

NAMA MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A Thesis

by

LACY MICHELLE PRICE

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

August 2011

Major Subject: Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Traci L. Naile
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ABSTRACT

NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility. (August 2011)

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As corporate social responsibility (CSR) becomes increasingly important within organizations, it is imperative that professionals define their role in setting the CSR agenda. Through a descriptive survey, this study investigated National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) members' perceptions of their roles in CSR and acceptable practices for releasing data about an organization, and whether NAMA members' demographic characteristics were related to perceptions of CSR. The greatest number of respondents reported that they were between 40 and 59 years of age, 54.5% were female, and 69.7% worked for a corporation or public relations agency. Public relations serves to bring private and public entities into harmony and should assume their role in CSR. NAMA members were neutral that the agricultural communications industry has a clear code of ethics and standards of performance. NAMA members agreed that developing programs that are good for society is both good for business and good citizenship, and that public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role. A significant difference did exist between gender and the following statements: management must act socially responsible, regardless of how those actions influence profit, and organizations must try to calculate the social

impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking action. No significant difference was found based on whether respondents' current position involves public relations and six statements related to perceptions of CSR.

A majority of respondents reported working for an organization that recruited and hired employees who had an agricultural communications major, and had worked with someone who had an agricultural communications major, but were unsure of their preparation, management skills, and strategic thinking skills. Agricultural communications programs should take this perception into account and incorporate these three issues into their curriculum.

No research was found that discussed CSR and public relations in the agriculture industry. With this study, agricultural public relations practitioners might see their role in CSR and the need for a clear code of ethics to unify the industry. This study creates a foundation for additional studies of agricultural public relations professionals, delving deeper into more specific roles related to CSR.

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NOMENCLATURE

PR	Public relations
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
NAMA	National Agri-Marketing Association

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Setting

As the media report irresponsible corporate behaviors and set the corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda, there seems to be a growing interest in CSR in the marketing and corporate communications field (Podnar, 2008). CSR is the responsibility for corporations to be committed to their employees, the public and communities, and overall society; to provide quality products; and to the environment (Verschoor, 2008). “A question for marketing and corporate communication practitioners is twofold: how to think strategically about CSR communication and its consequences, and how to employ different communication tools to meet stakeholders’ (and especially customers’) expectations of CSR issues” (Podnar, 2008, p. 76).

CSR is especially important in agriculture because of the many ethical issues it faces and because of the consequences that could result from poor judgment on the part of agricultural organizations. Food safety issues, such as E. coli in tomatoes and spinach and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (Murphy-Lawless, 2004), were situations that would have harmed many people had false information been provided. Johnson & Johnson’s chief executive officer was socially responsible in 1982 when it was found that some bottles of Tylenol had been laced with cyanide. “While he could have tried to ride out the storm or simply reacted to the regional problem, he instead went on the offensive, launching both a recall of 31 million bottles of Tylenol capsules and a massive

This thesis follows the style of *Journal of Applied Communication*.

PR campaign to inform the public” (Yang, 2007).

Public relations professionals, specifically, make decisions about charitable giving, encourage and facilitate volunteering, promote community relations and health and safety issues, and manage other relationship-building programs (Kim & Reber, 2008). All of these things are included in an organization’s CSR. They all demonstrate how invested an organization is in its stakeholder, customers, and community (Kim & Reber, 2008).

Heath (2006) wrote:

For a fully functioning society, CSR must entail choices and actions that go well beyond the organization’s narrow self-interest. CSR requires proactive planning and management to make the organization good by meeting or exceeding the expectations of its stakeholders and stakeholders. (p. 103)

Agribusinesses should be very concerned with responsibility to stakeholders, as many ethical issues facing agriculture could have a negative effect on human health and safety (Murphy-Lawless, 2004).

CSR is not only about making a positive contribution to society for an organization, but also gaining support and loyalty at the same time (Heath, 2006). The organization gains respect and happiness by guiding the interests and principles of stakeholders, stakeholders, and the organization, even though these often are conflicting (Heath, 2006). A company has a social responsibility to its stakeholders regardless of whether it is the main priority for the company (Podnar, 2008). For this reason, stakeholders play a large role in the evolution of CSR (Podnar, 2008). CSR

communication is “a process of anticipating stakeholders’ expectations, articulation of CSR policy, and managing of different organization communication tools designed to provide true and transparent information about a company’s or a brand’s integration of its business operations, social and environmental concerns, and interactions with stakeholders” (Podnar, 2008, p. 75).

Marketing communications tools can play a major role in conveying a company’s CSR messages and communicating a more socially responsible image (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). A company can use this information to do two things: to persuade or to inform (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). CSR simply may be a way to persuade a customer to use a product (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). An example of this would be if Starbucks agreed to donate a dollar to a local charity every time someone bought a latte. They would be doing a service to the community but would have an ulterior motive to sell more of their product. If a company just releases factual information about its CSR practices, the company’s intention is to build its reputation and not to directly persuade customers into buying its products (Podnar, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

As more companies close their doors due to the ramifications of unethical practices, the importance of understanding corporate social responsibility continues to grow (Podnar, 2008; McCleneghan, 2005). Research has been conducted to determine public relations professionals’ perceptions of CSR (Kim & Reber, 2008), but not specifically in the agriculture industry. Research targeting public relations professionals in the agriculture industry is important because unethical practices in agriculture could

harm stakeholders. Agricultural public relations professionals must realize their roles in CSR and strive to do their part so they can protect consumers and gain support of stakeholders and stakeholders.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe NAMA members' perceptions of corporate social responsibility in agriculture and their roles related to corporate social responsibility.

Objectives

Specific objectives in meeting the purpose of this study were to:

1. Describe NAMA members' perceptions of their roles in corporate social responsibility.
2. Describe NAMA members' perceptions of career practices in the agricultural communications industry.
3. Describe relationships between NAMA members' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of CSR.

Scope of the Study

This study included members of the National Agri-Marketing Association who were accessible via the organization's email list. Members included professionals in the agriculture industry, specifically in marketing, advertising, public relations, and media.

Assumptions

This study was conducted under the following assumptions:

1. Corporate social responsibility applies to public relations professionals

in agriculture.

2. Participants will honestly and accurately report their perceptions of corporate social responsibility.

Limitations

The following limitations were identified for this study:

1. The results of the study cannot be generalized beyond the NAMA members who participated in this study.
2. Roles of public relations professionals vary among organizations.
3. NAMA consists of professionals who specialize in marketing, advertising, public relations, and media, and work for non-profit and for profit organizations. The duties associated with each of these aspects of communication vary.
4. This study does not reflect all variables that influence NAMA members' perceptions of corporate social responsibility.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined as follows for use in this study:

Ethics: Beck (1963) defined ethics as “the division of universal practical philosophy which deals with the intrinsic goodness found in some but not in all actions, dispositions, and maxims” (p. xiii).

Corporate social responsibility: The responsibility for corporations to be committed to their employees, the public and communities, and overall society; to provide quality products; and to the environment (Verschoor, 2008).

Public relations: “Managing strategic relationships” (Hutton, 1999).

Stakeholder: Freeman (1984) defines stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a corporation’s purpose. Stakeholders include employees, customers, suppliers, stockholders, banks, environmentalists, government and other groups who can help or hurt the corporation” (p. vi).

Supply chain: “A supply chain is a series of linkages between purchasers and suppliers of goods and services” (Young, 2000, p. 57).

Commodity group: An agricultural commodity is defined as any plant, or part thereof, or animal, or animal product, produced by a person (including farmers, ranchers, vineyardists, plant propagators, Christmas tree growers, aquaculturists, floriculturists, orchardists, foresters, or other comparable persons) primarily for sale, consumption, propagation, or other use by man or animals (FIFRA, 2005). Therefore, a commodity group is an organization that represents production of a specific commodity.

Significance of the Study

Insights into NAMA members’ perceptions of CSR will contribute to a greater understanding of what they think their roles are and what might be done to increase participation in CSR efforts. The data collected in this study will establish the importance of public relations professionals in CSR and help organizations and other professionals in the industry better understand their CSR roles.

Chapter Summary

There seems to be a growing interest in CSR due to recent irresponsible corporate behaviors (Podnar, 2008). CSR is especially important because of the possible

consequences that might result from poor judgment on the part of agricultural organizations. Public relations professionals must assume their role in CSR and assume a strategic role to advocate for CSR issues (Kim & Reber, 2008). The purpose of this study was to understand NAMA members' perceptions of CSR, perceptions of acceptable practices for releasing data about a company, and to describe the relationship between NAMA members' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of CSR. Looking at agricultural public relations professionals' perceptions of CSR will help organizations and other industry professionals better understand their CSR roles and increase participation in CSR efforts.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Agricultural Communications and the National Agri-Marketing Association

Agricultural communications began in the 1800s with influential leaders who argued for important causes that aimed at improving farming, and has evolved over the years (Tucker, Whaley, & Cano, 2003; Burnett & Tucker, 2001). Today, communicators must be trained to address such complex and controversial contemporary issues as food safety, environmental conservation, and genetic modification of plants and animals (Burnett & Tucker, 2001).

The National Agri-marketing Association is the nation's largest association for professionals in marketing and agribusiness. NAMA allows members to “get the latest thinking on ag marketing from leading thinkers, network with leading professionals from across the industry, and develop leadership skills, learn from experts, and gain recognition” (National Agri-Marketing Association, n.d.). NAMA includes, but is not limited to, members who are employed by agricultural organizations. For example, members are employed by organizations such as 3 Advertising, an advertising agency that does not only focus on agriculture-related clients, and Fleishman-Hillard, a public relations company that covers all disciplines and industries, including agribusiness and animal care. Members who work for specifically agricultural organizations work for organizations such as Farm Credit and Dairy Farmers of America.

Public Relations and Ethics

“Practicing ethical public relations may become one of the greatest challenges to

the public relations practitioners of the 21st century” (Holtzhausen, 2000, p. 93). “Public relations must be fluid, entrepreneurial, changing constantly to the inevitable trends in the marketplace . . . in society. Especially in the aftermath of the wave of corporate scandals” (Budd, 2003, p. 378).

Hutton (1999) recognized six distinct orientations or models of public relations practice: persuasion, advocacy, public information, cause-related public relations, image/reputation, management, and relationship management. He concluded that only one definition could truly define public relations: managing strategic relationships (Hutton, 1999). The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) formally adopted an official statement on public relations in 1982. It stated that public relations contributes to a mutual understanding among groups and institutions, and it “serves to bring private and public policies into harmony” (PRSA, 1982, p. 1). Public relations develops and manages effective relationships with several audiences or publics at a diverse number of institutions in society (PRSA, 1982).

Heath (2006) concluded that:

Public relations is a piece of some whole. The challenge is to continue to search to discover the whole and public relations’ place in it. One view of that whole is the nature of society and, consequently, the constructive and destructive roles that public relations can play to that end (p. 110).

Public relations fails to have a largely accepted definition, and the void has been filled with a variety of negative connotations such as “spin,” “spin control,” or “spin doctoring” (Hutton, 1999). Fawkes (2007) concluded that because of reluctance to

discuss propaganda and persuasion in public relations, the field has not developed a set of ethics. Persuasion must be seen as a central part of the public relations practice, or persuasion will continue to be seen as synonymous with manipulation (Fawkes, 2007).

“It seems clear that proponents believe the persuasive “professions” can serve the public interest and that persons active in those professions can be ethical. Unfortunately, the “can” too often does not translate into a reality of fact (Baker & Martinson, 2001). The core requirement that audiences have adequate information to make voluntary, informed, rational, and reflective decisions is essential to the ethics of persuasion (Messina, 2007). A few researchers have created principles of ethical persuasion that serve as moral boundaries in persuasion (Hamilton 1984; Baker & Martinson, 2001; Messina, 2007). Hamilton (1984) wrote that practitioners face four specific ethical problems: truthfulness, balancing the need for research with the right of privacy, persuasion as the goal of the practice, and accountability. Baker and Martinson (2001) developed the TARES Test, an acronym for five principles of ethical persuasion: truthfulness, authenticity, respect, equity, and social responsibility. Messina (2007) also identified four standards of ethical persuasion: truthfulness, authenticity, responsibility, and equity. Truthfulness includes confidentiality and honesty. Information disclosed should not mislead, misinform, or deceive. Authenticity means having integrity. Public relations professionals must know what they are talking about and be trustworthy. Responsibility is the most important of these standards. This refers to the responsibility to give the public the full story. Leaving out important details to protect an organization is considered irresponsible. The last standard is equity. Equity includes taking into

account what resources are accessible to the audience, and the audience's ability and opportunity to speak and be heard (Messina, 2007).

Agricultural Ethics

There are many ethical issues related to agriculture, including: food safety and security; animal welfare and production; pollution and environmental sustainability (Busch, 2003); technological change and agricultural production techniques; and corruption of regulators and policy makers (James, 2002). "Because food is such a necessity for humans and regulation of food production is imperfect, it is essential that those producing it or working in the agrifood sector have high ethical standards so that the food produced is safe and wholesome" (James & Hendrickson, 2008).

In early 2003, a children's hospital in Seattle, Washington, reported a high number of E. coli infections, and two days later, the health department determined that food sold at Jack in the Box restaurants was at least partly responsible (Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000). After three children died from E. coli and 400 were infected with the bacteria, Jack in the Box was unwilling to take responsibility for the issue, as it was able to trace the contaminated meat to a single supplier. Ulmer and Sellnow (2000) concluded that although ambiguity is a component of effective crisis communication, it raises ethical issues because of the negative effects it has on stakeholders.

Johnson & Johnson, during the Tylenol-tamper scare, redeemed all previous purchases, recalled all products on store shelves, and took preventive measures by creating a new product seal (Murray & Vogel, 1997). "Indeed, as a result of its public actions as a responsible pharmaceutical producer, Johnson & Johnson enhanced its

public image by taking decisive action” (Murray & Vogel, 1997, p. 143).

Food safety issues have also been an ethical concern facing agriculture (Langosch & Schlenz, 1990; Busch, 2003). An outbreak of E. coli was linked to Taco Bell restaurants in 2006 (Miller, 2006). Although they waited until six days after the incident to address the public, Taco Bell controlled the damage by closing a number of restaurants and switching produce suppliers, and pulling green onions from 5,800 stores (Miller, 2006).

Farm animal welfare has been an ethical issue that has brought about debate among stakeholders (Lusk & Norwood, 2008). There are many conflicting opinions as to whether animal welfare decisions should be made based on either scientific evidence or ethics (Lusk & Norwood, 2008; Thompson, 2010). The spotted owl controversy has also brought about many ethical questions. In 1986, after heavy logging in the forests of the Pacific Northwest resulted in a decrease in the number of spotted owls, an environmentalist group petitioned to add the owl to the “endangered species” list (Andre & Velasquez, 1991). The government set up a provision that would require timber companies to leave at least 40% of the old-growth forest intact within a 1.3 mile radius of any spotted owl nest or activity site. Timber industry representatives claimed that the provision would leave thousands of Northwest loggers and mill workers jobless. “We must ask whether and to what extent preserving endangered species and the wilderness they inhabit should take precedence over other considerations, such as major economic dislocations” (Andre & Velasquez, 1991).

Public Relations in Agriculture

A study by Langosch and Schlenz (1990) examined the agricultural sector, focusing on public image and how the field can improve as a whole, and found that public relations requires that the entire industry realize the necessity and possibilities of public relations, even beginning with the farmer himself. Bhardwaj, Maekawa, Niimura and Macer (2003) found that information dissemination is central to the modern information society, and that the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization viewed it as a major role. For example, the media has created a negative opinion of Genetically Modified (GM) technologies, and ethics should be involved in providing people unbiased information at the community level and the country level (Bhardwaj et al., 2003). Tockman (1993) said that finding ways to educate consumers on four major issues affecting agriculture (food safety, environmental concerns, biotechnology, and animal rights/welfare) was critical to communications and marketing-related jobs. Public relations must be handled differently depending on the situation, but a disconnect between interests of individuals in the field detract from an overall positive image for the farm sector (Langosch & Schlenz, 1990).

According to popular media, the term “swine flu,” which was used to refer to a strain of influenza in 2009, was a public relations nightmare for the pork industry (Frank, 2009). The agriculture secretary, Tom Vilsack, urged people to call the disease H1N1, as “swine flu” made consumers wary of consuming pork products. Government health agencies agreed to begin referring to the strain as its official name, but the

damage had already been done (Welch, 2009). On average, producers lost about \$20 per pig, and the \$1.8 billion per year industry took an \$18 million hit (Welch, 2009).

Conceptual Framework

In the 1920s, practitioners began to pay more attention to the idea of social responsibility, noting that it was good for public relations and thus good for business (Clark, 2000). CSR was the “buzzword of the 1960s and 1970s [and] has become critical in the 2000s.” “The corporate scandals of 2002 have had a profound impact on how people assess corporations, their leaders, and their securities” (McCleneghan, 2005, p. 18). Since 2002, CSR has become increasingly important, as it can be used to regain public trust (McCleneghan, 2005).

Both scholars and managers in recent years have paid greater attention to the notion of CSR (Podnar, 2008). “At the start of the 21st century, Corporate Social Responsibility seems to be a leading principle in innovating business practices with a positive impact on People, Planet and Profit” (Zwetsloot, 2003, p. 202).

Campbell (2007) concluded:

CSR might include measures of how the corporation treats its employees with respect to wages, benefits, and levels of workplace safety; how it treats its customers with respect to product quality, truth in advertising, and pricing; how it treats its suppliers with respect to its willingness to uphold contracts and honor more informal commitments; how it treats the government with respect to operating within the law and not trying to subvert it; and how it treats the community with respect to making charitable contributions, ensuring not to foul

the environment, and so forth (p. 950).

Corporate Social Responsibility and Public Relations

Edward Bernays, commonly known as the “Father of Public Relations,” was quoted as saying, “Public relations is the practice of social responsibility” (p. 47) at the 1980 meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism at Boston University (Bernays, 1980, as cited in Clark 2000). Kim and Reber (2009) suggested that acting in a socially responsible way could have an effect on public relations attaining professionalism, as professionalism and CSR are closely intertwined (Wilcox, Cameron, Ault, & Agee, 2003). Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier (2002) said that public responsibility has been understood and emphasized as nearly synonymous with the concept of public relations.

Several public relations practitioners in Kim and Reber’s (2008) study said public relations had no role in an organization’s social responsibility activities. These professionals separated public relations and CSR completely. Despite these results, Kim and Reber concluded that public relations professionals do have a role in CSR. “Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other” (Public Relations Society of America, 2010). Kim and Reber (2008) wrote that if they are to play a part in CSR, PR professionals should be converted to a managerial role within the organization. They say that PR professionals serve in a strategic way, and that this could be a means of leading to more influence within a managerial role (Kim & Reber, 2008). The largest number of respondents in their study in a significant management role said public relations played a large role in CSR, or that the role was to strongly advise clients

or advocate to management on behalf of CSR issues (Kim & Reber, 2008).

Benn, Todd, and Pendleton (2010) interviewed nine corporate leaders from different industries and found that public relations professionals have very little involvement in the implementation of CSR. The interviewees insisted that CSR be implemented across the organization to avoid being seen as a public relations stunt. Researchers drew the conclusion “that the role of public relations in CSR should be one in which it provides sound counsel and develops the communicative aspects of the organizations activities rather than designing activities for external communication purposes” (Ben, Todd, & Pendleton, 2010, p. 417).

“It is clear that corporate public relations and CSR have, throughout this last century, a set of similarities, which provide clues to their integration and increased joint effectiveness” (Clark, 2000, p. 376). In 2008, Podnar found that both scholars and managers have paid greater attention to CSR, as a company has a social responsibility to its stakeholders. This responsibility is present, whether it is the main priority for the organization or not (Podnar, 2008). Clark (2000) concluded that both disciplines should realize that it would make good business sense to combine their efforts. The connection between the two suggests that public relations and CSR have similar objectives; both disciplines are seeking to enhance the quality of the relationship of an organization among key stakeholder groups (Clark, 2000). Murray and Vogel (1997) suggested that it is the corporate seeking the well-being and satisfaction of societal stakeholders without the proximate prospect of financial gain. Ethical public relations practitioners can be enormously useful to corporations wishing to make the transition from a state in which

the sole emphasis is on capital accumulation to one in which equal emphasis is placed on profit generation and on socially responsible action (Ryan, 1986, p. 741). CSR is essentially corporate attempts to meet the expectations of the society and at the same time maintain and improve their reputations (Murray & Vogel, 1997). Prabu (2004) suggested that social responsibility demands require corporations to accommodate the social good, and that public relations could play a critical role in fostering corporate citizenship.

“Interdependence means that the success of the organization rests on its effectiveness in selling products while at the same time winning public approval for its mission, citizenship, and practices” (Stoker, 2005, p. 276). Heath (2006) wrote that the expectations that people create, negotiate, manage, and apply in their social actions as they work and live in societal arrangements is important to this interdependency.

“Interdependence and relationships assume that all stakeholders share universal norms and values—the deeper loyalties. Unlike marketing, public relations must communicate the organization’s deeper loyalties if it hopes to create relationships based on interdependence” (Stoker, 2005, p. 276).

Kim & Reber (2008) researched public relations’ roles in CSR, surveying public relations practitioners across the U.S. In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to reflect generally on public relations’ contribution to CSR. Many of the respondents were knowledgeable and passionate about CSR, but felt that their involvement in CSR is sometimes “limited by their influence and authority within the organization” (Kim & Reber, 2008, p. 340). It was recognized that public relations

professionals should act as the conscience of the organization and encourage CSR, but that in the real world, it is not always possible. Another theme that emerged was that the contribution public relations can make to CSR is to identify community needs.

Respondents said that it is important to find out what the needs of a community are and to ensure that these needs are met. A third contribution of public relations to CSR that is discussed is its contribution to build the organization's bottom line. Most executives recognize the importance of social and environmental responsibility to the bottom line (82%), to their companies' reputations (59%), and to their customers (53%) (Zhang & Swanson, 2006). The bottom line is important, however, without customer satisfaction in the social responsibility of the company, the bottom line will suffer (Zhang & Swanson, 2006). Companies are concerned about profit, and if a public relations professional suggests CSR, the executives can say no. Within all of these contributions, there is always the possibility that public relations professionals will be limited by authority (Kim & Reber, 2008).

Kim and Reber (2008) also found that public relations professionals' personal viewpoints in ethics or their personal experiences seem to be a key factor in how they see their part in CSR. "Some companies (like Wal-Mart) are beginning to require their vendors and suppliers to adhere to a strict code of conduct, and to report on how they manage environmental, social, and governance issues" (KPMG, 2008, p. 6).

Clark (2000) explored the link between public relations and CSR, tracing the origins of both, in an attempt to gain insight into how to optimize their effectiveness and their impact on the corporate world. She suggested that the link between public relations

and CSR began in 1973 with the Texas Gulf Sulfur (TGS) case, and was reinforced when public relations leaders began to recognize that a role of public relations is to assist organizations with developing appropriate responses (Clark, 2000). TGS was indicted because officials of TGS purchased shares in the company based on undisclosed information regarding the discovery of silver and copper deposits in Canada, and did not publicly disclose this information until 5 years after the discovery (Allen, 1990). The TGS case changed the practice of public relations by creating the need for public relations practitioners to “focus on their role as insiders and make sure they did not arbitrarily select what information to reveal and what to conceal” (Clark, 2000, p. 365).

Value of Corporate Social Responsibility to Stakeholders

McCleneghan (2005) surveyed 231 U.S. public relations professionals, asking them to rank Seital’s nine millennium issues that he said would affect PR early in 21st century, and then answer an open-ended question to explain his or her No. 1 issue ranking.

One respondent, Johnny Whitaker, director of communications for the United States Air Force Academy, said that "Corporate Responsibility" and "Accountability" are collectively the No. 1 millennium issue. “Public trust—from both my internal and external publics—is everything. Without it, the organization quite likely could cease to exist; or, at a minimum, will function only marginally effectively. If we do not perform our mission responsibly and with integrity, our support will be withdrawn and our leaders replaced” (Whitaker, 2005, as cited in McCleneghan 2005). In the Johnson & Johnson cyanide scare mentioned earlier, the organization was accountable for its

actions and rectified the crisis by removing all products from the shelf (Murray & Vogel, 1997). Taco Bell also took action by shutting down stores and switching suppliers, fulfilling their corporate social responsibility to consumers (Miller, 2006). Jack in the Box refused to take responsibility by placing blame on external actors (Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000). A director of advisory services for a nonprofit CSR consultancy organization said that many companies overlook how things are handled from a communications perspective during a crisis, stating that an organization should take accountability, apologize, and recognize its effects (McCleneghan, 2005). Campbell (2007) views a corporation as socially responsible if they do not knowingly do anything to harm their stakeholders, and if they do, they must rectify it when the harm is discovered and bring it to their attention.

There is concern over perceived supply chain CSR deficiencies in regard to food companies (Maloni & Brown, 2006). Agri-food chains are responding to demands from civil society by implementing private standards initiatives (PSIs) in the form of voluntary standards and code (Tallontire, 2007). Setting private regulations ensures that an organization's members act in socially responsible ways (Campbell, 2007). In the case of the 2006 E. coli outbreak traced to Taco Bell, public health and the safety of the produce supply chain were main concerns of Taco Bell (Miller, 2006).

A survey of 800 U.S. adults showed that consumers believe that good corporate citizenship is reflected in how well a company treats its employees. Twenty-seven percent of respondents said corporate social responsibility means "corporations need to be committed to their employees," 23% said, "corporations need to be committed to the

public and communities and overall society,” 16% said “corporations have a responsibility to provide quality products,” and 12% said “corporations have a responsibility to the environment” (Verschoor, 2006). The ability to practice ethical public relations might determine success in dealing with employees (Holtzhausen, 2000).

Hong, Yang, and Rim (2010) surveyed 416 college students about their willingness to provide feedback through dialogic communication to a company based on its corporate social responsibility efforts. They found that when customers believe a company is socially responsible, they are more likely to give feedback to and identify with that company (Hong, Yang & Rim, 2010).

Chapter Summary

Compared to the amount of research done on agriculture and CSR, and agriculture and public relations, but no research was found that encompassed all three topics. Public relations practitioners have the challenge of practicing ethical public relations (Holtzhausen, 2000). Persuasion is a main role in the public relations practice, and practitioners should follow standards of ethical persuasion to make sure the public interest is served (Hamilton, 1984; Baker & Martinson, 2001; Messina, 2007). Ethics in agriculture are also important. When a crisis in the food industry occurs, much like that in the Jack in the Box case, it is important to take action rather than place blame elsewhere because of the negative effects it has on stakeholders (Sellnow, 2000). CSR has become increasingly important (Clark, 2000; McCleneghan, 2005; Podnar, 2008) and should become the response to many unethical issues facing public relations

practitioners in the agriculture industry.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

CSR is an organization's responsibility to be committed to its stakeholders: employees, customers, suppliers, stockholders, banks, environmentalists, government and other groups who can help or hurt the corporation (Freeman, 1984). Public relations is generally understood as being synonymous with CSR and public relations leaders are qualified and positioned to guide the CSR effort (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Clark, 2000). Agricultural public relations professionals must realize their roles in CSR and strive to do their part in shaping the CSR agenda. CSR should be an integral part of agricultural organizations because of the serious consequences that could be faced due to unethical practices.

Institutional Review Board

Texas A&M University policy and federal regulations require approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators can begin their research. The Texas A&M University Office of University Research Services and the Institutional Review Board conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. In compliance with that policy, this study was reviewed and granted permission to proceed. The IRB assigned the number 2010-0940 (see Appendix A) to this study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe NAMA members' perceptions of corporate social responsibility in agriculture and their roles related to corporate social

responsibility.

Objectives

Specific objectives in meeting the purpose of this study were to:

1. Describe NAMA members' perceptions of their roles in corporate social responsibility.
2. Describe NAMA members' perceptions of career practices in the agricultural communications industry.
3. Describe relationships between NAMA members' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of CSR.

Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey design to describe NAMA members' perceptions of corporate social responsibility. Data describing these perceptions were collected via an online questionnaire.

Survey Instrument Design

Survey responses were obtained using a Web-based questionnaire. "With advances in computer technology over the past twenty years, the use of online surveys has become convenient and widespread" (Case & Yang, 2009, p. 15). Using a Web-based questionnaire has a very low marginal cost per respondent (Schonlau, Matthias, Fricker, & Elliott, 2002). Questions were adapted from two surveys of public relations practitioners about how their professionalism is related to their attitudes about CSR (Kim & Reber, 2009; Ryan, 1986). Kim and Reber (2008) found that there was a link between public relations practitioners' professionalism and their attitudes toward CSR.

For this study, questions were tailored to members of NAMA.

The Web-based questionnaire used in this study (see Appendix C) was created using SurveyMonkey.com. There were a total of 46 close-ended questions, with 3 sections in the survey titled Career Practices, Social Responsibility, and Career and Organization Demographics. An introduction question asked respondents if their current position involved public relations tasks, followed by 17 questions related to career practices. The second section asked respondents about their perceptions of CSR. Both of these sections used a 7-point Likert-type scale, 1= “strongly disagree,” 2= “disagree, 3= “somewhat disagree,” 4= “neutral,” 5= “somewhat agree,” 6= “agree,” 7= “strongly agree.” A third section asked respondents 15 multiple choice demographic questions related to their career and organization. There were 15 questions related to objective 1, 15 questions related to objective 2, and 12 questions related to objective 3.

Validity

The original survey instrument was created and used in two previous studies (Kim & Reber, 2009; Ryan, 1986). A panel of experts, consisting of an agricultural communications and journalism faculty member, executive vice president/ceo of NAMA, and NAMA member, reviewed modifications made to the original survey instrument to ensure face and content validity were maintained.

Reliability

Data were used to calculate a post-hoc Cronbach’s alpha for the scaled items. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is used to calculate the reliability of items where more than one answer is possible (Cronbach, 1951). For this study, the Cronbach’s alpha for all 30

scaled items was .784. The reliability measured for 17 items related to career practices was .758, and reliability measured for 13 items related to perceptions of CSR was .750.

Population

Public relations professionals registered as members of the National Agri-Marketing Association who were accessible via email as of March 2011 were selected for this study (N = 1,623). The source list for the population was the National Agri-Marketing Association email list. NAMA includes both members who are employed by not-for-profit organizations and associations, such as commodity groups, and members who are employed by for-profit organizations. A census was conducted because the survey was sent by NAMA to the NAMA email list.

Data Collection

NAMA members initially were contacted through an email (see Appendix B) that was distributed by NAMA to protect the privacy of members on the listserv. The introductory email was distributed in National NAMA e-News on March 7, 2011. A reminder was sent March 17, 2011, in an agri-marketing special edition e-news email, and a second reminder was sent March 30, 2011, in a NAMA agri-marketing conference attendee update. Three hundred seven responses were obtained during the data collection period for a response rate of 18.92%. The response rate was likely low because the introductory and reminder emails were sent with other NAMA updates instead of as individual, personalized emails, as suggested by Dillman (2000). The survey had a fairly large number of questions, and this might also have had an impact on the response rate.

Data Analysis

Responses to quantitative survey items were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17.0 for Windows and were interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, frequencies, modes, ranges, and medians. Analysis of variance was used to examine differences among responses based on demographics.

A scale was established to determine respondents' level of agreement with each statement. The scale was as follows: 1.00 – 1.49 = “strongly disagree,” 1.50 – 2.49 = “disagree,” 2.50 – 3.49 = “somewhat disagree,” 3.50 – 4.49 = “neutral,” 4.50 – 5.49 = “somewhat agree,” 5.50 – 6.49 = “agree,” and 6.50 – 7.00 = “strongly agree.”

Nonresponse error was controlled for by comparing the characteristics of early and late respondents to the survey, using respondents of the initial email as early respondents, and those who responded after a reminder email was sent as late respondents (Linder & Wingenbach, 2002). There were 144 late respondents and 163 early respondents. Responses were pooled for analysis and interpreted, and no differences in the means of the selected items were found between the early and late respondents.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study was an examination of NAMA members' perceptions of CSR. With the need for many organizations to regain public trust, CSR has become increasingly important in recent years (McCleneghan, 2005). A descriptive online survey of NAMA members was used to describe members' perceptions of CSR and acceptable practices when releasing data about an organization, and to describe relationships between NAMA members and their perceptions of CSR.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe NAMA members' perceptions of corporate social responsibility in agriculture and their roles related to corporate social responsibility.

Objectives

Specific objectives in meeting the purpose of this study were to:

1. Describe NAMA members' perceptions of their roles in corporate social responsibility.
2. Describe NAMA members' perceptions of career practices in the agricultural communications industry.
3. Describe relationships between NAMA members' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of CSR.

Population

A census was conducted of National Agri-Marketing Association members

registered as of March 2011 (N = 1,623). The population was the National Agri-Marketing Association email list. NAMA is a professional organization that includes members who are in marketing, advertising, public relations, media, nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

Response Rate

Survey responses were collected from March 8, 2011, through April 4, 2010. A total of 307 responses were collected for a response rate of 18.92%. For Web surveys, typical response rates range from 7% to 44% (Schonlau et al., 2002).

Demographics

General Background

Of the 307 survey respondents, 54.5% were female and 45.5% were male. More than half (53.4%) of the respondents were between 40 and 59 years of age, with 23.9% between 40 and 49 years old, and 29.5% between 50 and 59 years. These were followed with 21.6% in the 20 to 29 age range, 17% in the 30 to 39 age range, 6.8% in the 60 to 69 age range, and 1.1% in the over 70 age range.

Career Experience

NAMA members were asked if their current positions involved public relations tasks. A majority of respondents (73.9%) answered yes. The greatest number of respondents (18.2%) had between 16 and 20 years of public relations experience, and the least number of respondents (5.3%) had between 21 and 25 years of public relations experience (see Figure. 1).

The greatest number of respondents (29.4%) had 1 to 2 years of experience in their

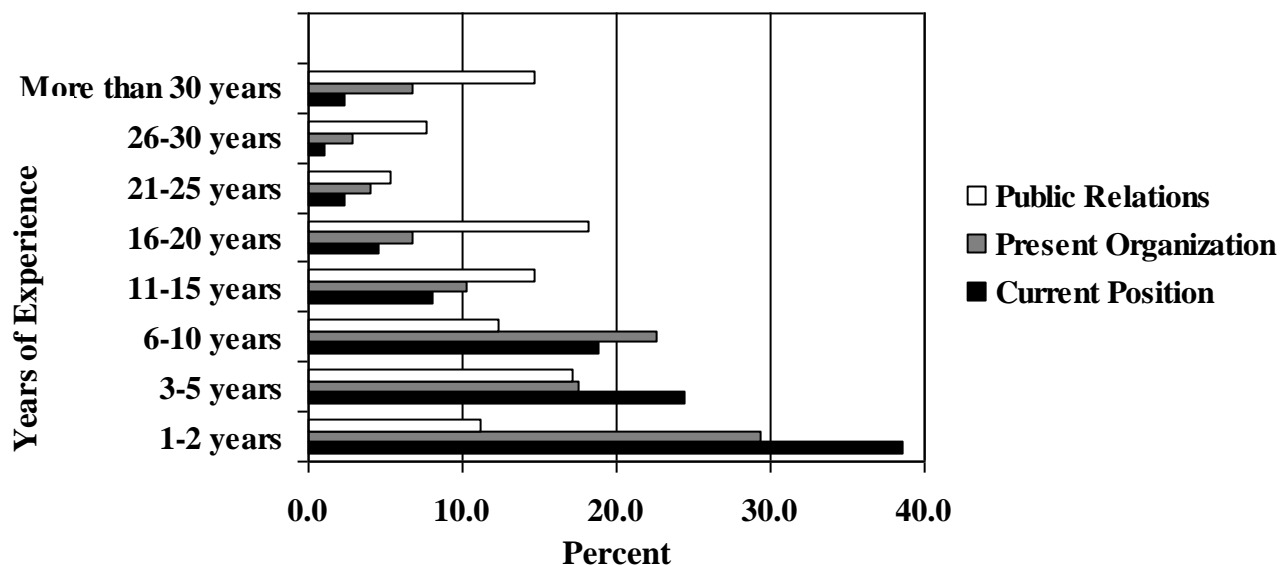


Figure 1. Findings Related to Overall Career Experience

present organizations, and the least number of respondents (2.8%) had 26 to 30 years of experience in their present organizations (see Figure 1).

The greatest number of respondents (38.6%) had between 1 and 2 years of experience in their current positions, and the least number of respondents (1.1%) had between 26 and 30 years of experience in their current positions (see Figure 1).

Organization Demographics

Respondents were asked to answer three questions based on their knowledge and personal experiences related to the agricultural communications major. A majority of respondents reported that their organization had recruited employees who had an agricultural communications major (65%) and had hired employees who had an agricultural communications major (70.6%), and a majority (83.6%) had worked with someone who had an agricultural communications major.

NAMA members were asked to describe the organization with which they are employed on a full-time basis. The most common type of organization was a corporation, with 47.8% selecting this type of organization. Public relations agency was selected by 21.9%, followed by 19.1% who selected other. Nonprofit organization was chosen by 4.5%, trade association was chosen by 2.8%, with the least amount of respondents choosing independent public relations consultant (2.2%) and education-related organization (1.7%). Organizations specified as other are listed in Appendix G.

NAMA members described their present positions, with 19.1% describing themselves as managers, followed by 15.7% as CEO/president/owner and 12.9% as director. Vice president and other were both selected by 12.4% of respondents. Communication specialist was chosen by 10.1%, account executive was chosen by 5.1%, and assistant account executive (2.8%) and public relations specialist (2.2%) were chosen the least. Positions specified as other are listed in Appendix H.

The percentage of respondents who reported that their organization's annual revenue was less than \$1 million was 9.6%, 16.6% reported \$1-5 million, and 10.2% reported \$5-10 million. The percentage of respondents who reported between \$10 and \$50 million was 21.7%, between \$50 and \$100 million was reported by 5.1%, \$100-500 million was reported by 5.7%, between \$500 million and \$1 billion was reported by 5.1%, followed by 15.3% that reported more than \$1 billion and 10.8% who chose other. Revenues specified as other include those that chose to not divulge the information because of corporate policies or unknown reasons, or they were unsure of the correct answer.

Most (75.5%) of the respondents worked for an organization that has fewer than 500 employees, with 33.5% reporting fewer than 50 employees, 21.0% reporting 50-100 employees, and 21.0% reporting 100-500 employees. The percentage of respondents who reported 500-1,000 employees was 2.3%, 6.3% reported 1,000-5,000 employees, 7.4% reported 5,000-10,000 employees, 4.0% reported 10,000-25,000 employees, and the least number of respondents reported 25,000-50,000 (1.1%), 50,000-75,000 (1.1%), and 75,000-100,000 (.6%).

About one-third (34.9%) of respondents chose other in response to what field they earned their highest degree in, followed by business (26.3%) and journalism and mass communications (22.3%). Public relations and advertising were both chosen by 5.7% of respondents, 2.9% chose speech communication, and the least number of respondents (2.3 %) earned a degree in English. A list of those majors specified as other can be found in Appendix I.

The mean number of employees in their organization's public relations department was 8.83 ($SD = 16.70$). The greatest number of organizations (20.4%) reported that their organization had only 2 employees. A majority of respondents (73.5%) reported that their organization had 6 or fewer employees.

Findings Related to Perceptions of CSR

Thirteen items were included on the survey that pertained to NAMA members' perceptions of CSR. These Likert-type items were scored on a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". See Table 1 to view M , SD , & Mdn for each statement.

Respondents agreed that developing programs that are good for society is both good for business and good citizenship, that an organization that is socially responsible over a long period is more credible with the public than one that is not, and that the pursuit of social goals strengthens an organization's ability to earn a fair profit.

Respondents somewhat agreed that they thought that the agricultural communications industry has a clear code of ethics and that the agricultural communications industry has clear standards of performance.

Respondents agreed that management must act socially responsible regardless of how those actions influence profit. They also agreed that corporate social responsibility must stem from a firm, deep-seated conviction of management that it is important for organizations to act in the public interest, and not just when it is convenient to do so.

Respondents somewhat disagreed that it is right for an individual to have one ethical standard in his or her private life and a different standard in business affairs.

Respondents somewhat agreed that public relations professionals should act as the consciences of the organizations for which they work.

Respondents agreed that public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role.

Respondents somewhat agreed that public relations professionals must avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience, and respondents agreed that public relations professionals must work hard to ensure that organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct.

Table 1

<i>Findings Related to Perceptions of CSR</i>				
CSR Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	
Developing programs that are good for society is both good business and good citizenship.	6.11	.90	6.00	
The pursuit of social goals strengthens a corporation's ability to earn a fair profit.	5.50	1.19	6.00	
An organization that is socially responsible over a long time period is more credible with the public than one that is not.	6.19	.91	6.00	
Corporate social responsibility must stem from a firm, deep-seated conviction of management that it is important for organizations to act in the public interest, and not just when it is convenient to do so.	6.15	1.07	6.00	
Management must act socially responsible, regardless of how those actions influence profit.	5.74	1.30	6.00	
It is all right for an individual to have one ethical standard in his or her private life and a different standard in business affairs.	3.01	1.78	2.00	
Public relations professionals should act as the consciences of the organizations for which they work.	5.14	1.42	5.00	
Public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role.	5.67	1.07	6.00	
Public relations practitioners must avoid putting organization obedience ahead of personal conscience.	4.99	1.55	5.00	
Public relations professionals must work hard to insure that organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct.	5.93	1.09	6.00	
Organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions.	5.78	1.05	6.00	
A socially responsible public relations staff presents several sides of an issue and provides an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions when it disseminates information.	5.56	1.29	6.00	
Presenting all sides of an issue and providing an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions is the job of the news media, not of public relations.	3.92	1.94	4.00	
I think the agricultural communications industry has a clear code of ethics.	4.89	1.25	5.00	
I think the agricultural communications industry has clear standards of performance.	4.77	1.27	5.00	

Note. Scale: 1.00-1.49 = "strongly disagree;" 1.50-2.49 = "disagree;" 2.50-3.49 = "somewhat disagree;" 3.50-4.49 = "neutral;" 4.50-5.49 = "somewhat agree;" 5.50-6.49 = "agree;" 6.50-7.00 = "strongly agree."

Respondents agreed that organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions.

Respondents agreed that a socially responsible public relations staff presents several sides of an issue and provides an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions

when it disseminates information, but were neutral about the statement that presenting all sides of an issue and providing an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions is the job of the news media, not public relations.

Findings Related to Career Practices

Survey respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement with 17 career-related statements. See Table 2 to view a table of the *M*, *SD*, & *Mdn* for each statement.

Respondents somewhat agreed that they decide on communication policy often and that their clients/organization asked the agency/communications department to get involved in strategic planning.

Table 2
Findings Related to Career Practices

Career Practice Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I set strategic goals often.	5.76	1.11	6.00
I set quantifiable objectives often.	5.57	1.12	6.00
I decide on communications policy often.	5.17	1.60	6.00
I consider myself a long-time employee in my organization.	5.35	1.84	6.00
My clients/company ask the agency/communications department to get involved in their strategic planning.	5.38	1.51	6.00
My clients/company ask for communications programs that go beyond media relations.	5.74	1.43	6.00
My company is considered an industry leader.	5.95	1.18	6.00
My organization has a large executive staff.	4.08	2.00	4.00
I think professional associations contribute to professionalism.	5.79	1.01	6.00
I think professional associations have membership benefits.	5.76	.97	6.00
I evaluate communications graduates' overall preparation as excellent.	4.33	1.10	4.00
I evaluate communications graduates' management skills as excellent.	4.06	1.13	4.00
I evaluate communications graduates' strategic thinking as excellent.	4.04	1.16	4.00
Formal qualifications should be compulsory to be a communications professional.	4.56	1.44	5.00
Academic training is important for communications professionals.	5.55	1.21	6.00

Note. Scale: 1.00-1.49 = “strongly disagree;” 1.50-2.49 = “disagree;” 2.50-3.49 = “somewhat disagree;” 3.50-4.49 = “neutral;” 4.50-5.49 = “somewhat agree;” 5.50-6.49 = “agree;” 6.50-7.00 = “strongly agree.”

Respondents agreed that they set strategic goals and quantifiable objectives often.

Respondents somewhat agreed that they consider themselves a long-time employee in their organization and were neutral that their organization had a large executive staff.

Respondents agreed that their clients/organization asked for communications programs that go beyond media relations.

Respondents agreed their organization was considered an industry leader.

Respondents agreed that they thought professional associations contribute to professionalism and that professional associations have membership benefits.

Respondents agreed that academic training was important for communications professionals, but were neutral in their agreement that agricultural communications graduates' overall preparation was excellent, agricultural communications graduates' management skills were excellent, and agricultural communications graduates' strategic thinking was excellent.

Respondents somewhat agreed that formal qualifications should be compulsory to be a communications professional.

Findings Related to Comparisons Between Demographics and CSR Perceptions

Analysis of variance was used to examine differences among responses based on demographics. Significant differences did exist between gender and the following statements related to NAMA members' perceptions of CSR: management must act socially responsible, regardless of how those actions influence profit $F(1, 172) = 8.23, p = .005$; organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions $F(1, 173) = 12.64, p = .000$.

No significant differences were found based on whether respondents' current position involves public relations and the following statements related to CSR: Public relations professionals should act as the consciences of the organizations for which they work $F(1, 185) = .579, p = .448$; public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role $F(1, 183) = .462, p = .498$; public relations professionals must avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience $F(1, 182) = .019, p = .889$; public relations professionals must work hard to insure that organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct $F(1, 182) = 1.547, p = .215$; a socially responsible public relations staff presents several sides of an issue and provides an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions when it disseminates information $F(1, 181) = .215, p = .644$; presenting all sides of an issue and providing an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions is the job of the news media, not of public relations $F(1, 182) = .220, p = .639$.

Chapter Summary

Females comprised 54.5% of respondents, with over half of the respondents between the ages of 40 and 59. Most respondents were college graduates, and over a third of respondents specified that the field they earned their highest degree in was agricultural business, agricultural communications, animal science, and agricultural economics.

The greatest number of respondents had only 1 to 2 years of experience in their present organization, less than 20 years of experience in public relations, and less than 5 years of experience in their current position. A majority of respondents were currently in

a position that involved public relations tasks. The greatest percentage of NAMA members described their present positions as manager, and the most common type of organization was a corporation. A majority of respondents reported that their organization has from less than 50 to 500 employees, and the mean number of employees in their public relations department was 8.83 ($SD = 16.70$, $Mdn =$).

Most respondents' organizations had recruited employees who had an agricultural communications major, had hired employees who had an agricultural communications major, and a majority of respondents had worked with someone who had an agricultural communications major.

Respondents agreed that they set strategic goals and quantifiable objectives often, and somewhat agreed that they decide on communications policy often.

Respondents agreed that their organization is considered an industry leader, somewhat agreed that they considered themselves a long-time employee in their organization, and were neutral that their organization has a large executive staff. Respondents somewhat agreed that their clients/company ask the agency/communications department to get involved in their strategic planning, and agreed that their clients/company ask for communications programs that go beyond media relations. Respondents were neutral that they evaluated communications graduates' overall preparation, management skills, and strategic thinking as excellent, and that formal qualifications should be compulsory to be a communications professional. They agreed that academic training is important for communications professionals.

Respondents somewhat agreed that the agricultural communications industry has a clear code of ethics and clear standards of performance. Respondents agreed that developing programs that are good for society is both good business and good citizenship, and that an organization that is socially responsible over a long time period is more credible with the public than one that is not. Respondents agreed that CSR must stem from a firm, deep-seated conviction of management that it is important for organizations to act in the public interest, and not just when it is convenient to do so. Respondents somewhat agreed that the pursuit of social goals strengthens a corporation's ability to earn a fair profit, but agreed that management must act socially responsible, regardless of how those actions influence profit.

Respondents somewhat disagreed that it is all right for an individual to have one ethical standard in his or her private life and a different standard in business affairs. Respondents somewhat agreed that public relations professionals should act as the consciences of the organizations for which they work, and that they must avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience. Respondents agreed that public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role, that they must work hard to insure that organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct, and that organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions.

Respondents agreed that a socially responsible public relations staff presents several sides of an issue and provides an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions

when it disseminates information, but were neutral that it was the job of the news media, not of public relations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The need to define public relations practitioners' roles in CSR continues to grow (Clark, 2000; McCleneghan, 2005; Podnar, 2008) because of the ramifications that could be faced due to unethical practices in agriculture. Public relations in agriculture should start with the farmer himself (Langosch & Schlenz, 1990). Ethical public relations in agriculture has proven to be important, especially when safety is an issue. The example of the Jack in the Box case, in which responsibility was not taken for the E. coli outbreak, shows how unethical practices can affect stakeholders (Sellnow, 2000).

CSR includes how a company treats its employees, customers, the government and the community (Campbell, 2007). A company has a responsibility to these stakeholders, whether it is a priority for the organization or not (Podnar, 2008). Public relations and CSR both aim to enhance the quality of the relationship of an organization among key stakeholders, and Clark (2000) concluded that combining their efforts would make good business sense. Clark (2000) also suggested that public relations practitioners are needed to help set the CSR agenda.

Statement of the Problem

As more companies close their doors due to the ramifications of unethical practices, the importance of understanding corporate social responsibility continues to grow (Podnar, 2008; McCleneghan, 2005). Research has been conducted to determine public relations professionals' perceptions of CSR (Kim & Reber, 2008), but not specifically in the agriculture industry. Research targeting public relations professionals

in the agriculture industry is important because unethical practices in agriculture could harm stakeholders. Agricultural public relations professionals must realize their roles in CSR and strive to do their part so they can protect consumers and gain support of stakeholders and stakeholders.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe NAMA members' perceptions of corporate social responsibility in agriculture and their roles related to corporate social responsibility.

Objectives

Specific objectives in meeting the purpose of this study were to:

1. Describe NAMA members' perceptions of their roles in corporate social responsibility.
2. Describe NAMA members' perceptions of career practices in the agricultural communications industry.
3. Describe relationships between NAMA members' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of CSR.

Significance

Looking at NAMA members' perceptions of CSR will create a greater understanding of their roles in CSR efforts and how they might increase participation in CSR efforts. This study will establish the importance of public relations professionals in CSR.

Procedures

In this study, NAMA members were surveyed using a Web-based instrument to gain greater understanding of their perceptions of CSR in agriculture and their roles related to CSR. The survey instrument was based on a survey of PRSA members (Kim & Reber, 2008), a study to discover public relations professionals' perceptions of CSR. Validity of the instrument was determined by a panel of experts (see Appendix B) and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the reliability. NAMA members initially were contacted through an email (see Appendix B) that was distributed by NAMA to protect the privacy of members on the listserv. Two reminders were sent, one in an agri-marketing special edition e-news email, and the second in a NAMA agri-marketing conference attendee update. Survey responses were collected from March 7 through April 11. The population comprised 1,623 NAMA members who were on the NAMA email list as of March 2011.

Data were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, frequencies, modes, ranges, and medians. Analysis of variance was used to examine differences among responses based on demographics. The survey response rate was 18.92%.

Summary of Findings

Findings Related to Demographics

NAMA members were asked 15 demographic questions. Females comprised 54.5% of respondents, with over half of the respondents (53.4%) between the ages of 40 and 59. Most respondents (70.6%) were college graduates, and 34.9% chose other as the

field they earned their highest degree in. Respondents specified other fields as agricultural business, agricultural communications, animal science, and agricultural economics.

The greatest number of respondents (29.4%) had only 1 to 2 years of experience in their present organization, 73.5% had less than 20 years of experience in public relations, and 63% had less than 5 years of experience in their current position. A majority (73.9%) of respondents were currently in a position that involved public relations tasks. The greatest percentage of NAMA members described their present positions as manager (11.1%), and the most common type of organization was a corporation (27.7%). A majority (75.5%) of respondents reported that their organization has from less than 50 to 500 employees, and over half (58.1%) of respondents reported that their organization's annual revenue did not exceed \$50 million. Respondents reported that the mean number of employees in their public relations department was 8.83 ($SD = 16.70$).

Most respondents' organizations had recruited employees who had an agricultural communications major (65%), had hired employees who had an agricultural communications major (70.6%), and a majority of respondents had worked with someone who had an agricultural communications major (83.6%).

Findings Related to Career Practices

Survey respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement with 17 career-related statements. Respondents agreed that they set strategic goals and quantifiable objectives often, and somewhat agreed that they decide on communications policy often.

Respondents agreed that their organization is considered an industry leader, and were neutral that their organization has a large executive staff. Respondents somewhat agreed that they considered themselves a long-time employee in their organization. Respondents somewhat agreed that their clients/company ask the agency/communications department to get involved in their strategic planning, and agreed that their clients/company ask for communications programs that go beyond media relations. Respondents agreed that professional associations contribute to professionalism and have membership benefits. Respondents were neutral that they evaluated communications graduates' overall preparation, management skills, and strategic thinking as excellent. Respondents were also neutral that formal qualifications should be compulsory to be a communications professional, but agreed that academic training is important for communications professionals.

Findings Related to NAMA Members' Perceptions of CSR

Respondents agreed that developing programs that are good for society is both good business and good citizenship, and that an organization that is socially responsible over a long time period is more credible with the public than one that is not. Respondents somewhat agreed that the pursuit of social goals strengthens a corporation's ability to earn a fair profit, but agreed that management must act socially responsible, regardless of how those actions influence profit. Respondents agreed that CSR must stem from a firm, deep-seated conviction of management that it is important for organizations to act in the public interest, and not just when it is convenient to do so. Respondents somewhat disagreed that it is all right for an individual to have one ethical

standard in his or her private life and a different standard in business affairs.

Respondents somewhat agreed that public relations professionals should act as the consciences of the organizations for which they work, and that they must avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience. Respondents agreed that public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role and that they must work hard to insure that organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct. Respondents also agreed that organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions.

Respondents agreed that a socially responsible public relations staff presents several sides of an issue and provides an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions when it disseminates information, but were neutral that it was the job of the news media, not of public relations.

Respondents somewhat agreed that the agricultural communications industry has a clear code of ethics and clear standards of performance.

Conclusions

Conclusions Related to Demographics

A majority (70.6%) of respondents were college graduates, and most had degrees in business, journalism and mass communications, and other, such as agricultural communications and journalism and agribusiness. Ryan's (1986) study yielded the same results in regard to highest degree earned, but differed in the field. There is a difference in field of study because Ryan did not survey professionals specifically in the agriculture

industry.

Most respondents were a manager, ceo/president/owner, director, or vice president, and were employed by corporations, public relations agencies, or other organizations, such as media, marketing agencies, and associations. This is representative of the NAMA membership. NAMA members come from agribusiness companies (corporations), marketing communications firms (public relations agency), or other organizations, such as media and associations/organizations. Most respondents reported that their organization's annual revenue is less \$50 million and had fewer than 500 employees. Over half (54.3%) of respondents in Kim and Reber's (2009) study also reported fewer than 500 employees. The mean number of employees in respondents' public relations department was 8.83 ($SD = 16.70$).

Most respondents had 16 to 20 years of experience in public relations, but only 1 to 2 years of experience in both their present organization and current position. More than half of respondents were between the ages of 40 and 59. This closely follows Buck and Barrick's (1995) study, in which it was found that the typical agricultural communicator was 45 years of age and had around 20 years of experience. A difference between the two studies is that a greater amount of respondents in this study were female (54.5%), and a majority of respondents (63.4 %) in the Buck and Barrick (1995) study were male. This difference can be attributed to the increase in female college graduates over the years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Buck and Barrick's study included respondents who were members of six different professional organizations in 1992. Respondents who were 45 years of age in 1992 should have graduated from college in the late 1960s or

early 1970s. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), the percentage of females that were enrolled in college in 1969 was 40.17%, and in 1970 was 40.64%. Half of the respondents from the current study should have graduated from college between 1974 and 1993. The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) found that there were 45.16% females in 1974 and 54.15% females in 1993. The late 1960s marked the beginning of a steady increase in female college students. Agricultural Communications programs have also shown an increase in the number of females. In 1970, Kansas State University had 100% males in their agricultural communications program, compared to 23.26% males in 1995.

The greatest amount of respondents agreed that academic training was important for communications professionals, but were mostly neutral on their evaluation of graduates' overall preparation, management skills, and strategic thinking, as excellent. Despite their uncertainty, respondents reported that their organization had recruited and hired employees who had an agricultural communications major, and had worked with someone who had an agricultural communications major. Irlbeck and Akers (2009) found that agricultural communications professionals would like to see improvements among graduates in critical thinking and business etiquette. Even though NAMA members were unsure of graduates' skills coming out of college, agricultural communications students are sought after and are valuable to the agricultural communications industry.

Conclusions Related to NAMA Members' Perceptions of CSR

Respondents agreed that the pursuit of social goals strengthens a corporation's

ability to earn a fair profit, but that management must act socially responsible, regardless of how those actions influence profit. This supports Johnson's (1971) view of CSR called "utility maximization." In utility maximization, maximum profit is not the only goal. Although CSR can influence profit, it should not be the primary goal related to CSR efforts. Zhang and Swanson (2006) concluded that although the bottom line is important, it will suffer without the presence of CSR. I concluded that respondents perceive CSR as important to an organization regardless of profit, but that profit as a result of CSR is an added bonus.

Fawkes (2007) concluded that because of reluctance to discuss propaganda and persuasion in public relations, the field has not developed a set of ethics. NAMA members were neutral in their level of agreement with a statement that the agricultural communications industry had a clear code of ethics and standards of performance. In a 1992 public personnel inventory, it was found that half of the respondents had their own code of conduct (Sanders, 1992). It should not be left up to the individual to decide what is right or wrong in business. Professional associations and public relations organizations typically have a code of ethics in place for their members and employees, but there still fails to be a general set of ethics for the public relations industry as a whole. Fitzpatrick and Guthrie (2001) wrote, "Although industry associations have done a laudable job in developing codes of conduct for their members, the codes stop short of providing a theoretical basis for ethical decision making."

NAMA members agreed that developing programs that are good for society is good for business and good citizenship; that an organization that is socially responsible

over a long period of time is more credible; that CSR must stem from a firm, deep seated conviction of management that is important for organizations to act in the public interest, and not just when it is convenient to do so; and that organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions. Ryan's (1986) study, which asked 135 public relations practitioners who were not specifically in the agriculture industry the same questions, agreed with all of these statements as well. This also further supports the findings of Jahdi and Acikdilli (2009) that the commitment and dedication of senior-management to CSR in a holistic manner is unquestionably crucial.

Respondents also agreed that organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions. Research has shown that public relations is the managing of relationships internally and externally (Hutton, 1999). Public relations professionals are concerned with bringing private and public policies into harmony (PRSA, 1982).

Respondents somewhat agreed that public relations professionals must avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience and that public relations professionals should act as the consciences of the organizations for which they work and agreed that public relations professionals must work hard to insure that organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct. Gersuny (1967) wrote that different individuals will make different appraisals of the values controlled by management, and that varying degrees of compliance may be anticipated. He concluded that there is a point in which the employee will view the effort required to obey the

organization as requiring too much effort, and is no longer worth it (Gersuny, 1967). Employees tend to work for organizations that have the same set of values as themselves so organizational obedience might not challenge personal conscience very much. Respondents somewhat disagree that it is all right for an individual to have one ethical standard in his or her private life and a different standard in business affairs. This supports Fitzpatrick & Gauthier's (2001) conclusion that in ethical situations, "the decision maker must employ his or her own values, moral intuition, and character to determine which principle is most important and most controlling in the particular context" (p. 207-208).

NAMA members agreed that public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role. Most professionals who provide public relations services offer counsel regarding the public implications of an institution's decisions and actions (Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, 2001).

NAMA members agreed that a socially responsible public relations staff presents several sides of an issue and provides an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions when it disseminates information, but varied greatly in their view that presenting all sides of an issue and providing an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions is the job of the news media, not public relations. It was surprising that NAMA members were neutral in their level of agreement that it is the job of the news media, as the core requirement of giving adequate information to make voluntary, informed, rational, and reflective decisions is essential to the ethics of persuasion (Messina, 2007). Fitzpatrick & Gauthier (2001) concluded that "selective communication is morally suspect when it is

intended to mislead or when it is used to conceal information that others need to make their own life decisions” (p. 209).

Conclusions Related to Career Practices

Kim and Reber (2009) did not specifically survey professionals in the agriculture industry, but the responses related to career practices that they received were very similar to this study. In both studies, respondents agreed that they set strategic goals and quantifiable objectives often.

In both studies, respondents were neutral that their organization has a large executive staff and somewhat agreed that they considered themselves a long-time employee in their organization. Respondents in both studies somewhat agreed that their clients/company ask the agency/communications department to get involved in their strategic planning, and agreed that their clients/company ask for communications programs that go beyond media relations. In both studies, respondents agreed that professional associations contribute to professionalism and have membership benefits.

Respondents in both studies were neutral that they evaluated communications graduates’ overall preparation, management skills, and strategic thinking as excellent. Respondents in both studies, respondents somewhat agreed that formal qualifications should be compulsory to be a communications professional, but agreed that academic training is important for communications professionals.

Of the 17 statements related to career practices, only two statements yielded different levels of agreement across the two studies. Respondents in the Kim and Reber (2009) study agreed, while respondents in this study somewhat agreed that they decide

on communication policy often. Respondents in this study agreed that their organization is considered an industry leader, while Kim and Reber (2009) respondents were neutral.

The similarities between the responses in both studies show that public relations serves the same roles across industries. Public Relations Society of America members and NAMA members have the same level of agreement with most career practices.

Conclusions Related to Comparisons Between Demographics and CSR Perceptions

The study found that there was a significant difference between male and female responses to two CSR perception statements: Management must act socially responsible, regardless of how those actions influence profit $F(1,172) = 8.23, p = .005$, and organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions $F(1, 173) = 12.64, p = .000$. This agrees with Lund's (2008) study that found that female marketing professionals showed considerably higher ethics judgment than their male counterparts. It also agrees with Kim and Reber's (2009) study that found that gender of respondents was significantly related to practitioners' attitudes towards CSR. However, gender was not significantly different for two other CSR perception statements: An organization that is socially responsible over a long period is more credible with the public than one that is not $F(1, 172) = 3.453, p = .065$, and CSR must stem from a firm, deep-seated conviction of management that is important for organizations to act in the public interest, and not just when it is convenient to do so. I could not conclude why there was no significant difference based on prior research.

No significant difference was found based on whether respondents' current

position involves public relations and the following statements: public relations professionals should act as the consciences of the organizations for which they work; public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role; public relations professionals must avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience; public relations professionals must work hard to insure that organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct; a socially responsible public relations staff presents several sides of an issue and provides an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions when it disseminates information; presenting all sides of an issue and providing an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions is the job of the news media, not of public relations. I concluded that there was no difference because of the proximity with which agricultural communicators work. More professionals are merging titles, and explaining that they are in marketing and public relations rather than one or the other.

Recommendations

Recommendations Related to Demographics

A majority of respondents reported working for an organization that recruited and hired employees who had an agricultural communications major, and had worked with someone who had an agricultural communications major, but were unsure of their preparation, management skills, and strategic thinking skills. Agricultural communications programs should take this perception into account and incorporate these three issues into their curriculum. With increased perceptions of agricultural communications preparedness after college, recruiting and hiring of students might also

increase.

The response rate (18.92 %) was fairly low. Emails to the NAMA email list should have been personalized in order to receive a higher response rate. Each email covered multiple topics related to NAMA and did not highlight the survey. Some members might not have read far enough to be aware of the survey. Questions should also have been prefaced with definitions. Without being aware of what definition of CSR was being used, one might not have known the context in which the questions were being asked, and chosen to skip the question altogether.

Since Buck and Barrick's (1995) study of public relations practitioners' views of CSR, the percentage of female respondents increased. A more even split between males and females in agricultural communications programs has occurred over time. Agricultural communications programs should work to keep the balance between males and females rather than allow females to become more predominant.

Recommendations Related to NAMA Members' Perceptions of CSR

NAMA members agreed that CSR is important and that public relations practitioners possess the skills necessary to have an active role in CSR efforts. Management should be aware of perceptions of professionals' abilities, and use them strategically in developing a CSR agenda.

The agricultural communications industry should establish a clear code of ethics to avoid uncertainty throughout the industry concerning what is ethically acceptable. Fitzpatrick and Gauthier (2001) wrote that practitioners have the choice to be ethical or not, and they need guidance in integrating the potentially conflicting roles of the

professional advocate and the social conscience. Public relations professionals should not have to choose between private ethics and business ethics. Codes of ethics for professional associations and organizations should be examined to develop a code of ethics for public relations professionals as a whole so that there is a unified professional set of guidelines to follow across the entire industry.

This study should also be replicated with other professional agricultural organizations, such as production organizations. Corporate social responsibility only covers the business side of agriculture, not agriculture as a whole. Research should be conducted looking at agriculture producers' perceptions of social responsibility, a term that better fits the production side of agriculture.

Recommendations Related to Career Practices

Irlbeck and Akers (2009), as do I, recommend that each agricultural communications program conduct research to determine co-worker perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of their specific program. Each program is different, and this will help them determine which skills should be emphasized more, and what advancements need to be made. I also recommend that research be conducted to assess agricultural communications graduates' overall preparation, management skills, and strategic thinking. With increased knowledge on the subject, NAMA members understanding might be improved. Respondents' career practices should also be compared to their perceptions of CSR. Professional development programs for members of professional organizations should continue to be used to ensure that members stay on top of current trends. NAMA encourages professional development through conferences,

chapter meetings and seminars, in which they address critical issues such as marketing communications, product/species management, public relations and sales. Professional development provides members the opportunity to obtain information needed to advance their career and develop as professionals (National Agri-Marketing Association, n.d.).

Recommendations Related to Comparisons Between Demographics and CSR

Perceptions

The effect of gender on perceptions of CSR should be researched. As women are becoming more involved in the agriculture industry, it is important to understand what affect this will have on the industry. NAMA members whose current position involved public relations perceptions of CSR were not significantly different from those whose current position did not involve public relations. Future researchers should focus on outsider perceptions of public relations professionals' roles in CSR. To understand why or why not other professionals in the agriculture industry think public relations professionals belong in CSR would allow public relations professionals to better understand how to change these perceptions.

Implications

Despite many studies of CSR and public relations, no research was found that discussed CSR and public relations in the agriculture industry. With this study, agricultural public relations practitioners can see their role in CSR. Perceptions might be changed into actions. They might also see the need for a clear code of ethics to better unify the industry.

This study creates a foundation for additional studies of agricultural public

relations professionals, delving deeper into more specific roles related to CSR. As NAMA members consider the results of this study, steps can be taken to ensure proper education is provided where deficiencies are present.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

U

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES - OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

1186 TAMU, General Services Complex
 College Station, TX 77843-1186
 750 Agronomy Road, #3500

979.458.1467
 FAX 979.862.3176
<http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu>

Human Subjects Protection Program

Institutional Review Board

DATE: 08-Dec-2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: MUNTEAN, LACY
 77843-3578

FROM: Office of Research Compliance

SUBJECT: Institutional Review Board
 Initial Review

Protocol Number: 2010-0940
Title: NAMA members' perceptions of corporate social responsibility
Review Category: Exempt from IRB Review

It has been determined that the referenced protocol application meets the criteria for exemption and no further review is required. However, any amendment or modification to the protocol must be reported to the IRB and reviewed before being implemented to ensure the protocol still meets the criteria for exemption.

This determination was based on the following Code of Federal Regulations:
<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Provisions:

This electronic document provides notification of the review results by the Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX B
PANEL OF EXPERTS

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APPENDIX C

INITIAL EMAIL

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Early Registration Deadline

March 18, 2011



AgriMarketing

[Renew Membership](#)

[Register for the NAMA Webinar Today](#)

Chances are if you've picked up a magazine, browsed a supermarket aisle or checked out billboards, you may have noticed an unusual, square black/white graphic in the corner of an increasing number of advertisements and labels..... [more](#)

[NAMA Member Survey: Perceptions of Corporate Responsibility](#)

Please plan to participate in an upcoming survey about corporate social responsibility that will be sent to all NAMA members. The survey is being conducted..... [more](#)

[ABEF Announces Vision2020 Initiative](#)

The Agribusiness Educational Foundation (ABEF) has recently announced new efforts to further advance its core mission of supporting and developing future Agribusiness leaders..... [more](#)

[Early Registration Deadline Approaching](#)

The early registration deadline for the Agri-Marketing Conference is Friday, March 18. Register today to avoid higher rates after March 18..... [more](#)

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Wouldn't you rather be swinging a golf club than shoveling snow? Spring is less than a month away and we've got the cure for your winter blues! It's time to start thinking about your golf game again..... [more](#)

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NAMA Member Survey: Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

Written by NAMA on Monday, March 7, 2011 , 8:38 am

Please plan to participate in an upcoming survey about corporate social responsibility that will be sent to all NAMA members. The survey is being conducted by an agricultural communications graduate student at Texas A&M University.

The survey will focus on your perceptions of corporate social responsibility, particularly related to roles you have in public relations. The results of the survey will be shared as part of a breakout session at the 2011 NAMA conference.

Within the next few days, you will receive a link to the survey from Texas A&M via e-mail. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and help in providing this important information.

No comments.

No comments are allowed on this page.

This Web site is hosted by the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA).
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APPENDIX D

FIRST REMINDER EMAIL



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Workshops on Dominating the Market and Crossing the Generational Divide.

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Outstanding networking with industry leaders and decision-makers.

National Cattlemen's
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If you're responsible for brand identity and market development—and if you want to rub elbows with the movers and shakers in the industry—make plans to join NAMA April 13-15 in Kansas City.

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See video's of our Keynote Speakers on the ExploreNAMA YouTube channel at

Successful Farming

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Farm Progress
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Early Registration/Hotel Cut-Off Date Tomorrow!

Agri Marketing
Magazine

The early registration deadline and hotel cut-off date is Friday, March 18. Register today to get the conference early rates. Make your hotel reservations to get the special NAMA rate. Reservations made after March 18 are subject to higher rates and potential unavailability.

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Click here to register for the conference online.

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For room reservations, call the Hyatt Regency Crown Center at (816) 421-1234 or reserve your room online. Please note there are 2 blocks at the Hyatt, one for professionals and one for students.

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Communications

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ABEF Auction Donations Needed

Kansas City Board of
Trade

Donations are needed for the ABEF Online and Silent Auctions. The Online Auction begins March 30 and ends April 6. Media pledges for the Online Auction need to be submitted to the NAMA office by March 28 to be included in the Online Auction. All other donations must be submitted by April 1 to be included in the Auction Catalog for the conference. The

LEE Agri-MEDIA

Natl. Association of
Farm Broadcasting

Silent Auction will take place in the Connection Point on April 13 & 14. All donations benefit the ABEF in support of the NAMA Student Careers Program.

Corn & Soybean
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BEEF / National Hog
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Forage Grower /
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To make your donations, please fill out the online form at <http://www.nama.org/abef/silentauction/pledgeform.htm> or call Jenny Pickett at the NAMA Office at 913-491-6500 or email Jenny at jennyp@nama.org.

Progressive Dairy
Publishing

The social epicenter of the conference, the Connection Point is the place to meet new faces, reconnect with old friends and forge new relationships. Schedule plenty of time in your conference plan to visit the over 50 exhibiting companies and mingle with industry leaders. You'll get a first look at the latest products and services entering the industry. Plus, most booths host drawings for door prizes and other giveaways. Expand your network, peruse new technology and services and win cool stuff—see you there.

Purdue University
SGS North America

Vance
Publishing/Food 360

Assn. of Equipment
Manufacturers/
Ag Connect

To sign up for a booth, visit <http://www.nama.org/ConferenceRegistration/Default.aspx?confid=28>

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Watch for the Virtual Trade Show coming soon as well as information on exhibitor drawings!

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Potato Grower/Sugar
Producer/Mtn. West
Turf

Make plans now to come in a day early for the Agri-Marketing Conference and join us for the ABEF Golf Outing on Tuesday, April 12. The Golf Outing will take place at Winterstone Golf Course. A bus will leave the hotel at 11:30 a.m. to take everyone to the golf course and a boxed lunch will be provided. Tee time begins at 1:00 p.m. An awards ceremony and reception will cap your day on the greens. Cost for the outing is \$150 per golfer.

National 4-H Council

U.S. Farm Data

To sign up for the golf outing visit www.nama.org/amc/golfregister.htm

Ag Media Research
Saepio

Show your support and sponsor a hole. Hole sponsorships are now available. To sign up for a sponsorship on-line visit, <http://www.nama.org/amc/golfsponsor.htm> or contact Jenny Pickett at 913-491-6500 or via e-mail at jennyp@nama.org.

Farm Auction Guide

NAMA Member Survey: Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

Just a reminder that we need your help! A week ago, you received a link to an online survey that will help us learn your perspectives related to public relations professionals' roles in corporate social responsibility. The results of this study will be used to identify professional development opportunities for NAMA members and will be shared through a breakout session at the 2011 NAMA conference.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and is only available for a short time. Please respond to the questions in terms of your views. Your responses are voluntary and will be treated confidentially.

You will be able to access the survey one time from your computer. If you are not able to access the online survey, please e-mail Traci Naile at tnaile@aged.tamu.edu, and the

APPENDIX E
FINAL REMINDER EMAIL



See You In Two Weeks!

In two weeks you will be attending "Harvesting Ideas," the 2011 Agri-Marketing Conference in Kansas City, MO. Included in this email is information that may be helpful as you prepare for the conference.

The Hyatt Regency Crown Center is located at 2345 McGee Street, Kansas City, MO 64108. The hotel is approximately 20 miles (30 minutes) from the Kansas City Airport. Estimated taxi fare is \$35-\$40 one way. You can also take the KCI Super Shuttle (**Hours 5:50am-11:25pm**) \$17.00 per person - \$29.00 round trip per person. It leaves from the Baggage Claim area at 5 minutes to the hour and 25 minutes after the hour. Reservations are not required. For additional info, please visit <http://www.supershuttle.com/default.aspx?GC=ERQEX&port=mci> and use the code ERQEX for a discount or call KCI Shuttle service at 800-243-6383 (Blue vans and buses with yellow lettering that says KCI Shuttle.)

TAXI: Approx \$35.00-\$40.00

BUS: Greyhound Bus Station, Taxi approx \$5.00

TRAIN: Union Station (Amtrak), Taxi approx \$2.00

Hyatt Parking – Valet parking at the Hyatt is \$10.00 for short term (in & out the same day) or \$18.00 overnight with

in/out privileges. Self parking at the Hyatt costs \$14.50 overnight with in/out privileges. The Hyatt will validate your parking ticket at the Bell Stand for \$7.00 (3 hours). The Early Bird parking (in before 10 a.m. & out the same day) is \$7.50. Please note that this hotel cannot accommodate vehicles that are taller than 6'9" (i.e., no motor homes/tall vans, etc).

Once you arrive at the hotel, please register as soon as possible. No one is allowed in any function without a name badge! The conference registration desk will be located in the East Lobby Alcove of the Hyatt which is right next to the hotel's own check-in area. The NAMA staff will be at the registration desk to serve you from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday and all day Wednesday through Friday.

The dress for the conference is business casual, except for the Best of NAMA Awards Ceremony where we encourage business attire.

Coming in early? Join us for the ABEF Golf Outing on Tuesday, April 12. The ABEF Golf Outing will take place at the WinterStone Golf Course. A chartered bus will leave the hotel at 11:30 a.m. to take everyone to the golf course. A boxed lunch will be provided. Tee time begins at 1:00 p.m. A golf awards ceremony and reception will follow the outing at the golf course. The price is \$150 per golfer. To sign up for the golf outing visit <http://www.nama.org/amc/golfregister.htm>. Please let us know if you need to rent clubs, the cost of club rental is not included in the registration cost so you will need to pay for your club rental at the golf course. In addition, club rental is limited, so if possible bring your own clubs or be prepared to share.

Take a look at the conference schedule-at-a-glance at <http://www.nama.org/amc/schedule.htm> to help you plan your time more effectively. Please note that the Best of NAMA Awards Ceremony will be from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. A Best of NAMA Celebration Reception will occur in the Connection Point from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. You won't want to miss this celebration! These activities will be over in time for your client and customer appreciation dinners. Please make your dinner reservations after 7:30 p.m. and plan to join in the Celebration Reception. Take a trip through the Connection Point before you get to the Conference at <http://nama.org/amc/ts/virtual.htm>. The Car of the Heartland will be in the NAMA themed area this year, stop by and check out this NASCAR!

If you don't have dinner plans on Thursday, join other attendees for a Dine Around (Dutch treat). Sign up at the conference registration desk prior to 12:00 noon on Thursday to join a group for dinner.

A partial registration list can be downloaded at <http://www.nama.org/amc/2week.pdf>. It includes attendees who registered on or prior to noon on March 30, 2011. A complete registration list with addresses will be available at the registration desk throughout the conference.

If you are looking for a restaurant in the Kansas City area visit, <http://www.nama.org/amc/kansascity.htm>. Enjoy the best of both worlds in Kansas City. A cosmopolitan city with a friendly Midwestern feel. A thriving arts scene, downtown and nightlife where you can get the best ribs you ever had in your life. . . Jazz and the Blues were born here. This is where Walt Disney was inspired to create Mickey Mouse. Make your own history in the Paris of the Plains.

Donations Needed! Please support the ABEF and donate items to the Silent Auction at the conference. Please visit <http://www.nama.org/abef/silentauction/pledgeform.htm> to make a donation. The Online Media Auction begins Friday, April 1 and ends on April 8.

Offer your professional insights to students at the Connection Point luncheon on Thursday, April 14th. These students are interested in learning more about their profession and need your guidance, please sign up to be a mentor at <http://nama.org/amc/student.htm>.

We'd also like to thank all of the sponsors of the 2011 Agri-Marketing Conference, without them this event would not be possible. Please visit <http://www.nama.org/amc/sponsors.html> to see all of our sponsors for this year!

You recently received a link to an online survey that will help us learn your perspectives related to public relations professionals' roles in corporate social responsibility. The results of this study will be used to identify professional development opportunities for NAMA members and will be shared through a breakout session at the 2011 NAMA

conference. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and is only available for a short time. Please respond to the questions in terms of your views. Your responses are voluntary and will be treated confidentially. You will be able to access the survey one time from your computer. If you are not able to access the online survey, please e-mail Traci Naile at tnaile@aged.tamu.edu, and the survey will be provided in an alternate format. To access the online survey, please use your Internet browser of choice and go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/tamucsrsurvey>. Your immediate response is greatly appreciated.

If you have other questions about the conference, give us a call at (913) 491-6500. Have a safe and pleasant trip.

See you in Kansas City!

Sincerely,
Jennifer Pickett
Executive Vice President/CEO

(If you do not see graphics included with the text below, please visit <http://www.nama.org/amcpc.htm>)

Sent to jennyp@nama.org: [unsubscribe](#) | [update profile](#) | [forward to a friend](#)

APPENDIX F

SURVEY

NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

Does your current position involve public relations tasks?

Yes

No

Career practices

In this section, we ask about career-related practices and perceptions. Please identify your level of agreement with the statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I set strategic goals often.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I set quantifiable objectives often.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I decide on communication policy often.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consider myself a long-time employee in my organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My clients/organization ask the agency/communications department to get involved in strategic planning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My clients/organization ask for communications programs that go beyond media relations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organization is considered an industry leader.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organization has a large executive staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think professional associations contribute to professionalism.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think professional associations have membership benefits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think the agricultural communications industry has a clear code of ethics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think the agricultural communications industry has clear standards of performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I evaluate agricultural communications graduates' overall preparation as excellent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I evaluate agricultural communications graduates' management skills as excellent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I evaluate agricultural communications graduates' strategic thinking as excellent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal qualifications should be compulsory to be a communications professional.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Academic training is important for	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

communications professionals.

Social responsibility

In this section, we ask you about your views toward social responsibility. Please identify your level of agreement with the statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Developing programs that are good for society is both good for business and good citizenship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The pursuit of social goals strengthens an organization's ability to earn a fair profit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An organization that is socially responsible over a long period is more credible with the public than one that is not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Corporate social responsibility must stem from a firm, deep-seated conviction of management that is important for organizations to act in the public interest, and not just when it is convenient to do so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management must act socially responsible, regardless of how those actions influence profit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is all right for an individual to have one ethical standard in his or her private life and a different standard in business affairs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public relations professionals should act as the consciences of the organizations for which they work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public relations professionals should be deeply involved in helping management define an organization's social role.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public relations professionals must avoid putting organizational obedience ahead of personal conscience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public relations professionals must work hard to insure that organizational secrecy is not used to hide organizational misconduct.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizations must try to calculate the social impacts of major decisions before implementing policies or taking actions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A socially responsible public relations staff presents several sides of an issue and provides an objective appraisal of conflicting opinions when it disseminates information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presenting all sides of an issue and providing an	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

objective appraisal of conflicting opinions is the
job of the news media, not of public relations.

Career and organization demographics

How many years of experience do you have in the practice of public relations?

- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- More than 30 years

Which best describes the organization with which you are employed on a full-time basis?

- Corporation
- Public relations agency
- Government
- Non-profit organization
- Education-related organization
- Health-related organization
- Trade association
- Independent public relations consultant
- Other (please specify)

NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

How many years have you worked in your present organization?

- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- More than 30 years

Which title best describes your present position?

- CEO/president/owner
- Vice president
- Senior account executive
- Account executive
- Assistant account executive
- Director
- Manager
- Public relations specialist
- Communication specialist
- Other (please specify)

NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

How many years have you been in your current position?

- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- More than 30 years

What is your organization's annual revenue (U.S. dollars)?

- Less than \$1 million
- \$1-5 million
- \$5-10 million
- \$10-50 million
- \$50-100 million
- \$100-500 million
- \$500 million-\$1 billion
- More than \$1 billion
- Other (please specify)

NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

How many employees are in your organization?

- Less than 50
 50-100
 100-500
 500-1,000
 1,000-5,000
 5,000-10,000
 10,000-25,000
 25,000-50,000
 50,000-75,000
 75,000-100,000
 More than 100,000
 Other (please specify)

How many employees are in your public relations department? Please enter a whole number.

Please respond to the following statements based on your knowledge and personal experiences.

	Yes	No	Not sure
My organization has recruited employees who had an agricultural communications major.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organization has hired employees who had an agricultural communications major.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have worked with someone who had an agricultural communications major.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Personal demographics

NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

What is the highest degree you earned?

- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- College graduate
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other (please specify)

In what field did you earn your highest degree?

- Journalism & mass communications
- Public relations
- Advertising
- English
- Speech communication
- Business
- Other (please specify)

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

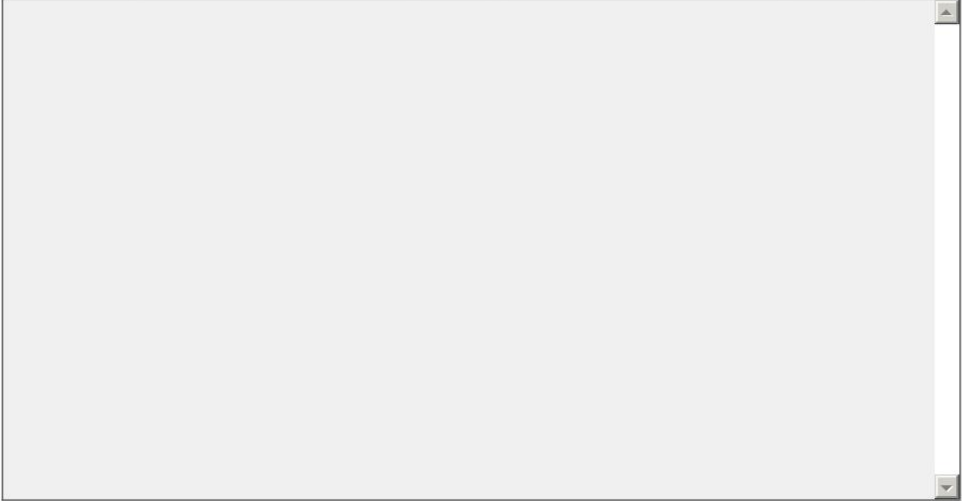
NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

What is your age?

- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- Over 70

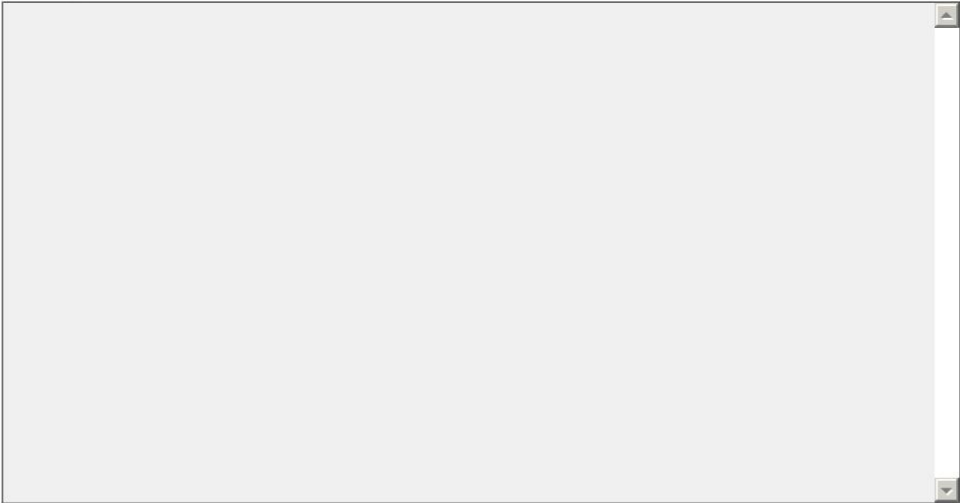
Additional comments

What role do you believe public relations plays in your organization's social responsibility?



NAMA Members' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility

If you have additional comments or thoughts on the subject of public relations and social responsibility, please provide them.



APPENDIX G

Organizations Specified as ‘Other’
Which best describes the organization with which you are employed on a full-time basis?

Advertising agency
 Advertising agency Advertising Agency
 Advertising and Marketing to a specific group or entity
 Advertising and PR agency
 Association management company
 Association Management Company
 Commodity Association
 Commodity Marketing Board
 Consultant Cooperative
 Cooperative Financial Institution
 Farm Financial Institution FARM RADIO NETWORK Financial Industry Financing Cooperative
 for profit cooperative
 Full Service Advertising Agency
 Full-service marketing communications agency
 General marketing communications agency
 Magazine Marketing Agency
 Marketing and Communication Firm
 Marketing and overall communications firm, of which PR is an integral part of the business
 Marketing communications agency
 Marketing communications agency
 Marketing communications agency - PR and Advertising
 Marketing consultancy media Media Media Company
 Print media
 Public Relations, Consulting, Marketing and Advertising
 Seed company

APPENDIX H

Positions Specified as 'Other'
Which title best describes your present position?

Director--specifically for our reputation management practice, which focuses heavily on PR strategies and tactics and CSR/Sustainability objectives.

Integrated Communications Manager

Loan Officer Marketing Marketing Assistant marketing associate marketing specialist

Marketing Specialist Media planner and buyer media planner/buyer Product Support

Specialist Professor

Public relations specialist for 6 months, Account Coordinator 6 months

Relationship Mgr

Sales

Sales rep

Senior AA

Senior Director in GM role.

Senior Strategist

Transitioning from loan officer/part-time communications to full- time communication specialist

Web Developer

APPENDIX I

**Majors Specified as ‘Other’
In what field did you earn your highest degree?**

Advertising & Public Relations	Political Science
Ag Business & Economics	Psychology
Ag Communications	Public Administration
Ag Journalism	Reproductive Physiology
Dairy Science	Science
Ag Education	Spanish
Ag Science	Telecommunications & Marketing
Agri-business Management	Agronomy
Animal Science	Biology
Education	English
History	Hospitality & Tourism
Marketing	Mathematics
Paralegal Studies	

VITA

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University, 2010

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Texas A&M University, 2011