

NEWS

Enthused about enthuse ltd

by Jonathon Taylor

Public relations has been around for almost 100 years. Many believe Edward Bernays invented the profession in the 1920s, while others point to Ivy Lee who opened a counselling office in 1904, or the Publicity Bureau of Boston which opened its doors in 1900.

Ivy Lee described himself as "physician to corporate bodies" and for one of his first clients, the Pennsylvania Railroad, he invented the "press release".

The aim was to distribute the company's 'news' about an accident before reporters received other versions of the story. It worked like magic and in 1915 Lee became John D. Rockefeller's publicity counsel.

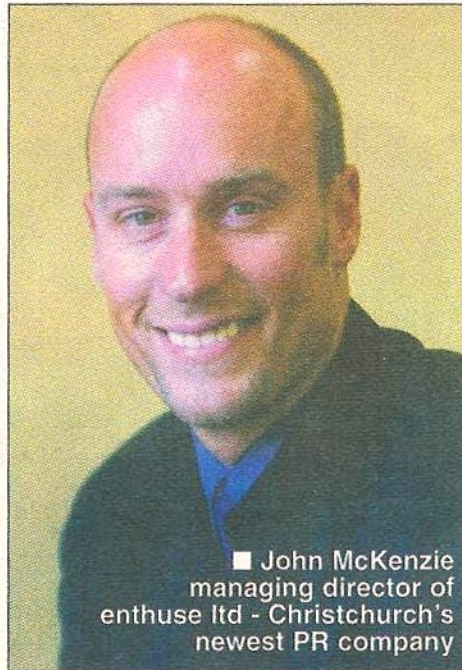
Mr Lee supposedly told Edward Bernays that when they died, public relations as a profession would die with them. History, it seems, had other ideas.

Not only is the public relations industry alive and well, it has come a long way from Ivy Lee's first press release.

In fact, according to one of New Zealand's newest additions to the industry, enthuse ltd, the perception of public relations being just about press releases is a widespread and outdated misnomer.

At four months old, enthuse ltd is the brain child of its managing director John McKenzie and consists of three main business units - consultancy, events and media/television. The company's scope is a reflection of the breadth good public relations should have, Mr McKenzie says.

"I think there is an unfortunate perception of PR being a spin industry. And at a senior executive and CEO level I think there is a lack of understanding about what PR is and how it can contribute to a business.



■ John McKenzie
managing director of
enthuse ltd - Christchurch's
newest PR company

"Many (executives) are caught up in tangibles and the bottom line, but PR is an intangible and they don't realise what positive public perception and media relations can do for a business."

With a background in sales, marketing, events and public relations, Mr McKenzie saw a gap in the market where no one was specialising in marketing communications activity for small to medium sized businesses in the tourism industry, so Christchurch based enthuse ltd was born.

The goal is to offer strategic direction, brand development support and the integration of marketing communications (Marcomms) activity with appropriate creative development, helping clients build

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relationships with customers, suppliers, their own industry and the media. And this, he says, is what good PR should deliver.

"PR needs to be fully integrated into all levels of a business like marketing, sales and at the strategic level.

"It's not just the people who write the press releases, but reflects the entire company's culture and values."

Studies have shown individuals are bombarded with a staggering 3000 commercial images per day and this marketing overkill shifts emphasis to having good PR, he says.

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diversity. This is because people are more likely to form an opinion, good or bad, of a company or product from what they see in the media than they are from advertising.

"Company culture, sponsorship, events, marketing and advertising, along with a targeted media relationship are all elements of PR and any good PR campaign covers all those elements," he says.

The intention is for enthuse ltd to deliver exactly that using Marcomms, a term the New Zealand business sector is relatively unfamiliar with.

"It's combining marketing with communications and integrating the two disciplines into a co-ordinated approach."

Following a three year stint as communications marketing manager for New Zealand's largest regional tourism organisation, Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing, Mr McKenzie sees this approach as the future face of good PR.

"For me enthuse ltd offers diversity in event organisation where other competitors lack it."

Involved in strategic communications planning and implementation, event organisation, project management, negotiation, proactive media management, publicity ideas generation, brand development and management and training of staff and various marketing groups, Mr McKenzie has built his company as he would aid another.

"You must understand your core business and what exactly it is you're trying to do, what your business is and translating that into your own identity."

While a single press release may have worked in 1906 for the Pennsylvania Railroad, today's business milieu means creating, holding and nurturing an identity.

It's a whole new approach to PR.