PRS100 – Writing Assignment 2 (Memphis Image Survey)

After reviewing the article and all the data representing the opinions on Memphis (by Memphians) I believe that the best public relations practice that could be emphasized throughout the campaign is an idea made by Dan Lattimore (Memphis Chapter of PRSA, research committee) himself. “The public relations plan should address…promote Memphis as a whole” (Lattimore 104). This idea by Lattimore suggests that the way to get the best out of this campaign in Memphis would be to not try and fix Memphis as a whole, but strengthen individual neighborhoods that seem to be poor and struggling in other economic areas (such as arts, health care, racial issues, education, and government). The reason I would take this approach is because given the data in the survey summary the people who like living in Memphis make up 75 percent of the respondents. Of that percentage 92 percent like the neighborhood in which they lived in, and then 80 percent of those people felt safe in their neighborhoods. Therefore, if the public relations department focused more on fixing the neighborhoods in which people don’t like living or feel safe in, then the number of people who enjoy living in Memphis would only rise. Additionally, I would also emphasize the strength that seems to be found throughout Memphis in the arts and health care. I would advertise the fact that more than 80 percent of Memphians think that the health care quality is good throughout Memphis and also advertise the attractive arts found throughout the city.

In terms of going about this the public relations department of a campaign could look deeper into the survey to figure out which areas of Memphis the respondents who disliked their neighborhood were from. Then the public relations department could then organize events at local parks within the neighborhoods with unhappy, dissatisfied Memphians. One event that could strongly help the perception of Memphis could be an art auction fundraiser, where the city of Memphis auctions off some of its finest arts to offer. By doing so the city could benefit from any profit made from the events and double the quantity and quality of the arts throughout the city and additionally put more funding towards new roads to help traffic, schools to help produce better education, purchase more cultural arts, and perhaps even unify Memphians of different color/races to help eliminate or reduce any racial issues flowing throughout the community. If the poorer neighborhoods felt and experienced the same things that the satisfied communities do, than the overall percentage of happy Memphians could increase substantially, thus giving a better outside perception of Memphians. The public relations campaign could be advertised as something such as “A Stronger Memphis” or something along those lines, representing the fact that Memphis is not only strong in the present, but is also building in the poorer neighborhoods to build a stronger future.

The sample given in the survey summary is adequate in terms of determining citizen’s perceptions of Memphis. The reason being is because you are given a strong idea of those who do and don’t enjoy living in their given neighborhoods, or in Memphis in general. Additionally you could then discover why the people who don’t enjoy living in Memphis feel that way. The racial issues seemed to be a strong negative category throughout Memphis where only 30 percent of the respondents felt racial groups worked well together (meaning an eye-catching 70 percent of respondents felt racial groups did not work well together). However, the survey also shows positive results such as the arts and health care in Memphis. Although half of the Memphians who responded felt that there wasn’t enough of an art variety, people still felt it was a strong point. Also 80 percent of the respondents felt the health care in Memphis was good (Lattimore). Although the sample was adequate at distributing information, it would help my idea for the public relations campaign if more of the respondents were from the more economically depressed areas of Memphis, rather than those who come from the better parts.

The return rate could affect the results of the survey substantially if majorities of the people responding are from the same general area. For example if 100 of the 305 usable submitted surveys are from the same city/area in Memphis, than the results may not vary as much as they really should to show the ranging percentages of opinions throughout Memphis. Furthermore, it may not give a true/fair perception of what Memphis is really like because the less fortunate people did not speak out as much.

If I were in charge of the survey the only change I would make would be to try and get more of a variety in terms of the return rate. “Respondents more likely to be white…entire Shelby County Area.” (Lattimore 104) Lattimore says that most of the people who responded were from the more fortunate side of things in Memphis. If there were more respondents from the other end of the spectrum, then the survey could have been more precise in showing the Memphians’ (from different lifestyles) overall opinions of Memphis.