

**Book Review:**

**The Handbook of Stakeholder Public Relations & Integrated Communications and Marketing, Clarke L. Caywood, Ph.D. editor  
McGraw-Hill, New York, Second Edition, 2011-2012**

Part of the appeal of the IMC approach to business problem solving is it's inherently robust and concurrently elastic model for driving viable solutions. As marketers and communicators we are largely in the business of problem solving. When it comes to Public Relations, or Integrated Communications one of the go-to guides for the last decade and a half has been the First Edition of *The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations and Integrated Communications* (McGraw Hill, 1997).

I'm not telling you anything you don't already know when I say much has changed since then. For starters, many of the students this Second Edition of *The Handbook* is aimed at, were in 1997 enjoying the building blocks of elementary school. In the business sector and in professional communities the focus was on the Asian Currency Crisis and IT systems integration, and not the number of Facebook fans or Klout scores.

This Second Edition update of *The Handbook*, as it has become affectionately referred to by communications professionals and students alike, addresses the fundamental changes in how we leverage emerging digital tools to better understand our stakeholders and conduct effective two-way dialogues. While access to consumer data and tactical executions has changed, the underlying principals hold true: people want to connect with people, and honest, timely and forthright communication is the name of the game. This is where *The Handbook* gets it right and provides the framework for the future of Integrated Marketing.

Historically, *The Handbook* was a groundbreaking text in the stakeholder model of communication strategy. This model is often found in academic management texts, and *The Handbook* brought it to life with practical applications, detailed and outlined by some of the top practitioners in the field.

Having such an intimate look at the text as the book came to shape, was an enlightening experience. (In the interest of full disclosure, I worked as an editor on the Second Edition of *The Handbook*, and co-authored a chapter on the value of content strategy as a strategic business advantage.) Combing through the chapters (including the preface by Al Golin of GolinHarris of the Al Golin/Ray Kroc fame) it was as if Golin was in the room with me, imparting his wisdom and experience on the essentials of mass communication.

In fact, *The Handbook* boasts over 55 chapters each carefully crafted addressing such industries as sports marketing, hospitality, entertainment, restaurant, healthcare, retail, oil, financial and banking, aviation, and telecommunications, among others. The Issues section includes sustainability, reputation management, and the Practical Skills and Knowledge subheading encompasses creativity, storytelling, speechwriting, behavioral results and virtual worlds. The chapters grouped under Stakeholder Leadership are all rich with information and practical communications and management guidance relevant to burgeoning students and seasoned professionals alike.

Whether you're considering entering the field of Public Relations or Integrated Marketing, just looking brush up on your thinking or in search of inspiration and mentorship, make room in your backpack or on your shelf for *The Handbook*.

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