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## The Development and Evolution of a Self-Supporting, In-House Public Relations Program in the Rockwood School District

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THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVOLUTION OF A SELF-SUPPORTING,  
IN-HOUSE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM  
IN THE ROCKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jeff Arnett

B.S. Communications  
B.S. Education  
M.Ed.



An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Lindenwood College in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science

1994

When the Rockwood School District implemented site-based management in 1990, the change dramatically altered the district's overall communications program.

The responsibilities and funds to pay for requested services were given to each of Rockwood's schools and departments. As a result, monies for communications projects, which were formerly budgeted to the communications department, were shifted to the individual school accounts. Site-based management had seemingly left the communications department with a reduced budget and the challenge of recovering the schools' money and maintaining their business.

What has evolved is a more effective program that also attempts to generate revenue for itself and the school district. The goals of this approach are to foster schools that are more accountable for their communication needs, a public relations program that is more answerable to its consumers, and greater opportunities for improved relations with clients in the community. RSD Communications became the department's new name and its services were marketed to both internal and external customers.

Advertisements were placed in local publications, a competitive price structure was promoted and "word of mouth" recommendations soon led to inquiries by outside organizations. Site-based management allowed RSD

Communications to function as Rockwood's own in-house PR agency but also created the flexibility to provide services for clients in the community.

To facilitate and communicate the financial procedures created by the department's restructuring, a computerized accounting system was implemented to meet the unique needs of the new in-house agency approach.

The success of RSD Communications' self-supporting venture is evidenced by the schools' incentive to be better consumers as they search for the most cost-effective means of meeting their communication needs. RSD Communications staff members are able to prove their importance and contribution to the communication process through careful record keeping and detailed account statements.

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COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	1
Review of Literature . . . . .	10
Selective Review and Evaluation of Research . . . . .	29
The Results of Rockwood's Self-Supporting Approach . . . . .	54
Background on the District . . . . .	54
Background on the Communications Department . . . . .	55
The Employees and their Responsibilities . . . . .	56
The Evolution of a Self-Supporting PR Unit . . . . .	58
The Self-Supporting Process . . . . .	62
The Accounting Process . . . . .	66
Discussion of Rockwood's Self-Supporting Communications Program . . . . .	70
Accountable Schools - Accountable Communications . . . . .	70
Disadvantages of the Self-Supporting Approach . . . . .	74
The Bottom Line . . . . .	78
Appendices . . . . .	81
Works Cited . . . . .	175
Vita Auctoris . . . . .	178

## INTRODUCTION

In 1952 when Scott Cutlip and Allen Center published the first edition of their landmark text, Effective Public Relations, they included a chapter dealing with the practice of communication in public education. They began the section with this comment: "The progress of the school as an institution of democracy depends upon the support of the public it serves" (561).

Little has changed in the forty years since that opinion was first expressed. Today, public education remains caught in a web of difficult relationships, rapid change and shifting social patterns. These critical variables have heightened public awareness of education thereby launching a broadly-supported reform of our schools. The ensuing changes have resulted in greater costs, higher expectations and an increasing degree of criticism.

Since 1935 when the National School Public Relations Association was established, school administrators have attempted to deal with the challenge of maintaining a positive public image amid a storm of ongoing changes and scrutiny.

In the early days, educators attempted to communicate with parents and patrons via handwritten newsletters and town meetings conducted in the local schoolhouse. A single course in English composition



might have been a sufficient qualification for employment as a district's community relations director.

Today, some school districts have graduated to the use of desktop publishing, four-color publications, board meetings transmitted over cable television and promotional videos filled with special effects. Many districts with a need for a full-time communications staff now require experience in marketing, public relations, graphic design, broadcasting or news reporting.

Not all school systems have reached this level. Communications programs founded on such modern components and progressive standards are still only a dream for some school districts hobbled by inadequate finances and conservative attitudes. But most administrators with an appreciation for quality public relations are aware of the role these tools can play in disseminating news about education and competing with the high-tech communication tactics of the business world.

In theory, the practice of public relations in a public school district should differ little from how the same principles are applied in the corporate arena. Whether the news is a school board meeting or an annual shareholders' gathering, the fundamentals of communication are interchangeable. Obviously, there are some things unique to educational public relations. The

target audience is different, the modes of communication may vary and the budget is likely to be proportionately smaller, but the same basic truths apply.

In practice, however, because of budget issues the public relations programs in many school districts are often simplified versions of their potential. Even in systems consisting of 10,000 or more students and several hundred employees, it is not unusual to find a single person responsible for all public relations efforts. This person's job accountabilities may also include business partnerships, adult education and miscellaneous tasks designated by the superintendent. The importance of public relations in the educational arena is usually acknowledged by central office and school administrators, but only in a few school systems is the PR function fully supported or adequately developed.

Why is it that corporations, even those smaller than some public school districts, seem to do a better job of utilizing trained public relations professionals? Even those companies without the budget to afford a formal communications department may still employ outside agencies to handle their marketing, advertising and public relations activities. Readings in periodicals such as Public Relations Quarterly, Public Relations Journal, PR Reporter and Communication World confirm the impression that the practice of public relations is much

more effective and lucrative in the corporate world than it is in public education.

The differences between educational and corporate PR are understandable. The success of agencies and in-house departments is measured against the bottom line or in terms of how the corporate image influences revenues. There is a pressure to produce or face the risk of losing either an account or a career. Accountability often leads to improved performance which, in turn, stimulates profits that can be both measurable and immeasurable for the company.

The accountability factor has long been absent in the field of public relations related to public education. In a school district, the director of public relations, community relations or public affairs may be responsible for information communicated to the community, but he or she rarely needs to provide justification - financial or otherwise - for the actual communications program. That assumption, however, has begun to disappear in educational circles in the face of dwindling finances and a forced re-examination of priorities.

At the 1993 convention of the National School Public Relations Association in San Diego, many of the skill sessions focused on how those in attendance can make themselves indispensable to their respective school

districts. The underlying theme became obvious throughout the conference: PR professionals serving public schools are in jeopardy of losing their jobs unless they can justify their importance to the district's everyday mission and long range strategic plan.

Actually, the threat of being eliminated from the organizational chart is just as real and prevalent for those involved in corporate public relations. The difference has been that corporate or agency PR practitioners have been more accustomed to justifying their continued existence by demonstrating the cost effectiveness of their service. Until recently, that option has never really existed for educational PR professionals because their services have largely been viewed as unavoidable expenditures rather than revenue-generating ventures for the district. The opportunities for financial contribution have been overlooked.

Interestingly enough, the budgetary aspects of a new trend in school management now give educational PR practitioners the ideal opportunity to develop their own program into a self-supporting and clearly justifiable service to the school district. The increasingly common practice of site-based management in public education advocates that schools should be given the freedom to manage themselves, thereby creating a new sense of

identity and "ownership" for the school, its staff and students. This self-management approach gives the administration of each school more freedom to make decisions in such matters as curriculum, discipline and finances.

In 1990, when the Rockwood School District in west St. Louis County adopted the site-based management approach for all of its 23 schools, every department in the district faced new fiscal challenges. Instead of services being provided routinely for each school by the central administration, the responsibility of meeting needs and administering budgets with money appropriated by the school board was transferred to the individual schools.

From food services to maintenance, every supporting department in the district faced the arduous task of creating specialized accounting systems that would invoice each school for services rendered. Conversely, another reality of the site-based management approach meant that the funds normally allocated to the various supporting departments were now divided among the individual schools so the principals could decide for themselves how to spend the money. In a sense, the money had to be "earned back" if the supporting departments wanted to justify their existence.

For the Rockwood communications department, the

challenge of dealing with 23 individually managed schools created the perfect occasion to market its services, make itself indispensable and apply many of the strategies introduced successfully by agencies and in-house departments in the corporate arena. The communications department thereby operated as an in-house PR department with the responsibility of maintaining the district's "corporate" image while, at the same time, assuming the identity of an external agency competing for 23 individual accounts. While the advantages of this new system were recognized immediately, there were also many disadvantages and unforeseen challenges that quickly confronted the department's leadership.

What evolved was a plan of action that slowly transformed the department into a self-supporting unit within the school district. Billing individual schools for various services created an opportunity for tracking every dollar that was added to or spent from the department's budget. In the process, an accounting vehicle was developed that allows the department's staff to see exactly where and how its money is spent and earned. The department now functions as a self-supporting, in-house agency with a revenue-generating clientele that includes community organizations, area businesses, neighboring school systems and, most importantly, Rockwood's own schools and offices.

The dynamics of this self-sufficient approach have placed it at the cutting edge of current trends in educational and corporate communications. In fact, the concept of an independent PR agency within an organization is somewhat innovative even in the private sector.

"It may not be life imitating art, but some corporate PR departments are imitating commercial PR agencies, with results so successful that the biggest problem is keeping up with client demand," writes Dwight A. Johnson in the prologue to his article, "Build Your Own In-House Agency," that appeared in the June/July 1993 issue of Communication World.

The same should be true of public relations efforts on behalf of public schools. Like Rockwood, public and community relations departments in educational settings have long had the opportunity to function as small "agencies" working within a large or medium-sized "corporate" framework. The communications approach in Rockwood is different from the PR programs in most other school district because it follows new prototypes for design and operation. Rockwood's communications department is successful in justifying its services through strategic positioning. The department has the energy of an agency while maintaining a corporate mentality; it uses the financial aspects of site-based

management to generate revenue and justify expenditures; and, it consistently strives to learn from current trends and insights shared by PR practitioners in the private sector.

The renaissance of Rockwood's communications program into a self-supporting unit has not been without miscalculations, unexpected obstacles and instances of success common to any new venture.

In light of this evolutionary process, the objectives of this document are three-fold: To provide an outline of research from which the self-supporting public relations approach can be studied; to explain the integral components of a self-supporting PR program from a logistical and financial perspective; and to objectively discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this approach based upon the experiences of Rockwood's communications department and similar corporate programs also attempting the in-house agency approach.



## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of operating an in-house public relations agency in either a corporate or an educational environment is so new that only a handful of influential practitioners and theorists have become subscribers. A review of current literature written by communication scholars on the subject of public relations in the education and corporate arenas produced few references to the topic of self-supporting PR agencies in either setting.

For instance, Fraser P. Seitel, a senior vice-president and director of public affairs for Chase Manhattan Bank, has authored one of the most widely read public relations textbooks since 1980. Yet, in the most recent printing of The Practice of Public Relations (1992), there is no discussion of corporate PR offices operating as in-house, self-supporting agencies.

Given the lack of substantial literature from corporate PR authorities like Seitel, it is not surprising that little discussion on this subject has come from influential thinkers in the field of educational public relations. Some of education's most respected experts have yet to explore the topic. These include Richard Bagin, ASPR/APR, the executive director of the National School Public Relations Association; Pat Jackson, APR, a senior counsel for the public relations

consulting firm of Jackson, Jackson & Wagner; and William J. Banach, ASPR, chairman of the public relations consulting firm Banach, Banach & Cassidy.

One possible explanation for the lack of literature dealing with the in-house approach for educational PR is that the strategy has been attempted previously and found to be unsuccessful. If this were the case, then at least some research or article dealing with the ineffectiveness of this method should have been discovered, but none was.

A more logical reason is that those in charge of public relations for school districts have been so busy defining their roles and applying the principles of practical public relations that little priority has been assigned to departmental reorganization. Educational public relations is evolving. Only recently has it reached a plateau that would accommodate a paradigm shift of this proportion. This is a possible explanation for the absence of any meaningful literature on self-supporting, in-house agencies from experts in the field of educational PR.

A review of relevant literature shows that the self-supporting public relations approach, even in the private sector, is so new that only in very recent publications have entire articles been devoted to the topic. References to the realities and logistics of self-supporting PR can be seen in professional articles dating

to 1990, giving an historical perspective to the emergence of this strategy.

In the Winter 1990 issue of Public Relations Quarterly, A.C. Croft outlined "Ten Management Strategies for Public Relations Profitability." It was the first such article suggesting the concept of self-supporting public relations. In the article, Croft lists several tactics for ensuring profitability, growth and success. He advises firms to develop a long-term business plan, establish reasonable goals, target a market niche or strategic position, and conduct an ongoing marketing program (11).

"Firms should create a reputation for creativity, strategic management and good results," Croft said. "High staff productivity must be encouraged and maintained" (12).

Croft suggests that a system for tracking client profitability should be implemented. He also insists that firms charge fair but adequate prices for their services, control their costs and manage their time efficiently and productively (13-14).

Croft's article is especially relevant to the financial implications of establishing a self-supporting PR agency within a school district. His points on tracking client profitability and charging fair prices are essential to the accounting (charge-back) aspects of

in-house public relations.

Adam Shell also referred to the public relations accounting process in his March 1990 Public Relations Journal article, "Firms Get Tough About Non-Payment."

"Public relations companies are asking clients to pay fees in advance, writing contracts carefully, watching accounts receivables closely, and running thorough financial checks on prospective clients in response to an increase in non-paying accounts," Shell said (7).

Shell's comments about carefully written contracts and closely monitored accounts receivable are pertinent to the concept of a self-supporting educational public relations program driven by site-based managed schools. Being prepared to handle incoming payments is especially important if schools are going to purchase the services they need from a district's in-house communications agency. Without that ability, the demand of tracking the services provided, issuing invoices and applying payments would be difficult in a small school district and overwhelming in a large one.

An article by Frank L. Pollare appears in the March 1990 edition of the Public Relations Journal. In "Surviving the Budgeting Game," Pollare says that "public

relations and marketing professionals should follow a step-by-step procedure to prepare an annual budget that will survive management scrutiny" (29).

Three basic points Pollare believes should be considered are the long- and short-term needs of the organization, the limit on PR and marketing funding, and the organization's actual PR and marketing needs (29). Pollare also refers to a department's capability to bill expenses directly, another important component of the in-house agency approach.

"If a budget reaches the cutting stage, PR professionals should begin with a budget that is realistic and they should know how to justify expenditures," Pollare said (30). This alone should be the motivation for organizing a self-supporting PR department in a school district where finances have been curtailed. Public relations administrators must know how to defend their funds.

John F. Budd Jr. analyzes where PR will be in the year 2000 in his article, "When Less is More: Public Relation's Paradox of Growth," published in the Spring 1990 issue of Public Relations Quarterly. Budd believes the future of public relations will be influenced by trends which began occurring in 1990.

"In 2000, it is predicted that many large PR firms

will no longer exist and that the credibility of senior management and corporate PR departments will be a very important issue," Budd writes (11). His forecast gives plausibility to the idea that, in the future, smaller in-house PR departments will receive more attention and be given more responsibility as the services of large outside agencies become too costly and uncontrollable.

This idea is refuted, however, in a May 20, 1991 special issue of the Los Angeles Business Journal. In her article, "Cuts Give New Definition to Full-Time Work," Anne Rackham reports that recessionary times have been good for public relations firms relative to companies cutting their in-house publicity departments and advertising budgets (42).

In Rackham's article, Stuart Zanville, director of public relations for Knotts Berry Farm in Buena Park, Ca., comments on the declining number of in-house jobs. "In tough economic times, companies cut their PR departments," Zanville notes (42).

Rackham makes the point that "the decision of whether to go with an outside agency or inside employees for publicity is often based on cost, regardless of the nature of the economy" (42).

In the same article, Rackham quotes Phil Myers, senior vice-president at the Los Angeles office of GCI

Group, the public relations arm of Grey Advertising Inc., as saying it makes sense to have an in-house PR director at a large company "because that person is going to have enough to do" (42). At a small company, Myers suggests it is often more affordable to use an agency because there are no benefits to pay and the cost is tax deductible as a business expense. These factors also may be advantageous for school districts of any size when faced with similar financial considerations.

Rackham said the best arrangement is to employ an in-house PR staff and use outside agencies for special projects. In education, this might be a viable alternative for large school districts searching for more efficient ways to use their public relations budgets. Myers said he did this when he was vice-president of public relations for 20th Century Fox. But he added that "a lot of the in-house people may feel threatened if they are not involved in the selection of the agency" (42).

A July 23, 1990 article by David Finn in the Marketing News provided some interesting observations for PR departments thinking about restructuring. Titled, "An Integrated Approach is Best in Any Communications Effort," Finn's article recommends that a corporation should conduct "...an audit of all the company's PR activities, measuring their congruence with the company's

corporate and marketing objectives, in order to create a policy that links them together" (14).

Finn's advice on conducting an audit underscores the importance of an agreement between the mission statements and strategic plans of a school district's administration and its communications department. To avoid internal misunderstandings, a consensus of this kind needs to be reached long before the self-supporting public relations approach is undertaken.

One of the primary considerations for any public relations department entertaining the idea of attempting the in-house agency approach is how to market its services to a primary clientele. This is especially true of a school district's PR department in that it must maintain the businesses of several schools that are site-based managed.

According to an article by Dorothy Levy in the Fall 1990 edition of Public Relations Quarterly, public awareness is increasingly vital to the marketing and financial functions of an in-house agency. Levy asserts that self-supporting units must be visibly active in order to preserve the freedom of serving their districts in an independent and profitable capacity (34). In other words, public relations departments that attempt to become self-supporting must assume the added



responsibility of aggressively marketing their programs and helping clients understand the financial terms of their services. Failure to do so will likely result in lost revenues, slashed budgets and/or downsizing of the department.

On a similar note, Todd Lief and Nan Kilkeary discuss the accountabilities of the in-house PR approach in their February 1991 article, "Building Competitive Strength: Adjust Small Firm Philosophies to Break Through Barriers," published in the Public Relations Journal.

Lief and Kilkeary believe managers of small PR companies must avoid obstacles to growth if they want to sustain progress and promote quality. According to the authors, the obstacles to growth common to small PR companies include having only one key executive, lacking a balance between business and creative systems and believing that some jobs are too big (22).

Where growth is concerned, Lief and Kilkeary feel that firm size is not nearly as important as talent, energy and the proper match between client and firm. The latter point should be a particular strength for educational public relations departments given the assignment of identifying and promoting the strengths of their district's schools (24).

Interestingly enough, the communications department

of the Rockwood School District has attempted to avoid many of the barriers Lief and Kilkeary warn against. The district recently added an associate director to help manage the department's self-supporting efforts and bring a balance to the accounting and creative functions.

In a related article titled, "What is the Single Biggest Inhibitor to Growth for Small/Medium firms?" also from the February 1991 issue of the Public Relations Journal, Lief and Kilkeary survey the opinions of 13 PR professionals on what they believe to be the single greatest inhibitor to growth for small- and mid-sized public relations firms. Among the professionals interviewed are Howard Kalt, president of Kalt, Rosen & Associates; Dana L. Clay, president of Everett, Clay & Associates, Inc.; and Lee Duffey, president of Duffey Communications.

In the article, Kalt expresses the feeling that a lack of necessary business skills is the most significant inhibitor (26), while Duffey thinks that a lack of confidence is a key obstacle to the success of small firms (27). Clay believes that firms often have not found the proper balance between developing new businesses and servicing the business they have (27).

Clay's observations are especially relevant to a public relations program like the one at Rockwood which

attempts to generate additional revenue by attracting new clients from outside the school district. The complexities of this approach will be discussed further in subsequent chapters. However, there are certain conflicts of interest created when district PR departments are forced to decide which jobs will be given priority: those from schools and departments within the district or those from outside clients accustomed to immediate service.

In an article by Cheri L. Brennan in the February 4, 1991 issue of the Puget Sound Business Journal, R. Danner Graves, president of Communications Northwest Inc., notes the emergence of more bottom line accountability among PR agencies of all sizes.

"At one time, getting lots of news clippings was the measure of success," Graves said. "Now performance is tied to profit contributions or linked to other specific outcomes" (19). Again, this is particularly true of school district public relations departments which must justify their services in the face of smaller budgets and greater financial scrutiny.

"Like other occupations, public relations must respond to the pressures of an increasingly complex and global world," Brennan said. "Continued effectiveness will depend in part on the ability to adapt" (19).

Catherine J. Cummings discusses the topic of financial management for public relations departments in "The Marketing Manager and the Public Relations Budget," in the Spring 1991 issue of Public Relations Quarterly.

"A good client-firm relationship involves a thorough understanding of the PR firm's billing system," Cummings says (16). She also advises that an hourly fee structure encourages clients to manage their time, requests and costs effectively (17).

Cummings' observation was found to be true in the Rockwood School District when individual schools suddenly had to pay for the communications service they received. Previously, schools thought nothing of ordering the design and printing of several hundred brochures when purchased by the school district. Now, administrators think twice about the services they request because the communications department charges by the hour and the funds come from the schools' own budgets. The result has been less waste of time, materials and money.

Of special interest is an article titled "Uproar in Marketplace Sparks a Spate of Restructuring" by Liz Mullen that appeared in the Los Angeles Business Journal on May 20, 1991. The article reported that some PR agencies experienced continued growth in the early 1990s, while others laid off employees and reported flat or

declining revenues. One such agency, the Los Angeles office of Burson-Marsteller, laid off five employees in early 1991.

The five employees were laid off because "we just got to a point where we had to reduce compensation costs so we could maintain a level of profitability," said Douglas Buemi, executive vice president of the Los Angeles office (41). Regardless of size, most PR agencies or departments will experience this scenario when profits decrease.

"In any business, but especially in the public relations field, if you stay the same, not only are you not growing, but you're falling behind," said Richard S. Kline, chairman of Berkheimer, Kline, Golin & Harris, a Los Angeles based PR agency (42).

In the article, Kline said he has noticed that corporations, although not firing their entire public relations staff, are downsizing. In fact, Berkheimer Kline recently won the public affairs business of Chrysler Corp., which closed its West Coast group as a cost-cutting measure (42).

Public relations directors for public school districts can learn a valuable lesson from articles such as this one by Mullen: Develop the mentality of an in-house agency looking for every opportunity to acquire new "clients" or face the risk of becoming another victim of

cost-cutting measures with your responsibilities given to an agency outside the district.

"PR Agencies Promote Audit to Cut Recession Losses" is the title of a November 1991 article by Howard Schlossberg in the Marketing News. Like Finn's article in the same publication almost 18 months earlier, Schlossberg's research describes the use of public relations audit services to reduce communication expenditures.

Schlossberg cites Information Counselors in Bethel, Conn., as a firm that now aggressively markets its own audit service. Alexandra Ballentine of Information Counselors says in the article that "an audit examines the mechanics of a [PR] program, the research performed for it, the results of it and the people administering it" (6).

In an industry ravaged by the current recession as firms trim their marketing and communication budgets, Schlossberg says "PR practitioners are expanding their repertoires and services to boost business and hold onto existing accounts" (6). The PR audit is one type of service being offered more frequently by agencies and large communications departments.

Schlossberg points out, however, that audits and other services offered by larger PR firms are being

shunned somewhat because client corporations perceive them as "looking for their profit margins" and believe they "won't necessarily recommend the best method if it's not profitable for the agency" (6).

According to the article, much of today's work is being farmed out to freelancers who will work on a project basis, keeping corporate expenses down in the short term.

"That's why consultants and freelancers are doing very well right now," said an anonymous New York consultant quoted in the article who noted that "client companies perceive those kinds of workers as being able to provide lower cost services than larger shops" (6).

Schlossberg's article raises interesting questions for a communications program such as Rockwood's. The need for an audit like those described may actually help in defining and refining the department's services. Furthermore, the communications department itself may be able to add auditing to its resume of services once it has undergone and benefitted from the process.

The PR audit is very different from financial audits typically conducted by accounting firms. To reiterate Finn's definition from an article discussed earlier, an organization should conduct "...an audit of all [its] PR activities, measuring their congruence with the company's corporate and marketing objectives, in order to create a

policy that links them together" (14).

And what about Schlossberg's other points that may be relevant to Rockwood's self-supporting PR program? From a financial standpoint, freelance writers, designers and accountants may actually be needed to assist with the workload or replace full-time employees to lower the cost of doing business. Also remaining to be seen is whether Rockwood's self-supporting approach will continue to attract outside clients or interfere with service to its most important customer base -- the schools.

The title of an article by George Simpson in the June 1, 1992 issue of Folio: the Magazine for Magazine Management is extremely pertinent to the topic of self-supporting public relations. However, "The ABCs of In-House PR: How to Develop a High Return Public Relations Strategy You Can Afford," was little more than a few elementary PR guidelines for low budget magazine publishers. Nevertheless, Simpson's fundamental suggestions are worth repeating in the context of this discussion of innovative public relations management and media relations. After all, as Simpson suggests in the article: "A strategy is not enough: You need to learn some PR basics so that you don't turn off reporters and hurt your chances of coverage" (76).

Simpson's advice falls into seven main points:

1. Know the players: Separate reporters who cover



only editorials or features from those who are primarily interested in significant news.

2. Learn deadlines. Never call reporters when they are writing against a deadline -- unless the news is extraordinary.

3. Find out what reporters want. Do not pitch stories that are out of a writer's normal subject area.

4. Keep up-to-date changes in reporting beats. Reporters will not trust information if it is consistently sent to the attention of someone who has been gone from the position for a long time.

5. Foster credibility. Give reporters good tips on stories , but also give them important news in general. Since reporters are often on deadline, take their calls whenever possible so they do not go to another source.

6. Know what is coming. Keep track of upcoming trends and issues.

7. Finally, never lie or try to play games. All credibility will be lost and no amount of PR, no matter how good, will earn forgiveness for dishonesty.

Though somewhat basic, Simpson's rules serve as a reminder that even PR programs on the cutting edge need to maintain a grasp of the rudimentary principles of the practice.

In May 1993, Dena Winokur and Robert W. Kinkead's cover story for the Public Relations Journal was titled

"How Public Relations Fits Into Corporate Strategy." The authors conducted an in-depth investigation into the attitudes of CEOs on public relations. The participating chief executives, drawn from small and large organizations, were asked about the values and expectations they hold for the role of PR in the future. Previous strategies of CEOs' activities as communicators and users of communication strategies were also reviewed.

The research revealed that while the application of PR as a strategic management device is increasing, the PR professional is still not viewed as an essential adviser in the boardroom decision-making of most companies (21). This disregard also exists to some extent in many school districts employing a full-time public relations director.

The buzz word at the 1993 Seminar of the National School Public Relations Association was "indispensable." Public relations directors from school districts across the country expressed the opinion that the key to becoming an essential member of the superintendent's cabinet was to position oneself for a more strategic counseling role where an active part can be played in the decision-making process. This is good advice, but such a scenario may take several years to develop. A faster way of securing a level of indispensability is to demonstrate the fiscal advantages and important

contributions that a self-supporting public relations program can bring to a financially burdened school district.

The preceding articles discuss many of the emerging thoughts related to the theory of self-supporting public relations. Among those are the discernable patterns of strategic management, media relations, creative budgeting, client profitability, hourly fee structures, downsizing, outside agencies vs. freelance employees, public relations audits, bottom line accountability and indispensability.

In the following chapters, these and other concepts will be developed to illustrate how each one directly contributes to an ongoing, self-supporting, in-house public relations program in the Rockwood School District.

### SELECTIVE REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF RESEARCH

In late spring of 1993, the communications department of the Rockwood School District was invited to present an outline of its self-supporting program at the 40th Annual Seminar of the National School Public Relations Association in San Diego which was held that summer. Preparing for the presentation gave the department an opportunity to inventory its strengths and evaluate its weaknesses. For several weeks, communications staff members researched similar programs in other companies only to find that what was being done in Rockwood had been attempted in few other settings.

To date, only a handful of articles speak specifically to the type of program being implemented in Rockwood. One of these emerged in the January 1991 issue of the Public Relations Journal. In their article, "Forecast 1991: Finding Ways to Do More for Less Challenges Professionals this Year," Susan Fry, Judy Gordon and Adam Shell write about several trends which are still evident nearly three years later.

"Paying attention to the bottom line, working smarter with fewer resources and finding cost-effective ways to get messages across are shared concerns of public relations professionals, regardless of their specialties," according to the authors (22). Indeed, these are many of the challenges that spurred Rockwood's

communications department into becoming a self-supporting unit.

Fry, Gordon and Shell comment that "Practitioners who can wear many hats and handle many different public relations functions are most likely to succeed" (23). Rockwood's communications staff has found this to be true with requests for expertise ranging from public affairs to community relations to employee communication, issues management, marketing and even customer service training.

In their article, Fry, Gordon and Shell write that "Professionals will have to master a balancing act between an organization's needs, its limited budgets and its publics' demands. Improving the bottom line will be paramount to success, as will cost control and working smarter, maybe with fewer people" (25). These three variables are integral to the success of a self-supporting public relations program.

One of the reasons Rockwood's communications department could be so assertive in its development of the in-house, self-supporting program was because the entire school district was undergoing a strategic overhaul to better define its mission and goals. Every department in the system was asked to re-evaluate its responsibilities and objectives. As a result, a new identity began to emerge for the district and its programs, especially in the public relations area.

According to Moses Kanhai, the strategic creation of a new identity for an organization's communications program is often invaluable and necessary for that program's continued success. In an article in the February 1992 issue of Communication World, Kanhai reports that, more often than not, the communications department is viewed as relatively unimportant and requiring no formal training (23). While many professional communicators will disagree with his perception, there is some validity to his thoughts in relation to designing new strategies and creating new images.

Kanhai points out that an audience's belief in the ineffectiveness of the public relations department will eventually influence client-departments that rely on its advice and counsel. This image is likely to be a major factor in corporate decision-making about the dispensability of the public relations office in a time of organizing and reorganizing.

"It should also be abundantly clear that the most important responsibility for correcting that identity problem rests with us [the communicators]," Kanhai writes. "We must know and understand who we are and why we exist. And we must ensure that senior management and our audiences know that, too" (23).

Kanhai believes the best way to accomplish this is

to develop a strategic communications rather than a mass communications program.

"What all this boils down to is that the most effective way we can demonstrate our identity and value is to view ourselves as strategic communicators and for others to view us that way," Kanhai comments (24). Kanhai says the distinction between mass and strategic is one of definition.

"Mass communication is the domain of the mass media," he writes. "Those are the journalists, broadcasters, or any group that delivers its message to the 'general public'" (24).

According to Kanhai, the "target audiences" are left to be served by strategic communicators. "The distinction may not unclutter all the confusion, but it certainly has potential to help us better understand who we are and why we exist," Kanhai states. "It allows us to refocus on our identity and our corporate mission. And it clarifies some of the common perceptions by our CEOs and other audiences" (24).

Just as Kanhai advocates, the redefinition of Rockwood's communications department as a self-supporting unit was closely tied to strategic communications and management. In an article allied to Kanhai's, Paul Forbes details the application of strategic management to public relations in the March 1992 issue of Public

Relations Journal.

According to Forbes, "Strategic management is a process that enables any organization -- company, association, nonprofit or government agency -- to identify its long-term opportunities and threats, mobilize its assets to address them and carry out a successful implementation strategy" (32). In short, Forbes believes it is the flip side of reactive, short-term thinking that has pervaded so many U.S. companies and hobbled their ability to compete internationally.

Forbes' theories apply to the development of a self-supporting program in Rockwood's communications department through a six-step curricular process: scanning the future; building scenarios; reviewing the mission; setting objectives, strategies and policies; implementing strategy; and evaluating and updating the plan. The following is a summary of the six steps as they relate to Rockwood's move toward a self-supporting program.

**Step 1: Scanning the Future** -- "The organization must have a formal process for looking at least a decade ahead for opportunities and threats posed by social, economic, political, technological and environmental trends," says Forbes. "Then the organization should inventory its structural, cultural and resource assets and liabilities in addressing these challenges" (32).



In essence, the movement of Rockwood's communications program toward self-supporting status was a proactive step to justify and protect its programs against the possibility of economic cuts in the future. The self-supporting approach also allows for continual assessment of the program's effectiveness.

**Step 2: Building scenarios** -- Forbes believes "The trends identified in the future scanning process should be translated into three scenarios: an optimistic outcome, a more pessimistic outcome and another outcome somewhere between the two" (33). This type of thinking was the catalyst in Rockwood's effort to develop a financially self-sustaining department able to withstand significant budget cuts at the district level.

**Step 3: Reviewing the mission** -- After considering likely future challenges, Forbes says a mission statement should be drawn up for the organization and for the public relations department.

Forbes believes "A mission statement should not be immutable. On the contrary, it should be reviewed annually, to keep it relevant to the emerging future" (33).

Forbes says the mission statement should define what business the organization and the department are in.

**Step 4: Setting objectives, strategies and policies** -- Forbes suggests that once the mission statement is

adopted it should be translated into a series of objectives detailing where the organization and/or the public relations department want to go. Strategies on how to get there should also be developed. Then a series of policies must be established to serve as a framework for implementation of these strategies.

"Added together," observes Forbes, "future scanning, scenario building, mission review, and setting objectives, strategies and policies make up what is generally known as strategic planning" (33).

**Step 5: Implementing strategy** -- Strategy implementation consists of the development and execution of detailed action plans and budgets that carry out the objectives and strategies set by senior management.

Forbes believes the strategically-managed organization "manages by exception" (33). "It gives each person the freedom to develop a plan of action and report to management only when there is a divergence from the plan" Forbes writes (33).

**Step 6: Evaluating and updating the plan** -- Forbes believes strategic management includes a process for an annual review of assumptions, and updating of strategies where necessary. It is a time to assess whether the agreed-upon goals and objectives for the year have been attained and to review the performance of those entrusted with achieving them. According to Forbes, "The annual

evaluation completes the circular process of strategic management, leading directly to the next year's future scan and mission review" (33).

Forbes says that strategically-managed organizations are rarely blindsided by events. This is especially important for public relations programs such as Rockwood's, whose communications department has been proactive, even assertive, in its attempt to stay ahead of other school districts by anticipating events and finding the right competitive niche, thus the development of the self-supporting, in-house agency approach.

Forbes writes that strategically-managed organizations "spot emerging trends and take necessary corrective actions before being forced to do so by consumer or environmental activists. In short, they have learned how to manage change," he says (33).

Forbes cautions, however, that once an organization employs strategic management it will be inexorably driven toward accountability. "That's because the entire process is goal driven," he writes (33).

Forbes also believes that strategic management of public relations works best when the organization is driven by the process. "If the CEO and the board know where they want to go and how to get there, the role of public relations will be clearly defined," he says (33). A public relations strategy can then be based on the

corporate plan, which is exactly the way Rockwood's self-supporting PR program evolved.

Finally, Forbes offers this advice for any public relations program considering a more strategic approach to the process of communication: "If you develop a well-planned public relations strategy based upon these six strategic management steps, you will have taken a significant step toward positioning yourself as an indispensable advisor to the CEO" (33).

Of special interest and relevance to Rockwood's program is Forbes' concluding comment in the article: "During the next decade, the traditional public relations departments of old *will gradually give way to purchased services*. What will be left will be strategic counselors to the CEO" (33).

If Forbes is correct in predicting that purchased services will be the norm in the future of public relations, then maximizing business opportunities may well become the focus of many communications programs. This is the premise of an article by Kyla Thompson in the March 1992 issue of Public Relations Journal.

Thompson believes the public relations firm that anticipates a company's economic anxiety and offers services that continue to help create and maintain relationships for the company becomes a gold mine for its client.

Economic anxiety is all too real for many public school districts. With the funding formula having undergone recent revisions in Missouri, some larger districts such as Rockwood are a little anxious about their financial future. Without increases in local tax levies or drastic re-budgeting, employee layoffs may become more "probable" than "possible." According to Thompson, this reality may have some painful, albeit advantageous results.

"When companies lay off employees," says Thompson, "it's not that easy for someone to walk across the street and get hired by another company, because the company across the street is also laying off employees. Therefore, the situation drives the creation of many small business start-ups" (15).

As an example, Thompson cites the fact that small business is now the number one business in Colorado. Because many small business people are freelance journalists, graphic artists, desktop publishers, designers and photographers, public relations firms have the ability to stay small and hire these people on contract, rather than hiring them as full-time employees and adding to overhead costs. While communications personnel currently employed full-time by a public school district might be alarmed by this prospect, it may be an attractive alternative for a system facing financial

uncertainty. Because of strict teacher certification requirements, it is much more reasonable for a school district to hire a freelance writer or graphic artist than it is to hire a freelance teacher.

In her article, Thompson quotes Charlie Russell, APR, president of Russell, Karsh, Hagan Public Relations based in Denver, Colo. "I have used freelancers on a project basis for several years," Russell says. "As long as you deliver results and quality work to the client, the status of the people you hire is not an issue with the client" (15).

Thompson writes that one of the most significant actions that a firm can take is to do a cost analysis of its "product lines" - the services it offers. Indeed, one of the goals of Rockwood's self-supporting program is to use accounting measures to carefully scrutinize the cost-benefit of each service provided.

"It is necessary to track and analyze each product line with the objective of determining which ones are profitable and which ones are not," Thompson says. "The profitable products should become key selling points with new clients. The activities that are not profitable should not be pursued and pitched to new clients, even though they may be services that you enjoy delivering" (16). Thompson advises, however, that unprofitable products should continue to be provided when a client

presses for delivery as part of a continuum of services.

Thompson suggests that the more profitable services are usually consulting, publicity, community-based programs, employee relations, minority public relations and marketing communications, public affairs and strategic planning (16).

"The surviving public relations firms became chameleons," Thompson writes. "When business scaled down, so did they. The survivors increased their networking, bettered their firm management and identified their profitable product lines. That's why they're still in business" (16).

With Rockwood's self-supporting program falling somewhere between an agency and a corporate approach, Esther Silver-Parker's comparison of corporate and agency work styles in the March 1992 issue of Communication World is particularly interesting.

"Today, the corporate and agency work environments exhibit striking similarities and distinct differences, with each side playing a vital role and offering unique contributions," Parker says (30).

Her article examines the views of eight professional communicators, all of whom have served in both corporate communications and agency public relations assignments. These men and women, at various stages of their careers, offer a range of perspectives.

Parker quotes Manuel D. Valencia, a Pasadena, Calif., practitioner:

"Practicing corporate public relations is like plowing through the ocean on a cruise ship: only major decisions and big storms really affect your course," Valencia is quoted as saying. "In agency public relations, you're in a speedboat. You feel all the waves and every bump, and you have to make frequent adjustments in your course to get where you are going" (30).

"In agency public relations, there is something fulfilling about working with and meeting the needs of a range of clients," Valencia says. "Here, you see a beginning, middle and end to your efforts. With corporate public relations it's sort of an ongoing challenge" (31).

Parker also quotes Lonnie Fogel, director of public relations for Atlanta-based Home Depot. Fogel says he has done his time on the agency side of the business and has no plans to return.

"In corporate PR you can really sink your teeth into your industry and get to know your subject," Fogel says (31).

After 27 years in corporate communications with Gulf Oil in Pittsburgh, Pa., Tom Latimer took the helm of the Atlanta office of agency giant Hill and Knowlton in 1985. Parker says Latimer sees a great deal of overlap between



the corporate and agency sides of the business.

"There isn't a heck of a lot of difference when it comes to skills, because the basic tools in our business are pretty standard," says Latimer. "Crisis communication, for example, has certain guidelines whether you are dealing with a product recall or a hotel fire. They are handled from basically the same PR perspective" (31).

Parker tells the story of Jim Hill who, in 1986, left his position as director of public relations and communications with Sara Lee Corp. to accept the top post with Rurrell Public Relations, the largest minority-owned PR firm in the United States. According to Parker, Hill took with him some valuable professional experience.

"One thing I learned on the corporate side was an uncompromising commitment to quality," Hill says. "If we couldn't do something right, we didn't do it. And that same philosophy is essential if you are going to be successful on the agency side" (32).

According to Parker, some communication professionals contend that agencies consistently demand a faster work pace than most corporate communications departments, especially those in large companies.

"Energizing is the term to describe the diversity of the typical agency PR client base," Latimer says to Parker. "One day I'm talking to a banker, the next day

a retailer, then a manufacturing firm. It's not that corporate public relations is boring, but it simply does not offer that same kind of diversity" (32).

Jeannine Addams disagrees. President and CEO of the Atlanta-based public relations firm of Tarkenton & Addams, she served previously as news bureau director at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and as a vice president with two leading public relations agencies, Carl Byoir & Associates and Cohn & Wolfe Inc.

"My Georgetown University news bureau experience was as much agency as corporate in nature," Addams says. "The university is like a large corporation, but we served a wider array of internal organizations than most corporations do. So the range of clients and the pace of work were a lot like agency PR" (32).

Hill, who spent several years early in his career as a public information director with a public television station, adds that PR professionals in many nonprofit organizations and small companies, in particular, probably wear a variety of hats and work at a pace comparable to that of their agency counterparts (33).

Parker quotes one practitioner who advocates the value of working in agency public relations. Donna Garland, marketing publications editor for Hallmark Cards in Kansas City, Mo., spent two years with small PR agencies, occasionally working with large firms in joint-

venture arrangements before joining Hallmark in 1989.

"In an agency, you have more autonomy to evaluate challenges, make decisions, and carry them out," Garland explains. "You are trusted on an individual level to know what you are doing and to come up with creative ideas" (33).

Corporate communications, on the other hand, normally operate more on a group mentality, according to Garland. "As a professional communicator, you think like the company thinks because you have to communicate its key messages to your audiences," she says to Parker (33).

In a point directly relating to the self-supporting approach in the Rockwood School District, Garland maintains that agencies are profit centers where success is closely tied to profit, and that means "you must justify your existence every day" (33).

Parker explains that the two sides of the business seem to be on common ground when it comes to structure, as well as professional skills. In fact, she believes more than half of corporate communications departments are set up like independent, in-house agencies. But operating a corporate communications function like an outside agency is not a new development.

"It makes sense," says Hill, who ran his departments like an agency when he was a public relations manager at Johnson Wax and later at Sara Lee. "We had a range of

internal clients and divisions. If the Raid or Off or Pledge brand at Johnson Wax needed a PR plan, we did it" (33).

Parker says Latimer adopted a similar approach at Gulf, where, as director of advertising and public relations, he managed more than 80 subordinates and provided communications support to at least eight divisions. But even when internal communication operations function like agencies, the comparison is incomplete, Latimer says. "All of my clients at Gulf were energy related," he explains. "And, to be honest, they could not go out and get another agency" (33), which is something that can be done by the 25 individual schools in Rockwood.

Parker also cites recent surveys that suggest many agency/client relationships may not be faring well. Addams says she is not surprised. She indicates that agencies must begin to charge less money, do more work and listen more closely to their clients.

Says Addams: "Today's agencies have to be very entrepreneurial with clients. We have to keep our overhead down so that our fees can fit our clients' budgets. To put it another way, if our clients don't work in plush offices and drive fancy company cars, why should we?" (33).

Parker also quotes Linda K. Peek, director of

strategic communications for Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta. "Fault exists on both sides," according to Peek. "Agencies and clients must share the responsibility for making the relationship work," she explains to Parker, stressing the importance of basics such as establishing an agreement with specific terms and reaching consensus on what constitutes success (33).

"In the best of all worlds, public relations agencies are treated like extensions of the client's communications staff," Peek says. "Cooperation is the key to making that happen" (33).

A.C. Croft returned to the Public Relations Quarterly in the spring of 1992 with another definitive commentary on creative PR management. In his article, "Managing PR Firm Expansion: Priorities and Problems," Croft says that, while many public relations firms are dealing with the problems of a sluggish economy, probably an equal number are coping with expansion dilemmas created by corporate staff cutbacks combined with increased business.

"Anticipating and managing the priorities and problems that come with expansion could be compared to learning to ice skate," Croft comments. "It's not as easy as it looks, but it's certainly as much fun as you expected...once you get the hang of it" (41).

Professionals who are a bit skeptical of progressive

PR approaches such as Rockwood's might want to take note of a comment made by Paul Franson, president of Franson, Hagerty and Associates, a thriving "high tech" public relations firm in San Jose, Calif. and Washington, D.C. Croft quotes Franson as saying "A public relations firm is like a fish. If you're not moving ahead, people may think you're dying...or already dead." Franson adds, "On the other hand, if you move ahead too fast, with your eyes closed and no sense of direction, you may slam your nose on a rock" (42).

Croft refers to a number of other PR leaders who have dealt with the challenges of rebuilding and expanding their own practices. In almost every instance the principals spoke about the problems that a lack of good back-up professionals, usually a number two person, caused during expansion.

"When expansion hit, principals often were spread too thin to pay attention to everything," Croft writes. "A Northern California principal told me, 'I got too fragmented, lost control and had huge staff and client turnover'" (43).

Croft says the owner finally solved his problem by hiring an experienced professional to back him up. Asked how he would handle expansion, if he had it to do over again under similar circumstances, he told Croft, "First I'd find a super #2 to focus on running current

businesses," (43). Coincidentally, Rockwood's director of communications and strategic planning hired an associate director to provide such a concentration in the summer of 1993, just as the department expanded into a self-supporting format.

Croft also says that any expanding program needs an effective computerized accounting system to keep track of expenses to be charged to clients. As one agency principal comments to Croft in the article, "The more clients you have, the more money will dribble through your hands without the right systems. If you haven't caught on to the right systems when you have two or three clients, heaven help you when you have 15" (43).

Croft cites principals who believe accurate accounting systems allow them to track the number of hours their employees bill and how that applies to clients. "Train your staff to not only serve clients properly but to manage accounts profitably," Croft advises (44).

Near the end of the article, Croft adjusts his counselor's cap one final time when he admonishes: "Be very clear about one thing. If you are to manage expansion properly and come out of it profitably and with your skin on...you will be required to do less client work and handle more administrative chores," he warns. "That can be a real problem, particularly if you like to

do client work and have trouble giving it up" (44).

While Croft outlined strategies for expansion in the Spring 1992 issue of Public Relations Quarterly, that same edition included an article with a less optimistic theme. In "How to Survive 'Til '95," James B. Strenski says the economic downturn experienced by the PR industry in the latter part of the 1980s calls for a concentrated effort by professionals in the field to recoup losses by departing from the excesses of the past and reorienting their organizations toward more cost-effective strategies in the 1990s.

Strenski cites a deteriorating financial industry, corporate downsizing, shelved expansion plans, hard-nosed competition to survive, federal and state budgets that are out of control and growing unemployment as reasons for caution in the public relations industry.

"What's the answer for the public relations practitioner?" Strenski asks rhetorically. "Tighten the belt, work harder and smarter than ever. Provide cutting edge leadership to employees and clients" (39).

Strenski advises PR professionals to anticipate what will be the challenges and problems in the next year as well as the next five years and "prepare our managements and clients to deal with those challenges cost effectively" (40).

"All of us will be compelled to devise new methods





to measure the results of our efforts more accurately," Strenski says. "Cost benefit ratios have become increasingly important and that trend will continue. If our efforts do not favorably affect the bottom line, we're likely to be without jobs" (40).

Fortunately, Strenski chooses to end the article on a more upbeat note. "There is cause for optimism if we're smart enough to recognize the growth niches," he adds (40).

"Communications is at the heart of problem-solving, issues management and successful marketing," Strenski writes. "For those practitioners who can tough it out, who have the vision, stamina and talent to survive over the next several years, there should be ample rewards. As never before it will be the survival of the fittest" (40).

Arguably, the most convincing and comprehensive research to date on the topic of self-supporting, in-house agency public relations is featured in Dwight A. Johnson's article, "Build Your Own In-House Agency," in the June/July 1993 issue of Communication World.

"The [changing business climate] is part of the evolution in corporate PR toward providing only those services that in-house clients are willing to pay for," says Johnson (30).

According to Johnson, many PR departments already

have changed from one centralized organization that serves everybody, using funds from a corporate budget, to several PR account teams deployed to business units which need them enough to pay for their assistance.

Similarities to Rockwood's approach are obvious. Rockwood's communications department no longer relies entirely on the "corporate" or district budget, but instead serves the individual "business units" or schools willing to pay for the support.

Johnson quotes Harold T. Sieloff, head of Ford's creative services department, in Dearborn, Mich., who stresses the importance of competitive qualities in an in-house setting. "We give the same fast response and creativity one would expect from an outside agency," Sieloff says. "Some traditional internal organizations just don't have that reputation" (30).

Johnson says a lot is involved in the administrative aspects of running an in-house agency. This includes time sheets for the staff so clients can be billed properly and promptly, vendor contracts and invoices in large volumes. All of these components are currently being employed in Rockwood's self-supporting approach.

Johnson quotes Rob Merchant, manager of the business office for AT&T's creative services unit. "Don't underestimate the manpower it might take to put together and run an operation like this," is Merchant's advice to

anyone setting up a comparable in-house agency (30). AT&T's unit has grown from five people in 1988 to 27, seven of them video specialists.

Johnson says many in-house groups like the ones at Ford and AT&T buy a good deal of freelance writing, photography, publication design, video production and other creative services. "Their [the freelancers'] contribution, under the creative services unit's supervision, is cost-effective, so that even the fully-loaded cost of projects is less than a client faces outside the company" Johnson writes (30).

Jerry Santos, now director of AT&T's creative services group, has had to continually adjust the balance between the work force and work load. Thus far, the adjustments have been to add staff and free-lance support.

Santos describes the origins in 1988 of the creative services unit to Johnson: "The winds were changing. Every activity was being questioned for its cost, and if it couldn't be justified it was likely to go out of business," Santos says. "...I felt it would be very useful if they moved toward the agency concept, charging the client for the work rather than expecting corporate headquarters to pick up the bill" (32).

"Everything we do - or should be doing - needs to be tied into the organization's strategic plan," says Keith

Sheldon, ABC, APR, leader of Southern California Edison's eight-member communications team. "The in-house agency approach helps tie overall communication efforts into the corporate plan," Sheldon says to Johnson (31).

Johnson says the in-house agency concept has proven so successful at Bell Atlantic, in Arlington, Va., that high-quality competitive performance has even attracted outside clients to that company's creative services group, something which has also begun to happen at Rockwood.

Walter Perkowski, director of Bell Atlantic's creative services program, also says his department receives steady job requests from outside customers. Johnson quotes Perkowski as saying that "three-quarters of [Bell Atlantic's creative] work comes from other companies, usually elsewhere in the telecommunications business" (30).

While there are distinct differences in the approaches and rates of success of these programs when compared to what is happening in Rockwood, there are enough similarities to inspire a confidence and satisfaction that many educational PR programs would envy. But, as Johnson writes in his article, "that's what can happen when you turn a cost center into a savings center, and do a bang-up job as well" (32).

### **THE RESULTS OF ROCKWOOD'S SELF-SUPPORTING APPROACH**

While a great deal has been said about the Rockwood communications department's self-supporting program in the preceding chapters, little has been written about the make-up of the department itself. In other words, what are the primary functions of the office? How many employees are needed to carry out the department's responsibilities? And what areas are these employees responsible for? Answers to these questions will better illustrate the climate in which a self-supporting program can exist and be successful.

### **BACKGROUND ON THE DISTRICT**

To begin with, the Rockwood communications department serves the fifth largest school district in Missouri. Located in suburban west St. Louis County, Rockwood has been Missouri's fastest growing school district for the last decade with average annual growth of more than 900 students since 1988. With a 1993-94 enrollment of 18,384, Rockwood is the second largest district in St. Louis County and will probably surpass the Parkway School District to become the largest sometime in the mid-to-late 1990s.

With 16 elementary schools, five middle schools, four high schools, a center for gifted education, a central administrative center, two separate

administrative campuses and nearly 2,500 employees all located and working within a 150-square-mile area, Rockwood is well acquainted with the logistical communication challenges often faced by expanding corporations.

#### **BACKGROUND ON THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT**

Much of the district's growth and success can be attributed to a longstanding emphasis on public relations and marketing. With the same consistent and creative communications leadership since the early 1970s, Rockwood has received numerous awards of excellence from the National School Public Relations Association and the Missouri School Public Relations Association. Walt Disney World has recognized the communications department for its outstanding efforts in marketing and promoting Rockwood's schools and programs.

As Rockwood's enrollment has grown, so has the size of its communications program. There are currently 12 communications employees functioning within 10 different areas or "mini departments". These 10 branches include administration and strategic planning, marketing, secretarial support and special projects, graphic design and typesetting, news services, audio-visual services, offset printing, duplicating services, support services, and accounting. As will be illustrated later, accounting

is especially important to the self-supporting nature of the department.

#### **THE EMPLOYEES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each of the 12 individuals working in the communications department has important responsibilities.

Rockwood's director of communications and strategic planning provides leadership and vision for all components of the communications program. The director oversees strategic planning efforts for the district, serves as the chief liaison among the administration, community and news media, and consults and coordinates special events.

Working closely with the lead administrator is an associate director who guides the district's marketing efforts and manages the department's other programs under the director's supervision.

A single individual provides secretarial support for communications and strategic planning. The secretary serves as an administrative assistant to selected special projects and routes job requisitions to appropriate persons within the department.

The graphics design branch consists of three employees who provide desktop publishing, typesetting, photography and camera-ready art for printed materials including annual reports, information folders,

newsletters and newspapers, posters and display ads, directories, handbooks and booklets.

Rockwood's communications department has one person responsible for news gathering, writing, editing and proofreading. This person works closely with the graphic artists to produce the district's publications, news releases, press packets, brochures, public service announcements and scripts for videos, slide shows and special programs.

The department employs a full-time audiovisual producer to provide multi-media services for slide photography and presentations, video editing, video productions and operation of sound systems.

Offset printing and duplication services are all done in-house under the direction of two employees. These individuals operate two offset presses and a large multi-volume copier to accommodate the wide range of printing requests that come from the various schools and departments within the district. Printing, duplicating and bindery services are provided for handbooks, brochures, calendars, awards, directories, forms, invitations, newsletters and stationery.

Important miscellaneous department functions and responsibilities are coordinated by another employee who supports printing and duplication services, maintains supply inventories, facilitates job requisitions and



assists with set-up for special events.

Perhaps the individual most integral to the self-supporting process is the employee who maintains the accounting and bookkeeping responsibilities. This person oversees all computerized accounting and budgeting functions, including purchase orders, invoices and statements, accounts receivable or payable and monthly closing with financial reports.

#### **THE EVOLUTION OF A SELF-SUPPORTING PR UNIT**

The evolution of Rockwood's communications department into a self-supporting in-house agency began in the spring of 1989 after the district hired a new superintendent. When Dennis L. Peterson, Ph.D. arrived from Wyoming, he brought with him an extensive background in organizational strategic planning. Almost immediately, he initiated a process by which Rockwood could re-evaluate its programs and plan for the future. By the spring of 1990, a portfolio of strategic plans had been written by a number of committees to give direction and definition to the district's long range planning.

One of the strategic plans called for a comprehensive move to a more site-based form of management throughout the district. This meant that schools were to be given primary responsibility for their own budgets and programs. The superintendent and other

central office administrators would continue to provide focus and leadership to the overall educational system, but individual principals were given the freedom to manage their schools and implement their own programs as long as the integrity of Rockwood's mission was maintained and adhered to.

At the same time, Rockwood's communications department moved from the district's administrative complex into a custom-designed communications center in the lower level of one of the elementary schools. Located seven miles from the administrative complex, the new communications center contained specially- designed areas for all of the department's employees and their respective functions.

Initially, many people in Rockwood and even some outside of the district were skeptical that a communications department could truly be effective when located so far from the superintendent's office. Actually, the distance factor has made the department more autonomous, thereby enhancing its effectiveness and accelerating its evolution into a self-supporting program. As Dwight A. Johnson observed in his article, "Build Your Own In-House Agency," location should not be a deterrent to service (31).

As Rockwood's move to a site-based form of management became more complete, one of the changes

involved the way funds are apportioned to the individual schools. For example, schools previously requested services from the communications department at no charge. The communications department provided whatever services were needed as long as the necessary funds had been allocated to its budget by the district.

With site-based management, however, the freedom and responsibility to pay for requested services were given to the individual schools. Funds that were formerly budgeted to the communications department were now shifted to the individual school accounts so they could decide for themselves how to spend the money and which services to request. Site-based management had seemingly left the communications department with a greatly depleted budget and the challenge of earning back the schools' money and business.

While the new system presented several unfamiliar challenges, the communications department benefitted from a strong reputation within the district and the confidence that many schools would continue to request services without even considering an external source.

Having always been a resourceful group and not wanting to take any chances, the communications staff responded to the test by marketing its services to the schools and developing a price structure so attractive that principals and teachers would not even be tempted to

take their media or printing needs outside the district.

The department created a system to assist schools in determining their communication needs and the associated costs. In the past, schools could order several hundred copies of a brochure or form without considering the financial effect of wasted supplies because they were not responsible for paying the bill. With the financial aspects of site-based management, principals and administrators now think twice about ordering more copies than needed because they are ultimately responsible for payment. The bottom line is that schools are now held accountable for their communication expenses.

While the new system created challenges and dilemmas for the communications department, the entrepreneurial possibilities were recognized immediately. RSD Communications became the new name for the program and a computerized accounting system was extensively researched and implemented to facilitate expenditure tracking, sending out invoices and applying revenues.

The department now conducts an ongoing assessment of price structures and performance to ensure that Rockwood's schools and programs receive the highest quality and lowest priced communications support possible. The department's services and marketing efforts have been so successful that some businesses and organizations from the Rockwood community have contracted

with RSD Communications for their media and printing needs.

### **THE SELF-SUPPORTING PROCESS**

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines self-supporting as "meeting one's needs by one's own efforts or output" (1293). The self-supporting process in the Rockwood School District has required both considerable effort and output. A great deal of teamwork and paperwork are required to operate the system in a productive and cost-effective manner. Perhaps the best way to illustrate Rockwood's self-supporting program is to discuss the sequence of steps involved in facilitating a requested service.

Communication job requests from a Rockwood school or department are usually mailed to RSD Communications or called in by telephone. Requests are typically routed to the person most capable of handling that particular assignment. By now, many people in the district are acquainted with the department's services and well aware of whom they should call depending upon the assistance needed.

Cost estimates are typically provided either verbally or in writing depending on the customer and the requested service. Estimates are always required by and given to clients outside the school district. Jobs

requested by district departments or schools are also normally given a cost estimate. The exception is routine printing jobs such as school letterhead or grade report forms that the school or office must have. So the cost is not really a consideration. However, the customer and the communications department both keep careful records of previous charges for the same services to ensure that prices are not inconsistent.

When a job requires the assistance of several people in the department the components of the job are prioritized and the job ticket is first given to the person or persons with the skills needed to begin the project.

For example, the dedication ceremony for a newly-constructed Rockwood school will involve several communications staff members. The elements of the project might include working with the principal and parents to plan the dedication, assembling a press packet for the media, designing and printing invitations and a dedication program, and producing a video of the actual ceremony.

The job ticket will first go to the communications staff members who can assist the school in planning the ceremony. For several weeks prior to the event, they develop a timeline, order necessary supplies and create the order of the ceremony. As they do this, they are

recording their hours on a job ticket and listing all expenses incurred in the planning process. Communications staff members typically charge \$20 per hour for time spent on a project.

The hourly fee charged by staff members is considerably less than the going-rate of most freelance writers, graphic designers, consultants or established PR firms. The department's fee structure was developed after a thorough study of price rates charged by St. Louis area PR firms comparable in size to Rockwood's communications program.

As the staff members working on the planning committee complete their tasks and record their charges on a job ticket, the project is passed on to another person in the department who can complete additional pieces of the request.

The next part of the assignment requires the writing and assembly of a press packet to be sent to all appropriate media contacts. Again, this person spends time gathering information, writing the news releases, taking photographs, compiling the packets and mailing them to the media. The amount of time spent on these responsibilities is again listed on the job ticket at \$20 per hour. Other expenses, such as postage, folders, envelopes, film and developing are also added to the bill. At this point, the job ticket is passed to the

next person required to complete the requested services.

Another important part in the planning of a school dedication is the design of the invitations and the printed program for those who will attend the ceremony. As the invitations are designed by the department's graphic artists, the fees for their time and materials are added to the job ticket. Postage may also be added to the bill at a later date if the communications department is responsible for mailing the invitations.

Once the invitations have been designed, the graphic artists create the printed program taking into account the details and directions of the ceremony planning committee. Again, the appropriate fees are recorded on the job ticket as the services are provided.

As the invitations, envelopes and printed programs are produced by the graphic artists and typesetters, the camera-ready copies are given to the department's print shop where negatives are made so the documents can be run on the offset presses.

Unlike the other branches of the department that charge for their time and materials separately, these costs are combined on rates for printing jobs so that customers, whether they be internal or external, can compare RSD Communications' low printing prices with those of commercial printing and quick copy establishments, such as Kinko's and Color Art. As with



all other jobs, the final costs of printing the invitations and the programs are added to the job ticket before it is passed on to the next person.

Finally, the day of the dedication ceremony has arrived. The invitations have been mailed, the media have been contacted and the printed programs are ready to be distributed to those in attendance. The final responsibility of the communications department is to produce a video of the ceremony. Those employees providing audiovisual services add to the job ticket their time involved in set-up, videotaping the ceremony, materials and supplies used, and any pre- or post-production editing.

#### **THE ACCOUNTING PROCESS**

Once all the jobs associated with the event are complete, the job ticket is given to the department's accountant who totals all charges and assigns a number to the job ticket for reference. Copies of the ticket are made and samples of printed documents, such as the invitation and printed program, are attached and included in the numbered file created for that job.

Each file is given a separate number, which is also printed on the invoice. This is done for reference in case a job needs to be duplicated or a customer/school has a question.

Throughout this process, it may be necessary to order additional supplies or materials so the jobs can be completed. For instance, the graphic artists may design the invitations with a special paper in mind. In this case, the paper is ordered and bill is paid from the communications department's budget. The same is true for other items, such as video tapes and special inks. When the overall project is complete, however, those expenses are added to the job ticket so the customer/school's remittance can be used to reimburse the branches within the department that ordered the supplies.

Now the accountant prepares an invoice for the customer/school based upon all costs for assisting with the dedication ceremony as they are listed on the job ticket. The invoice provides the customer/school with an itemized list of all services and materials provided along with the associated fees. Payment of these charges is expected within 30 days after the bill is mailed to the school. At the end of every month, a statement listing all outstanding invoices is sent to each customer/school.

At the present time, schools and departments within the district write their own checks to pay for services provided by the communications department. Lately, there has been some discussion that an internal transfer of funds handled by the district's Business Office would be

a more efficient way of expediting the payment process.

The advantages of an internal fund transfer would be twofold: first, the time and paperwork associated with the writing and depositing of an actual check would be eliminated; secondly, while most schools and departments are punctual in paying for services rendered, others are intentionally slow in issuing checks because they still take exception to the idea of paying for services they think should be provided without cost. For this reason, an internal transfer of funds would allow the communications department to automatically obtain delinquent payments with the assistance of the Business Office. Of course, this method of collection might also result in damaged customer relations with those schools or departments that have had their funds taken from them.

When payment of an invoice is received by the communications department, the reimbursements are applied to the branches that provided the service. For example, in the case of the dedication ceremony, the money received is credited to those individuals who completed the requested jobs. If news services charged \$60.50 for preparing and mailing press packets, then that amount is applied as revenue to the news services budget. If the printing department charged \$283.12 for producing the invitations and printed programs, then that amount is

credited as revenue to the printing department.

The computerized accounting aspect and applied payments are very important to the effectiveness of RSD Communications' self-supporting effort. The concept of a financially independent in-house agency remains unproven and questionable for RSD Communications without the ability to see which branches within the department are generating revenue and actually supporting themselves monetarily.

The self-supporting, in-house agency approach creates several distinct benefits for RSD Communications. However, the concept also carries with it some very real disadvantages. Many of these obstacles will be overcome in time as the system is refined; others are inherent to the process and may continue to challenge the feasibility of this strategy. RSD Communications' gains and losses as a self-supporting PR unit are discussed in the next chapter.

**DISCUSSION OF THE ROCKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SELF-  
SUPPORTING COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM**

While Rockwood's communications department has long been regarded by the National School Public Relations Association as having one of the best educational P.R. programs in the country, the success of its self-supporting approach is still somewhat inconclusive.

Without question, there are distinct advantages for a public school district to have a self-supporting in-house communications agency. By definition, most sizable school districts already have an in-house public relations program of some kind. What they do not have is a program that attempts to generate revenue for itself and the district. In doing so, this approach fosters schools that are more accountable for their communication needs, a communications program that is more answerable to its consumers, and greater opportunities for improved community relations.

**ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOLS - ACCOUNTABLE COMMUNICATIONS**

Because each Rockwood school is now responsible for purchasing the communication services it needs, hopefully more scrutiny and discernment is used before making a cost commitment. In a published interview with Mary Massey of the National School Public Relations Association from October of 1993, Rockwood's director of

communications and strategic planning, Dan Burns, says his department's self-supporting venture has prompted schools to be better consumers as they search for the least expensive cost for the communication services they need.

"Schools had to say for the first time, 'what is the value of the product or service?' No one had asked that before," Burns says (1).

Some schools have periodically opted to take their communication needs to outside vendors. The reason is not RSD Communications' inability to do the job well for the right price, but rather an occasional inability to do the job quickly enough to meet the needs of the schools.

Admittedly, the efficiency of the department suffers if several departments and schools ask for their jobs to be done at the same time. Because schools know they are going to pay for the service anyway, the temptation may present itself to take the job elsewhere to be done faster even if the costs are higher.

There are schools that claim to have found printers and graphic artists who charge less than the communications department. The department, however, invests considerable time in making sure its rates are highly competitive. To be sure of this, when a school has a job completed by an outside vendor, that school is required by Rockwood's business office to show at least

three estimates dated before the job was submitted and completed. One of these must be from RSD Communications.

The purpose of this guideline is twofold. First, it requires each school to make sure it is getting the best price for the service. Secondly, it gives RSD Communications the opportunity to make sure its fee structure remains competitive.

"It helps schools be accountable and it helps me be accountable," Burns says. "If the schools can get a service performed somewhere else, why shouldn't they? It's forcing me to look at my costs to see if they are in line," Burns adds (1).

The accountability factor for the communications program is actually higher than it is for the schools and departments. This is primarily because of the improved budgeting, documentation, accounting and tracking of exact expenses for provided services. Communications staff members are accountable for every project they work on through the job tickets they write and the tasks they record in their individual log books.

In an age when job security is no longer guaranteed in public education, the ability for employees to justify every minute of their time and each project they have contributed to is very important. If Rockwood's Board of Education wants to trim the budget by eliminating employees or programs, the communications staff should be

able to prove the exact value of its contributions through revenues, detailed logbooks and other financial records.

On the other hand, the documentation also may provide an accurate basis for making such difficult decisions if reductions in staff and expenses are legitimate.

Besides being more accountable, improved community relations is viewed as another benefit of the self-supporting program. Because RSD Communications is now more revenue-oriented, the office is organized to allow community groups to contract for the department's services.

The communications department currently does work for local religious groups, businesses and hospitals. Some view this as a conflict of interest, believing instead that enterprises in the community already pay taxes to Rockwood and district departments should not charge additional costs for services rendered. In reality, the principle is similar to what occurs when schools charge a nominal fee to community residents or groups desiring to use the building's auditorium or gymnasium.

In the aftermath of the 1993 flooding in Chesterfield Valley, a group of influential business people joined forces to create the Chesterfield Valley



2000 Coalition. One of the members of this group is an assistant superintendent in Rockwood. Recognizing the group's need for public relations materials, and that RSD Communications had the resources to meet that need, the administrator quickly made arrangements with the Coalition for the communications department to provide the necessary PR services. The result is another productive partnership that enables the communications program to become even more financially self-reliant.

Another community relations benefit of the self-supporting program may occur at the time of a tax referendum or bond issue. Ideally, if businesses in the community have received quality, cost-effective PR services from RSD Communications, the business community will be more inclined to support the issues and items on the ballot.

#### **DISADVANTAGES OF THE SELF-SUPPORTING APPROACH**

While there are numerous benefits to the self-supporting concept, there also are some obvious drawbacks. For example, in the case of community organizations purchasing services from the communications department, there is the dilemma of who comes first -- the organizations or the schools.

Businesses and their owners are not accustomed to waiting in line for their printing or communication

needs. More likely than not, if they contract with a professional job shop or PR firm they are going to receive preferred service. When they do business with RSD Communications they may have to wait longer for their job to be completed so that a printed school band program can be produced or a new program logo designed. While the outside revenue is desirable, there is never any question that Rockwood's schools receive first priority. Many businesses may grumble a bit at the slower turn-around time but most are understanding in light of the lower service fees.

The fundamental change in the way the department operates has left other challenges that Burns and his staff continue to grapple with.

"For starters," National School Public Relations Association's Mary Massey says, "it's difficult sometimes to determine who to bill for what services" (1).

Burns comments in Massey's article that his department still has responsibility for all of the district-wide communication activities (1). Because of this, many schools and departments in the district are ambivalent about having to purchase communication services. The department continues to struggle with whether it should charge for routine activities such as news releases and media relations. As many principals note, individual schools should not have to pay for the

primary functions and responsibilities of the communications department.

There is logic to the principals' argument that the department exists to meet the communication needs of the district and should not charge for those services. However, for the site-based management and self-supporting theories to truly be effective, either the superintendent or the communications department must insist that schools abide by the spirit of the strategy. Otherwise, the "gospel" of site-based management is nothing more than meaningless rhetoric.

In spite of this, news releases and other expected communication tasks are now billed to "internal PR." When a job is billed to internal PR it simply means that the department pays for that service because the nature of the request was expected or required. Nearly two-thirds of the department's business is billed to internal PR as more and more principals express misgivings about paying the communications department for routine services.

The downside of billing internal PR for jobs completed is that no revenue is ever credited to the department's general ledger. Payment is applied to the individuals who complete the jobs but the money is transferred internally meaning that no actual income is deposited in the department account. The staff members

who contribute to a project are simply being "paid" from the department's budget because no compensation is received from an outside source.

From a self-supporting viewpoint, the internal PR factor can be both a negative and a positive. It is negative in the sense that two-thirds of the jobs completed are still being paid for out of the department's own budget rather than generating revenue. On the other hand, the internal PR factor is positive because it allows the department to distinguish between the jobs that it apparently should be paying for from those that schools or other offices should assume the costs for. In addition, because payments are being applied whether they are from within or outside the budget, it is even more evident which branches of the department are contributing and which are not.

Another disadvantage of the self-supporting approach is the amount of time and paperwork required to complete job tickets and log books. While these tasks are a distraction from the most important function of the department - facilitating the district's communication programs - they remain a necessary routine if the financial aspect of the program is going to function accurately. Self-discipline in completing the forms must be practiced by each employee if the billing process is expected to work efficiently.

Another stumbling block in RSD Communications' attempt to become self-supporting is the ongoing difficulty it has had with the accounting component of the approach. More than any of the other branches, the accounting arm of the department should function with ease and accuracy. Constant technical problems with the computer set-up, however, and a complicated software accounting system have been consistent stumbling blocks in the chase to become a truly self-supporting department.

While the invoices and statements are now distributed on a regular basis, the actual financial reports needed to verify the success of the department's self-supporting efforts are still unavailable because the accountant is unfamiliar with the computerized bookkeeping system. Steps are being taken to improve this situation to the point that detailed reports on the department's fiscal progress can be produced on a regular basis.

#### **THE BOTTOM LINE**

Bill Dixon, community relations specialist for the Albany, Ore., public schools says in Massey's article that school-based management plus school budget cuts are forcing a new look at ways to keep communications departments alive.

"[Rockwood's] idea of setting-up a self-supporting service agency has a lot of appeal," Dixon says (3).

Kathy Leslie, APR, executive director of educational public relations for the Beaverton, Ore., public schools, says she also is exploring a range of revenue-generating ideas similar to those implemented in Rockwood. Among them:

- \* One major business has committed to sponsor the community-wide school newspaper in exchange for a listing of the school programs in which the business is involved.

- \* Another business is sponsoring individual school newsletters in exchange for advertising.

- \* Local Realtors are paying for the production of a school map previously produced by the district. Realtors will sell the maps at their offices.

- \* Volunteers in the communications office are solicited from colleges. Those with journalism backgrounds are identified.

Leslie believes drastic measures are necessary so the communications function can survive even in the face of cutting schools to the bare essentials - the teacher and the classroom.

"Moving in the direction [of outside funding] has a strong appeal to people who want to maintain these types of services when we're getting down to the core," Leslie tells Massey. "[Rockwood's approach] is a way to move

ahead to ensure the services are there" (3).

In his published conversation with Massey, Burns predicts that RSD Communications will survive and continue its progress toward becoming totally self-supporting within a short time. "We're still evolving," he says. "But we have a long way to go" (1).

**APPENDICES**

In July of 1993, Rockwood's Director of Communications and Strategic Planning, Dan Burns, and the author of this paper were invited to the 40th Annual Conference of the National School Public Relations Association to give a presentation on the development and structure of the district's self-supporting public relations program. This same presentation was also given at the Winter Conference of the Oregon School Public Relations Association on January 7, 1994 in Salem, Oregon.

What follows are the pages from the presenters' notebook that was used during both of these seminars.



Oregon School Public Relations Association  
Winter Conference  
January 7, 1994

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BUILDING A

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SELF-SUPPORTING

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PR UNIT

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**Presented By**

Dan J. Burns, *Director Communications & Strategic Planning*  
Jeff Arnett, *Communications Associate*



*RSD Communications*  
*Babler Campus*  
*1955-A Shepard Road*  
*Glencoe, Missouri 63038-1431*  
*(314)458-1143 FAX (314)458-9652*

*Welcome*

**"Developing a Self-Supporting PR Program"**

Presented by  
**RSD Communications**

*A self-supporting unit of the Rockwood School District  
West St. Louis County, Missouri*



**N O T E S**

The audience will see this slide as they enter the room.

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# Building A Self-Supporting PR Unit



An Introduction to the Rockwood School District and RSD Communications



The Evolution of a Self-Supporting PR Unit



The Self-Supporting Process



Benefits and Advantages of a Self-Supporting Unit



Self-Supporting PR: Success in the Corporate World

**self - sup • port • ing** *adj* (1836): meeting one's needs by one's own efforts or output

- Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1991

**self - sup • port • ing** *adj* (1836): meeting one's needs by one's own efforts or output

- *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1991*

N O T E S

Webster's definition of self-supporting for those who may be unsure  
as to how it applies to public relations in the Rockwood School  
District.

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Part I

An Introduction to the Rockwood School District and RSD Communications

*Welcome to the Rockwood School District*

**ROCKWOOD**



**SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**

*"Empowering People with a Vision"*

NOTES

This should be a very quick transition slide to help introduce the audience to the district.

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## *Quick Facts*

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### **The Rockwood School District**

- Located in suburban west St. Louis County, Missouri
- Missouri's fastest growing school district
- Total Enrollment - 18,384 students
- 26 school campuses
  - 16 Elementary Schools
  - 5 Middle Schools
  - 4 High Schools
  - CLC (Gifted Ed Center)
- 2,250 Employees
- Recently completed a \$65 million bond issue construction program

### N O T E S

1. Rockwood covers a 150-square mile area.

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2. Missouri's fastest growing school district since 1984-85.

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3. Second largest district in St. Louis County

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4. Several departments in addition to the 26 school campuses.

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5. Recently opened two new middle schools and two new  
high schools.

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6. Lafayette High School had the largest graduating class in Missouri  
this year.

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7. Refer the audience to the Quick Facts brochure in the information  
folder.

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*Photo of outdoor sign*

N O T E S

1. This slide introduces the audience to RSD Communications.

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2. There are two departments in the lower level of Babler Elementary.

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3. RSD Communications occupies a custom designed office center,  
including a graphics area and a print shop.

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4. The department is located seven miles from the district's central  
office. This distance has helped create our self-supporting and  
independent status.

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5. A profile of the department is located in the addendum of this book.

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*Photo of Gold Medallion and other awards*

N O T E S

As a communications team, we are proud of the honors and awards  
we have received at the state and national levels.

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## *Recent Awards and Honors*

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### **1993**

Award of Excellence, NSPRA: Identity/Image Package

Award of Merit, NSPRA: Special Purpose Publication

Two Golden Achievement Awards, NSPRA

Four Awards of Excellence, MoSPRA

### **1992**

Gold Medallion Award, NSPRA: Internal Public Relations

### **1991**

Gold Medallion Award, NSPRA: Finance Campaign

### **1990**

Certificate of Recognition, Walt Disney Seminar Productions

## N O T E S

1. A few of the awards we have recently received are listed here.
2. A more complete listing of the department's accomplishments is included in the addendum of this book.

## *Branches of RSD Communications*



- Communications & Strategic Planning
- Secretarial Support & Special Projects
- Accounting & Marketing
- Graphic Design
- News Services
- Audio-Visual Services
- Offset Printing
- Duplicating Services
- Support Services

### N O T E S

1. There are nine branches of RSD Communications as shown by this slide.
2. Each branch operates as a self-supporting unit within the department.
3. The following slides will provide a more in-depth look at each of these branches and the individuals who are responsible for making RSD Communications a self-supporting PR department.
4. A more complete list of the department's services is included in the addendum of this book.



## *The Director of Communications & Strategic Planning*

- Provides leadership and vision for all components of the communications program
- Oversees strategic planning efforts for the district
- Serves as chief liaison between the administration, community and news media
- Consults and coordinates special events

### N O T E S

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*Photo of Jeff Arnett*

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## *Secretarial Support & Special Projects*

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- Provides secretarial support for communications and strategic planning
- Serves as administrative assistant to selected special projects
- Routes job requisitions to appropriate persons within the department

### N O T E S

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## *Accounting & Marketing*

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- Oversees all computerized accounting/budgeting functions
  - purchase orders
  - invoicing
  - accounts receivable/payable
  
- Assists with marketing and special project assignments

### N O T E S

1. This is a particularly important slide because it previews the third  

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section of our presentation.

2. The Accounting function of this branch is a significant part of the  

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self-supporting process.

3. Most school PR departments do not include an accounting  

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component.

4. This is one of the branches that makes RSD Communications  

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unique and distinguishes it from most other school PR programs.

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*Photo of Sue Molner*

N O T E S

In addition to graphic design, Sue's responsibilities also include  
typesetting, layout and assistance with special communication  
projects.



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# Graphic Design

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Design thinking process  
concept ready art for print  
A Journal Report

A Journal Report *Photo of Judy Dodd*

A Workshop, Newsletter  
A Poster and Display Art  
A Presentation, Manual

## NOTES

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## *Graphic Design*

Design, desktop publishing or photo typesetting, photography and camera ready art for printed materials including:

- Annual Reports
  
- Brochures and Information Folders
  
- Mastheads, Newsletters and Newspapers
  
- Posters and Display Ads
  
- Directories, Handbooks and Booklets

### N O T E S

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News Services

News published, articles, photos, and recordings, 1-2-2014

Introduction/Overview

Photo of *Michelle Mueller*

Production and Financing

Public Perception

Strategic Reporting

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*Audio-Visual Production*

*Photo of Ron Leonard*

N O T E S

The department operates its own half-inch super VHS editing suite.

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## *Audio-Visual Production*

Provides multi-media, audio or visual services for the following:

- Multi-Projector Slide Shows
- Slide Photography
- Video Productions, Editing and Duplication
- Transfer of Slide Show to Video Format
- Sound Reinforcement (P.A. Systems)

### N O T E S

From this editing suite, we are able to provide these and many other  

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audio-visual services.

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## Printing & Duplication Services

Printing, duplicating, and other services for your business.

• Business Forms

• Booklets

• Calendars

• Certificate Awards

• Directories

• Forms

• Invitations

• Newsletters/News

• Stationery

*Photo of Lue Stolts*

## NOTES

1. The office number

of the Department

2. They arrive to the

3. We may need to work

another part of the

## *Printing & Duplication Services*

Printing, duplicating and bindery services are provided for the following:

- Booklets/Handbooks
- Brochures
- Calendars
- Certificates/Awards
- Directories
- Forms
- Invitations
- Newsletters/Newspapers
- Stationery

### N O T E S

1. The offset printing and quick copy services are under the umbrella of the Communications Department.
2. Easy access to the print shop is a major advantage.
3. We only need to walk down the hall as opposed to driving to another part of the district when a job needs to be completed.

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## *Support Services*

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- Supports Printing and Duplication Services
  - Maintains supply inventory
  - Facilitates job requisitions
  
- Assists with miscellaneous department functions and responsibilities

### NOTES

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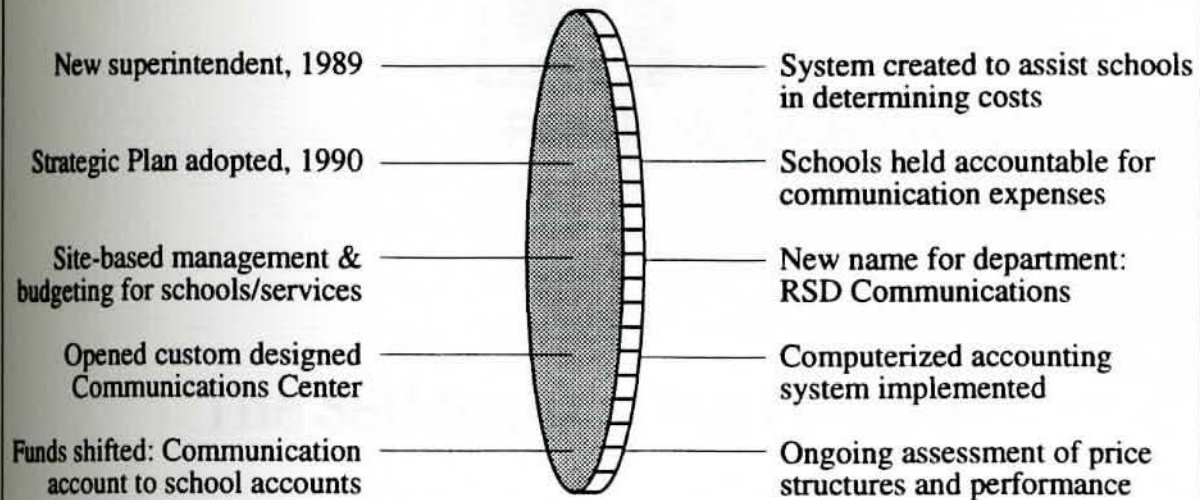


## Part II

# The Evolution of a Self-Supporting PR Unit



## *How RSD Communications Evolved*



### N O T E S

**1L:** The new superintendent provided visionary leadership.

**2L:** The Strategic Plan laid the foundation for visionary direction.

**3L:** Site-based management allows the district to identify and track all site operational costs

**4L:** New communications center at new location added to evolution.

**5L:** District funded services became school purchased services.

**2R:** Schools are encouraged but not required to purchase our services.

**4R:** Great deal of effort was invested in researching and purchasing an accounting software program that would allow us to track the costs of various services and bill our clients for completed projects.

**5R:** The department continues to evolve into a more clearly defined self-supporting PR unit within the school district.



Part III

# The Self-Supporting Process

*Job Entered in Portfolio*

*Photo of Michelle working on project*

N O T E S

1. For this presentation, we have created a hypothetical project to demonstrate the self-supporting process.

2. The project begins with News Services where a press packet is created for the dedication ceremony.

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\_\_\_\_\_

# Job Entered in Daily Log

Communications Department  
**DAILY LOG**

Jeff Arnett  
'92 - '93

S M T W R F S      8 / 2 / 92

Worked on press  
packet for  
Rockwood Valley  
Middle School

1:00 - 2:00

2:00 - 3:00

## NOTES

1. After a job is completed, the time spent working on that job is entered in a daily log.
2. Refer to the sample log page in the addendum of this book.
3. Each hour of the daily log is divided into 15 minute increments.
4. The department's labor charge is \$20 per hour, so a client could be billed for as little as \$5 if a project took only 15 minutes to complete.
5. The log is used to complete the labor column on the job ticket.
6. The daily log also enables each person in the department to account for the time spent working on various projects.

*The Job  
Ticket -  
Step 1*

USE Black Ink

## RSD Communications - Job Ticket

Job # \_\_\_\_\_ Date (Arrive RSD Comm) 8/1/92 Date Due DAY OF DEDICATION  
9/1/92

Customer ROCKWOOD VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL Ordered by MARY RIEDEL Qty VARIES PER ITEM Job Description/Form Number NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION

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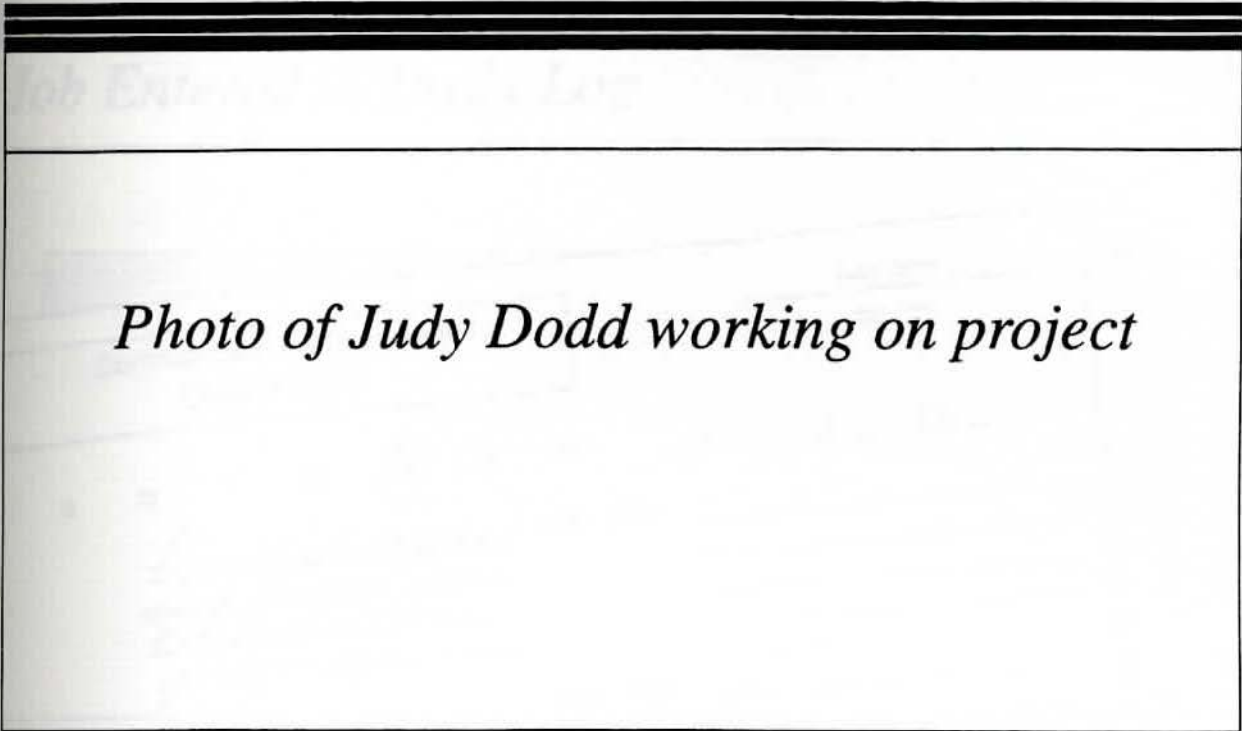
Date	Depart/Employee	Description of work done	Labor	Materials	Unit Cost	Total To Be Billed
8/2/92	N	PRESS PACKET	\$60.00	-	-	\$60.00

-----  
Job Ticket Sent to Accounting \_\_\_\_\_ Date Invoice Prepared \_\_\_\_\_ (13/92)

Dept/Employee: (Example) A=DPS  
Department Codes: A=Admin, B=Business Services, C=Graphic, M=Marketing, N=News Service, O=Office, Q=Quick Copy, V=Audio Visual

### NOTES

- Point out the important parts of the job ticket as it is shown in the addendum:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 - customer  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 - job description  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 - department codes  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 - labor charges  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 - cost of materials  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Job # is left blank until the end of the process  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Information is entered on the job ticket after the service has been completed.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Since other services are requested, the job ticket is passed to the next appropriate branch of the department.  
 \_\_\_\_\_



*Photo of Judy Dodd working on project*

N O T E S

The job ticket then goes to graphic design where the layout, design  
and typesetting are done to produce a camera ready copy of the  
program for the dedication ceremony.

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*Photo of Dan Tadrick working on project*

N O T E S

1. Next, the camera ready copy goes to offset printing where the  
completed brochure is produced.

2. A copy of the brochure should be displayed for the audience to see.

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# The Printing Services Price List

Offset Printing  
 Black or Colored Ink • Quantity Above 1,000 Copies  
 Prices based upon PRINT READY copy (run "as is" without making adjustments or new print copies)

#20 Offset Paper — BLACK INK

Quantity	White 8½ x 11		Colored 8½ x 11		White 8½ x 14		Colored 8½ x 14	
	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side
1,000	\$28.50	\$39.50	\$29.90	\$40.90	\$39.50	\$56.00	\$41.50	\$58.00
2,000	39.50	57.00	42.30	59.80	53.50	76.00	57.50	80.00
3,000	50.50	74.00	54.70	78.20	67.50	96.00	73.50	102.00
4,000	60.50	88.00	66.10	93.60	81.50	114.00	89.50	122.00
5,000	70.50	102.00	78.50	109.00	96.50	134.00	106.50	142.00
10m	13.90/m	20.20/m	15.30/m	21.60/m	18.70/m	26.00/m	19.70/m	27.00/m
15m	15.70/m	22.50/m	17.10/m	23.50/m	20.50/m	28.00/m	21.50/m	29.00/m
20m	17.50/m	24.80/m	18.90/m	25.40/m	22.40/m	30.00/m	23.40/m	31.00/m
25m	19.30/m	27.10/m	20.70/m	27.30/m	24.30/m	32.00/m	25.30/m	33.00/m
30m	21.10/m	29.40/m	22.50/m	29.20/m	26.20/m	34.00/m	27.20/m	35.00/m
35m	22.90/m	31.70/m	24.30/m	31.10/m	28.10/m	36.00/m	29.10/m	37.00/m
40m	24.70/m	34.00/m	26.10/m	33.00/m	30.00/m	38.00/m	31.00/m	39.00/m
45m	26.50/m	36.30/m	27.90/m	34.90/m	31.90/m	40.00/m	32.90/m	41.00/m
50m	28.30/m	38.60/m	29.70/m	36.80/m	33.80/m	42.00/m	34.80/m	43.00/m
55m	30.10/m	40.90/m	31.50/m	38.70/m	35.70/m	44.00/m	36.70/m	45.00/m
60m	31.90/m	43.20/m	33.30/m	40.60/m	37.60/m	46.00/m	38.60/m	47.00/m
65m	33.70/m	45.50/m	35.10/m	42.50/m	39.50/m	48.00/m	40.50/m	49.00/m
70m	35.50/m	47.80/m	36.90/m	44.40/m	41.40/m	50.00/m	42.40/m	51.00/m
75m	37.30/m	50.10/m	38.70/m	46.30/m	43.30/m	52.00/m	44.30/m	53.00/m
80m	39.10/m	52.40/m	40.50/m	48.20/m	45.20/m	54.00/m	46.20/m	55.00/m
85m	40.90/m	54.70/m	42.30/m	50.10/m	47.10/m	56.00/m	48.10/m	57.00/m
90m	42.70/m	57.00/m	44.10/m	52.00/m	49.00/m	58.00/m	50.00/m	59.00/m
95m	44.50/m	59.30/m	45.90/m	53.90/m	50.90/m	60.00/m	51.90/m	61.00/m
100m	46.30/m	61.60/m	47.70/m	55.80/m	52.80/m	62.00/m	53.80/m	63.00/m

## NOTES

1. Unless a printing job is unique, all labor and materials are included in the costs as they are listed in the Printing Services Price List.
2. Because the cost of labor and materials is included in the Price List, Dan does not need to keep track of his time in a daily log.
3. A copy of the Printing Services Price List is included in the addendum of this book.

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The Job  
Ticket -  
Step 3

USE Black Ink

## RSD Communications - Job Ticket

Job # \_\_\_\_\_ Date (Arrive RSD Comm) 8/1/92 Date Due DAY OF DEDICATION  
9/1/92

Customer ROCKWOOD VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL Ordered by MARY RIEDEL Qty STEM Job Description/Form Number NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION

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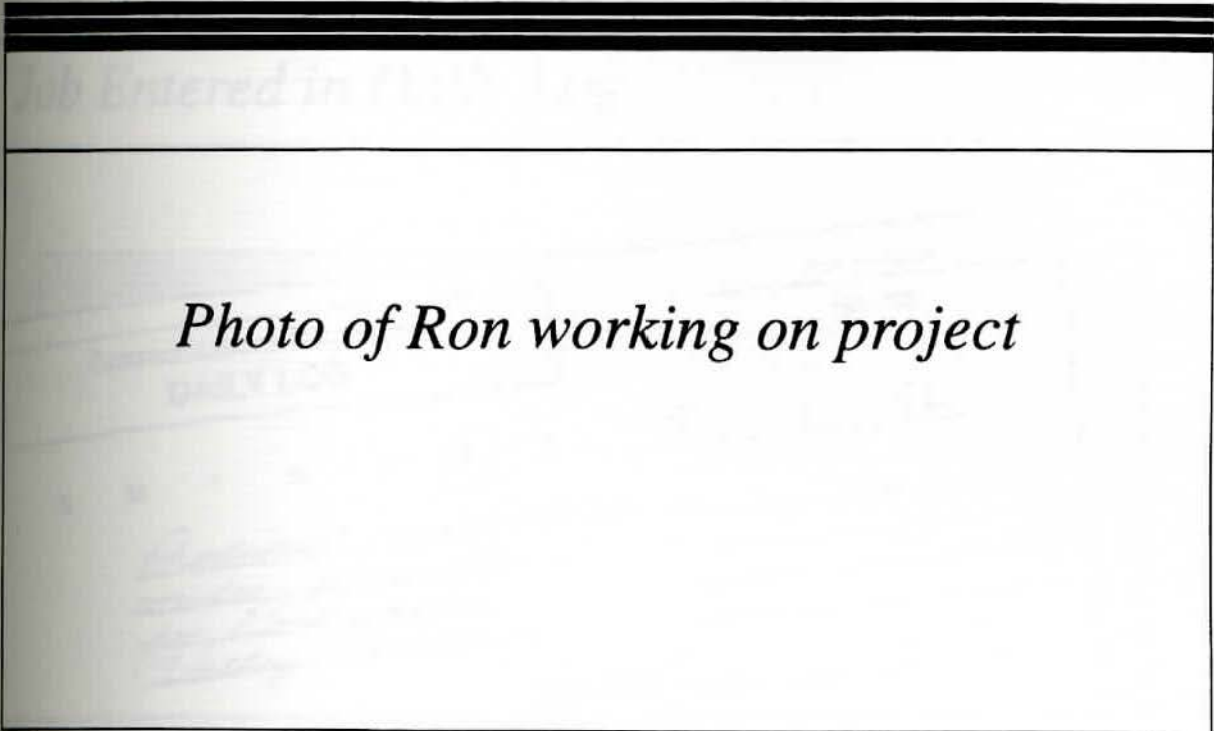
Date	Dept/Employee	Description of work done	Labor	Materials	Unit Cost	Total To Be Billed
<u>8/3/92</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>PRESS PACKET</u>	<u>\$60.00</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>\$60.00</u>
<u>8/4/92</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>PROGRAM LAYOUT/TYPESET</u>	<u>\$310.00</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>\$310.00</u>
<u>8/7/92</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>PROGRAM PRINTING</u>	<u>\$200.00</u>	<u>\$83.12</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>\$283.12</u>

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Job Ticket Sent to Accounting \_\_\_\_\_ Date Invoice Prepared \_\_\_\_\_ (12/92)

Depart/Employee: (Example) A=DPS  
Department Code: A=Admin, B=Business Services, G=Graphics, M=Marketing, N=News Service, O=Other, Q=Quick Copy, Y=Audio Visual

### NOTES

1. Offset printing enters its information on the job ticket.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Direct attention to the cost of materials.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Show an example of the completed brochure.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Job ticket is passed to next requested service.  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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N O T E S

The final service requested is the audio-visual support for the actual  
dedication ceremony.

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# Job Entered in Daily Log

Communications Department <b>DAILY LOG</b>							Ron Leonard '92 - '93			
S	M	T	W	R	(F)	S	9	1	1	92
<i>Produced multi-media presentation for Rockwood Valley Middle</i>							1:00 - 2:00	_____		
							2:00 - 3:00	_____		

## NOTES

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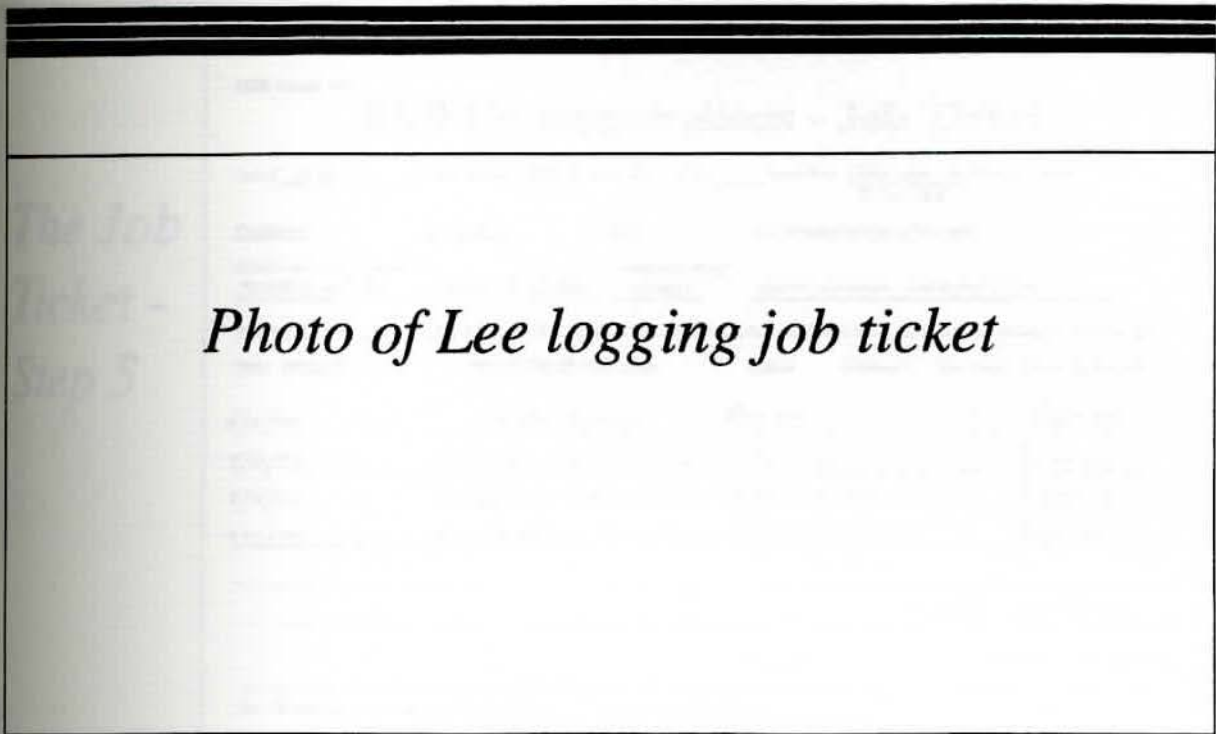
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N O T E S

Lee receives the completed job ticket and assigns a number to it.

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*Photo of Lee filing job ticket*

N O T E S

Once a job has been completed, Lee files an original copy of the job  
ticket along with any related materials that might be needed for  
future reference.

*Photo of Judy Harley entering data*

**N O T E S**

**Accounting receives a copy of the job ticket and generates an invoice that summarizes the services provided and the charge for those services.**

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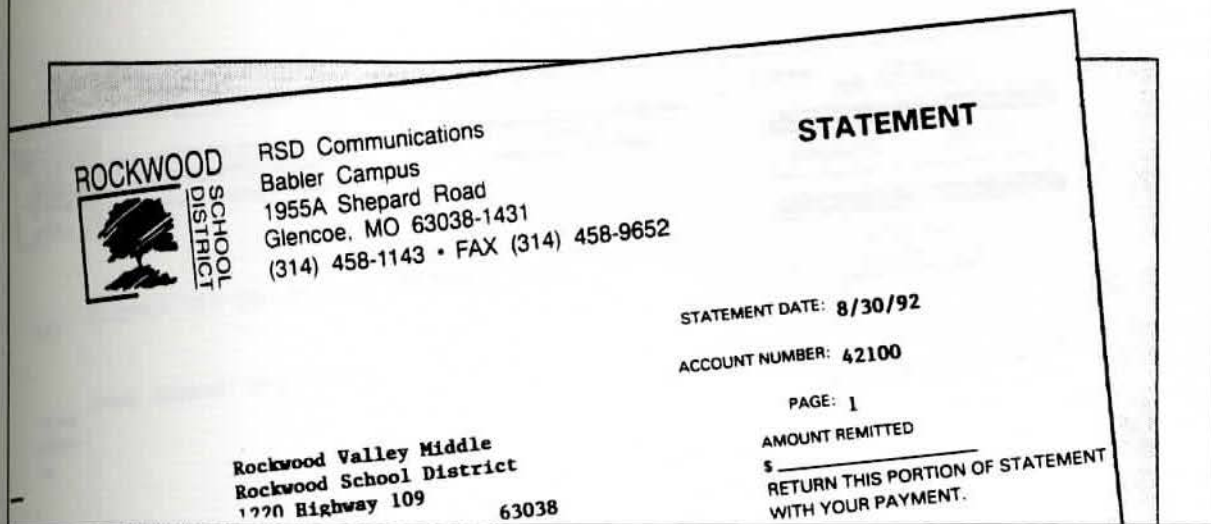
# The Invoice


		<b>INVOICE</b>	
RSD Communications Babler Campus 1955A Shepard Road Glencoe, MO 63038-1431 (314) 458-1143 • FAX (314) 458-9652		INVOICE NUMBER: 000551	
		INVOICE DATE: 8/30/92	
		PAGE: 1	
SOLD TO	Rockwood Valley Middle Rockwood School District 1220 Highway 109 Glencoe, MO	SHIP TO	Rockwood Valley Middle Rockwood School District 1220 Highway 109 Glencoe, MO 63038

## NOTES

1. The invoice and other accounting forms were designed to look professional and important so they would be taken seriously by the client.
2. The invoice was designed so it would match the configurations of our accounting system.
3. The invoice lists much of the same information shown on the job ticket.
4. A sample invoice is included in the addendum of this book.

# The Statement



**ROCKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
 RSD Communications  
Babler Campus  
1955A Shepard Road  
Glencoe, MO 63038-1431  
(314) 458-1143 • FAX (314) 458-9652

**STATEMENT**

STATEMENT DATE: **8/30/92**  
ACCOUNT NUMBER: **42100**

PAGE: **1**  
AMOUNT REMITTED  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
RETURN THIS PORTION OF STATEMENT  
WITH YOUR PAYMENT.

Rockwood Valley Middle  
Rockwood School District  
1270 Highway 109 63038

## NOTES

1. Statements are issued at the same time invoices are mailed.
2. The statement lists any outstanding balances, including the most recent invoice.
3. A sample statement is included in the addendum of this book.





## Applied Payments

ITEM ID / DESC	ORDERED	SHIPPED	UNIT	PRICE	NET	TX
NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION 12 PRESS PACKETS - Mary Riedel NEWS SERVICES - JOB 5072		1.0		60.00	60.00	E
NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION PROGRAM LAYOUT/TYPESET - Mary Riedel GRAPHICS - JOB 5072		1.0		310.00	310.00	E
NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION PRINT 1,000 PROGRAMS - Mary Riedel OFFSET - JOB 5072		1.0		283.12	283.12	E
NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION MULTI-MEDIA PROGRAM - Mary Riedel		1.0		135.00	135.00	E

### NOTES

1. Once the payment has been deposited, it can then be applied to the branches responsible for completing the different parts of the job.
2. This enables the different branches to become self-supporting units within the department.
3. The accounting system allows us to track the applied payments and see which branches within the department are making money and which ones are not.
4. This very presentation could have served as a model for this process because so many different branches were involved in its production.





Part IV

# Benefits and Advantages of a Self-Supporting PR Unit

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## *Benefit #1: Accountable Schools*

- Each school is responsible for *purchasing* the communication services it needs.
- Schools use more scrutiny and discernment before purchasing communication services.
- Schools are especially more careful when ordering printing items.
- Schools become better consumers as they search for the least expensive cost for the communication services they desire.

### N O T E S

1. Schools must now ask themselves if they really need the service

they are purchasing.

2. Schools tend to be more wasteful in their communication requests

when they know those materials and services are provided free of

charge by the district.

3. Schools have the option of going to an outside source.

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## *Benefit #3: Improved Community Relations*

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- Low overhead and cost effective service to organizations and businesses outside the district create new opportunities for positive relations with the community.
  
- Greater awareness of and emphasis on the importance of quality customer service.

### N O T E S

1. The information folder is a marketing tool that can attract outside  

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customers because it lists all services provided by RSD  

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Communications.  

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2. Any services provided to organizations and businesses in the  

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community will hopefully contribute to feelings of good will and  

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support when the time comes to propose an increase in the district's  

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tax levy.  

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Part V

## Self-Supporting PR: Success in the Corporate World

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*Photo of Communication World Cover*

N O T E S

This is the June/July 1993 issue of Communication World published  
by the International Association of Business Communicators.

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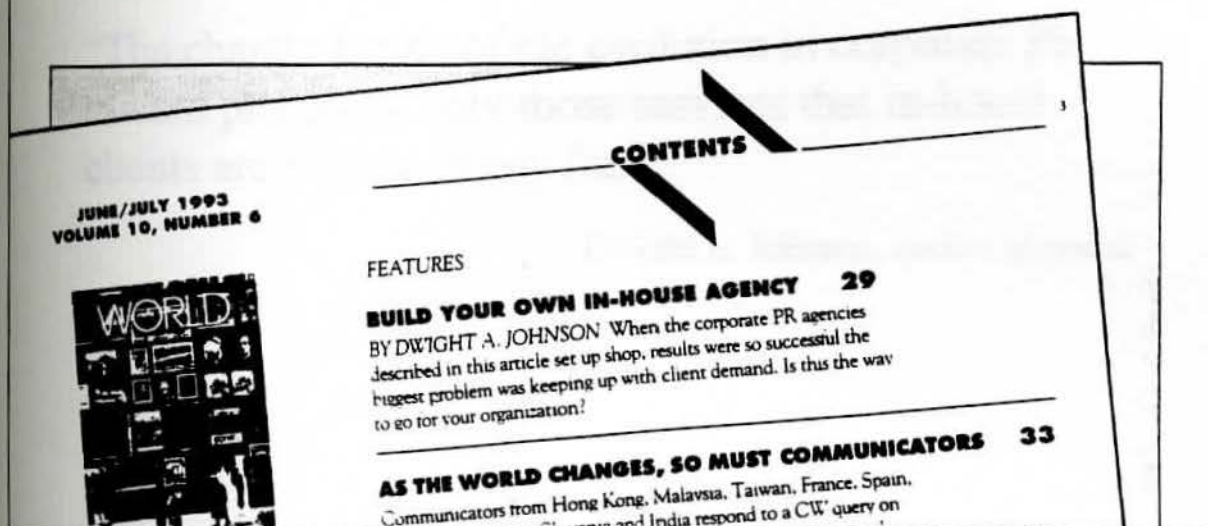
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## Article from IABC Communication World



### NOTES

1. This article is from the June/July issue of Communication World published by the International Association of Business Communicators.
2. The article clearly illustrates that the idea of a self-supporting PR unit within a school district is being tried on a similar basis with equally successful results in the corporate world.
3. In doing research for this presentation, we contacted the IABC for additional information and were told that this article received more response than any other feature in this issue, proving that interest in the self-supporting PR approach is becoming more prevalent.



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## *Thoughts from the Corporate World*

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“The change is part of the evolution in corporate PR toward providing only those services that in-house clients are willing to pay for.”

- Dwight A. Johnson, *author of article*

### N O T E S

1. The key words are "change" and "evolution."

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1. The theme for this seminar is "Meeting the Challenge of Change."

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2. Many school PR departments will face the challenge of changing to a self-supporting approach.

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## *Thoughts from the Corporate World*

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“Every activity was being questioned for its cost and if it couldn’t be justified it was likely to go out of business.”

- Jerry Santos, *AT&T*

### N O T E S

Consider the implications of Total Quality Management: Are your services of such quality that they are in demand by the schools and clients you are serving? If the answer is "no" then your job may very well be in jeopardy.

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*Thoughts from the Corporate World*

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“The in-house agency approach helps tie overall communication efforts into the corporate plan.”

- Keith Sheldon, *Southern California Edison*

N O T E S

An understanding of the overall district plan will make the PR  
department even more valuable and indispensable.

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## *Thoughts from the Corporate World*

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“Even the fully loaded cost of projects is less than a client faces outside the company.”

- Dwight A. Johnson, *author of article*

### N O T E S

Low overhead enables RSD Communications to provide

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competitively priced services to the district's departments and

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schools.

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## *Thoughts from the Corporate World*

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“High quality competitive performance has even attracted outside clients.”

- Dwight A. Johnson, *author of article*

### N O T E S

1. Another benefit of being a separate agency is the opportunity to offer the same services to businesses and organizations in the community.
  2. According to the article, Bell Atlantic's creative services group receives three-quarters of its work from customers outside the company.
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## *Thoughts from the Corporate World*

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“A lot is involved in the administrative aspects of running an in-house agency: time sheets for the staff so clients can be billed properly and promptly, vendor contracts and invoices, all in large volumes.”

- Dwight A. Johnson, *author of article*

### N O T E S

1. Emphasize the fact that "A lot is involved in the administrative aspects of running an in-house agency."

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2. Many of these same components are in place at RSD Communications.

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## *Thoughts from the Corporate World*

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“Don’t underestimate the manpower it might take to put together and run an operation like this.”

- Rob Merchant, *AT&T*

### N O T E S

While there are numerous benefits and advantages to operating a self-supporting PR unit, it should also be noted that there are many challenges as well.

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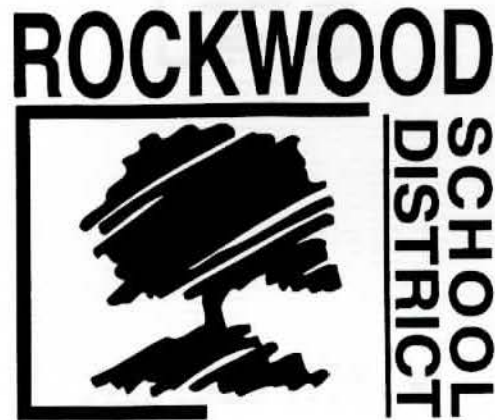
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*"Empowering People with a Vision"*

N O T E S

1. At RSD Communications, our vision of the future includes an ongoing effort to be a more efficient and more self-supporting PR program. In keeping with the theme of this seminar, we would like to challenge you to consider some of the same changes we have outlined here today.

2. This slide ends the presentation and should provide a backdrop for questions and answers.



## ADDENDUM

# Communications & Strategic Planning

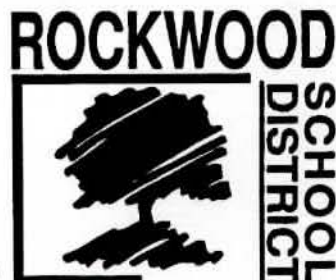
**Profile** RSD Communications is a self-supporting unit operating under the auspices of the Rockwood School District. Although the team primarily serves Rockwood schools and departments, the same expert resources and services are available to other organizations, firms, agencies and individuals.

Communications  
& Strategic Planning  
Babler Campus  
1955-A Shepard Road  
Glencoe, Missouri 63038-1431  
(314) 458-1143 Telephone  
(314) 458-9652 Facsimile

**Services** Audio-visual production, graphic design, marketing, printing, program planning/coordination, writing/editing

**Expertise** Full-service public relations: educational, non-profit, governmental and corporate

**Team** 11 members



*"Empowering People with a Vision"*

# RECOGNITIONS

1993

Award of Excellence, MoSPRA: *Rockwood Vision*

Award of Excellence, MoSPRA:

92-93 Pleasures of Music (best in show)

Award of Excellence, MoSPRA:

General Information Packet

Award of Excellence, MoSPRA: Knee Injury

Video (best in show)

Award of Merit, MoSPRA: *Keystone*

Award of Merit, MoSPRA: State of the District 92-93

Award of Merit, MoSPRA: Uthoff Valley

Elementary VALOR Team Brochure

Award of Merit, MoSPRA: Ridge Meadows Elementary  
Information Packet

Award of Merit, MoSPRA: Key Into Rockwood

Award of Commendation, MoSPRA: Uthoff Valley

Elementary Science Fair Video

Award of Commendation, MoSPRA:

Voluntary Transfer Program Feature

Award of Excellence, NSPRA:

General Information Packet

Award of Merit, NSPRA: Take Time for Music

Golden Achievement Award, NSPRA: Park • Rock Day

Golden Achievement Award, NSPRA: *Keystone*

1992

Gold Medallion Award, NSPRA:

Internal Public Relations

Award of Excellence, MoSPRA: *Rockwood Vision*

Award of Merit, MoSPRA: 1991-92 Music Calendar

1991

Gold Medallion Award, NSPRA: July 1991 Finance  
Campaign

Award of Honor, NSPRA: Overall School Public  
Relations Program

Rockwood Outstanding Service in Education Award

1990

Certificate of Accomplishment, St. Louis County:  
Community Planning

Certificate of Recognition, Walt Disney Seminar  
Productions

Certification, Dale Carnegie Strategic Presentations

# SERVICES

## Audio-visual Services

Providing multi-media, audio or visual services for the following:

- Photo Identification Cards
- Multi-Projector Slide Shows
- Narration for Slide Shows/Video Programs
- Setup for Conferences/Special Meetings
- Slide Photography
- Sound Reinforcement (P.A. Systems)
- Transfer of Slide Show to Video Format
- Video Productions/Duplication
- Video Editing
- Video Tape of Special Events

## Graphic Design

Design, desktop publishing or photo typesetting, photography, camera-ready art for the following printed materials:

- Annual Reports
- Business Cards, Stationery, Envelopes
- Brochures
- Calendars
- Certificates/Awards
- Direct Mail
- Directories
- Displays/Booths
- Documents
- Flyers/Bulletins
- Forms
- Handbooks/Booklets
- Information Packets/Folders
- Invitations
- Labels
- Logo Production
- Maps
- Mastheads/Newsletters/Newspapers
- Memo Pads
- Newspaper Display Ads
- Posters
- Signs and Sign Programs
- Slides/Transparencies
- Specialty Promotion Materials  
(buttons, cups, hats, bumper stickers)

# SERVICES

## Marketing

Consulting, design and production of marketing for the following items:

- Logos and Slogan Development
- Publicity Packages
- Specialty Promotion Materials (banners, bumper stickers, buttons, cups, hats, pencils/pens and shirts)

## Printing

Printing and bindery services are provided for the following:

- Booklets/Handbooks
- Brochures
- Calendars
- Certificates/Awards
- Directories
- Documents
- Flyers/Bulletins/Posters
- Forms
- Information Packets/Folders
- Invitations
- Memo Pads
- Newsletters/Newspaper
- Stationery

## Program Planning/ Coordination

Consulting, coordinating and emceeding special events, such as:

- Ground-breaking Ceremonies
- Dedication Ceremonies
- Election Campaigns
- Fundraisers
- Recognition Programs
- Special Events

## Writing/Editing

News gathering, writing, editing, proofing for the following:

- Brochures
- Newsletters/Newspapers
- News Releases
- Press Packets
- Promotional Pieces
- Public Service Announcements
- Scripts (for videos, slide shows, special programs)
- Special Letters
- Speeches

# STAFF

## **Director of Communications & Strategic Planning**

*Dan J. Burns*

## **Secretarial Support/Special Projects**

*Judy Harrington*

## **Communications Associate**

*Jeff Arnett*

## **Accounting**

*Judy Harley*

## **Graphic Design**

*Sue Molner*

*Beth Ruprecht*

*Judy Dodd (freelance)*

## **News Services**

*Michelle Mueller*

## **Audiovisual Services**

*Ron Leonard*

## **Offset Printing Services**

*Dan Tadrick*

## **Duplication Services**

*Lue Stolts*

## **Support Services**

*Lee Atwell*

**Communications Department  
DAILY LOG**

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
**'93 - '94**

S      M      T      W      R      F      S

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

A.M.		1:00 - 2:00	

7:00 - 8:00		2:00 - 3:00	

8:00 - 9:00		3:00 - 4:00	

9:00 - 10:00		4:00 - 5:00	

10:00 - 11:00		5:00 - 6:00	

11:00 - Noon		6:00 - 7:00	

Noon - 1:00		P.M.	

SAMPLE



USE Black Ink

# RSD Communications - Job Ticket

Job # \_\_\_\_\_ Date (Arrive RSD Comm) \_\_\_\_\_ Date Due \_\_\_\_\_

Customer                      Ordered by                      Qty                      Job Description/Form Number

\_\_\_\_\_

+++++

Date   Depart/Employee                      Description of work done                      Labor                      Materials                      Unit Cost                      Total To Be Billed

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



=====

Job Ticket Sent to Accounting \_\_\_\_\_ Date Invoice Prepared \_\_\_\_\_

(12/7/92)

Depart/Employee: (Example) A=DJB

Department Codes: A=Admin, B=Business Services, G=Graphics, M=Marketing, N=News Services, O=Offset, Q=Quick Copy, V=Audio Visual

# Printing Services

RSD Communications  
PRINTING SERVICES PRICE LIST  
June 1993

**SAMPLE**

RSD Communications  
Babler Campus  
1955-A Shepard Road  
Glencoe, Missouri 63038-1431  
(314) 458-1143 Telephone  
(314) 458-9652 Facsimile



*"Empowering People with a Vision"*

# 5090 Xerographic Reproduction Quick Copy • Black Ink Only Quantity Below 1,000 Copies

Prices based upon PRINT READY copy  
(run "as is" without making adjustments or new print copies)

## Copying (per sheet — PRINT READY)

White #20	8½ x 11 .....	One Side - \$.03; Two Side - \$.04
	8½ x 14 .....	One Side - \$.04; Two Side - \$.05
	11 x 17 .....	One Side - \$.08; Two Side - \$.10
Color #20	(Standard In-Shop Stock)	
	8½ x 11 .....	One Side - \$.04; Two Side - \$.05
	8½ x 14 .....	One Side - \$.05; Two Side - \$.06
	11 x 17 .....	One Side - \$.10; Two Side - \$.12
Astrobrights	(Medium weight • Variety of Colors)	
	8½ x 11 .....	\$.08
Card Stock	(Heavy Weight • White and Colored)	
	8½ x 11 .....	\$.10
Tabs	Call for Prices	
Document Hand Placement	.....\$.05 (for making "print copy" from glossy, paste-up, halftone, light, dark or damaged documents, shifting, enlargements, reductions, corrections, etc.)	

## Automated Binding

Tape (25-120 sheets) .....	\$.40 per book
Staple (2-70 sheets) .....	\$.01 per staple

## Hand Binding

Hand Staple (maximum 100 sheets per book) .....	\$.035 each (minimum \$5.00 charge)
Comb (up to 1") .....	\$1.00 per book (call for prices over 1") (minimum \$5.00 charge)
Acco .....	\$.50 per book
Brass Fasteners .....	\$.30 per book

## Other Services

Cutting .....	\$.50 per cut
Folding (minimum \$5.00) .....	\$.01 per sheet
Padding (50 sheets) .....	\$.50 per pad
3-hole Standard Punch .....	\$.25 per 500 sheets
Hand Assembly .....	priced per job (inserts, binder assembly, large books printed in sections and assembled, fold-out maps inserted in 8½ x 11 books, etc.)
Distribution .....	priced per job (packaging for interschool mail to multiple locations)

# Offset Printing

## Black or Colored Ink • Quantity Above 1,000 Copies

Prices based upon PRINT READY copy (run "as is" without making adjustments or new print copies)

### #20 Offset Paper — BLACK INK

Quantity	White 8½ x 11		Colored 8½ x 11		White 8½ x 14		Colored 8½ x 14	
	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side
1,000	\$28.50	\$39.50	\$29.90	\$40.90	\$39.50	\$56.00	\$41.50	\$58.00
2,000	39.50	57.00	42.30	59.80	53.50	76.00	57.50	80.00
3,000	50.50	74.00	54.70	78.20	67.50	96.00	73.50	102.00
4,000	60.50	88.00	66.10	93.60	81.50	114.00	89.50	122.00
5m-10m	13.90/m	20.20/m	15.30/m	21.60/m	18.70/m	26.00/m	19.70/m	27.00/m
10m-15m	11.80/m	17.50/m	13.20/m	18.90/m	16.80/m	23.90/m	17.80/m	24.90/m
15m-20m	10.20/m	14.67/m	11.60/m	16.07/m	16.07/m	22.80/m	17.07/m	23.80/m

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES

### Carbonless Paper (NCR) 8½ x 11 — BLACK INK

Ream	Sets — 2 PT		Sets — 3 PT		Sets — 4 PT		Sets — 5 PT		Sets — 6 PT	
1	250	\$26.50	167	\$26.50	125	\$26.75	100	\$27.50	84	\$27.75
2	500	33.50	334	33.50	250	34.00	200	35.50	168	36.00
3	750	42.50	501	42.50	375	43.25	300	45.50	252	46.25
4	1,000	51.50	668	51.50	500	52.50	400	55.50	336	56.50
5	1,250	60.50	835	60.50	625	61.75	500	65.50	420	66.75
6	1,500	69.50	1,002	69.50	750	71.00	600	75.50	504	77.00
7	1,750	78.50	1,169	78.50	875	80.25	700	85.50	588	87.25
8	2,000	89.50	1,336	89.50	1,000	91.50	800	97.50	672	99.50
9	2,250	99.50	1,503	99.50	1,125	101.75	900	108.50	756	110.75
1 case	2,500	107.50	1,670	107.50	1,250	110.00	1,000	117.50	840	120.00
1½	3,750	160.00	2,505	160.00	1,875	163.75	1,500	175.00	1,260	178.75
2	5,000	200.00	3,340	200.00	2,500	205.00	2,000	220.00	1,680	225.00
2½	6,250	242.00	4,175	242.00	3,125	248.25	2,500	267.00	2,100	273.25
3	7,500	287.00	5,010	287.00	3,750	294.50	3,000	317.00	2,520	324.50

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES

### Carbonless Paper (NCR) 8½ x 5½ — BLACK INK

Ream	Sets — 2 PT		Sets — 3 PT		Sets — 4 PT		Sets — 5 PT		Sets — 6 PT	
1	500	\$31.50	334	\$31.50	250	\$31.75	200	\$32.50	168	\$32.75
2	1,000	38.50	668	38.50	500	39.00	400	40.50	336	41.00
3	1,500	47.50	1,002	47.50	750	48.25	600	50.50	504	51.25
4	2,000	56.50	1,336	56.50	1,000	57.50	800	60.50	672	61.50
5	2,500	65.50	1,670	65.50	1,250	66.75	1,000	70.50	840	71.75
6	3,000	79.50	2,004	79.50	1,500	81.00	1,200	85.50	1,008	87.00
7	3,500	88.50	2,338	88.50	1,750	90.25	1,400	95.50	1,176	97.25
8	4,000	99.50	2,672	99.50	2,000	101.50	1,600	107.50	1,344	109.50
9	4,500	109.50	3,006	109.50	2,250	111.75	1,800	118.50	1,512	120.75
1 case	5,000	117.50	3,340	117.50	2,500	125.00	2,000	127.50	1,680	130.00
1½	7,500	175.00	5,010	175.00	3,750	178.75	3,000	190.00	2,520	193.75
2	10,000	220.00	6,680	220.00	5,000	220.00	4,000	240.00	3,360	245.00

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES

### Carbonless Paper (NCR) 4¼ x 5½ — BLACK INK

Ream	Sets — 2 PT		Sets — 3 PT		Sets — 4 PT		Sets — 5 PT		Sets — 6 PT	
1	1,000	\$38.50	668	\$38.50	500	\$38.75	400	\$39.50	336	\$39.75
2	2,000	45.50	1,336	45.50	1,000	46.00	800	47.50	672	48.00
3	3,000	54.50	2,004	54.50	1,500	55.25	1,200	57.50	1,008	58.25
4	4,000	63.50	2,672	63.50	2,000	64.50	1,600	67.50	1,344	68.50
5	5,000	72.50	3,340	72.50	2,500	73.75	2,000	77.50	1,680	78.75

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES

### Textured Stock 8½ x 11 — Black Ink

Quantity	White		Colored		Quantity	White		Colored	
	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side		1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side
500	\$24.25	\$37.65	\$24.50	\$38.00	2,500	\$68.25	\$ 93.75	\$69.50	\$ 95.00
1,000	35.00	51.50	35.50	52.00	3,000	79.00	107.50	80.50	109.00
1,500	45.75	65.25	46.50	66.00	3,500	88.75	119.25	90.50	121.00
2,000	56.50	79.00	57.50	80.00	4,000	98.50	131.00	100.50	133.00

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES

### Index Card Stock 8½ x 11 — BLACK INK

Quantity (250 sheets/ream)	White		Colored	
	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side
1,000	\$42.90		\$65.40	
1,250	50.25		75.75	
1,500	57.60		86.10	
1,750	61.95		90.45	
2,000	66.30		94.80	
3,000	85.70		114.20	

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES

### Business Stationery 8½ x 11 — BLUE INK

500	\$34.25	4,000	\$ 92.50
1,000	45.00	4,500	100.25
1,500	50.75	5,000	108.00
2,000	58.50	7,500	154.75
2,500	68.25	10,000	208.00
3,000	77.00	15,000	275.50
3,500	84.75	20,000	342.00

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES

### #20 Offset 8½ x 11 — COLORED INK

White Offset with Colored Ink			Colored Offset with Colored Ink		
Quantity	Total Cost	Cost per 1,000	Quantity	Total Cost	Cost per 1,000
5,000	\$ 98.00	\$19.60	5,000	\$105.00	\$21.00
10,000	148.00	14.80	10,000	162.00	16.20
15,000	200.00	13.34	15,000	221.00	14.73

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES

### #20 Offset 11 x 17 — BLACK INK

Amount	White		Colored		Amount	White		Colored	
	1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side		1 Side	2 Side	1 Side	2 Side
1,000	\$54.20	\$85.20	\$55.00	\$86.00	2,000	\$72.40	\$108.40	\$74.00	\$110.00
1,500	63.80	97.80	65.00	99.00	2,500	84.00	120.00	86.00	122.00

FOR ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES, CALL FOR PRICES



RSD Communications  
 Babler Campus  
 1955A Shepard Road  
 Glencoe, MO 63038-1431  
 (314) 458-1143 • FAX (314) 458-9652

# INVOICE

INVOICE NUMBER: **000551**

INVOICE DATE: **8/30/92**

PAGE: **1**

**SOLD TO:** Rockwood Valley Middle  
 Rockwood School District  
 1220 Highway 109  
 Glencoe, MO 63038

**SHIP TO:** Rockwood Valley Middle  
 Rockwood School District  
 1220 Highway 109  
 Glencoe, MO 63038

SHIP VIA:  
 SHIP DATE: **8/30/92**  
 DUE DATE: **9/30/92**  
 TERMS: **NET #30**

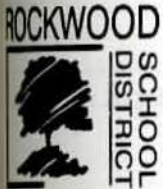
CUST. ID.: **42100**  
 P.O. NUMBER:  
 P.O. DATE: **8/30/92**  
 OUR ORDER NO.:  
 SALESPERSON:

ITEM ID / DESC.	ORDERED	SHIPPED	UNIT	PRICE	NET	TX
NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION 12 PRESS PACKETS - Mary Riedel NEWS SERVICES - JOB 5072	1.0			60.00	60.00	E
NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION PROGRAM LAYOUT/TYPESET - Mary Riedel GRAPHICS - JOB 5072	1.0			310.00	310.00	E
NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION PRINT 1,000 PROGRAMS - Mary Riedel OFFSET - JOB 5072	1.0			283.12	283.12	E
NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION MULTI-MEDIA PROGRAM - Mary Riedel AUDIO-VISUAL - JOB 5072	1.0			135.00	135.00	E

**SAMPLE**

Please prepare a purchase order/check to RSD Communications.  
 Show invoice number on purchase orders/checks.

SUBTOTAL: **788.12**  
 TAX: **0.00**  
 PAYMENTS: **0.00**  
 TOTAL: **788.12**



RSD Communications  
 Babler Campus  
 1955A Shepard Road  
 Glencoe, MO 63038-1431  
 (314) 458-1143 • FAX (314) 458-9652

**STATEMENT**

STATEMENT DATE: 8/30/92

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 42100

Rockwood Valley Middle  
 Rockwood School District  
 1220 Highway 109  
 Glencoe, MO 63038

PAGE: 1  
 AMOUNT REMITTED  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 RETURN THIS PORTION OF STATEMENT  
 WITH YOUR PAYMENT.

VOICE	DATE	TERMS OR REF.	CODE	DEBITS	CREDITS	BALANCE
000343	2/24/92	Prev. Balance	***	365.00	321.00-	44.00
000443	5/24/92	Prev. Balance	***	455.44		455.44
000551	8/30/92	Prev. Balance	***	788.12		788.12
				<u>1608.56</u>	<u>321.00-</u>	<u>1287.56</u>

**SAMPLE**

Please prepare a purchase order/check to RSD Communications.  
 Show invoice number on purchase orders/checks.

CURRENT	1-30 PAST DUE	31-60 PAST DUE
788.12	0.00	0.00
OVER 60 PAST DUE	OPEN CREDIT	TOTAL
499.44	0.00	1287.56

By Dwight A. Johnson

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BUILD  
YOUR  
OWN

---

# in-house Agency

It may not be life imitating art, but some corporate PR departments are imitating commercial PR agencies, with results so successful that the biggest problem is keeping up with client demand.





The change is part of the evolution in corporate PR toward providing only those services that in-house clients are willing to pay for — just like in the outside world. Many PR departments already have changed from one centralized organization that serves everybody, using funds from a corporate budget, to several PR account teams deployed to business units who need them enough to pick up the tab.

Now, at companies such as AT&T, Ford and Bell Atlantic, the evolution has gone further. Separate, self-supporting in-house agencies, each coincidentally named creative services, have been set up to help serve the companies' PR needs.

Steve Aaronson, the first manager of AT&T's unit, views them as "a sort of post-bureaucratic PR organization that emphasizes competitiveness."

"The reason we exist is to be flexible and fast, to fill all the unanticipated needs," Aaronson said. "We respond literally within hours when there's a crisis or urgent need — such as a new business entry, an acquisition announcement, or a Baldrige award win. Quickness is critical — but strong PR skills, knowledge of the business, and creativity is what clients look for."

The ability to fill client needs explains why AT&T's creative services unit has grown so fast, from five people in 1988 to 27 now, seven of them video specialists. It also explains why the people both in and out of the group refer to it as PR's S.W.A.T. team.

### Competition spurs creativity

Harold T. Sieloff, head of Ford's creative services department, in Dearborn, Mich., also stresses the importance of competitive qualities. "We give the same fast response and creativity one would expect from an outside agency," he said. "Some traditional internal organizations just don't have that reputation."

Ford's staff of 16 includes writers, graphic arts specialists, and several multidisciplinary producers who help clients design, launch and manage communication projects. The group is part of the Ford Communications Network.

At Bell Atlantic, in Arlington, Va., high-quality competitive performance has even attracted outside clients to that company's creative services group. According to Walter Perkowski, who directs its staff of 14, three-quarters of the work comes from other companies, usually elsewhere in the telecommunications business. But one client, Sandra Cope, International, is a manufacturer of cosmetics; most recent project: a 30-minute infomercial produced for cable.

The clients, of course, are the real test, and all three creative services groups get high marks from them. Every year, the AT&T unit asks clients to rate its work on the requirements most important to them, such as producing results consistent with objectives, speedy turnaround, knowledge of the client's business, and cost competitiveness with freelancers or agencies. In the five most important requirements, clients rate creative services 4.5 on a scale of 1 to 5. These results further explain why demand keeps rising.

AT&T's unit offers several pricing options to its clients. Those who have a contract pay a lower rate than those who don't, and clients who contract for a full year get the lowest rate. The attractive lower-price options have led the major clients to opt for ever larger annual contracts.

"The ongoing experience with a business unit client, which you get with a contract, makes for a more stable and efficient operation for the client and for us," explained Rob Merchant, who manages the AT&T group's business office. "The overhead is less, the cost of processing invoices is less, so we can charge less."

A lot is involved in the administrative aspects of running an in-house agency:

time sheets for the staff so clients can be billed properly and promptly, vendor contracts and invoices, all in large volumes at each of the three companies. Merchant's advice to anyone setting up a comparable "business office": "Don't underestimate the manpower it might take to put together and run an operation like this." He has a manager and five contract workers assisting him.

The total volume of work done by the three creative services units is impressive: about U.S. \$6 million last year at Bell Atlantic, nearly \$12 million at AT&T and at Ford.

### Subcontracting adds to in-house advantages

All three groups buy a good deal of freelance writing, photography, publication design, video production and other creative services. Subcontracting accounts for about half the dollars at AT&T and Bell Atlantic and somewhat more at Ford.

AT&T's creative services unit hired 440 freelancers, or "external vendors," last year, paying 5,300 invoices worth U.S. \$5.9 million. What's impressive is not just that the vendors do a lot of the work. It's also that their contribution, under the creative services unit's supervision, is cost-effective, so that even the fully loaded cost of projects is less than a client faces outside the company.

"In any vendor relationship, the key is picking the right vendor at the start. We've sorted through the vendors," explained Aaronson, "and we understand which ones provide the best services in different situations. We also know their rate structure, and we encourage a sort of open market competition. When they're high, we acquaint them with the competi-

ive marketplace they're in and often they bring their rates into line."

"What is at work in these entrepreneurial PR units are all the advantages of insourcing combined with all the advantages of outsourcing," said Gifford Pinchot, a management consultant and head of Pinchot and Co., Branford, Conn. "At AT&T, a business unit can use its own captive PR staff, or it can call on creative services. If it does the latter, it avoids enlarging its own staff and increasing the risk of future layoffs. At the same time, going to creative services instead of going outside the company means the client has a greater ability to keep secrets, keep things inside. So they have many of the advantages of going outside without the disadvantages."

Outsourcing to suppliers outside the company "also becomes more effective when it's done through an outfit such as creative services," Pinchot believes, "because entrepreneurial intermediaries become very good at buying things."

Pinchot, who will shortly publish a book that describes the decline of bureaucracy in many fields, noted that "bureaucracy is based on monopoly relationships, for example where you have to go to in-house suppliers and you get high costs and often indifferent service. But when a supplier — inside or out — competes for business, strong customer focus is a natural result."

He emphasized that those who handle the outsourcing must have the entrepreneurial spirit or outsourcing does not get the results hoped for. He gave an example of the U.S. Department of Defense which is "so bureaucratic it makes suppliers bureaucratic."

"Only if you have an entrepreneurial buyer are you likely to have an entrepreneurial seller," he concluded.

### Location is no deterrent to service

Another strength of AT&T's creative services group is the way it addresses — or ignores — geography. It has members located in Santa Clara, Calif., Jacksonville, Fla., and Pittsburgh, Pa., in addition to the Basking Ridge, N.J., base. Kevin Compton serves clients in the Western U.S., with special attention to Silicon Valley and AT&T's evolution toward more futuristic communication. Linda Haertlein in Jacksonville gives her attention to highly strategic special projects as well as key corporate initiatives. Lenora Vesio, located in Pittsburgh, serves AT&T's global organizations, with clients in Asia, Europe and South America. The way global work is increasing, it's conceivable that one or more staff members will be based overseas sometime in the near future.

Launching the AT&T Universal Card three years ago was a huge effort that

**'The reason we exist is to be flexible and fast, to fill all the unanticipated needs. We respond literally within hours when there's a crisis or urgent need ...'**

occupied all of the then-fledgling creative services staff for about six months. It has been one of the group's greatest successes. Another was laying out and then implementing a complex — and sensitive — internal/external communication effort that announced a recent Baldrige "double win" that put two AT&T organizations in the spotlight for their quality performance at the same time.

The group also has established a special niche for itself in electronic publications. It set up *AT&T Today*, the company-wide electronic newsletter "originally as sort of

### IN-HOUSE AGENCY CONCEPT WORKING AT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON

Switching over to an in-house agency communication concept at Southern California Edison hasn't been without its challenges, according to Keith Sheldon, ABC, APR, but after more than two years of operation, the benefits are beginning to emerge.

"Everything we do — or should be doing — needs to be tied into the organization's strategic plan," Sheldon says. The in-house agency approach helps tie overall communication efforts into the corporate plan.

They have recently taken the in-house agency set-up a step further by creating an eight-member communication team that is physically located in a different location from the rest of the communication group, and that team reports to the Energy Efficiency and Marketing Services department.

"We're still a corporate communication arm," Sheldon says, "but we are entrenched in the Energy Efficiency and Marketing Services department's culture." They are looking to create other mini-teams to serve other strategic departments such as customer service and human resources.

One of the difficulties that arose during the switch to an in-house agency involved ambiguous jurisdictions for account executives. As a result of an extensive benchmarking effort, and a review of the account executive system's performance in the past year, a solution to the jurisdictional confusion could be to elevate the position of account executive to that of account supervisor, giving that person a broader and more strategic approach to solving communication problems.

an R&D operation," Vesio recalled. The four- to six-page update, immediately available each morning to everyone on AT&T's internal network of employee computers, quickly became so successful that several business units and regions soon wanted their own. The creative services unit has helped set them up. Recently, that project has involved Vesio's international beat. She has spent time in Europe and in Hong Kong helping regional PR managers develop format, content and distribution schemes for their new electronic publications, and she is now helping them survey their readers.

### Basics still count

"Writing is the core skill" of most creative services people, according to AT&T's Aaronson. Video production capabilities are a close second, and video projects have been some of the group's biggest assignments.

Jim McNerney's television projects unit, which merged with the creative services unit three years ago, recently produced a three-day, multipoint videoconference sponsored by AT&T for the American Society for Quality Control. The TV Project staff also produces an ambitious series of live "narrow-casts" for the employees of AT&T's global business communication systems unit — ambitious because they are done quarterly from different parts of the U.S. — Shreveport, La., West Chicago, Ill., Denver, Colo., Atlanta, Ga., Los Angeles, Calif., and other cities where the business unit has factories or other major installations. One of the video producers, Chris Newton, is responsible for the broadcasts, setting them up from scratch with the help of local pick-up crews, getting the set built, bringing in television equipment and doing the broadcast.

"We have 40 to 50 video projects going right now and more are continually coming in," says Newton, one of the five TV producers and a documentarian by trade. "We're running as fast as we can just

to keep up." It's a frequent refrain. Video in its various forms is an important part of Bell Atlantic's and Ford's creative services work as well.

At Bell Atlantic, consistent with that company's corporate mission, Perkowski's staff is developing expertise in interactive multimedia; for example, transmitting video programs to clients on demand.

At Ford, television accounts for more than half the work, according to Sieloff. In fact, his group grew out of an earlier radio, television and film department, a name reflecting the company founder's avocational interest and desire to preserve and document processes and historical events. "The charter goes way back," says Sieloff.

### Balancing growth can be tricky

The creative services units have proved so effective, they risk a problem most organizations would like to have: growth.

"We don't want to grow too fast, because if work dries up we could be in trouble," said Jerry Santos, now director of AT&T's creative services and the AT&T executive who originally started the embryonic group in the direction that led to its success. He also has had to continually adjust the balance between the work force and work load. Thus far, the adjustments have been to add staff and free-lance support.

"In my personal view, the group hasn't reached its maximum size yet," Santos said. "It plays a strategic role in PR at AT&T, providing the business PR units with flexibility and extended resources, and keeping them from having to add people and later cut back." At the same time, Santos believes, the dedicated PR account teams also will continue to grow, "because of the nature of the work," he says, "things never get simpler; there's always more and more work."

Santos recalled the beginning of the creative services unit in 1988. "The winds were changing. Every activity was being questioned for its cost, and if it couldn't be justified it was likely to go out of business," he said. "The group was then primarily engaged in the important area of face-to-

face employee communication, but I felt they would be in trouble unless they expanded their focus to include all types of PR projects. In addition, I felt it would be very useful if they moved toward the agency concept, charging the client for the work rather than expecting corporate headquarters to pick up the bill."

What everyone saw as "a very noble experiment that they hoped would work" has indeed worked, by every possible criterion.

One of the most important tests is how the staff fares, and AT&T's creative services appears to have a work environment where people thrive. To Paul LaPlante, a staff manager who has been with the group since it was formed, "What's most satisfying about working here is how we're perceived in the PR division," he said. "I think we've got an outstanding reputation among just about everybody, but we had to work for it. People were a little skeptical in the beginning, and asked 'Why do we need it?' But people have seen we add value."

Santos sees additional reasons for creative services unit's good standing with its staff members. "They have a lot of control over their projects," he said, "and because they work with many different business units they get to know which ones they might want to work with later, so they also feel they have some control over their destiny." He summed up: "We don't have a lot of people hurrying to leave."

AT&T's creative services unit is so effective, some have wondered if it couldn't operate as a separate, wholly owned subsidiary, or even as a spin-off independent company. While these ideas are offered as light-hearted conjectures, they reveal a confidence and satisfaction that many organizations would envy. But that's what can happen when you turn a cost center into a savings center, and do a bang-up job as well.

*Dwight A. Johnson is a free-lance writer based in New Jersey.*

# Network

October 1993

National School Public Relations Association

## PR Officers Discover Alternative Funding Methods

Site-based management and inadequate school funding are pushing school public relations professionals to seek alternative ways of financing the school communications office.

School PR officers are exploring innovative ways to work with businesses to support school communications activities and creative uses of community resources.

One suburban St. Louis (Mo.) school district's communications office, perhaps, has gone further down the road of any district in moving its financial structure into a self-supporting PR unit.

The lessons learned so far by the state's most rapidly-growing district, Rockwood Public Schools, in creating an "in-house PR agency" may portend the future for the school PR office.

Dan Burns, Rockwood's director of communications and strategic planning, said the path to changing the PR office began with the district's move toward site-based management.

His department began by estimating what each school would spend on communications. Each school is given an allocation from which they

may buy communications services, including audio-visual, graphic design, marketing, printing, program coordination and writing/editing.

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*"Schools had to say for the first time, 'what is the value of the product or service.' No one had asked that before."*

Dan Burns

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The district's 25 schools have become better consumers as they search for the least expensive cost for the communications services they need.

His 10-person department charges for every service and documents all charges. If his prices aren't competitive, schools may go elsewhere for services.

"It helps schools be accountable and it helps me be accountable. If the schools can get a service performed somewhere else, why shouldn't they? It's forcing me to look at my costs to see if they are in line," he said.

Besides being more accountable, improved community re-

lations is viewed as another benefit of organizing the office to allow community groups to contract out for the department's services.

Jeff Arnett, communications assistant, said a group of influential businesses created in the aftermath of the Midwest floods has approached the school communications office to provide some PR services.

But Burns emphasized there is never any question who gets first priority—Rockwood Public Schools.

To be sure, a fundamental change in the way the department operates has left some challenges that Burns and his staff continue to grapple with.

For starters, it's difficult sometimes to determine who to bill for what services. Burns emphasized that his department still has responsibility for all of the districtwide communications activities.

Burns predicts the department will be totally self-supporting in a couple of years. "We're still evolving," he said. "We have a long way to go."

For those school PR professionals who wish to explore becoming a self-supporting PR unit, Burns' advice is to go

(Continued on page 3)

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*Coping with School Critics is the title of the NSPRA workshop scheduled for January 14-15 in Hilton Head, South Carolina. The conference is coordinated by NSPRA's past presidents and hosted by our South Carolina Chapter. Watch your mail in November for registration materials.*

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## PR Programs Use Creative Funding

(Continued from front page)  
slowly.

"And don't underestimate the manpower needed to put this together," Arnett added.

However, Burns believes you don't need a large staff to modify this operation to fit a one-person office.

Arnett said, "A lot of one-person shops are in jeopardy. This approach helps track and justify all responsibilities of the school PR office."

Bill Dixon, community relations specialist for the Albany, Ore., public schools, said school-based management plus school budget cuts are forcing a new look at ways to keep communications departments alive.

"Dan's idea of setting up a self-supporting service agency

has a lot of appeal," he added.

Out of economic necessity, other Oregon school districts are pressing forward with alternative ways to fund communications activities.

Kathy Leslie, APR, executive director of educational public relations for the Beaverton, Ore., public schools, said she's exploring a range of fund-raising activities, including partnerships with businesses. Among them:

- One major business has committed to sponsor the community-wide school newspaper in exchange for a listing of the school programs in which the business is involved.

- Another business is sponsoring individual school newsletters in exchange for advertising.

- Local Realtors are paying

for the production of a school map previously produced by the district. Realtors will sell the maps at their offices.

- Volunteers for the communications office are solicited from colleges. Those with journalism backgrounds are identified.

Leslie believes drastic measures are necessary so that the communications function can survive even in the face of cutting schools to the bare essentials — the teacher and the classroom.

"Moving in the direction (of outside funding) has a strong appeal to people who want to maintain these types of services when we're getting down to the core," she said. "This is a way to move ahead to ensure the services are there." —Mary Massey

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*"A lot of one-person shops are in jeopardy. This approach helps track and justify all responsibilities of the school PR office."*

Jeff Arnett

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## Policies that Work: Chemical Awareness

The district is committed to helping all students fully realize their potential. To do this, it is necessary that the educational process allow students to make decisions about significant life issues.

One increasingly important issue in our society is the use of mood-altering chemicals. We know that students cannot make full use of total school program if they are harmfully involved with chemicals; involvement with chemicals can seriously inhibit their capacity to learn and to function effectively in our schools.

The primary responsibility for helping students

who are seriously involved with chemicals lies with their parents. However, the potential for lasting personal damage exists unless schools act in conjunction with parents to help their children understand the complex nature of chemical dependency. It is necessary that our students, their parents, and their teachers be made aware of the danger inherent in making unwise choices about chemical abuse. It is also the intent of the school to uphold state and federal laws pertaining to chemical use. It is vital that the district provide the students and their teachers with a comprehensive chemical awareness program.

Therefore the district sup-

ports the following three major components in the district's Chemical Awareness Program:

1. Drug abuse prevention education and the promotion of wise choices concerning the individual's health.
2. An early intervention in the abuse process for the purpose of identification, evaluation, and, when appropriate, referral for treatment.
3. A supportive school environment for students who have been harmfully involved with drugs and/or alcohol, including those whose families are disrupted by chemical abuse.

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*This is an excerpt from the Chemical Awareness policy of the Anoka - Hennepin School District, Minn.*

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