

2007 Professional Development Grant Report

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### *Restatement of Problem Researched or Creative Activity*

In March 2007, I was awarded a Professional Development Grant in the amount of \$3,148.00 to cover the expenses of attending three conventions – two regional and one international – for the following purpose: (1) to present my research; (2) to chair a panel; (3) to attend my students' presentations; (4) to learn about scholarly and pedagogical advances in the field of communication; and (5) to complete the work on two manuscripts to be submitted to peer-reviewed journals in the course of 2007.

The grant helped me accomplish the following: (1) attend three conventions and present three papers; (2) chair a panel at one of the conventions; (3) attend students' presentations; (4) advance my knowledge about scholarly and pedagogical developments in the field of communication; and (5) have two manuscripts submitted for publication. The following paragraphs contain the details of creative activity:

#### *Convention presentations*

(1) Southeast Region US Conference of the Association for Business Communication, Nashville TN, March 22-24, 2007. Paper presented: "Overstepping the Marketing Boundaries: Pharmaceutical Companies' Use of Public Relations Strategies."

(2) Southern States Communication Association annual convention, Louisville, KY, March 28-April 01, 2007. Paper presented: "Are We Killing the Mockingbird: Making Sense of the Avian Flu Scare."

The paper was awarded the Top Faculty Paper Award by the Southern States Communication Association's Kenneth Burke Division.

(3) International Communication Association annual convention, San Francisco CA, May 24-28, 2007. Paper presented: "The Meaning of Organizational Trust."

#### *Panel chair*

I chaired the panel "Analyzing Relationships in Language and Social Interaction" at the Southern States Communication Association annual convention, Louisville, KY, March 28-April 01, 2007.

#### *Students' presentations*

Four students from my SPH 4063 Organizational Communication class, whom I mentored and supervised in writing their papers, presented their respective papers at the Undergraduate Honors Conference, which was held within the Southern States Association annual convention in Louisville, KY. The following students presented their papers at the convention:

Hefley, L.: "Language: The Most Essential Element of Organizational Culture"  
Nelson, W.: "Exploring Narcissistic Tendencies in Corporate Organizations"

Strickland, A.: "Crisis Communication in Organizations: Entergy Corporation's Response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita"

Klocke, S.: "Theatre Communication and Control"

It is my special pleasure to note that students' presentations were outstanding and that they received many compliments from the audience members.

#### *Manuscript submission*

In the period between March 2007 and October 2007, I submitted the following manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals:

Kodish, S. "Are We Killing the Mockingbird? Ethical Issues of the Avian Flu Scare." Submitted to the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* (currently under review)

Kodish, S., & Pettegrew, L. S. "Enlightened Communication is the Key to Building Relationships." Submitted to the *Journal of Relationship Marketing*.

#### *Brief Review of the Research Procedure Utilized*

In the two manuscripts that I submitted for publication and the three papers that I presented at conventions, I utilized several different research procedures. In the paper "Are We Killing the Mockingbird: Making Sense of the Avian Flu Scare" and the resulting manuscript with a slightly different title "Are We Killing the Mockingbird: Ethical Issues of the Avian Flu Scare," I applied Kenneth Burke's theory – specifically, his selection, reflection, deflection triad – as critical methodology in addressing the ethical aspects of media's presentation of the bird flu issue. I also applied Kenneth Burke's theory – this time it was Burrke's pentad and his notion of identification – in my paper "Overstepping the Marketing Boundaries: Pharmaceutical Companies' Use of Public Relations Strategies." In the manuscript "Enlightened Communication is the Key to Building Relationships," the co-author of the manuscript, professor Pettegrew from the University of South Florida, and I, incorporated pertinent concepts from communication theory into relationship marketing. Finally, the paper "The Meaning of Organizational Trust" is a result of a portion of the findings I obtained by conducting two empirical studies based on grounded theory methodology. The studies were conducted in 2004 and 2006, respectively.

### *Summary of Findings*

The Professional Development Grant made it possible for me to accomplish the following:

- present three papers at two regional and one international convention
- chair a panel at one of the conventions
- attend my students' presentations
- advance my scholarly and pedagogical knowledge
- have two manuscripts submitted for publication

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

Attending the three conventions was a meaningful and enriching experience. I learned about the latest scholarly and pedagogical developments in the field; I met with scholars from different parts of the country, and, in the case of the international convention, from many parts of the world. I also had the opportunity to present my work and to use the convention experience for completing the manuscripts. What I am especially proud of are students' accomplishments. Presenting papers at a regional convention is a wonderful recognition of their outstanding work and of their commitment to excellence. It was also a wonderful recognition of Arkansas Tech University. The Professional Development Grant was crucial in making it possible for me to enrich and advance my scholarly, professional, and pedagogical experience, and I feel both honored and grateful for being awarded the 2007 Grant.

## *Appendix*

### *Abstracts of papers presented at the conventions*

#### **Overstepping the Marketing Boundaries: Pharmaceutical Companies' Use of Public Relations Strategies**

##### **Abstract**

Over the past several years, pharmaceutical companies have been increasingly pressured into following a number of restrictions, rules, regulations, and guidelines when advertising medications. As a result, medication ads have become more informative and reader friendly, and their persuasive clout has, seemingly, been curbed. Believing, however, that persuasive medication ads have been replaced by benevolent informative messages does not reflect the actual state. Some industry representatives have devised an ingenious way to influence the decisions of patients and prospective patients. In this essay, a claim is made that some pharmaceutical companies are overstepping advertising and marketing boundaries by applying strategies normally associated with public relations. The author analyzes a specific case of the public relations approach with the purpose of drawing attention to the new practice. On one hand, such a development is theoretically intriguing, and may indicate a new trend in advertising. On the other, applying a public relations approach to advertising medications raises a number of ethical questions. Shedding light on new persuasive strategies and the principles on which they are based can contribute to the understanding of the new approach and to designing ways to counter its impact.

## Are We Killing the Mockingbird? Making Sense of the Avian Flu Scare

### Abstract

Ever since new cases of avian flu were detected in humans in a number of Asian countries in the fall of 2005, the general public began to be inundated by disconcerting news. The fear factor is not unfounded: about half of the individuals who contracted the virus over the past three years succumbed to the disease. Another alarming fact is that the avian flu pandemic, popularly known as Spanish flu, killed over fifty million people in 1918. Incidentally, my great grandmother and great grandfather, both in their prime, died of Spanish flu. The dangers of avian flu should not be taken lightly, by any means. There seems to be, however, much more to avian flu than the alarming news articles suggest. In this essay, the author argues that the media are focusing on one side of the avian flu issue, and by doing so are deflecting facts that are of significance for understanding the spreading of this lethal type of flu and for implementing preventative measures. Inspired by Burke's notion of the role of the critic and aided by Burke's reflection-selection-deflection triad, the author sheds light on the deflected portion of the avian flu story with the aim of presenting the issue in a balanced manner. It is the hope of the author that an understanding of the many facets of avian flu will lead to a more rational solution to preventing the spread of the H5N1 virus among poultry and its potential jump to humans.

## The Meaning of Organizational Trust

### Abstract

Over the past decade, trust has been gaining special attention as a crucial component of organizational life. It is increasingly being viewed as an important ingredient in business, global business, learning organizations, and in the new economy. Research presented here includes the results of two studies designed with the purpose to explore the meaning of organizational trust. The first study was conducted in 2004 in a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States, whereas the second study was conducted in a Midwestern regional center in 2006. The findings show that organizational trust contains a cognitive, moral, and affective component and that there is a difference in the depth of trust in the workplace.