

Chapter 1

THE ROOT CHAKRA OF PR

*Effective communication is 20 percent what you know
and 80 percent how you feel about what you know.*

— Jim Rohn, American businessman

Have you ever wondered why the words *public relations* and *marketing* have acquired such a harsh reputation? Why are people, especially those in creative fields, turned off by the mere mention of these words? Why are business owners so apprehensive to embark on a promotional campaign that could bring them the abundance and recognition they are yearning for?

I will attempt to address these questions, and provide answers and solutions — not only because of my own personal interest in this magical, mysterious process, but because I believe there are conscious and sensible ways to use public relations and marketing to grow our businesses, particularly when we approach them from a spiritual or holistic mindset.

Before I begin, however, I'd like to clarify the meaning of a few words and their relationship to this book. When the word *spiritual* is used, I do not mean “religious” or religion in any way. *Spiritual*, in the context of this book, has to do with an internal awareness, a sacred connection to oneself and one's work, a bond with the soul and the spirit that includes our relationship to ourselves and to the world. In the truest sense, spirituality is not “for” anything — not for marketing success, prosperity, good health, or fulfilling relationships. It is its own reward, as a consequence of connecting with *source*, wherever that source, that place of truth, exists within us. It also includes a conscious awareness, our moral compass regarding the products and services we offer — a compass without which the very concept of “spiritual marketing” becomes an oxymoron. Every contribution, every decision we make is so integrally connected with “the market” — consumption, lifestyle, manufacturing, buying, selling — that it's naturally connected with marketing and PR.

This spiritual dimension of our outreach requires that we look not only at *how* we are promoting our business, but *what* we are promoting. This is where we probe our

souls, question our intentions, explore the moral fiber in our approach toward our clients, the planet, and ourselves.

When I speak of *holistic marketing*, I'm talking about an integrated, multidimensional approach that doesn't focus solely on the bottom line, but rather operates by synthesizing the whole picture. The key word here is *wholeness*. The wholeness of our intention, our message, our story, how we share our story, how other people share our story, and their feelings behind it. The wholeness of the person administering the business and the wholeness of what we offer those we serve will define our success.

Spiritual marketing is a *science* in the sense that it provides a rational understanding of an emerging worldview; [the](#) reuniting of science and spirituality. Science is a system of acquiring and organizing knowledge that reveals information about reality. In the same way, this book attempts to share reliable, concrete predictions about the science of spiritual marketing, gained through my research.

So, let us begin.

Too Much Noise

From the moment we are born and alert enough to perceive information on any level, we are inundated with advertisements that promote some product or service. Our senses are flooded by blaring hype, propaganda, political spin, and advertising that scream at us from the radio, TV, newspapers, billboards, telemarketers — and now from the Internet.

Advertisements are showing up in elevators and at the gas pump. They jingle and jangle before us on TV and in grocery-store checkout lanes. They have even made an appearance in restroom stalls and over public urinals. After trying countless ways to tune out the noise, customarily without victory, our brains have become so saturated, so numb, that the thought of using any of these venues to promote ourselves has become, to say the least, unattractive.

It's a shame to think we must turn away from the channels of communication that bring us pleasure in our leisure and benefit to our work in order to escape this overkill. This problem has been, in fact, the catalyst for me to initiate my search for a holistic/spiritual approach. By delving into the base *chakra* — the root cause and true

nature — of PR itself, perhaps we can understand how this dilemma came to be, and how we can move out of it.

In the Beginning . . . There Was the Word

The “word of mouth.” The undeniable outpouring of expression that stimulates us to take notice, and “buy into” a myriad of products or services. This natural, spontaneous “technique” of *word of mouth* began, I suspect, as early as the days of the Neanderthal — possibly even before. I can only imagine that when the first cave person developed a stone tool that could shape hand axes or scrape deerskins in half the time, he or she ran around gesticulating how the new instrument could do the job better, faster, easier. It didn’t take long for the invention to spread to other cave dwellers. Soon, cave dwellers everywhere were developing similar tools of their own.

America is, after all, the land of word of mouth. Word of mouth brought our forebears to this new world. Word of mouth populated the first sparse settlements on the eastern shore, and then drew everyone westward. Word of mouth settled the frontier. In the late nineteenth century, as industries and cities grew, word spread to the farms and rural towns that jobs were available and that fortunes could be made by moving to the big cities. As a result, thousands of families moved away from their country settings hoping to improve their families’ future. There were no TV or radio announcements made to inform these farmers about this opportunity. Still, the news spread.

Historically, word of mouth was, and still is, a powerful way to disseminate information. It is that face-to-face relationship with someone you know that establishes authenticity and credibility. Of course, if the object of the buzz is not authentic or doesn’t live up to its expectation, the buzz will quickly die and bad press will take its place.

I am not proposing that word of mouth is the only way to create an outreach, or that advertising through traditional media can’t be effective. I am purely sharing some thoughts about the word-of-mouth phenomenon. Both *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell and *The Anatomy of Buzz* by Emanuel Rosen are books that extrapolate the word-of-mouth trend in greater detail and are, without question, books I highly recommend you add to your marketing library. We’ll take a more detailed look at how to enhance our use of “word of mouth” in Chapter [10](#), Building Bridges.

So, how did we move from this simple, uncomplicated form of marketing to the media explosion and misuse we currently endure?

Media Propaganda

It is clear that a quantum shift, a watershed [of demarcation](#) took place in how the media was used — manipulated, if you will — in 1924 during the administration of President Coolidge.

During this era, radios and automobiles emerged as the top-selling consumer products. For the first time, advertisers were able to mass-market their products, and the public had the resources to purchase them.

The widespread prosperity that followed World War I had catapulted the nation into a mass consumer economy, and President Coolidge set out to capitalize on the innovations. After an arduous search, he found and hired just the man to help him accomplish his new agenda: Edward Bernays, regarded as the founder of the field of public relations.

It is interesting to note that Bernays was the nephew of Sigmund Freud (double indemnity, as it were: his mother was Freud's sister; his father was Freud's wife's brother). We can only imagine the psychological edge he must have had. Bernays would come to orchestrate elaborate advertising and consumer spectacles for his corporate clients: the Dodge Brothers, Procter & Gamble, the American Tobacco Company, the General Electric Corporation, and many more. ¹

For instance, while working for the American Tobacco Company, Bernays mastered the link between corporate sales campaigns and popular social causes. He did this by persuading prominent women in New York City to hold up Lucky Strike cigarettes at a public event as symbolic “torches of freedom.” Another clever “global media event” Bernays originated was the “Light's Golden Jubilee,” a worldwide celebration commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the electric light bulb, sponsored (behind-the-scenes) by the General Electric Corporation.

Needless to say, his corporate sponsors thought Bernays was the best thing to come along since sliced bread. Word spread quickly and, as a result, Bernays became the

first public-relations consultant to work on behalf of a United States president when he was hired to improve Coolidge's image for the 1924 presidential election. ²

Out of concern that he was using advertising techniques to aid his political candidate, Bernays was accused of crossing the line between advertising and propaganda — in other words, “selling” the politician to voters as if Coolidge were toothpaste. Bernays defended his position and insisted that truth seeking and advertising need not be incompatible; he believed that the mass promotion of ideas was necessary to change society in beneficial ways.

And thus began the merchandising of politics in a whole new way.

The Marketing of Goods and Services

In the 1950s, television gained national popularity. Consumers could now *see* the products that they had previously only heard about. Corporations that could afford to advertise, did, and for the most part monopolized the commercial airwaves. Through aggressive and subliminal messages, advertisers directed millions of people toward the purchase of goods and services that, in the end, may not have led to their advancement or betterment.

Commercial advertising promoted cigarettes as a “cool” thing to do on a summer day; only later did we discover the deadly effects of nicotine and inhaled carcinogens. Milk manufacturers are still promoting dairy products as the best source of calcium for our bones, yet naturopathic and allopathic doctors alike are finding that dairy products do *not* necessarily do the body good and can trigger severe allergies. Research has documented the harmful effects diet drinks have on our teeth and organs — not to mention the cancer-causing and neurologically overstimulating sugar substitutes, saccharin and aspartame, used to sweeten these drinks. Fast food, household chemicals, and the pesticides we eat and breathe all contribute to climbing death rates. And don't even get me started on the overconsumption of pharmaceutical drugs and the detrimental side effects they create in the body, or the destructive products damaging our environment and our global atmosphere.

Not only are the above-mentioned products slowly but surely destroying our inner and outer environments, but the overload of information and sensory stimulation has

contributed to many of the diseases prevalent on our planet today: obesity, diabetes, asthma, migraines, ADHD, and Alzheimer's. Particularly Alzheimer's! If you think about it, with the surfeit of messages we are subjected to, by the time we reach our seventies and eighties, dementia begins to look like the only way out.

The New Paradigm

There needs to be a shift. There needs to be a way to restore the integrity of marketing and public relations, as both a process and a profession — not only for the consumer, but for the conscious business owner and the marketing consultant who wants to promote his or her clients ethically and become more conscious about the actual products and services being promoted.

Some years ago, I began to contemplate these issues . . . rather obsessively. I watched how people from various professions struggled with how to define themselves, how to reach their audiences in ways that were provocative and stimulating, while at the same time uplifting rather than degrading. How to create marketing strategies that were ethical and memorable? I would observe how businesses tried to stop manipulative actions and practice “truth in advertising,” but would inevitably fall back and repeat approaches they disliked — because they didn't know any other way.

Then I had an overnight revelation that took thirty years to materialize. I realized that many business owners had not journeyed inside themselves first. They had not asked those pertinent questions that would bring them more into alignment with the spiritual aspect of their nature and of their business — but were, instead, “shooting from the hip.”

I saw how thousands of dollars were being spent by earnest businesspeople to learn their respective fields, and yet, when it came time to open their business and start marketing it, they were in the dark. They had no idea how to start, let alone proceed. They would hire marketing consultants, but many of these consultants performed their job like allopathic doctors and mechanics: looking at only one part of the body, without considering the whole picture — the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual implications of the campaign. In addition, many of these consultants didn't care what their clients were promoting, even if it meant killing wildlife, polluting the environment, or destroying the planet.

For marketers in the new paradigm, integrity needs to be top on the list. Instead of jumping in with all fours, for the monetary rewards, we must ask ourselves: Does this client resonate with who I am and the kind of business I want to represent? Are they missing the mark? And if so, how can I support them to reconnect with what is important? Our responsibility is to steward our clients, guide them to Oz — the future they want to experience — so they are aware of where their “Yellow Brick Road” starts and ends.

We walk a fine line when we start writing our clients’ material. Our true role as marketers is to help clients access their vision, their innate wisdom, in a process that brings their deepest yearnings to the forefront — so that it’s their words, their images that resonate with the audience they want to attract, not ours.

If more marketers would understand and use this process, people’s faith in the profession would be renewed, the vital force of public relations would return, and business owners would be more apt to pursue positive, life-enhancing marketing options.

As entrepreneurs, sole proprietors, and CEOs, it is time to take responsibility for the products and services we are introducing. It’s time to ask ourselves: How is my business serving me, and the gifts I have to offer? How is my business helping my audience, and the world at large? Because we are living during a critical moment in human and planetary history, when global warming, capitalism, and consumerism are at a heightened peak, these spiritual/holistic inquiries are more fundamental than ever.

The Resurrection

I first introduced this holistic/spiritual approach to traditional business owners in New York in the early eighties. There was limited interest. Most of the immediate attention came from the complementary-therapy community, as they had a clear, well-developed understanding of energy and the energetic response words, feelings and, in this case, marketing, have on the whole body. They understood *karma*, the cause and effect associated with a product or service and the spiritual ramifications it would have — both overtly and subtly.

It was only after 9/11 that more businesses became interested in Holistic PR. It was only after our lives and our trust in the United States and all forms of “business as

usual” had fallen apart, when our comfortable lifestyles were uprooted, and our collective minds had shifted from seeing life in black and white to seeing variable shades of many colors, that previously unquestioned values were suddenly up for grabs. For many, there was an unparalleled opening to questioning, and reevaluation. The business owners who were coming to me for marketing knew they had to find other ways to reach their audience, and more personal, heartfelt ways to express themselves. They began to ask more meaningful questions: Are we stimulating fear in our audience? Are we being hypocritical? Are our products causing harm? Are we truly serving our audience and their best interest, and if so, by what means?

And all of us, as consumers, found ourselves looking for more substance and meaning in what we listened to, watched, and bought. This opening of the heart, this change in consciousness, forever altered not only the way we lived our lives, but the way marketing would be approached and received.

Less Fear — More Love

The dissemination of fear is something [we have all experienced and even seen escalate in our lifetime](#). Whether it comes from [a political machine, a terrorist cell, a pharmaceutical company](#), or the Weather Channel, fear has become the archetypal tactic. [Fear cripples people. It cripples our thoughts, our creativity, our freedom of choice, and our motivation. When a government, an organization, or a company uses this approach to market their products or ideologies, and we are unconscious of its effect, it neutralizes our senses, subliminally weakens the moral fiber of our being and creates a culture of apathy, frailty and anxiety.](#)

Holistic marketing is the antithesis of this. We don't use fear tactics. We find ways to soothe the spirit and build trust through personal participation. We design messages that create ease, through truthfulness and an expanded, uplifting point of view, and therefore connect with our audience in stronger ways. By honoring the mind, body, and spirit as a unity, we create a climate in which our audience looks forward to our information rather than turning away from it. From the beginning of what we do to the very end, everything gets processed through our spiritual values and holistic view[point](#).

As business owners, entrepreneurs, and consultants, we can continue to pollute the planet and the media with superfluous images and text — or we can fill the hearts and minds of our audience with information that uplifts the planet and the spirit, and thereby creates a more beneficent result. We have the opportunity to design, manufacture, and promote products that have integrity in the marketplace. When our story is authentic and our product and service benefit mankind and live up to our promises, we can trust that word of mouth will spread the news — with less effort than we can imagine.

When the context of our public-relations efforts is in alignment with our content and we understand that we have a moral and social purpose to uphold, when we understand that emotional connection is the true driving force and that we don't have to manipulate our content to get our audience's attention, then the words *public relations* and *marketing* will no longer be greeted with hesitation or negativity. Instead, operating from the spiritual/holistic concepts of wholeness and integration, our mindful outreach will be understood as a crucial part of making our offerings known, and people will feel inclined to explore the messages in the materials that we create.

For Further Contemplation

At the end of each chapter, a series of contemplations will be offered as an invitation to dive deeper into an experience of the material. These questions can be a vehicle for you to reflect on what you've just read, explore new approaches, catch sparks of inspiration, and brainstorm new possibilities and applications. As you begin the initiation process, you may want to journal your responses.

1. Has your understanding regarding PR and marketing changed while reading this chapter? If so, how?
2. Are the products and services you are promoting in alignment with your truth? Are they credible and beneficial to you, your clients, and the planet?
3. What are the ways and means you are using to attract your audience?
4. Do you subliminally pressure your audience, or do you educate and inform

them?

5. Are you in your truth and integrity with your message — both in its content and in the way you present it
6. What would holistic marketing actually look like for you? For your business?
7. What aspects of holistic marketing might benefit your business and outreach?
8. What changes do you need to make to create a more spiritual/holistic approach?