

Project Report On

(ROLES OF PUBLIC RELATION IN RURAL MARKETING)

Submitted by

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Project Guidance by

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Certificate

This is to certify that (**SAILY RAVINDRA DESAI**) has worked and duly completed his/her Project Work for the degree of Master in Commerce under the Faculty of Commerce in the subject of (**RURAL MARKETING**) and his/her project is entitled, (**ROLES OF PUBLIC RELATION IN RURAL MARKETING**) under my supervision.

I further certify that the entire work has been done by the learner under my guidance and that no part of it has been submitted previously for any Degree or Diploma of any University.

It is his/her own work and facts reported by her/his personal findings and investigations.

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Declaration by learner

I, the undersigned (**SAILY RAVINDRA DESAI**) declare that the work embodied in this project work hereby, titled (**ROLES OF PUBLIC RELATION IN RURAL MARKETING**), forms my own contribution to the research work carried out under the guidance of (**MRS SUSHMA PATIL**) is a result of my own research work and has not been previously submitted to any other University for any other Degree to this or any other University.

Wherever reference has been made to previous works of others, it has been clearly indicated as such and included in the bibliography.

I, here by further declare that all information of this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct.

Name of the learner: **SAILY RAVINDRA DESAI**

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Certified by

Name of the Guiding Teacher: **MRS SUSHMA PATIL**

Signature:

Acknowledgment

To list who all have helped me is difficult because they are so numerous and the depth is so enormous.

I would like to acknowledge the following as being idealistic channels and fresh dimensions in the completion of this project.

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Signature of the Student

(SAILY RAVINDRA DESAI)

INTRODUCTION TO ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATION

Public Relations is a management function and is an art and science of managing communication strategically and effectively for a desired outcome. Public Relations is not a subset to any other knowledge vertical as often construed as a subset to marketing, advertising, or corporate communication. PR encompasses every aspect of communication for an organisation to achieve a particular goal or result through a very humane holistic approach to understand various groups of people.

Public Relations or PR is not everyone's domain though each and everyone within an organisation is responsible to protect the organisational reputation, by maintaining rapport and building understanding with diverse groups of people, who are called 'publics' who are directly or indirectly engaged with the organisation. The term 'public' in public relations is also often equated with general public, whereas it stands for the groups of people, both internal and external, who interact with the organisation.

The practice also helps individuals, celebrities, authors, and other professionals, to streamline and deploy various communication tactics to build their reputation in their chosen niche.

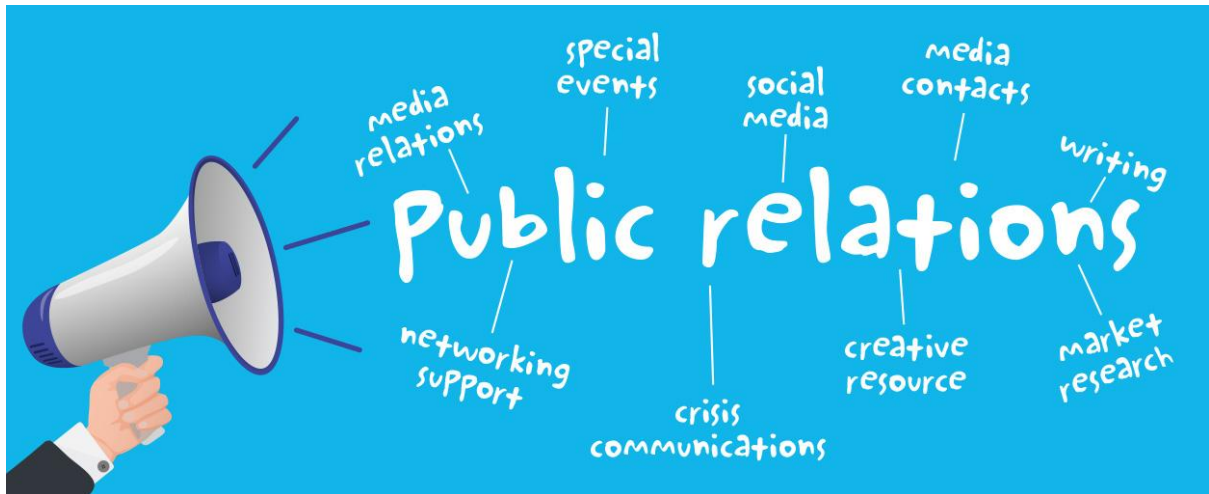
As a strategic management function, public relations strength rests on the body of communication theories and knowledge, specialised skill sets, supported and reviewed by peer groups organised under various professional bodies, and with its own set of ethics and high level of professional integrity.

Though PR as a profession is believed to have evolved in the 1920s in US, India has a rich tradition of its practice from the hoary past. The first manual of public relations practice for a king delineating strategies for governance of state by a king, was written by **Chanakya** in 375BC in the form of '**Arthshastra**', There are numerous other historical examples and records of effective communication strategies that various people used over the centuries in one form or the other.

Public relations specialists establish and maintain relationships with an organization's target audience, the media, relevant trade media, and other opinion leaders. Common responsibilities include designing communications campaigns, writing press releases and other content for news, working with the press, arranging interviews for company spokespeople, writing speeches for company leaders, acting as an organisation's spokesperson, preparing clients for press conferences, media interviews and speeches, writing website and social media content, managing company reputation (crisis management), managing internal communications, and marketing activities like brand awareness and event management.^[6] Success in the field of public relations requires a deep understanding of the interests and concerns of each of the company's many stakeholders. The public relations professional must know how to effectively address those concerns using the most powerful tool of the public relations trade, which is publicity.^[7]

As the negotiations began to deteriorate, the company began planning contingencies at all levels, including public relations¹. In 1997, UPS was still a privately held company. The public relations department was small, with only 10 management employees and a limited budget of \$5 million in the United States. There were few trained spokespeople, since the company did not have the public disclosure obligations typical of publicly traded firms. The public relations department functions included product publicity, financial communications, reputation management, and executive communications through a speaker's bureau. The function was also responsible for overall message development, crisis management, sponsorships, and event support. But it was understaffed and underfunded to deal effectively with the global attention UPS was about to face. The contract negotiations continued to unravel throughout the summer of 1997 and culminated with the Teamsters rejecting UPS's final contract offer on July 30. At that point, federal mediators intervened and continued negotiations through August 3. As the talks concluded at the end of the day, the union indicated it would return to the table the next day. Without any forewarning, the Teamsters union announced to its members that evening that it would strike. Ron Carey held a press conference early in the morning on August 4 confirming a national strike and encouraging all UPS workers to walk out. The Teamsters had been developing a full-court media blitz, which they launched that day with a well-coordinated campaign using television, radio, and print.

Public relations is a conduit, a facilitator, and a manager of communication, conducting research, defining problems, and creating meaning by fostering communication among many groups in society. The United Parcel Service (UPS) case illustrated the importance of this communication, both in financial terms—the strike cost UPS about \$750 million—and in terms of reputation with strategic publics. Public relations is a strategic conversation. As you might imagine, it is an ephemeral and wide-ranging field, often misperceived, and because of the lack of message control inherent in public relations, it is difficult to master. Public relations is even difficult to define. Is it spin or truth telling? Either way, the public relations function is prevalent and growing; the fragmentation of media and growth of multiple message sources means that public relations is on the ascent while traditional forms of mass communication (such as newspapers) are on the decline. You can find public relations in virtually every industry, government, and nonprofit organization. Its broad scope makes it impossible to understand without some attention to the taxonomy of this diverse and dynamic profession. Learning the lexicon of public relations in this chapter will help you master the discipline and help your study move quicker in subsequent reading. Corporate and agency public relations differ. These concepts are discussed in detail in a later chapter, along with nonprofit public relations and government relations or public affairs. For the purposes of an overview, we can define corporate public relations as being an in-house public relations department within a for-profit organization of any size. On the other hand, public relations agencies are hired consultants that normally work on an hourly basis for specific campaigns or goals of the organization that hires them. It is not uncommon for a large corporation to have both an in-house corporate public relations department and an external public relations agency that consults on specific issues. As their names imply, nonprofit public relations refers to not-for-profit organizations, foundations, and other issue- or cause-related groups.



OBJECTIVE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations can truly mean the difference between life and death for an organization, or the difference between profitability and failure. The following case illustrates the importance of public relations as a means to maintain ongoing, beneficial relationships, to systematically listen to and understand the concerns of publics—in this case, internal publics and a labor union and the external public of news media. Ongoing public relations initiatives, such as strategic issues management, could have prevented the problems encountered by the organization in the following case. The case also demonstrates that an organization can

recover its footing and repair its reputation and relationships, once it acknowledges its mistakes and commits to changing course. The following series of events highlight the importance of ongoing, strategic public relations as the very lifeblood of an organization.

Department of public relations aims to develop the positive image of the company, its products and policies.

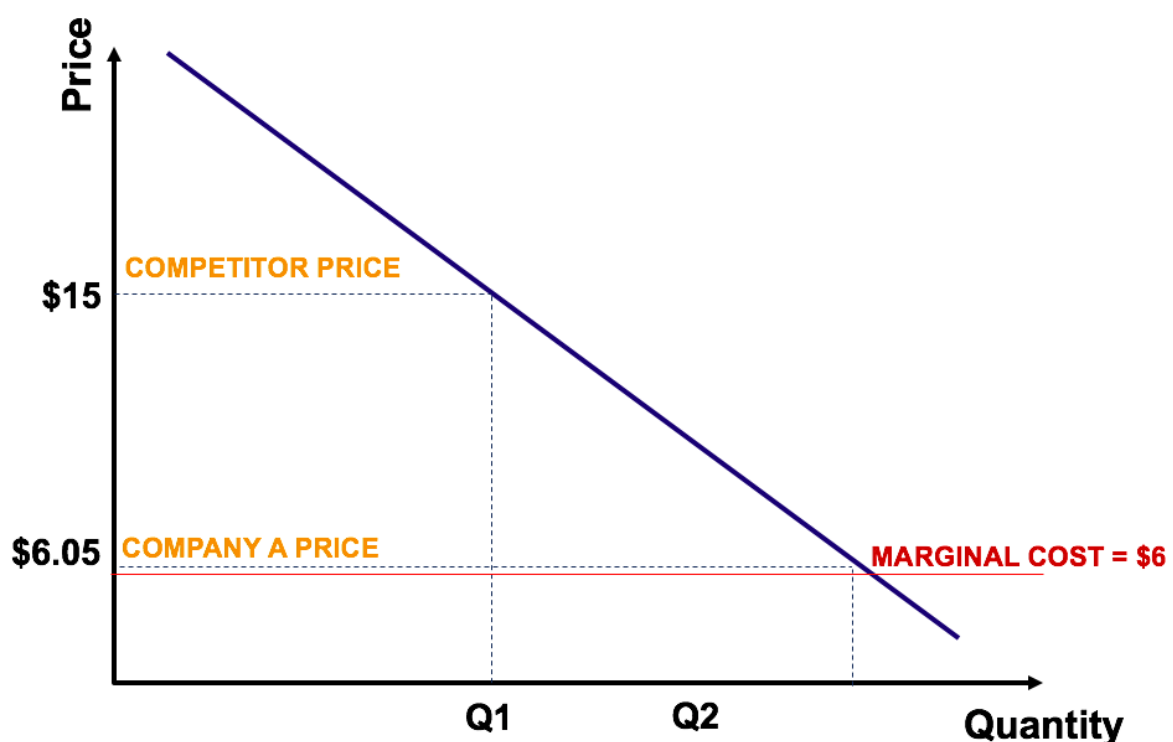
It achieves following objectives for the organisation:

- (i) It facilitates smooth functioning of business and achievement of organisational objectives.
- (ii) It builds corporate image and creates a favourable impression and creditability of company's products.
- (iii) It helps in launch of new products and maintain interest and confidence in the existing products.
- (iv) It acts as a supplement to advertising in promoting existing and new products. Thus, it helps business and its associates to sell products easily.
- (v) It lowers the promotional cost as it has to simply maintain staff to develop and circulate information with media or manage events.

• Public relations helps our complex, pluralistic society to reach decisions and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions. It serves to bring private and public policies into harmony. • Public relations serves a wide variety of institutions in society such as businesses, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations, foundations, hospitals, schools, colleges and religious institutions. To achieve their goals, these institutions must develop effective relationships with many different audiences or publics such as employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders and other institutions, and with society at large. • The managements of institutions need to understand the attitudes and values of their publics in order to achieve institutional goals. The goals themselves are shaped by the external environment. The public relations practitioner acts as a counselor to management and as a mediator, helping to translate private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action. Public Relations

Society of America (2009a). As such, the public relations field has grown to encompass the building of important relationships between an organization and its key publics through its actions and its communication. This perspective defines the field as a management function and offers insight into the roles and responsibilities of public relations professionals. The PRSA definition, however, is not perfect: A main weakness of that definition is that it requires public relations “to bring private and public policies into harmony.”Public Relations Society of America (2009b). In reality, we know that the relationships an organization has with all of its publics cannot always be harmonious. Further, that definition obligates us to act in the best interest of both the organization and its publics, which could be logically impossible if those interests are diametrically opposed. A few examples would be class action litigation, boycotts, and oppositional research and lobbying; despite the negative nature of those relationships, they still require public relations management and communication.

Chapter 2 What Is Public Relations? 12 The unique management function of public relations is critical to the success of any organization that engages people in its operation, whether they are shareholders, employees, or customers. Although many people think of publicity as the sole purpose of public relations, this text will help you understand that publicity is a subfunction of the overall purpose of public relations and should not be confused with the broader function.



HYPOTHESIS

With the increasing call for accountability of public relations spending, measuring the contribution of public relations to company's effectiveness is a requirement for business success. Many companies have taken a limited view of the impact that public relations can have on overall company's effectiveness. This paper deals with the value or more specifically, the contribution of public relations to overall company's effectiveness and hypothesizes that public relations impact on company's effectiveness. The paper consists of two parts: the theoretical framework for the role of public relations for the overall effectiveness of the company and the empirical analysis, based on the primary data collected. An analysis of the data in the sample of Slovenian companies is used to address the research question regarding the relationship between two concepts. This research confirms positive relationship between dependent variable public relations and the independent variable company's effectiveness.

Public relations education in Australia has primarily developed in response to market forces within the public relations industry. While this development has led to an increasing number of courses, and a range of subject choices, there has been relatively limited work on developing an epistemology of public relations. The current review of public relations education at RMIT University is providing opportunities to explore new approaches. When the review of the competencies required for such a course is combined with consideration of work in some scientific and social science disciplines, which illuminate our understanding of what shapes attitudes and behaviours, it is possible to develop some tentative hypotheses on future directions for public relations practice, teaching and research. Further, it is possible to identify insights into critical theories of public relations which can be derived from analysis of the interactions between these competencies and the context within which they operate. Public relations practice has, historically, been market-driven. This was reflected in the first development of public relations as an academic discipline over the past two decades and has informed the structure, content and location of public relations courses in tertiary institutions in which the subject is taught. It would now appear that opportunities exist to review our strategies regarding modes of knowing about public relations.

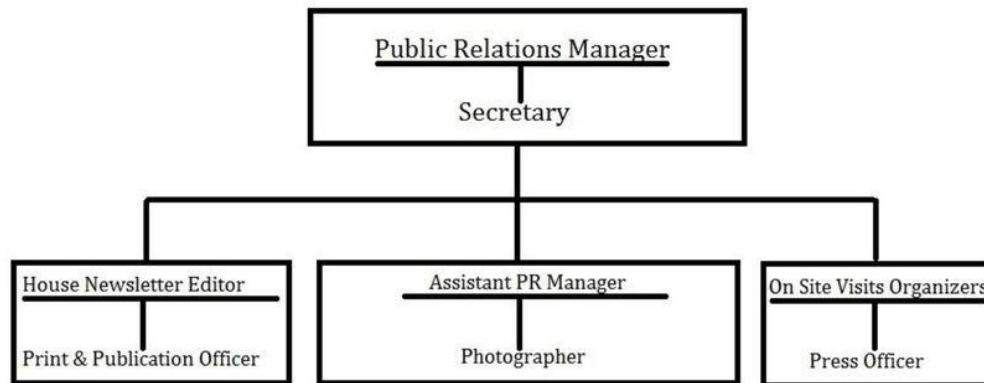
Conventional versions of public relations history tend to focus on its US origins, Lee and Bernays. This has probably been inadequate simply in terms of public relations as it is currently understood by practitioners. It also ignores significant work by historians such as Burke, Jardine and others investigating areas such as court ritual, the dissemination of intellectual concepts and technology diffusion. Burke, for instance, describes court rituals and governmental persuasive activities during the reign of Louis XIV (1) within a framework analogous to 20th century political and communication practice. Jardine, similarly, interprets the influence of Erasmus (2) within a framework which would be familiar to practitioners focussed on the role of opinion leaders in shaping public attitudes.

In Australia in the 20th century the early history of public relations was fundamentally about a process by which journalists were employed to shape and place information about public and private sector organisations in the mass media – until recently the dominant communication channel.

The development of tertiary public relations courses

By the 1970s, however, there was considerable internal industry debate about whether public relations practice was a “profession” or not. While this debate appears quaint in hindsight it drove two significant developments. First, it inspired a commitment to developing an industry “body of knowledge” appropriate to such a profession. Second, it encouraged the industry to approach tertiary institutions with a view to creating degree courses in public relations. This was successful and now every State offers at least one degree course plus various post-graduate public relations study options. The PRIA operates a national accreditation system for the courses thereby maintaining the market-industry link which had initially inspired the move to create the degrees. It should also be noted that there was another dimension to this market-driven development. The rapidly developing public relations industry needed more practitioners at a time when it, and other industries, was looking to tertiary institutions as a source of employees with more systematically-based skills. It should be noted however, that although many of those who entered the industry from journalism had pursued the craft-based training of cadetships there were a number of journalists with tertiary education. The Melbourne University Diploma in Journalism and direct entry to journalistic gradings from graduates were examples of this relation.

Chart of PR Department

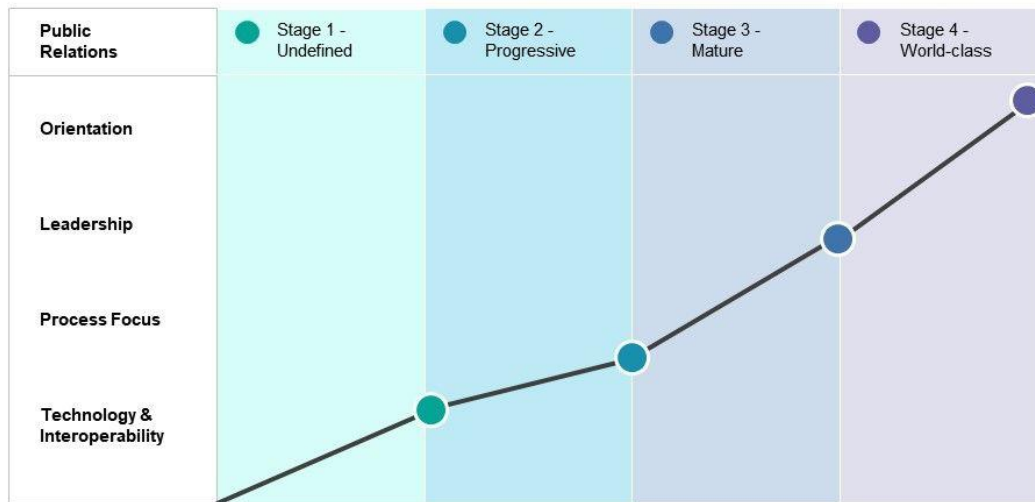


IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC RELATION

Public relations is a conduit, a facilitator, and a manager of communication, conducting research, defining problems, and creating meaning by fostering communication among many groups in society. The United Parcel Service (UPS) case illustrated the importance of this communication, both in financial terms—the strike cost UPS about \$750 million—and in terms of reputation with strategic publics. Public relations is a strategic conversation. As you might imagine, it is an ephemeral and wide-ranging field, often misperceived, and because of the lack of message control inherent in public relations, it is difficult to master.

Public relations is even difficult to define. Is it spin or truth telling? Either way, the public relations function is prevalent and growing; the fragmentation of media and growth of multiple message sources means that public relations is on the ascent while traditional forms of mass communication (such as newspapers) are on the decline. You can find public relations in virtually every industry, government, and nonprofit organization. Its broad scope makes it impossible to understand without some attention to the taxonomy of this diverse and dynamic profession. Learning the lexicon of public relations in this chapter will help you master the discipline and help your study move quicker in subsequent reading. Corporate and agency public relations differ. These concepts are discussed in detail in a later chapter, along with nonprofit public relations and government relations or public affairs. For the purposes of an overview, we can define corporate public relations as being an in-house public relations department within a for-profit organization of any size. On the other hand, public relations agencies are hired consultants that normally work on an hourly basis for specific campaigns or goals of the organization that hires them. It is not uncommon for a large corporation to have both an in-house corporate public relations department and an external public relations agency that consults on specific issues. As their names imply, nonprofit public relations refers to not-for-profit organizations, foundations, and other issue- or cause-related groups. Government relations or public affairs is the branch of public relations that specializes in managing relationships with governmental officials and regulatory agencies.

PR Plan Public Relation Orientation Leadership Process...



This slide is 100% editable. Adapt it to your needs and capture your audience's attention.

1. Saturation of Effort:

Organisations competing for a finite amount of media attention puts pressure on the public relations effort to be better than that of competitors. There can be no guarantee that PR activity will have any impact on the targets at whom it is aimed.

2. Can be Targeted:

To a small specialised audience public relations activities can be targeted assuming if the right media vehicle is used.

3. Relatively Low Cost:

It is much cheaper, in terms of cost per person reached, than any other type of promotion. Apart from nominal production costs, much PR activity can be carried out at almost no cost, in marked contrast to the high cost of buying space or time in the main media.

4. Relatively Uncontrollable:

A company has only a little direct control over the proceedings of public relations activity. If successful, a press release may be printed in full, although there can be no control over where or when it is printed. A press release can be misinterpreted and result may be unfavourable news coverage. This is in contrast to advertising, where an advertiser can exercise considerable control over the content placing, and timing of an advert.

5. Credibility:

PR activity results in a high degree of credibility as compared to other promotional sources like advertising. As the audience may regard such a message as joining from an apparently impartial and non-commercial source. Where information is presented as news, readers or viewers may be less critical of it than if it is presented as an advertisement, which they may presume to be biased.



SCOPE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Community Relations:

A business should be seen as a responsible citizen of the community it operates in. A comprehensive community relation programme should focus on building a respectable image for the company in the community in the long run. Many organizations implement educational and health related programmes for improving quality of life of the community members. Such activities help to build their reputation along with benefiting the society.

2 . Employee Relations:

Employees are the most valuable assets of the company and the organization had to create employee goodwill for maintaining a loyal workforce. Loyal employees are more productive and interested in the well-being of the company.

3. Customer Relations:

The most important component of external public is the customer. The customer is the reason behind the existence of the organization. Public relations informs the customer about introduction of new products or changes in existing ones. Public relations plays a crucial role in attracting the attention of the buyer towards the company's offerings and helps to differentiate the product from those of its competitors.

4. Financial Relations:

A segment of the company's public consists of those individuals and institutions the company has financial dealings with. These include the shareholders, creditors, potential investors, banks, financial analysts, etc.

These parties have to be informed about the company's finances, plans for expansions, plans to raise share capital, etc. A well planned financial relations programme is necessary to improve the organization's image and increase the value of its stock.

The Company has to function under the control of government rules and regulations. It has to forge proper relations with various government officials and political parties to ensure smooth functioning of the enterprise.

5. Crisis Communication:

The role of public relations takes on vital significance during crisis situations like an accident, financial scams, bankruptcies, etc. It is the responsibility of the public relations to give the honest and accurate information to the concerned publics and assure them of remedial measures taken to control the crisis.

6. Political and Government Relations:

The Company has to function under the control of government rules and regulations. It has to forge proper relations with various government officials and political parties to ensure smooth functioning of the enterprise.

7. Press relations

The public relations department works with the media to present true facts about the company to ensure that information about the company is presented in a positive manner.

8. Product publicity

The public relations department sponsors events and programmes to publicise new or existing products. For example, many companies adopt a park, a school, an orphanage or sponsor sports and cultural events like seminars, exhibitions, news conferences etc.

9. Corporate communication

The company issues newsletters, annual reports, brochures, audio-visual materials to influence the public and the employees. For example, company's top leaders may give a speech or message or give an interview to media.

10. Lobbying

The company has to maintain healthy relations with government officials, ministry in charge of corporate affairs, industry, finance association of commerce and industry etc. The company also has to take the opinion of shareholders while formulating industrial, taxation policies etc. to keep them satisfied.

THE DIFFERENT METHOD OF PUBLIC RELATION

Films and videos

Films are giving way now to videos as a PR method of communicating, for videos are generally cheaper and can be easily seen by many more people. Film and video companies exist who will do the script, production and distribution of such materials. A good understanding of video making and its potential will help you in your PR work.

Education as a public relations activity

Commercial enterprises, such as banks and food manufacturers, may all have educational PR programs, as do some non commercial organizations such as the British Dental Association and the Health Education Council. One major educationally based public relations campaign mounted in recent years was that for Information Technology Year on behalf of the Government.

Some banks in the past have distributed banking educational games devised for use in school to teach young people about banking and the use of money. The attachment of a particular bank's name to the game generates goodwill from teachers and parents today's customers and helps recognition of the bank among students at an early age tomorrow's customers. This benevolent commercialism does little harm, but educationalists rightly want only that which really serves their students' interests.

One campaign by a leading washing powder manufacturer went into schools with an educational program because it was an effective way of reaching the mothers who were its prime target. An educational lesson was devised involving each primary school child with a colored card of a house. The child had to take the card home and get different fabric cuttings from her or his Mum. These were brought back to school and curtains and rugs were cut out of the fabrics for the house, each being labeled as to the fiber, e.g. wool, cotton, silk, polyester, nylon. The teacher then involved the class in discussions about these fabrics and the fibres in them. This became an excellent and creative lesson. One has only to think of the remarkable story of growing, harvesting, and weaving cotton with its social and industrial history to realize the enormous learning potential of such a project. The child involved the

mother at home in the project by hunting out scraps of fabric, discussing what they were, and then bringing back home the finished house. A teaching pack was sent separately to the teacher for her use in this project. In this way three different groups were used, each linking with the other the teacher who is both an opinion former and a consumer, the child who learns about the manufacturer and may become a potential future customer and who acts as a messenger to the mother who is the manufacturer's prime commercial and marketing target.

Financial public relations

This specialty has been the big growth area for PR in recent years. You will need a degree or professional qualifications, preferably law or accountancy, unless you are already an established financial journalist or parliamentarian. Your work will cover the following main areas .Maintaining the confidence of a company's shareholders, investment analysts, and the media by a regular flow of information on aims and achievements. Dealing with special situations such as takeovers and mergers, transferring from private to public company. Stock exchange procedures and regulations. International capital markets PR strategies related to international quotations and fund raising.

Financial public relations and the media

The financial media whether printed or broadcast, is the life blood of the financial public relations consultant. He must always be on the move with those who influence, control and make the complex world of finance go round, and this includes those in the media concerned with money, investment, and economics. Financial media normally has immediate and easy access to any client. Top financial journalists can make and break company reputations. If you work in financial public relations you are not a generalist you are a keen specialist for your work is not, as you might suppose, just about money but about investment, capital, tax, financial packages and products, stocks, shares, bonds, management and corporate reputations. There is a lot to learn about financial media. Start now by reading the Financial Times regularly.

Special interest public relations

The environment is a popular topic these days and there are many special conservation groups all around the country. These are just one kind of special interest group. Perhaps a group dedicated to the conservation of a particular kind of architecture has started in your area. This group must put across its views and gain popular support and understanding for its campaign. Putting up posters and sending out press releases is no longer really enough in the face of so much publicity effort by so many special interest groups these days. Why not join a local group of some kind in whose fight you believe and try to improve the quality and extent of their public relations?

PROBLEMS

Prince Matt Owobu (2011) explains that public relations as an applied social and behavioral science assists management in defining organisation's objectives for increasing public understanding and acceptance of the organization's products (goods or services), plans, policies and personnel. Put differently, it is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an organization with the public interests and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. He further agrees with Laura (2012) as regarding what public relations problems are in this contemporary world. It is also important to understand that public relations is a world-wide discipline, it is global in operation and has relevance in the image of any institution employing it.

Public relations problems are peculiar to the country or organization where it is operating. Without doubt, the discipline has its global problems. We shall enumerate these problems as it affects the world and Nigeria respectively. It is not exaggeration that public relations is faced with numerous problems or challenges, the truth is that, these problems have constituted to the major challenges the profession is facing today.

More so, the dynamism of the world has posed another challenge to the profession, since our job is communication oriented, we are faced with divers' media to communicate our messages to identified audience. Some schools of thought have enumerated their passive

opinions as regarding their thoughts on what public relations' problems are globally. These are:

1. **Financial Constraint**

There is no doubt that organizations are cutting budgets, thereby leading to poor financing of the public relations department. Financial belt-tightening has stemmed the flow of public relations' budgets. Companies are reluctant to spend the little revenue they have on improving their media profile. Ironically, now is the time for them to raise their profile and gain new custom.

2. **Increase in Communication Platform**

Communication platforms offer a swift, easy way of disseminating messages across to target audience; but the huddles to choose the right communication channels for clients could be painstaking. Though many social media are free to use, even if it need paying subscription for some services, it is still convenient to use. However, a lot of time-investment need to be made in order to reach out to the right audience, passing your messages across to them and getting desired results.

3. **Client's Expectation Management**

It is a problem that clients expect you to perform magic in-order to produce their imagined expectations. They expect you to work within any giving budget. They have unrealistic expectations of media coverage and how far their budget will stretch. Saddled with these challenges, a practitioner would need to reduce the scope of his campaign to at least achieve an optimum result.

4. **Poor Man-Power Situation**

It is a known fact that most practitioners of public relations have background disciplines in other field of studies. Some are practicing journalists, marketers, advertisers, graphic artists, psychologists and so on; the truth is, they lack comprehensive understanding of what it takes to be a full practitioners in Public relations.

Those disciplines are relevant to gaining an expertise in public relations, but they need to be merged with core public relations courses to achieve the birthing of a fully fledged public relations expertise. Some quacks position themselves as practitioners, thereby putting the profession at disrepute; they make claims they cannot defend, and organize campaigns that are substandard and guarded with professional misconduct.

5. Poor Appreciation of the Profession Among Public and Private Organizations' Leaders

Most organization's leaders have no regard for the profession. They believe anyone could do the job of public relations if put through. They have myopic perception of the profession so they do not see need for engaging both an In-house public relations and consultant to manage their reputation. If they eventually do, they could just employ them as errand officers (Protocols), this is a bastardization of the profession.

6. Low Awareness of Public Relations and What it Stands For

Public relations is still an evolving phenomenon in most developing countries of the world. This has caused a set back to the proliferation of the discipline in the world. Public relations is just a topic in mass communication or marketing in higher institutions lieu of a discipline. Until practitioners rise to the wake-up call, the discipline may die a natural death in these countries.

7. Poor Usage of Social Media

Social media has formed the basis for public relations per-excellence in this digital age. Any practitioner that is deficient in the usage of this may fade-out of the profession soon. Social media such as Face book, Linked-in, Tweeter, Net log, etc. are pre-eminent in this present age of our practice. However, most users of social networks abuse them a lot; while some are not diplomatic in the way they use them to convey messages to the public. Other practitioners promote themselves and products without prior interactions with their targets. This attitude could make them (public) perceive you as self centered person who care only about oneself, thereby confirming the saying "No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you cares."

Public Relation in Marketing: Helping Create a Market, Influencing Non-Consumer Groups, Influencing the Influential in Crisis and a Few Others

As far as the marketing function of any organisation is concerned, PR can help, if not more, at least in six different ways, apart from supplementing and enhancing the impact/of the advertising effort –

1. Helping Create a Market:

Marketing assumes the existence of a market, and the role of marketing invariably is to satisfy the needs and wants of those who constitute the market.

However, sometimes companies face a situation where market is blocked for them and they just can't operate.

For example, in India until 1982, India was a blocked market for colour televisions as the colour transmission didn't exist. For all TV manufacturers, the marketing task was to convince the government to commence transmission in colour.

The opportunity was the "Asian Games" and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) was, perhaps, convinced on the need to telecast the prestigious games to the rest of the world in colour.

Here one can see the linkage between political strategy of a country influencing the opening of the markets. It is said that companies therefore, must identify the people with the power to open the gates of the blocked markets and prevail upon them to exercise their power. Such tasks fall under the domain of Public Relations, and not marketing.

It is suggested that the organisations should not only identify the chief gatekeeper, but also determine the right mix of incentives to offer.

Under what circumstances will the gatekeepers cooperate? Is legislator X primarily seeking fame, fortune or power? How can the company induce this legislator to cooperate? In some countries, the answer may be with a cash payoff (a hidden P of the marketing Mix).

Elsewhere, a payoff in entertainment, travel or campaign contributions may work.

What is expected is to successfully negotiate and do lobbying in order to successfully achieve the objectives which you have been lobbying for.

Kotler (1986) in his articles of Mega marketing has said that “successful marketing is increasingly becoming a political exercise”. Pepsi Cola outwitted its arch rival, Coca-Cola, by striking a deal to gain entry into India’s huge consumer market, fast heading towards, 1,000 million people. While Coca-Cola withdrew from India in 1978, Pepsi made an entry forming a joint venture with the Indian counterpart, winning governmental approvals, despite opposition from other Indian soft drink companies, and anti-MNC legislations.

The package offered included exports of agro-based products, focus on rural markets, newer food processing, packaging and water treatment technology. This package was attractive enough to win over various interest groups.

Taking the example of Pepsi Cola’s entry into the Indian market, Kotler emphasised the need for supplying benefits to parties other than target consumer. “This need extends beyond the requirements to serve and satisfy normal intermediaries like agents, distributors and dealers.” These so-called third parties included governments, labour unions and other interest groups that individually or collectively, can block profitable entry into a “market. These groups act as gatekeepers and they are growing in importance. In dealing with such groups, one has to add two more Ps, i.e., Power and Public Relations.

2. Influencing Non-Consumer Groups:

Invariably, marketing addresses its efforts to the ultimate consumer and overlooks those which might influence the bottom-line. Such groups of people or publics are advertised by the public relations function for overall organisational goals. A typical example is that a medical representative calls on a physician he does not aim to sell medicines, like any typical salesperson involved in marketing and selling.

The medical representative has a purpose of just to keep the physician informed about the new products and formulations the company has introduced in the market though public relations expects the physician to recommend his (medical representative’s) medicines to the patients.

Similar is the case with representative of publishing houses who visit teachers in different schools, colleges to inform teachers and not to make them buy their books.

One can identify many such examples where PR programmes are strategically and regularly executed to meet the business objectives from the target audience other than non-consumer groups.

3. Influencing the Influential in Crisis:

How to and how not to communicate during crisis is also a strategic decision. The marketing crisis can range from product failure or tampering during transit or by trade, protests by

activists (e.g., KFC in Bangalore), accidents (e.g., fire in a hotel), government pronouncements (BVO in Limca), etc.

Such situations of crisis get complicated and they get further messed up due to inaccurate reporting. The organisations by not submitting clarifications to the media due to the fear of jeopardising the legal stand, might end up with a negative image in crisis. Denials or withholding information may be viewed as a cover up and even look like admission of guilt automatically.

In such situations, it is suggested that legal and marketing objectives should be dealt with separately. In such situations, the thumb rule is to confirm facts rather than giving explanations. It is likely that as a result of this organisations might emerge with a cleaner image.

4. Influencing the Dealers and Sales People:

Most organisations find it difficult to reach their product to the consumers directly, and, instead they use either a sales force to sell their goods door to door or to dealers and on the other hand they have a whole lot of intermediaries who participate in reaching the company's product from manufacturing point to the consumption place. It is the trade which might push the product in the market and give priority to a product over the competitors.

It is, therefore, important to exercise good relations with dealers, wholesalers who contribute significantly in making the bottom line the balance sheet, rosier. Dealer conferences, conventions, display contents, gifts, in-house publications, etc., are all such PR tools to achieve dealers' support and cooperation. Similar is the significance of the sales force.

5. Influencing Direct Consumers through Means Other than Advertising:

In certain industries, it is not possible to use the conventional promotion tools with success. For example, there are other organisations where the size of the operation is not large enough to support a heavy promotional budget. There are others who find it difficult to advertise or promote as it might lead to a bad taste. For example, a hospital might find it very difficult to advertise abortion services. Similar could be the case for open heart surgery or other services. Arising out of these reasons, the conventional promotional tools have a limited use. Duncan (1985) has suggested that the services sector industries have to think about other promotional tools.

There are very successful examples like a medical doctor specialising in eye care running his own clinic-cum-nursing home and organising free eye camps in his region. This community service not only spreads his name, but also proves his competence. The local newspapers might carry stories about such camps to give further boost to the promotion.

Therefore, promotional activities like community relations, event management, media blitz, corporate identity programmes have a relevance and they should be used innovatively and effectively.

6. Influencing Employees to Serve the Customers Better:

Marketing activities in all organisations can, be clubbed under three major heads, namely – External marketing, Internal Marketing and Interactive Marketing.

The traditional 4Ps of the marketing mix are basically external to an organisation as these efforts are targeted at customers. However, every single individual in organisation plays some role in marketing a product or service and, therefore, any effort by the company by way of training on product knowledge, product handling, customer knowledge, selling etc., in addition to motivation, can be taken as the internal marketing tool.

Interactive marketing relates to the skill of employees in handling, customer contact. A customer judges the quality not only on the basis of technical quality of the product services package, but also by its functional quality.

Customer's experiences of the moments of truth are based on certain expectations created by the service provider. The traditional marketing efforts give promises, which correspond with the personal need and aspirations of the target group of customers. In addition, employee's abilities and motivation to meet the expectations of customer as created by external marketing efforts are backed up by internal marketing efforts.

PUBLIC RELATION –ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Advantages:

Public Relation should be an important but subtle part of the promotional mix, not just an adjunct to advertising.

The most important advantages to be gained are:

- i. Credibility – If the public are made aware of the benefits to be gained from a company's products from an independent source, and that source is not being paid by the company in question, then the credibility factor is that much greater.
- ii. Greater readership – When glancing through a newspaper it is seldom that a great deal of attention is primarily paid to advertisements. Much more attention is given to editorial or

news sections. Similarly, people are more likely to divert attention from the television to do other things while the advertisements are being shown.

iii. Contain more information – Public relation is able to impart more information to the public than advertisements can. A glance is all that is usually given to an advertisement, whereas public relation, when presented as news, is given more attention and is therefore able to contain much more detailed information.

iv. Cost benefits – No direct payments are made to the media for public relation. There are obviously costs involved, but PR budgets are far less than those for advertising.

v. Speed – Public relation has an advantage of speed. Information on a major development can often be issued and reported in a short space of time. Public relation can also be flexible and reactive.

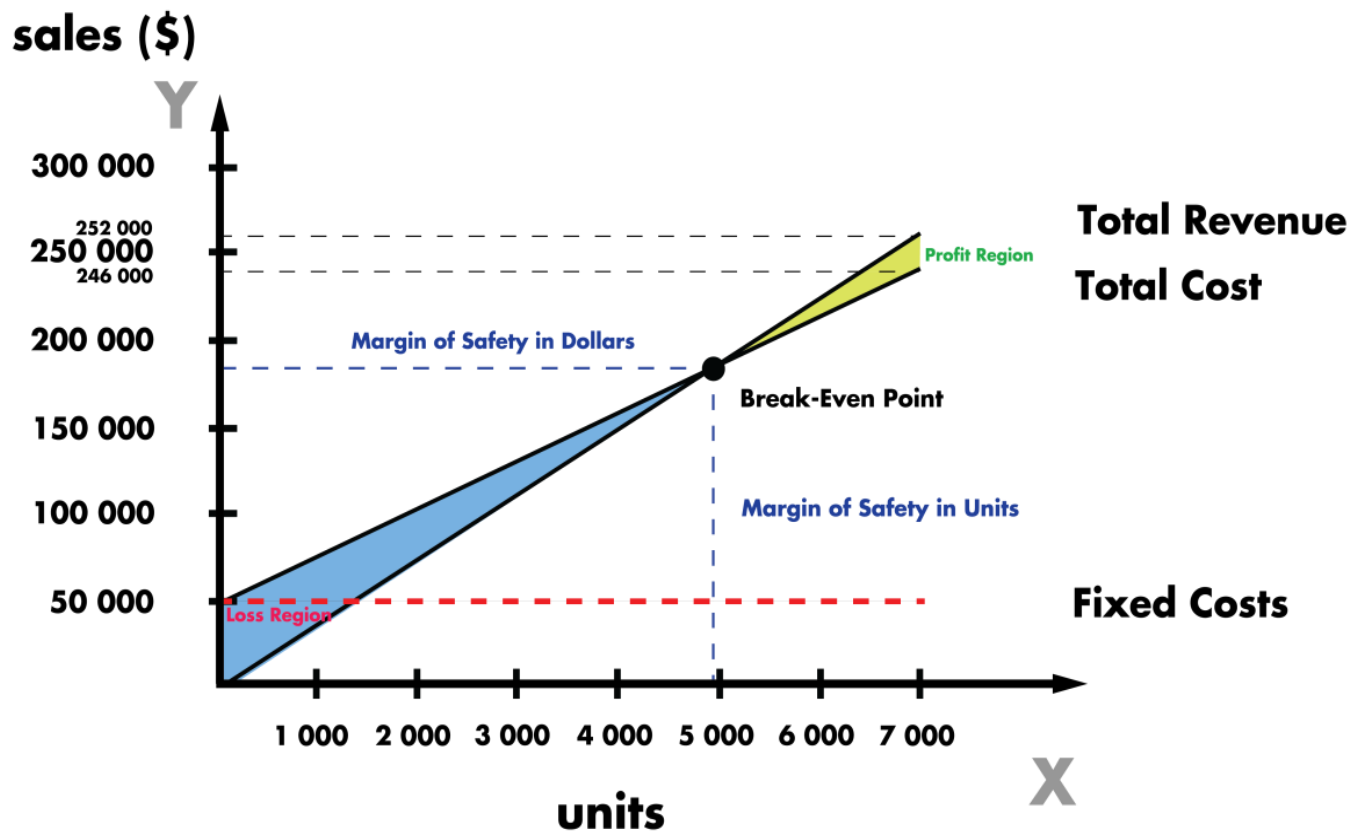
Disadvantages:

Public Relation is generally looked upon as being of benefit, but sometimes both companies, and famous personalities, wish that they could avoid public relation. If there is a major accident on the premises of a company, or an oil leak from one of the oil companies' installations offshore, that company will be on the receiving end of some very bad public relation.

They can try to minimise this by breaking the news to the media themselves, and being as helpful as possible, but damage to their reputation will still be incurred.

i. Message distortion – A company has no control over what the media report about them. A press release, which a company hopes is reported in full, may in fact not be used at all, or may have only a small portion of it reported.

ii. Repetition – With advertisements a company can ensure that there is frequency of the message. Public Relation does not have this advantage and the message may only be given once, if at all.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Public relations or PR is a multifaceted discipline with no standardized definition. It is the discipline which looks after organizations reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. PR is planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between organization and its publics. Traditionally, PR belongs to marketing and is considered as a branch of promotional activities. However, some authors consider PR as a managerial function since it deals with the organizations relations with both internal and external public.

The ambiguity of PR will probably bring even more theoretical discussion among marketing and management experts. The roots of PR reach far into the history, but the fundamentals of the modern concept of PR could be found in the pioneering propaganda efforts against the British Monarchy during the American Revolution. Besides its use for commercial and political purposes, PR also plays an important role in the context of public healthcare communication activities. Like never before, PR in public healthcare is faced with so many challenges and expectations.

Today's PR has to deal with a broad perspective of health related issues and needs of target markets, together with taking into account financial aspects of healthcare services. It is the goal of this paper to provide better understanding of the application of PR in the public healthcare system and to detect possible gaps in the available literature.

Unlike some corporate functions, such as legal and finance, the communication function does not have as its primary mission fulfilling specific regulatory or compliance requirements. As a result, the function is rarely organized in a uniform fashion from one organization to the next. Similarly sized organizations can vary widely in the resources and number of employees devoted to communication.

Reporting relationships and functional responsibilities also differ depending on the nature of the company. For example, companies that are heavily focused on building and sustaining strong consumer brands may devote far more employees and greater attention to the communication function than organizations that operate exclusively in the business-to-business sector.

A company that sells directly to consumers has a greater need for a large media relations team since it can field dozens of calls each day from both mainstream and trade media. When a new product is being launched, the staff will be called upon to plan press conferences, conduct satellite media tours with local television stations, and organize customer events. Companies that sell their products to other businesses rather than directly to consumers may have similar needs from time to time, but they are usually on a much smaller scale. Some industries, such as fashion, entertainment, packaged goods, and travel, place a greater emphasis on communication than those with longer selling cycles, such as construction, manufacturing, and engineering. Newer fields, such as computing, also tend to rely more on public relations and social media programs than through traditional advertising channels.

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Newer fields, such as computing, also tend to rely more on public relations and social media programs than through traditional advertising channels. In many organizations, the senior leader of the communication team reports directly to the CEO, whereas in others, that individual may report to the head of legal, marketing, or human resources. Regardless of the specific reporting relationship, in virtually all companies, the function is responsible for communicating with the media and usually has the lead role in developing employee communication as well. Public relations activities, such as the management of corporate events, press conferences, product launches, large employee gatherings, and leadership meetings normally also are managed by the chief communications officer (CCO) and his or her team. In some companies the function is also charged with managing investor relations—that is, communicating with the company's shareholders and financial analysts who follow and report on the company.

In a publicly traded company, the Chapter 10 The Practice of Public Relations 103 investor relations function must comply with a number of securities regulations regarding the company's disclosure of its financial results. These activities involve the release of quarterly and annual financial results and providing timely information to shareholders regarding any event that meets the definition of materiality¹, an event that could have a positive or negative impact on the company's share price. In fulfilling these requirements, the investor relations

function works closely with the finance and legal departments, as well as the company's outside audit firm.

Most CCOs would maintain that there is no such thing as a typical day. Some of the most important qualities of successful CCOs are flexibility, patience, analytical ability, and the ability to remain calm under pressure. All organizations face potentially damaging issues every day. The CCO must monitor these issues on an ongoing basis, much like a chef watching many simmering pots on the stove. The objective in this pursuit is not to let any of these issues boil over into full-fledged crises. This task has been made harder by the ubiquitous presence of the Internet. The Web has provided the means for unhappy customers, disgruntled employees, or disappointed shareholders to voice their concerns in a very public manner with a few computer keystrokes. Although the corporate public relations function is extremely complex .

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

PRIMARY DATA :-

PUBLIC RELATIONS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

1. Which service have had contact with today?

1. .Public Relations

2. Graphic Design

2. How would you rate the service you receive from us?

1.Excellent

2. Good

3. Adequate

4. Poor

5. Unacceptable

3. How do you sell your products or services?

1. online

2. in stores

3. through distributors

4. Do you have any new products coming out?

1. Yes

2. No

5 .Have any of your products been improved in the past year?

1. Yes

2. No

6. Did any new products come out in the past year?

1. Yes

2. No

7. Does your company have any upcoming events or significant trips planned?

1. Yes

2. No

8. Was your product or service used in a unique way in the past year?

1. Yes

2. No

9. Are there any specific press releases you would like to publish in the next year?

1. Yes

2. No

SECONDARY DATA

The role of research and planning is essential to any public relations effort. Until recently, this aspect of public relations practice has suffered from what has been described as a lack of measurable outcomes. That is, public relations has been seen as a soft practice (one that focuses primarily on outputs such as news releases) or “publicity,” most often an in-house organ or media relations unit that produced press releases and other promotional materials. As such, much of public relations planning was focused on getting a message out to as many constituents as possible, often without much thought to the outcomes that these materials were seeking to influence.

This chapter reviews the research and planning process involved in successful public relations campaigns that cross various corporate communication needs. It examines the research process and focuses on the roles of research in the campaign, such as benchmarking and evaluation of public relations outcomes. The chapter is rounded out by a review of the research methods employed in both gathering data and providing indicators of program success and an overview of the measurement process in terms of Return On Investment (ROI) and Return On Expectations (ROE).

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PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Public relations research is no different from any other type of corporate research and should strive to meet several ends. First, it should be driven by the same general organizational research assumptions that drive other organizational areas. Second, public relations research must address achievable and measurable goals.

Third, research has specific uses that should match those goals. Fourth, public relations research should be programmatic rather than one-shot case-by-case instance driven.

Finally, public relations departments need to have the budget and resources to carry out this research. Research is the controlled, objective, and systematic gathering of data. It seeks to describe, understand, predict, and control phenomena (Hocking, Stacks, & McDermott, 2002).

Basic research begins by describing what it is that the public relations action is and what it seeks to do.

Once described, the research can then be used to understand the concern or problem and establish a baseline against which the public relations campaign can be measured and evaluated. Research serves to provide reliable and valid data from Public relations research is no different from any other type of corporate research and should strive to meet several ends. First, it should be driven by the same general organizational research assumptions that drive other organizational areas. Second, public relations

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CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of time, public relations have involved a sense of relationships, whether the practitioner wanted it to or not. This is because when an organization listens to and collaborates with a public, better final decisions are made versus when an organization just tries to persuade or convince the public to accept their goals or decisions.

For an organization to be effective and excellent, a two-way communication system must exist; when the public opposes to management goals and decisions, issues or crises will evolve.

This is where the problem for most public relations professionals arises: as decisions are made that do not care for public opinion, public relations professionals must go into a strategic mode to defend or apologize for actions done or decisions made.

This entire process of public relations people covering for organizations or businesses can be avoided, if the dominant coalition in the organization or the management listens to what the people wanted in the first place.

Thus, it can be said it is necessary to develop and maintain relationships with strategic publics to enhance organizations and to help them make effective and excellent decisions.

Consequently, considering that it is the public relations practitioners that are the ones on the field and doing the research about the public, public relations practitioners need to be able to negotiate relationships with both management and multiple publics, as this will help make organizations make better decisions.

Relationships between organizations and businesses can be enhanced when decisions are made based on a general framework. For this, the author suggests a widely recognized framework or organizational point of view known as the RACE framework, as first introduced in 1979 by Marston (Hon 8). This framework focuses on the necessity to have mutually beneficial relationships to make more effective decisions

SUGGESTION OF PUBLIC RELATION

1. Plan ahead

While some short-lead media work one to two months in advance, traditional consumer media works four to six months in advance. If you know that a new product is going to launch, or recipes will need photography, think about this lead time in order for your PR team to best leverage your assets for timely and relevant media content.

2. Find the right media

Not all media is right for your brand if it doesn't speak to your target audience, so invest in finding the appropriate media outlets that will deliver messages to the right people.

3. Do your research

Take the time to invest in each media outlet that you're considering a relationship with. If you plan to pitch to The New York Times, then you should be reading it, regularly.

4. Create personal relationships with the media

Part of creating a positive brand image is to develop personal and trusting relationships with the industry influencers – the media. Pick up the phone, meet face-to-face, and be a trusted partner instead of just another generic email in a reporter's inbox.

5. Offer industry experts as resources

As part of relationship building, offer support from the experts within your organization as a resource for journalists and editors. Something as simple as answering a question about the best way to store tomatoes can lead to a great quote and brand mention.

6. Create publicity opportunities

Public Relations is not only about pushing press releases for new products and promotions. It's about creating opportunities that lend themselves to publicity, like partnering with a celebrity chef, supporting a charitable cause, or hosting an industry-wide event.

7. Develop an electronic media kit

A media kit consists of electronic documents and photographs that tell the brand story. Everything from brand logos, new product and recipe images, and press materials should be included so that the media has access to the essential brand assets.

8. Write newsworthy stories

Press releases and pitches must be newsworthy if you want them to be relevant to journalists and editors. We are so used to "industry speak" that we sometimes forget who our audience is. Researching hot food trends and what the food editor you are trying to reach writes about is a good place to start to get your foot in the door with relevant content.

9. Tailor your message to the media

The way your brand would share a message to a trade audience vs. how the media would report that same message to a consumer audience are often quite different. Make sure that your messages reflect the media's audience and aren't overly sales-y.

10. Elevate team communication

In order to help eliminate surprises and aid in media successes, it's essential to the success of your brand to keep your PR team updated and informed about what is going on – new research, potential product changes/additions, marketing plans, lawsuits/recalls, participation in events, etc.

Using these tips will put you and your PR team in a successful position to increase earned media for your brand, which means less dollars spent in the long-run to secure media placements. In other words, be the early bird that gets the worm!

LIMITATIONS

1. PR is Not Advertising

That's an important thing to understand for any brand. Once the thought seeps-in, it'll be easy for both the consultant and the client in moving forward and relishing the outcome.

The stories or the mentions that appear and the way media portrays a brand or its leadership, it is all the prerogative of the journalist and the editor. PR can at the best try to get the best out of it by way of good media relations and right pitches. But limitations like size, prominence, frequency, date and tone of the story cannot be controlled. That's just beyond PR's limit of scope.

2. PR is not Selling

Like PR is not advertising, likewise PR is not 'selling' either. Don't expect to try to draw parallels between PR and revenue. The two have no connection and relation. What PR does is to get your product or service a reputation. Put your brand in the conscious and sub-conscious mind of the users and customers. PR removes the negative connotation attached to the brand and products. All this leads to creating an ecosystem that promotes sales. But the bottom line is that PR is not there to bring sales.

3. Guaranteed ROI

PR undoubtedly works on the principle of manifold return on investment. While advertising gets you assured and controlled exposure, the value of editorial coverage is way more than advertisements and PR does that at a fraction of the advertisement cost.

Well, that's true but that doesn't mean that a PR push can get anything and everything about you published. Organisations need to understand that there may be times when the stories and announcements don't get to see desired results.

Overall, manifold ROI from PR is a thing for sure but in exceptions. Each pitch should not be expected to prove the same.

4. PR cannot Completely Clean the Unclean

There could be brands, personalities, products or incidents that may be witnessing or are in themselves a nothing but a big blot. PR can try to clean the tarnished image and is probably the best tool to do so. But then there is a limitation to its cleaning power.

A tarnished image or a blot on the image cannot be cleaned overnight and also cannot be cleaned completely. There's a limit to it and much expertise, time and effort required to do the same.

5. PR No Bunker to Hide

PR consultancy, spokesperson, corporate communications team is in no way a shield to hide behind in times of crisis. Yes, they are the ones who will stand on the frontline, take the direct hit from media and defend the organisation. But that does not mean that the organisation can hide behind them and remain silent observers.

The frontline has to be supplied with the ammunition from within the organisation. Discussing strategy, sketching a plan and taking head-on questions from media is the only way. No PR can act as a shield or provide bunker for you to hide from. Time buying is a different story and that's one of the advantages of having PR besides you.

6. No PR out of Nothing

To show a positive image the organisation needs to have one. To build reputation PR would require a base. If there is no image and reputation equally nothing can be promoted about it. Similarly, if there is no news to disseminate, PR can't get you in the news. You need give talk points. Yes, the expertise of PR can multiply it further but if they don't get the raw material don't expect any output too.

7. No Visibility without Appearance

To get into limelight there has to be a person who walks up to it. Publics want a personal touch, a one-to-one connect. One way announcements, releases and stories don't work for ever. To influence people and to gain the seat of thought leadership the top brass or the spokesperson(s) will have to shed all inhibitions and come out in public.

Interacting with media and making a personal connect takes you way far than you can imagine. But then if the leadership is silent and glare shy, even the best of the PR can't help beyond a limit.

Future of Public Relations

1. **Average is out** – The age of mediocrity is over. There is no scope for anything that does not strive for excellence. Be it grammar and spelling in what we write, or the way we respond to stakeholders and the turn-around time. Nothing in the future can be half-hearted or without passion. An average style of operating can only take one so far. So, average is really out. This is especially true when companies wonder why they did not win a pitch or an award or a talented professional.
2. **Build unique competencies** – This applies to organisations and individuals. Unique competencies could be offering an employee engagement service for a PR firm or the ability to do search engine optimisation for a PR professional or if you work in-house in a corporate communications role learn WordPress to be able to manage websites. Generalists are great but specialists are awesome too. So, work towards that.
3. **Create value through content** – Content can no longer merely be a tool that creates conversations. Content needs to go beyond that realm and be linked to profits or some sort of commercial goal. An example of this is an event that a large conglomerate puts together at their headquarters in Mumbai annually. The entire event is smartly-designed content that appeals to all the senses. And the value it creates is immense.
4. **Disrupt using data** – The 2014 general election in India was the first one where a lot of disruptions took place by smart use of data. It was an election in which Public Relations won. The candidate from the challenger party used different data points in each of his speeches and went on to capture the imagination of the audience thus being elected the Prime Minister. The same principle can be applied to brands we work on.
5. **Engage meaningfully** – Every connection one makes on behalf of a brand or corporate organisation will be measured by both sides. Connections evolve into engagement. Engagements that do not offer benefits to both sides will be redundant. The trick is to engage with the end in mind and not on an ad-hoc basis. Those who plan their outreach and then activate it meaningfully will be the ones that will thrive.
6. **Factor in credibility** – Credibility is what brands, organisations and individuals seek. Credibility is a function of multiple layers that come together. It cannot be bought and has to be earned. Organisations need to keep this principle at the core of what they do

and stand for. Credibility comes from offering a superior product that is managed by trustworthy leaders which is spoken of highly by the users. There is no way this can be faked.

7. **Go big** – An often-used phrase is Go Big or Go Home. I do not subscribe to the latter. But I think the future of Public Relations is about making things larger than life in order to create salience. Whether it is the Jaipur Literature Festival or the WEF in Davos, the size does dictate its impact. Big comes at a price but over a period of time it will need to pay for itself because they will engage meaningfully and would have built adequate credibility.
8. **Have plans and review** – A Public Relations professional whether working in-house or in a consultancy on clients will only be as good as his or her plans and the level at which they are executed and then evaluated. If you are a PR professional who does not know how to make a robust plan that includes budgets and timelines then you are in the wrong profession.
9. **Influence is Nothing** – There is been a lot of song and dance about influencers. The original influential person is now overtaken by the person who has thousands of followers on a particular social network. That does not matter if the influencer does not wield clout or is unable to translate the influence into revenue for brands they work for. Therefore, influence without meaningful engagement or authentic credibility is nothing.

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