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# Communicating the Obesity Crisis: The Role of Public Relations and the Media in Framing a National Health Issue

Kimberly Jandl

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# Communicating the Obesity Crisis: The Role of Public Relations and the Media in Framing a National Health Issue

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May 2005

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Public Relations with Honors

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## **Abstract**

Communication of obesity as a public health issue has taken many forms and been framed in a variety of ways since early 2000. These communications often frame the public's perception of the problem and of potential solutions. This study examines the current perceptions and actions according to several groups, including the government, the food industry, individuals, the media, and public relations professionals. It then attempts to assess the framing of the issue, including perceptions and actions, by the print media and public relations professionals. A census of newspaper articles and press releases from a one-month time period in late 2004 were collected and analyzed to answer two questions: (a) How are each of the groups – newspapers and PR professionals – framing the issue? and (b) What are the implications of the current framing strategies? The study found evidence of framing according to a blame-and-responsibility scheme, and reactions that attempt to sway blame from one party to another.

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## Preface

I never really noticed the problem until I came home for my first college break. After attending school for several months without access to the outside world – for freshmen, the first semester of college is like a summer sleep-away camp – I had become accustomed to a world of mostly thin, fit people. It was when I went to the local Wal-Mart in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, that it hit me: There are a lot of overweight people in America. Every other person, it seemed, was fat. A little fat, a lot fat... it was like a spreading plague. Of course, I realized that no one is perfect and everyone has a different body. But this was beyond normal. This was downright unhealthy.

It was also about that time that the news media seemed to pick up on the fat trend. Like a snowball dropped at the top of a mountain, the stories were slow and small at first. Then they started picking up speed, getting larger and more frequent. By the time I entered sophomore year, I couldn't go a day without hearing something about America's growing waistline. That summer, I took an internship with Aetna, a health insurance company. There, I got a fast education on exactly how large the scope of the problem had become.

Obesity is costing us – a lot. And not just in dollars; it is costing us in quality of life and in life itself.

A few other things were happening around the same time. I was taking biopsychology and health psychology courses. I was taking public relations ethics and marketing courses. I was talking to doctors and nurses at the health

and wellness center and family practitioner office where I had worked in previous summers. It was all coming together, piece by piece. The obesity problem, I realized, was a problem of perception.

Perception is a powerful thing – it's one of the main drivers behind action (or inaction). In my thesis project, I explore the obesity crisis as it is communicated. I examine perspectives and actions around the obesity crisis according to several different groups, including the government, the food industry and the individual. I then examine how these perspectives and actions are communicated by the media and by public relations professionals. These two groups, in fact, are the ones that help form perspectives on obesity by framing the issue.

To determine the specific framing of the issue, I chose to examine a month's worth of press releases and newspapers. While I would have liked to include more mediums, I found it virtually impossible to keep track of the enormous amount of material on all of the television stations, radio broadcasts and the Internet. What I did find, however, was that the main way the obesity crisis is framed is as a blame game.

In the last two sections of the project, the reader will be able to see how the media's framing has affected the actions taken by each of the groups. In addition, I hope the reader considers those actions in the context of today's media coverage as well. After all, what the media says today is different than

what it said months ago. I also hope that the reader will take notice of how framing affects his or her own perceptions of the issue - because it is how we perceive these things that will determine our next steps in solving the obesity problem.



## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my advisor, Rogan Kersh, for all his guidance and help both throughout this project and my college career as a whole. I would also like to thank my second readers, Brenda Wrigley and Joshua Smyth for their insights and motivation. And, of course, I would like to thank my family, whose love and support inspire me to always pursue the best.

## Obesity as a Public Health Crisis

By now, it's no secret that most Americans are overweight. Turn on the television, flip through a newspaper or magazine, take a trip through the local mall – it's pretty obvious that we have a problem managing our pounds.

Consider the following statistics from a 2004 TIME magazine survey (Lemonick 57):

- Two-thirds of U.S. adults are officially overweight, and about half of those are clinically obese.
- Among children ages 6-19 years old, 15%, or 1 in 6, are overweight; another 15% will be overweight by the time they are adults.
- Even the pets suffer – 25% of dogs and cats are too heavy.

Besides causing emotional and psychological problems, obesity causes serious physical complications. According to any number of medical publications, carrying extra weight can significantly increase the risk of heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, infertility, gall-bladder disease, arthritis, and many forms of cancer. The price tag for all this: an estimated \$117 billion per year, according to the Surgeon General (Lemonick 58). Medical experts are projecting obesity may soon be the number one cause of preventable death in the United States (58).<sup>1</sup> At the rate obesity is rising – from 15.1% of the population ages 20 and above in the late 1970s to 30.5% in the late 1990s – it may not be an exaggeration to call obesity a public health crisis (58).

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<sup>1</sup> Though at the time of publication, the CDC estimates this projection is an overstatement.

This is not the first time America has faced a public health dilemma. Political scientists Rogan Kersh and James Morone likened obesity to four other formerly personal activities that became public (and eventually political) controversies: alcohol, drugs, sex (namely birth control and abortion), and tobacco. Their analysis pointed to seven “triggers” – based on perceptions of the public – that prompt the government to take action and attempt to regulate the situation (Kersh and Morone 162).

The first “trigger” to political action is **social disapproval**; some groups judge and criticize others’ private choices as social norms shift. Next is a revelation in **medical science**; knowledge about medical findings regarding health-related activities is made public, for better or worse. Following the dissemination of medical health warnings are **self-help** movements that help people live the healthy lifestyle encouraged by the medical community. Kersh and Morone noted these first three triggers are private-sector activities that “together...move health issues toward the political arena” (164).

Next are the **demon users**. These are people “singled out by reformers [and] on the social and economic margins: foreigners, racial minorities, the urban masses, the lower classes,” (Kersh and Morone 164). They are the people who “refuse, to the detriment of both society and themselves” to improve themselves, and are often classified by race in the “us” against “them” conflict (164).

Along with demon users is the **demon industry**, the “evil corporate empire that coins money out of human suffering...the greedy industry [that] lures helpless children into self-destructive habits,” (165). When Americans recognize the two “demons,” they are then ripe to form a **mass movement** to demand political action – and action they see. “[Mass movements] overwhelm entrenched industry power and overcome the incrementalism and inertia built into American politics. But movements do not define or promote concrete policies” (165). What does is **interest group action**. Interest groups, said Kersh and Morone, are able to frame issues and policy solutions as they turn popular dissatisfaction into focused political plans ready for action (165).

Basically, the Kersh and Morone theory is one about blame. In public health crises, as in any crisis, our first instinct is to blame someone or something beside ourselves. For tobacco and alcohol, the blame was placed on the manufacturers – the logic being that if these corporations didn’t make the stuff, the public wouldn’t have a problem in the first place. Blame was also placed on the government, for not taking action sooner and not properly regulating and protecting the public from such “evil” substances. Of course, these two groups placed some blame on individuals as well for not consuming the products responsibly.

Eventually, everyone took some portion of responsibility for the situations. In the instance of alcohol, government tried Prohibition, settled on regulation, and educated citizens on the dangers of alcohol consumption. Corporations addressed concerns about marketing to youth (though that's still up for debate), and individuals accepted ownership of their actions related to alcohol consumption. With tobacco, the results of a class-action lawsuit have changed the face of distribution, consumption and education for all parties involved. It would seem that a similar set of circumstances would follow for the obesity crisis.

### **Demonizing Obesity**

Obesity, however, is profoundly different for one reason: humans cannot survive without food. So far, the blame game is the same. At first glance, three major players stand out: the government, for its action (or inaction) related to policy issues involving food production, distribution, and promotion, as well as community planning and education; the food industry, for putting the products on America's table – and everywhere else, for that matter; and the individual, for nutrition and physical fitness choices. The story is much more complicated than that, however.

Kersh and Morone were quick to warn that “no set of political triggers can be read like a cookbook,” and that context and circumstances play an important role in political action (166). At the time of their article (2002), obesity and low-nutrition foods met the first three triggers. Indeed, any look at mass

media will make perfectly clear that fat is not socially acceptable. Models are airbrushed to look even thinner; the Atkins and South Beach Diet are part of a \$40 million annual diet industry (168); obesity appears daily in the news. And this concern about weight has been around, said Kersh and Morone, for over a century (168).

Medical concern, conversely, appeared about a half century ago (169). The National Obesity Society was founded in 1949; about that time physicians changed the language traditionally used to discuss fat and its causes to more medical terms (169). Medicine was then armed with the tools to publicize the dangers of fat. At the same time, self-help movements were already taking shape (169). Overeaters Anonymous was founded in 1960, Weight Watchers in 1963; both were modeled after self-help formulas (169).

Kersh and Morone believed the opportunities for demonizing obese individuals and the food industry may be currently present, while social movement is not (170-1). Interest group advocacy is present, but on not on the side of public health officials. “Subtle, pervasive industry mobilization has kept [obesity] largely off the political agenda and quelled serious discussion of regulating unhealthy foods” (172). In fact, states have been limited to ensuring purity and promoting nutritional practices, while “both local and national governments have actively encouraged the production and consumption of high-fat foods, especially meat and dairy products” (172).

Conveniently, the latter activities are not included in the organization mission statements.

While legislators are debating policy issues, the food industry and individuals have been keeping busy. To determine how the debate over responsibility influences perception and choice, let's take a look at the major players in the blame game: the government, the food industry and the individual.

## The Blame Game: The Major Players

### ***The Government***

The United States government has duties to its public: make policy, regulate business and commerce, and protect citizens, among other things. To most, the process is an enigma. Then we add health care to the mix. Already, it would seem America's politicians and policy makers have enough to worry about, with Medicare and prescription drugs, foreign affairs and wars, energy and the environment. A little extra something around our middles never used to matter. That all changed when Americans began carrying *a lot* extra around their middles (and everywhere else, for that matter) - when politicians perceived obesity to be an "epidemic."

In 2001 the Surgeon General issued the first report to declare obesity a national health threat (Dodge). The following year The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity was released (Overweight). During 2003, 142 anti-obesity laws were introduced in state legislature (Dodge). At the same time, obesity lawsuits made headlines across the nation. Health care costs skyrocketed to an estimated \$120 billion a year (Kersh and Morone 162). And sadly, some 280,000 people lose their lives to the condition each year (Kersh and Morone 162). Without a doubt, obesity has become an issue the American government cannot afford to ignore.



## **Government Agencies**

Several agencies within the U.S. government have already recognized the weight problem. Most notable is the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the U.S. government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves (What we do).

With a \$502 billion budget and more than 65,000 employees, HHS is involved in many levels of government (What we do). The department includes more than 300 programs, several of which are involved directly with obesity. These include:

- **The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps**

This is one office of HHS that serves as the focal point for leadership and coordination in public health and science and provides advice and counsel on public health and science issues to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. \*This also includes the Office of the Surgeon General (Office).

- **National Institutes of Health**

NIH is the world's premier medical research organization, supporting some 35,000 research projects nationwide. It includes 18 separate health institutes, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine and the National Library of Medicine (About HHS).

- **Food and Drug Administration**

The FDA assures the safety of foods and cosmetics, and the safety and efficacy of pharmaceuticals, biological products and medical devices – products which represent 25 cents out of every dollar in U.S. consumer spending (About HHS).

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

The CDC is recognized as the lead federal agency for protecting the health and safety of people, providing credible information to enhance health decisions, and promoting health through strong partnerships. The CDC serves as the national focus for developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States (About CDC).

This is not an exclusive list; several other government groups take part in Americans' health. Another large federal agency, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is also granted the responsibility of providing Americans with health and nutrition advice. Kelly Brownell, a critic of many government policies related to the obesity dilemma, maintained that government subsidies to meat and sugar industries encourage overweight in Americans. He specifically pointed to the sugar and dairy-heavy school lunch programs and federal nutrition programs that provide food packages for

millions of Americans (Zernike 1). The USDA is responsible for much of the food industry's activity, as well, which has a direct effect on the weight problem. Government budgets are also responsible for cuts in recess and physical education classes (Zernike 1). Each group, under the same government, presumably employs one or more communications specialists to craft messages (including the agency descriptions above). Sometimes, however, the agencies and their messages come into conflict.

### **Not Alone: Lobbyists**

Of course, these agencies are not alone when planning public messages and advice, creating policy, and regulating products. When it comes to all things digestible, the food industry makes itself known by lobbying. In short, lobbying is “any legal attempt by individuals or groups to influence government policy or action,” excluding bribery, and is done by paid (not elected) representatives (Nestle 95). Lobbying usually involves three elements:

1. Promoting the views of special-interest groups,
2. Attempting to influence government laws, rules, or policies that might affect those groups, and
3. Communicating with government officials or their representatives about laws, rules or policies of interest (Nestle 95) Strategies for these actions vary and include:

- Providing federal officials with well-researched technical advice about proposed legislation, regulation and public education
- Establishing personal contacts through meetings and social occasions
- Arranging campaign contributions
- Staging media events
- Organizing public demonstrations
- Harassing critics
- Encouraging lawsuits (Nestle 95)

Currently, more than 20,000 people are registered lobbyists; in 1998 they spent more than \$1.42 billion on behalf of their clients (Nestle 97). Indeed, lobbying is a powerful force that the food industry does not neglect. Nutrition expert Marion Nestle maintained that in the time she worked for the government, it succumbed to pressure from food special interest groups. She is now one of the government and industry's most vocal critics. In her book *Food Politics*, she identified two lobbying tactics the food industry employs to influence America's nutrition and health, which she called "the revolving door" and "funding elected officials" (99, 103).

### ***The Revolving Door***

"Today's public servant is tomorrow's lobbyist, and vice versa" (Nestle 99).  
Congressional representatives and their staff do not limit themselves to

serving in the government. By 1998, 12 percent of all senators and representatives who had left office since 1970 were listed as lobbyists (Nestle 100). Nestle noted that “job exchanges between lobbyists and the USDA are especially common,” as are exchanges between the industry and the FDA. The reason for this, Nestle said, is “because as many as 500 agency heads and staff are political appointees chosen on the basis of party affiliation and support” (100). The exchange has benefits beyond that – when officials trade places, the industry stands to gain their expertise, and they stand to gain the industry’s high salaries (Nestle 101).

### ***Funding Elected Officials***

Donations to elected officials can come in two forms: “hard” and “soft” money. Hard money is governed by legislation and given to individual members of Congress through Political Action Committees (PACs). PACs can donate up to \$5,000 to each candidate and must disclose their contributions. In the 1999-2000 election cycle, 211 agribusiness PACs contributed \$4.3 million to federal candidates (Nestle 103). Nestle noted that “agribusiness PAC money is remarkable for its unequal distribution among Democrats and Republicans” – Republicans get more (103). Also noteworthy is that PAC money “preferentially goes to candidates most likely to favor particular corporate interests...and to members of House and Senate Agriculture Committees” (103). Nestle proposed that legislators probably do not want to make decisions that “displease” PAC contributors because of the costs of election campaigns and the finance laws that govern them (105). Of

course, most often the case is that PAC money goes to whichever party is in power.

Soft money is given “for administrative and other expenses involved in supporting issues that political parties and candidates might favor...[It] supports elections indirectly, can come from any source, is unrestricted in amount, and does not need to be disclosed” (Nestle 105). For these reasons, soft money contributions can be quite substantial. From 1997-1999, food retailers gave \$3.8 million to Republicans and \$1.1 million to Democrats (Nestle 106).

Lobbyists also give members of Congress gifts, though they are limited to small items worth no more than \$50 each and totaling no more than \$100 each year (Nestle 106). Members of Congress are permitted to accept paid trips from corporate lobbyists, as well, if “the event was sponsored by a political party, was a fact-finding mission, or was a conference at which the member was an invited speaker” (Nestle 107). Nestle pointed to the leading recipient of trips –26 of his excursions were courtesy of the meat industry and were worth \$18,550 (107). Indeed, the food industry keeps its lobbyists busy.

## **Other Advocacy Groups**

Not all advocates concerned with food are lobbyists working with for-profit companies. That does not mean they aren't able to influence opinion and policy. Some of the active advocacy groups include:

- **Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)**

A consumer advocacy organization “whose twin missions are to conduct innovative research and advocacy programs in health and nutrition, and to provide consumers with current, useful information about their health and well-being” (CSPI).

- **Center for Consumer Freedom**

A nonprofit coalition supported by restaurants, food companies and consumers “working together to promote personal responsibility and protect consumer choices” (Center).

- **American Dietetic Association**

The nation's “largest organization of food and nutrition professionals,” with a commitment to “helping people enjoy health lives.” The ADA has professional education programs, government affairs officials, a “National Nutrition Month” (March), a journal, a charity foundation, and regularly issued position statements (ADA).

- **World Health Organization (WHO)**

The United Nation's health agency, the WHO has been in existence for over 50 years and pursues the "highest possible level of health" for all peoples. The WHO Constitution defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." The organization is governed by 192 Member States associated with WHO (WHO).

These are just a few of the many interest groups active in Washington and beyond. Interestingly, there is even a group devoted solely to the obesity issue: The North American Association for the Study of Obesity.

With so many different messages being presented to policy makers, deciding what to do about the obesity problem is not an easy task. Many of these groups are calling for strong and drastic action against the food industry – some want tax on unhealthy food; some want stronger health programs. While the U.S. government has yet to regulate fatty foods, it is certainly something on the minds of politicians. Regulation of fatty foods is a sensitive issue, and not just because food is personal. Food is also unique in that everyone must consume it to survive; it is engrained in many cultural and familial customs and activities; and is not easily classified as "healthy" and "not healthy" or "good" and "bad." If the government were to regulate food, at least four strategies exist: controlling the conditions of sale, raising prices (via sin



taxes), regulating marketing and advertising, and education (Kersh and Morone 172). These solutions do not come without problems of their own. It will probably be many years before America sees a “fat tax” enacted.

Besides a fat tax, many want an end to pouring contracts and fast food in schools, and others want healthy food choices to receive government aid to level the playing field with the cheap, processed stuff on the shelves. At the same time, the food industry is battling to keep its freedoms and place in government decisions. Still others want the government to enact social engineering changes, similar to the creation of smoke-free laws in response to the smoking problem. And the policy makers are finding themselves sandwiched between it all. Indeed, the government faces many ethical dilemmas in assuming responsibility for food choice.

Now, let’s take a look at the next major player: the food industry. The following section will examine exactly how the food industry is involved in government decisions and what actions it is taking in relation to the obesity dilemma.

## ***The Food Industry***

Humans need food to survive. That is a simple, indisputable and powerful fact of life. And where there is a need in this world, there is a profit to be made. Enter the food industry.

## **The Hand That Feeds Us**

The food industry is immense and diverse; it ranges from small, family-owned farms to large agribusiness (producers and processors of food crops and animals), from product businesses like Nabisco to giant companies such as PepsiCo. Kelly Brownell, Ph.D. and world expert on obesity and nutrition, noted that on the whole, the massive agribusiness and product companies “control a surprising amount of the food chain ... [and] a consequence of this consolidation is that enormous power and influence rest in the hands of a few companies” (10).

The names are familiar: Kraft, General Mills, PepsiCo, ConAgra. Those do not include the lesser-spoken names of the agribusinesses. Nestle considered the food industry to encompass all companies that “produce, process, manufacture, sell, and serve food, beverages, and dietary supplements” (11).

The food industry generates at least a trillion dollars in sales each year, accounts for 13 percent of the U.S. gross national product and employs nearly 20 percent of the country’s labor force (11). These figures do not specify whether this includes international profits or what percent of the global

workforce big food companies employ. The American public alone spends approximately \$800 billion directly on food and drink annually. Of this, \$90 billion is spent on alcoholic beverages, with the remaining 54 percent on retail food enterprises and 46 percent on food service (11). No wonder we refer to the food industry as “big.”

### **From Hand to Mouth: How the Industry Sells Food**

Food companies subscribe to “bigger is better” in every sense of the phrase. Nestle stated that economic pressures force food and beverage companies to expand to “tremendous size” (12). In 2000, seven U.S. companies ranked among the top ten largest food companies in the world (12). With big size comes big sales, and with big sales comes big profits – and budgets. The industry operates in a variety of ways to get food out their door and into our mouths, but most of their direct-to-consumer tactics rely on three methods: advertising, marketing and public relations.

#### ***Advertising***

Nearly four percent of what Americans spend directly on food and drink annually goes right back to them in the form of advertising. Each year, food companies spend \$30 billion (\$33 billion according to Nestle) to convince us to buy, buy, buy (Brownell 103). One third of this amount is directed just to children (Brownell 100).

Advertising comes in a variety of forms: television, billboards, print, product placement in movies and television, logos in schools and on vending machines, buses, taxis and police cars. Television is the favored means of advertising for the food industry – not surprising, given the average American watches 1,567 hours per year, or 3-4 hours per day (Brownell 100). In general, advertising works by first affecting people’s awareness, then their attitudes, and finally (and to the advertiser, most importantly) their behaviors. In other words, it has a direct effect on perception.

Advertising is worth the cost – with the intensity, repetition and visibility of a message comes increased sales (Nestle 22). Promotion of nutritional advantages such as “low-fat, no cholesterol and calcium-added” and health claims such as “lowers cholesterol and prevents cancer” further increase sales. Ironically, the foods that can truthfully and ethically make these claims (fruits, vegetables and the like) are not the ones with big money.

Indeed, some areas of the industry are more aggressive than others. Of the \$30-\$33 billion, nearly 70 percent is for convenience foods, candy and snacks, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts (Nestle 22). Many of these brands use celebrity sponsorship to enhance the credibility of the brand and cartoon characters to increase recognition. McDonald’s, for instance, spends more than \$1 billion a year on the Ronald cartoon character and the Justin Timberlake “I’m lovin’ it” jingle (Brownell 101). Soft drink companies spent \$115.5 million (think Pepsi and Britney) and candy bars (think numerous

athletes) spent up to \$50 million in 1998 (Brownell 101). At the same time, only 2.2 percent of the advertising sum is for fruits, vegetables, grains or beans (Nestle 22). The National Cancer Institute's 5 A Day campaign had just a \$1million budget (Brownell 101). That's tough competition.

### ***Marketing***

Marketing generally centers on "the four P's": product, price, place and promotion. Food marketers use these "P's" to help determine people's wants and needs. Nearly all research on food wants and needs, said Nestle, yield the same conclusion:

"When food is plentiful and people can afford to buy it, basic biological needs become less compelling and the principle determinant of food choice is personal preference. In turn, personal preferences may be influenced by religion and other cultural factors, as well as by considerations of convenience, price, and nutritional value." (16)

For these reasons, the food industry's marketing imperatives principally concern the four factors of taste, cost, convenience and "public confusion" (17).

Marketers' product process corresponds with both taste and convenience. Indeed, we prefer foods that taste, look and smell good, are familiar, and provide variety (Nestle 17). Our preferences are influenced by family and ethnic background, level of education, income, age and gender (17). We also

prefer foods that are convenient. Nestle pointed to convenience as the “principle factor driving the development of value-added products” (19). Nearly half of all meals are consumed outside the home. This, of course, creates a need for products such as pre-packaged cereal in a bowl, yogurt in a tube, and “power” bars. Many of these products are high in calories, fat, sugar or salt (19).

The marketing price process corresponds with cost. The food industry’s overabundance of products means that prices must be low. This pressures the industry to add value to foods through processing (Nestle 17). Processing does not cost too much – about 20 percent – so that leaves plenty left over to pay for labor, packaging and other value-enhancing strategies (17). These value-enhancing activities, in turn, are used to create our wants and needs and to motivate us to purchase the product.

The place process also corresponds with convenience. The food industry knows we “need” foods where and when we want them, and that we are willing to pay the price. When we are not near a kitchen, the food industry provides us with many convenient means of obtaining their food: stores every few miles, vending machines in the office and at school, snack bars and cafeterias, and even delivery. “Convenience adds value to foods and stimulates the food industry to create even more products that can be consumed quickly and with minimal preparation” (Nestle 20).

Finally, promotion corresponds with confusion. Aside from the usual coupons and sales the industry uses are the “deals” they invented. McDonald’s has its SuperSizing: “For just a few cents more, you can get an additional...” At 7-Eleven, options range from the Big Gulp to the Super Big Gulp to the Xtreme Big Gulp to (finally) the Double Big Gulp. With each increase in size, consumers seem to be getting more for their dollar. Consumers like this. And the food industry likes selling more of its product. “Multiple opportunities exist to get food for less money – stores run sales, large sizes are ubiquitous and tend to have lower unit prices ... this is truer for packaged foods than for fresh foods” (Brownell 203). As a result, portion sizes across the environment have become larger and larger to the point that Americans do not know what a correct (or healthy) portion size looks like.

In addition to the size “deals” are the health claims the food industry puts on products. Techno-foods (foods enriched or fortified with vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, amino acids, fatty acids, herbs, plant phytochemicals or wood pulp derivatives) offer manufacturers the opportunity to promote their foods with health claims (Nestle 296). Often, consumers misinterpret the meanings of these claims and mistakenly perceive them for nutritional guarantees. “The development of these foods has produced ... a further increase in public confusion about how to best achieve a recommended diet” (297).

### ***Public Relations***

While many definitions exist even within the field, the most general and applicable one maintains that public relations is “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends” (Cutlip, Center and Broom). The operative words here are “mutually beneficial” and “success.” For the food industry, public relations is just as powerful as marketing and advertising.

“Virtually every food and beverage product is represented by a trade association or public relations firm whose job it is to promote a positive image of that item among consumers, professionals and the media...food companies use public relations to divert criticism and to convince people that their products promote more health or are – at worst – harmless.” (Nestle 21, 145)

Public relations is probably the most ubiquitous and active of the three methods the industry uses. Nestle freely admitted to obtaining her information for *Food Politics* from “unofficial” sources such as position papers, press releases and advocacy materials, and that she “regularly” receives public relations handouts from food companies and trade associations (vii, ix).

She also provided an example of a food company establishing and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship: Proctor & Gamble and Unilever public relations representatives “visit [her] department regularly to



consult about products under development;” Nestle also gives speeches at meetings sponsored by food companies, reads journals subsidized by food companies, speaks on panels with food company representatives, holds grants from food companies and has even asked for material from them (x).

In addition, the food industry actively creates and supports programs designed to “increase activity” in some of its publics (Brownell 84). Undoubtedly, these programs are actually designed to maintain a positive relationship with those and other publics. Brownell, a public opinion leader himself, called some programs “quite good,” such as the 2002 Kidnetic program.

“[It] is an engaging, colorful, and appealing program dealing with both diet and activity, aimed at children ages nine through twelve. It was developed by the International Food Information Council (IFIC) ‘to communicate science-based information on food safety and nutrition to health and nutrition professionals, educators, journalists, government officials and others providing information to consumers IFIC is supported primarily by the broad-based food, beverage and agricultural industries.’” (Brownell 84)

Indeed, the food industry established several positive relationships, albeit indirectly through the IFIC (from the PR viewpoint, a wise decision). In fact, a question of Brownell’s regarding these kinds of programs addressed the trustworthiness and ethical aspects of such sponsorships (84).

The food industry also uses public relations to interact with the media and disseminate messages. Companies regularly send press releases and pitch stories to the media. Usually such stories are announcing the latest product or news of study findings about the benefits of a particular ingredient or nutrient in their food. (Conveniently, the company sponsored the research in the form of another relationship, one which probably benefits the university or group conducting the study). If the company has skilled PR practitioners who can make the information seem like news, the media will share it with the public. And with each company and each brand sending messages about their product's (of course positive) impact on personal health and nutrition, public confusion grows. Americans undoubtedly become even more confused on what to eat with each new message – especially when the news conflicts with traditional dietary advice. “Research on the effects of single nutrients ...[is] more likely to garner headlines, especially if [it] conflicts with previous studies. In the meantime, basic dietary advice remains the same – constant, but dull,” (Nestle 20).

As the obesity problem becomes more serious, groups across multiple societies, industries and individuals are looking for answers. Unfortunately, as Nestle mentioned, many of the responses are always the same, always there, and to the public, always dull. Big food knows this. One of the industry's most clever investments is in bright people, who are able to respond with new answers that seem more exciting and irrefutable. For all it is,

America cannot live without the food industry. Society has adapted to the industry just as industry has adapted to society.

Next, we will examine just how society and the individual have adapted to the industry and how they perceive the blame game in this food fight. Let's take a look at the next major player: the individual.

## ***The Individual***

Individuals are often criticized for their lack of responsibility in managing a healthy weight. Most of the food industry and health insurers still maintain the obesity problem would not be so severe if people took personal responsibility and made better lifestyle choices (Spake 52). There is some truth to this. In a study by Context Marketing, 90 percent of Americans subscribed to the statement “I am responsible for what I eat and how it affects my health” (Dolliver 35). Of course, it is also noteworthy that 41 percent agreed that advertising “causes us to eat more than we should” and 27 percent said “I am so busy I eat what I can, when I can,” (35). It seems as though Americans perceive the problem to be both their own fault and the fault of others.

The reason for this disparity is the “toxic environment.” Coined by Kelly Brownell, the term refers to modern eating and exercising conditions that are hazardous to human biology.

## **Diet and Nutrition**

Food today is not what it was yesterday. First, it’s more plentiful. From vending machines in schools and the office, to delivery services to instant meals and 24-hour drive-thrus, Americans can get food without doing much work. The substance of food is drastically different as well. As humans evolved through times of scarcity, they developed instinctive desires for basic

tastes: sweet, fat and salt (Lemonick 67). As agriculture evolved, food manufacturers developed ways to incorporate these tastes into their products. The result: over-processed food stripped it of its nutrients. Just take a look at a traditional fast-food menu – burgers, fries and milkshakes. All of the basic tastes are present and accounted for, in a huge overabundance. That is, portion sizes are larger than ever, and most people are not able to distinguish what a single portion is anymore.

The pace of life has an effect on diet and nutrition as well. People today are more connected and busier than ever. This translates into more hours on the job for parents, more time running from extracurricular activity to after-school jobs for kids, and less time for meal preparation. Add to this the changing family dynamic – more single-parent homes, more independent children – and the family meal becomes the exception rather than the norm. It's turned into a fend-for-yourself, eat-what-you-can-when-you-can-find-it world.

### **Physical Fitness**

On the surface, weight gain is a simple matter – consume more calories and expend less. In fact, that's how scientists view the obesity issue: in terms of the underlying thermal equation of calories in vs. calories out. So far, all the factors discussed have been related to the input portion of the equation. With the many changes in societal and personal lifestyles, though, a good portion of the factors contributing to obesity are on the expenditure side. Brownell noted

that specifically, advances in technology, an auto-centric nation, and television and computer-based entertainment discourage physical activity. Most adults have jobs that require little physical exertion – computers and machines do the work for them. Elevators and escalators are available in place of stairs; subways and buses replace bicycles; highways replace sidewalks.

It's worse for kids. Only 20 percent of children today play sports on a daily basis, compared to 80 percent in 1969 (Lemonick 60). Sadly, by the age of 17 a child will have spent 38 percent more time in front of the TV than in school (60). Physical education programs and recess time are being cut at an alarming rate to make more funds and time available for testing and other activities. In fact, only 29 percent of high school students today participate in physical activity classes (Brownell 78). The time of aerobic activity in the average gym class: less than four minutes (78). As Brownell said, the American population is “good at being still” (70). For as fast as the pace of life is today, people are slow to move.

## **Economics**

Economics are also an issue. In his book, Brownell noted a lack of non-threatening environments for exercise and the economics of eating – namely that it costs more than people can afford to eat healthy (71, 206). On the whole, unprocessed foods are more expensive and harder to get than

processed foods. According to one study, approximately 28 percent of Americans live in “food deserts,” or places where big supermarkets are at least 10 miles or a 20 minute drive away (Cullen 67). Schools also feel the pinch – children who attend schools with less funding are less likely to have physical education programs and more likely to sign franchise deals with food and beverage companies (67). In poor communities, children are less likely to play outside for safety reasons, and parents are less likely to make balanced meals because they are busy working two jobs (67). These issues are not matters of personal responsibility, on the whole.

### **Classification**

Indeed, the “toxic environment” influences how Americans eat and how many people are overweight as a result. Several health organizations, including the National Institutes of Health and the World Health Organization, classify obesity as a disease (Spake 52). Researchers are demonstrating at an increasing rate that obesity is controlled by a “powerful” biological system that tells the brain what, when and how much to eat (53). Still, biology does not control overweight – it is the interaction between biology (genes, hormones, proteins and neurotransmitters) and the environment that determine overweight. Many of the obesity programs today rely on personal responsibility to take control over biological tendencies (Spake 54). University of Illinois nutrition and marketing professor Brian Wansink conceded that obesity is a combination of biology and psychology (Spake 54). But he worried that viewing obesity primarily as a matter of biology will

remove the issue of personal responsibility and shift blame to someone else (54). As obesity expert George Bray said, ‘Genes load the gun, the environment pulls the trigger’” (Brownell 24).

### **Risk Perception**

How individuals perceive their risk for overweight and obesity is central to their lifestyle choices. In general, two factors contribute to a society’s level of protection from a risk: societal values and public willingness to accept a risk (Tickner and Gee, and Stirling). On an individual basis, people make decisions depending on their assessment of how likely a risk will happen or affect them (Menton, Block and Ramanathan 533). These assessments generally take into account memory-based information and message-based information, or the context of the situation (533). Sometimes these assessments can be biased, however. Simplifying heuristics - ways of thinking about things - such as the availability heuristic (considering what information is easily available or retrieved from memory) and the representativeness heuristic (comparing something to a similar known and assuming similarity) can cause people to over or under-estimate risks (533).

So, for example, a person trying to decide between eating a greasy hamburger and a salad will consider information she remembers about both (taste, the fact that hamburgers have fewer nutrients and more calories than salads, the fact that frequent consumption of greasy hamburgers may contribute to weight gain and other health problems, etc). – and messages presented at the time of



the situation (marketing gimmicks, menu design, etc.). But she also may not consider that salads with certain toppings may increase calorie and fat content significantly (availability heuristic), and she may assume that since the burger has lettuce and tomato toppings that it has similar nutrients to the salad (representativeness heuristic). She may not have nutrition charts to use for comparison (message-based information), so her decision will be biased in some way.

The difficulty with risk assessment and weight is that it happens every single time a person decides what to eat and decides whether to exercise. With frequency, a risk assessment would naturally lose effectiveness in the decision-making process, unless information about the risks is regularly available to serve as message cues.

### **Risk-factor Intervention**

One way to help people in their risk assessments is with risk-factor intervention. In general, three methods of risk factor intervention exist: epidemiological, environmental, and educational (Harris 341). With *epidemiological intervention*, a person would receive help “identifying the characteristics correlated with increased frequency of the disease and taking steps to alter those characteristics,” (341). That is, a person with obesity would be identified as obese and screened for such things as cardiovascular disease using blood pressure tests. *Environmental intervention* involves “changing the environment in a healthier direction,” (341). For example, a

person who is obese would benefit from a grocery store that sold only low-fat foods, or from legislation that limits junk food marketing. Finally, *educational intervention* is the kind that uses the media to transfer knowledge from medical professionals and other experts to the general public – which brings us to the often-overlooked player in the blame game: the mass media.

## **The Often-Overlooked Player: The Mass Media**

Many theories exist around the mass media's role as an influencer on society.

A brief examination of the psychology surrounding mass media and influence is necessary for further discussion.

### ***Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication***

According to Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, psychosocial function occurs in terms of triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura 61). That is, a person's behavior, personal factors (cognitive, biological and other), and environment will each and all influence one another in a system that, as a whole, determines how that person will act under different circumstances (61). Not all of these aspects are of equal strength in the system, and they do not all exert influence at the same time (61). Because they each affect one another and the person as a whole, it means that people are "both products and producers of their environment" (61). The media, as an element of the environment, then has a role in a person's psychosocial functioning.

This phenomenon is explained in terms of symbols – Bandura hypothesized that people take information from personal and vicarious experiences and translate it into mental symbols in order to process and transform their experiences into ways of thinking. These cognitive models then serve as guides for judgment and action and are used to give meaning to experiences (62). Put in terms of learning, this theory also states that people learn both

from their own experiences and from observing others. Today, it is very common for individuals to observe others – to learn from – the media.

Bandura proposed that “it is one thing to acquire skills, it is another thing to use them effectively under a difficult circumstance” (81). Of course – it is one thing to learn that greasy fast food is bad for a person’s health; it’s another thing to keep from eating it because it’s so tasty and cheap and easy. What Bandura argued is that “human competency requires not only skills, but also self-belief in one’s capabilities to use those skills well,” (81). He is discussing self-efficacy, or a person’s belief that they can make the decision to change, make the change, and maintain the change (81). While Bandura’s theory may be applied to any aspect of learning and behavior, it is especially relevant to health-related habits (this will be discussed in further detail later).

Based on general social psychology theories, Bandura’s included, scholars generally discuss media effects in terms of four cognitive effects: agenda setting, priming, knowledge gain and cognitive complexity, and framing (McLeod, Kosicki and McLeod 136). McLeod, Kosicki and McLeod offer a few words to help define each of these theories:

- **Agenda Setting:** Agenda setting...is based on two related propositions: (a) the media control the agenda by selecting certain issues for prominent coverage, and (b) prominence subsequently determines which issues are judged as important.

- **Priming:** As applied to media use, exposure to a given type of content or message activates a concept, which for a period of time increases the probability that the concept, and thoughts and memories connected with it, will come to mind again.
- **Knowledge Gain:** Despite the amount of information the media convey to the public, the public remain largely uninformed. This may be because audiences choose news for entertainment value rather than for knowledge gain, and because the cognitive complexity of the news may make it difficult to learn.

The framing theory deserves a more detailed definition, because it is within the context of this theory that the rest of the discussion will take place.

### ***Framing the Issue***

The theory of framing states that how the public will perceive an issue depends on how the mass media frame it. A frame can be any “central organizing idea for understanding events related to the issue in question” (McLeod, Kosicki, and McLeod 134). The core frame usually comes as a “package” that uses various *framing devices* including metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images, as well as *reasoning devices* such as causal attributions, consequences, and appeals to principles (134).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For more on other framing theories please see Kahneman & Tversky, and Rothman & Salovey.

McLeod, Kosicki and McLeod believe that in the early history of an issue, reporters and editors have more latitude in choosing framing packages, although their options become “more narrow as elites take positions and media content shows consensus in choosing particular frames” (134). Other factors that affect frames include reporters’ tendency to draw from sources with geographic and social proximity (called “sourcing the news”); values of individual journalists, organizational deadlines and routines, occupational ideologies, and legal and social constraints (134 - 135).

One additional factor exists, although it is often not included in scholarly discussion of this sort: public relations. Media professionals and public relations professionals share a unique relationship, wherein (at its best) public relations professionals act as a resource for reporters, providing them with sources, story ideas and other things. In exchange, public relations professionals hope that the message of their organization makes it into the story and reaches the public. A more detailed discussion of this relationship will follow in the next section, but it is important to recognize now that public relations professionals also take part in framing issues.

## ***The Media and Public Health***

When the media communicate about health-related issues, they have the potential to influence health at the individual level in a number of different ways. Related to the earlier idea of risk-factor intervention and educational intervention, Meyerowitz and Chaiken identified four alternative mechanisms by which the media influence health: by transmission of factual information, fear arousal, change in risk perception, and enhancement of perceived efficacy (Bandura 81). Many of the studies related to this topic have found that the most effective way to initiate change in health behaviors is to use the media as a means of empowering people with “the tools and self-beliefs for exercising personal control over their health habits” (82).

The media also have the potential to influence health at the public level by raising awareness among policy-makers, thereby contributing to changes in the political/social environment. The effects of the media on personal and public health can be assessed on three different levels: level (personal/public), intention of the message producer (intended/unintended), and value (positive/negative) (Brown and Walsh-Childers 390). The intended and unintended consequences are especially important, according to Brown and Walsh-Childers, because they help explain the conflict between health and media professionals (391).

“Fundamentally, media professionals operate in businesses in which the primary goals/intentions are increasing company profits through increased audience and circulation shares. If health-related content contributes to that goal, fine, and by the same token, in general, if there are negative effects, too bad, because health promotion is not the media’s responsibility.”  
(391)

Yet, many psychologists claim it *is* the media’s responsibility to warn the public of health dangers (Driedger and Eyles 1279). Some scholars have found, however, that the media are “often unable to explain the underlying complexities involved in science and politics concerning risk issues” (1279). Analyses of health news in general have shown that the commonly believed answer to most health problems is either a lifestyle change or something “found in the world of medical expertise” (Brown and Walsh-Childers, 1994, 401). This is, of course, is a direct result of how the media frame health news.

### ***How Is the Obesity Issue Framed?***

According to Brown and Walsh-Childers (2002), the mass media have “unintended, primarily negative effects on consumers’ knowledge and behaviors regarding food and nutrition,” (465). They point to commercials during children’s programming that focus on fun instead of nutrition; that roughly 75 percent of foods advertised as “low cholesterol” or “low saturated fat” were actually high in fat; and that food consumption in television



programs is more often portrayed as a satisfaction for social and emotional needs (466). Other studies have found a positive relationship between TV viewing and children's requests for advertised foods, as well as their overall calorie intake; that heavy TV viewing increases children's preference for unhealthy foods and poor eating habits; and numerous other effects (466). And of course, there is also the matter of physical inactivity related to media consumption. Many of these effects are related to the use of television, though. Few studies have examined the relationship between obesity and overweight and print media.

What some studies have discovered, however, is that the news media can have an effect on health policy by focusing attention on certain issues (476).

According to agenda-setting theory, such attention by the news media may lead to public concern about frequently-covered issues "that overestimates the actual public health impact of those issues, and this 'perhaps unfounded' public concern may lead to policy action" (476). Moreover, the framing of health issues can affect the types of policy solutions considered (476). In fact, case studies of newspaper coverage of certain health issues suggest that

"news coverage is most likely to influence public health policy development when health experts agree on solutions to a problem, when the change can occur at the local or state policy level, and when there are private citizen groups and/or public health officials working toward specific policy changes supported by the news content." (476)

The first step toward new policy development and other changes in the current “toxic” environment, then, is for health experts to agree on a solution. But in order for that to happen, there has to be some agreement about a problem.

The obesity problem is frequently reported in the news, but exactly how it is reported – and framed – is not exactly clear.

### ***A Case Study***

To help answer this question, a research study was conducted. Specifically, the two goals of the study were to determine: (a) How are newspapers and PR professionals framing the obesity issue? and (b) What are the implications of the current framing strategies? PR professionals are included in the study because press releases are the inspiration for many stories. The hypothesis of the researcher was that if press releases related to obesity did seem to be the source of news stories related to obesity, then public relations does indeed affect the framing of the obesity issue – and thus plays a role in influencing public perception.

### **Methodology**

A census of newspaper articles and newswire press releases that mentioned the word “obesity” during the time period of November 15, 2004 to December 15, 2004 were collected. The newspaper articles were obtained using a LexisNexis search; the newswire releases were obtained using a Factiva search. Criteria for newspaper articles included any mention of the word “obesity” in the text. Criteria for newswire releases were the same, although

only the top three newswire services were searched: US Newswire, PR Newswire, and Business Wire.

After the newspaper articles were collected, the researcher – who was also the coder - performed a content analysis to determine (a) date and day of publication, (b) publication name, (c) publication location, (d) type of article, (e) type of impression, and (f) whether the article used an anecdote about an individual to illustrate a point (e.g., if the article told the story of a specific person who lost weight using a certain diet program, or told the story of a specific person who sued a company on the claim that its products caused him or her health problems, etc.).

After extensive reading of literature related to obesity, the researcher chose themes that were predominant, such as medical, fast food, children and diets, and others to determine categories for type of story. There was no limit to the total number of categories for the study, as other predominant themes emerged during the analysis of the stories. While the researcher attempted to create mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories, the nature of newspaper and newswire articles made this difficult to do because the articles often mentioned multiple subjects that met criteria for multiple categories. In those instances, the coder/researcher counted the number of references that met criteria for each type of article, respectively, and placed the article in whichever category was mentioned more. (For example, if a story discussed both fast food and children and diets, the coder counted both the number of

times fast food was mentioned and the number of times children and diets were mentioned; she then placed the story in whichever category was counted more frequently). Criteria for each category, respectively, was simply the appearance of the word or related word – for example, criteria for the “Children and health” category were the appearance of the word “children” and another word related to health, such as “health,” or the name of a disease or condition. The categories for type of article were as follows:

### Newspaper Story Categories

Activism	Children and physical fitness	Food addiction	Health disparities	Physical fitness
Big Food	Children and surgery	Food labeling	Health intervention programs	Policy
Body perception	Consumerism	Food marketing	Health promotion	Public health initiatives
Book review	Corporate healthcare costs	Food policy	Insurance and obesity	Soft drinks
Children and diets	Corporate social responsibility	Gastric bypass surgery	Lawsuits	Statistics
Children and food marketing	Eating disorders	General obesity crisis	McDonald's	Suburban sprawl
Children and health promotion	Editorial/Opinion	Government programs	Medical	Technology
Children and nutrition	Elderly and obesity	Government health promotion	Nutrition and diets	Theatre review
Children and obesity	Farming	Government regulations	Obesity and consumerism	Weight loss programs

For type of impression, the coder considered the categories of positive, negative or neutral. A positive article was one that encouraged action; praised a program, person, or thing; or portrayed an optimistic prediction. A negative article was one that demanded cessation of an action; criticized a program, person, or thing; or portrayed a pessimistic prediction. A neutral article was one that reported facts from a study; data from an organization; or statistics on the obesity issue, without mention of optimistic or pessimistic predictions, encouragement of action or cessation, or praise or criticism.

The content analysis for press releases was similar. For releases, the researcher determined: (a) date and day of publication, (b) publication name, (c) sponsoring organization name, (d) type of article, (e) type of impression, and (f) whether the sponsoring organization was not-for-profit, for-profit, or government. Some releases were jointly sponsored by two or more organizations. In this case, all sponsoring organizations' names were listed.

While some press releases met criteria for several categories, each release was placed in only one category in the same manner as they were for newspaper articles. The categories were also determined in the same manner as they were for newspaper articles; type of impression was determined in the same manner and using the same criteria as they were for newspaper, as well. Because the releases are a different kind of writing and published in a different medium, the categories were slightly different than those for

newspaper articles, however. The categories for type of press release were as follows:

### **Press Release Categories**

Book promotion	Food marketing	Grants	Media	Physical fitness
Child obesity	Food products	Health disparities	Medical	Research
Consumerism	Gastric bypass surgery	Health promotion / intervention program	Mention in boilerplate	Technology
Disease management	General obesity crisis	Lawsuits	Nutrition and diets	Weight loss drugs
Education	Government officials	Legislation	Occupational health	Weight management program
Financial	Government standards	Lobbying	Pharmaceutical	

When reporting results, the researcher grouped some categories together in order to compare newspapers and newswires.

### **General Findings**

Approximately 150 different newspapers and news services (e.g., AP Wires) ran a total of 366 stories during the month of November 15, 2004 – December 15, 2004. In this sample, at least 10 countries were cited in the dateline. Following the United States with 209 stories were England with 77 stories (in major newspapers), and Canada with 43 stories. Of the three newswires considered, PR Newswire had the most releases with the keyword “obesity” at 90 releases, or 58.8 percent; Business Wire followed with 56 releases, or 36.6

percent; US Newswire had only 7 releases, or 4.6 percent. Out of 166 organizations sponsoring 153 total releases, 71.7 percent were for-profit, 27.1 percent were not-for-profit, and 1.2 percent were government.

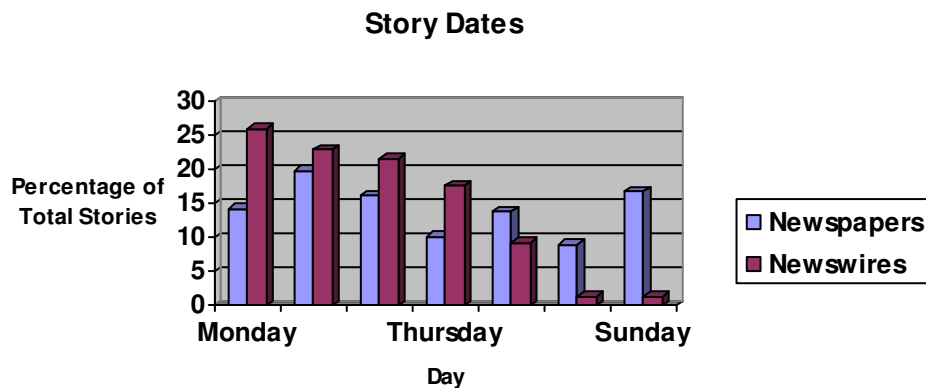
Within the United States, approximately 35 states (plus the District of Columbia) ran at least one story on obesity. Of those 35 states, 23 had rates of obesity at or higher than the national average (22.8 percent) and 11 ran stories higher than the average number of stories counted (4.34 percent). Three states met both criteria. Among the three national newspapers (The New York Times -10, USA Today -11, The Wall Street Journal -1), there were 22 stories.

### Newspaper Story Locations:

State	Number stories	Percent of population considered obese (BMI 30 or greater)
Alabama	3	28.4
Alaska	1	23.5
Arkansas	1	25.2
California	19	23.2
Colorado	2	16
DC	7	no data
Florida	11	19.9
Georgia	4	25.2
Illinois	1	23.2
Indiana	4	26
Iowa	2	23.9
Kansas	4	22.6
Kentucky	3	25.6
Louisiana	2	24.8
Massachusetts	9	16.8
Michigan	2	25.2
Minnesota	1	23
Missouri	2	23.6
Nebraska	1	23.9
New Jersey	1	20.1
New York	12	20.9
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>
North Dakota	2	23.7
<b>Ohio</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24.9</b>
Oklahoma	1	24.4
Oregon	7	21.5
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23.8</b>
South Carolina	3	24.5
South Dakota	1	22.9
Tennessee	4	25
Texas	12	24.6
Utah	3	20.8
Vermont	1	19.6
Washington	5	21.7
West Virginia	1	27.7
Wisconsin	1	20.9
Rate of obesity is 22.8% or higher (nat'l average)		
Number of stories is 5 or higher (4.3 is avg # stories)		
<b>Meets both criteria</b>		

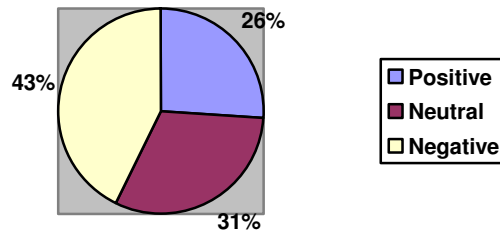


Of the 366 stories, 21.9 percent of stories used an anecdote about an individual to illustrate a point. The majority of news stories ran on Tuesdays (19.9 percent), followed by Sundays (16.7 percent) and Wednesdays (16.1 percent). For newswires, on the other hand, Monday was the most popular day to issue a release, with 26.1 percent. The rest of the days followed in descending order, with Tuesday at 22.9 percent and Wednesday at 21.6 percent. Saturdays and Sundays only saw 1.3 percent each.

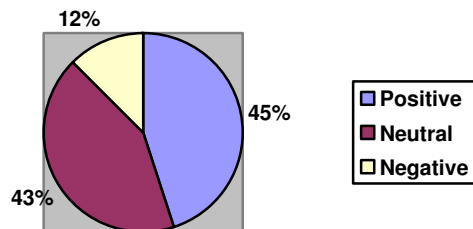


Approximately 26 percent of news stories left a positive impression; 31.1 percent left a neutral impression; and 42.9 percent left a negative impression. Impressions for newswires were quite the opposite: Most of the releases left impressions that were positive (45.1 percent) or neutral (42.5 percent). Only 12.4 percent left negative impressions.

### Newspaper Impressions

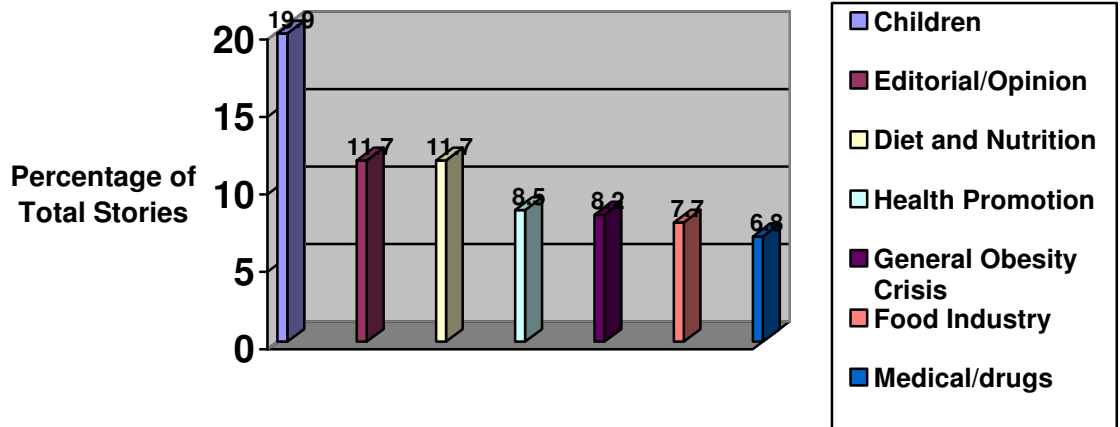


### Newswire Impressions

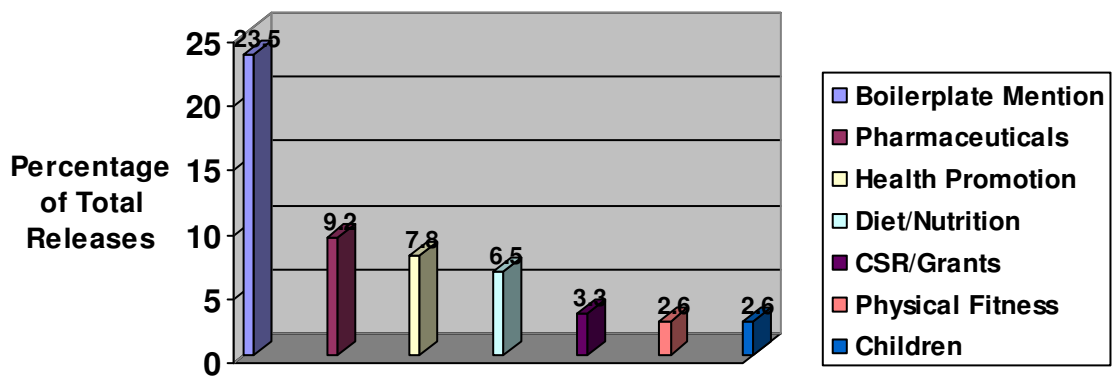


The majority of the news stories (73 stories, 19.9 percent) were about children and overweight or obesity; tied at second were editorial/opinion and stories about diet and nutrition (43 stories, 11.7 percent); third were stories about health promotion or intervention programs (31 stories, 8.5 percent). For press releases, the word “obesity” most frequently appeared in the release’s boilerplate (23.5 percent), with reference to the company’s general mission or activity. The second most frequent mention of obesity was in releases related to pharmaceuticals (9.2 percent), followed by releases related to health promotion or intervention programs (7.8 percent).

### Newspaper Leading Categories



### Press Release Leading Categories



## Discussion

Before discussing the results, several limitations of the study should be explained. First, the time of year may have influenced the overall total number of stories related to obesity. This period, chosen on the basis of convenience, also happens to be the time of highest consumption during the year: Thanksgiving and Christmas. According to Joshua Smyth, Ph.D., professor of health psychology at Syracuse University, it is clearly established that the rate of food and weight-related articles is much higher during this time of the year than any other. He estimated he receives about two to three interview requests a week during this time on these topics, compared to an average of one to two a week during the non-holiday season (Smyth). Further research conducted during other time periods may resolve this issue.

Next, the keywords used to determine the category of story – as discussed above – also influenced the results. The relatively arbitrary inclusion (or exclusion) of various keywords could have dramatically altered the results. Moreover, the coding was done solely by the primary researcher. In most coding studies, it is typical to have multiple raters code the same data and evaluate if they reach the same conclusions (inter-rater reliability). Because the researcher coded without raters, an unintentional systematic bias may have occurred. Also, the coding categories themselves were broad nominal categories. Nuanced stories that exhibited both positive and negative themes,

then, may not have neatly fit into one category. While the researcher attempted to account for this, multiple raters again would have helped.

Now, for the discussion: With approximately 209 stories in one month's time, it is evident that reporters in the United States are paying plenty of attention to the obesity issue. Considering where the stories are published, aside from the 22 that appeared in the top three national newspapers, it is also evident that the subject receives more attention where it is more of a problem. Of the top 25 states with the highest prevalence of obesity, 23 states had at least one story. Of the bottom half, only 10 states had at least one story. It should be noted that three of those 10 states – Massachusetts, Florida and New York – also have more newspapers than the average state. Intuition would lead one to believe that because there are more pages to devote to national issues, these papers would of course address obesity.

The day that news articles and press releases were published indicates a common trend in the industry: More press releases are distributed at the beginning of the week in hopes of catching the editor or reporter's eye and eventually making it into the Sunday paper – the largest paper (and day with the most stories on obesity) of the week.

Also significant are the topics that receive the most attention from reporters. Aside from editorials – which, in themselves, reveal that the individuals are concerned and want the public to know it – the stories that received the most

attention were those about children, diet and nutrition, and health promotion. This indicates that the media are framing the obesity crisis as one that can be corrected by individuals. That is, if we make lifestyle changes - if we address the problem at a young age and improve nutrition and diet habits using health promotion - we can overcome this obesity problem. Another frequently occurring category, after discussion of the general problem itself, is medical issues and drugs. This finding is also consistent with that of Brown and Walsh-Childers, that the media show that the answer to the problems is found in the world of medical expertise.

The food industry was not ignored, however. Approximately 7.7 percent of stories had something to do with the food industry, be it marketing, food labeling, or some other topic. It should be noted, however, that nearly 75 percent of those stories about the food industry originated abroad. The media, it seems, are largely influenced by the norms of their respective societies. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the debate about obesity centered on the food industry's negative influence on government and individuals. During the examined time period, many of the stories from this region were about policy measures up for decision regarding food labeling and regulation of food marketing to children. The United States, on the other hand, is much less concerned with such matters. The major theme here is empowerment of the individual. It seems as though the media are framing the United States obesity crisis as an individual battle, a matter of willpower and determination.

This, of course, is exactly what the food industry would hope for. Moreover, it is exactly what a capitalistic society would hope for. Corporations are not being demonized; in fact, it is quite the opposite. The obesity “crisis” is being framed in such a way that it has become an opportunity for business. The food industry can expand its product lines to take advantage of the latest trends in diet and nutrition. Businesses are being founded solely to serve the obese and overweight market – after all, being overweight does not mean a person ceases to be a consumer. The market is ripe for plus-sized everything: clothing, resorts, furniture, camps, counseling. On contrary, the market is also ripe for minimized-everything: portions, menus, diet programs. With so much press being devoted to individual needs and solutions, it would make sense that the more innovative businesses would make the papers.

Granted, it may not have always been like this. A year or two ago, when obesity first emerged as a “crisis,” it seemed as though more news stories focused on what caused the problem: food, namely, and bad personal habits. As time passed, however, the environment changed. More people were acknowledging they were overweight and started doing something about it. The diet market boomed – there were Atkins, South Beach, and numerous others. Rates of gastric bypass surgery increased. A greater focus was put on physical fitness.

At the same time, businesses recognized these opportunities and exploited them. Restaurants started adding “Atkins-friendly” items to the menu;

employers began encouraging healthy lifestyles and offering discounts to gyms, or health promotion programs at the worksite. Fast food changed its approach to the entire way of doing business, by focusing on establishing a relationship with the customer (McDonald's and "I'm lovin' it;" Burger King and "Have it your way"). Entire new sections of "healthy" options appeared on their menus as well. All of this activity received significant news coverage, and not just in print.

Interestingly, this strategy fits well with what Brownell and Nestle called the "public relations script focused on personal responsibility" (113). To counter criticism, they said, the food industry and pro-business groups use a PR script that has three elements: "1) if people are overweight, it is their own fault; 2) industry responds to consumer demand but does not create it; and 3) insisting that industry change – say, by not marketing to children or requiring restaurants to reveal calories – is an attack on freedom (113)." Perhaps a look at the press releases can reveal whether this is indeed the script.

At first glance, the most frequently occurring category – mention in a boilerplate – does not seem relevant to the discussion. A boilerplate is simply a paragraph about the sponsoring organization that states a few significant facts about the organization's mission and activities. Boilerplates are relevant, though, because it means that obesity is significant to whatever organization is sponsoring the release. After all, press releases cost considerable money to write and distribute, and every word counts – especially when the average



time spent by a reporter or editor reading it (if at all) is only seconds. Surely, the mention of obesity will catch an eye.

The next most frequently occurring category, pharmaceuticals, indicates that the pharmaceutical industry is responding to a demand for weight-loss and weight-management drugs. This again matches what Brown and Walsh-Childers suggest about the desired answer to health problems. The number of releases about health promotion, diet and nutrition, physical fitness, and children also correlate with Brown and Walsh-Childers' suggestion about the answer to health problems lying in lifestyle change.

Of course, the number of press releases about grants and corporate social responsibility indicate that corporations want to be regarded as caring and responsible citizens, as companies that respond to their consumers' needs. That is part of the reason 88 percent of releases are either positive or neutral. Organizations sponsoring releases want to be viewed favorably and as part of a solution to a problem. Newspapers are much more objective in their reporting; 43 percent of stories were negative. Still, this means the majority of stories about obesity were either neutral or positive.

It is also important to note that many advocacy groups issued press releases: The Center for Consumer Freedom issued two releases within the month. They were titled, "Hail to the blimp? Ridiculous government standards have long labeled President Bush 'overweight' and part of so-called 'obesity

epidemic says Center for Consumer Freedom,” and “Ocean's 12 Tons; Skewed government standards make the new rat pack more like the fat pack says Center for Consumer Freedom.” Many medical and academic associations - some of which are advocates in the obesity debate – issued press releases as well. These included the National Medical Association, The American Medical Association, The American Council on Exercise, The American Heart Association, The American Diabetes Association, The School Nutrition Council, and The North American Association for the Study of Obesity, to name a few. Most of the associations issued releases on research findings.

Press releases alone do not influence perception, however. Now it is time to consider in detail how public relations professionals perform their job and influence public and individual opinion. Let's examine the invisible player in the blame game: public relations.

## **The Invisible Player: Public Relations**

Indeed, as the people who write the press releases, public relations professionals have some responsibility for how the news is framing the obesity issue. What is important to realize, however, is that in addition to their role as media relations professionals, people who practice public relations perform a number of other functions. These include community relations, marketing communications, employee communications, and management counseling, among others. Because public relations professionals have a role in framing the obesity crisis, ethics in advocacy are especially important. In a society that is almost evenly split on the issue - a May 2003 poll by the Harvard School of Public Health revealed half of people surveyed felt obesity is a “private matter” while the other half felt it is a “public health issue that society needs help to solve” - public relations can be a powerful tool in the debate (Zernike 2).

Most groups, in fact, do use public relations to advocate their position on the food fight. Probably the more obvious employers of public relations professionals are the food industry and the government. The food industry uses just about every public relations function to reach its constituent publics: consumers, shareholders, the government, nutrition experts and other businesses. Similarly, the government employs public relations (or “public affairs”) to persuade its constituent publics on health issues. Advocacy groups use PR techniques to further their causes as well, though they may not be as

well-funded. Numerous scientific societies, such as health psychology, behavioral medicine, and public health groups, also employ public relations. Many of these groups, in addition to having lobbying presence (as mentioned in the “Government” section), produce scientific studies that may or may not influence the debate and accompanying media coverage. Some of those studies, in fact, appeared in the case study (see Appendix). The only group that does not explicitly employ public relations professionals is the American public. Unless individuals choose to join one of the above-listed groups, the best way to ensure they have a voice in the debate is through purchasing and voting power. And as key publics of each of these groups, individual Americans experience public relations advocacy every day in one form or another.

Without a standard code of ethics to guide decision-making, professionals must rely on their own expertise and experience when practicing excellent public relations. Unfortunately, not all people who call themselves “public relations professionals” understand what is meant by the phrase “excellent public relations.” A brief look at the theory of public relations may be useful at this point.

### ***The Four Models of Public Relations***

The best practices of advocacy in public relations ideally use a **two-way symmetrical model** (Toth 2004). According to Ruth Edgett, message receivers are valued equally to message originators; “thus, in the terms of

classical moral philosophers, audiences are regarded as ends-in-themselves rather than as means toward ends” (3). In other words, it provides “a forum for dialogue, discussion, and discourse on issues for which people with different values generally come to different conclusions” (Fitzpatrick and Gauthier 199). Central to the two-way symmetrical model is the notion of transparency. Of course, this conflicts with the need for competitive businesses to keep certain aspects of its business private to maintain its profits. Another criticism of this model is that it is altruistic and could go “too far” in requiring practitioners to meet the needs of constituents (199). The two-way symmetrical model can also be considered a theory of public relations ethics because it rests on principles of mutuality in decision making (Fitzpatrick and Gauthier 200).

Similar to the symmetrical model of public relations is the **asymmetrical model**. Both use research when planning and executing programs, but the asymmetrical model as defined by J. Grunig “uses research to develop messages that are likely to persuade strategic publics to behave as the organization wants,” instead of using research to engage in dialogue (Barney and Black 235). Barney and Black pointed to the disadvantage of asymmetry, namely that it “poses the very real danger of victimizing as the organization strives to create a benevolent environment for itself” (235). Many organizations today practice the asymmetrical model because it is the most practical in a competitive business environment. This model is conducive to making a profit because it maximizes knowledge about key

publics while still keeping the organization's interests central to all forms of persuasion.

In **public information** or public communication model, the purpose of public relations is dissemination of information, where the nature of communication is one-way but truth is important (Toth Table 2-1). R.E. Heibert noted the main difference between public communication and effective public relations is the presence of dialogue and a transparency "that allows third-party objective scrutiny, thereby gaining credibility" (244). Few food companies use this model because it does not place value on the publics' thoughts and concerns.

Finally, the last of the four technical/strategic models of public relations is the **press agentry/ publicity** model. This is primarily a propaganda-based means of communication in which the nature of communication is one-way, and complete truth is not essential. The organization does little research, and the message goes directly from source to receiver (Toth Table 2-1). In today's competitive, litigation-infused environment, this model is risky because it is based on assumptions about publics and the belief that so few people will question the truth of the message that it is permissible to lie.

### ***Corporate Social Responsibility***

Sometimes associated with public relations is the relatively new idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR). According to Carroll, the founding

definition of CSR is a four-part model; each part corresponds with a distinct responsibility (Matten, Crane and Chapple 110). The first responsibility of a corporation is the **economic** responsibility to be profitable; next is the **legal** responsibility to abide by the law of the respective society. These are mandatory aspects of the responsibility associated with operating a business. The third responsibility is **ethical**, and obliges corporations to do what is “right, just and fair,” no matter the legal boundaries. Carroll noted issues linked to ethical responsibilities should lead to voluntary action by corporations, but are “expected” from business (110). Finally, the fourth area of responsibility is **philanthropic**, those activities “desired” by society. These include contributing resources to social, educational, recreational or cultural purposes, and like ethical actions, are “expected” (110).

The Public Relations Society of America promotes strategic (or corporate) social responsibility because it affects the way companies operate by building brand loyalty, attracting and retaining quality employees, strengthening mission-critical partnerships, smoothing the path for entering new markets, appealing to the growing number of socially responsible investors, and polishing the public image and enhancing the reputation of corporations (“Welcome: Strategic Social Responsibility”).

In addition to corporate social responsibility is the idea of **stakeholder management**. Stakeholder management is a normative theory that maintains corporations have a moral obligation to all stakeholders (110). Although this

is a business theory, stakeholder management mirrors the symmetrical two-way model ideal in that public relations practitioners have an obligation to each public. And similar to the two-way symmetrical model, the stakeholder theory can be seen as “a necessary but not sufficient condition for social responsibility” (110).

Another related idea is that of **corporate citizenship (CC)**. Several scholars have debated whether corporate citizenship is distinct from corporate social responsibility. Maignan defined it as “the extent to which businesses meet the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities imposed on them by their stakeholders” (Matten, Crane and Chapple 113). Indeed, this is similar to Carroll’s definition of CSR – in fact, Carroll himself defined CC the same way he defined CSR two decades after offering the original definition of CSR (113). Matten, Crane and Chapple offered the idea that CC is just a re-branding of ideas in order to appeal to better business as a more strategic approach to philanthropy (113).

### ***CSR OR PR?***

Skeptics of corporate social responsibility and its related theories say it’s just a public relations tactic “to divert attention from corporate rapacity and corruption” (Gunther 3). Moreover, that CSR does indeed drive profit and growth has yet to be proven, mainly because the field is, like public relations, relatively new (Gunther 5).



In the United States, corporations came to be regarded “at law as having the natural rights of persons” (Starck and Kruckeberg 33). Society gives these rights to individuals not for the good of the individual, argued Menand, but for the good of society (33). Then, social responsibility in the broadest sense should occur naturally because the corporation is granted these rights only for the good of society. Of course, there’s always a critic – economist Milton Friedman maintains that the only responsibility a corporation has to society is to make a profit (33). Other critics, like Peter Frankental, believed CSR is merely an invention of PR until it becomes an invention of substance, is open to public scrutiny and is rewarded by the financial market (Frankental 6).

Starck and Kruckeberg believed, despite the many conflicting models of ethics and communications, public relations professionals have a responsibility to both themselves and society: to develop a ‘worldview’ compatible with the normative moral fabric of the indigenous societies in which corporations exists...to define and prescribe the society that its members need and desire...and to take leadership in ensuring openness and transparency (35). In other words, it is not the sole responsibility of public relations practitioners to make their organizations “look good and sincere,” but to encourage organizations to actually work toward being good and sincere. Most of the leading public relations scholars endorse the idea that public relations practitioners should be a conscience for their organizations and act as professional ethics counselors (Grunig and Grunig 2). In fact, one of founders of modern public relations, Edward L. Bernays, told public

relations educators that “public relations is the practice of social responsibility” (1).

### ***Public Relations and Responsibility***

When responding to the charges of critics, organizations – and public relations professionals (especially in their role as counselors to management) – typically have a number of strategies from which to choose. Smith and Ferguson noted most scholars suggest that “responding to activists requires strategic planning, with consideration given to desired outcomes and implications of a confrontation” (297). They pointed to Oliver’s five strategic responses to outside pressure, which include:

1. acquiesce, which includes complying with activists’ demands;
2. compromise, which involves balancing the perspectives of multiple constituencies, pacifying outside critics, or bargaining to reach agreements;
3. avoid through concealing problems, changing activities, or building barriers between the organization and outside pressure;
4. defy by ignoring explicit norms and values, challenging new requirements, and attacking the sources of institutional pressure; and
5. manipulate through co-opting influential constituents, influencing perceptions of the organization, and controlling

the processes by which the organization might be influenced.

Smith and Ferguson conceded that Oliver did not write from a public relations perspective, but they recognized his suggestion “that strategic choices are influenced by the reason for activist pressure, the number and nature of constituents demanding change, the content of requested change, the means by which pressure is being exerted, and the environmental context in which demands are being made” (297).

### ***A Question of Ethics***

Related to each of the above strategic responses are elements of ethics. In some instances, to acquiesce would be the most ethical response, while in others a compromise is more ethical. Rarely is avoidance ethical; and it is never ethical to manipulate someone. Public relations practitioners are often criticized for their lack of ethics – they are accused of being “flaks” who “spin” the message and “conceal” the truth in an effort to manipulate the public.

Indeed, those who operate under the publicity model risk this criticism more than those who operate under the two-way symmetrical model. Most public relations professionals, whether explicitly or implicitly, follow one of several ethical models related to the strategic models to help determine which activities are permissible.

Today, many corporations engage in the sophisticated asymmetrical model while operating under the **enlightened self-interest** ethical model. According to this paradigm, the standard for persuasive communications is that for the organization to do well financially it must do good ethically; it is in the bottom-line interest (Fitzpatrick and Gauthier 197). Many companies - McDonald's included - agree that "doing good is good business" (Gunther 4).

Besides this is the **attorney adversary** ethical model, in which public relations "performs the socially necessary role of professional advocacy within the adversary process essential to free enterprise and competition" (Fitzpatrick and Gauthier 196). In this system, the public has an assumed responsibility to "gather and evaluate information that is relevant to their lives and choices" (196). Evidently, food companies follow this model when it comes to providing nutrition information – the posters are in the restaurants for anyone to see, if anyone bothers to read them. Still, important information may be withheld – and in less privileged groups with little access to public officials and education, challenges to the institution's truth are difficult and responsible action is not always taken.

Another popular ethical model for public relations and organizations is the **community/social responsibility** model. Implied in the symmetrical models are moral obligations to society, or social responsibility. True social responsibility, according to Fitzpatrick and Gauthier, is:

“taking actions and instituting policies that are morally right for that reason alone, without an ulterior self-interested motive...[it] means first that one recognizes, accepts and acts on a general responsibility to one’s society, [m]ore specifically and more realistically it requires responsibility to those persons and interests who will be impacted by one’s actions.” (199)

These guidelines can be vague, however, and “lack a clear definition” (199). Another criticism is that ethics based on social responsibility are limiting for public relations practitioners because the primary focus of responsibility is that of the organization to the community, rather than on strict ethical obligations of the practitioner (199). Many of these arguments are the same for corporate social responsibility.

Exactly *how* public relations professionals should practice social responsibility in terms of the obesity issue depends on which organization they represent. It is time now to examine what is being done about the obesity problem, and how public relations professionals fit into the picture.

## **The Play Book: What's Being Done**

When it comes to food, responsibility is a sensitive issue. By now it should be evident that everyone is responsible in some capacity for the obesity crisis: the government, for its policies; the food industry, for its products and sales techniques, as well as its role in influencing policy; the individual, for his or her personal habits; the media, for how it frames the issue; and public relations, for how it influences each of the aforementioned.

### ***Health Promotion***

Most of the time, promotion is thought of as a tactic for selling a product. But promotion can work as more than just a public relations or marketing tactic to push goods and increase revenue. Promotion can help influence thought, opinion and behavior by sharing ideas; this is often called social promotion. Health promotion is a sub-section of social promotion and encompasses a variety of activities. According to Lester Breslow, M.D., MPH, of UCLA's School of Public Health, health promotion is:

- (1) the process of influencing people to adopt healthful behavior;
- (2) all kinds of efforts to prevent disease, including medical procedures such as immunization;
- (3) the process of achieving health beyond disease prevention (wellness);

(4) all social efforts that protect and advance health, including overcoming poverty and education deficiencies; and

(5) others. (388)

The first – and usually most difficult form of health promotion – can provoke “substantial stress” (388). Behaviors are not self-contained. They take into account physiological, psychological and social factors as well as family, cultural, peer pressure and tradition, ignorance, generational habits and tendencies to adhere to social norms (388, 389). Understandably, to change even one behavior (usually as part of a series) that affects a person’s health is an impressive challenge. Still, it is worth the effort. Health promotion can increase individual longevity and general life expectancy of the population, enhance quality of life, and decrease the cost of treating preventable conditions. It is estimated that 50 percent of deaths from the top 10 leading causes of death are due to modifiable lifestyle factors (Taylor 55).

## **Health Promotion Theories and Strategies**

### *Stages of Readiness for Change Model*

Psychologists have discovered several patterns involved in behavior changes.

One of the most popular models is the **Stages of Readiness for Change model**.<sup>3</sup> This five-step model outlines the stages people go through from start to finish when making a lifestyle change. First is **Precontemplation**, which occurs when a person “has no intention to change his or her behavior” (Taylor

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<sup>3</sup> Other prominent models include the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behavior, and the elaboration likelihood model.

84). Persons in this stage are often not aware they have a problem, but those surrounding them may be. Next is **Contemplation**, the stage in which “people are aware that a problem exists and are thinking about it but have not yet made a commitment to take action” (84). People may remain in this stage for years while debating the pros and cons of changing behavior. Following this stage is **Preparation**, when “individuals intend to change their behavior but may not yet have begun to do so” (85). This hesitancy may be because they’ve been unsuccessful in the past. After this comes the **Action** stage, when the person actively modifies his or her behavior to overcome the problem. The Action stage requires serious time and energy and a strong commitment to making a real change. Once the person makes the change, he or she enters the **Maintenance** stage, where “people work to prevent relapse and to consolidate the gains they have made” (85). Relapse is expected in this stage; the general rule of thumb is if a person makes it past six months, he or she can be considered in the maintenance stage. Researchers have found when interventions are targeted at the stages people are in, people are more successful in meeting their change goals (96).

A prospective study of 284 obese individuals ages 30-69 used this model in a primary care setting and discovered that depending on readiness to change level, persistence in current activities exist (JAmBoard Fam Pract 164). The study also revealed that patients in preparation stages were almost ready to change their behaviors, while patients in action and maintenance stages engaged in target behaviors. The researchers also found that preparation for



one target behavior did not translate to other behaviors. Finally and most importantly, because the readiness to change fluctuates over time, patients were recommended for re-evaluation periodically (171). Essentially, the model works, but people practicing health promotion should understand and appreciate the varying stages' implications on behaviors. A one-time promotion activity will probably not work in changing a person's behavior, especially those so central to everyday life – eating and exercising.

### ***Cognitive-Behavior Therapy***

Cognitive-behavior therapy targets cognitions and behaviors of individuals; it maintains that a person is in control of him or herself. The approach this therapy takes to health-habit modification is to “change the focus to target behavior itself: the conditions that elicit and maintain it and the factors that reinforce it...also focus heavily on the beliefs that people hold about their health habits” (Taylor 70). Many current interventions focus on cognitive-behavior-based therapies. Some common ones include self-monitoring, exercising control over eating, adding exercise to daily activity, controlling self-talk, social support systems, and relapse prevention.

Of course, these approaches assume individuals have the strength and will, along with the opportunities, to engage in such therapies. The “toxic environment,” as Brownell called it, is exactly what hinders cognitive-behavior therapies. While a person can attempt to control himself or monitor what he puts in his mouth, an environment that points (or pushes in most

cases) in exactly the opposite direction can make cognitive-behavior therapies near impossible.

### *The Dirty Dozen*

Any of these approaches will require both time and money. Unfortunately, money for health promotion can sometimes be hard to find. The reasons for lack of funds are complex. One expert categorizes the money shortage according to the “dirty dozen of prevention.” First are what he calls “**stealth results**” (McGinnis 392). Health promotion, if it is successful, results in healthy individuals. These are people who don’t receive much medical attention and don’t cost employers or the government money – and therefore don’t get noticed. Next is the **primacy of the rescue**. The obligation to promote is more easily resisted than the obligation to “save” people in medical peril. Then there are **blunted time horizons**. Prevention and promotion results are not immediate; they come years after intervention.

**Opportunity costs** discourage promotion because the expenses of health promotion are immediate and apparent, benefits are not. Some even take the attitude of “why pay for someone else’s or society’s benefit?” **Double standards** also exist in health promotion. “Introduction and application of a treatment intervention generally needs only proof of its safety and its effectiveness (not always the latter), whereas introduction and application of a preventive intervention must have demonstrated its safety, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness before provided or reimbursed” (McGinnis 393).

Health promotion brings up **complex issues**. “Prevention is charged with targeting multiple causes of disease, whereas medical care focuses only on the visible manifestation of a disease or injury” (McGinnis 393). **Multiple loci of control** in health promotion discourage adaptation because coordination of different avenues is complicated. The **flow of funding streams** and the pluralistic, decentralized character of the U.S. healthcare system further complicates things.

Then there is the **paradox of self-responsibility**. “Adjustments in lifestyle and behavior may radically alter health outcomes, but behavior patterns are dependent on individual choice; individual capacity; and social norms, structures and opportunities” (393). McGinnis also points to what he calls a “**technophilic culture**,” where “most interventions are not dependent on sophisticated, individually applied technology” because of their broad-based, cost-effective necessity (394). Finally, are the **vested interests** of big-budgeted industries such as food and tobacco and the difficulty of mobilizing support for change in **politics** (394).

### ***Advocacy in Health Promotion***

Despite the aforementioned complexities, even when individuals do receive and accept messages promoting health, their environment does not always enable them to adopt healthy behaviors (Brown and Walsh-Childers, 2002, 478). To help counter this issue, public health activists have turned to the mass media for help. Called media advocacy, this refers to the “strategic use

of mass media for advancing social or public policy initiatives” (478).

Advocates try and harness the power of the media, particularly the news media, to influence public policy and emphasis on certain issues. This helps frame the issue in news coverage “to focus on policy change rather than individual behavior change as a solution to health problems” (478).

As discussed before, the print news media does not seem to focus much on policy in the United States – the script is still about individual behavior change. The only policy issue that does seem to receive attention is related to children and nutrition and physical activity in schools. Still, health promotion is taking place. In fact, health promotion is one way each of the major players are taking some sort of responsibility for the obesity crisis. Here are some ways each of the first three players in the blame game are being accountable:

### **The Government: Education**

In 2000, the Surgeon General estimated the total direct and indirect costs of obesity at \$117 billion. Currently, the NIH funding for obesity research is \$400.1 million, with a 10 percent increased budget request for 2005 - nearly one three-hundredth the cost (Citing). The total amount spent on health promotion is difficult to estimate; however, several well-recognized programs have extremely limited funding.

One of the most commonly-recognized health promotion programs related to nutrition is the Food Pyramid. Designed by the USDA, the Food Pyramid is accompanied by a 29-page booklet with general nutrition advice. Less than

\$1 million went into developing the Pyramid (Nestle). Much controversy surrounds the Pyramid; in her book, Nestle described that numerous industries (most notably meat and dairy) influenced the Food Pyramid content and structure. Today, the guide serves as a standard of evaluation and “has been highly influential” with 67 percent of Americans having heard of it (Nestle 66). Since the original Pyramid was published, numerous others have followed. These pyramids are specialized according to diet (i.e. vegetarian). Still, other sources such as popular magazines offer their own takes on the pyramid, including variations on shape and content.

Recently, HHS has devised a public awareness and education campaign entitled Healthy Lifestyles & Disease Prevention. It “encourages American families to take small, manageable steps within their current lifestyle – versus drastic changes – to ensure effective, long-term weight control” (Citing). A few consumer-direct measures include public service announcements developed pro bono by McCann Erickson and a new interactive website ([www.smallstep.gov](http://www.smallstep.gov)) (Citing). These are part of a strategic plan that will “intensify research to better understand, prevent and treat obesity through: (1) behavioral and environmental approaches to modifying lifestyle; (2) pharmacologic, surgical and other medical approaches; and (3) breaking the link between obesity and diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some forms of cancer” (HHS Unveils).

Part of these strategies is a national education program by the FDA called “Calories Count.” The program is part of a multi-strategic approach to help consumers get “accurate, helpful information that allows them to make wise food choices” by using one simple message: calories count (Citing). Key recommendations for the program come from the NIH obesity research strategy and Obesity Working Group report (HHS Unveils). HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson, upon unveiling the program, said, “We need to tackle America’s weight issues as aggressively as we are addressing smoking and tobacco” (Citing). If this is any indication of what is to come, health promotion is about to take a much more prominent role in addressing the obesity crisis not only in the government, but also in schools and the workplace.

### **The Food Industry: Adaptation**

To this point, the food industry primarily argued that being overweight is a matter of personal responsibility, of individual choice, and not of corporate responsibility. Many of the industry’s CSR efforts have existed in the realm of being environmentally and animal-friendly, in volunteering in the community and in funding research and other causes.

Routinely providing information and funds to academic departments, research institutes, and professional societies is one of the industry’s more common “philanthropic” activities (Nestle 111). Food companies even go as far as to support meetings, conferences, journals (111). Some nutrition experts seek

funding just to enable research (111). In fact, a few of the press releases examined in the case study revealed such research activity: A press release titled “New research from Penn State shows that eating soup, vegetables and fruits increased weight loss and enhanced satisfaction,” was sponsored by Campbell’s Soup. Similarly, Atkins sponsored the press release “First major study examining long-term followers of low-carbohydrate diets reveals significant success rate; study of individuals following the protocols of low-carb diets directly refutes conclusions mistakenly drawn from national weight loss registry data,” while the Corn Refiner’s Association sponsored the release “Innovative uses of corn for healthier diets outlined in CRA's newly released 2004 corn annual report.” Not to be left out, the Egg Nutrition Center enlisted the help of the American College of Nutrition to release news that “Potential weight loss and vision benefits found in eggs research published in December Journal of the American College of Nutrition (JACN) supplement.”

Marion Nestle described the ethical battle nutritionists face as a result of the food industry’s advocacy: “Research suggests that to avoid undue influence, nutritionists should refuse sponsorship or decline invitations to attend or speak at sponsored meetings. Perhaps so, but if we take this ethical high road, we end up talking only to ourselves....If I refuse such invitations, I lose an opportunity to explain my views to an influential audience.” (116)

But, as we have already established, the food industry is notorious for lobbying and creating partnerships and alliances as well. And of course to sell

its products, the industry advertises, markets and uses public relations to promote brands to consumers. It uses celebrity endorsements and brings its products into schools. There are soft drink pouring contracts and bigger portions than ever. The “socially responsible” activities the industry engages in were not enough to balance the activities the industry employs to make a profit. People began demanding the industry become socially responsible for the products it sells - and the food industry listened.

A brief look at major food corporations’ websites reveals the main way the industry is responding is with health promotion.<sup>4</sup> And, as we shall see, most of the health promotion follows the PR script suggested by Brownell and Nestle that centers on personal choice and responsibility.

### **Kraft**

On its website’s homepage, Kraft displays four major themes: Business Update, Brand Close-Up, Food and Fun, and Responsibility. The responsibility section, headlined with “New initiatives increase visibility of better-for-you food choices,” clicks through to an entire website devoted to responsibility (Kraft). On the page are tabs for: Overview, Agricultural Supply Base, Contributions and Communities, Environment, Government/Compliance and Integrity, Nutrition, Health and Wellness, People, and Quality and Food Safety. Under its tab on Nutrition, Health and

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<sup>4</sup> Of course, this discussion of corporate social responsibility in the food industry and case studies could be another thesis in itself.



Wellness, Kraft details its position on health and wellness, and promotes its healthy living principles, community health and wellness programs and education on nutrition and fitness.

In addition, Kraft highlights its U.S. “Sensible Solutions” labeling program, which is meant to help people easily identify healthier food options. Kraft also noted its change in food marketing to children; it will only advertise those foods that meet the “Sensible Solutions” criteria. Recognized as a company of integrity by Forbes magazine, Kraft seems to indeed understand and subscribe to the concept of social responsibility.

### **PepsiCo**

Listed as one of Forbes magazine’s best corporate citizens and as one of the companies with the most integrity, PepsiCo is also recognized for its social responsibility (Forbes). On its homepage, PepsiCo highlights its position on health and wellness. A click-through to the page reveals commitments to “applying the best available science,” and “promoting kids healthy lifestyles,” (PepsiCo). The company encourages visitors to learn more from two of its affiliate websites, SmartSpot and Health Is Power. SmartSpot is an initiative comparable to Kraft’s Sensible Solutions labeling system. In fact, the websites are startlingly similar. The Health Is Power website is a health promotion tool offering educational information on nutrition and fitness, most of which is geared toward children’s health. Not by coincidence, one of the press releases examined, “Olympic gold medalist Kristine Lilly joins students

to celebrate results of Get Kids in Action pilot program; student athletes help children reach goal of 60 minutes of physical activity each day,” is for a health promotion program sponsored by Gatorade, which is owned by PepsiCo.

### **McDonald's**

One of the largest targets of criticism from around the world is the fast food industry, McDonald's in particular. The people at McDonald's know this. Early in 2002, the company published its first social responsibility report to explain that it is not “the epitome of capitalist greed” (Anonymous 8). The 46-page report detailed the company's efforts to have a positive effect on the community, the environment and the global market (8). McDonald's does indeed take its critics seriously – so much so that it has organized events to promote dialogue with its critics to work together toward a solution (Gunther 3). The company has relied primarily on Oliver's compromise strategy and has remained profitable because it has done so. A brief look at the website reveals McDonald's, much like PepsiCo and Kraft, seems to be following the PR script proposed by Brownell and Nestle. On its Food and Nutrition page, McDonald's says, “Choice is crucial: different tastes, menu flexibility, and all the right sizes to fit every active lifestyle. McDonald's range of high-quality foods can fit into a balanced diet” (McDonald's). The site also offers Tools for Health Professionals, Meet the Nutritionist, Nutrition Info and Health Topics. Under the Health Topics section, a variety of health promotion

appears around physical fitness, diet choices, and education on overweight and obesity.

Still, some critics have said the only way McDonald's would truly be socially responsible is by shutting down (Gunther 4). The company, which employs 1.5 million people around the world, serves 46 million customers daily, and offers a variety of choices on the menu – some of which are healthy – vehemently disagrees. Like many food companies, McDonald's maintains it is offering a service and filling a need (4). Considering how similar McDonald's CSR and PR tactics are to Kraft's and PepsiCo's, critics likely have the same thoughts regarding much of the food industry.

Even proponents of CSR wonder about McDonald's (and the industry in general's) attempts at compromise. Rich Polt, who founded a CSR agency, said McDonald's efforts to push healthier foods such as salads are not CSR “per se” but make a point nonetheless (“For Effective” 2). Polt believed the key to effective CSR and not “compliance” CSR is sincerity (2). Of course, it is difficult to determine whether these companies are sincerely adhering to the “enlightened self interest” model of response, or whether they are simply promoting their ongoing self-interest. Only the decision-makers could reveal that for sure. On the surface, however, it does appear that these companies are sincere with their health promotion efforts. They are putting millions of dollars into social marketing, public relations, and other activities in order to

educate the public on how to use their products in a “responsible” way, as part of a complete lifestyle choice.

### **The Individual: Getting Help**

In addition to the activities of the government and the food industry, places of work and school are taking steps in health promotion geared toward helping the individual.

#### ***Workplace Health Promotion: A Case Study in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Strategies***

One of the things health promotion tries to achieve is wellness – health beyond disease prevention. Disease prevention comes in three forms: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary prevention “aims to prevent illness before the disease process begins” (Stave 359). It is the closest thing to wellness. Secondary prevention “entails intervention when the physiologic changes that precede illness are recognized or when subclinical illness develops” (359). Tertiary prevention “is directed at limiting the consequences of clinical illness once it has occurred” (359). With increasing levels of prevention strategies is increasing difficulty in changing behavior. Glaxo Wellcome, a research-based pharmaceutical firm, recognized this in its “integrated” approach to health promotion.

As part of its Contract for Health and Wellness, a “voluntary, incentive-based, umbrella program that unites and focuses all health promotion activities,”

Glaxo focused its efforts in the three prevention stages to help commit employees to making a positive health change. In its primary prevention stage, employees committed to health promotion activities such as fitness and exercise, nutrition, coping enhancements, recreation and work-home balance, as well as disease prevention and injury prevention. In the secondary prevention stage, employees pledged to medical evaluations, injury diagnosis and treatment, screening programs and high-risk population education. Those in the tertiary prevention stages enrolled in self-care programs, disability management and industrial hygiene monitoring (359). Before committing to anything, employees completed a self-assessment for each focus area “based on the stages of readiness for change model” (358).

This program has won several awards, earned the support and recognition of senior management, furthered healthcare savings, increased participation in on-site programs, and reduced lost time due to short-term disability (360). Dr. J. Michael McGinniss, MPP, of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, noted that prevention was “the major contributor to the health gains of the last century, with only five of the century’s 30 added years of life expectancy attributable to advances in clinical medicine” (392). Still, less than five percent of health expenditures are devoted to efforts like those of Glaxo (392).

### *Making the Case: ROI and more*

Indeed, the “dirty dozen” discussed previously are discouraging to health promotion. Still, many corporations implement programs for a much simpler reason: the bottom line. Health affects productivity, which in turn affects revenues and expenses. In a study of over 10,000 employees, obese individuals tended to be absent more from work due to illness, and were 1.74 and 1.61 times more likely to have high and moderate levels of absenteeism, respectively (Jacobsen). Associated costs with such high absenteeism included overtime, overstaffing, employing part-time replacements, supervisory time, costs of absence control program and benefits for absent workers.

Over the past two decades, researchers documenting health promotion have found an increasing financial value – long term benefits usually result in \$3 to \$8 per dollar invested (Anderson, Serxner and Gold 281). Union Pacific, a company with 54 percent of the 48,000 employees considered overweight, investigated its potential savings and recognized a strong need for health promotion. After reviewing injury claims and illness records, it estimated that “reducing the percentage of overweight employees by one point would save \$1.7 million; 5 points, \$8.5 million; and 10 percent, \$16.9 million,” (Zernike 1). Wellness programs that include weight control have demonstrated especially high cost savings. In 1998, Proctor and Gamble’s ROI was 1.5 to 1.0; in 1990, Johnson and Johnson had an ROI of 1.7 to 1.0, and in 1999, Citibank, N.A. had an ROI of 4.6 to 1.0 (Aetna). Predicting ROI for health

promotion is difficult and requires substantive research. Anderson, Serxner and Gold of the StayWell Company, suggested companies use a conceptual model of health promotion to determine the process, impact and outcome of health promotion in support of financial justification for programs (282).

Glaxo Wellcome used a similar model to justify its program to senior management. First, health coordinators offered a rationale for the health and wellness program that included morale, attraction/retention, productivity, reduced time loss from work/disability, short-term health benefit cost savings, long-term health benefit cost savings, and quality of life (Stave 359). Next they offered critical success factors that included senior management support, contracting, focus, longitudinal programming, stages of readiness for change model, integration with other health programs, integrated data analysis, feedback/continuous improvement, employee surveys, and continuous marketing (359). By clearly and concisely outlining the issues for management, the health coordinators were able to make the case for the program and ensure all parties understood upfront what was necessary for success.

### *The Options*

In general, workplace health promotion takes place in two forms: explicit amenities part of a health benefits program, or implicit strategies in workplace design. Weight management programs that stress personal responsibility assisted by the workplace are more common. The Washington Business

Group on Health issued a report in 2003 titled *Best Practices and Strategies for Weight Management: A Toolkit for Large Employers*. The document analyzed weight management programs according to costs, success factors and features, and offered a series of tips and strategies sheets in addition to contact info. Some of the programs that received especially favorable reviews include Weight Watchers, LEARN, and Live for Life.

The second option – workplace design – is taking place more gradually. Companies offer more cafeteria options, change locations and layouts of their workplace in a “passive-aggressive” measure to “get an increasingly overweight society to move more and eat less” (Zernike 1). Sprint offered an especially interesting example. In reaction to research that suggested pedestrian-friendly places promote healthier weights, the company planned its 200-acre world headquarters accordingly (1). It placed parking garages on the far side of a road and banned cars, forcing employees to walk the sometimes half-mile distance between buildings (1). To encourage more cardiovascular activity, Sprint also put in slow elevators and wide, windowed staircases (1). Employees adapted, but slowly.

Advocates of workplace design, such as Brownell, point to the success of clever planning and encourage the government to create similar conditions in communities. Some communities, such as the Kentlands in Gaithersburg, Maryland, are built in a similar fashion to encourage walking and active lifestyles.



### **School Health Promotion**

Schools enact health promotion programs for similar reasons to workplaces – reduced absenteeism and more productive students. But several other reasons for the program exist, namely that most children go to school, school population is young (and therefore impressionable), and schools have a natural intervention vehicle: classes (Taylor 90).

For the latter list of reasons, other kinds of promotion occur in the classroom as well. Many schools throughout the nation have million dollar pouring contracts that grant soft drink companies exclusive rights to schools. Corporations enter schools through cafeterias, Channel One, vending machines, sponsored gymnasiums and equipment and many other avenues. But children and adults alike have recognized the implications these sponsorships and contracts bring forth. In Seattle, schools have begun halting corporate partnership programs (Brownell 150). Schools are removing soft drink machines in Minneapolis (150). And some schools are going the extra step to promote health – they are starting programs of their own. In Berkeley, California, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, high schools have their own food and agricultural programs that educate students on food from ground to mouth. The Philadelphia students even have the opportunity to see their food in action at a popular local restaurant (Brownell 150).

Some schools do still appreciate outsiders coming in to influence their students, however. For instance, the 5 A Day Power Plus Program in St. Paul brings scientists into the classroom to work with a multiethnic group of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade children. Program leaders hope to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by combining classroom instruction, parent involvement, changes in school food service and industry support (Brownell 151). Programs like these are especially important in an increasingly commercialized school environment.

Without a doubt, the use of health promotion as a solution to the obesity problem is appearing in all facets of American life. How effective it is, though, has yet to be determined. And of course, health promotion alone will not solve the obesity problem. More groups need to take positive action, including public relations professionals.

## **New Plays: What Does this Mean for PR Professionals?**

At this point, it is impossible to reverse what has created the obesity problem. The best answer is to improve what already exists. This won't be easy - policy change takes years; the food industry will always do what is best for its bottom line; individuals will always respond to their environment; and the media will report on whatever attracts the highest audience numbers. Perhaps the best place to start is with public relations professionals. After all, they influence everyone else.

Consider the advice of Kersh and Morone: If America wants to make a change in the obesity epidemic, it must “put aside prohibitions; emphasize treatment, education, and well-grounded public health approaches; and consider ways to reshape the offending industry and its products” (175). In other words, don't criminalize food, and don't demonize any of the major players. Instead, use public relations for what it is intended: a form of counsel and mediation, a way to identify the needs of publics and to promote a continuous, open dialogue. That would be the most obvious – and ethical – answer to the problem.

What public relations professionals can do is ensure a sense of sincerity about the dialogue. At the heart of the debate over responsibility is the conflict between sincere concern for the public and profit. Within the last year,

McDonald's announced the elimination of the Supersize option in a phase of menu simplification. But the Wall Street Journal – and many American citizens - saw it differently: “What the Supersize dump is really about is the mau-mauing that the hamburger chain has received from the nation's food nannies for selling what increasingly overweight Americans love to eat,” (Supersize Silliness 2). Yes, McDonald's move was reactive and not proactive – but that's how most business works. The goal of public relations, though, is to be proactive. The next logical step, then, is to be proactive in taking responsibility for one's actions – no matter who “one” may be.

That is, food companies must be proactive in demonstrating sincerity and responsibility in placing their products in the market; the government must be proactive in demonstrating its sincerity in its efforts to support public health; the individual must be proactive and sincere about making wise lifestyle choices. And most important, there must be a sense of transparency in all this. Transparency is integral to sincerity – and sincerity is the key to a perception that obesity is an important issue that deserves immediate action.

## Appendix

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**Newspapers: Data**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Byline</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Impression</b>	<b>Personal Anecdote (re: weight loss/struggle)</b>
11/13/2004	Saturday	The Times (London)	England	Eat as I say, not as I do	Michele Kirsch	Children and Diets	Positive	Yes
11/13/2004	Saturday	The Times (London)	England	Food giants slim down their children's TV ads	Sam Lister	Children and Food Marketing	Neutral	No
11/13/2004	Saturday	The Record (Ontario)	Canada	School food plan works	Tara Veldman	Editorial	Positive	Yes
11/13/2004	Saturday	Hamilton Spectator (Ontario)	Canada	Make exercising mandatory and junk the food idea	Megan Anderson	Editorial	Negative	Yes
11/13/2004	Saturday	The Star Phoenix (Saskatchewan)	Canada	Addiction: Eating to live or living to eat?	Robin Summerfield	Food Addiction	Positive	Yes
11/13/2004	Saturday	Edmonton Sun (Alberta)	Canada	Corporate Waistlines Watched; Employers Take a Serious Look at Rising Costs	Anita Bruzzese	Corporate Healthcare Costs	Positive	No
11/13/2004	Saturday	Deutsche Presse-Agentur	England	Health service to offer "lifestyle gurus" to unhealthy Britons		Government Programs	Neutral	No
11/13/2004	Saturday	Daily Mail (London)	England	Personal trainers on NHS in drive to get Britain fit	Anil Dawar	Government Programs	Neutral	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Sunday Herald Sun	Australia	Diet myths		Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No

11/14/2004	Sunday	The Observer	England	Junk food ads banned to fight fat epidemic; Children's TV targeted in drive against obesity	Gaby Hinsliff, Jo Revill, Denis Campbell	Food Marketing	Negative	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	The Sunday Herald	Scotland	In the shadow of the east	Iain S. Bruce	McDonald's	Negative	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Sunday Express	England	Ordering' us to keep fit is fat lot of use because we won't listen	Tim Shipman	Government Programs	Negative	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Independent on Sunday	England	Without a bit of nannying, we'll never eat properly	Antony Worrall Thompson	Government Programs	Positive	Yes
11/14/2004	Sunday	Sunday Herald Sun	Australia	Blast for Coca-cola; Experts hit soft drinks	Mary Papadakis	Soft Drinks	Negative	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Sunday Mercury	England	Eating out: Tax fast food to stop our kids being obese	Zoe Chamberlain	Government Programs	Positive	Yes
11/14/2004	Sunday	Sunday Times	England	In search of the miracle pill	Lois Rogers	Medical	Neutral	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Sunday Times	England	Nanny, junk the junk food	India Knight	Editorial	Negative	Yes
11/14/2004	Sunday	Sunday Times	England	Junk food television adverts to be banned	Jonathon Carr-Brown	Food Marketing	Neutral	No
11/12/2004	Friday	The Cincinnati Inquirer	US	More phys ed for our students		Editorial	Positive	No
11/12/2004	Friday	Plain Dealer (Cleveland)	US	Phys ed standards for Ohio		Editorial	Positive	No
11/12/2004	Friday	Palm Beach Post (Florida)	US	Sprinting toward obesity crisis	Hal Habib	Physical Fitness	Negative	Yes
11/12/2004	Friday	News & Record (Greensboro)	US	Health scare: Obesity traced to the state fair	Lorraine Ahearn	Editorial	Negative	No

11/12/2004	Friday	News & Record (Greensboro)	US	Heavier population heads for big trouble		Editorial	Negative	Yes
11/12/2004	Friday	The Dallas Morning News	US	The big question: Self discipline, not fad diets, is the answer		Editorial	Negative	Yes
11/13/2004	Saturday	Telegraph Herald (Dubuque)	US	Washington Junior High tries to get students moving; Pedometers track how many steps students are taking per day	Madelin Fuerste	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
11/13/2004	Saturday	Akron Beacon Journal	US	Caution greets new diet drug	Tracy Wheeler	Medical	Neutral	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	UPI	?	U.K. proposes banning junk food ads on TV		Government Regulations	Neutral	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Austin American-Statesman	US	State's rx for poor patients: prevention	Mary Ann Roser	Government Programs	Positive	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	News & Record (Greensboro)	US	Grant to help fitness efforts	Elyse Ashburn	Government Programs	Positive	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Omaha World-Herald	US	Holiday health tips available online	Nichole Aksamit	Health promotion	Positive	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	US	Here's the skinny on the girth of the nation	Betty Cuniberti	Editorial	Negative	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	US	Fat to fit: health care executives practice what they preach by shedding extra weight	Pamela Gaynor	Corporate Healthcare Costs	Positive	Yes
11/14/2004	Sunday	AP Wires	US	Body fat machines removed from elementary schools		Children and Health promotion	Neutral	No

11/14/2004	Sunday	Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)	US	It's never too late to start exercise regimen: Healthy habit starts to help when you start	Nancy Naternicola	Physical Fitness	Positive	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	Chattanooga Times Free Press	US	Obesity in the work force costly	Mike Pare	Corporate Healthcare Costs	Negative	No
11/14/2004	Sunday	The Cincinnati Inquirer	US	A recipe for disaster: kids, fat, sugar and salt	Krista Ramsey	Children and Diets	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	Ottawa Citizen	Canada	Counting your bites: The latest diet fad claims high success rates that just aren't adding up	Rosi Schwartz	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	Xinhua General News Service	?	Gulf countries witness rise in heart disease and diabetes	Abu Dhabi	Disease	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	Ottawa Citizen	Canada	All schools should ban junk food	Carlene Stuart	Editorial	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	The Irish Times	Ireland	Study to show Ireland's rate of obesity and diabetes near US levels	Anne Lucey	Statistics	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	The Guardian	England	Parents unmoved by couch potatoes	Gerard Seenan	Children and Physical Fitness	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	Financial Times	England	Junk food ad ban will be 'ineffective'	Cathy Newman	Government Regulations	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	Birmingham Post	US	Parents criticized for not encouraging obese children to exercise		Children and Physical Fitness	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	The Daily Telegraph	England	TV advertising ban on junk food	Caroline Davis	Government Regulations	Neutral	No

11/15/2004	Monday	Daily Post	England	Junk food ad ban is a drop in the ocean		Editorial	Positive	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	Windsor Star (Ontario)	Canada	Eat Smart' project empowers students to make good choices	Elisabeth Dulmage	Editorial	Positive	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	Daily Mail (London)	England	Obesity: Is a caveman gene really to blame?	Martyn Halle	Medical	Neutral	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	Birmingham Post	US	Shipley claims junk food tv ad ban not enough	Jonathon Walker	Government Regulations	Neutral	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	The Irish Times	Ireland	A label that will say it all at the supermarket		Food labeling	Positive	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	The Independent	England	Health white paper: years of targets from obesity to salt	Tessa Jowell	Government Programs	Neutral	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	Financial Times	England	Ban on junk food commercials 'is unlikely to harm advertising industry'	Gary Silverman	Government Regulations	Neutral	No
11/15/2004	Monday	USA Today	US	The loneliness of the nighttime snacker	Nanci Hellmich	Medical	Positive	Yes
11/15/2004	Monday	Salt Lake Tribune	US	Gym class going by the wayside; Kindergartners at school get precious little time for exercise	Ronnie Lynn	Children and Physical Fitness	Negative	Yes
11/15/2004	Monday	The Seattle Post-Intelligencer	US	Moses Lake accepts challenge in pilot program; city sets goal to eat better and get more exercise	Julie Davidog	Government Programs / Health Promotion	Positive	Yes
11/15/2004	Monday	The San Francisco Chronicle	US	Truckin' in a healthier choice	Chip Johnson	Health disparities	Positive	Yes



11/15/2004	Monday	The Macon Telegraph	US	Healthy living means smaller snacks, more work	Joe Kovac Jr.	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
11/15/2004	Monday	New Orleans City Business	US	Fatty foods fill out low-income eating options	Richard A. Webster	Health disparities	Negative	Yes
11/15/2004	Monday	Orlando Sentinel	US	Americans are piling it on - pounds, that is	Ramsey Campbell	Editorial	Negative	Yes
11/16/2004	Tuesday	Saint Paul Pioneer Press	US	Putting our obese planet on a diet	Ray Warner	Editorial	Negative	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	Magazine spotlights Fairhope teacher's fight against child obesity	Dan Murtaugh	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
11/16/2004	Tuesday	Philadelphia Inquirer	US	The 'Good Body' about obesity, needs more meat on its bones	Howard Shapiro	Theatre Review	Negative	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	The Miami Herald	US	Is it yucky or yummy? Kids put food to the test	Cynthia L. Garza	Children and Diets	Neutral	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	Study: Low-fat diets better long-term	Marilynn Marchione	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	The Washington Post	US	Holiday challenge 2004: The demands of the season seem to expand yearly; that doesn't mean you have to	Sally Squires	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	Yes
11/16/2004	Tuesday	USA Today	US	Drug helps smokers quit, avoid weight gain	Nanci Hellmich	Medical	Neutral	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	USA Today	US	Study: The bigger the platter, the bigger the appetite	Nanci Hellmich	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/16/2004	Tuesday	USA Today	US	How to downsize the student body: Play ball -- not videos	Nanci Hellmich	Children and Physical Fitness	Neutral	No

11/16/2004	Tuesday	Edmonton Journal	Canada	Chef targets 'Big Food Inc.' in Canada's battle of the bulge	Nick Lees	Big Food	Negative	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	The Gazette	Canada	Fussy can be dangerous: An obsession with food's purity can lead to severe weight loss, social isolation	Raj Persaud	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	The Guardian	England	Agenda for a healthy nation, but will it work?		Government Programs	Neutral	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	The Guardian	England	You can't add apples to oranges: Winston Fletcher to change children's eating habits, the government will need to do more than tinker with TV advertising		Editorial	Negative	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	The Independent	England	The investment column: supermarket squeeze weighs on Northern foods	Susie Mesure	Big Food	Neutral	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	The Independent	England	The government can no longer be a passive bystander in the fight against this epidemic		Editorial	Negative	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	Times Colonist	Canada	Fat and sugar are worse culprits	Reg Mitchell	Editorial	Neutral	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	The Times (London)	England	The notional health service	Alice Miles	Editorial	Negative	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	The Times (London)	England	Nanny phobia		Editorial	Negative	No
11/18/2004	Thursday	AAP Newsfeed	Australia	Fed: Doctors sign up to obesity initiative	Sharon Labi	Health promotion	Positive	No

11/18/2004	Thursday	Financial Times	England	Challenges loom at cola groups	Andrew Ward	Big Food	Negative	No
11/19/2004	Friday	The Daily Telegraph	England	Obesity news	Peter Simple	Government Programs	Neutral	No
11/19/2004	Friday	Financial Times	England	Let's put a stop to the exploitation of the innocents	Richard Tompkins	Editorial	Negative	No
11/19/2004	Friday	Financial Times	England	A good name can pay big dividends: Corporate Social Responsibility	Fiona Harvey	CSR	Positive	No
11/19/2004	Friday	The West Australian	Australia	Atkins takes bite at diet critics	Cathy O'Leary	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/19/2004	Friday	Press Association	England	Poorest areas to benefit from health initiatives	Lyndsay Moss	Health promotion	Positive	No
11/19/2004	Friday	The Times (London)	England	Watery Diet		Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/19/2004	Friday	The Times (London)	England	The joyless pursuit of good health should not be the purpose of life	Mick Hume	Editorial	Negative	No
11/19/2004	Friday	The Toronto Sun	Canada	Dying for a burger: Our poor food choices aren't just making us fat	Holly Lake	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	Yes
11/17/2004	Wednesday	Corpus Christi Caller-Times	US	Health care is plagued by obesity; Children could face short life expectancy	Leanne Libby	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
11/17/2004	Wednesday	The Seattle Times	US	Hershey's fortified chocolate syrup with calcium; Relativ bites - a closer look at the food we buy	Judith Blake	Big Food	Negative	No

11/18/2004	Thursday	Newsday	US	Ambulating for health; more sidewalks can help curb obesity	Robert Fresco	Suburban Sprawl	Negative	No
11/18/2004	Thursday	USA Today	US	For dieters, dairy's impact is minimal	Nanci Hellmich	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/18/2004	Thursday	USA Today	US	Walking, the weight-loss equalizer	Nanci Hellmich	Physical Fitness	Positive	No
11/18/2004	Thursday	The Post-Standard	US	Life may be shorter for fat youths; Research: Obese children of today may die 10 years sooner than their parents	Amber Smith	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
11/18/2004	Thursday	The Post-Standard	US	Childhood obesity topic of conference		Children and obesity	Neutral	No
11/18/2004	Thursday	Bismarck Tribune	US	Lawyer: Insurer should pay for obesity surgery		Insurance and obesity	Negative	Yes
11/18/2004	Thursday	AP Wires	US	Homemade baked goods banned from some schools	Louise Chu	Children and nutrition	Negative	No
11/18/2004	Thursday	The Courier-Journal	US	Portion size matters; smart servings let you enjoy your favorites	Linda Stahl	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/18/2004	Thursday	Houston Press	US	Ground zero: Houston's been the No. 1 city in America in the obesity crisis. But hype doesn't mean help	Sarah Fenske	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	Yes
11/19/2004	Friday	The Detroit News	US	Schools must choose student health over cash	Peter Maurer	Children and nutrition	Negative	No
11/19/2004	Friday	Orlando Sentinel	US	Rolls of fat add wrinkle to seniors' health risk	Jeff Kunerth	Elderly and Obesity	Negative	No

11/19/2004	Friday	The Washington Post	US	Fewer poor students eat free breakfasts in region	Valerie Strauss	Children and nutrition	Neutral	No
11/21/2004	Sunday	Sunday Express	England	Is surgery really the best way to help obese children?	Clare Heal	Children and surgery	Negative	Yes
11/21/2004	Sunday	Sunday Mail	Australia	Excess baggage: Bigger planes needed to fit oversized passengers	Jessica Lawrence	Obesity and consumerism	Neutral	No
11/20/2004	Saturday	Winnipeg Sun	Canada	Trimming the fat: federal task force to tackle trans variety	Reuters	Government Programs	Neutral	No
11/21/2004	Sunday	Sunday Times	England	Your health: it's all a question of class	Margarette Driscoll	Health disparities	Negative	Yes
11/20/2004	Saturday	The Toronto Sun	Canada	Tele Chubbies: TV encourages kids to be sedentary, commercials tell the to eat junk. Is it any wonder that we're raising a generation of...	Holly Lake	Children and obesity	Negative	Yes
11/21/2004	Sunday	Sunday Times	England	Tax the junk		Editorial	Neutral	No
11/21/2004	Sunday	The Sunday Telegraph	Australia	Big league- Aussies are fatter than Americans	Sharri Markson	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
11/21/2004	Sunday	Independent on Sunday	England	Media: Junking the junk-food ads won't solve anything	Andrew Mcguinness	Editorial	Negative	No
11/22/2004	Monday	The Independent	England	Revival of the fittest; As a nation we're fatter than ever, but joining a gym isn't always	Harriet Griffey	Physical Fitness	Negative	No

11/22/2004	Monday	Edmonton Journal	Canada	Childhood obesity worse than public thinks: report: focus remains on exercise, rather than eating habits	Eric Beauchesne	Children and obesity	Negative	No
11/22/2004	Monday	Edmonton Journal	Canada	Eating their way to sickness; Heart disease may be no more than a Big Mac away for many teenagers	Liane Faulder	Children and nutrition	Negative	Yes
11/22/2004	Monday	Ottawa Citizen	Canada	Parents underestimate childhood obesity: report: 'overwhelming majority' concerned about problem, but don't know how bad it is	Eric Beauchesne	Children and obesity	Negative	No
11/22/2004	Monday	The Leader-Post	Canada	Latest fad diet's success rate just doesn't add up	Rosi Schwartz	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
11/22/2004	Monday	The Leader-Post	Canada	Child obesity data withheld	Eric Beauchesne	Children and obesity	Negative	No
11/22/2004	Monday	Herald Sun	Australia	Label Lingo	Daniel Hoy	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/20/2004	Saturday	The Dallas Morning News	US	No stuffing this year: Students gather together, bu rules force some schools to skip feast	Kim Breen	Children and nutrition	Neutral	No
11/21/2004	Sunday	AP Wires	US	More paying to shed pounds		Gastric bypass surgery	Neutral	Yes
11/21/2004	Sunday	Orlando Sentinel	US	When I was in high school	Ramsey Campbell	Editorial	Negative	Yes
11/21/2004	Sunday	The Sunday Oregonian	US	Surgery risks include added costs, failure, complications	Boaz Herzog	Gastric bypass surgery	Negative	Yes

11/21/2004	Sunday	The Sunday Oregonian	US	Some taking costly steps to lighten obesity's burden	Boaz Herzog	Weight loss programs	Neutral	Yes
11/21/2004	Sunday	The State (Columbia, SC)	US	35 years later, poor face new maladies	Carolyn Click	Health disparities	Negative	No
11/21/2004	Sunday	Columbus Dispatch	US	Book review: Kid marketing assails parents trying to resist	Suzanne Goldsmith-Hirsch	Food Marketing	Neutral	Yes
11/21/2004	Sunday	The Atlanta Journal-Constitution	US	Our opinion: Real American idol? It's food	Cynthia Tucker	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	Yes
11/22/2004	Monday	Chattanooga Times Free Press	US	Battle against the county's bulge		Editorial	Neutral	No
11/22/2004	Monday	Los Angeles Times	US	Fitness; Action is a first step; But to get fit, researchers say, you'll need more than just exercise	Jeannine Stein	Health intervention programs	Neutral	No
11/22/2004	Monday	The State (Columbia, SC)	US	Prevention obesity is goal of state agency	Carolyn Click	Government programs	Positive	No
11/22/2004	Monday	Contra Costa Times	US	Three-fourths of kids fail state fitness test	Larry Slonaker	Children and Physical Fitness	Negative	No
11/23/2004	Tuesday	Financial Times	England	Plenty to chew over, but very little real meat. So there's no ban on food ads to kids - yet. But was there anything else of substance in that white paper?	Emiko Terazono	Government Regulations	Neutral	No
11/23/2004	Tuesday	The Times (London)	England	Junk food 'has to be rationed'		Editorial	Negative	No

11/23/2004	Tuesday	Daily Record	Scotland	Vital: The recipe for good health? (Good food of course); Celebrity chef Lesley Waters vows that fighting the flab doesn't need to mean tasteless food and tiny portions	Lisa Adams	Nutrition and Diets	Positive	No
11/23/2004	Tuesday	ANSA English Media Service	Italy	Paediatricians want ban on food ads as well as alcohol		Government Regulations	Negative	No
11/24/2004	Wednesday	The Vancouver Province	Canada	Action Schools! Plan in B.C. to be enlarged: pilot program upped kids' aerobics	Elaine O'Connor	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
11/24/2004	Wednesday	The Canadian Press	Canada	Provincial government expands physical activity pilot project in B.C. schools		Health intervention programs	Positive	No
11/24/2004	Wednesday	The Leader-Post	Canada	Obesity hurts heart	Sharon Kirkey	Medical	Negative	No
11/24/2004	Wednesday	The Times (London)	England	Tax the fat	Daniel Finkelstein	Editorial	Negative	No
11/24/2004	Wednesday	The Guardian	England	Business is not to blame for obesity, says CBI chief	Larry Elliot	Big Food	Neutral	No
11/22/2004	Monday	Buffalo News	US	Task force targets obesity in children	Thomas J. Prohaska	Public Health initiatives	Positive	No
11/23/2004	Tuesday	Wall Street Journal	US	CDC overstate obesity as a cause of death	Betsy McKay	Medical	Neutral	No
11/23/2004	Tuesday	The Post-Standard	US	The weightiest issue: Obesity threatens to steal years from children's lives		General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
11/23/2004	Tuesday	Detroit Free Press	US	Good for you: Simple farming life really burns off calories	Barry Franklin	Physical Fitness	Positive	No



11/23/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	Walker encourages state employees to work healthier		Public Health initiatives	Positive	No
11/23/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	Study suggests 'glycemic index' diet	Lindsey Tanner	Medical	Neutral	No
11/23/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	CDC admits errors in calculating Americans' obesity risks	Daniel Yee	Medical	Neutral	No
11/24/2004	Wednesday	The New York Sun	US	During holidays, weight gain is bad business	Dan Dorfman	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/24/2004	Wednesday	The New York Times	US	Crunching fitness into phys ed at school	Jan Hoffman	Children and Physical Fitness	Neutral	Yes
11/24/2004	Wednesday	The Washington Post	US	CDC Study overestimated deaths from obesity	Rob Stein	Medical	Neutral	No
11/24/2004	Wednesday	USA Today	US	CDC says its study inflated number of obesity deaths	Nanci Hellmich	Medical	Neutral	No
11/26/2004	Friday	Daily Mail (London)	England	The parents who can't see their children are fat	Jenny Hope	Children and obesity	Negative	No
11/25/2004	Thursday	The Gazette	Canada	Some big firms have made move, but little guys warn of price hikes: Frito Lay has already removed trans fats from Doritos, Tostitos, and Sunchips	Nicolas Van Praet	Big Food	Positive	No
11/25/2004	Thursday	Financial Times	England	Children are off the menu for marketers: The government's concern over obesity has made food advertisers cautious	Claire Murphy	Food Marketing	Neutral	No

11/25/2004	Thursday	The Calgary Herald	Canada	Nutritionists applaud attack on trans fats: Ottawa may fight threat to heart health	Sean Myers	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/26/2004	Friday	The Standard	Canada	Report offers 'road map' to fight obesity	Peter Downs	General "Obesity Crisis"	Neutral	No
11/26/2004	Friday	The Times (London)	England	Shoppers want traffic light labels to show healthy food	Valerie Elliot	Food labeling	Neutral	No
11/26/2004	Friday	Financial Times	England	Retailers give red light to food labels	Rohit Jaggi	Food labeling	Neutral	No
11/26/2004	Friday	The Daily Telegraph	England	Schools will not be ordered to double PE ration	George Jones	Children and Physical Fitness	Neutral	No
11/27/2004	Saturday	The Daily Telegraph	England	How do French women stay so slim?	Allison Pearson	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	Yes
11/27/2004	Saturday	Hamilton Spectator (Ontario)	Canada	A culture that loves food but hates obesity	Rabbi Bernard Baskin	Book Review	Neutral	No
11/27/2004	Saturday	The Irish Times	Ireland	Rise of 'supersize' portions helping to pile on the pounds	Joe Humphreys	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
11/27/2004	Saturday	The Times (London)	England	Stop, go? I don't know	Simon Crompton	Food labeling	Negative	No
11/28/2004	Sunday	Ottawa Citizen	Canada	Demise of physical education a factor in childhood	Jill Reeves	Children and Physical Fitness	Negative	No
11/28/2004	Sunday	Independent on Sunday	England	Living review life etc: Body -- the 10,000 step programme; can walking save you pounds in weight, or just taxi fares?	Catherine Jarvie	Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
11/29/2004	Monday	Herald Sun	Australia	Fit kids, not fat kids; With this guide, families can have fun while becoming	Daniel Hoy	Health intervention programs	Positive	No

				healthier				
11/28/2004	Sunday	Sunday Times	England	Obesity tourism' is Mugabe's answer to feeding Zimbabwe	Christina Lamb	Consumerism	Neutral	Yes
11/29/2004	Monday	The Guardian	England	Television: A modest proposal: Add a health warning, fine those who watch it, load on the taxes...	Peter Preston	Editorial	Negative	No
11/30/2004	Tuesday	Edmonton Journal	Canada	Half of capital region too fat: Trend towards chubbiness worries medical officer of health	Mike Sadava	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	Yes
11/30/2004	Tuesday	The Press (Christchurch, New Zealand)	New Zealand	Hefty premiums for the obese	Kamala Hayman	Insurance and obesity	Negative	No
11/25/2004	Thursday	The Oregonian	US	Hint to parents: Try making those vegetables taste good	Jill Smith	Children and nutrition	Positive	Yes
11/25/2004	Thursday	Los Angeles Times	US	Here's the skinny: Most students aren't	Cara Mia DiMassa	Children and Physical Fitness	Negative	No
11/25/2004	Thursday	The Kansas City Star	US	It's time to fight obesity	Steve Penn	Editorial	Negative	No
11/25/2004	Thursday	Chattanooga Times Free Press	US	More Americans use pedometers to step up the pace of fitness		Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
11/25/2004	Thursday	The Boston Herald	US	Please pass the pie and the liability waiver	Heather V. Eng	Law suits	Negative	No

11/26/2004	Friday	The New York Times	US	Teenagers turn to surgery to shrink their stomachs	Marc Santora	Gastric bypass surgery	Neutral	Yes
11/26/2004	Friday	The Seattle Times	US	Schools' ban on junk food takes bite out of budgets	Linda Shaw	Children and nutrition	Negative	Yes
11/26/2004	Friday	The Washington Post	US	Can being fit outweigh fat? It's possible to be obese and healthy, experts say	Rob Stein	General "Obesity Crisis"	Positive	Yes
11/26/2004	Friday	The New York Times	US	At private schools, healthier food wins favorable reviews (mostly)	Anemona Hartocollis	Nutrition and Diets	Positive	Yes
11/27/2004	Saturday	AP Wires	US	N.Y. creates site on obesity, insurance	Michael Gormley	Insurance and obesity	Positive	No
11/27/2004	Saturday	The Dallas Morning News	US	Overeaters struggle for control during holidays; With food at every turn, sufferers cling to one another for help	Matt Stiles	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	Yes
11/28/2004	Sunday	The Boston Herald	US	Local doc has the skinny on carb vs. fat cut	Thomas Caywood	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
11/28/2004	Sunday	The Wichita Eagle	US	Is the U.S. government's farm policy making you fat? Some say subsidies tip the scales against health	Alan Bjerga	Food policy	Negative	Yes
11/28/2004	Sunday	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	US	Kids taste, help select food	Marda Rose Williams	Children and nutrition	Positive	Yes
11/28/2004	Sunday	The Boston Globe	US	In battle of bulge, soda firms defend against warning	Raja Mirsha	Soft Drinks	Negative	No

11/28/2004	Sunday	The New York Times	US	Tell the truth: Does this index make me look fat?	Gina Kolata	Medical	Negative	No
11/28/2004	Sunday	The New York Times	US	Hey mom, is it OK if these guys market stuff to us?	Jon Gertner	Food Marketing	Negative	Yes
11/29/2004	Monday	The San Francisco Chronicle	US	Overstating the obesity risk		Medical	Negative	No
11/29/2004	Monday	Philadelphia Inquirer	US	Menacing heavyweight: If you haven't heard of metabolic syndrome, you probably will. It's a silent killer, abetted by Americans' penchant for obesity	Susan Fitzgerald	Medical	Neutral	Yes
11/30/2004	Tuesday	Philadelphia Inquirer	US	Family farms, health foods	Dennis Wolff	Farming	Neutral	No
11/29/2004	Monday	Los Angeles Times	US	They can't do it alone; Getting the whole family involved is crucial in helping obese children lose weight	Jeannine Stein	Health intervention programs	Positive	Yes
11/30/2004	Tuesday	The New York Times	US	Sorry. Your eating disorder doesn't meet our criteria	Robin Marantz Henig	Eating disorders	Neutral	Yes
11/29/2004	Monday	Fresno Bee	US	Grants fund health projects Kaiser Permanente aids programs that aim to fight obesity	Barbara Anderson	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
11/29/2004	Monday	Fresno Bee	US	What's for dinner, Mama? If there's nothing nutritious in the house, maybe food stamps can help		Government programs	Negative	No

11/30/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	Alabama insurer stops paying for stomach-shrinking surgeries		Insurance and obesity	Negative	No
11/30/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	Schools will reward kids who make good choices at lunch	Carolyn Thompson	Children and nutrition	Positive	No
11/30/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	District officials cite lost revenue after soda and junk food ban		Children and nutrition	Negative	No
11/30/2004	Tuesday	The Boston Globe	US	Healthy food doesn't have to be pricey	Lawrence Lindner	Nutrition and Diets	Positive	No
11/30/2004	Tuesday	The Boston Globe	US	The cost of good nutrition why the poor eat so poorly	Stephen Smith	Health disparities	Negative	Yes
11/30/2004	Tuesday	Agence France Presse	France	One in five Irish adults take no exercise: report		Physical Fitness	Negative	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	Windsor Star (Ontario)	Canada	Health crisis looms: Obesity, shortage of MDs means trouble	Doug Williamson	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	The Australian	Australia	Fat chance of losing weight	Kirsten Lawson	Medical	Negative	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	The Vancouver Province	Canada	New Brunswick joins anti-junk food drive		Health intervention programs	Neutral	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	Financial Times	England	Food ads face greater regulation	Gary Silverman	Food Marketing	Neutral	No
11/30/2004	Tuesday	Daily News (New York)	US	Weighing kids down: A generation's being sold out to junk food	Errol Louis	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
11/30/2004	Tuesday	Anchorage Daily News	US	Overweight and underage; One-third of schoolchildren are TOO HEAVY	Ann Potempa	Children and obesity	Negative	No

11/30/2004	Tuesday	Rocky Mountain News	US	A profound irrationality	Paul Campos	Editorial	Negative	No
11/30/2004	Tuesday	The Columbian	US	New obesity law prompts Vancouver school board debate; Nutrition, vending sales discussed	Amy McFall Prince	Policy	Neutral	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	Chattanooga Times Free Press	US	Resisting temptation: Diet experts caution against overeating during the holidays	Anne P. Braly	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	Grand Forks Herald	US	From the nutrition lab: Plant-based diet may be healthiest choice	Haawel Zeng	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	San Jose Mercury News	US	How to help teens make healthy food choices		Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	Times-Picayune	US	Green-plater award		Health intervention programs	Neutral	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	Chicago Tribune	US	Regional boom: Groups look to promote organic foods that grow in our back yard	Rick Asa	Farming	Positive	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	Los Angeles Times	US	In the classroom: Supersize Me filmmaker offers food for thought	Erika Hayasaki	Children and nutrition	Negative	Yes
12/1/2004	Wednesday	The New York Times	US	Read any good nutrition labels lately?	Marian Burros	Food labeling	Negative	Yes
12/1/2004	Wednesday	The Washington Post	US	Coming soon: The government's revised guidelines for healthful eating	Judith Weinraub	Government programs	Negative	No

12/2/2004	Thursday	The Star Phoenix (Saskatchewan)	US	Rushing to ban trans fat undermines benefits	Sylvian Charlebois	Editorial	Negative	No
12/2/2004	Thursday	Evening Times	Ireland	School bosses hit back in junk food menu row: City reacts angrily as report says not enough is done to encourage healthy eating	Chris Musson	Children and nutrition	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	The West Australian	Australia	Healthy step fast food con: nutritionists	Cathy O'Leary	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	The Toronto Sun	Canada	Obesity study to 'shame' us; Kids might live shorter lives than their parents	Sarah Green	Children and obesity	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	Hamilton Spectator (Ontario)	Canada	No end to Dalewood workouts; physical education expert stresses need for students to exercise, vent, relax	Jacque De Almeida	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/3/2004	Friday	The Toronto Sun	Canada	Government should stay out of our snacks	Michael Taube	Editorial	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	The Times (London)	England	It's technology that has made us fat	Graham Searjeant	Editorial	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	The Daily Telegraph	England	Will men ever go on a diet?	Judith Woods	Nutrition and Diets	Positive	Yes
12/3/2004	Friday	The Advertiser	Australia	Jogging, gym may be a waste of time	Robin Yapp	Physical Fitness	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	Herald Sun	Australia	Stranger dangers fuel child obesity; Parent's shut-in policy a hazard to kids' health	Michelle Poutney	Children and obesity	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	Hamilton Spectator (Ontario)	Canada	Too much food, too much watching TV		Children and obesity	Neutral	No



12/3/2004	Friday	Scripps Howard News Service	US	Scientists debate link between corn syrup and obesity	Lance Gay	Medical	Neutral	No
12/1/2004	Wednesday	The Boston Globe	US	The fairy tale about soft drink nutrition won't sell	Derrick Z. Jackson	Soft Drinks	Negative	No
12/2/2004	Thursday	The Washington Post	US	Alexandria students getting less recess; some parents upset about shrinking playtime	Tara Bahrapour	Children and Physical Fitness	Negative	Yes
12/2/2004	Thursday	Tulsa World	US	Good health, fitness practices are especially important in winter	Michael Flynn	Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/2/2004	Thursday	USA Today	US	'Twinkie tax' worth a try in fight against obesity	Suzanne Leigh	Policy	Positive	No
12/2/2004	Thursday	The Boston Globe	US	Students learning to feel the burn: Youths health habits a workout in progress	Matt Viser	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
12/2/2004	Thursday	San Jose Mercury News	US	Bay area making strides in pedestrian safety, study finds; But in most U.S. cities, situation worsening	Chuck Carroll	Physical Fitness	Neutral	No
12/2/2004	Thursday	The Houston Chronicle	US	Weight-loss surgery gains medical respect; But concerns are growing that the radical operation could be overused	Eric Berger	Gastric bypass surgery	Neutral	Yes
12/2/2004	Thursday	The Atlanta Journal-Constitution	US	School boards will weigh recess policies	S.A. Reid	Children and Physical Fitness	Neutral	No
12/2/2004	Thursday	AP Wires	US	Diet: A visit to the supermarket to teach kids what's healthy	John P. McAlpin	Children and nutrition	Positive	Yes

12/3/2004	Friday	The Wichita Eagle	US	Randy Scholfield: Subsidies made me eat it		Policy	Negative	Yes
12/3/2004	Friday	The Sun News	US	A healthy view on weight	Issac J. Bailey	Body perception	Negative	Yes
12/3/2004	Friday	AP Wires	US	Junk food ban costing L.A.schools		Policy	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	USA Today	US	Neb. Governor tapped as Agriculture chief	Richard Benedetto and Elizabeth Weise	Policy	Neutral	No
12/3/2004	Friday	San Jose Mercury News	US	Rich foods a big threat to poor kids; Cesar Chavez school is fighting obesity, maybe Oprah can help	Joe Rodriguez	Health disparities	Negative	Yes
12/4/2004	Saturday	The Guardian	Canada	Hot dogs, nuggets almost off menu	Steve Sharratt	Policy	Neutral	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	The Halifax Daily News	Canada	Food fight	Cathy Nicoll	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	The Jerusalem Post	?	Mental, physical junk food go together	Judy Siegel-Itzkovich	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	Sunday Telegraph	England	Obese American passengers break the seats on the Queen Mary II; Doezens of chairs on the world's most luxurious liner are to be replaced because of the weight of fat travellers	Rajeev Syal and Elizabeth Day	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	The Observer	England	Fast food giants join war on fat	Denis Campbell	CSR	Positive	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	The Observer	England	Is this any way to treat a child? Why our kids are hooked on crisps	Louise France	Big Food	Negative	Yes

12/6/2004	Monday	The Guardian	England	Don't blame fast food, television or the car - fat is a technological issue	Ashley Seager	Technology	Negative	No
12/6/2004	Monday	The Advertiser	England	Stockings stuffed full of unhealthy cheer	Bronwyn Hurrell	Editorial	Negative	No
12/6/2004	Monday	Ottawa Citizen	Canada	Bodacious' no more: Fat-bashing back in style: Gloves are off as the media target the overweight	Misty Harris	Body perception	Negative	No
12/6/2004	Monday	The Guardian	England	America is addicted to the internet, burgers and drugs. A nation in decline or a glimpse of the future?	John Sutherland	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Australian	Australia	Aged, obese weigh down health system	Sid Maher	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/3/2004	Friday	Sacramento Bee	US	In shape for learning? Physically fit students do better in school, analysis finds	Michael Kolber	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/4/2004	Saturday	Salt Lake Tribune	US	Discipline associated with many of the world's religions helps followers keep to a...Spiritual Diet	Kristen Moulton	Nutrition and Diets	Positive	No
12/4/2004	Saturday	Los Angeles Times	US	Food banks teaching veggie 101; Software being tested offers recipes tailored to the produce available that day at a pantry. The project seeks to produce healthier diets	Mike Anton	Health intervention programs	Positive	No

12/4/2004	Saturday	The Myrtle Beach Sun-News	US	Healthy advice study: Workouts in late afternoon may be better		Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/4/2004	Saturday	The Advocate	US	Study: Child obesity may change heart	Joe Gyan Jr.	Children and obesity	Negative	No
12/4/2004	Saturday	The Capital Times	US	Tommy says he's drained	David Callender	Policy	Neutral	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	Sun-Sentinel	US	Isolating cause of metabolic syndrome	William Hathaway	Medical	Neutral	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	News & Record (Greensboro)	US	Local agencies aim to tackle weighty problem		Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	Columbus Dispatch	US	Thinning the ranks: After-school programs more aggressive in pushing children away from obesity	Dennis Fiely	Health intervention programs	Positive	Yes
12/5/2004	Sunday	Columbus Dispatch	US	Studies help state pin down size of problem	Dennis Fiely	General "Obesity Crisis"	Neutral	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	The New York Times	US	Will a new drug melt the pounds? It may, but doctors urge caution	Gina Kolata	Medical	Neutral	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	Los Angeles Times	US	City fixes: Good design keeps the doctor away	Neal Kaufmann	Editorial	Negative	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	The New York Times	US	Is the low-carb boom over?	Melanie Warner	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/5/2004	Sunday	AP Wires	US	TV shows try to get kids off the couch	David Bauder	Children and Physical Fitness	Neutral	No

12/6/2004	Monday	Sun-Sentinel	US	Brain training; P.E. classes add time for reading and math in the district's new effort to boost low high school test scores	Scott Travis	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/6/2004	Monday	Scripps Howard News Service	US	Too few z's may result in too many pounds	Lee Bowman	Medical	Neutral	No
12/6/2004	Monday	Orlando Sentinel	US	If you have cash, list brokers have child info to sell	Jolayne Houtz	Food Marketing	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	Courier Mail	Australia	Patients getting fatter and older	Leanne Edmestone	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The New Zealand Herald	New Zealand	Obesity rate doubles in 25 years		General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	Financial Times	England	Italians struggle to maintain bella figura: Material abundance, small families and convenience foods are all adding to the health problem of expanding wastelands	Tony Barber	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Daily Telegraph	England	Shortage of sleep is linked to obesity	Roger Highfield	Medical	Neutral	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Herald	Scotland	How to get back on track: For years one small European nation struggled to beat heart disease. Sound familiar? Doug Gillon discovers whether Finland has set an example for ailing Scots to follow	Doug Gillon	Medical	Neutral	No

12/7/2004	Tuesday	Daily Mail (London)	England	My battle of the bulge	Charlotte Reather	Editorial	Neutral	Yes
12/8/2004	Wednesday	The Standard	Canada	A generation obsessed with weight: Life's too short to worry about measuring up to the standards of others	Lianne Wyatt	Editorial	Negative	Yes
12/8/2004	Wednesday	The Record (Ontario)	Canada	Region to tackle the fat: Public health officials want municipalities to get serious about obesity problem	Carol Goodwin	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	The Scotsman	Scotland	Vow to help children fight 'frightening' levels of flab	Alison Hardie	Policy	Positive	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	Brisbane News	Australia	Facts, not fads	Loretta Douris	Nutrition and Diets	Positive	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	Statesman Journal	US	Obesity coverage just beginning	Dana Haynes	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/10/2004	Friday	The Toronto Star	Canada	Kids riding down road to ruin; Parents need to let children walk, task force says	Kevin McGran	Children and Physical Fitness	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	Statesman Journal	US	Schools have ability to encourage healthy habits		Editorial	Positive	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	The Express	England	Why Britain is a nation of fitties, not fatties	Julie Wheldon	General "Obesity Crisis"	Positive	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	The Dominion Post	New Zealand	Pulling our weight on obesity		Editorial	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Indianapolis Star	US	You go girls; Nationwide effort to get youngsters moving	Tracy Dodds	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	Agence France Presse	France	Nutrition transition' leading to rise in diet-related disease		Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No

12/8/2004	Wednesday	Grimsby Evening Telegraph	England	Fight the flab -and junk food		Editorial	Negative	No
12/9/2004	Thursday	Birmingham Post	England	Thought for food: Michelle Alexander says it's time to put a brake on the fast food	Michelle Alexander	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	Statesman Journal	US	After-school programs give kids a good workout	Beth Casper	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	Dayton Daily News	US	Portion control key for weight loss, maintenance	Marjie Gilliam	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Houston Chronicle	US	Grocery options tied to obesity; Study shows inner-city stores lack healthy foods	Eric Berger	Health disparities	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Boston Globe	US	Immunize your children against health dangers of TV	Darshak Sanghavi	Food Marketing	Negative	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Record (Bergen County NJ)	US	Full-time focus on fitness keeps 480 pupils on move; menu of schoolyard laps, healthy foods, water	Charles Austin	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
12/7/2004	Tuesday	San Jose Mercury News	US	Overweight? Try going to bed; sleep deprivation linked to increased hunger, weight gain	Julie Sevrens Lyons	Medical	Neutral	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Wichita Eagle	US	Schools urged to lead obesity fight	Josh Funk	Policy	Positive	No
12/7/2004	Tuesday	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	US	Fat not phat; let's all reverse field and de-incentivize overeating and incentivize exercise	Eric Mann	Physical Fitness	Neutral	No

12/7/2004	Tuesday	The Atlanta Journal-Constitution	US	Healthy living: Doctors no stranger to obesity	Elizabeth Lee	General "Obesity Crisis"	Neutral	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	Philadelphia Daily News	US	Here's the dirty little secret about dieting	Kimberly Garrison	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	US	Too much food for thought		General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	USA Today	US	United Nations says hunger still grips millions	Elizabeth Weise	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	The Tallahassee Democrat	US	Obesity: Let's teach kids to make healthy choices	Renee L. Giachino	Children and obesity	Neutral	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	AP Wires	US	Advocates say public policy must support good health	Vicki Smith	Policy	Neutral	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	Newhouse News Service	US	Eat, drink and be wary or risk Santa's waistline	Meg Nugent	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	Buffalo News	US	Munching on the top 10 food stories of the year; obesity was voted as last year's no. 1 food-related story. It's still on the list	Janice Okun	General "Obesity Crisis"	Neutral	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	AP Wires	US	Life by the numbers: What do Americans eat, how far do they drive	Genaro C. Armas	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/8/2004	Wednesday	The Houston Chronicle	US	School nutrition: low-fat choices attract few nibbles; parents like the better food and snack limits; kids often don't	Paris Achen	Children and nutrition	Negative	No



12/8/2004	Wednesday	The Houston Chronicle	US	Medicare costs go up as obese Americans age; Study predicts drain on program if trend continues	Eric Berger	Government programs	Negative	No
12/9/2004	Thursday	Des Moines Register	US	Education gets physical; students at Southeast Polk junior high school participate in a national fitness contest - and they're not just active in the gym	Megan Hawkins	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
12/9/2004	Thursday	Herald News	US	At school, kids get lessons in living longer; Acclaimed program instills healthy habits	Charles Austin	Health intervention programs	Positive	Yes
12/10/2004	Friday	Scripps Howard News Service	US	Schools take a new look at how fitness can fuel brains	Thomas C. Tobin	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
12/9/2004	Thursday	The Dallas Morning News	US	Council dropping full obesity coverage; city workers will instead get stipend for weight loss surgery	Dave Levinthal	Insurance and obesity	Negative	No
12/9/2004	Thursday	AP Wires	US	Popularity of obesity surgery increasing in Minnesota		Gastric bypass surgery	Negative	No
12/9/2004	Thursday	Argus Leader	US	School snacks: What's in, what's out?	Brenda Wade Schmidt	Children and nutrition	Negative	No
12/9/2004	Thursday	AP Wires	US	Childhood obesity expert calls it growing 'epidemic'	Paul Nowell	Children and obesity	Negative	No
12/10/2004	Friday	Los Angeles Times	US	Pass the ball to the kids who can't jump	Jonathan Zimmerman	Editorial	Neutral	Yes

12/10/2004	Friday	Albuquerque Journal	US	APS effort takes aim at obesity	Russell Contreras	Health intervention programs	Neutral	No
12/10/2004	Friday	The News Tribune (Tacoma, Washington)	US	Don't get that recess whistle out quite yet; Tacoma school board members get an earful about elementary school recess. However, no decision is made	Debby Abe	Children and Physical Fitness	Neutral	No
12/10/2004	Friday	The News & Observer	US	Kids get into action	Vicki Cheng	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/10/2004	Friday	UPI	US	Study: Nearly one-third of workers obese		General "Obesity Crisis"	Neutral	No
12/10/2004	Friday	The Oregonian	US	Less delicious, more nutritious	Holley Gilbert	Children and nutrition	Neutral	No
12/9/2004	Thursday	AP Wires	US	Tips to combat childhood obesity		Children and obesity	Neutral	No
12/11/2004	Saturday	National Post	Canada	Their larger agenda: Fat activists get serious	Siri Agrell	Activism	Neutral	No
12/11/2004	Saturday	The Record	Canada	There are many ways to get kids moving	Valerie Hill	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/11/2004	Saturday	The Record	Canada	A snapshot look at global initiatives for good health		Health intervention programs	Neutral	No
12/11/2004	Saturday	The Guardian	England	Figures reveal national indulgence in cakes and ale; sales increase despite healthy eating messages	Felicity Lawrence	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
12/11/2004	Saturday	The Independent	England	Shopping habits show food advice is being ignored	Jeremy Laurance	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No

12/11/2004	Saturday	The Daily Telegraph	England	Crisps are out, but chocs are in	Jane Mulkerrins	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/11/2004	Saturday	The Times (London)	England	Too sweet by half...	David Rowan	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No
12/13/2004	Monday	The Advertiser	England	Family approach to good diet	Rebecca Jenkins	Children and obesity	Positive	Yes
12/13/2004	Monday	AAP Newsfeed	Australia	Bulge-busting drug moves closer to market	Trevor Chappell	Medical	Neutral	No
12/13/2004	Monday	Financial Times	England	Supermarkets 'failing' healthy food test	Rohit Jaggi	Health disparities	Negative	No
12/12/2004	Sunday	Press Association	England	Parents want junk food promotions banned	Lyndsay Moss	Food Marketing	Neutral	No
12/13/2004	Monday	The Times (London)	England	Warning: some food stores can damage your health	Valerie Elliot	Health disparities	Negative	No
12/11/2004	Saturday	The Bradenton Herald	US	Ready...set...GO! Get your kids off the couch	Michael Barber	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/12/2004	Sunday	Lexington Herald Leader	US	As obese children grow into disabled adults, society has much to lose	Mary Meehan	Children and obesity	Negative	Yes
12/12/2004	Sunday	Lexington Herald Leader	US	Extreme obesity in kids surprises even the doctor	Mary Meehan	Children and obesity	Negative	Yes
12/12/2004	Sunday	Sun-Sentinel	US	Transformed: diet, exercise and, most of all, determination change a woman's life	John Tanasychuk	Health intervention programs	Positive	Yes
12/10/2004	Friday	The Cincinnati Inquirer	US	Ohio sets new lawsuit limits	John Byczkowski	Government Regulations	Neutral	No
12/12/2004	Sunday	Vallejo Times-Herald	US	Solano faces 'Super Size'	Rachel Raskin-Zrihen	Health intervention programs	Neutral	No
12/13/2004	Monday	The New York	US	The weight debate	Jay Dixit	Consumerism	Neutral	No

		Sun						
12/12/2004	Sunday	Daily News (New York)	US	Delicious and nutritious: School district cooks up ways to bring both to meals	Laura Williams	Children and nutrition	Positive	No
12/13/2004	Monday	Los Angeles Times	US	Calories in juice still count; Though nutritious, some varieties contain more sugar than soda does. Kids should drink water for their thirst, some dieticians say	Alice Lesch Kelly	Children and nutrition	Neutral	No
12/13/2004	Monday	AP Wires	US	Multimedia program aims to tackle obesity	Ron Stanton	Health intervention programs	Positive	Yes
12/14/2004	Tuesday	Herald Sun	Australia	Atkins diet fad finished	Fay Burstin	Nutrition and Diets	Neutral	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	Financial Times	England	Swiss boast the best lifestyles and live the longest too, says study	Haig Simonian	General "Obesity Crisis"	Neutral	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	New Straits Times	Malaysia	Healthy eating		General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	The Gazette	Canada	Tidbits and timely advice	June Thompson	Nutrition and Diets	Positive	Yes
12/15/2004	Wednesday	Herald Sun	Australia	Plump for a better diet	Paula Beauchamp	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	The Guardian	England	Food fight: While Scotland forges ahead with healthier school meals, English pupils are still being fed products with fat levels that are far from 'bootiful'	Katharine Quarmby	Children and nutrition	Negative	No

12/14/2004	Tuesday	The Guardian	England	Children to take five hours of PE a week	Patrick Wintour	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/13/2004	Monday	Brattleboro Reformer (Vermont)	US	Program pushes healthy snacking	Mike Kalil	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/13/2004	Monday	Austin American-Statesman	US	Step, in the right direction; With pedometers, people can walk themselves into fitness	Pamela LeBlanc	Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
12/13/2004	Monday	Salt Lake Tribune	US	Cities make an effort to be exercise-friendly; From urban trails to simple safety, they try to encourage pedaling and walking; Cities try designs, ideas to encourage physical activity	Lori Buttars	Policy	Positive	Yes
12/14/2004	Tuesday	Newsday	US	No bones about it; Vigorous exercise in youth can help stave off osteoporosis later in life	John Hanc	Physical Fitness	Positive	Yes
12/14/2004	Tuesday	The New York Times	US	Curb your craving: sleep it off	John O'Neil	Medical	Positive	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	The Washington Post	US	Obese and opaque: Another downside of obesity: Standard x-rays, ultrasound and other imaging methods can't 'see' through excessive fat, inhibiting diagnosis and treatment	Sandra G. Boodman	Medical	Negative	No

12/14/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	State promoting fattening foods as Alabama struggles with obesity		Government programs	Negative	No
12/15/2004	Wednesday	Gold Coast Bulletin	Australia	Toys to get kids; off the couch		Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/15/2004	Wednesday	The Guardian	England	Big cash injection will boost school sports: PM announces L519m package on same day as increase in central funding for sporting bodies	Paul Kelso and Rebecca Smithers	Children and Physical Fitness	Positive	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	The Denver Post	US	Eat, drink and be healthy: Step-by-step approach to nutrition and weight loss advances in state	Ellen Sweets	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	News & Record (Greensboro)	US	Emphasis shifts to preventing disease	Bob Forman	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	AP Wires	US	Officials announce \$3million grant to promote health	Mike Glover	Health intervention programs	Positive	No
12/14/2004	Tuesday	Sarasota Herald-Tribune	US	School board approves Coca-cola contract	Tiffany Lankes	Food Marketing	Negative	No
12/15/2004	Wednesday	The Boston Globe	US	Importance of physical education		Editorial	Positive	No
12/15/2004	Wednesday	Lexington Herald Leader	US	Supersizing danger; Overindulgence spoils children's health, future		Editorial	Negative	No
12/15/2004	Wednesday	AP Wires	US	Diet: Steer clear of eggnog and margaritas; add alcohol to the list of potential diet-busters	J.M. Hirsch	Nutrition and Diets	Negative	No

12/15/2004	Wednesday	AP Wires	US	Study links obesity to U.S. residency	Lindsey Tanner	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No
12/15/2004	Wednesday	Scripps Howard News Service	US	An apple a day...is more expensive than you think	Ben Grabow	Health disparities	Negative	Yes
12/15/2004	Wednesday	USA Today	US	Another way U.S. immigrants are assimilated: Weight gain; Study shows changes in diet, lifestyle take their toll over the long term	Elizabeth Weise	General "Obesity Crisis"	Negative	No

**Newsires: Data**

Date	Wire Name	Headline	Type	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3	Impression
12/14/2004	US Newswire	OH Gen. assembly passes major civil justice reforms; reform measure provide Ohio citizens with comprehensive protection, says ALEC	Lawsuits	American Legislative Exchange Council			Neutral
12/13/2004	US Newswire	Statement by Kidney Care Partners on the nomination of Governor Michael O. Leavitt to lead HHS	Government officials	Kidney Care Partners			Positive
12/10/2004	US Newswire	National Medical Association launches the W. Montague Cobb/NMA health policy institute to address health disparities	Health disparities	National Medical Association			Positive
12/3/2004	US Newswire	Mercury regulation to be addressed at ALEC's 2004 States and Nation policy summit	Legislation	American Legislative Exchange Council			Neutral



12/2/2004	US Newswire	Press highlights for the national league of cities; Indianapolis meeting Friday, Dec. 3, 2004, Indiana convention center and RCA dome	Childhood obesity	National League of Cities			Neutral
12/1/2004	US Newswire	AMA medical students kick off "Healthy Lifestyles to Reduce Obesity" project in Atlanta	Health promotion/intervention program	American Medical Association			Positive
11/29/2004	US Newswire	Academic health center leaders spearhead community health improvement; New report highlights strategies and actions	Health promotion/intervention program	Association of Academic Health Centers			Positive
12/15/2004	PR Newswire	Viral suppression of once-daily LEXIVA plus ritonavir sustained over 120 weeks in ART-native subjects, according to study presented at DART	Pharmaceutical	Vertex	GlaxoSmithKline		Positive

12/15/2004	PR Newswire	Resolve to get fit in the new year and fight those extra holiday pounds! New survey from the American Council on Exercise reveals fitness trend predictions for 2005	Physical fitness	American Council on Exercise			Neutral
12/15/2004	PR Newswire	Basketball legends Earl 'The Pearl' Monroe and Walt 'Clyde' Frazier 'D-Up' for diabetes and heart disease duo double-team for the heart of diabetes to encourage people to reduce risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease	Health promotion/intervention program	American Heart Association			Positive
12/15/2004	Business Wire	Hoover fellow Mary Eberstadt turns spotlight onto mental problems, behavioral drugs, obesity, rap music and other troubling facts about kids today	Book promotion	Penguin			Neutral
12/15/2004	Business Wire	Phytopharm and Unilever enter into license and joint development agreement for Hoodia Gordonii Extract	Weight loss drugs	Unilever	CSIR	Phytopharm	Positive

12/14/2004	Business Wire	Merck focused on future growth prospects	Pharmaceutical	Merck			Positive
12/14/2004	PR Newswire	UnumProvident reports 100% increase in diabetes claims employers' cost tops \$33,000 annually per claimant	Occupational health	UnumProvident	National Business Group on Health		Negative
12/14/2004	Business Wire	CHS conditioning programs support employee wellness; Comprehensive health services helps employers lower costs by keeping employees healthy	Occupational health	Comprehensive Health Services (CHS)			Positive
12/14/2004	PR Newswire	UK food standards agency (FSA) gives 'green light' to chromium picolinate as safe dietary supplement; people with diabetes stand to benefit as safety questions resolved	Weight loss drugs	Nutrition 21			Positive

12/14/2004	Business Wire	UK food standards agency (FSA) gives 'green light' to chromium picolinate as safe dietary supplement; people with diabetes stand to benefit as safety questions resolved	Weight loss drugs	Nutrition 21			Positive
12/14/2004	PR Newswire	Biovitrium AB and discovery partners international, inc. form research alliance	Research	Biovitrium	Discovery Partners		Positive
12/13/2004	PR Newswire	Race may affect weight and fitness level; African-Americans more obese and less fit than Caucasians	Health disparities	American College of Chest Physicians			Negative
12/13/2004	PR Newswire	Hail to the blimp? Ridiculous government standards have long labeled President Bush 'overweight' and part of so-called 'obesity epidemic' says Center for Consumer Freedom	Government standards	Center for Consumer Freedom			Negative
12/13/2004	Business Wire	General Mills will use proceeds from SVE transaction to reduce debt	Financial	General Mills			Neutral

12/13/2004	Business Wire	American Society of Plastic Surgeons honors KCI with president's award	Education	Kinetic Concepts			Positive
12/13/2004	PR Newswire	Metabolic reports positive results from its Phase 2b obesity trial	Pharmaceutical	Metabolic			Positive
12/13/2004	Business Wire	Joslin Diabetes Center teams with Click4Care to help health plans medically manage members with chronic disease	Disease management	Joslin Diabetes Center	Click4Care		Positive
12/13/2004	PR Newswire	Kaiser Permanente awards \$2.2 million for research to find out what works in managing weight; Garfield memorial fund chooses 8 innovative projects - fewer knee surgeries?	Grants	Kaiser Permanente			Positive
12/10/2004	PR Newswire	Ocean's 12 Tons; Skewed government standards make the new rat pack more like the fat pack says Center for Consumer Freedom	Government standards	Center for Consumer Freedom			Negative

12/10/2004	PR Newswire	US Department of Health & Human Services and Ad Council launch flu vaccine campaign	Health promotion/intervention program	US Department of Health & Human Services	Ad Council		Positive
12/10/2004	PR Newswire	Jenny Craig, Inc. appoints Barbara Fulmer to newly created position, national director of corporate programs deepening commitment to help employers reduce obesity-related healthcare costs, industry leader hires business development expert to create customized programs	Occupational health	Jenny Craig			Positive
12/10/2004	PR Newswire	Obesity among American workers rose 44% over past decade new study finds obesity doubles work limitations, has same effect as 20 years of aging	Occupational health	Pfizer			Negative
12/9/2004	PR Newswire	Novel antibiotic shows promise in shortening treatment of tuberculosis	Mention in boilerplate	Johnson & Johnson			Neutral

12/9/2004	PR Newswire	Nastech announces completion of its public offering of common stock	Mention in boilerplate	Nastech			Neutral
12/9/2004	PR Newswire	Lilly profiles its exceptional new product flow and pipeline to Wall Street company also provides 2005 financial guidance; reconfirms 2004 expectations	Financial	Lilly			Neutral
12/9/2004	PR Newswire	It's better to give than to receive	Education	FormulatedSciences			Positive
12/8/2004	PR Newswire	Soccer champ Freddy Adu helps launch inaugural NikeGo afterschool program at Washington, DC Boys & Girls club; National program kicks off in DC with future launches in Chicago, New York and LA	Health promotion/intervention program	Nike	Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK)		Positive
12/8/2004	PR Newswire	New drug application submitted to FDA for intravenous injection of Boniva™ would be first IV bisphosphate treatment for osteoporosis	Mention in boilerplate	Roche	GlaxoSmithKline		Neutral

12/8/2004	PR Newswire	Medifast's hi-energy clinic division opens 4 new clinics in Texas and reopens 7 in the Southeastern United States for a total of 11 corporate clinics new grand opening events scheduled for January	Weight management program	Medifast			Positive
12/8/2004	PR Newswire	New survey shows heel pain contributes to nation's obesity epidemic; Heel pain and obesity - a vicious cycle	Medical	Heeling Situations			Negative
12/8/2004	PR Newswire	Metabolic syndrome drug market to increase to nearly \$13 billion by 2013; increased awareness among physicians will drive the market, according to a new study from decision resources	Pharmaceutical	Decision Resources			Neutral



12/8/2004	PR Newswire	Cardiocom® awarded 'most innovative technology to improve patient outcomes' at the emerging technologies and healthcare innovation congress (TETHIC)	Mention in boilerplate	Cardiocom			Neutral
12/8/2004	PR Newswire	Anthem foundation awards \$685,000 with focus on making it easier for people to get needed health care	Grants	Anthem			Positive
12/8/2004	PR Newswire	Bravo! Foods ships Slim Slammers ® initial shipments to national retailers, including 7-Eleven, ShopRite and A&P	Food products	Bravo! Foods			Neutral
12/8/2004	PR Newswire	Five things you need to know about integrated consumer marketing in 2005; Manhattan research to host live webinar highlighting market trends	Research	Manhattan Research, Inc.			Neutral

12/8/2004	PR Newswire	Obesity reaches epidemic levels in Minnesota new Blue Cross report reveals increasing numbers, rising costs and growing concern	General obesity crisis	Blue Cross			Negative
12/7/2004	PR Newswire	12 winners announced to receive 2004 mayor's business recognition awards on Dec. 10 for outstanding community service	Grants	Blue Cross			Positive
12/7/2004	Business Wire	RxGen, Inc. awarded phase I of fast track SBIR for study of environmental causes of Parkinson's disease	Mention in boilerplate	RxGen			Neutral
12/7/2004	Business Wire	Research and markets: business opportunities in diabetes, obesity and metabolic disease market analyzed	Research	Research and Markets			Positive

12/7/2004	PR Newswire	Healthcare's top business issues for 2005 forecasted by Capgemini; Expanding focus on clinical information technology, electronic health records, pay-for-performance and consumer driven health products	Disease management	Capgemini			Neutral
12/7/2004	PR Newswire	ChemBridge corporation signs new discovery chemistry strategic alliance agreement with Merck & Co., Inc.	Mention in boilerplate	ChemBridge			Neutral
12/6/2004	PR Newswire	Olympic gold medalist Kristine Lilly joins students to celebrate results of Get Kids in Action pilot program; student athletes help children reach goal of 60 minutes of physical activity each day	Health promotion/intervention program	Get Kids in Action	Gatorade		Positive
12/6/2004	PR Newswire	Companion HealthCare BlueCross BlueShield provide fitness dvd to schools	Health promotion/intervention program	Blue Cross			Positive

12/6/2004	Business Wire	Kettle Foods offers low-fat snack option through Stonyfield Farm's healthy vending program	Consumerism	Kettle Foods			Positive
12/6/2004	PR Newswire	Bank of America announces \$1 million grant to Children's Hospital Boston 3-year commitment to address priority health issues facing Boston's at-risk children through education and treatment	Grants	Bank of America	Children's Hospital Boston		Positive
12/6/2004	Business Wire	PhytoMedical to develop new compound for type-2 diabetes	Mention in boilerplate	PhytoMedical Technologies, Inc.			Neutral
12/6/2004	Business Wire	Inamed submits PMA for its next generation silicone gel-filled breast implants -- and -- announces pending silicone gel-filled breast implants PMA will be reviewed at an upcoming FDA panel meeting	Mention in boilerplate	INAMED			Neutral

12/6/2004	PR Newswire	CytRx announces scientific data showing the potential of its oral drug, arimocicamol, to reverse nerve generation	Mention in boilerplate	CytRx Corporation			Neutral
12/6/2004	PR Newswire	From supd to spud: Guinness World Records' 'World's Fittest Man' tells you how to become the 'world's fittest you'	Book promotion	Penguin			Positive
12/6/2004	PR Newswire	Low quantity eating challenges the good food/bad food diets and redefines healthy eating and weight control	Nutrition and diets	Diet Directives			Positive
12/5/2004	PR Newswire	Amylin pharmaceuticals provides update on clinical development programs	Pharmaceutical	Amylin			Positive
12/5/2004	PR Newswire	Researchers add more pieces to the puzzle of finding cure for common childhood cancer	Medical	Spectrum Science	American Society of Hematology		Neutral

12/4/2004	PR Newswire	Single dose phase I data on CG53135 for the prevention of oral mucositis presented at ASH - clinical data presented at the American Society of Hematology (ASH) 46th annual meeting	Mention in boilerplate	CuraGen			Neutral
12/4/2004	PR Newswire	New Tipifarnib (R115777) data in AML presented at American Society of Hematology annual meeting	Mention in boilerplate	Johnson & Johnson			Neutral
12/3/2004	Business Wire	CalPERS asks drug companies to restore market confidence and questions health partners about prescription drug safety	Weight loss drugs	CalPERS			Negative
12/3/2004	PR Newswire	Positive results from study in Japan using Antares Pharma's needle-free medi-jector vision ® for the delivery of human growth hormone	Mention in boilerplate	Antares Pharma			Neutral

12/3/2004	Business Wire	Phytopharm announces preliminary results for the year ended 31 August 2004	Weight loss drugs	Phytopharm			Neutral
12/2/2004	Business Wire	FDA approves Captique - a new non-animal stabilized hyaluronic acid dermal filler to be marketed by Inamed for facial wrinkle correction	Mention in boilerplate	INAMED			Neutral
12/2/2004	PR Newswire	World's leading researchers and family experts at family policy council summit tacoma confab explores new research findings to help families thrive	Research	The Family Policy Council			Neutral
12/2/2004	PR Newswire	Matria Healthcare awarded four new disease management contracts	Disease management	Matria Healthcare			Positive
12/2/2004	PR Newswire	Endocrine society calls for clinical guidelines on androgens for women professional group also supports need for future research on female sex dysfunction	Mention in boilerplate	Endocrine Society			Neutral

12/2/2004	PR Newswire	Roche celebrates 10 years of South Africa's 'Train of Hope' as it continues to better the lives of millions	Mention in boilerplate	Roche			Neutral
12/2/2004	PR Newswire	Americans can monitor US flu rates on the first-ever desktop flu tracker breakthrough technology makes customized flu data easily accessible from home or office computer	Mention in boilerplate	Roche			Neutral
12/2/2004	PR Newswire	CuraGen receives fast track designation for CG53135	Mention in boilerplate	CuraGen			Neutral
12/1/2004	PR Newswire	New program offers immediate access to FUZEON® for patients in expanded access programs of investigational HIV therapies	Mention in boilerplate	Roche			Neutral



12/1/2004	PR Newswire	Potential weight loss and vision benefits found in eggs research published in December Journal of the American College of Nutrition (JACN) supplement	Nutrition and diets	Egg Nutrition Center	American College of Nutrition		Positive
11/23/2004	PR Newswire	Innovative uses of corn for healthier diets outlined in CRA's newly released 2004 corn annual report	Nutrition and diets	Corn Refiners Association			Positive
11/23/2004	Business Wire	OSI Pharmaceuticals to present at the Lazard life sciences conference on Tuesday, November 30th	Mention in boilerplate	OSI Pharmaceuticals			Neutral
11/23/2004	Business Wire	Video game industry's double messages are double trouble for parents; despite efforts, youth access to violent and sexually graphic games still major issue	Childhood obesity	National Institute on Media and Family			Negative
11/23/2004	PR Newswire	GlaxoSmithKline reviews novel therapeutics for CNS disorders and confirms strong pipeline momentum	Pharmaceutical	GlaxoSmithKline			Positive

11/23/2004	PR Newswire	Nastech acquires exclusive worldwide rights to patents and patent applications for peptide YY analogs in the fields of obesity and appetite suppression from University of Cincinnati	Pharmaceutical	Nastech			Positive
11/23/2004	PR Newswire	Two new videos give toddlers fun introduction to football and golf; Join award-winning series aimed at keeping kids active	Physical fitness	Tiny Tot Sports			Positive
11/23/2004	PR Newswire	Women and heart disease: more risk, less prevention studies find women with diabetes more likely to have heart attacks, less likely to receive preventive therapies, than men	Health disparities	American Diabetes Associate			Negative
11/22/2004	Business Wire	OSI Pharmaceuticals announces launch of Tarceva™	Mention in boilerplate	OSI Pharmaceuticals			Neutral

11/22/2004	PR Newswire	Lazard to webcast Lexicon Genetics presentation at first annual life sciences convention	Mention in boilerplate	Lexicon Genetics			Neutral
11/22/2004	PR Newswire	Obesity liability waiver offered for Thanksgiving dinner hosts eat, drink, and be merry - and free from the threat of a lawsuit	Lawsuits	Center for Consumer Freedom			Negative
11/22/2004	Business Wire	Obesity epidemic stymies primary care physicians: Pri-Med Institute survey cites need for better treatment methods, education focus	General obesity crisis	Pri-Med Institute			Negative
11/22/2004	Business Wire	OSI Pharmaceuticals to announce year-end financial results on November 29, 2004	Mention in boilerplate	OSI Pharmaceuticals			Neutral

11/22/2004	Business Wire	Zimmer launches quad-sparing total knee replacement along with campaign to help patients understand differences between 'minimally invasive' approaches	Medical	Zimmer Holdings, Inc.			Neutral
11/22/2004	PR Newswire	Zimmer launches quad-sparing total knee replacement along with campaign to help patients understand differences between 'minimally invasive' approaches	Medical	Zimmer Holdings, Inc.			Neutral
11/22/2004	PR Newswire	Roche announces first major study to examine efficacy of hepatitis C treatment in latinos information on pegasys® study sites available	Mention in boilerplate	Roche	Pegasys		Neutral
11/19/2004	Business Wire	HEE Corporation announces appointment of Timothy W. Lawton, MD, as medical director	Pharmaceutical	HEE Corporation			Neutral

11/19/2004	Business Wire	Childhood obesity crisis poses financial losses to schools: school nutrition association releases data on financial and academic consequences	Childhood obesity	School Nutrition Association			Negative
11/19/2004	PR Newswire	Circle group holdings update shareholders	Pharmaceutical	Circle Group Holdings			Positive
11/19/2004	PR Newswire	FDA approves Tarceva™ for patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer	Mention in boilerplate	OSI Pharmaceuticals			Neutral
11/19/2004	Business Wire	Forbes Medi-Tech appoints Dr. Steven Nissen to chairman of medical & scientific advisory board	Pharmaceutical	Forbes Medi-Tech Inc.			Positive
11/18/2004	Business Wire	OSI Pharmaceuticals announces conference call on earlier announced FDA approval of Tarceva	Mention in boilerplate	OSI Pharmaceuticals			Neutral
11/18/2004	PR Newswire	The Sbarro health research organization: cancer research fundraiser	Research	Sbarro Health Research Organization			Positive
11/18/2004	Business Wire	FDA approves Tarceva™ for patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer	Mention in boilerplate	OSI Pharmaceuticals			Neutral

11/18/2004	PR Newswire	Oprah Winfrey debuts as first African-American on BusinessWeek's annual ranking of 'America's top philanthropists' Warren Buffett vaults from No. 26 to No. 3; Bill and Melinda Gates continue reign as America's top givers	Grants	BusinessWeek	Atkins		Positive
11/18/2004	Business Wire	Inamed appoints Dr. Cary Reich as head of research and development; Health industry veteran to lead R&D department as senior vice president	Mention in boilerplate	INAMED			Neutral
11/18/2004	Business Wire	Starion instruments' TLS-2 recognized as '2004 innovation of the year' by the Society of Laparoendoscopic surgeons	Gastric bypass surgery	Starion Instruments			Positive
11/18/2004	Business Wire	New evidence links increased chromium absorption with reduction in cardiovascular risk factors in people with type 2 diabetes	Medical	Nutrition 21			Negative

11/18/2004	Business Wire	The Holland, Inc.- Burgerville boldly sponsors 'The Head Table'; A new television show exploring the politics and culture of food	Media	Burgerville			Neutral
11/18/2004	Business Wire	Low-fat vs. low-carb study results mis-reported: study revealed the real enemy is junk food	Nutrition and diets	LowCarb Living magazine			Negative
11/18/2004	Business Wire	Medicure announces development of MC-4262 combination product	Pharmaceutical	Medicure Inc.			Positive
11/18/2004	PR Newswire	Where you live affects what you eat; Study finds limited access to quality fruits, veggies in some urban areas	Health disparities	American Diabetes Associate			Negative

11/18/2004	PR Newswire	Studies investigating relationship between cardiovascular health and obesity presented at the annual meeting of the North American Association for the Study of Obesity (NASSO); Results demonstrate that weight loss can help manage cardiovascular and metabolic disease risk	Medical	Weight Watchers			Negative
11/18/2004	PR Newswire	FASgen, Inc. reports progress in obesity drug development	Pharmaceutical	FASgen, Inc.			Positive
11/18/2004	Business Wire	Research and markets: Ethical food and drinks marketing to children under 16 - What does the future hold?	Food marketing	Research and Markets			Positive
11/18/2004	PR Newswire	Gifts of health: New pedometer, blood pressure monitor, and body fat analyzer let people measure their health and progress faster -- from Omron Healthcare	Technology	Omron Healthcare			Positive



11/17/2004	PR Newswire	Metro, American Heart Association, Ketchum-Downtown YMCA announce 'Metro Fit' campaign to encourage more exercise using public transit; *Metro Fit helps health-conscious residents lose pounds, save money and discover LA	Health promotion/intervention program	Metro Media Relations	American Heart Association	YMCA	Positive
11/17/2004	Business Wire	Kinetic Concepts, Inc. to participate in credit suisse first Boston annual healthcare conference	Mention in boilerplate	Kinetic Concepts			Neutral
11/17/2004	PR Newswire	Unlocking your metabolic fingerprint: Discover the missing link to achieving an overall healthier lifestyle and how to create a truly personalized weight management program	Weight management program	Health-e-Tech			Positive

11/17/2004	Business Wire	Research and markets: Nuclear receptors: The market for nuclear receptor targeted drugs is estimated to be 10-15% of the \$400 billion global pharmaceutical market	Research	Research and Markets			Neutral
11/17/2004	PR Newswire	What's new in weight loss: Programs that work - and some that don't work (as well as you thought) - the effect of dairy and carbs; losing weight on the web	Weight management program	American Diabetes Associate	North American Association for the Study of Obesity		Positive
11/17/2004	PR Newswire	eHealth innovators drive health and pharmaceutical marketing in 2005; New category of online consumers represents only 10 percent of the market - but nearly 50 percent of the value	Technology	Manhattan Research, Inc.			Neutral
11/17/2004	Business Wire	Research and markets: Growth forecasts of the functional genomics market to 2007	Research	Research and Markets			Neutral

11/17/2004	PR Newswire	First major study examining long-term followers of low-carbohydrate diets reveals significant success rate; Study of individuals following the protocols of low-carb diets directly refutes conclusions mistakenly drawn from national weight loss registry data	Nutrition and diets	Atkins			Positive
11/17/2004	Business Wire	New Kaiser Permanente survey shows most Americans gain weight during the holiday season; Net-savvy consumers look online for help to keep the pounds off	Technology	Kaiser Permanente			Positive
11/17/2004	PR Newswire	Bristol-Meyers Squibb showcases pipeline at research and development overview meeting - company delivering on strategy to focus R&D efforts on 10 disease areas	Research	Bristol-Meyers Squibb			Positive

11/17/2004	PR Newswire	Sports icons visit Cleveland to help residents get 'Back in Full Swing' after a heart attack; Legendary couple, Nancy Lopez and Ray Knight, tour the country taking on post-heart attack health	Health promotion/intervention program	GlaxoSmithKline			Positive
11/17/2004	Business Wire	enGene Inc. appoints R. Hector MacKay-Dunn and L. Jack Wood to its board of directors	Mention in boilerplate	enGene			Neutral
11/17/2004	Business Wire	Jack in the Box Inc. reports fourth quarter and FY2004 results; affirms guidance for first quarter and fiscal 2005	Mention in boilerplate	Jack in the Box Inc.			Neutral
11/17/2004	Business Wire	Research and Markets: the total worldwide cardiovascular market is expected to show revenues of \$91.2 billion in 2008, an increase of 6.9% compared with 2003	Research	Research and Markets			Neutral

11/17/2004	PR Newswire	New research from Penn State shows that eating soup, vegetables and fruits increased weight loss and enhanced satisfaction	Nutrition and diets	Campbell's Soup			Positive
11/16/2004	Business Wire	Experts available to discuss low-fat versus low-carb diets	Nutrition and diets	ExpertSource			Neutral
11/16/2004	PR Newswire	1,200 local girl scouts and government agencies celebrate healthy Philadelphia day at Franklin Institute on November 20	Health promotion/intervention program	Girl Scouts	US Environmental Protection Agency		Positive
11/16/2004	PR Newswire	Lack of sleep may lead to excess weight study finds link between hours of sleep and risk of obesity	Medical	American Diabetes Associate	North American Association for the Study of Obesity		Negative
11/16/2004	PR Newswire	New study shows benefit of low-level heat for treating wrist pain	Mention in boilerplate	Proctor & Gamble			Neutral
11/16/2004	Business Wire	Kaiser Permanente and HealthMedia, Inc. win prestigious C. Everett Koop national health award for 2004	Health promotion/intervention program	Kaiser Permanente			Positive

11/16/2004	PR Newswire	Foot health Q&A: Athletes and Plantar Fasciitis (Heel pain)	Physical fitness	California Podiatric Medical Association			Neutral
11/16/2004	Business Wire	Research and Markets: Rising obesity levels are among the factors that have contributed to the current high level of interest in slimming and diet foods	Nutrition and diets	Research and Markets			Neutral
11/16/2004	Business Wire	New study shows nutrient combination reduces the increase in blood glucose levels after eating carbohydrates in moderately obese people with type 2 diabetes	Nutrition and diets	Nutrition 21			Positive
11/16/2004	PR Newswire	Sports icons visit Cleveland to help residents get 'Back in Full Swing' after a heart attack; Legendary couple, Nancy Lopez and Ray Knight, tour the country taking on post- heart attack health	Health promotion/intervention program	GlaxoSmithKline			Positive

11/16/2004	Business Wire	Elixir secures license from Medical College of Georgia to intellectual property covering the human equivalent to the INDY aging gene	Pharmaceutical	Elixir Pharmaceuticals			Positive
11/16/2004	Business Wire	Manhattan Pharmaceuticals, Inc. presents Oleoyl Estrone pharmacology data at the North American Association for the Study of Obesity 2004 annual meeting	Pharmaceutical	Manhattan Pharmaceuticals, Inc.			Positive
11/16/2004	PR Newswire	Vasogen announces full patient enrollment in its pivotal phase III trial of celacade™ in peripheral arterial disease	Mention in boilerplate	Vasogen			Neutral
11/16/2004	PR Newswire	Atkins research update; clinical research on controlled-carbohydrate nutrition from around the world volume 3, issue III November 2004	Nutrition and diets	Atkins			Positive

11/16/2004	Business Wire	Research and Markets: Commercial viability of phosphates enzyme class as therapeutic targets analysed	Research	Research and Markets			Neutral
11/16/2004	Business Wire	Pacific Biometrics, Inc. reports first fiscal quarter earnings	Financial	Pacific Biometrics			Positive
11/16/2004	Business Wire	Lucile Packard Children's hospital is first California pediatric hospital to perform bariatric surgery	Gastric bypass surgery	Lucile Packard Children's Hospital			Neutral
11/15/2004	Business Wire	Lucille Farms, Inc. announces results for the quarter ended September 30, 2004	Financial	Lucille Farms, Inc.			Neutral
11/15/2004	Business Wire	Kinetic Concepts, Inc. to participate in Merrill Lynch medical technology fundamentals conference	Mention in boilerplate	Kinetic Concepts			Neutral
11/15/2004	Business Wire	Pacific Biometrics, Inc. announces appointment of new division vice president for business development	Mention in boilerplate	Pacific Biometrics			Neutral



11/15/2004	PR Newswire	Physicians' group responds to Consumer Freedom's smear tactics; Criticism is false, defamatory and anti-public health	Lobbying	Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine			Negative
11/15/2004	PR Newswire	Antares Pharma, Inc. reports third quarter 2004 results progress in product development, new management and cost controls highlight quarter	Mention in boilerplate	Antares Pharma			Neutral
11/15/2004	PR Newswire	Youth weight-loss: what schools can do to help stem the tide of childhood obesity - after-school programs, smaller snack portions and better health education can make a difference	Childhood obesity	American Diabetes Associate	North American Association for the Study of Obesity		Positive
11/15/2004	PR Newswire	New study shows people and pets can succeed together in fighting the obesity epidemic; researchers announce results of first-ever, year-long people and pet weight loss study	Physical fitness	Northwestern Memorial Hospital	Hill's Pet Nutrition		Positive

11/15/2004	PR Newswire	Smoking cessation drug also keeps weight off - study offers hope to those afraid quitting may lead to extra pounds	Weight loss drugs	American Diabetes Associate	North American Association for the Study of Obesity		Positive
11/15/2004	PR Newswire	ECRI's special report addresses the safety and quality of bariatric services; other bariatric resources available	Gastric bypass surgery	ECRI			Neutral
11/15/2004	PR Newswire	Synovis Life Technologies' peri-strips ® significantly reduces bleeding and operating times in laparoscopic gastric bypass study; study results published in obesity surgery; second study announcement in six weeks to support clinical benefits of peri-strips in gastric bypass surgery	Gastric bypass surgery	Synovis Life Technologies			Positive
11/15/2004	Business Wire	Kraft Foods to sell sugar confectionary business as part of its sustainable growth plan	Mention in boilerplate	Kraft Foods			Neutral

11/15/2004	PR Newswire	Palatin Technologies' novel small molecule melanocortin agonist demonstrates a decrease in food intake and body weight without causing side effects; data presented at North American Association for the Study of Obesity annual scientific meeting	Weight loss drugs	Palatin Technologies			Positive
11/15/2004	Business Wire	Research and Markets: Examine now this overview of generally accepted pharmaceutical approaches to diabetes and obesity that are used today	Research	Research and Markets			Positive
11/15/2004	Business Wire	Cengent Therapeutics signs genes-to-leads drug discovery contract with dynamis therapeutics	Pharmaceutical	Cengent Therapeutics			Positive