



Public Relations: Planning for 2021? Be an optimist! - by Harry Zlokower

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The sad loss of legendary public relations counselor Howard Rubenstein, December 29th, recalled for me one memorable moment during a meeting in Rubenstein's office where I was employed during the heat of New York's 1970s financial crisis. The phone rang and mayor Abraham Beame, whom Rubenstein often advised, was on the line. As their conversation was ending, Rubenstein suddenly asked, "Abe, are you an optimist or a pessimist?" There was silence. Rubenstein repeated, "I said, Are you an optimist or a pessimist?" Beame then said something to which Rubenstein

responded encouragingly “Well, be an optimist,” calmly ending the conversation and rejoining our meeting.

The meaning and tone of that advice coming from this distinguished PR professional struck me as instructive now as it was nearly 50 years ago during a time of great stress for businesses and residents in New York. With experts predicting challenging times for commercial real estate in 2021, optimism and positivity in your thinking and attitude are key before re-formulating your planning with answers to these key questions: How should you define your company in the months ahead? What will be your goals and messaging for 2021? Who are your target audiences? What media strategies should you employ? How much can you budget?

How you plan depends on the type of real estate business you run. Investment firms need to re-define their preferred price range, geographical coverage, and acquisition types. Office and retail owners update how they present property values, rents and tenancies. Lenders, brokers, lawyers and other professionals should review advice relating to interest rates, space availability, market forecasting and COVID-19 vaccine guidance. The strategies and tactics of communicating your messaging to rebuild presence and make brands known and credible will take on a new and exciting look. It’s 2021 folks. Be an optimist.

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