

Engineering Perception – Part 2

By Steve Schuster, CEO

The scientific technique of shaping and manipulating public opinion originated with Edward Bernays (1891-1995), who called the practice “engineering of consent.”

Widely acknowledged as the father of public relations, Bernays borrowed a great many of his concepts from his uncle, **Sigmund Freud**, the psychoanalyst pioneer who clearly understood a thing or two about the human mind.

Engineer perception of your product in the market – engineer its acceptance

Bernays was absolutely right when he said the science of PR is not simply one of circulating artificially polished images and impressions of a company or a product. For Bernays and for every technology company, the goal must be far more ambitious than that.

Solid – not “squishy”

Public relations must be about fashioning and projecting credible and truthful messages that convey a reality-based perception of market significance for your product. Executed with this in mind, the old image of PR as a “squishy” art is replaced with a solid view of a practice that is equally as disciplined, calculated and **results-oriented** as engineering.

Every important undertaking must have PR

During a PR career that spanned a full half-century, Bernays’ game-changing invention of public relations caused Life Magazine to name him one of the 100 most influential Americans of the 20th century. How many engineers would have guessed that such an exclusive list of influencers would have included a PR guy?

Bernays said this about the **non-optional** nature of PR: “No important undertaking is carried out without it.”

Indeed, every well-engineered technology undertaking must be carried out with a well-engineered PR program – one that deliberately engineers the most favorable market conditions possible for your company’s ultimate success.

[Steve Schuster](#) is CEO of [Rainier Communications](#), a leading U.S. technology-marketing agency that has been the creative force behind hundreds of PR campaigns for a wide variety of high-tech innovations from Fortune 500 to start-up companies. With BSEE and MBA degrees, Schuster served in various management-level roles throughout the high-tech industry. He launched Rainier in 1993 with a vision of providing technology companies with a credible resource for communicating “complex” technologies to the marketplace.

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