



Public Relations and Community: A Reconstructed Theory

Dean Kruckeberg, Kenneth Starck

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This slim volume hits hard at one major point: public relations practitioners need to abandon their dominant attitude of narrowly serving the needs of their clients and instead attempt to engender a broad-based sense of community. By approaching public relations from this broader perspective both the needs of the client and the community are served. Implicit in this theory is that a closer-knit community will retain more traditional family-based values and therefore comprise a more stable and appreciative economic unit for one's client.

Canadian Journal of Communication

Public relations is commonly viewed as using persuasive communications to achieve a client's vested goal. Kruckeberg and Starck challenge this oversimplified approach, asserting that public relations is a complex, multi-flow process that should--and can--affect society as a whole. In Part I, they examine critically the historical definition and practice of public relations, outlining the shortcomings of this narrow approach. Part II explores how the community itself has changed. Such issues as the shift from rural to urban life and the attempt to regain a sense of community are discussed. Part III attempts to reconcile the authors' new notion of public relations and community through an in-depth case-study. The results lead the authors to conclude that only if public relations is practiced as an active attempt to build a sense of community can it become a full partner in the communications milieu.

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