1957

The membership of the Huntington Avenue YMCA: A survey and discussion of internal public relations problems

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

School of Public Relations and Communications

Thesis

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE HUNTINGTON AVENUE YMCA

A Survey and Discussion of Internal Public Relations Problems

By

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(A.B., Tufts University, 1953)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

1957

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great deal of credit and thanks must be given to four elements, without any of which this thesis could not have been satisfactorily accomplished.

First, the eighteen members of a course in advances communications research who did the actual footwork in conducting the survey of the YMCA members are thanked for their efforts.

Secondly, Dr. Nathan Maccoby, Director of Research at the Boston University Achool of Public Relations and Communications, whose close supervision and active participation is gratefully acknowledged.

Thirdly, Miss Jane Dubois, Research Assistant to Dr. Maccoby, is here thanked for the many hours she spent in tabulating and interpreting a major portion of the survey.

And finally, the staff members of the Boston Young Men's Christian Association, especially Ian Tanner, Membership Director, and Mr. Frank Stevens, Director, along with the generous aid of Mr. Alexander St. John, President of the A. B. Dick Company of Boston are gratefully acknowledged for contributing their time and offering their invaluable assistance in collecting data, mechanically reproducing the survey, and opening the organization to us for inspection.

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CHAPTER I

THE PURPOSE OF THE THESIS, IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY AND PROCEDURE

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this study to analyze and evaluate the problems of the Huntington Avenue Young Men's Christian Association in its relationship with its membership, the difficulties and limitations of the organization in solving these problems, and most important, the implications of this situation as they effect the overall internal public relations situation.

II. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The YMCA is doing a worthwhile job for the community. It operates on a very limited budget and it cannot provide its members with all of the luxuries of a private club. Yet the YMCA offers opportunities that cannot be matched anywhere for the price.

The work of this thesis will be to discover how the Huntington Avenue Young Men's Christian Association can utilize its present facilities and staff to make itself more valuable to its members and to the community. This was thought to be worthwhile both as an exercise in public relations and as a public service effort.

Definition of Terms

Throughout most of this thesis, the terms "Y" and "YMCA", unless otherwise qualified, will refer to the present Huntington Avenue Young Men's Christian Association. However, in Chapter II, the history section, the terms "Y", "YMCA" or "Boston YMCA" may refer to the organization in general in the Boston area unless

otherwise specified since the main consideration of this thesis, the main or Huntington Avenue branch, did not come into being until 1912.

III. PROCEDURE

A thorough search through histories of the YMCA and specifically of the Boston YMCA was conducted and pertinent information extracted in order to provide a background for this study. The development of the organization through the years is offered to provide the knowledge of the spiritual, physical and chronological evolution of the YMCA in order that the reader have the knowledge necessary to understand how the Y has grown and what it has gained and lost in the process.

It was then decided to examine this present membership to find out who they are, what they do as members and how they feel about their organization. An opinion survey was conducted in order to accomplish this because it was felt that observation of activities and examination of data would not be enough to give a complete picture of the situation and since the root of the study was people, it was obvious that the people themselves should be questioned directly in order to properly evaluate the organization.

This survey was undertaken as a class project by the graduate class in research methods at the Boston University School of Public Relations and Communications.

The class of eighteen students, with the guidance of the instructor, Dr. Nathan Maccoby, was responsible for the study design, the selection of the sample, the construction of the

questionnaires, the interviewing, and the coding. The check-coding, the tabulation, the analysis, and the presentation of the results was done by the Division of Research of the School of Public Relations and Communications.

The study was started in February, 1956. The interviewing took place during the month of April, 1956.

The Study Design

The study was designed to determine the attitudes, activities, and background characteristics of the members of the Huntington Avenue YMCA. Since it was not feasible to interview all members, a representative sample was taken. Also, it would have been more informative had a group of persons who did not belong to the YMCA also been interviewed. The size of the samples needed to provide good estimations of both populations was such as to eliminate this as a practical procedure for our purposes. Thus, it should be borne in mind that this survey is intended to measure attitudes of the members and not a broader population, and that because it was taken by a sampling procedure, a precise statement is not possible for even the members.

The Geographic Area

The area for study was Greater Boston, Massachusetts.

A number of factors were taken into account in the selection of this particular area:

1. This is the area from which most of the members of the Huntington Avenue YMCA come.

2. This area is within easy commuting distance of the School of Public Relations and Communications. Since the student

interviewers had limited time, it was felt that an excessive amount of time should not be spent in traveling to and from the interview area. The area selected, at the most thirty minutes from the school via subway, proved to be easily accessible, a factor which greatly facilitated the interviewing procedures.

Selecting the Sample

The primary step in the selection of the sample was the securing of a list of all members (both adult and youth) of the Huntington Avenue YMCA. Resident members are not included because most reside on a transient basis.

All members who lived outside greater Boston were eliminated from the list. Then, every tenth member was selected to be interviewed. This provided a list of 309 members. Sub-areas were designated so that each interviewer had a list of members in a concentrated area; thus cutting down on his travel time.

The Questionnaire (See Appendix for complete questionnaire)

The membership list was stratified by area of residence and by certain kinds of membership. Random selections were made from each of the strata, thus providing a stratified random sample of the members.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts.

Part One consisted of a series of questions designed to find out the attitudes of the members about the YMCA.

Part Two was designed to determine the activities of the member at the YMCA. In this section, frequency of going to the Y, activities at the Y, whether friends (non-members) were brought to the Y, etc., were measured.

Part Three contained face sheet information, such as the income of the family, education of the family, occupation of the head of the family, age of the respondent, and the religion-nationality background of the respondent.

All information was obtained through open-ended interviews with the respondents.

Pretest

Prior to the construction of the final questionnaire, a pretest was made. This pretest was given to members who did not fall in our sample for the revised survey. Numerous constructive corrections and additions to the questionnaire resulted. It might be added, in passing, that the pretest also served to bolster the courage of the interviewers, some of whom were skeptical of the reception to be accorded them by the potential respondents.

The Interviewing

Interviewers were instructed to call back at least three times in cases where no one was at home and to vary the time and day of the call-backs. In order to assist entrance into the home, all interviewers were given a signed letter from Dr. Maccoby attesting to the purpose of the interview, and that it was being conducted by the School of Public Relations and Communications, Boston University. Where it was not possible to complete a full interview, the interviewers were instructed to get as much data as possible about the respondent rather than to write the interview off as a refusal.

The interviewing period was of approximately three weeks' duration. The final result of the interviewing was as follows:

Total Interviews to Be Taken	Interviews Obtained	Refusals or Not at Home
309	265	44
(100%)	(85.8%)	(14.2%)
		15 Refusals 5%
		29 Not at Home 9.2%

Many of the results appearing in tables in the body of the study reveal differences which are not statistically significant. The tables have been included where it was felt that they were of suggestive value. The reader is urged to look below each table to ascertain whether or not the differences reported are statistically significant before attempting to base any conclusions on them. A 6% error may exist on either side of a given percentage 95 out of 100 times.

This survey could not be expected to draw an exact picture of the situation. The statistics are used as the skeletal framework on which can be built only hypotheses. But since this is all there is to guide the reader, a face value acceptance cannot lead him too far astray.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE Y.M.C.A.

The parent organization which was to become the international Young Men's Christian Association was conceived in the minds of a small group of young salesmen in London in 1844. The social repercussions of the industrial revolution were taking their toll among the youth who had come to the big city to seek their fortunes. They had left the healthy guiding influences of their homes and had been thrown into the godless confusion of the cities which were caught up in the growing tide of industrial progress. The living conditions of these young men were deplorable. They were introduced to immorality in all of its forms.

One of these men was not blind to the dangers surrounding him. George Williams and eleven of his closest friends established a brotherhood "to improve the spiritual condition of young men engaged in the drapery and other trades by the introduction of religious services among them."[1] The idea spread rapidly and with the inspired efforts of George Williams, the organization grew to 500,000 members in twenty-four countries in fifty years. In 1894, George Williams was knighted by Queen Victoria.[2]

The founders were inspired by the evangelical revival. It would be almost eighty years before the dominant influence

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[1] C. Howard Hopkins, History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America (New York: Association Press, 1951), p. 4.

[2] Ibid., p. 4.

of the evangelical churches left the Association. The history of the Young Men's Christian Association is an exceptional "lay expression of dynamic Christian concern for the youth adrift in a modern city."[1]

I. THE GENESIS AND GROWTH OF THE BOSTON Y.M.C.A.

The following paragraph is condensed from The Boston YMCA and Community Need by William B. Whiteside, Chapter I.

The Boston YMCA began its existence in the Central Congregational Church on December 15, 1851. Captain Thomas V. Sullivan had heard of the London movement and became enthusiastic about organizing a similar one in Boston. This meeting witnessed the proposal and at a later meeting on December 29, 1851 at the Spring Lane Chapel of Old South Church, the constitution was adopted and the Boston YMCA officially came into being through the efforts of Captain Sullivan and thirty-two men representing twenty evangelical church bodies. The first rooms were rented over a store on the corner of Washington and Summer Streets. Within a year and a half, almost fifteen hundred young men had taken out annual memberships. As the organization grew, it was forced to move from place to place and just before it moved into its own buildings, it rented expensive yet confining space in the Tremont Temple. As physical exercise became more important, much space was required. To suit this purpose the Y bought the Symnasium Building at Tremont and Eliot

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[1]Hopkins, op. cit., p. 3.

Streets in 1879. However, the Association shortly outgrew these quarters and in 1883, a large structure was built on the corner of Berkeley and Boylston Streets. This sufficed until it burned in 1910. On October 2, 1912, President William H. Taft laid the cornerstone of the present Huntington Avenue YMCA.[1]

II. RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

"The men who founded the Young Men's Christian Association were deeply influenced by the religious trends of their time."[2] In the first decade of the life of the organization all members were required to belong to an evangelical church.[3] This parctice of secular exclusion caused much hard feeling in the community. Most of the Board of Governors were ministers of the evangelical gospel.[4] The activities program of those days consisted mainly of spiritual lectures and discussions. Regular prayer meetings were held for members and devotional services and lectures were introduced to the general public.[5]

In 1888, the Board of Governors began to let down its guard. The Boston YMCA began to advertise that it was an "unsectarian organization which any young man without any regard to his religious belief"[6] might become a member.

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[1] William B. Whiteside, The Boston Y.M.C.A. and Community Need, (New York: Association Press, 1951), Chapter I.

[2] Ibid., p. 32.

[3] Ibid., p. 88.

[4] Ibid., p. 39.

[5] Ibid., p. 44.

The Annual Report of that year said,

> The religious work, quietly and persistantly pursued is such that no one feels that it is forced upon him and there is the kindest feeling and heartiest good will among our members, whether church members or not.[1]

Revivalism did not die quickly, however. Even as late as 1906, the YMCA was sponsoring revival meetings at the Tremont Temple.[2] Gradually this emotional religious appeal was directed toward an effort to see that the members, regardless of their sects, understood their particular religious heritage.[3] By 1917, the membership included a healthy percentage of members whose religion was not Protestant.

In 1937, the Huntington Avenue YMCA in Boston signified its democratization by stating its purpose,

> ...to help young people to accept and to practice the Christian way of life and to work for the development of a society which is friendly to that way of life.[4]

The statement of purpose today is not much different. According to Mr. Ion G. Tanner, Membership Secretary of the Huntington Avenue YMCA, it is,

> To help its members and constituents to grow and develop in keeping with the spirit and teachings of Jesus and the highest ideals of the Judaic-Christian heritage.

III. THE GROWTH OF THE HUNTINGTON AVENUE Y.M.C.A. AS A SERVICE AGENCY

Soon after the YMCA had become an established part of Boston life, it began to build itself as a community

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1Whiteside, op. cit., p. 98.

2Ibid., p. 147.

3Ibid., p. 146.

service agency to counteract the influence and attractiveness of the city's bars and brothels.[1] Religious teachings were the first line of defense against these evils. Literary classes and religious discussion groups were added to the curricula to supplement prayer meetings. The program was an earnest effort to protect young newcomers "ith Christ-like sympathy until they can securely walk amid the dangers of the city."[2] After the Civil War, the YMCA added some practical assistance by loaning money and giving food and temporary lodgings to those jobless stranded in the big city.[3]

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

In 1873, the YMCA began its educational program in earnest. Sums of money were set aside to pay professional instructors. Classes in modern languages, singing, elocution, penmanship and bookkeeping were included in the curriculum.[4] Near the close of the nineteenth century, President and General Secretary Woodworth advocated increased social and educational facilities by saying that the Association should "touch the young man in every point of his nature."[5] The Evening School extended its facilities and in 1893, seven hundred students were enrolled.[6] It became evident that

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1Whiteside, op. cit., p. 69.

2Ibid., p. 86.

3Ibid., p. 85.

4Ibid., p. 82.

5Ibid., p. 96.

6Ibid., p. 112.

the child was outgrowing the father. Day courses were soon added. The Association Day School, later to become the Huntington School for Boys was added. By 1915, the Association Schools had three thousand students enrolled.[1] It was becoming too difficult for the directors to keep the schools as an integrated part of the Association. Northeastern University was founded in 1916. Eventually, it was to become completely separate from the control of the YMCA directors.

Although Northeastern took care of the field of formal education, the YMCA continued its program of mental and social improvement activities. Lectures and study groups supplemented the formal education of the university. This program grew and in 1936, the Association School was formed.[2] The curriculum is more avocational than was that of the old Evening School. The school offers practical instruction in photography, piano, art, drama, and helpful series of talks on "Getting Along With People", and "Are You in the Right Job". There are still discussion groups and seminars, but most of the academic instruction has been handed to Northeastern.

V. THE Y.M.C.A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Shortly after the Civil War, an employment agency was set up. It was staffed by volunteer committeemen. So that the YMCA would not become an auxiliary to "reformatories

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1Whiteside, op. cit., p. 121.

2Ibid., p. 198.

and charitable institutions through which dissipated and unworthy persons are placed in positions",[1] the service was limited to those who had good references. After being in operation for only a few years, the Board of Directors put to an end the service because they did not approve of the growing practice of serving the jobless regardless of their race, religion, or character.[2] This is indicative of the social attitude of the YMCA during the 1870's and 1880's. There are still traces of the bad publicity it received in those days. Its directors were interested in the "deserving" only, who happened to be, in their estimation, young, white, pure Protestants. Soon, however, responsible far-sighted members and officials realized that the Y was in a position to be of real value to the community as a whole, and not to just a chosen few. They realized that the true Christian spirit included both charity and respect for all men; race, creed or color notwithstanding. The placement service was in operation again soon. Sectarianism was on its way out as was the idea that only the righteous could be saved. In 1905, the service placed 1,842 men. The Association was on its way towards having a real vocational guidance program. In 1916 the Vocation Bureau became the Department of Counsel and Placement, and rudimentary tests

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1Whiteside, op. cit., p. 53.

2Ibid., p. 84.

were used to help place men in jobs for which they were best fitted.[1]

In 1933, the Government Employment Office took over the placement problem to such a degree that the Y's services were no longer needed in that capacity. However, the Y continued its guidance service. It has expanded to the point where it offers expert advice on the basis of extensive, modern testing and interviewing. It not only is available to the members, but also to any other individual or to local industries which are too small to have comparable service of their own.

VI. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The YMCA was not intended originally to be an organization dedicated to bodily health. Today, the greater majority of its members belong to the Y for no other reason. The first gymnasium was added to the YMCA after the Civil War.[2] It consisted of second-hand gymnastic equipment formerly used by circus performers. Thus, its use was restricted to the most daring. It wasn't until 1880 that the gym was adapted to the use of the average man. Robert J. Roberts was the person who convinced the members and the directors of the YMCA that a healthy body and a healthy mind were inseparable.[3] He began to hold regular exercise classes for members. He had a large following, and his techniques

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[1]Whiteside, op. cit., p. 152.

[2]Ibid., p. 52.

[3]Ibid., p. 77.

were known and used widely. In 1920, the Roberts Health Club, a businessmen's health group, was inaugurated as a useful memorial to Robert J. Roberts[1] who may well be called the father of the modern physical education program at the YMCA.

The physical facilities of the YMCA at Huntington Avenue are very extensive. They include equipment for most every popular sport and then some. The reader shall see later in this thesis how physical exercise has become the most dominant activity at the YMCA. The religious purpose, in actuality although not by intention, has become secondary in practice. This situation is not quite as serious as it might sound, for there are many who still believe, and rightfully so, that a healthy body is condusive to a healthy mind.

VII. THE GROWTH OF YOUTH SERVICE

The Boston YMCA had not been in existence too long before the directorate realized its potential value to the youth of the community. In 1868, General Secretary Rowland said that, "Jesus wanted boys in his service".[2] Boys' prayer meetings and physical education classes were added. Membership was restricted to those who were "willing to sign a pledge to forever abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors, tobacco, and profanity".[3]

1Whiteside, op. cit., p. 149.

2Ibid., p. 62.

3Ibid., p. 62.

Thus, the youth department had its start. It expanded and changed over the years with the rest of the Association. In 1899, the Association purchased an island on Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire, to serve as a summer camp for boys.[1] In 1917, the membership of the youth division was 990.[2] The division is still growing.

The YMCA flourished and grew to become one of the pillars of social service in Boston. An examination of the present organization follows in Chapter III.

1Whiteside, op. cit., p. 150.
2Ibid., p. 158.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS OF SURVEY

I. WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE HUNTINGTON AVENUE Y.M.C.A.?

Occupation

Four questions relating to occupation were asked of each respondent: Whether the respondent was employed full-time, whether the head of the house was employed full-time, whst was the occupation of the respondent, and what the occupation was of the head of the house. It should be noted that in some cases, the respondent was the head of the house, in which case his responses would be duplicated. The results of these questions on occupation are shown in Tables I and II.

TABLE I

EMPLOYMENT - RESPONDENT AND HEAD OF HOUSE

	Respondent	Head of House	National 1950 Census
Full time	65%	81%	77%
Part time	9	3	
Not employed	19	6	4
No answer - other	7	10	19

TABLE II

OCCUPATION - RESPONDENT AND HEAD OF HOUSE

	Respondent	Head of House	National 1950 Census
Professional and semi-professional	16%	18%	8%
Administrative business-management	5	8	

TABLE II (continued)

	Respondent	Head of House	National 1950 Census
Small business owner	1%	4%	16%
White collar	16	15	19
Skilled labor	7	13	15
Semi-skilled labor and service	13	17	32
Unskilled labor	8	9	10
Unemployed and/or student	22	3	
Retired	0	3	
No answer	9	9	
Armed Forces	1	0	
Housewife	0	1	

The national figures given include both males and females and would therefore tend to be greater for Not Employed and No Answer-Other categories than this sample which was almost completely men. This sample of members includes a higher percentage of professional and semi-professional workers than the World Almanac shows for the nation as a whole. Since these national firgures are for just employed persons, the percentages are larger than they would be if the unemployed, retired, student, and not-ascertained categories were included. This supports the assertion that the YMCA members are from a higher-status group than the United States' inhabitants as a whole.

Income

Table III shows the income distribution of the sample.

TABLE III

INCOME - RESPONDENT

Income Level	Percentage
Under $4,000	29%
$4,000-$6,000	31
Over $6,000	31
Not ascertained	9

Interviewers were under the impression that respondents with obviously low incomes tended to raise their estimate of income, and those obviously in higher brackets tended to hedge on an answer or to lower their estimate.

Education

Data on the amount of education was obtained for the head of household. The percentages are presented in Table IV.

TABLE IV

EDUCATION - HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

	Head of Household	Y Figures
Some high school or less	26%	11%
Completed high school	26	30
Some college	17	21
Completed college at least	28	29
Not ascertained	3	9

Here, too, the interviewers had a feeling that some respondents were inclined to be optimistic in their recollection of

their educational level. This opinion is supported by the comparison of these figures with those of the YMCA.

Family Size

Several questions were asked about family size. Tables V and VI give some indication of the composition of the families of the members. Table IVA determines marital status of the respondents.

TABLE IVA

MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENT

Status	Percentage
Single	71%
Married	26
Divorced	1
Not ascertained	2

TABLE V

TOTAL SIZE OF FAMILY

Size	Percentage
Live alone	16%
Two people	20
Three people	20
Four people	20
Five or more	22
Not ascertained	2

TABLE VI

NUMBERS OF ADULT MEN, ADULT WOMEN, MALES UNDER 18, AND FEMALES UNDER 18

TABLE VI (continued)

	Adult Men	Adult Women	Males Under 18	Females Under 18
One	59%	64%	19%	16%
Two	23	15	10	8
Three or more	12	2	4	1
Other (none or not ascertained)	6	19	67	75

Birthplace and Race

As shown in Table VII, a large majority of the sample was native born.

TABLE VII

Place of Birth	Percentage
Native born	92%
Foreign born	8

The major portion of the sample was white as shown in Table VIIA.

TABLE VIIA

Race of Respondent	Percentage
White	90%
Negro	6
Other	1
Not ascertained	3

Religion

Tables VIII and IX refer to religion and church or synagogue attendance. An overwhelming majority of the YMCA are church members, and a large percentage attend a church or a synagogue every week.

TABLE VIII

RELIGION

Religion	Percentage
Protestant	28%
Catholic	45
Jewish	20
Other, not ascertained or none	7

TABLE IX

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT A CHURCH OR A SYNAGOGUE

Attendance	Percentage
Every week	58%
At least once a month	17
Less often than once a month	12
Other or never	13

The interviewers felt that respondents were inclined to exaggerate here in order to impress someone they felt to be a Y representative.

Age

The age distribution of the respondents is shown in Table X.

TABLE X

AGE

Age of Respondent	Percentage
Under 20	25%
21-30	37

TABLE X (continued)

Age of Respondent	Percentage
31-40	17%
Over 40	19
Not ascertained	2

Sex

The sex distribution of the respondents is shown in Table XI.

TABLE XI

SEX OF RESPONDENTS

Sex	Percentage
Male	93%
Female	6
Not ascertained	1

The preceding tables show that the membership of the Y is indeed made up of many different groups. Yet, as some of the following tables will indicate, the internal public relations practices of the staff must be doing a good job in subduing friction between racial and religious groups.

II. MEMBERSHIP IN THE HUNTINGTON AVENUE Y.M.C.A. - BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

The next four tables deal with membership characteristics of the respondents. Table XII indicates percentage belonging to various categories of membership; Table XIII indicates the length of membership; Table XIV indicates plans about renewal; and Table XV shows the extent of the family of the respondent belonging to the YMCA.

TABLE XII

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

Type	Percentage
Basic Social	16%
Full Privilege	57
Roberts Health	9
Sustaining	3
Youth	9
Girls	2
Other	1
Not ascertained	3

TABLE XIII

LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP

Length	Percentage
Less than 1 year	41%
1 year to 2 years	15
2 years to 5 years	16
More than 5 years	27
Not ascertained	1

TABLE XIV

PLAN ON RENEWAL

Plan	Percentage
Yes	82%
No	10
Don't know	6
Not ascertained	2

TABLE XV

FAMILY BELONG

Answer	Percentage
No	82%
Yes	16
Not ascertained	2

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE MEMBER AT THE Y.M.C.A.

The next section of this thesis will deal with the activities of the member at the YMCA. It is certainly of interest to know how people happen to join the YMCA. The percentages of reasons which the sample of respondents gave are indicated in Table XVI. The percentages add up to more than 100% since more than one reason was given by some members.

TABLE XVI

REASONS FOR JOINING YMCA

Reasons	Percentage
Attracted by athletic facilities	53%
Influence of friends	29
Attracted by clubs and activities	7
Had to join as resident or to get into league	5
Influence of parents	4
Other	18
Not ascertained	2

The respondents were asked if they ever brought guests to the YMCA, and about two-thirds said yes they did; and

about one-third said no they didn't. They were also asked what happened when they brought guests to the Y - how the guests reacted, did they like it or not, and all but 4 percent said that the guests had liked it very well and enjoyed coming. Now, related to this is the next item, and that is, what happened to these guests? Did they eventually join and become members themselves? Over one-half of those who reported bringing guests to the Y said that the guests eventually joined; and this suggests strongly that this is probably the most powerful single method of recruiting new members. In spite of this high percentage of guests who eventually become members, there is a substantial number of them who do not, so the attempt was made to find out why they didn't join and there are various reasons given. In some cases, no reasons are given. The principal reason given for the guest not joining the Y was that he already belonged to too many other organizations and didn't have time to join the Y. This represents about one-sixth of those who did not join. The next most frequently mentioned reason for the guest not joining was that he lived too far away. Another reason offered by about a tenth was that the guest did not like it and just was not interested. It would seem to add up to the idea that a very important source of new members is the guest, and that if the Y wants to build up membership, some way of encouraging members to bring guests is a very potent source. Tables XVII and XVIII

indicate whether members brought guests to the Y, what the guests thought of the Y, and whether these guests eventually joined the Y.

TABLE XVII

RESPONDENTS' INFORMATION ON GUEST OPINIONS

Information	Percentage
Never bring guests to the YMCA	37%
Bring guests, no information on guests' opinions	10
Guests thought Y excellent or very good	30
Guests thought Y good	19
Guests thought Y fair or poor	4

TABLE XVIII

DID GUESTS JOIN?

Answer	Percentage
Guests joined	37%
Guests didn't join	21
Don't know whether guests joined	2
Not ascertained	2
Other	1

Here is as positive proof as is possible that internal public relations practices are creating an atmosphere which must be immediately attractive to the visitor. That is to say, the staff is successful in maintaining the proper attitude towards guests so that they, at least 37 per cent of them, do join. The Y staff believes in a fairly liberal visitors-privilege policy, both for the convenience of the

member and, of course, to attract potential members. This is distinctly good public relations practice. The staff takes the risk of inviting the nuisance factor which would accompany such liberalism, but, without doubt, it adds to the warmth of the atmosphe re. After all, what is a club if one's friends are not welcome, and here it is strongly indicated that this practice pays off in the continuous addition of new members.

The attempt was made to determine what the attitudes of members were toward YMCA in comparison to other organizations to which they now belong or have belonged to in the past. Unfortunately, over half of them indicated that they do not and have not belonged to other organizations, and therefore were unable to make any such comparison, but among those who did have some idea of other organizations, most of them said they felt that the YMCA was better. That is, some 56 per cent of those who could make the comparison felt that the YMCA was better than the other organizations, and only 11 per cent said that the Y was not so good. This information is shown in Table XIX.

TABLE XIX

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMPARISON

Comparison	Percentage
Have belonged but no comparison given	24%
Have belonged, Y much better	26
Have belonged, Y is better	30

TABLE XIX (continued)

Comparison	Percentage
Have belonged, Y is same	9%
Have belonged, Y is worse	11

The table shows that 56 per cent definitely believe that this YMCA is better than other organizations to which they have belonged. This implies a multitude of factors. However, again it can be interpreted to speak well for the relationship between the members and the members with the staff. Since there is a considerable amount of staff supervision of activities, it shows that good public relations practices are being observed. In this instance, the sociological side of public relations has come into play. That is to say, in their dealings with members, the staff has earned for the Y not only the approval, but also the appreciation of the members by exercising the kind of leadership which guides and does not direct.[1]

It is interesting to discover whether the members meet friends at the Y. About one-half of the sample reported that they arranged to meet their friends at the Y. Of those who meet friends at the Y, about half say that at least some of these persons are their closest friends. See Tables XX and XXI.

TABLE XX

ARRANGEMENT TO MEET FRIENDS AT THE YMCA

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[1]Norman R. F. Maier, Principles of Human Relations, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1954, p. 3.

TABLE XX (continued)

Arrangement	Percentage
No arrangements	50%
Yes, no indication how often	31
Yes, sometimes	13
Yes, often	5
Not ascertained	1

TABLE XXI

ARE Y COMPANIONS CLOSEST FRIENDS?

Answer	Percentage
None are	51%
Yes, all are	11
Yes, most are	6
Yes, some are	16
Yes, doesn't elaborate how many	15
Not ascertained	1

One of the major questions in dealing with what they do when they get to the Y is to find out how often they come. Nine percent say that they come more than four times a week, 48 per cent say that they come two to four times a week, 23 per cent say that they come once a week, 9 per cent at least once every two weeks, and 7 per cent say that they come once a month. The remainder come less often than that. This information is shown in Table XXII.

TABLE XXII

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDING YMCA

Attendance	Percentage
More than four times a week	9%
Two to four times a week	48
Once a week	23
At least once a month	7
At least once every two weeks	9
Less often than once a month	4

When examining the responses of activities in which members participated, it was discovered that the most attractive activity in the Y is the athletic program. Some 93 per cent of all the sampled members who were interviewed reported participating in the athletic program to some extent when coming to the Y. The percentages add up to more than one hundred per cent since many people engage in more than one activity. Nineteen per cent engage in a social or recreational program; 8 per cent in clubs; 6 per cent in educational activities; 1½ per cent in crafts or hobbies; and less than one per cent in religious activities. This information is shown in Table XXIII.

TABLE XXIII

ACTIVITIES

Activity	Percentage
Athletic program	93%
Social-recreation	19

TABLE XXIII (continued)

Activity	Percentage
Clubs (drama, outing, etc.)	8%
Education	6
Crafts and hobbies	2
Religion	1
Other activities	1
Not ascertained	1

It was asked whether, on a specific trip to the YMCA, they come primarily to do something in particular like making a date to play handball, basketball, or going to a dance; or do they just come when they feel like coming and decide what they are going to do when they get there. Some 79 per cent said they decided before they came what they were going to do, and about 11 per cent said they made up their minds after they got there. About 3 per cent said that it depended, sometimes they did it one way, sometimes another way. So, apparently the large majority of members come to the Y for a specific purpose decided upon in advance rather than just to come and see what is going on. See Table XXIV.

TABLE XXIV

TIME OF DECISION OF ACTIVITY AT Y

Time of Decision	Percentage
Activity decided before going to YMCA	79%

TABLE XXIV (continued)

Time of Decision	Percentage
Activity decided after arriving at YMCA	11%
Other	4
Not ascertained	6

This might indicate that members do not go to the Y just to "hang around". This could show a lack of clubby atmosphere (socially) and not inviting to those who would visit it like a second home.

It is interesting to discover whether the members can take part in activities of their choice; that is, the chosen activities may be too crowded, or they cannot find a partner, or the activities may be closed. If this happened often, it could lead to discontent and ultimately non-renewal of membership. When asked about this, a large majority of the members indicated that they were able to partake in the activity of their own choosing. Table XXV gives this information.

TABLE XXV

ABILITY TO PARTAKE IN CHOSEN ACTIVITY

Respondent	Percentage
Yes	84%
No, facilities too crowded	6
No, activities closed	3
No, no indication why not	5
Not ascertained	2

A series of questions was asked about the educational program. The respondents were asked first of all whether they had taken anyeducational courses at the YMCA. Very few, a small percentage (8 per cent), reported that they did. In connection with the relative unpopularity of the educational program, it was thought that possibly the lack of participation in the program was due to ignorance on the part of the respondents, but such does not seem to be the case, at least for a substantial minority of those who are not participating. It was found that some 24 per cent of the respondents were able to name at least one course that was being offered at the YMCA and that there were some 61 per cent who could not. Certainly, among the minority who could name courses, the Y is not attracting very many people to these courses. It was asked whether there were any courses that are not now offered that they would like to take if they were offered, and it was found that about 5 per cent named courses which are not now offered that they would like to take. A surprising finding was that fourteen people mentioned a course that actually was offered and said that they would like to take it if it were offered. Almost half the members said that if there were a course that was interesting to them available, they would enroll. Information about actual and potential activity in the educational program is shown in Tables XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII and XXIX. It is unlikely that the large number of members

who did express interest in additional courses actually would enroll.

TABLE XXVI

COURSE PARTICIPATION AT YMCA

Respondents	Percentage
No, have not taken courses	92%
Yes, have taken courses	8

TABLE XXVII

KNOWLEDGE OF COURSES OFFERED AT YMCA

Respondents	Percentage
No knowledge	61%
Correct knowledge	24
Knowledge which could not be verified*	8
Incorrect knowledge**	3
Not ascertained	4

*These people stated that they did know of courses but did not state which ones.

**These people stated they knew of courses and named ones not offered.

IV. ATTITUDE

The sample membership of the Huntington Avenue YMCA has been discussed in the light of who they are and what they do. Now data will be examined which indicates what those people think about the Y.

Purpose of the YMCA

The first question asked was "What in your opinion is the main purpose of the Y?" People gave more than one answer so the percentages will add up to more than 100 per cent.

TABLE XXVIII

PURPOSE OF THE YMCA

Opinion		Percentage
1.	Recreation (keep people occupied, etc.)	41%
2.	Physical fitness	35
3.	For youth (prevent delinquency, etc.)	31
4.	Social (make friends, etc.)	20
5.	Promote brotherhood, fellowship	17
6.	Build character, promote citizenship	15
7.	Place to live	4
8.	Education	1
9.	DK	1
0	No answer	1
Y	Other	1

The most commonly mentioned reason was recreation, to keep people occupied, to keep them busy. The next most frequently mentioned reason was physical fitness. The next reason is related perhaps to the first but more specifically-- for youth to prevent delinquency, to keep kids off of the streets.

Only 20 per cent said it was for social purposes, to

meet new people, make friends, etc., and a related reason given by 17 per cent-- to promote brotherhood and fellowship. Some 15 per cent said to build character and to promote citizenship. No other reasons got very much attention.

Mrs. Gavin, Membership Secretary of the Huntington Avenue YMCA, supplied the purposes of the Y in the order that the staff itself feels are the most important. They are as follows:

1. To build character and promote fellowship
2. A place to live
3. Physical fitness
4. Education

Obviously this sample of the membership feels otherwise. They are mainly concerned with the advantages of the physical plant rather than participation in the underlying spirit of the organization. The staff and the membership are not working at cross purposes, but naturally the staff is more inclined to be concerned with the sociological manifestations of the Association. It is shown in Table XVI that 53 per cent of the membership joined the Y because they were attracted by the athletic facilities. Only 7 per cent were attracted by clubs and activities and 3 per cent because of the social advantages. It looks as if the members have not changed their preferences. It would seem that the members' needs in regard to their characters and friends, housing, and education are satisfied elsewhere. These opportunities

which the Y offers, while available to all, are used by only a few. This would indicate that either the need for the services involved is small or else the staff has not been able to persuade its members to take advantage of them.

Thus, the members will continue to feel that the Y is merely a well-equipped gymnasium until they are persuaded to take part in other activities as well.

Success in Accomplishing Purpose

The interviewers then asked the respondents how well they thought the YMCA was accomplishing what they believed to be its major purposes.

TABLE XXIX

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PURPOSE

Opinion	Percentage
Excellently	9%
Very well	41
Well	36
Fairly well	9
Poorly	1
DK	2
No reply	2

Forty-one per cent thought that the purposes were being accomplished very well. Nine per cent used superlatives in comment. Thirty-six per cent felt that the Y fulfilled this purpose adequately, 9 per cent "fairly well", and only 1 per cent admitted that they thought the Y was far from accomplishing its purposes.

It may be said, then, that the members feel that the Y is accomplishing satisfactorily what these people believe to be its purposes.

Then the members were asked how they felt about the way the Y was being run.

TABLE XXX

HOW THE Y IS BEING RUN

Opinion	Percentage
Excellently	11%
Very good	30
Good	32
Fair	18
Poor	3
DK	3
No answer	2
Other	1

Here again, few respondents used enthusiastic adjectives in describing the situation, and fewer were critical.

Staff Treatment of Members

The next question was "How do the people who work at the Y treat you when you go there?"

TABLE XXXI

TREATMENT OF MEMBERS

Opinion	Percentage
Excellently	18%
Very well	48

TABLE XXXI (continued)

Opinion	Percentage
Well	25%
Fairly well	7
Poorly	2

Table XXXI would indicate the staff enjoys better than average relationships with the members. This is a good background for the improving of other aspects of the membership problem.

Good internal public relations practices are evident here. The staff obviously enjoys a healthy relationship which must have been built with a great deal of care. In the consideration of the solution of future problems, then, it can be assumed that this pleasant situation exists and that the application of future public relations activities can proceed taking this for granted.

Service to Special Age Groups

The respondents were then asked if they thought that the Y services any special age groups.

TABLE XXXII

SERVICE TO SPECIAL AGE GROUPS

Opinion	Percentage
No	68%
Yes, no elaboration	1
Yes, youth - high school age and below	11

TABLE XXXII (continued)

Opinion	Percentage
Yes, young adults 18-30	9%
Yes, youth and young adults	3
Yes, older adults	2
Yes, youth and older adults	1
No answer	1
DK	3
Other	1

Twenty-seven per cent felt that the Y does service special age groups. Sixty-eight per cent believed that it does not-- meaning that it services all age groups. The most frequent age group mentioned by those who think that there is specialized service was the young age group, the high school group or younger.

Membership of Both Sexes

The next question asked whether or not the Y is designed for both boys and girls.

TABLE XXXIII

ORGANIZATION FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Opinion	Percentage
No	33%
Yes, no elaboration	33
Yes, but mostly for boys	26
Yes, don't approve	1
DK	4
No answer	3

Fifty-nine per cent, then, agreed that the Y is designed for both boys and girls. Thirty-three said that it is not. This might be interpreted to mean that a majority feels that girls do have a place in Y activities.

Improvements

This next query was designed to determine whether the respondents had any concrete suggestions about the ways the Y could do things it was not now doing.

TABLE XXXIV

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Opinions	Percentage
None	38%
Yes, no elaboration	4
Yes, improve parking facilities	5
Yes, more co-ed activities	6
Yes, more competitive sports	4
Yes, improve gym facilities and equipment	9
Yes, more and/or better instructors	3
DK	13
No answer	4
Other	14

Thirty-eight per cent had no suggestions at all. An additional 4 per cent thought there were some things the Y could do better but were not able to say what. Nine per cent of the total group, which would be about 17 per cent of those who gave a reason or gave a specific suggestion

said the Y could improve its facilities and equipment. The next most frequently mentioned problem was that they felt there could be more co-ed activities. This ties in with Table XXXIII which shows a good percentage who do believe that the organization is set up to handle such activities and only 1 per cent of the sample indicated disapproval of such undertakings. This hints that a healthy portion of the youth membership wants a more well-rounded organization which will offer and help supervise more and varied activities. Many of the Y activities are now open to girls, but no effective inducements seem to have been offered to increase their attendance.

At one sitting, it was difficult for the interviewers to get all of the ideas each respondent might offer. Many said, "I can't think of many (or any) right now." Therefore, the author thinks that some of the ideas lumped in the "other" category of Table XXXIV deserve mention, even though each suggestion may only have been made once or twice. Under these circumstances, they should be regarded as ideas which represent more universal feeling than is indicated by percentage. Here are a few:

More organized teams in the gymnasium (two mentions)
A music room, more classical music programs (four mentions)
More evening courses and all better advertised (four mentions)
Keep the place cleaner (three mentions)
Need of more public relations and advertising (five mentions)

Make effort to integrate new members, make them feel at home (two mentions)

More staff leadership in age group 18-25

More emphasis on religion (four mentions)

More television sets (three mentions)

Programs for older people (three mentions)

No doubt some of these have been tried, and others are impractical. However, some are food for thought. The fifth suggestion is of particular interest for present purposes. It may be assumed that a few of the members feel that the Y has not been presented in the proper light to the community it services. Increased advertising is out of the question. It costs too much. Here is the opportunity to apply public relations which in this case can cost nothing. As will be shown later in the thesis, the best source for the propagation of improved public relations are the members themselves. It has been seen that, in general, they are satisfied. It is advisable if an improved public relations situation is to be realized, the members must be enthusiastic. This can be done only by improving the spirit of the membership.

Sources of Income

The respondents were then asked where they thought the Y got its money on which to operate.

TABLE XXXV

SOURCE OF OPERATING MONEY

Opinion	Percentage
Membership fees	85%

TABLE XXXV (continued)

Opinion	Percentage
Red Feather	31%
Contributions	62
Activities (dances, movies, etc.)	13
Room rents	14
Other	6
No answer	1

An examination of the Y's income statement proves the estimates of the members to be substantially correct. For example, the Red Feather supplies 12 per cent and membership dues 42 per cent of the yearly revenue. This indicates that public relations practices are successful in communicating to its membership that its income is credited to sources other than dues-- well over 50 per cent. It can be expected that the membership, then, appreciates the social benefits it obtains from this community organization. This can only contribute to good public relations.

Control of Local Organization

The next question was "Who decided the way the Y is run-- the local or national office?"

TABLE XXXVI

CONTROL

Opinion	Percentage
National office only	17%
Local office only	40
Mainly national office	9

TABLE XXXVI (continued)

Opinion	Percentage
Mainly local office	16%
Both equally	5
DK	10
No answer	2
Other	1

Fifty-six per cent then, feel that the local organization pretty much runs itself. That is a healthy opinion. The members feel closer to the organization if they believe that the final authority is within reach.

Importance of Y in the Community

The members were asked how important they thought the Y is to the community.

TABLE XXXVII

IMPORTANCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Opinion	Percentage
Very important	69%
Important	20
Fairly important	6
Not very important	3
No answer	2

Of course the importance of the Y to the community cannot be fairly measured for the sake of comparison. However, it is heartening to see that 89 per cent of the sample agreed that the Y is quite important. This might

signify that the great majority of the members do not underestimate the value and the potential of the organization. Another point may be scored for successful internal public relations.

Membership Fees and Policies

It is always of interest to the staff of an organization how the members really feel about the dues and membership restrictions. In this case, the question was answered in part by three queries on the subject. The first asked pointedly how the members felt about the fees. About 21 per cent felt that they were too high, 75 per cent figured that they were just about right, and only 1 per cent felt that they were too low. No doubt that 1 per cent would be among the first to grumble if the rates were raised. It is only to be expected that a percentage of the membership of any organization such as this will feel that any price is too high for their purse. Individually, they would see the need for even higher rates if they could interpret the balance sheet properly.

The second question brings opinion to bear on a finer point-- "What happens to someone when he wants to join the Y and cannot afford to pay the membership fee?"

TABLE XXXVIII

RESULT OF INABILITY TO PAY FEES

Opinion	Percentage
They get in - no elaboration	8%
They get in - special provisions are made, someone else pays, etc.	36

TABLE XXXVIII (continued)

Opinion	Percentage
They get in - pay in installments	12%
They get in - Y gives them jobs to raise money	4
They don't get in	24
DK	15
No answer	1

Sixty per cent believe that this hypothetical person will be admitted one way or another, and 24 per cent say that he will not get in. Perhaps these are the same 21 per cent who say that the rates are too high and must generally feel that the membership policies are prohibitive in some ways. However, the staff must be communicating successfully, at least to 60 per cent of the membership, that financial limitations do not prohibit membership.

The third question in this area asked if the particular type of membership held by the respondent limited the activities he cared to participate in and how did he feel about it.

TABLE XXXIX

LIMITATION OF ACTIVITIES BY TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

Opinion	Percentage
No	79%
Yes, no expression of feeling	3
Yes, favorable (or doesn't care)	8
Yes, unfavorable (does care)	4

TABLE XXXIX (continued)

Opinion	Percentage
DK	4%
No answer	1
Other	1

Almost four out of five said that these activities were limited in no particular way. Only 4 per cent said yes, and felt that it was a problem.

Social Integration

The respondents were then asked how they felt about the kind of people who belong to the Y.

TABLE XL

KIND OF PEOPLE BELONGING TO THE Y

Opinion	Percentage
Likes them all very much	39%
Likes them somewhat	35
Likes some, doesn't like others	19
Dislikes them somewhat	2
Hates them all	0
DK	1
No answer	3
Other	1

Very few said that they disliked the kind of people who were members of the Y. Nineteen per cent said that they did like some and did not like others. This seems to indicate that the social situation is normal-- perhaps even a little better than normal. The integration of many

factors for social purposes would seldom yield a perfect result. The total membership of the Y scarcely represents a homogeneous group, but the situation seems not to have bred many problems.

Total Opinion Percentage

For what it is worth, there is calculated below a composite of all opinion questions involving Tables XXIX (Accomplishment of Purpose, XXX (How Y is Being Run), XXXI (Treatment of Members), XXXVII (Importance in the Community), XL (Kinds of People at the Y).

This may aid in seeing the general attitude of the sample toward the Y as a whole.

TABLE XLI

GENERAL ATTITUDE

Attitude	Percentage
Extremely favorable	27%
Quite favorable	35
Favorable	33
Unfavorable	2
No comment	3

This table speaks for itself. Ninety-five per cent of the remarks concerning the respondent relationship with the Y is definitely favorable. Yet, the unfavorable comments should not be disregarded. In this area lie the stimuli and ideas to improve the organization within the limits of its ability.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

The Boston YMCA is an imposing stone structure on Huntington Avenue. It is, geographically, a "city" club. For this reason and many others, it also is a "city" club in a social sense. Few of its members live within walking distance. It is scarcely a neighborhood organization. Its members attend in order that they may use the athletic facilities. The youth go there because it is a step off the streets, and they may have the space and some of the equipment they need to release their excess energy. Young men go there to "keep in shape". Middle-aged men go there to work out the kinks which result from confinement in office chairs. Older men go there to relax or engage in mild exercise to improve their circulation and to prove to themselves that they are not so old as they think they look.

As evidenced by Tables, XIX, XXI, XXIII, XXIV, and XXVIII, few view or use the Y as a social club. Few of the members' closest friends are fellow members. They arrange to meet other members there only a little over half the time.

In a word, the organization lacks a cohesive social element. The plant is too large, and the decor too austere to provide a homey or clubby background. The organization is not accomplishing its avowed dual purpose of building character and promoting fellowship. Certainly, the characters of many are improved, but the promotion of fellowship must necessarily take a back seat for these reasons.

Naturally there are good reasons why this situation exists. For one, the membership is far too large and heterogeneous to permit one binding force to predominate. For another, in order to house and service these members, the structure would necessarily have to be big, and it can hardly be expected that the central areas look like family living rooms. Therefore, the accomplishment of the cohesiveness which breeds fellowship and builds character is partially sacrificed by the attainment and maintenance of size and breadth of service.

You have seen that the members surely feel kindly toward the Y but not in a filial sense-- as perhaps it should be. Few could fail to appreciate the benefits wrought by the service of selfless people and the hard cash from the generous. Nevertheless, for the lack of a better expression, it could be said that there is little real warmth in the relationships among members and between the members and the organization.

There are remedies which might be applied to this basic deficiency. One can discuss all kinds of superficial improvements regarding the athletic and educational programs, but until the Y is on its way to solving this bed rock problem, other improvements will be of a temporary nature when considered as support for the first purposes of the Y.

The term "internal public relations" has been used before but perhaps not quite adequately defined for these purposes. It means two things. The first being the relationship

between the staff and the members. This has been ascertained to be suitable. The second is the relationship among the members and between groups of members. There are no adequate tables to show what one group thinks of another. From the observation of the writer, the situation could be called one of indifference. There are sure to be minor frictions which develop, for example, when the sub-teeners get underfoot or when two groups wish to use the same facility at the same time. However, there is no positive relationship, no conscious intermingling, no concerted effort to bring the divergient elements together for a common purpose.

The exercise of external public relations is that of creating an atmosphere of harmony between an organization and various outside sources for immediate and long range purposes. Internal public relations, then, is the creation of harmony within for the purpose of developing an atmosphere of positive mutual interest, the results of which will be for the betterment of the organization as a whole and, of course, for the ultimate benefit of the members themselves. Naturally, external and internal public relations are correspondent in that one inevitably aids or injures the other. Here is a case of reform or improvement beginning at home. If the internal public relations of the YMCA improve, so will the relationship of the Y with the community. This occurs for the simple reason that the individual has a dual membership-- one with the Y and one with his community.

His impression of and interest in his YMCA will naturally be known within his circle of friends in his community, and so the word will spread.

It has been stated that the Huntington Avenue Y lacks a cohesive social element for many good reasons. It is the job of internal public relations to try to create an atmosphere in which the member identifies himself with his organization because he has more than a casual interest in it. If the members can become interested in their fellow members and thus in the work of the organization as a whole, then that would help breed enthusiasm which could be directed in many useful ways.

When the Boston YMCA was new and small, it had the interest and seriousness of purpose to propel it to great success. As it expanded by the very nature of its purpose, it was able to perform more services for more people. But when it grew to its present size, it became evident that it lost something along the way. At the beginning, each member was an apostle. As it grew, it added to its membership those who were interested in the Association only as a place to play or relax. This was only natural. Not everyone could be on the Board of Directors and beyond that, not everyone could have a say in the way things were run. Thus the interested group did not grow in size and eventually became an organization wherein a handful of men administered to six thousand members. And the rest of the members either formed small groups centered around a particular

interest, or remained by themselves to use the Y as merely a place to go. As has been said, this is not an unusual situation, it is normal. But what if these isolated elements could be brought together again as their predecessors were in the 1850's? The purpose would be somewhat different. In those days, it was a struggle for space and recruitment of new members. At this time, the Huntington Avenue YMCA has no immediate wish for tremendous growth. However, in order to be able to do more for its members and for the community as a whole, it does have a desire to make a better organization out of the one it has. It can do just so much by arranging and rearranging curriculum, making small improvements and changes in the physical plant. But until it improves the spirit of the membership in whole or in part, all other attempts must be relatively insignificant.

Here the writer is back to internal public relations. The staff must make use of its position to build a communal spirit, a loyalty. If programs of mutual aid were instituted among the members, this spirit would naturally develop. Most assurredly there are other ways to approach the same goal but it is inevitable that they would cost money. In the opinion of the writer, this is the most effective and least expensive way to bring about basic improvement.

In the next section, recommendations will be made relative to progress in the social atmosphere and then supporting suggestions for the solution of more superficial, but nonetheless important, problems will follow.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated by answers to some of the questions, there is no end to the improvements that could be made in this Y. Unfortunately, most of them involve physical changes which cost more money than the Y can afford at this time.

Recommendations made here, then, must be those which concern elements which are of a social nature. The various staff committees and the Board of Directors of the Y may use these figures as a lens throught which to view the facts.[1] They can decide on the basis of practicality what can be changed and what must be left unchanged. The writer, at this time, is not well enough informed or qualified to advise improvements which involve any major expenditures. Therefore, it is the purpose here to suggest the use of some available facilities to ameliorate the communal spirit for its own sake and to aid the organization in accomplishing its many purposes.

There is no question that this one helpful factor exists: we have a definite attraction to get a great many people in one place at one time. Much is being done to take advantage of this. The Y offers many club activities outside of the athletic program. There is a camera club, an outing club, a drama guild, and many others. But these create little pockets of social activity. They are fine as far as they go, but they do nothing to foster a "community"

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[1] Howard Stephenson, Professor of Public Relations, in an address at the YMCA Planning Committee dinner on March 10, 1953

spirit within the organization as a whole.

It would be beneficial for the accomplishment of our purpose to inaugurate a number of programs which transcend age and social groupings. The educational program does this to a degree, but it is doubtful whether it succeeds in encouraging much interaction between the participants.

The foundation of a well-organized sponsor system involving the older and younger members, if successfully done, would be a partial answer. The Y has at its fingertips some of the best minds and some of the best hearts in Boston. There are many older members who belong to the Roberts Health Club, for example, who drop in to the Y a few times a week to exercise or to get a run down. Among them are professional men and business executives. It might be possible, without annoying them too much, to ask them to sponsor a youngster. The Y already has "Boy Bonds" which serve somewhat the same purpose. However, the proposal here is to initiate a program whereby the sponsors take a more active part in friendship, guidance, and perhaps, rehabilitation. The youngsters who might benefit from this program would be those whose families may feed and clothe them well enough, but because of extenuating circumstances or indifference do not provide the adult guidance and friendship youth needs. These children need not necessarily be extreme cases, but those who might be in the borderline category. There are many youngsters "hanging around" the Y who would benefit by frequent contact with a sympathetic but firm adult.

There would be a definite activity involved as a necessity.

Exposure to a guidance clinic might not sell well with the youngster. Were he and the adult to engage in a mutually interesting hobby, project, or discussion, the results would be beneficial and participation more than palatable.

Ideally, the Y might endeavor to discover some of the interests of these children. One might be interested in airplanes, music, or sports. He might be matched with an aeronautical engineer, an amateur pianist, or a man who also follows porfessional sports. These interests may merely serve as basis for an introduction, or they may develop into a project. The important thing is to get the two people together and develop a relationship which is interesting and rewarding to both.

At best, the success of any such program would be difficult to attain. There is a chance of its being realized, and if it is, the mutual benefits would be worth the effort.

The implementation of such programs would have to be handled carefully from the start. The staff would first talk over the general idea of the plan with those older members who are known for their continuing interest in the organization. If the plan is met with approval, it should then be presented to a group of selected members for discussion. A "brainstorming" session would be excellent for eliciting ideas on how to get the program underway. Rules should be made eliminating negative comments and restraint. When

the total crop of suggestions have been voiced and recorded, the selection of the best practical suggestions should be left until the subsequent meeting. This will provide the participants with time to reflect and consider the ideas heard and perhaps the opportunity to build prospective plans of them.

After a single formula has been devised, including methods of solicitation, presentation, and selection of youth who will participate, a few experimental relationships should be set up in order that they be observed for the benefit of future, more comprehensive programs. These experiments will take a few months to complete in order that both the youth and the older member may have the chance to develop the relationship to the degree where it can be examined successfully. When enough is learned from the experiments, then it will be possible to institute a larger program with more volunteers from youth and men.

The sponsor system could be used with older boys also--a Big Brother program. Responsible boys could be interested in the activities and development of one younger boy subsequently. It might be difficult to match these two individuals properly, but if well done, the relationship would be one in which the elder would gain a sense of responsibility and the younger would benefit from the guidance. That fact that someone cares enough to be interested in him would be enough reason why the younger boy should be exposed to the program.

With the purpose of cohesion again in mind, it might be possible to initiate programs which would include an entire family. At the outset, perhaps only one of the family may be a Y member. On the strength of this, the rest of the family might be invited to join with the member in group activities.

On an introductory basis, a program could be devised whereby each member of the family would be offered an activity which would be related to their particular interests. For example, the fathers could be offered courses in laymen's automobile repair, everyday law; or the opportunity to join a gun, bowling, or gin rummy club. The mothers, at the same hour, could participate in an economy cooking or handcrafts group, a flower arrangement lecture, or one on child care, or play bridge under the tutelage of an expert. At the same time, the children or young adults could be engaging in team sports. When these separate activities had terminated, the family groups could be brought together for entertainment- movie shorts or color television.

The best way to start this program in motion would be to get the opinion of those who are to participate in it. It would be well to ask twenty or thirty children what they think of the idea. The next move would be to ask these children to bring the idea home and to see what the reaction is. In families where interest is indicated, members of the staff might visit a few of the homes and discuss the matter in detail. A group of the most interested parents

should then be asked to gather at the Y along with members of the staff with the purpose of devising a practical program which would be of universal interest to themselves and those like them. The activities involved, for practical purposes, should be kept as close as possible to existing facilities and programs. This idea is meant to tie together the separate activities and make them more a part of the whole.

Many of these activities are now offered at the Y. However, if they were incorporated into a"family package" plan, individually and together they might be more successful. It would serve to bring all age groups together and to use existing family ties to help the Y be of a more centralized nature as far as membership is concerned.

In previous questionnaires, younger members have expressed a sincere interest in the government of the Y above and beyond the Activities Committee. If teenagers were asked their opinions at regualr meetings, and if they were given more responsible positions in the execution of plans and policies, they might feel more of an integral part of the organization. It should be stipulated at the first that this body would exercise no executive authority but that their comments and proposals will be made a matter of record to be presented at staff meetings. If this group comes up with one or more workable suggestion at the start, the Y might extend itself slightly in order to put them into operation even if the ideas are not the best solutions. In this way, the group will gain confidence and a sense

of responsibility, and if the initial plan proves poor, it is something that they will have found for themselves--more or less independently. When this group awakes and finds itself a respected entity in the organization, it will improve in all ways and will become a valuable source of liaison. It will also lend itself to the accomplishment of the proposed "cohesion program". If all youth age groups are equally represented by numbers, this can do much to dissolve the natural barriers which exist between ages.

If a substantial portion of the youth membership became interested, the components of the different age groups might try to get new members in their own age bracket to increase their representative vote.

The conduct of the council meetings themselves must be handled carefully. To as great an extent as possible, the young men and women should be allowed to run their own meetings. However, in order that they receive some expert guidance, the staff could skeleton a plan of organization and procedure. The first few meetings should be moderated by a staff member with the eventual discontinuance of this practice understood beforehand.

The best principles of group procedure and non-directive guidance should be applied. The moderator may introduce those principles with the hope that they will be sufficiently attractive problem-solving methods to continue after his guidance is removed.

A few basic rules appear in Principles of Human Relations by Norman R. F. Maier.

1. Summarize the points of agreement and disagreement.
2. Give minorities an opportunity to explain their position.
3. State as a new problem the failure to agree.
4. Regard the solution as the one yielding most agreement.
5. Regard failure to agree as indecision and withdraw the problem.[1]

If these principles alone are introduced (in simplified terms) and are accepted and used, a giant step has been taken in the accomplishment of their purpose.

It is not inconceivable that such a plan might work. It presents its touchy side, but in the opinion of the writer, it is worth the gamble.

In order to broaden the individual members' interests, it is advisable that they be informed of the educational classes available to them at the Y. According to Table XXVI, only 8 per cent of the membership have taken courses. Only 24 per cent had correct knowledge of courses offered, and 61 per cent had no knowledge of courses offered.

The writer had been told that the Y lacks the facilities to increase its educational program. However, an effort could be made to broaden the base of attendance so that more of the members are at least familiar with a few courses and hence, with the program in general.

It might be possible to allow just a few more members

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[1]Maier, op. cit., p. 205.

into each class. In order to attract them, an improved communications system must be developed to reach members who do not read pamphlets or who do not seem to notice posters.

There must be a nucleus of members who habitually attend classes. Each of these people might be charged with bringing another member to class. Secondly, a "Come and Listen" invitation might be issued to members in general and one or two class members could take it upon themselves to go out into the lobby or library the same night the class was being held, buttonhole a few members, and ask them to come up to the class for that one meeting-- no obligation of course.

These are just a few of the ways that might be used to introduce other members to the educational program. It would be beneficial to cut into that 61 per cent who know nothing of the program.

All the suggestions above are designed to promote integration and to stimulate interest in the Y in general within its membership.

There is no survey which tells what Eastern Massachusetts thinks about the YMCA. Among this population are thousands of future members and perhaps hundreds of people who could become members now. Also in the number are the hundreds of thousands of people who donate to Red Feather. It is important that this public has not only a good opinion of the Y but also some knowledge of its work.

A national survey conducted by George Gallup on the YMCA draws this conclusion from its findings:

> A stronger publicity and promotional program is indicated by the question, "In the past six months, can you recall having seen, read, or heard anything about the following organizations?" The relatively low standing of the Y (Y 29 per cent, Boy Scouts 56 per cent, church groups 55 per cent...) points to the need for a more aggressive local and national effort.[1]

Together with some of the Boston newspapers, the Y succeeds in getting its name in front of the public on special programs, such as the "Learn to Swim" campaign which is run each year. However, this is not nearly enough. Effort should be made to convince editors that things are happening at the Huntington Avenue Y which are both worthy and newsworthy. The publicizing of such innovations as the "Big Brothers" and "Family Plan", for example, might find the Y in the rotogravure section of the newspapers. The staff of the Y must show the editors that the Y has not only something to tell, but also something to do; and that too few people are cognizant of the opportunities which await them there.

Paid advertising is far too expensive for an organization such as the Y to use as a method of constant communication. And it should not be necessary except for announcements and notices.

The people best qualified to spread the word are the members. The thousands of members are the very best communication the Y has with the general public. The more they

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[1]George Gallup, YMCA Survey, (Princeton: American Institute of Public Opinion, 1956) p. 4.

know about the organization, the better opinion of it they will have and the more incentive they will have to talk about it to their friends.

This is better internal and external public relations than can be bought.

It is not the first purpose of these programs, especially the Big Brother and Family Plans to attract new members. These are intended to make the Y a better organization to belong to and to foster the principles of brotherhood and fellowship which once were the major concern of the membership. They would build the spirit of the organization so that it would be more valuable to itself and to the community. Youngsters taken in off of the streets and older boys attracted from the drug store will be far better citizens if the Y means more to them than a playground.

If these things are accomplished by this "Operation Spirit", there is good reason to let the community in on the progress. In a very hard, practical sense, the YMCA needs to be not only recognized but also applauded by Greater Boston because the United Fund Drive will include the Huntington Avenue YMCA as one of its benefitting agencies. Each agency has its duty of showing its best face to the public--and as often as possible, because it not only means more hard cash for itself but also for its fellow service organizations. As for the increased membership which might result from the improved esprit de corps, the Y can handle a larger

membership and naturally it wishes to replace those who drop out. In addition, the staff members have always said, "There's room for one more."

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. (a) In your opinion, what do you think is the main purpose of the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

   (b) How well do you think the Huntington Avenue YMCA is accomplishing this purpose?

2. How do you feel about the way the Huntington Avenue YMCA is being run?

3. How do the people who work at the YMCA treat you when you go there?

4. Do you think the Huntington Avenue YMCA:
   (a) services any special age groups? If yes, what?

   Any other special group you think it services?

   (b) is designed for both girls and boys?

5. Are there some things it could be doing that it isn't doing now? If yes, what?

6. As far as you know, how does the YMCA get its money to operate on?

   Other?

7. Who decides the way the Huntington Avenue YMCA is run? (That is, the people at the local office or those at the national office). Explain? (Probe)

8. How important do you feel the Huntington Avenue YMCA is to the community? Why?

9. Do you think the Huntington Avenue YMCA is tied in with any particular religious group? If yes, what?

10. (a) About how many members would you say the YMCA has?

    (b) What religious groups would you say belong to the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

    (c) Of these, what per cent of the members are (Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, or other, whichever respondent mentions)?

11. As far as you know, how does the Huntington Avenue YMCA treat the members of different religious and racial backgrounds?

12. Do you think all members are expected to take part in a religious program? If no, what per cent does take part?

13. How did you happen to join the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

14. (a) Do you ever bring guests to the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

    If yes, what did they think about it?

    (b) Did they join?

    If no, why not?

15. Have you ever belonged to any other community centers other than the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

    If yes, which ones?

    What do (did) you like about them?

    How do you like them compared to the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

16. What do you think would happen if someone wants to become a member and can't afford to pay the membership fees?

17. How do you feel about the membership rates?

    Why?

18. Does your membership limit the activities which you are able to participate in?

    If yes, in what way?

    How do you feel about this?

19. Could you tell about the kind of people who belong to the Huntington Avenue YMCA? (Probe deeply).

20. (a) Do you arrange to meet your friends at the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

(b) Are the people you do things with the Huntington Avenue YMCA your closest friends?

21. (a) About how often do you go to the Huntington Avenue YMCA? Week____Month____ Year____

(b) What things do you usually do at the YMCA?

Other?

22. Do you usually go the Huntington Avenue YMCA to do something special or do you usually decide what you are going to do after you get there?

23. What activities or programs do you take part in at the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

24. What other activities that go on at the Huntington Avenue YMCA do you know about?

Any others?

25. Would you mind telling me which of the activities listed on this card in which you would be interested in taking part?

( ) a. Badminton
( ) b. Body Building
( ) c. Boxing
( ) d. Fencing
( ) e. Judo
( ) f. Weightlifting
( ) g. Wrestling
( ) h. Basketball
( ) i. Handball
( ) j. Squash
( ) k. Golf
( ) l. Volleyball
( ) m. Gymnastics
( ) n. Swimming
( ) o. Dancing
( ) p. Co-ed Activities
( ) q. Chess, Bridge, Camera, or Drama Clubs

26. Do you usually get to take part in the things you came to do at the YMCA?

If not, why not?

27. (a) Have you ever taken any educational courses at the Huntington Avenue YMCA?

Which ones?

What do you think of it (them)?

(b) Do you know of any courses that are available that you could take?

If so, what?

(c) Are there any courses not offered now that you would like to take?

If so, what?

(d) If courses in which you were interested were available, would you enroll?

If not, why not?

Now, there are a few more questions I would like to ask you that will help us in our analysis.

1. How many people are there in your family now living at home?_____

Of these, how many are

_____Adult men 18 years or over

_____Adult women 18 years or over

_____ Boys under 18 years

_____ Girls under 18 years

2. (a) Are you employed at the present time? _____Full_____Part_____No

If yes, what is your occupation?_____

(b) (If respondent is not head of the household, ask part (b).)
Is the head of the household employed at the present time? Full___Part___No___

If yes, what is the occupation_____

3. What is the last grade of school (head of household) attended?

( ) Some grammar school
( ) completed grammar school
( ) some high school
( ) completed high school
( ) some college
( ) completed college
( ) Other_____

4. Were you born in the United States? Yes ( ) No ( ) If no, where_____

5. What is your religion?

( ) Protestant ( ) Catholic ( ) Jewish Other_____

6. About how often do you attend? _____

7. About how old are you?

( ) 15-20
( ) 21-30
( ) 31-40
( ) 41-50
( ) 51-60
( ) over 60

8. Sex
Male ( ) Female ( )

9. Race_____

10. What is your marital status? ( ) Single ( ) Married ( ) Div. ( ) Widower

11. What type of membership do you have at the YMCA?_____

12. How long have you been a member?_____

13. Do you plan on renewing your membership when it runs out?

If not, why not?

14. Do any of your immediate family belong to the YMCA?

If yes, who?

15. Would you look at the card (hand respondent card #2) and tell me which of the groups the total annual income for family fell into in 1956.

(a) less than $1,000
(b) $1,000 to $1,999
(c) $2,000 to $3,999
(d) $4,000 to $5,999
(e) $6,000 to $7,999
(f) $8,000 to $9,999
(g) over $10,000

Interviewee's Name_____ Address_____

Date_____ Interviewer's Name_____