional representation in contested sites in which information is exchanged, meaning constructed and managed, and consensus, consent, and legitimation gained or lost with others.

And that:

“representation refers to the purposeful expression of organizational voice(s) and appearance(s) to influence others”.

James (in press) built on this new definition and developed a provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations (see Figure 1) based on the Positioning Theory from the field of social psychology developed by Harré and van Langenhove (1999). This framework has been applied to 21 Australian award-winning government agency/public sector organizations’ communication campaigns2 from the period 1999-2008. All had won a Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target Award in their categories. There were three award entries from federal government-funded organizations, 14 from state government-funded organizations (covering 5 of the 8 Australian states and territories) and 4 from local government-funded organizations. The data to which the framework was applied was that generated by textual and thematic analysis of the award entry texts and the transcripts of interviews with selected practitioners who designed award-winning government communication campaigns in recent years.

**APPLYING THE PROVISIONAL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTENTIONAL POSITIONING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The framework for intentional positioning in public relations campaigns has four domains as shown in Figure 1 below.3

Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework for Intentional Positioning in Public Relations Campaigns – mark II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIONING TRIANGLE DOMAIN</th>
<th>POSITIONING TYPE DOMAIN</th>
<th>POSITIONING PURPOSE DOMAIN</th>
<th>GOAL DOMAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of first positioning triangle pole of position, i.e. entity’s point of view of its own and stakeholders’ actual and potential positions e.g. determine the desired position</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate self positioning</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of positioning for the purposes of ingratiation</td>
<td>Evidence of intended positioning related to a desire to achieve a specific goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of second positioning triangle pole of speech act/action, i.e. language/action used to achieve an specific consequence or outcome e.g. enact the desired position</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced self positioning</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of positioning for the purposes of intimidation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of the third positioning triangle pole is story i.e. a storyline that the entity has chosen to promulgate through its public relations activities e.g. construct meaning through storylines about the position declared</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate positioning of others</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of positioning for the purposes of self promotion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of positioning for the purposes of exemplification</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of positioning for the purposes of supplication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of positioning for the purposes of facilitation</td>
<td>Evidence of situations of positioning for the purposes of supplication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 See appendix one for the listing of award entries.

3 A comprehensive explanation of the framework and its background can be found in James (in press).
The work undertaken to date by the author to apply this conceptual framework to examples of practice as described in Australian award entries indicates that for successful positioning to occur, the three poles of the positioning triangle should be aligned (the positioning triangle domain). It should be clear as to the type of positioning that is occurring (the positioning type domain) and for what purpose it is being undertaken (the positioning purpose domain). In Harré and van Langenhove’s (1999) Positioning Theory, five purposes for positioning were articulated however, James (in press), in adapting their work for a public relations context, identified a possible need for another purpose category – positioning for the purposes of facilitation. It should be noted that the framework presented in this paper has been labeled “mark II” as the sixth purpose for positioning, facilitation, has been added in light of the results of this current project. The final domain of the positioning framework is the goal domain i.e. there should be a clear overarching strategic communication goal to which the positioning aligns.

Possibly the most challenging part of the framework as proposed by James (in press) is the positioning triangle domain, and specifically, the second pole of the positioning triangle - speech act/action. At the first pole, the desired positioning is determined through analysis of research findings and strategic decision-making. It is at the second pole of the positioning triangle where the desired positioning is enacted and this process draws on Speech Act Theory, a theoretical area with which few public relations scholars apart from Neff (1998; 2008) have engaged. Searle (1979), who built on the work of Austin (1962), suggests five ways of using language or “five general categories of illocutionary acts” (Searle 1979, viii):

- We tell people how things are (Assertives), we try to get them to do things (Directives), we commit ourselves to doing things (Commissives), we express our feelings and attitudes (Expressives), and we bring about changes in the world through our utterances (Declarations). (Searle 1979, vii).

The method I used in this project aligns with Searle’s approach which he states is “in a sense empirical” (1979, viii) but which I view as interpretative. It involves looking at the uses of language in each award entry and identifying evidence of one or more of the five general categories of Speech act/actions in the context of the discourse within which the award entry is situated. I then claim that particular speech-acts/actions can be classified under these headings. This approach is more than just looking for verbs in the text such as “announce” or “proclaim”, which Searle states is the most common error people make with speech act/action. At the first pole, the desired positioning is determined through analysis of research findings and strategic decision-making. It is at the second pole of the positioning triangle where the desired positioning is enacted and this process draws on Speech Act Theory, a theoretical area with which few public relations scholars apart from Neff (1998; 2008) have engaged. Searle (1979), who built on the work of Austin (1962), suggests five ways of using language or “five general categories of illocutionary acts” (Searle 1979, viii):  

- We tell people how things are (Assertives), we try to get them to do things (Directives), we commit ourselves to doing things (Commissives), we express our feelings and attitudes (Expressives), and we bring about changes in the world through our utterances (Declarations). (Searle 1979, vii).

In general situations, most illocutionary acts are not intended to have specific perlocutionary effects but I would argue that in the context of public relations campaigns, most are intended to have such effects, i.e. to have target publics construct the meaning that public relations practitioners intend for them (James 2009). Bach (1998, np) states that “the perlocutionary act is a matter of trying to get the hearer to form some correlative attitude and in some cases to act in a certain way”. The evidence in this study indicates this is what organisations were attempting, and according to their evaluation statements, actually achieved. At the third pole of the positioning triangle the storylines are invoked and are those developed and promulgated by the public relations practitioner to support the positioning. The storylines are determined by the first and second poles – hence the positioning triangle is a “mutually determining triad” (van Langenhove and Harré 1999, 18). To pursue storylines that are incongruent with the first two positioning triangle poles would mean the desired positioning would not be achieved. This links back to the role of key messages in public relations campaigns and the importance placed by practitioners on consistent messaging in supporting believability (Bruce & Tini 2008).

LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH AND THE FRAMEWORK

I am continuing to further develop and test the provisional conceptual framework and this work is ongoing. Some of the challenges posed by the inclusion of aspects of Speech Act Theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1979) into the framework are not straightforward, especially as they relate to the concept of perlocutionary effects and the active role of audiences in the co-construction of meaning. Some of the limitations of Speech Act Theory have been explored (e.g. Taillard 2000) and other scholars have added to, adapted or revised the Theory (e.g. Bach and Harnish 1979; Gu 1993; Hornsby 1994), but the tenet of Austin (1962) that words do not only describe things but that they also do things remains central. The author is currently examining the work of Taillard (2000) and others in examining the role of persuasion in intentional positioning.

APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK TO THE AWARD ENTRY DATA – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 21 award entries examined, 19 illustrated intentional positioning being undertaken when the framework was applied to the award entry data, i.e. the three positioning triangle poles were evident and were aligned, the positioning type and positioning purpose were identifiable and the positioning occurred within the context of the organization’s desire to achieve a specific goal. The two entries that were not included in these findings (2000 C9...
and 1999 H8) were ambiguous as to whether they did or did not demonstrate positioning techniques so were omitted from this discussion. The next section will discuss the results in more detail and will primarily use only two of the award entries to illustrate the findings due to the constraints of word limits preventing more of the textual analysis to be included. These two award entries were randomly selected as examples of a large and relatively small scale campaign. There was no evidence of differences between techniques used across the decade in which the award entries were submitted. Pertinent comments from the interview transcripts will also be included when they further illuminate how positioning is undertaken in government communications.

**The positioning triangle**

The three poles of the positioning triangle were evident and were aligned in each of the 19 award entries.

**Pole 1 of the triangle - Position determined**

Each of the award entries showed evidence of having a desired position as part of their campaign and the determining of this desired position was informed by research in all cases. This is not surprising as the Golden Target Award entry template dictates that the campaign research be detailed by the entrant, however, it was very clear that in the research, regard was given to the overall campaign goal and the relative actual and potential positions of publics and stakeholders. Wu (2007, 417) states that “the underlying reason for stakeholder analysis is to identify, position, understand and predict those conflicting and often contentious relationships among various constituents”. This is illustrated in the case of the lead up to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games where the Olympic Roads and Transport Authority (ORTA) listed two “top line” objectives: positioning ORTA as a credible, professional organization and bringing the Sydney community from a position of apprehension about Olympic transport to a level of public confidence in transport strategies (1999 A 11). Thus ORTA had determined its desired position but had also determined the position of a key public – the transport users. However, a number of campaigns did not include the words “position” or “positioning” in the text but there was ample evidence that positioning was being undertaken when the framework was applied. For example the City of Casey set out in a community relations communication program (2003 A 6) to eradicate all graffiti from its precincts. The program had three elements – “eradication, education and enforcement”. Graffiti was positioned as “not cool”, as “senseless vandalism” and was subject to “harsh penalties”. Although the word “positioning” was not used in the award entry, there were clear positioning elements evident when analysed using the framework for intentional positioning.

**Pole 2 of the triangle - Position enacted**

The second pole of the positioning triangle is when the desired position of the entity initiating the public relations activity is enacted through a speech-act. A speech act performs several acts simultaneously with the intent of the speaker being a key distinguishable factor. A speech act encompasses a) the act of saying something, b) what is being done by what is being said (such as declaring, requesting, promising), and c) how one is trying to affect one's audience (Bach 1998). Each of the award entries had a clear strategic intent to persuade, educate, motivate and otherwise get target publics to co-construct meanings intended for them. One interview respondent stated: “Ninety percent of the time the messages or the positioning we put out is done to call people to action to do something” - Respondent D

Organizations, once having determined what position they desired, undertook some kind of speech act/action to enact that position, most often through statements to target publics made through direct communication channels or the media. All 19 enacted their positioning through the use of Assertives, which tell people how things are (Searle 1979, viii). For example, in the ORTA award entry (1999 A 11), the positioning was enacted via the delivery of a series of set-piece announcements, “each self-contained but designed to collectively provide a consistent and coherent picture of Olympic transport arrangements”.

However, in addition to using Assertives, in other cases the positioning was also enacted through requests, orders or propositions to target publics, in what could be termed Directives (Searle 1979). There were 14 of the 19 award entries that could be identified as having used Directives in their positioning efforts. Six of the 19 award entries showed evidence of using what Searle (1979) described as Commissives – where organizations committed to do something; 4 of the 19 award entries illustrated elements that could be identified as Expressives, where feelings and attitudes are expressed; and only two of the 19 award entries could be shown to have used Declaratives – these were both instances where laws were introduced to declare behavior illegal – one related to the City of Casey’s anti-graffiti campaign (2003 A 6) and one to the Victorian Department of Primary Industry’s control of Equine Influenza campaign (2008 C4-3). Only one award entry demonstrated all five of the speech act categories and this was in the City of Casey graffiti eradication campaign (2003 A 6). The positioning was enacted at the second pole through Assertives – stating the way things were regarding graffiti, its image, its consequences and the City’s eradication program; Directives – the City was trying to get young people to stop doing graffiti; Commissives – the City committed to removing all graffiti reported within 24 hours; Expressives – the attitude was expressed “graffiti is not cool” and, Declaratives – new local law restricting “the availability of aerosol spray cans”.

**Pole 3 of the triangle - Position storyline**

The third pole of the positioning triangle is the storyline, i.e. what storylines about the organization’s declared position will support the holding of that position. Harré and van Langenhove (1999) tell us that with certain positions come the rights to use certain storylines and that positioning will fail if storylines do not align with the position determined at the first pole and enacted at the second pole of the positioning triangle. Storylines in a public relations context are in large part the key messages developed and disseminated through various channels and tailored to the needs of particular audiences, e.g.

“We tend to work on three key messages that are your main themes of how you want to position this initiative and then the supporting facts that back up each of those would probably vary for audiences” – Respondent J
One interview respondent disagreed that it was about key messages, stating it was more about keeping to particular themes:

“I’m not that formal and I’m not that dogmatic about it, saying these words in these ways, although there are sometimes I would, but generally speaking there are the themes rather than a key message in my case…the theme is that these will do these things for you so I’m more likely to stick to the themes and I make it clear that we need to keep repeating that in different ways…this is how we are positioning ourselves about it and this is what we believe and when you speak about it you represent that view” - Respondent C

The following example indicates the process of determining the positioning of the organisation and how this led to the positioning enactment and the development of the supporting storyline:
The Hospital Board had identified a common vision for the Hospital's redevelopment, but it needed to be clear on a preferred organisational position on the redevelopment. Socom [a PR agency] took this vision and developed the following key messages that underpinned all communications activities. (2007 C2 – 2)

The success of the campaign could be attributed to this strong underpinning – everything in the positioning triangle aligned. One local government interview respondent talked about the potential for issues and problems when the messages did not align with the rest of the campaign:

“Messages needs to gel with everything else that’s being put out there…because while the project manager may say okay this is what we want people to know, if you’ve got the mayor or the chairperson or somebody in the paper saying something completely different, it just, it erodes your credibility as a project team, but it also puts that councillor or mayor or whoever in a difficult position, because they’ve then got to explain why” - Respondent D.

It is evident that inconsistent storylines start to “derail” the positioning strategy as the positioning triangle loses its stability. When Harré and van Langenhove (1999) discuss certain positions opening up the possibility of certain storylines, it also means that other storylines will be closed off. You can’t run storylines about being an environmentally friendly organization if you’ve determined a public position of profit maximization at any cost. It won’t “gel”. The respondent expanded on this point:

“There’s no point putting out a message, or positioning something in a way that it’s not because our stakeholders will always find out. There’s no point us saying okay we’re going to address something and then nothing ever being done about it because then that’ll result in a bigger furor at the end of the project than you ever had at the beginning” - Respondent D.

The respondent was indicating that such a tactic wouldn’t make sense and it would raise questions in the minds of the media and other target publics – the positioning wouldn’t hold. Another interview respondent reinforced that the various aspects of the positioning must align:

“You could construct a campaign that links into their understanding of the good work the x organisation does and if they believe what they know about the x organisation, that it’s good, then that kind of translates to being able to build, well, a message that this must be okay too. And then if they believe that the x say it’s okay then it must be okay - so those two things coming in together position it as being okay” - Respondent J

This alignment of the storylines across various channels can be seen in the ORTA example (1999 A 11) - once announcements had been made about particular transport arrangements, spokespersons went on radio to explain what the arrangements were, how they’d be organized and how people could access transport across the city; media events and launches were held to show people the new fleets of buses coming to town; brochures were developed and distributed; homes along the Olympic routes were direct mailed information about impacts; community group information sessions were held and so on. In the City of Casey graffiti campaign (2003 A 6) the storylines at the third positioning triangle pole were delivered via key messages through media channels and education sessions with school students – telling people how to report graffiti, and educating about the costs and consequences of graffiti. This was supported through key messages in advertisements, fridge magnets, websites, visual displays and direct marketing. One prominent tactic was the development of a four-page comic and “pay if you spray” stickers distributed to school students. It can be seen that all poles of the triangle were aligned and this held the desired position for these organizations.

The positioning type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate self positioning</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced self positioning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of deliberate positioning of others</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of situations of forced positioning of others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is evidence in all award entries that deliberate self positioning was occurring however there were also other types of positioning occurring concurrently in many cases. It is clear that in the ORTA award entry, the effort was primarily to deliberately “self-position” the organization as credible and professional and to deliberately position Sydneysiders (“others”) as needing to be patient - “ORTA has been careful to stress the difficulties to be faced and the need for public cooperation and patience” (1999 A 11). In the award entry text, it was clearly stated that the strategy to reposition Sydneysiders from “a position of apprehension to one of confidence” was about “underpromising and overdelivering”. The City of Casey deliberately self-positioned graffiti in order to facilitate its eradication but deliberately positioned others, such as the shopowners as having a part to play in the program due to the face that they had sold spray paint in the past but were now prevented from doing so by the introduction of the new legislation.

Positioning purpose
Table 3 – Positioning purpose domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of ingratiation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of intimidation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of self promotion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of exemplification</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of positioning for the purposes of supplication</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of position for the purposes of facilitation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study of government agency/public sector communication campaigns confirms the need for the additional category of facilitation – many of the award entries could not be categorized as primarily self-promotion, exemplification, supplication, intimidation or ingratiation. In most cases, organizations in this study were aiming to facilitate an outcome – better transport, use of support services, secure water supply e.g. in the Brisbane Aquifer project (2007 C6-25), the Council did carry out positioning for the purposes of self-promotion (to better ensure re-election of Councillors) and possibly even exemplification (of best practice in water management) however positioning for the purposes of facilitation i.e. facilitating the provision of a safe water supply seems to be the primary purpose.

Positioning goal

Each of the positioning efforts in the award entries was related to specifically stated goals and objectives. The positioning was never undertaken in a “vacuum” but always occurred in the context of the organization’s strategic intent to achieve the stated goal/s.

CONCLUSION

Through the application of the positioning framework, evidence is presented that shows that the communication campaigns of the government agencies and public sector organizations intended to position their idea/s, their offering or their service in a particular way in the minds of target publics and that they employed a range of techniques to enact the intended positioning. The application of the provisional conceptual framework for intentional positioning in public relations (James, in press) to these examples of practice in government communications indicates that the framework can provide a useful tool for analyzing campaigns. Even in cases where there was no mention of the word “position” or a stated aim that positioning was being attempted, by applying the framework to a particular campaign, it can be determined whether positioning is taking place in a public relations context.

Positioning activities were employed to facilitate target publics constructing the meaning that the government agency/public sector organization intended for them – for example, that the local council is listening to its constituents; that living in Canberra would be a great thing to do; that building a new hospital on the current site would be the best outcome for all; that moving maternity services to a new location is safest for mothers and babies; that sending children to a particular government school saves parents’ money; that farmers need to consider their water needs; that it’s acceptable for young men to need support following disasters and that equine influenza outbreaks require certain measures to be taken by the community. These are in the main not marketing communication campaigns but campaigns designed to construct an “interpretive potential” (Neff 2008, 92) with a view to persuading or influencing identified target publics to view something a particular way or undertake a certain action, thus facilitating the achievement of specific organizational goals.

On the basis of the results and analysis, it can be concluded that the framework offers a more comprehensive approach to positioning than found in marketing models and also brings together elements identified by other public relations researchers in a single framework. The framework will need further testing and refinement but this study’s findings show that positioning is a significant part of government agency and public sector communication practice.

The author would like to express appreciation to her doctoral thesis supervisors, Associate Professor Marj Kibby, University of Newcastle, Australia, and Dr Christine Daymon, Curtin Business School, Australia, for their constructive feedback and guidance during my investigation of intentional positioning in public relations.
### APPENDIX 1

**Golden Target Award Winning Entries – Government agencies and public sector organisations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALL NO.*</th>
<th>CAMPAIGN TITLE</th>
<th>CLIENT</th>
<th>PR COMPANY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 1999 A11</td>
<td>A Prescription For (Disaster) Success</td>
<td>Olympic Roads and Transport Authority (ORTA)</td>
<td>Olympic Roads and Transport Authority (ORTA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 2000 A17</td>
<td>Adult Prisoner Work Camps - Community Communications</td>
<td>Ministry For Justice</td>
<td>Ministry For Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 2003 B7</td>
<td>Australia Day - Celebrate What's Great</td>
<td>National Australia Day Council</td>
<td>The National Australia Day Council Communications and Marketing Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 2003 F5</td>
<td>Ball bombings: Supporting Western Australians after the tragedy</td>
<td>Department for Community Development WA</td>
<td>Department for Community Development (Jane Machin-Evans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 2007 C6-25</td>
<td>Brisbane Aquifer Project</td>
<td>Brisbane Water</td>
<td>Marcom Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 2007 C2-2</td>
<td>Can you see and hear us?</td>
<td>SOCOM</td>
<td>Eye and Ear Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 2007 C7-7</td>
<td>Converting Staff Perceptions</td>
<td>Department of Water, Western Australia</td>
<td>Metropolitan Water, Western Australia (Garth Weadman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 2007 C11</td>
<td>Don't Let Another Year Go By</td>
<td>Northern Territory University</td>
<td>Northern Territory University (Tracy Jones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 2004 C3</td>
<td>Engaging DPI Staff in the White Paper for Water</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industries (Vic)</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industries (Vic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. 2006 C15-3</td>
<td>Kaleaya Hospital Maternity Unit</td>
<td>South Metropolitan Area Health Service</td>
<td>Mills Wilson Communication Consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. 2006 C1-5</td>
<td>Live in Canberra Campaign</td>
<td>ACT Government</td>
<td>ACT Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. 2006 C2-4</td>
<td>NoLink! Sorry, no service for outer Melbourne</td>
<td>Interface Councils</td>
<td>Socorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. 2006 C5-5</td>
<td>Promising Our Children a World-Class Hospital</td>
<td>Royal Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>Socorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. 2007 C4-1</td>
<td>Returning Power to Collinsville</td>
<td>Ergon Energy</td>
<td>Powerlink Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. 2002 A17</td>
<td>Royal Visit To South Australia By Her Majesty The Queen And His Royal Highness The Duke Of Edinburgh</td>
<td>South Australia, Department of Premier and Cabinet</td>
<td>Public Relations Institute of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. 2000 C9</td>
<td>Show Cause</td>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. 2007 C6-28</td>
<td>Sir Samuel Griffith Drive Operation Review</td>
<td>MarCom Communication</td>
<td>MarCom Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. 1999 H8</td>
<td>Take Control</td>
<td>Southbank Institute of TAFE</td>
<td>Media Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. 2003 A6</td>
<td>The Writings's on the Wall - Casey stamps out graffiti</td>
<td>City of Casey, Victoria</td>
<td>City of Casey, Victoria (Ros Weadman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. 2008 C4-3</td>
<td>Equine Influenza - Victoria</td>
<td>Biosecurity Victoria</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Call nos. are those listed on the database of award entries at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ and can be used to retrieve the award entries included in the study.

### REFERENCES


### Appendix H Results linked to goals/objectives – Finding 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*¹</th>
<th>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</th>
<th>Excerpt from goals/objectives</th>
<th>Excerpt from results and evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005A4</td>
<td>Positioning Alcan as credible and capable in terms of the proposed development.</td>
<td>To help secure stakeholder approval of the Gove refinery expansion, while managing expectations.</td>
<td>The goal was achieved: approval secured September 2004...Agreed positioning reflected in 100% of materials...Research undertaken 3 months into the positioning campaign showed improved perceptions/awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003B7</td>
<td>To enhance the meaning of Australia Day</td>
<td>To inspire national pride by educating Australians about the meaning behind what we celebrate on Australia Day to inform and encourage active citizenship.</td>
<td>This objective was ACHIEVED by the uniformed use of campaign key messages in all information that was disseminated and available to the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004G2</td>
<td>The Trust was credible and worthy of support, was not like other agencies and was an important adviser to government</td>
<td>To redress the severe imbalance in public perception and position the Trust for the future.</td>
<td>...we assess the program was 100% effective in redressing the imbalance in the child abuse debate and the positioning of the Trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C6 - 25</td>
<td>That groundwater was a logical, safe and well tested alternative water supply and testing was not wasting water</td>
<td>To proactively manage the impacts of an extremely fast-moving and ever-changing investigative program. Equally important was the need to correct perceptions around groundwater safety and potential concerns</td>
<td>“OUTSTANDING”. The results of this fast-paced program demonstrate that community relations does not have to be all about “consultation”. Where consultation is not possible, exceptional outcomes can still be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Call nos. are those listed on the database of award entries at www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/ and can be used to retrieve the award entries included in the study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</th>
<th>Excerpt from goals/objectives</th>
<th>Excerpt from results and evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 4</td>
<td>That therapeutic cloning has the best chance of success, Australia should not to fall behind in this and it was a matter for a conscience vote.</td>
<td>To persuade the Government to support a conscience vote; to secure the passage of Federal legislation ... to legalise therapeutic cloning for medical research purposes.</td>
<td>As anticipated, the Bill’s passage through the House of Representatives on December 5, 2006 was much smoother, passing by 82 votes to 62...our communications campaign ... clearly cut-through...The influence of CAMRA’s campaign is clear from a review of the sample media clips ...both in terms of CAMRA’s role in commenting and in terms of delivering the agreed key messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C2 - 2</td>
<td>With increasing need for services with the aging population the Ear and Eye Hospital is best geographically situated to meet that need</td>
<td>Secure State Government commitment to redevelop the Eye and Ear Hospital on its current site.</td>
<td>The State Labor party announced it would support the redevelopment of the Eye and Ear Hospital on its current site...This represented a significant change in Government policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 16</td>
<td>QGGA is a member-oriented, service-providing organisation with members’ needs at the forefront</td>
<td>Reduce the number of members who do not renew in 1998/99. Currently about 10 percent of members do not renew....Maintain QGG’s leadership and focus on agripolitics while undertaking additional membership marketing activities.</td>
<td>WCC’s membership communication program achieved outstanding results... The communication campaign allowed the QGGA to enter into the AgForce merger with power in numbers. As a result of the CU’s lack of communication with members prior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to and during the merger period, membership numbers dropped dramatically. This caused them to have little power in merger negotiations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C17-3</td>
<td>Speedway is great family fun and is exciting to watch – come and try it</td>
<td>Our overall goal was to increase the number of spectators at the Darwin Speedway.</td>
<td>This campaign achieved its objective, with an increase in the number of spectators at the Speedway from around 1000 at the start of the season to almost 4000 by the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C3 - 9</td>
<td>The closure is necessary, the company needs your ongoing support until the closure, and the company will support employees through the process and will continue to value all stakeholders.</td>
<td>Communicate the transfer of production from Toowoomba to Castlemaine as clearly as possible to stakeholders, while minimising the negative impact of the announcement on KRC’s reputation, brand and business operations.</td>
<td>Overall, the issues management campaign was extremely successful. Anecdotal feedback from employees indicated they felt well informed and were willing to support KRC to the end. KRC lead spokespeople were extremely responsive and willing to front the media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 E 8</td>
<td>That the process was valid and worth participating in, that the changes were worthwhile and that money was not being wasted.</td>
<td>To create awareness amongst industry member organisations of the process to create a single service entity, its importance and the benefits to be gained; To actively engage industry member organisations in discussion of the options for the new entity and elicit formal submissions; To inform individual levy paying members of the process and encourage participation.</td>
<td>HIASC had achieved all of its stated objectives. The committee not only received full levy paying member endorsement of its preferred company structure, but encouragement to continue beyond its charter to guide the industry through the transition period...Positive coverage was received ... In all accounts the process was reported as a step forward and all key messages on increased industry ownership, control and accountability were depicted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C7 - 7</td>
<td>That the move to the new department was worthwhile and would benefit all, that the feelings of employees were being considered.</td>
<td>The overriding goal was to shift staff perceptions, building a positive, motivated and dedicated workforce which would ensure the new Department of Water was able to open to the public, ready for business, as scheduled on January 2, 2006.</td>
<td>The Department of Water opened for business as planned on January 2, and was fully operational, with all staff in place, by June 30 2006. The Communications Plan insured it was able to overcome the significant cultural challenges presented by bringing a group of staff-many unwillingly-into a new organisation...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 E 3</td>
<td>This is a new business that is worth investing in.</td>
<td>To establish an understanding of the Cryosite business with the media, investors and the investment community; achieve widespread media coverage ...; establish an ongoing relationship with potential media followers; attract wider interest in the prospectus and ongoing story ...; explain the validity of the business plan ... to be achieved by information dissemination and media coverage; contribute to a fully subscribed prospectus by raising Cryosite's profile; contribute to a successful ASX listing on debut.</td>
<td>The story was reported nationally, garnering prospectus subscriber support and ongoing investor interest. Cryosite has achieved a level of media interest exceeding its size in the market. This is principally because of...the establishment of ongoing media followers. The company experienced a direct correlation between media hits and increased service enquiries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 G 11</td>
<td>That time is passing by and people don’t have to wait until next year to enrol</td>
<td>The campaign goals and objectives were: To drive targeted enquiries... and to communicate with new markets to attract interest from potential students who had never studied at the university before.</td>
<td>...the university increased EFTSU (Equivalent Full Time Student Unit) by in excess of 100 ... This brought its overall performance for the year to 105 per cent of target...One of the objectives of the campaign was to reach into new markets to attract interest from potential students who had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 J3</td>
<td>To portray Douglas Wood in a manner which might influence his captors to free him unharmed</td>
<td>There was one goal for the family's media and communication activities - free Douglas. Objectives: Use the Iraqi media to portray Douglas in a manner which might influence his captors to free him unharmed; Use the Australian and other media to present a positive message about Douglas Wood and his family to put further pressure on the captors; To maintain good relations with the Australian media through providing ready access to factual information to reduce the likelihood of reporters seeking other Wood stories that might move the focus away from the key objectives.</td>
<td>Because of the way in which Douglas was found and released - without the capture of his kidnappers - it has been impossible to determine what impact the campaign had on his discovery and return to freedom. The Mufti of Australia, Sheik Al-din Al Hilaly believed the campaign set up an atmosphere in Baghdad conducive to negotiating successfully with the kidnappers. Media exposure was enormous. It was also sympathetic and factual. There was little evidence of the media 'beating up' issues just to make a story. This was attributed to the constant availability of Neil Smail as media spokesman and the rapport he was able to build up with media people. 2. In Iraq Reports from Australian officials indicated there was greater interest in and concern about the fate of Douglas Wood among Iraqis than had been evident on previous occasions and attributed this to the family's campaign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 G15</td>
<td>That the credibility and appeal of Elders other business interests were now available in the new banking</td>
<td>The overall goal of the program was to launch Elders Rural Bank to metropolitan and regional Australia, and help secure $150 million in</td>
<td>The approach used for the launch was successful according to every level of evaluation required by the client, and has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 C4</td>
<td>Water Project Management Group (WPMG) and its activities were credible and reliable and that staff should accept, adopt and promulgate key messages about the White Paper reforms to DPI stakeholders.</td>
<td>deposits within the first 12 months.</td>
<td>since become a model for marketing and communication activities within Elders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 D6</td>
<td>The Summit is a unique opportunity for growers from throughout the country to participate as a national group in a consultative forum on the direction and vision for AWB International – The AWB deserves ongoing support</td>
<td>Ensure the Single Desk Summit is a credible and valid event through the comprehensive involvement of growers and the grains industry... AWB hoped to build a groundswell of support for the Single Desk and create a 'united front' of growers and grain industry bodies, championing the Single Desk to government...Use the Summit to demonstrate to industry, competitors and government a very high level of grower support for the Single Desk</td>
<td>By securing attendance by 198 participants (from a target of 150) including the GCA and affiliates, and AWB's Grower Consultative Groups, Red Agency met and exceeded this goal and its objectives.Following the Single Desk Summit, and during submissions to the WMR, Red Agency observed significant support expressed for the Single Desk system. Various Members of Parliament stated in the parliamentary chamber their...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 B3</td>
<td>That BMP was the way to go for cotton growers and that cotton growers were being responsible to the wider community</td>
<td>Improve community perception of the cotton industry by demonstrating a significant culture change in on-farm decision making and practices aimed at reducing the impacts on surrounding neighbours.</td>
<td>To evaluate the change in community sentiment towards the cotton industry expressed through the media, a media message analysis was conducted by Cox Inall Communications. The analysis covered 177 separate media items from print, radio and television during the period December 1998 to July 1999. Following the launch, 64% of all media items reported positive messages about Good Neighbours and the industry’s response to the beef residue issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C15 - 6</td>
<td>Eggs won’t raise your cholesterol and previous ideas about eggs doing so have been proven wrong.</td>
<td>Present the scientific evidence in a way that would change the knowledge, understanding and acceptance of Australia’s healthcare professionals regarding scientific evidence debunking the link between eggs and blood cholesterol levels. 2. Generate national media coverage to widely publicise the fact that eggs have the Heart Foundation ‘Tick’ and educate healthcare professionals and the public on the science behind this endorsement. 3. Change consumer opinion so that the consumption of eggs is not something they are worried about in relation to controlling or reducing blood cholesterol levels 4. Achieve 50% or more of 52% of GPs said the NHF Tick Program influenced their opinion on a healthy level of egg consumption and 60% of GPs said egg intake had little or no effect on cholesterol levels. Media interest and coverage was overwhelming. TV, print, and radio news and talkback all covered the story with hundreds of interviews conducted by the various NHF, AECL and ENAG spokespeople. A minimum of 283 media mentions were recorded. Only one mention was judged as negative. Newspoll consumer research commissioned by AECL showed a 25% improvement in consumer attitudes towards eggs and cholesterol and an 11% improvement in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*¹</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Egg products on shelf with NHF Tick</strong></td>
<td>understanding of the relationship between eggs and fat...sales volume increasing 14.4% compared to the equivalent period the preceding year...Within six months of launch, 59.7% of egg packaging by volume included the NHF tick nationwide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 E2</td>
<td><strong>This is a new product delivering good returns at some risk but is better than previous CDOs offered previously by others.</strong></td>
<td>To help develop aspects of the product and a marketing campaign that: created a new identity for a new investment product and the company issuing it; avoided the criticism that Nexus Bonds had suffered; would fill the issues of HY-FIs in Australia and New Zealand.</td>
<td>Both the Australian and New Zealand offers of HY-FIs were oversubscribed, with the Australian issue attracting $136 million from more than 2,000 investors...Our name and corporate identity for the product were well received and, as predicted, media used the musical allusion in creative headlines...Our media strategy prevented a repeat of the criticism of Nexus Bonds. All media articles contributed to investor understanding of the product. Only one quoted an investment adviser critical of CDO-structured investments for retail investors. The prospectuses contained greater explanation of the risks involved in the product than any previous or subsequent CDO issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 C4</td>
<td><strong>The best way to get info and communicate is through the intranet – even though it was previously unwieldy it is now good.</strong></td>
<td>The goal of the A/NZ Intranet is to be a trusted source of relevant, timely, easy to access information, - allowing employees to do their jobs better, while creating an open and</td>
<td>The results demonstrate that on all measurable outcomes the A/NZ Intranet Relaunch campaign has exceeded all expectations. The ANZ Intranet has become a trusted source of relevant, timely, easy to access information, - allowing employees to do their jobs better, while creating an open and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C10 - 3</td>
<td>IBM is not just about big business but also very relevant to SMEs</td>
<td>Shift market perception concerning IBM’s relevance and offering to SMEs; Assume a thought leadership position in the key mid-market sector; Establish and promote relationships with key industry influencers and SME representatives</td>
<td>... there have been impressive tangible results in terms of coverage, sales and ongoing influencer engagement and advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C7 - 2</td>
<td>Star City is taking staff communication needs seriously and management is committed to getting it right.</td>
<td>To improve Star City communications as measured by the annual Employee Opinion Survey by at least 10 per cent per annum; To educate and engage employees on a range of major issues including the promotion of Responsible Gambling and Responsible Service of Alcohol, reporting Illegal and Undesirable Activity and Customer Service. Success would be measured by surveys; Improve Customer Service levels by engaging staff so they improve their performance in the workplace. The aim was to lift patron advocacy of Star City by at least 20 per cent</td>
<td>...71 per cent of staff rate the company’s communications highly – a 20 per cent rise in 12 months... more than 90 per cent of staff retained the key messages. The campaign resulted in a surge in Star City’s customer service. The number of “advocates” – visitors prepared to recommend the casino to friends and family – rose from 19 per cent a year ago to more than 40 per cent in May 2006 – a 100 per cent increase compared with the target of 20 per cent...The campaign proved that, by meeting the needs of employees for better communications, we were able to boost staff knowledge and improve customer service to record levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C15 - 3</td>
<td>That moving the maternity unit it the right thing to do and that people can be confident in the services of the new</td>
<td>The goal of this campaign was to secure support for the move and instil confidence in the new maternity unit at Kaleeeya Hospital.</td>
<td>The most notable achievements of this campaign were that the opposition campaign failed and Kaleeeya’s maternity unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unit.</td>
<td>Our objectives were to: create a positive image for the new maternity unit – through use of positive media coverage and the development and delivery of a wide range of communications materials; prevent the counter-campaign gaining traction and causing a re-think on the move; ...communicate clear and accurate information to counter rumour and misinformation.</td>
<td>successfully opened on April 3 with an established identity...The campaign achieved positive media coverage for Kaleeya – during construction of the unit and since opening. The opposition group’s coverage declined then disappeared altogether and instead a “Welcome to the World” section featuring Kaleeya newborns now features in the local paper that once championed the opposition campaign ...Marketing collateral helped to provide a new “brand” identity for Kaleeya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C1 - 5</td>
<td>Canberra is more than just a boring government town, is a great place to live and offers solutions to problems experienced when living in Sydney.</td>
<td>Our primary objective was to identify a qualified group of prospects that we could follow up with. Our secondary objectives were to: ‘Sow the seed’ that Canberra is a great place to live and work. And to identify: Whether there was an opportunity to entice people to move to Canberra.</td>
<td>Live in Canberra has proven to be overwhelmingly successful...During the five weeks of the campaign more than 11,000 people sought more information about relocating to Canberra from the new website ......Of the 558 people who called, over 300 (54%) have asked to be put through to a case manager. These people are still being supported and followed-up. Importantly, we facilitated the move of the first residents here in June, less than 10 weeks from the campaign’s commencement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C4 - 3</td>
<td>Snack items may not be safe now and we’re protecting you until all is okay – come back and buy then - Masterfoods</td>
<td>Recall all Mars® and Snickers® products quickly and safely in NSW whilst protecting the reputation of MasterFoods. Objectives: 1.Protect public safety. 2. Ensure 90% of the</td>
<td>MasterFoods has achieved their goal of recalling ... products quickly and safely in NSW whilst protecting the reputation of MasterFoods....The media coverage ...92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>is grateful for your understanding</td>
<td>key messages are contained in the media coverage. 3. Return the products to shelf when it was safe, with at least 80% public support. 4. Return product sales to normal levels within four weeks of return.</td>
<td>contained the key messages prepared for each stage of the campaign and as translated in the media releases issued...98% of the community believed that MasterFoods had done more than they had expected them to do or had done the right thing...sales were 250% above average during the first week back on sale, with sales remaining above average for the following four months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 B13</td>
<td>That McDonalds is making a valuable contribution to the 2000 Olympic Games.</td>
<td>To position McDonald's as a valuable contributor to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and to communicate the benefits the sponsorship will bring to our employees and the communities in which we operate.</td>
<td>...Australia has set the benchmark for McDonald's Global alliances internationally. Many of the programs have become world's best practice not only for the Olympic games but for other activities such as the World Cup Soccer and Disney...Media Coverage/Awareness - Over 500 items appeared in all of our target media with coverage in a diverse range of media including print, broadcast and electronic. McDonald's Employee Involvement - Through the public relations program, involvement of McDonald's employees has been significant...the Program lifted the awareness of the Olympic Games in non-Sydney areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C9 -1</td>
<td>This state government selective high school can meet the educational needs</td>
<td>The goal of the strategy was to educate and inform the parents of gifted and talented</td>
<td>...strategy was highly successful and the objective, to achieve 400 applications from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of your gifted and talented children and you should apply.</td>
<td>students of the benefits of selective schooling and the capacity of the public education system to deliver it. The campaign objective was to achieve 400 applications from students to sit the selection examination with an expectation that 160 of them were of the calibre to be eligible to be offered a place.</td>
<td>students to sit the selection examination with an expectation that 160 of them were of the calibre to be eligible to be offered a place, was easily exceeded. Students who qualified for Perth Modern School were double the number of available places. On that basis, the degree of success is 100%.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 C7</td>
<td>Nippy’s will do all it can to protect the public and if Nippy’s has done anything wrong they’re open to due process and inspection. Then, Nippy’s is okay to drink again.</td>
<td>The objectives were: Present Nippy's as concerned for the safety of its customers, rather than its own future; Minimise media criticism and speculation and manage media interest; Minimise the loss in sales; Prevent further infections.</td>
<td>As a result of the responsible and positive way in which the issue was handled (and as a result of the considerable goodwill within the SA community built up by Nippy’s over the past 32 years) the company has enjoyed strong support from its customers, retailers and distributors and has maintained its market share...The close cooperation and ability of the crisis team to develop the right strategy and act upon it confidently gave Nippy’s the critical edge in issues management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C2 - 4</td>
<td>Bus services were urgently needed in the outer suburbs for social, economic and environmental reasons.</td>
<td>Influence the Victorian Government to spend an additional $50 million annually to provide a minimum level of public transport service in Interface Councils. Objectives: Relationships - Build constructive dialogue with government decision makers and influencers... Partnerships: Join with two other allied advocate groups to proliferate discussion about</td>
<td>The Interface Councils surpassed the goal of attracting $50 million annually for a minimum level of public transport service to their region in the 2006-7 state budget....Relationships: ...100% success; The Interface Councils formed strong links with 4 peak groups and two local community groups to spread their message...Over 40 local and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*1</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>public transport...Media: Influence 20 stories in local and metropolitan press to convey messages and generate public debate regarding the issue. Advocacy: Advocate for additional bus services...</td>
<td>metropolitan newspaper stories carried the Interface Councils’ key messages over an 18 month period.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A11</td>
<td>ORTA is providing effective Olympic public transport arrangements - fostering a public and media conclusion that “it’s not as I thought it would be”</td>
<td>To position ORTA as a credible, professional organisation; To bring the Sydney community from a position of apprehension about Olympic transport to a level of public confidence in transport strategies; and To progressively educate the community about Olympic transport arrangements.</td>
<td>Encouraged by continuing campaigns and information, more than 2.3 million people have now travelled to Homebush Bay on its new public transport system...one of the most encouraging results achieved by ORTA has been a relative absence of negative publicity. In an area of Olympic operation with few immediate positives and many contentious issues, ORTA has been very successful in averting an expected avalanche of negative suburban and metropolitan coverage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C6 - 5</td>
<td>We really want to get the best outcome for the hospital development and we want your input.</td>
<td>Determine how the best children’s hospital could be built in the best location with maximum community support. Objectives: Ensure that rebuilding the RCH poses no threat to its reputation and major fundraising efforts; Secure 90% support for the new hospital among stakeholders...Attain 500 participants for the consultation; Manage media so that 70% of coverage contains key messages.</td>
<td>Socom’s consultations captured the aspirations of the community, resulting in a $850 million commitment by Government to rebuild the RCH...Over 650 people participated in the consultation in some way. 110 people took part in the initial research and 202 people attended expos... Eighty-four percent of media reports reflected positive aspects of the new hospital...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 A20</td>
<td>Just because Australia was disease</td>
<td>Raise awareness among livestock producers</td>
<td>For the first time, 100% of AHA's industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>free, farmers couldn’t be complacent and must remain vigilant.</td>
<td>about emergency animal diseases, the need to check livestock regularly for unusual symptoms, and to report these symptoms quickly through the right channels. Specific objectives: 1. Help AHA build stronger and more active relationships with government and industry partners...2. Secure media coverage ... with the aim of involving more than 50% of program &quot;champions&quot; in media liaison. 3. Raise awareness among two specific industry sectors...and build relationships with key industry groups.</td>
<td>members and government partners were actively involved in the campaign, creating the platform for improved ongoing relations with AHA...Industry and government partners enthusiastically endorsed the new tag line...89% producers were able to identify unprompted an appropriate first point of contact to report disease symptoms; 59% of respondents recalled seeing information about the campaign, up from 44% in 2000. 51% of advocates who responded to the survey worked with the media...87% of media monitored carried the campaign slogan ...48% used one or more photos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 B14</td>
<td>If you were abused in an Irish institution you can /are invited to seek redress from the Irish government</td>
<td>The central goals of this project were to raise awareness of availability of redress to Australian-based survivors of residential abuse in Ireland and to put survivors who were interested in applying for redress in contact with legal advice.</td>
<td>...small measurable objectives were set, most of which were fully realised except for an expectation of more widespread regional and local media coverage. However, this objective will be targeted more extensively during a Phase Two campaign that will occur this year...Overall, with 50 cases currently applying to the redress board, the program was more successful than expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C4-1</td>
<td>That the restoration is a complex task but that the companies are doing all they can to restore power asap and are</td>
<td>To communicate promptly and effectively to stakeholders that Powerlink and Ergon Energy were committed to working around the clock as quickly and safely as possible to complete a</td>
<td>The goal was achieved. Powerlink and Ergon Energy used targeted communication channels to keep stakeholders – especially customers – educated about the complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>working around the clock to do so.</td>
<td>highly complicated power restoration effort. Objectives: 1. Educate target publics about the complex challenges associated with restoring power and empower them to make informed decisions about their own situation in relation to power supply 2. Mitigate negative perceptions about the incident and ensure balanced or positive media coverage 3. Protect reputations...</td>
<td>of restoration, emphasising commitment to working around the clock... negativity towards both Powerlink and Ergon Energy was mitigated and importantly, organisational reputations were protected, and in fact strengthened. Strong key messages apparent in media coverage...51% of all media items mentioning Powerlink featured Powerlink’s Chief Operating Officer...75% of all media items mentioned Ergon Energy or included an Ergon Energy spokesperson...The prominence of organisational spokespeople helped communicate the right messages and defuse what may have otherwise been damaging coverage...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2006 C16 - 2 Rio Tinto is committed to facilitating a stronger and more sustainable Western Australian community by establishing and supporting a Future Fund

To assist in facilitating a stronger and more sustainable Western Australian community; To enable Rio Tinto to share business success, skills, knowledge and resources; To achieve reputational benefits for Rio Tinto in Western Australia; To assist Rio Tinto to engage with stakeholders outside of the usual channels of communications. $10.6 million has been committed to 34 partnerships with a total program value of $31 million...Annual partnership workshops, networking and training events have been hosted increasing understanding of partnerships among partners and Government. Close collaboration with partners has enabled sharing of skills, expertise, in kind and other resources...Rio Tinto has achieved transparency in community investment further enhancing its reputation...The diversity of partners has
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.*</th>
<th>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</th>
<th>Excerpt from goals/objectives</th>
<th>Excerpt from results and evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002 A17</td>
<td>This was a special visit, a positive for SA and everyone (public, media, venues etc) would get an appropriate level of access to the royal couple</td>
<td>Set a national benchmark in successfully managing the public impact of the 2002 Royal Visit by producing a result that will exceed Government expectations, delight the public, and present all media with an experience noted for its professionalism and innovation. Objectives: 1. Optimise positive public interest in the event; 2. Satisfy demands of regional, metropolitan, national and international media; 3. Manage overlapping requirements of protocol and security; 4. Satisfy the differing needs of host venues and Government; 5. Identify and maximise opportunities with long term residual value to the State.</td>
<td>Huge public turnouts...Unprecedented coverage of route maps and programs via all media...All media coverage excellent...Media expressed satisfaction with arrangements and how helpful it had been ...Buckingham Palace conveyed gratitude for PR arrangements...SA Police praised media management...PR Strategy to be used as a model for future Royal Visits...Transport SA/Police relationship enhanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 H25</td>
<td>Only chance to legally own Gallipoli sand - the merchandise relevant and desirable, particularly given that for many, a trip to Anzac Cove is not feasible.</td>
<td>Achieve the Sands of Gallipoli national sales target of $500,000 by creating a positive environment for sales through: National and state media coverage which achieves big impact with a low budget; Effective management of anticipated issues surrounding the sensitivity of the Gallipoli legend.</td>
<td>We assess the goal and objectives was 100% achieved. The sales target was met within 8 weeks of launch. The anticipated issue concerning the commercialisation of the Gallipoli legend arose through radio talk back and created a wave of coverage in print and online media...The weight of opinion was against those who had criticised the collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 G11</td>
<td>Sentek is a leader and innovator in</td>
<td>Raise Sentek's profile in South Australia, and</td>
<td>The project created a valuable opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>research and development and has a great product coming onto the market to help farmers manage salinity that has the backing of scientists.</td>
<td>nationally, positioning the company as a leader and innovator in research and development. Objectives: 1. Create an opportunity for Sentek to engage independent researchers and industry influencers, building stronger collaborative relations and harnessing their support to reinforce the credibility of its technology; 2. Raise awareness among primary producers about Sentek and its technology, and how it will help manage salinity and fertiliser; 3. Generate immediate and widespread media coverage targeting key influencers and primary industry sectors.</td>
<td>for Sentek to engage independent researchers and industry influencers, by securing two of Australia's most respected scientists and a respected horticulture-sector adviser who directly influences hundreds of leading irrigators and primary producers. The involvement of these individuals also added substantial credibility and media appeal to the campaign; and clearly positioned Sentek as a respected leader in its field. Media liaison: The program succeeded beyond expectations in generating immediate and widespread media coverage, securing reports containing the key messages in priority media and reaching the target publics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 C9</td>
<td>This journal is worth subscribing to as it is specifically tailored for your interests and tastes.</td>
<td>Enhance the reputation of the Faculty with alumni, students, staff and supporters; Re-establish relationships with Faculty alumni; Assist in locating Faculty alumni; Titillate visually and intellectually; Engage intellectually; Provide opportunities for interaction; Reinforce advantages of continuing contact with UNSW; Encourage participation in broader alumni activities; Solicit ideas re: types of possible interaction/relationship; communicate development activities and seek support;</td>
<td>Having been satisfied that we had more than met our initial goals and that the key criteria had been achieved, the Dean has agreed to continue funding for the next two issues.... Staff response to the initial issue was very positive with the offer of items per issue Number 2 exceeding the agreed page allocation...Feedback from readers was particularly encouraging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2007 C6-26</strong></td>
<td>Brisbane Council wants to get this right and need user input.</td>
<td>The overarching consultation goal was to gather feedback and identify a clear preference to inform Council’s upgrade decision-making. A secondary goal was to demonstrate Council’s genuine commitment to community involvement.</td>
<td>This program was completely successful in achieving its original objectives.... media facility desire for one-way operation changed following discussion of feedback from other users-final meeting outcome noted support in the short term for the combination option preferred by the majority. Demonstrated Council commitment to community involvement: consultation outcome presented in project media release, letter and web information noting planning was to proceed based on the preference of over 70 percent of respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2000 F8</strong></td>
<td>Shell is quickly responding, is investigating, cooperating with authorities and will do all it can to ensure it doesn’t happen again.</td>
<td>To restore, protect and even enhance Shell's reputation, brand and 'licence to operate'. Objectives: Ensure communications to key audiences were timely and empathetic; Communicate company's decision to take moral responsibility for the spill; Maintain the trust of stakeholders; Ensure Shell's Gore Bay terminal continued to operate.</td>
<td>Shell received widespread praise on its response to the crisis. There was no discernible impact on sales during the crisis, long-term business damage was avoided and Shell's reputation with stakeholders was actually enhanced. ...Media found it difficult to report negatively on Shell’s activities during the spill as all Shell comments related back to key messages... Ninety percent of first breaking print and television stories included a Shell comment accepting moral responsibility for the spill...Support from the...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 C11 - 3</td>
<td>That rodeo is fun and exciting suitable for extreme sports lovers and families, will be run in the main arena at RAS show and will be humane to animals.</td>
<td>To diversify the core reasons people give for attending the Show beyond the traditional three of animals, Showbags and Carnival. To achieve this, the Sydney Royal Rodeo was established as an integral part of the public relations, advertising, marketing and media sponsorship campaigns. Objectives: 1. Increase the number of people who cited NAB Arena entertainment as a reason to visit the Show by 5%; 2. Increase the number of people who cited rodeo as a reason to attend the Show by 5%.</td>
<td>A combination of a great entertainment product and a solid marketing campaign spearheaded by media relations, allowed the RAS to achieve or exceed its campaign objectives. The RAS’s decision to feature rodeo as part of the nightly entertainment in NAB Arena proved a sound strategic move that was supported by a comprehensive media relations campaign, using research-based key messages appealing to four distinct market segments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 H8</td>
<td>Southbank Tech is cool and could provide the training you want.</td>
<td>The overall goal of the print communication campaign was to rebrand Southbank Institute of TAFE. Objectives: To provide Southbank Institute of TAFE with a cohesive, flexible and memorable image, which is reflected through all promotional materials; To expand the enrolment campaign image to create a recognisable and consistent brand image for the corporate and international markets; To raise awareness of Southbank Institute's new image both internally and externally.</td>
<td>68% of people interviewed outside the movie session could recall the ad without being prompted (65% is considered in the industry as excellent - Pearl and Dean)...43% of people felt the image reflected in the ad was 'modern and cool' and 18% said it was young and upbeat....International students responded well to the brochures....During school tours, one of the teachers introduced the Southbank TAFE representative saying they would help them ‘take control’ of their career (the use of this tagline was not prompted by Southbank). This indicates recognition of the image by one of the target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 E3</td>
<td>Vote for the merger as this is the best way forward for building society customers.</td>
<td>To achieve the required 75% vote in support of the merger at member and shareholder meetings; Motivate Queensland communities...to embrace Bendigo Bank and maintain accounts. Objectives: To convince State Government and Ipswich City Council leaders of the benefits of the merger; To reassure staff their jobs would be safe...; To prepare messages that would anticipate likely questions or concerns of stakeholders; To write and produce collateral that would support the key messages of the merger; To co-ordinate an announcement that would be inclusive of both metropolitan and national media outlets and key regional media.</td>
<td>...members and shareholders of First Australian Building Society voted more than 90% in favour of the merger ...the vote was more than 95% in favour, well over the 75% required....A positive media campaign had bolstered the intense member and shareholder campaign to ensure the result...Media coverage achieved included, but was not limited to: Coverage in major financial press including The Australian Financial Review; Positive coverage in key markets including Ipswich and Far North Queensland; Extensive radio coverage across Australia. Bendigo Bank was positioned well in the hearts and minds of shareholders and members and the Queensland public at large.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A16</td>
<td>The Beverly Uranium mine is good for Australia and local communities</td>
<td>Create an environment in which Beverley could proceed to commercial development, notwithstanding a hostile anti-nuclear lobby and general public ignorance about the resource and the mining process to be employed. Objectives: (i) educate and inform key target publics; and (ii) give comfort to politicians who would be required to approve an inherently controversial project.</td>
<td>The principal goal was achieved in March, 1999 when the project received approval to proceed...The objective of shifting public opinion was met in a convincing manner. While metropolitan area market research showed support as low as 18.5 percent in 1996, a similar sample in April, 1999 found 42.5 percent support, with 11.5 percent undecided. The communication program secured the vast bulk of the 1996 undecideds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 F2</td>
<td>You can trust the Panadol brand and that the company will do the right thing throughout this crisis – returning the product to the shelves when absolutely safe to do so.</td>
<td>The goal of the campaign was to demonstrate to target audiences that SB acted ethically and responsibly and in the interests of public safety at all times. It was essential to take control of the situation by proactive announcement rather than reactive comment.</td>
<td>Independent media analysis was undertaken by Media Monitors, which included assessment of every single radio, television and newspaper report on the issue and analysis of various media's treatment of SB. The analysis reports 'Overall the media reported SmithKline Beecham's management of the crisis in a favourable light'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 F5</td>
<td>Tampa did what it had to do according to International Safety of Life at Sea convention.</td>
<td>To protect WWL's reputation by managing communication in a way that met four objectives: Provide timely information to customers, media, other interested groups and the general public and maintain media goodwill and respect, even when commercial imperatives made it appear that WWL was withholding information; Communicate WWL's humanitarian concern while ensuring the group remained politically neutral; Maintain the goodwill of customers, port authorities and others important to the company's Australian business, assuring them that the company and ship's master were attempting to resolve the situation and would deliver cargo as expeditiously as possible; WWL's reputation was considerably enhanced by its conduct during the crisis. A CARMA analysis of media coverage indicated above-average favourability for WWL as a responsible shipping company with strong humanitarian values...The company received more than 200 emails, letters and phone calls of support from the general public and customers. There was not one customer complaint...Peter Dexter and WWL's general manager were invited to present papers on the handling of the incident to several business and shipping audiences ...To communicate WWL's humanitarian concern while remaining politically neutral: summed up in an article by senior journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006 C13 - 3</strong></td>
<td>Telstra is committed to regional Australia and is supporting this competition for aspiring country musicians in order to launch their careers.</td>
<td>Retain public respect for the company and the ship's master. and author David Marr: &quot;Through all this WWL conducted a carefully nuanced response... never a public brawl with the Howard government, nor did the shipping line feed the electoral controversy that ensued... the line kept insisting only issues of search and rescue were at stake. It was masterful&quot;.</td>
<td>The PR work carried out in support of the competition generated over 750 media clips across print, radio, television and online... Telstra’s brand received strong cut through in the media, with competition naming rights recognised in 78.87% of media generated during the 2006 TRTT campaign - (PR value $4.735m*). The 2006 TRTT program successfully promoted the Tamworth Country Music Festival for the 10 months leading to the annual festival in Tamworth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2003 A6</strong></td>
<td>Graffiti is not cool, will not be tolerated and will be removed.</td>
<td>Eradicate 100 per cent of graffiti from private and public-owned assets...Develop and implement a broad media and communication campaign to encourage the community to use a 24-hour graffiti reporting hotline...Educate young people in years 5 and 8 of the consequences of graffiti and the message that</td>
<td>A recent audit (June 2003) has shown a significant decline in the incidence of graffiti in Casey... 98.5 per cent of participants report that the education program gave them ‘a greater understanding of the anti-social consequences of graffiti’... Council has achieved 100 per cent compliance by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C9 - 11</td>
<td>Twinings has the best teas, the best tea blenders and is worth purchasing.</td>
<td>Reinvigorate Twinings positioning; generate media coverage about Twinings; create events that would allow consumers to engage with the Twinings brand and learn about specific tea blends; support sales of Twinings tea.</td>
<td>More than 55,000 tea samples were delivered via and magazines value bags · More 20,000 cups (7 per minute) sampled at MIFGS...Sales of new products at MIFGS were more than $25,000. Double the sales made...Australian Good Taste's consumer promotion received triple the average number of entries...Media coverage stressed Twinings’ expertise and tradition in creating blends, as the primary message· Coverage on Channel 9’s Fresh TV caused Twining to be overwhelmed by consumers’ requests for 300 Year caddies. Twinings UK noted this coverage as an example for all countries in the global PR report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'graffiti is not cool'...Achieve 100 per cent participation rate by primary and secondary schools in Casey in the graffiti education workshops....Achieve positive action by retailers who sell aerosol spray paint ...

retailers...Extensive media coverage has been achieved ...including throughout Australia and worldwide. The communication objectives have been achieved; however, many other additional positive results have been achieved. For instance, partnerships with community and business groups have been strengthened as a result of the communication strategies undertaken to implement Council’s Graffiti Management Program.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call no.</th>
<th>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</th>
<th>Excerpt from goals/objectives</th>
<th>Excerpt from results and evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005 D3</td>
<td>Come to the Olive Festival and try olive products and find out what you can do the olives in a beautiful farm environment.</td>
<td>The major goal of the festival was to attract visitors from within the local community and profile Mt Atkinson Olive Grove as a key attraction in the region. Objectives: increase awareness of Mt Atkinson Olive Grove &amp; Café; To establish a media profile of Mt Atkinson Olive Grove; Sub objective: To increase visitation to Mt Atkinson Olive Grove by 20% in comparison to the previous year.</td>
<td>Visitation 4,500 an increase of 12% in comparison to last Year's figure of 4,000 showing a steady increase; The media exposure included articles that featured in the community newspapers including Fairfax, Leader and Express Telegraph...; In the year 2004/2005 Mt Atkinson Olive Grove saw 11,205 visitors experience a complimentary tasting and experience the hospitality of the cafè. An increase of 57.9% in comparison to 6490 in the financial year of 2003/2004.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 F5</td>
<td>That welfare and counselling services were available and it was acceptable and normal to access them in the situation. That the Government was responding appropriately.</td>
<td>To deliver on the welfare response required under Western Australia's emergency management arrangements. Objectives: 1. ensure immediately affected individuals knew who to contact for support and what support they could access; 2. overcome potential barriers among victims and their families to seeking help; 3. ensure the wider community was informed of services to help them deal with trauma; 4. keep stakeholders, particularly the government, government and non government organisations and the media, informed of responses and services.</td>
<td>Results showed a huge number of individuals and families were reached in the immediate aftermath of the Bali bombings. Although 88 Western Australians lost their lives in Bali, in its first 10 days alone the Bali Support Line received calls involving 350 adults and 65 children...Feedback from counsellors enabled the communication strategies to be flexible and better targeted...The success of the website led to it being enhanced to include a facility for people to register for support groups. A number of groups were established involving people affected by the Bali events and wanting to connect with others with similar experiences...The Department took the lead role in coordinating the welfare response across government and non</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 D8</td>
<td>WA farmers need help and deserve assistance. WAFF is doing all it can to get this assistance.</td>
<td>Increase awareness of the issue amongst State and Federal politicians and the general public; Develop a desire to resolve the issue amongst State and Federal politicians; Increase awareness and recognition of WAFF's achievements on behalf of farmers.</td>
<td>The campaign resulted in the granting of almost $43 million in assistance from the State and Federal Governments, showing it effectively increased awareness and sympathy for drought affected farmers amongst politicians; The campaign effectively maintained the level of membership despite the difficult financial climate, showing it increased awareness of WAFF's achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 A17</td>
<td>A work camp is an opportunity for a regional town to get vital community work done and for prisoners to repay their debt to society.</td>
<td>Raise awareness that the Ministry was seeking to liaise with communities that may be suitable for a work camp; Gain the support of interested communities and councils to facilitate development of new camps throughout the State; Glean ideas for suitable community projects for new work camps; ... Increase the pool of prisoners eligible to participate in work camps; Increase the pool of prison officers to manage the work camps; Continue to promote work camps, their good work and their successes through the media and direct liaison</td>
<td>During the consultation phase more than 100 inquiries were received from communities across the State, confirming widespread awareness and interest. 83 communities requested application forms with detailed criteria. The campaign resulted in hundreds of suggestions for suitable community projects from 28 different communities which submitted formal expressions of interest...Substantial positive media coverage around the State; Good responses to the public meetings in short-listed communities; ...An absence of political opposition...There</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*1</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with relevant communities.</td>
<td>have been no difficulties in staffing the new work camps and interviews show prison officers are relishing the opportunity... overwhelming majority of the [media] coverage has been positive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 A13</td>
<td>BHP wants to get cross-cultural education right and will be guided by the local communities as to what should be included.</td>
<td>Consult broadly with all Aboriginal groups in the region to develop a workable structure in which the project could proceed; develop a workable approval process for the project - bringing together all parties to reach consensus; Develop a workable course, including supporting video and physical materials; Bring Aboriginal parties, then in conflict with each other, to a shared vision for the region; Involve BHP as a trusted part of the indigenous landscape and create strong links between the miner and community; Develop and undertake a phased handover to an indigenous management agency; Develop a portable methodology for community consultation in remote areas which BHP may modify and apply in other regions and other indigenous peoples.</td>
<td>the project has created a workable training package which has been well received by the almost 150 participants in training courses, has been onsold to external clients, and handed back to an indigenous management agency...the project has cemented a link between miners and traditional owners - bringing them to a single table to work for a joint purpose. This bipartisan and collaborative communications approach short-circuits much of the potential acrimony in issues like native title and indigenous employment - saving everyone resources and avoiding damage on all sides...To date, participant satisfaction levels (as collated from the feedback sheets) runs at more than 90 percent, with more than 60 percent of participants indicating they would attend further training in their own time. This, we believe, indicates significant acceptance of the project outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call no.*</td>
<td>Summary of intended meaning to be co-created by target publics</td>
<td>Excerpt from goals/objectives</td>
<td>Excerpt from results and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 C11-3</td>
<td>Farming families affected by drought need assistance as they are doing it tough – shopping at Woolworths will help farmers.</td>
<td>1. Raise awareness of the immediate issues of drought in rural and regional Australia; 2. Initiate positive action across business and community to help alleviate hardships experienced by farmers; 3. Build staff interest, morale and involvement in the campaign; 4. Encourage long-term support and development of sustainable farming practices; 5. Position Woolworths as a proactive, innovative and respected corporate citizen; 6. Achieve set target of $3 million profit for the day.</td>
<td>‘National Drought Action Day’ raised a total of $4,714,033 for CWA, exceeding the expected $3 million, clearly indicating the issue resonated with Australians. National quantitative research of 500 grocery shoppers by Woolworths following the campaign concluded the day performed strongly in generating awareness and positive reactions from customers (65.2%),...A minimum of 937 media mentions were recorded, of which 95% were positive and delivered the campaigns key messages...Research concluded over a third of shoppers did something different or changed the way they normally shop ... Research concluded that 65% of grocery buyers stated the initiative left a positive impression of Woolworths...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>