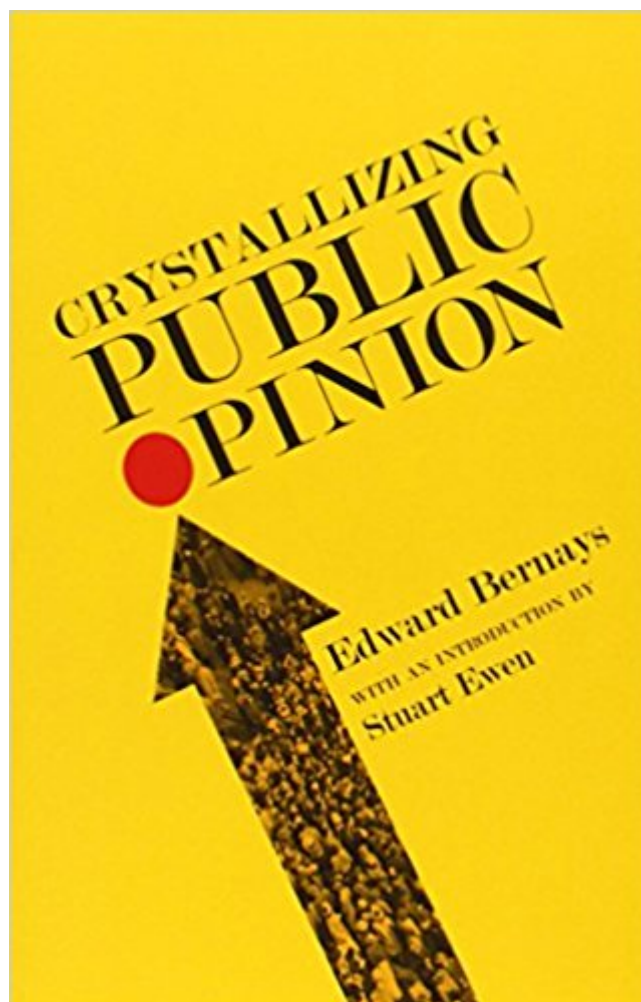


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# Crystallizing Public Opinion



## Synopsis

A seminal work on how public opinion is created and shaped, Edward Bernays's 1923 classic *Crystallizing Public Opinion* set down the principles that corporations and government have used to influence public attitudes over the past century. A primer on the then new profession of "public relations counsel," *Crystallizing* elucidates the "instruments and techniques" that PR professionals use to mold public opinion on behalf of their client's interests. By adapting the ideas that Bernays put forth in this book, governments and advertisers have been able to "regiment the mind like the military regiments the body." The first ever book ever written about the public relations industry, this all-new edition of *Crystallizing Public Opinion* features an introduction by Stuart Ewen, author of *PR! A Social History of Spin*, *All Consuming Images: On the Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture*, and *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For those who appreciate Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, Edward Bernays' *'Crystallizing Public Opinion'* will have a similar impact: Concise Guidance and lucid - if due to the original publication in 1923 - somewhat dated examples make for encompassing reading. It is fascinating that most of the literature on PR which has appeared since does not surpass the insights Bernays expounded so long ago. Bernays thinking has two pillars. First, he recognizes that "the public, ...due to the spread of literacy and democratic forms of government (feels) that it is entitled to its voice in the conduct of these large aggregations, political, capitalist, or labor, or whatever they may be"

(p.66). Therefore, any organization in society, no matter if it is a political entity, a company or a non-profit organization is looked at as some sort of public service. To succeed they will have to recognize this demand and communicate, accordingly. Second, Bernays regards the "average citizen (as) the world's most efficient censor. His own mind is the greatest barrier between him and the facts. His own 'logical proof compartments', his own absolutism are the obstacles which prevent him from seeing in terms of experience and thought rather than in terms of group reaction" (p. 133). This leads him to conclude that PR is of no use unless it has something to say which the public, consciously or unconsciously, expects to hear. PR is thus not primarily about authenticity or believability, as many current observers put it, PR is merely a communications effort which functions as a catalyst of change if it resonates with the public.

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