

Museum Public Relations, by G. Donald Adams. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1983. x, 235 pp. Notes, illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$14.75 cloth.

Not often does a reader find a book that is at the same time clear, thorough, and interesting. G. Donald Adams managed to bridge all the gaps involved and produce a book that is strong in all of these ways. An amateur, a volunteer, a newcomer to the profession, or the experienced employee would each find *Museum Public Relations* to be useful. All steps in processes are described in enough detail for the novice to follow, but these same steps can take the experienced person from a point of average to a point of excellent. At all times the author kept the overall needs and functions of a museum to the forefront. The public relations person must be very familiar with the whole operation, fit into it, and be sensitive to the special interests of management and of divisional chiefs.

Adams has a deservedly high reputation in the museum and historical society field. Not only does he bring to the challenge of successful public relations the evidence of a career in which he has excelled, he is also widely known as a teacher and speaker on the subject. High visitor recognition of the highlights at the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, and visibility in a metropolitan area where there is some of the toughest competition in the world for the visitor dollar and media space are also evidence of Adams's skill. Dozens of beginning professionals have benefited from his teaching at AASLH seminars, and hundreds of other museum and historical professionals have heard his presentations at national and regional conferences and meetings. I doubt if there is another name that would come to the mind of most museum administrators if the need arose to hire a public relations consultant. Adams is the logical and the ideal person to write this book.

The book is organized in a helpful way, and does not presuppose knowledge on the part of the reader. This is a crucial advantage if it is to be used by people on all levels of museum work. The large institution with professional public relations staff and the small county historical society with only volunteer and amateur staff both need public relations. Both interact with the visiting public and both use the media to attract new visitors and to promote special events. Both institutions also need to raise funds from the public. They have many areas of commonality, but there are critical differences and other areas of concern that are wholly separate. Any usable handbook must demonstrate an understanding of the range of needs, and must address the perceived needs of all sorts of organizations. This book, in its sequence and its

reading level, will be useful to all those who need information about public relations.

Among the specifics for which I commend this book are the excellent explanation of and use of information flow charts, and good emphasis on a reasonable, realistic mission statement. I also like the list of media "do's and don'ts." These common-sense bits of advice will save much trouble in actual practice. Adams's clear emphasis on the need for public relations persons to know in advance all ways the institution will communicate with the public, and the need for them to have direct access to policymaking levels and personnel are also practical helps. Adams correctly sees public relations as a management tool, but also sees that the emphasis should be on how this helps determine a museum's responses to public concerns, rather than on any attempt to dictate them. Adams points out that volunteer advisory boards can be volatile, difficult to handle, and should only be used to advise early in a project, not in the later stages. It is safer to use volunteer advisers as reactors to rather than creators of ideas.

Adams sets forth some basic guidelines for public relations personnel. These would be useful for any staff members of an institution, and an understanding of them will help create an understanding among all personnel about what the "PR" people are doing and why. Mutual understanding will lead to greater cooperation and better results. Adams also counsels care in the use of "PR" consultants. Such outside help can be important, but if not used with care can move in directions that are not in line with the museum's basic mission. Adams defines and differentiates long-range planning and strategic planning. Audience survey, marketing objectives, and planning are tools of management and the "PR" section alike. Indeed, as Adams moves through the various functions of a museum, he sees "PR" as a basic adjunct to all parts of the operation. Use of volunteers and their role in image-building, the importance of orienting visitors to the museum, the need for examination of types of giving, the design of publications, and the use of media kits all appear in such a way that the reader recognizes how each fits into the total. This is one of the best prioritizations of museum functions that I have read. The presentation moves smoothly and logically, avoids jargon of the field, and emphasizes the specific, the convenient, and the practical to the virtual exclusion of the "blue sky" theory.

Appendixes are an important part of any reference book. The appendixes in Adams's book are all clear examples of principles cited in the text, and are useful models for beginners in the profession as well as good refreshers to those who have worked in the field for some time. There are enough examples of what ought to be that a reader has no

reason to blunder on in trial-and-error. For a good, short course in how to do effective public relations in a museum or historical society, I recommend this book. It should become a basic addition to the bookshelf of any staff person. Not only will it help the public relations of an institution, it will also clarify other parts of the operation, and make cooperation between the component parts much easier to achieve. The book is an excellent addition to the literature in the field, and one that has few flaws.

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

LOREN N. HORTON

American Enterprise in Foreign Markets: Singer and International Harvester in Imperial Russia, by Fred V. Carstensen. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. 289 pp. Notes, bibliography, index, table, charts. \$29.95 cloth.

American Enterprise in Foreign Markets is no ordinary business history. Fred V. Carstensen is a very capable Russian scholar who has put together two unrelated industries and traced their development in the Russian market as multinational corporations. By examining their corporate structures he has provided excellent illustrations of how the Singer Sewing Machine Company and International Harvester developed their production and sales techniques in foreign markets and then specifically focused their largest overseas enterprises in Imperial Russia. As business history, the study develops a theme about the early operation of multinationals, and as Russian history it notes the peculiarities of the Russian environment which often remain constants Americans dealing with the Soviet Union would do well to understand. For example, the author gives the Russian branch of Singer, *Kompaniya Singer*, high marks for its vertical integration and understanding of the nation in which it operated. Meanwhile, International Harvester gets some kudos for its sales organization and for expanding Russian agriculture to the point where many Russian peasants were capable of leaving subsistence farming to produce for broader internal markets and exports. This extended the purchasing power of average Russians so they could afford to buy both reapers and Singer sewing machines. In essence, Carstensen tells the story of modernization in Russia, from about 1881 to 1914, and how it was in part stimulated by outside enterprise, especially American entrepreneurship.

Carstensen's case-study approach is useful for illustrating how Singer learned from its mistakes and served both its own profit interests and the public it sought as purchasers, while International Harvester was less successful in this regard. Singer learned to operate in

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