

Modern Public Relations Strategies: Revisiting Wheatley & Timmons' 1994 First Alert Campaign

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Our interest in this subject came after visiting Wheatley & Timmons, a public relations firm headquartered in Chicago, IL. The firm launched an extremely successful public relations campaign for First Alert in 1994. Our public relations class was asked to design an innovative campaign aimed at spreading awareness about carbon monoxide poisoning, acting as though no one had ever heard of it. The facts about deaths related to carbon monoxide are shocking. We had a lot of questions to answer, such as: How much do people really know, what are the most effective techniques for spreading general awareness, and what laws already exist regarding CO detectors? We created a campaign using new technology and current public relations practices. Our strategies were placed in three overarching objectives. The first objective is to spread general awareness through traditional media awareness. The second is to get people to retail stores to purchase the detectors. Our third objective is to spread awareness through enabling publics. In greater detail, our plan is to utilize safety conventions, breaks on homeowners' insurance, partnering with retail stores and fire departments, and lobbying for stricter building codes.

Information about the Authors:

Ryan Myers is a member of the football team at Valpo. His major is sports management. Victoria Brewton is a member of the Chi Omega Sorority and her majors are public relations and English. Ricky Hoffman graduated in December and was a member of the Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity. His majors were public relations and German. Megan Hohenstein spends most of her time in the ARC whether it's playing intramural sports or working. Martha Ramette is a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority. Her major is also public relations.

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