



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>

aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

PROCEEDINGS
of the
WESTERN FARM ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION

Twenty-First Annual Meeting
June 23, 24, 25, 1948
Davis, California

UNIVERSITY OF
MINNESOTA
LIBRARY

GOOD-WILL BUILDING, A FACTOR IN MARKETING RESEARCH

by

Howard W. Mathews
Swift and Company

Probably the best way to start a discussion of good-will building is to tell what we mean by the term. There are almost as many different interpretations as there are practitioners and writers in the field. It is a name that on the one hand may be considered so broad as to include all human relations, and on the other hand may be applied to one type of activity, such as publicity or advertising.

I would like to give you our basic concept of good-will building, which is not confined to any one method, be it publicity, advertising, personal contacts, correspondence, booklets, books, bulletins, or films. All of these are a part of the subject, and are evidence of something that must be deeper.

Good Will Is Based on Good Conduct

What we are primarily interested in is good good-will building. Therefore, we say that kind of good-will building is based on good conduct--actions and attitudes that are agreeable to a good majority of the understanding public with which we live and work.

Economic soundness and social desirability are terms which connote the objectives of public good will. In our business we understand economic soundness to mean:

- A. The objectives of business should be directed to the satisfaction of people's wants.
- B. The business should be efficient.

"Do Not Do Unto Others"

Social desirability can be interpreted in terms of ethics, attitudes and manners. The essence of practical ethics is "Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you." Openmindedness is an essential for proper attitudes. We expect good treatment; therefore, we cannot lose sight of the fact that people react toward us much in the same manner that we act toward them.

The stating of premises for a good-will building program is rather simple, but the working out of the program is more difficult.

If I were to summarize in a very few words the functions of good will, I would say:

- A. To interpret the public to your group or institution.
- B. To interpret the group to the public.

First, interpreting the public to the group:

Good-will activities insofar as possible must be directed to the interests of the various publics. We must talk the language of the publics and tell each

of them in what way our business affects them, the kind of service that we perform that contributes to their economic wants, and tell them also the way we perform it so that they in turn can evaluate the worthwhileness and efficiency of our business.

Public Opinion Research

We reason out very carefully the factors in our business in which we think these various publics are most interested, but regardless of how well we reason it out, we find that there is no substitute for direct information on the interest and opinions of these groups. We find that it is necessary to go directly to members of these various publics through the medium of public opinion research to find out in a most exact way the things they are thinking about and why they are thinking about those things.

From the factors that we learn about our business and from the opinions of our various publics, certain of our company policies are shaped. In the final analysis the policies and activities of an institution or any group must be acceptable to a good majority of the public if it is to survive. The first step, therefore, is to find out which policies and activities are acceptable to the publics we're dealing with, and which policies and activities are NOT acceptable, or are not understood by the people we're dealing with.

We then have the task of correcting the opinions of our publics or altering our actions and attitudes in some way so that they will be more acceptable. There are many ways to find out what our publics think about us--we can do it ourselves by simply going out and asking or we can hire the services of a research organization specializing in this kind of work--or maybe we don't have to do a whole lot more than to just read the newspapers once in a while to find out what others are thinking and saying about us.

Interpreting Our Institution

The second major function is to interpret the institution or group to the public:

When we refer to "the public", what we are actually talking about are "publics." As an illustration, in the business in which I'm engaged we have a number of publics. We have the people from whom we buy raw material, livestock, dairy and poultry products, cottonseed, etc.; the people to whom we sell, namely, retailers of meat food, dairy and poultry, and other products; the consuming public in general; and then the particular active groups among the consuming public, such as women's organizations, service clubs, state and national senators and representatives, and other influential individuals and groups.

Among the people from whom we buy, we find groups with varying interests. For instance, the various livestock organizations; the range cattlemen whose interests are somewhat different from those of the cattle feeder or the general farmer who feeds the cattle from the range; the sheepmen and others.

I hope you will pardon the rather lengthy approach I have used to lead up to the subject in which you are particularly interested; good-will building for colleges and universities and for the profession you represent. I have done this because ---

First, I know something about how we do the job of interpreting the public to our company; and

Second, it appears to me the job you gentlemen have to do is very similar to ours. You have certain products to sell, namely, the various subjects that are taught in your respective colleges and universities; your personal services to agriculture and business; and further, you have the philosophy, character, and personality of your institution to sell to the public or parts of the public.

It seems to me that you first should know:

1. Who your publics are. (You may discover some you didn't know about or that you had thought unimportant when this list is detailed).
2. Where they are.
3. And of course, what they think about you at the present time.

The answers to these questions should give you a basis of interpreting the public to your group and then by careful examination, also give you a basis of interpreting your group to the public.

Educator Must "Sell" His Products

Education may be considered a business and the products of this business are the arts and sciences of civilization. The job of the educator is to sell these products to his prospects -- the students -- and often to business men. We live in an interdependent society -- not an independent society. We live in a society where the individual expresses independent attitudes and viewpoints which if economically sound and socially desirable are finely woven into the fabric of the interdependent society in which we live.

The business man, professional man, and tradesman cannot actually live separate and apart from the university or college; and the trained specialists in the university or college cannot be independent of these groups.

The universities and colleges and educators have many worthwhile contributions to make and the greatest contribution must, after all, have to do with the process of living. These other groups have great contributions to make also in the process of living and assisting the universities and colleges by direct experience in bringing about the proper attitudes and actions in our interdependent society.

F. J. Roethlisberger, associate professor of Industrial Research at Harvard University, in his book "Management and Morale," states:

"Here we shall present businessmen to social scientists. We shall try to show social scientists that in business organizations co-operative phenomena exist; that certain people, called 'administrators' or 'executives' do handle such phenomena daily; and that some of them do an extraordinarily good job."

Roethlisberger goes on to say--

"It is a curious fact that there are certain areas of endeavor where those who teach do not practice and those who practice do not teach. In general, the skillful practitioners of business

do not teach 'economics' or 'business' in our universities. Likewise, in general, those who teach economics in our universities do not practice business. Teachers of 'government' do not often practice the skills of the politician or statesman; politicians or statesmen seldom teach government. This is not true in the fields of medicine or engineering. Here, more often than not, the men who teach are also practicing the skills they are taught."

The essence of what he has to say in pages following these paragraphs is that the universities have much to offer to business men and administrators, and that the business man and administrators have much to offer to the universities and colleges. Theory and practice should go hand in hand. From theories we work out methods; from methods, processes. If we are to accomplish the end of thought, namely action of some kind, then we must of necessity reach for one another.

The business man, individually and collectively, should reach to understand the work being done in the schools, and the schools should also reach to understand the work and the ways it is done in the great and small institutions throughout this nation if we are to truly accomplish the ideal of democracy -- an interdependent society wherein the individual can think independently and to an extent act independently to accomplish purposes that are for the good of our society.

Need "Togetherness"

I too often have the feeling that groups in the government, groups in business, and groups in the professions, groups in labor, and farm groups are separate and apart from the society in which I live, and I know too well that progress cannot be made with that feeling of separateness and the only thing I can do about it is to reach for the other fellow so that I may have the feeling of "Togetherness" with the groups of the society in which I live.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my purpose is to explore and remind you of certain factors, and these certain factors are of particular value in a goodwill building program.

Education is here to stay. Education is and can be a flexible and good product. Some business men accept the economic explorations of the universities and colleges but reject the sociological explorations. Certain sociological explorations have branded some educators as "crackpots."

Cooperation Will Solve Our Problems

We have some important problems facing us in the immediate future. These problems should involve the best thinking of members of the staff of various business enterprises and members of the staff of colleges and universities.

I am one who feels that the working out of these problems -- whether economic or social -- can be a cooperative enterprise in which business, professions, labor and farmers, and the universities and colleges can play a most important part if we can grasp the fact that we must reach for understanding the other fellow -- and reach for understanding the realities of situations rather than calling professors on one hand "crackpots" and they in turn calling business men on the other hand "exploiters."

Just one last idea -- in addition to carrying out a good-will building program that will serve the needs and wants of agricultural economists, you should continue to carry out a good-will building program that will be beneficial to the general cause of education. I say this because I feel that what is good for education in general, will in the long run be good for the individual institutions and groups which each of us represent.