Introduction

To

Public Relations

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San Jose State University
AJEEP 2012

AJEEP
Introduction to Public Relations

Course Contents

AJEEP
Introduction to Public Relations

Course Description

Principles, evolution, and professional practice of modern public relations. Concepts of planning and executing effective communication strategies, including message design and distribution, for any organization.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

The primary purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the basic concepts and principles of effective public relations.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- LO1 Demonstrate knowledge regarding the role and function of contemporary public relations in today's society and in the global economy.
- LO2 Demonstrate knowledge of the evolution of public relations throughout history, and the range of careers available in today's contemporary practice.
- LO3 Demonstrate knowledge of the basic process of public relations – research, planning, communication, evaluation – and how to apply this process to various situations.
- LO4 Demonstrate knowledge regarding the basic theories of communication/persuasion and how to apply them to specific public relations situations.

Required Text

There is no required textbook for this course. However, students who wish to have more information about the concepts discussed in this course could purchase the following textbook: Wilcox, Dennis, et al. (2012) *THINK Public Relations* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Education.

Assignments/Readings

Each class session will begin with a current review and discussion of the "public relations" stories in the news. Students will be expected to keep up with current events and be prepared to discuss news items in the context of course theories and concepts.

In addition to class participation, students will be graded on one major class project: the development of a **public relations plan**. Students will be expected to create a public relations plan – for a profit or not-for-profit organization – that includes the following elements: (1) Situation Analysis, (2) Organization Analysis (S.W.O.T.), (3) Audience Analysis, (4) Goals and Objectives, (5) Messages/Themes, (6) Strategies and Tactics (including evaluation measures), (7) Budget, (8) Calendar/Timeline.

The public relations plan will be evaluated based on the student's demonstrated understanding of the RACE (Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation) process and on well the plan is written (e.g., typos and grammatical errors will affect your grade).

Here's the points breakdown:

Category	**Points**
Participation	30
PR Plan	70
TOTAL =	100

Grades are computed according the following university standards:

97-100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+	67-69% = D+
93-96% = A	83-86% = B	73-76% = C	63-66% = D
90-92% = A-	80-82% = B-	70-72% = C-	60-62% = D-
			Below 60% = F

Introduction to Public Relations/Course Schedule

Class	**Topic**
1	*Defining Public Relations (History/Evolution of the Profession)*
2	*Top 10 Foundational Principles of Public Relations*
3	*RACE (Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation)*
4	*Persuasion (Theories; Characteristics of Legitimate PR Campaign)*
5	*Finding & Generating News (and Effective Media Relations)*
6	*PR Trends (Where the Profession is Headed)*

AJEEP
Introduction to Public Relations

Vocabulary

press agent
spin
stakeholder
public opinion
two-way communication
dialogue
trust
ROI (return on investment)
mutually beneficial relationships
consent
hype
manipulation
clarity
results
“managing expectations”
proactive public relations
persuasion
message
communication
selective attention
selective perception
social media
viral video
transparency
strategy
tactics
goals
objectives
content creation
communication conglomerate

AJEEP 2012
Public Relations
Dr. Mathew Cabot
Lecture One – Public Relations Defined

Welcome to the AJEEP six-hour course on public relations. This course provides an overview on the public relations profession. It describes the profession's history and evolution, the four-step public relations process, strategies and tactics, ethical challenges, and the foundational principles followed by public relations professionals.

In this first lecture, we attempt to define what public relations is, and trace the evolution of the profession from its beginnings to the present.

The idea of public relations has been around as long as people have sought to persuade other people to get them to do something, not do something, or keep on doing something. But public relations became a formal profession in America roughly between late 1800s and early 1900s.

In the 1800s, public relations techniques were used to encourage settlement in the American West. Railroad companies – which were laying down new tracks across America – employed former journalists to create flyers and pamphlets that described the vast opportunities in the American frontier. And many believe it was the railroad companies that first used the term "public relations."

While railroad companies were promoting westward expansion, the very first celebrity "press agents" were promoting clients such as Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, and Davy Crockett. In public relations history, the late 1800s were known as the Age of the Press Agent. The characteristic feature of the age was hype – or exaggeration. Press agents were concerned more about creating legends and selling tickets to shows than truthful portrayals about their clients.

The man who is credited for moving the public relations profession to its next age was Ivy Lee. In 1906, he published his "Declaration of Principles" that advocated truthfulness and openness, and thereby ushered PR into the Public Information Age. The main difference with this new age was the emphasis on the accuracy and honesty of the information issued by public relations people. Ivy believed that the best way to practice “public relations” was to make sure the public had truthful information.

During this time, as the public increasingly found its “voice,” corporations began to be concerned with public opinion. Only 20 years earlier had railroad tycoon uttered his famous words: “Let the public be damned!” Things had changed. Business executives began to realize that an angry public could make doing business much more difficult, if not impossible.

That’s why many companies began to employ public relations professionals whose job it was to keep the public informed. The goal was to provide accurate information to an organization’s stakeholders (anybody or institution that could be affected by the organization’s business).

The first big test for this newfound profession was persuading the American people to enter World War I. To do so, President Woodrow Wilson established Committee on Public Information (also known as the Creel Committee) in 1917. The committee’s most famous member was Edward L. Bernays, known as the father of modern public relations.

The committee’s success persuaded Bernays to open a public relations agency after the war to apply committee’s techniques to commercial interests. Major corporations such as General Electric, Proctor & Gamble, CBS, and the American Tobacco Company hired Bernays to conduct a wide variety of public relations activities.

In 1923 Bernays published his landmark book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* and established the profession’s theoretical foundations. Using theories first introduced by his uncle, Sigmund Freud, Bernays wrote about how to move people to do what you want them to do. By doing so, he transitioned the public relations profession into its third major age: scientific persuasion (and the two-way asymmetric model).

Using the tools of social science and psychology, Bernays showed his clients how to tap into their audience’s deepest needs and wants. The scientific persuasion age of public relations lasted for about 30 to 40 years until the 1950s and 60s when activism (i.e., public protests about perceived corporate power and greed) necessitated a shift toward relationship building.

When public relation practitioners saw their primary role as identifying, building, and sustaining relationships between an organization and its stakeholders, the nature of the profession changed. Now, instead of emphasizing one-way communication, organizations began to place increasing importance on two-way communication. Furthermore, if these relationships were to be sustained, they had to be mutually beneficial – where both organizations and their stakeholders benefitted.

When relationships became the primary focus for public relations activities, spin (i.e., intentionally making something appear better than it is) became counterproductive to long-term public relations goals. And that's because spin destroys the most important ingredient for a vital, healthy relationship: trust.

Spin can take many forms. At one end of the spectrum is lying, either by commission (saying it directly) or omission (intentionally withholding important information). At the other end of the spectrum is exaggeration – making a product or service appear better than it actually is. Whether it's lying or exaggeration – or something in between – spin destroys trust and undermines an organization's attempt to building valuable relationships.

It should be noted that the shift to relationship building does not negate the profession's emphasis on persuasion. Public relations professionals spend a great deal of time persuading an organization's many stakeholders that the organization is worthy of being in a relationship together. That is achieved by demonstrating that the organization is being responsive to stakeholder needs. That means adjusting policies, positions, and products to fit stakeholder needs.

Public relations professionals have always realized the importance of influence with senior management. Beginning roughly in the 1970s, public relations professionals began to increasingly identify themselves as "business people first, and communicators second." As a result, public relations became more concerned with establishing measurable objectives aligned with organizational goals, and demonstrating a tangible ROI (return on investment). After all, if businesses were going to allocate resources to public relations activities, they deserved to know what kind of "return" they could expect.

Did the public relations activities boost the organization's reputation? If yes, how? Did it increase sales? How would you know? The need to "demonstrate results" has led to a variety of innovations in public relations measurement – most notably in social media – where organizations are still assessing the value of engagement.

The emphasis on business strategy ushered more public relations professionals into senior management where PR input could be made prior to policy formation or product creation. As a result, public relations became more effective because PR activities became more proactive and less reactive. With proactive public relations, organizations can plan and execute strategies and tactics on their own timeline – rather than having to react to a PR problem. It is in these reactive situations that organizations will be most tempted to spin – to make things look better than they are. While it is impossible to avoid reactive public relations entirely, many PR problems can be prevented through proper proactive planning.

In the beginning of the profession in the early 20th century, public relations was narrowly focused on media relations/publicity. Consequently, most practitioners were former journalists who understood news and how to craft an effective media story.

Today, however, public relations is much broader. In addition to media relations, public relations practitioners work in the following areas: employee relations, investor relations, community relations, public affairs, lobbying, and social media, among other areas. As the scope of the profession has expanded, so has the skill set practitioners need to be successful.

Writing continues to be the core skill public relations practitioners need to possess. But employers are also looking for research skills, good interpersonal communication, media and cultural literacy, critical thinking skills, and business knowledge (i.e., what makes businesses more effective).

Today, the trend is to combine advertising, marketing, and public relations into integrated marketing communications (IMC) or integrated strategic communications. Under these integrated models, public relations works much more closely with advertising and marketing to achieve consistent messages/strategies and realize cost efficiencies.

Today, public relations is practiced worldwide. In fact, some of the profession's fastest growth is overseas – especially in developing countries and emerging markets. Any place or situation where public support is key to an organization's success, public relations will be valued.

Questions for Discussion

How would you define public relations?

What are the four public relations models? What model is practiced today?

Who is Edward Bernays, and how is he significant to the public relations profession?

What is spin, and why is it counter productive to long-term public relations goals?

What is the difference between "reactive" and "proactive" PR? And which is more effective?

What are "stakeholders," and why are they important in public relations?

Public Relations Defined

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Public Relations

AJEEP 2012

Public Relations Defined

"Public relations is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends."

-- Cutlip, Center and Broom

History

- Began in America in the late 1800s.
- Railroad companies promoted the American West.
- Term “public relations” first used.

The Evolution of Public Relations

Press Agentry/Publicity

- One-way communication
- Mass media-driven
- Often “hype”

Age of the Press Agent

- Annie Oakley, Buffalo Bill, and Davie Crockett.
- P.T. Barnum: Barnum and Bailey’s Circus

The Evolution of Public Relations

Press Agentry/Publicity

- One-way communication
- Mass media-driven
- Often "hype"

Public Information

- One-way communication
- Mass media primary channel
- Information-oriented

Public Information

- Ivy Lee – "Declaration of Principles"
- Emphasis on truthful, accurate information dissemination.
- World War I – Creel Committee
- Edward L. Bernays

The Evolution of Public Relations

Two-Way Asymmetric

- Two-way communication
- Audience research/feedback
- Purpose is to become more effective persuaders

Edward Bernays

- “Father of modern public relations.”
- “Crystallizing Public Opinion” (1923)
- Age of “Scientific Persuasion”

The Evolution of Public Relations

Two-Way Asymmetric

- Two-way communication
- Audience research/feedback
- Purpose is to become more effective persuaders

Two-Way Symmetric

- Two-way, balanced communication
- Purpose: mutual understanding and/or adjustment

PR's Purpose

To identify, build and sustain mutually beneficial relationships.

Spin

<u>Definition:</u>

Making something appear better than it is.

Spin

- Counter-productive to long-term public relations goals.
- Destroys trust and credibility.

Business Emphasis

- "Business people first; communicators second."
- Establishing measurable objectives.
- Demonstrating a clear ROI (return on investment).

Reactive vs. Proactive PR

- Reactive PR must react or respond to a public relations issue or problem.
- Proactive PR allows organizations to plan and execute public relations activities on their own timeline.

PR's Scope

- Public relations began as a media relations activity (i.e., publicity).
- Today, public relations includes employee relations, investor relations, community relations, public affairs, lobbying, and social media.

PR Skills

- Writing
- research
- interpersonal communication
- media and cultural literacy
- critical thinking
- business knowledge

Integration

The trend today is to combine the public relations function with advertising and marketing in **integrated strategic communication**.

Global Scope

- Public relations is practiced worldwide – especially in emerging markets and developing countries.

PR's Value

Public relations will be valued anywhere and in any situation where public support is key to an organization's success.

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Lecture Two – 10 Foundational Principles

The public relations industry has evolved greatly since it first began in the early 1900s. In fact, it has dramatically changed even in the last decade with the introduction and expansive growth of the social media.

The purpose of this lecture is to explore 10 public relations principles that should remain true regardless how the media landscape changes in the next 10 to 20 years. These are principles that have proved to be true over and over again in the public relations industry and are adhered to by PR professionals all over the world.

These principles are based on the idea that the purpose of public relations is to "identify, establish, and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its various publics" – a classic definition of the profession developed by Cutlip, Center, and Broom. All of the following principles are designed to achieve that objective.

Principle #1 – Organizations exist only by public consent.

This is one of the oldest principles in the public relations profession. The word "consent" here means "agreement" or "permission." But in what way does the public give its "consent" for an organization to exist? If the organization is a "for-profit" company, its existence rests upon whether the public buys its product or services. Without this <u>consumer</u> public, that organization would not exist.

If it's a "not-for-profit" organization, its existence is dependent upon people giving their time (volunteering) or money (donations). Without these things, this organization would not exist.

More broadly, though, an organization's existence is dependent on a wide variety of publics – many of whom will never buy the product or donate money. That's because organizations have many publics that more or less have a <u>stake</u> in what the organization does. These people or groups or associations are called <u>stakeholders</u> because in some way they can either influence or are influenced by the organization's business. These stakeholders include the consumers of the product, but they also include employees, government, media, financial institutions, and neighbors in the community where the organization conducts its business.

All of these stakeholders can either help or hinder your organization's mission. The function of public relations is to manage the relationships between these stakeholders and the organization.

Principle #2- Mutually beneficial relationships require two-way communication.

As we saw in the previous lecture, the public relations profession has evolved from one-way communication to two-way communication. With the possible exception of the government, which practices the public information model, most PR professionals practice two-way communication. What this simply means is that in addition to sending messages to their publics, organizations receive them as well.

Today, organizations must listen to their stakeholders/publics – especially given the prevalence of social media. There needs to be a dialogue, not a monologue. Additionally, organizations must demonstrate they have heard their publics by adjusting policies and products to their publics' needs and wants – as much as possible.

If the goal is to build and sustain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its various publics, two-way symmetric (balanced) communication must be practiced.

Principle #3 – It's not our job to put a clean shirt on a dirty body.

Many people believe this is the fundamental job of a public relations practitioner – to make something appear better than it actually is. Using hype, manipulation, distraction – and maybe outright lies – the practitioner uses "spin" to put a good face on someone or something that is essentially <u>not</u> good.

While spin may work – and many amateur PR hacks still do it – it is counter-productive to long-term public relations goals. If our job is to build and sustain relationships, spin destroys the most important ingredient to a healthy relationship: trust. Once that trust is lost, it is very difficult to regain it. And, at that point, the relationship is in jeopardy. If your public has a choice whether to be in relationship with you or not (e.g., there are comparable products or services on the market), it may decide to severe the relationship.

Even if that public decides to stick with you, the lack of trust will cost you. In their book titled *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen Covey and Rebecca Merrill argue that trust is <u>fast</u>. In other words, when you are in a trusting business relationship, you don't have to spend a great deal of time parsing out every bit of communication between you and your public. (Read the quote on slide).

Trust in business – as with all of life – is a valuable asset. Public relations practitioners can help organizations make better products, policies, and services, and communicate more effectively with all of their publics. They can ensure that their publics are "heard," and that everything the organization does – as far as possible – is in their publics' best interest.

Principle #4 – Act, then communicate.

The key idea here is that you cannot talk your way out of something you behaved your way into. Americans have a saying: "Talk is cheap." Public relations practitioners have the reputation of talking; publics need to see action.

(Read the slide: If you're product is defective…)

One company that clearly understands this principle is JetBlue. In 2007, JetBlue had its first major public relations crisis. The airline was established in 2000, and for five years enjoyed some of the best reviews from airline passengers. Then, on Valentine's Day 2007, the airline showed its lack of experience by not effectively handling a snow-and-ice storm in New York. Some passengers had to sit in grounded planes for more than 10 hours!

But, under the leadership of CEO David Neeleman, the company acted quickly and then communicated. First, Neeleman didn't shift the blame and took full responsibility for Jet Blue's failure. He then apologized to the passengers who were involved and the many other loyal passengers who were disappointed by the airline's mishandling of the situation. Finally, and importantly, Neeleman discussed the changes that would immediately made to ensure the problem did not happen again.

(Read the "What did the company do?" slide)

Principle #5 – Clarity is more important than cleverness.

Clear communication is difficult. Don't lose your message by trying to be clever. If your goal is to build relationships, then clear communication is essential. There is a lot of focus today about the channels of communication – from the changing digital landscape (e.g., media convergence) to the ever-expanding social media toolbox.

Selecting the right channel to reach your audiences is critical. The wrong channel ensures that your message will be not be delivered. But using the right channel does not necessarily mean <u>communication</u> will take place; it only means the message was received. In order for a message to be acted upon, it needs to gain the attention of the audience, be understood, and clearly address the audience's needs and wants.

Principle #6 – Activity does not equal results.

There is a difference between production and outcome, between activities and results. Your clients or bosses will expect that your public relations strategies and tactics will "move the needle." In other words, something has to happen as a result of your public relations efforts. The public relations situation needs to change.

More than ever before, organizations are seeking – even demanding – and tangible ROI (return on investment). They want to know if they spend money and resources on public relations that will yield a return in the form of better stakeholder relationships, less opposition, stronger support, improved reputation, positive attitudes, greater cooperation, more customers buying the product or using the service.

Because there is more client demand to demonstrate results, measurement tools are becoming increasingly sophisticated. It is no longer sufficient to simply count press clippings. Clients want to know the quality of those clippings. Are they positive or negative? How many of the organizations key messages were included in the stories? Who read the stories?

Ultimately, organizations want behavioral results: winning an election, increasing product sales, sold-out attendance at an event.

The more public relations professionals can demonstrate real results – that are tied directly into the organization's goals – the more valuable they become.

Principle #7 – Never refuse an opportunity to tell your side of the story.

This is one of the most common public relations errors. If you don't tell your side of the story, someone else will: a former (angry) employee, competitor, victim, or sour neighbor. If the media is doing a story, they need a quote. Let it be from you, and not from of these people.

When the news is bad, many organizations refuse to talk to the media. Instead, they say, "no comment." To the public, however, "no comment" means "we're guilty." It also means "we're uncooperative."

By telling your side of the story (especially in a bad situation), the public relations professional can help "frame" the story in the best possible light – without, of course, making a bad situation look better than it is (i.e., spin). But, the fact is, there are usually multiple "frames" that can be legitimately applied to the same situation. The media usually will pick the most dramatic frame because it makes for a better story. Your job as the PR professional is to make sure the frame is fair and accurate – and also to suggest another frame, if necessary, that more accurately reflects the reality of the situation.

All of this requires that the organization cooperates and works with the media to help them get a story. Understanding a journalist's job – from what they need to when they need it – is fundamental to establishing constructive media relationships.

Principle #8 – Manage expectations.

The key to fostering healthy relationships with all stakeholders is managing expectations. For example, if a company exaggerates product claims, consumers will be disappointed when the product falls short. Likewise, when PR practitioners hype (exaggerate) an event, attendees will be upset when the reality doesn't match the rhetoric. Same is true about pitching a story to the media. Journalists will stop using you as a news source if you consistently offer "fluff" stories with little or exaggerated substance.

This principle is also true, by the way, in maintaining positive relationships between PR practitioners and their clients. Your clients (and bosses) need to know what public relations can do, and what it cannot do. For example, if an organization has a negative reputation in the eyes of its publics, PR professionals cannot change a negative into a positive overnight. And ethical practitioners – aware of long-term public relations goals – will not put a clean shirt on a dirty body.

Principle #9 – Practice public relations proactively, whenever possible.

According to the freedictionary.com, "proactive" means "controlling a situation by causing something to happen rather than waiting to respond to it after it happens." Public relations is more effective if it is planned, intentional, and controlled. Reactive public relations puts an organization on the defensive and creates an environment ripe for spin.

Proactive public relations requires that organizations are continually monitoring various environments, assessing relationships, and identifying and tracking issues that may affect the organization. Research shows that most organizational crises could have been prevented through early intervention. The goals of "issues tracking" are to prevent problems and take advantage of opportunities.

In terms of managing relationships, organizations should be continually filling the "reservoir of goodwill" or "making deposits into the emotional bank account." Both of these metaphors speak to the idea of proactively and intentionally managing relationships. If the reservoir of goodwill is filled, there will be something left in times of drought (a crisis with that particular stakeholder or stakeholders). Likewise with the emotional bank account. If it's full, you'll have something left even if there's a big withdrawal (i.e., a crisis).

Principle #10 – Be a bridge, not a barrier.

There are at least two ways to practice public relations – and they are the polar opposites of each other. One way to practice PR is to be a barrier that <u>protects</u> an organization from its publics. This kind of PR uses one-way communication, doesn't listen to stakeholders in any meaningful way, ignores the media, and uses spin to help an organization not take appropriate responsibility. The problem is, if the organization wants to maintain relationships with its stakeholders, "barrier" public relations doesn't work – at least in the long term.

Short term, being a barrier can work. But as soon as the stakeholders know that they have been lied to or manipulated – or are simply not being heard – the stakeholders will leave (i.e., use another product or service) or protest if they cannot leave (i.e., neighbors near a factory, etc.).

But long-term, being a barrier is counter-productive to organizational goals. And, in today's world where transparency is becoming increasingly important, barrier PR simply won't work.

A much more effective (and ethical) way to practice public relations is to be a bridge that <u>connects</u> an organization to its publics. Practitioners who see themselves as bridges use two-way communication with the organization's stakeholders, conduct transparent dialogue through the social media, and respond affirmatively to journalists' needs.

The world doesn't need any more spin doctors. But it does need bridge builders who can foster dialogue, create mutual understanding, and build cooperative, mutually beneficial relationships.

Questions for Discussion

What does "organizations exist only by public consent" mean?

What does spin destroy in a relationship?

Why should an organization act before it communicates?

Does the principle of "Never refuse to tell your side of the story" mean that the public relations practitioner must answer all media questions?

What is the value of "managing expectations"?

What is the difference between being a "bridge" vs. being a "barrier" in public relations?

Ten Foundational Principles

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Public Relations

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Principle #1

Organizations exist only by public consent.

Stakeholders

Principle #2

Relationships require two-way communication.

Principle #3

It's not our job to put a clean shirt on a dirty body.

Spin

Spin, when uncovered, destroys the most important ingredient in a healthy relationship…

Spin

Trust

Spin

"In a high-trust relationship, you can say the wrong thing and people will get your meaning."

Spin

"In a low-trust relationship, you can be very measured, even precise, and they'll still misinterpret you."

- Stephen Covey & Rebecca Merrill

Principle #4

Act, then communicate.

Principle #4

Act, then communicate.

(You can't *talk* your way out of something you *behaved* your way into.)

Act, then Communicate

- If your product is defective…

  fix it

- If your service is subpar…

  improve it

- If your policy is damaging…

  revise it

Act, then Communicate

- If your product is defective…

  fix it

- If your service is subpar…

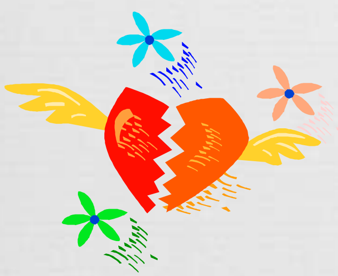
  improve it

- If your policy is damaging…

  revise it

THEN, talk about it

Act, then Communicate



Jet Blue

Valentine's Day 2007

Act, then Communicate

JETBLUES FOR STUCK FLIERS. HELL AT JFK AS PASSENGERS SIT ON PLANES - FOR 11 HOURS!

"JETBLUE MUST have had a brain freeze yesterday - doing nothing as hundreds of passengers sat captive for up to 11 hours on 10 planes stranded on the Kennedy Airport tarmac."

- New York Daily News, Feb. 15, 2007

Act, then Communicate

One Week Later…

Lessons on the Fly: JetBlue's New Tactics; Winter Storms Test Airline Soon After Major Meltdown; A New Willingness to Cancel

"A little more than a week after JetBlue Airways Corp. bungled a Valentine's Day storm and announced new policies to improve its response to poor weather, the airline seems to have handled the past weekend's snow-and-ice storm with more poise and less passenger pain. "

- The Wall Street Journal, Feb. 27, 2007

Act, then Communicate

What did the company <u>do?</u>

- Established new V.P. of systems operations (former pilot)

- Created a new communication system that allowed all of its operational departments (from reservations to airline crews) to coordinate responses to cancellations.

- Installed new software that allows the airline to record messages to pilots and flight attendants asking them to call with their availability.

Principle #5

Clarity is better than cleverness.

Clarity vs. Cleverness

"When you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver."

-- Sir Winston Churchhill

Principle #6

Activity does not equal results.

Activity Does Not Equal Results

- Something has to happen as a result of your efforts
- Organizations are looking for an tangible ROI (return on investment)
- Measurement has become more sophisticated

Activity Does Not Equal Results

"Move the Needle"

Principle #7

Never refuse an opportunity to tell your side of the story.

Wrong Answer!

What's the one response you never want to use in answering media questions?

Wrong Answer!

No comment.

Principle #8

Manage expectations.

Principle #9

Practice public relations proactively, whenever possible.

Proactive PR

Build the “reservoir of good will.”

Principle #10

Be a bridge, not a barrier.

Barrier vs. Bridge

Barrier vs. Bridge

Barrier

- Protects organization from its publics
- Digs “moat”
- Runs interference with media
- One-way communication

Barrier vs. Bridge

Barrier

- Protects organization from its publics
- Digs "mote"
- Runs interference with media
- One-way communication

Bridge

- Connects organization with its publics
- Two-way communication
- Mutual adjustment

Barrier vs. Bridge

The world doesn't need any more barriers or "spin doctors"

Barrier vs. Bridge

The world *does* need bridge-builders

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Lecture Three – RACE

Effective public relations is accomplished through a process known as RACE (Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation). This process is used to practice proactive public relations – PR that is intentional, planned, and strategic.

There are four fundamental questions asked in the RACE process (read slide).

Research is the first step. Nothing happens before doing research. Research helps determine objectives, messages, strategies and tactics. The first step in research is to clarify the public relations situation. Both the public relations practitioner and the client need to have a clear understanding of the situation before them. Without that, public relations plans are developed that do not accurately address the situation.

One of the most important aspects of situational analysis is identifying the stakeholder(s) or public(s) that are most involved in the situation. Since public relations is essentially about identifying, building and sustaining relationships between an organization and its various publics (stakeholders), the situational analysis allows an organization to focus on one (or more) stakeholders where either a problem or opportunity exists.

If it is a problem, what kind of problem is it? Two common public relations problems are awareness and reputation. If it's an awareness problem, the stakeholders lack awareness about the organization and/or its products and services. If it's a reputation problem, that means the stakeholder is aware of the organization but does not have a favorable opinion toward it.

Those are two very different kinds of public relations problems that require different strategies and tactics.

But the situation may not be a problem at all. It could be an opportunity (i.e., launching a product or leveraging customer enthusiasm). Whether it's a problem or opportunity, the situation needs to be clearly defined.

Once the audience/public/stakeholder has been identified, now it's time to do an audience analysis. The goal at this stage of your research is to learn as much as possible about your target audience. What do they know about the situation? What would you like them to know? What are their needs, concerns and wants? How do they get their information? What do they read, watch, listen to?

This kind of audience analysis goes beyond demographics that simply make distinctions based on ethnicities, age, gender, etc. A more useful research, perhaps, delves into "psychographics": values, attitudes, and lifestyles. The fact is, the more you know your target audience, the more likely you will be able to craft a motivational message, delivered by the right source, through the right channel.

In addition to the situational analysis and the audience analysis, your research should also include an organizational analysis. One common way to do this is to conduct a S.W.O.T. analysis, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

The public relations practitioner needs to know how to "position" the organization in the face of the situation – whether it's a problem or an opportunity. Once the S.W.O.T. analysis has been completed, the public relations practitioner will be more effective in maximizing strengths, minimizing weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, guarding against threats.

One question that often arises is, "What constitutes a threat?" A threat is anything that threatens the success of organization, from aggressive competition to poor legislation to organizational mismanagement.

Analyses of the situation, organization, and audiences can be conducted in a variety of ways. Research can either be primary or secondary, qualitative or quantitative. Primary research involves generating new information; secondary research uses existing information.

Despite being called "secondary research," this kind of research is conducted first. Public relations practitioners analyze existing information from organizational websites and electronic databases, among other sources, to gain understanding about the situation, organization, and target audience.

Since the information is available, it is the research most commonly used by public relations practitioners – either first or exclusively.

If, however, there are significant gaps in the secondary research, primary research is conducted – if there is enough time and money. If practitioners have both of these are their disposal and can conduct primary research, they can choose qualitative or quantitative methods.

Qualitative methods produce "soft" (as opposed to "hard") data that sometimes is called "exploratory." Using qualitative research techniques such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, observations, or surveys with open-ended questions, public relations practitioners can gain some valuable information about the situation, organization, and target audience. But they cannot extrapolate the data gathered scientifically to a larger audience. That's why the data is called "soft."

However, using quantitative techniques – such as surveys with closed or structured questions and random sampling – practitioners can produce "hard" data. Using statistical analysis, the practitioner can they make some definitive statements about the whole – if the sample population was representative and randomly sampled.

Given the fact that quantitative research is more costly and time-consuming, it is not conducted as much as qualitative research. Plus, crafting a scientifically valid quantitative study is beyond the skill set of most PR practitioners.

So, whether it's primary or secondary, quantitative or qualitative, the practitioner needs to conduct research prior to developing a plan. The research will help determine the strategy and provide more credibility for the practitioner before his or her clients. Finally, research is used to measure the results of the campaign – the essential last step in the RACE process.

Once the research phase of the process is complete, the practitioner can move on to the second phase: planning (or action). Now we understand more about the situation, the organization, and the audience, we can determine what to do about it.

The first step in the planning process is to set goals and objectives. Goals are the overarching purpose of the public relations efforts (e.g., To become the low-cost leader in the category). Objectives support goals, and they need to be S.M.A.R.T.: Specific, Measureable, Agreed Upon, Relevant, Timetabled. It is also important to remember that objectives should measure outcomes, not the means to those outcomes. For example, the objective should NOT be measuring how many news releases are produced in a given period of time (the means), but rather the outcome of those news releases (for example, awareness).

Once the goals and objectives have been set, then the practitioner can create the theme and messages for the campaign. The theme is overarching message – the one "takeaway" – you want your target audience to receive. Other messages flow out of – and support – your theme.

Your themes and messages are designed to support your goals and objectives by tapping into what you learned about your target audience through your research. Those messages need to be clear and understandable to your audience; delivered by a credible source (i.e., credible to that audience); and targeted at audience needs. Psychologist Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" helps practitioners understand what kinds of needs are being addressed, from "lower-level" physiological needs (such food, safety, shelter) to "higher-level" needs (such as living up to one's potential).

Ideally, these messages should be copy-tested with representatives from the target audience to see if the messages make sense with the audience and achieve the desired effect.

Once the themes and messages have been developed, then the practitioner needs to choose the channel through which they will be delivered. These are the strategies and tactics. The strategy is the main way you plan to accomplish your objectives. For example, there are many different PR strategies, from traditional media (pitching stories to print and broadcasting media) to social media (using Twitter, Facebook, etc., to build online communities) to more interpersonal strategies (creating slide presentations for key audiences).

Research has shown that the most persuasive form of communication is interpersonal (one-on-one, or one before a group). In those settings, the communicator can receive immediate feedback and answer questions from the target audience. Interpersonal communication strategies, however, can be used only when the target audience is small and identifiable.

Larger audiences, which are more difficult (or even impossible) to reach through interpersonal means, need to be reached through the media (either social or traditional, or both).

Once the overall strategy is set, the practitioner decided exactly how to implement the strategy through tactics. For example, if the practitioner has chosen a social media strategy as the best way to achieve the public relations objectives, then he or she needs to recommend a specific way to "flesh out" that strategy. That tactic could be a Twitter campaign designed to involve consumers in creating the next version of a product (e.g., creating a new flavor potato chip flavor for Lay's). Or, it could be a campaign designed to get more "friends" on Facebook.

The last part of any public relations effort is measurement. The practitioner needs to determine if the objectives were successfully met. There are different levels of measure, starting with the easiest – and least valuable – production. At this level, the practitioner is simply measuring what has been produced: counting "communication assets." Of course, your clients need to know what has been produced for the money they have expended on public relations. But that says nothing about the results of that production.

Increasingly, practitioners need to demonstrate results. Organizations need to see a clear ROI (Return On Investment) for dollars spent on public relations. At the lowest level of measuring results is "awareness." Practitioners can measure awareness through a variety of means. For example, to measure whether the public relations for an event was successful, the practitioner simply needs to count the number of attendees (and possibly the media coverage in the aftermath).

The next level up is attitude change, which can be measured only if the practitioner knows the current attitudes prior to the PR campaign. Depending on the size of the target audience, that may require scientific survey research, which can be expensive and beyond the skill set of most practitioners.

The most valuable public relations efforts are those that change behaviors. Most practitioners consider "behavior change" the gold standard of public relations objectives. Ultimately, public relations objectives need to support organization objectives. That means, public relations should motivate people to buy a product, use a service, adopt an idea, or vote for a candidate. These are the kinds of results that make public relations essential for organizations.

Discussion Questions

What is the value of research in public relations?

What is the difference between a goal and an objective?

What are some of the factors that help make messages effective?

What is the difference between a strategy and tactic?

What does ROI mean, and why is it important to public relations?

The RACE Process

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Public Relations

AJEEP 2012

The Public Relations Process

The RACE formula

- Research – What is the problem or situation?
- Action (program planning) – What is going to be done about it?
- Communication (execution) – How will the public be told?
- Evaluation – Was the audience reached and what was the effect?

Research

- The first step in the public relations process.
- Clearly define problem/situation (situational analysis)
- S.W.O.T. (Organizational analysis)
- Audience Analysis (needs, wants, desires, VALs)

Types of Research

- Primary
- Secondary
- Qualitative
- Quantitative

Value of Research

- Clarify/Direct Strategy
- Achieving Credibility with Clients/Management
- Measuring Results

Action (planning)

- Goals/Objectives
- Themes/Key Messages
- Strategies/Tactics
- Calendar
- Budget
- Evaluation

Goals vs. Objectives

- Goals are general; objectives are specific.
- Objectives should measure outcomes, not means.
- Objectives should be SMART:
  - Specific
  - Measureable
  - Agreed Upon
  - Relevant
  - Timetabled

Objective Example

Raise awareness among the target audience by 20% within three months.

Themes/Key Messages

- Audience focused
- Copy tested (for larger campaigns, whenever possible)
- Clarity is better than cleverness
- What’s in it for me?
- Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

Strategies vs. Tactics

- Strategy is the general way in which you plan to accomplish your objectives.
- Tactics “flesh out” strategies

Communication

- Implementation of tactics
- Visible part of a public relations plan
- Comes AFTER research and planning

Evaluation/Measurement

- Measuring production
- Measuring awareness
- Measuring attitude change
- Measuring behavior change (ultimate objective)

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Lecture Four – Persuasion

At the heart of public relations is persuasion – the ability to gain public support for a decision or course of action. It is critical for public relations practitioners to understand how persuasion works, from theoretical and practical perspectives.

Let's begin with the practical, and then move on to the theoretical. When public relations practitioners are trying to get a target audience to do or believe something, not do something, or keep on doing something, they are engaged in persuasion.

There are three components of persuasion: (1) the recipients of a message, (2) the message itself, and (3) the source of that message.

When considering the recipients of the message, we need to answer three questions (**read the slide**).

The answers to those questions will help us craft a message that resonates with the target audience and accomplishes our communication objectives.

We then need to be clear, as we begin to craft the message, what is it exactly we want our intended recipients to do with our message? Lack of clarity at this point will prevent our message from being effective. At this point, we should also consider how our message might be received by unintended recipients. Why? Because proactive public relations is better than reactive public relations.

Finally, after our message is crafted, we need to select the right source (channel) to deliver the message. We need to choose a source that is most credible with that particular audience. This is critically important. We may have done our research well and crafted an effective message. But if it's not delivered by a credible source, the entire persuasive effort is likely to fail.

There are other reasons why persuasive campaigns fail – and succeed. Persuasive rhetoric has been studied for thousands of years. The Greeks made an art of it, and contemporary scholars have proposed scientific theories of why people are motivated to do what they do.

One such scholar is Otto Lerbinger, who says there are five different approaches to persuasion.

The first is called **stimulus-response**.

(Read the slide)

Next, is the **cognitive** approach.

(Read the slide)

Next, is the **motivational** approach.

(Read the slide)

Next, is the **social** approach.

(Read the slide)

Finally, there is the **personality** approach.

(Read the slide)

Regardless of what approach is used – and usually a combination of approaches is most effective – there are some important things to remember about the persuasive process.

(Read **Key Points** slide)

Public relations practitioners must also remember to keep ethics prominently in mind when crafting a persuasive campaign. As practitioners become more effective as persuaders, they need to be even more sensitive to the ethical implications of their persuasive efforts. The tools of public relations are value-neutral. In other words, there is nothing inherently good or bad about the various communication tools practitioners use. It is the purpose behind the tools that can be good or bad, noble or ignoble.

Therefore, we can talk about public relations campaigns being either legitimate or illegitimate. A legitimate campaign uses the tools of persuasion ethically; an illegitimate campaign does not. There are two fundamental characteristics of a legitimate campaign.

The first characteristic of a legitimate campaign is free choice. Free choice means that audiences are able to choose freely among several options.

(Read **free choice** slide)

The second characteristic of a legitimate public relations campaign is mutual benefit. Both the communicator and the audience must emerge from the transaction with some benefit. If the communicator benefits only, that's not persuasion; it's manipulation.

Finally, there is a great deal of concern in some circles (primarily academic) about the power of the "persuasion industry" to exert control over the public. People who believe this have never worked with a public relations or advertising firm to help them accomplish their objectives. In fact, the adage in the public relations industry is that you don't want to be your client's first public relations agency. That's because their expectations are too high. They believe you can waive your PR wand and magically get their stakeholders to do anything they want.

Not so. Research and practical experience show there are many limitations to persuasive communication efforts.

The first is **selective attention**. We simply cannot pay attention to all the messages that we are exposed to every day. And with the social media and smart phones, and other electronic devices, our attention is more divided than ever. One PR agency has called this: "continuous partial attention." So, which messages do we pay attention to? Those that offer a clear answer to the question: "What's in it for me?"

The second limitation to persuasive communication is **selection perception**. People interpret messages. We essentially see what we want to see. The same message delivered to different people will be perceived differently. The problem comes when you are trying to communicate a message that is contrary to what people already believe. They will tend to interpret differently than you intended.

The third limitation to persuasive communication is lack of **message penetration**. Despite the practitioner’s best efforts, there is little to zero chance that the message will reach all the intended recipients. In other words, your persuasive communication efforts will be limited by the fact that some people simply won’t get the message.

The final limitation is that even if your message reaches your intended recipients, it won’t have their exclusive attention. As mentioned earlier, your message will be competing with other messages, some of which may directly contradict yours.

Combined, these factors present a formidable challenge to public relations practitioners who – for the sake their clients and the audiences they’re trying to reach – are engaged in persuasive communication.

Persuasion

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Public Relations

AJEEP, 2012

Persuasion Defined

Persuasion is defined as…

an effort to gain public support for an opinion or course of action.

3 Components of Persuasion

1. Recipients of the Message

- Who are they?
- What do they know or think they know?
- What do they believe about the issue/organization involved?

3 Components of Persuasion

2. <u>Message Construction</u>

- What do you want to happen as a result of communicating your message?
- What effect is it likely to have on each of the intended recipients?
- What about unintended recipients?

3 Components of Persuasion

3. <u>Source of the Message</u>

- Who is the most credible source with particular publics?

The Persuasion Process

Otto Lerbinger described five approaches to persuasion:

1. Stimulus-Response
2. Cognitive
3. Motivational
4. Social
5. Personality

The Persuasion Process

Stimulus-Response

The Persuasion Process

<u>Stimulus-Response</u>

- Based on the idea of association (connection).
- A low-level, almost thoughtless response from the audience.
- Useful for establishing an "association" between an idea and your organization.

The Persuasion Process

Cognitive

- Basic idea: People can think and reason about what they read, see or hear.
- Provide reasonable arguments to persuade them to agree with you.
- Limitation: People rarely are persuaded by the facts alone.

The Persuasion Process

Motivational

- Basic idea: People change attitudes to fulfill a need.
- Your message must offer a emotional reward for accepting your message.
- Must identify the relevant needs of your target audience.

The Persuasion Process

Social

- Basic idea: An individual's background, social class and group norms affect attitudes.
- The same message will not be effective across regional, ethnic or national boundaries.

The Persuasion Process

Personality

- Basic idea: Each individual is unique.
- Personality characteristics can determine which arguments work best.
- Difficult to implement when trying to reach mass audiences.

Key Points

- Behavior is both rational and emotional.
- Attitude formation is complex.
- Must know target public well to shape effective persuasive messages.
- Must clearly know goal of persuasive message before crafting it.

Characteristics of a Legitimate PR Campaign

- Free Choice – Audiences are able to choose freely among several actions.

Free Choice

- Adopt the ideas or behaviors being advocated by campaign organizers.
- Adopt the ideas or behaviors of another party involved in the issue.
- Remain committed to their previously held ideas or behaviors.
- Or, not take part in the issue at all.

Free Choice

Free choice means there is no coercion involved.

Characteristics of a Legitimate PR Campaign

Mutual Benefit – Both the communicator and the audience must emerge from the transaction with some benefit.

Mutual Benefit

A campaign in which only the communicator benefits is <u>manipulation</u> rather than true public relations.

Limits of Persuasion

- Selective attention.
- Selective perception.
- Lack of message penetration.
- Competing messages.

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Public Relations
Dr. Mathew Cabot
Lecture Five – Finding & Generating News

One of the main tasks public relations professionals are hired to do is finding and generating news. It is the heart of publicity. Most organizations are interested in receiving positive media coverage. While the media is not considered a primary public, they are considered a secondary public. In fact, they are often called an intermediary public because they are the link between the organization and the primary public (or stakeholder).

To find and generate news, public relations practitioners must first know what news is. There are generally six characteristics of news (read the **What is News** slide).

Consequence involves the idea of scope (how many people are affected) and significance (to what degree). A story of major consequence may affect a large number of people in a significant way (either positively or negatively).

Human interest simply means that: people are interested in other people. We want to know how other people live – especially if they are celebrities. Hence the popularity of magazines such as People.

Timeliness is one of the most important characteristics of news. News is happening now. It's been said that "nothing is older than yesterday's news." But today, with the 24/7 news cycle, sometimes news feels old in print the next day, when the previous day it was announced online.

Proximity means closeness. Stories are more impactful when there is a "local angle." The close the event/situation/issue is to where someone lives, the move valuable the news is. In general, we want to know how the news is going to affect us personally. So, even with international stories, local angles are usually included.

Prominence means importance. When prominent people (celebrities, politicians, etc.) and prominent companies (Apple, Google, etc.) do something significant, it is news.

Newness means new. Novel products, ideas, services, and situations create news. It's what makes news…news.

In addition to understanding what makes news, public relations practitioners need to understand the job of a journalist. Here are some questions to ask yourself. (Read the **Understanding Their Jo**bs slide).

Armed with this knowledge, our job is to make their job easier. How do you do that? (Read **Make Their Job Easier** slide).

Good media relations begins with finding and generating real news. With an understanding of what makes news, the practitioner can now begin to find it and generate it. Where to look first?

The first place to look is inside the organization. The PR practitioner needs to know everything they can about the organization. (Read **Internal News** slide).

All of these areas have potential news stories. Begin with the organization's mission, goals and objectives. Why? Because every story you generate should in some way support the organization's mission, goals, and objectives. If your job includes media relations, you must be constantly on the look out for story ideas from inside your organization.

But you also need to look outside the organization for external sources of news. That means paying attention to the news, being plugged in to your online communities, and identifying trends and issues that may serve as story ideas.

One general principle is "Action Generates News." So, you can do something that creates news. (Read **Generating News** slide).

Once you have found and/or generated news, you must let the media know. One way is to send out a news release announcing your news. These are sent out broadly to numerous media outlets simultaneously. The hope is that it will be "picked up" by as many media outlets as possible. NOTE: It is generally considered "bad form" to call journalists to find out if they received the news release. That's because they received hundreds of releases every day.

Another way to get the word out to the media is to “pitch” the media. That involves writing a targeted letter (or, more likely, an email) to a specific reporter, editor, or producer. The purpose of your email pitch is to convince the journalist to do a story on your product, service, issue, or event.

A good pitch has three phases (Read the first Pitch Letter slide).

The first phase is researching the publication or broadcast outlet. (Read **Researching the Publication** slide).

Next, you prepare the pitch letter (or email). (Read the **Preparing the Pitch Letter** slides).

Stephen Miller of the *New York Times* offers good advice to public relations professionals on how to create the “perfect pitch.” (Read **Perfect Pitch** slide).

Effective media relations is the function of being open and honest with the media and building a reputation for supplying real news, not fluff.

Questions for Discussion

What does the news value of “proximity” mean, and how do you achieve it?

How has the “24/7” news cycle changed the meaning of “timeliness” in news?

Name some ways public relations professionals can make a journalist’s job easier.

What are some internal news sources for possible public relations stories?

Where can public relations professionals look outside of their organizations for publicity stories?

What are the three phases of a “media pitch”?

Finding & Generating News

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Public Relations

AJEEP 2012

What Makes News

- Consequence/Significance
- Human Interest
- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Prominence
- Newness

Understand Their Jobs

- What does a typical day look like for a newspaper reporter?
- How about a TV producer?
- When are they on deadline?
- What kind of information do they need to write or produce a story?
- To whom do they need access?

Media Relations Goal

Make a reporter's or editor's job
as easy as possible.

Making Their Job Easier

- Understand and respect deadlines.
- Help a media person get what they’re looking for.
- Provide stories with real news value.
- Target the right media.
- Have factual background materials available.
- Always be honest.

Finding News

Internal News Sources

You must understand:

- Organization’s mission, goals and objectives
- Products and services
- History and background
- Financial status
- Major competitors

Finding News

External News Sources

- Read, listen, and watch the news for events or situations that may affect your organization.
- Identify trends and issues that might affect your organization in the future.

Generating News

Action generates news.

Generating News

Do something that will create news:

- Conduct a survey and release the results.
- Hold an event (e.g., Race for the Cure, a Health Fair, a Speaker’s Forum)
- Be a part of the solution (e.g., donating resources in a disaster)

Pitch Letters

One fundamental purpose:

To convince an editor or reporter to do a story on your product, service, or event.

Pitch Letters

A good pitch has three phases:

1. Researching the publication
2. Writing the letter or making the call
3. Follow-up

Pitch Letters

Researching the Publication

- Pitch letters must be customized to a particular publication and editor.
- Familiarize yourself with the publication’s style, format, readership, deadlines and regular features.
- Read the publication; watch the show; listen to the program
- The dreaded question: “Do you read our publication?”

Pitch Letters

Preparing the Pitch Letter

- Write a succinct, attention-grabbing letter.
- You have around 30 seconds to grab his or her interest.
- One page or less – Brevity is key.
- An enticing lead – Not: "I'm writing to inquire if you would be interested in a story about…"

Pitch Letters

Preparing the Pitch Letter

Your pitch letter should have six elements:

- Enough facts to support a full story
- An angle of interest to the readers of that specific publication.
- The possibility of alternative angles.

Pitch Letters

- An offer to supply or help secure all needed statistics, quotes, interviews, with credible sources, arrangements for photos, etc.
- An indication of authority or credibility.
- An offer to call the editor soon to get a decision.

The Perfect Pitch

Writing the "Perfect" Pitch

(source: Stephen Miller, *The New York Times*)

- Find out what the reporter covers and tailor your message accordingly.
- Find how the reporter prefers to be contacted – phone, fax, e-mail?
- Make sure you're pitching news.

Pitch Letters

- Offer help on trend stories even if your client isn't the focus.
- Don't call during deadline unless you've got breaking news.
- Don't call to find out if the release has arrived.
- Don't send clips of other stories about your client.
- Don't call to find out when or if the story has run.

Pitch Letters

- Relationships are everything: If you get the trust of a reporter, don't abuse it.
- Don't lie. Advise your clients or employer not to either.

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Public Relations
Dr. Mathew Cabot
Lecture Six – PR Trends

In this sixth and final lecture, we discuss the major trends in the public relations field and look ahead to its future.

Unlike many other academic disciplines, public relations is changing rapidly. That's because the profession is affected by changes in technology, media, and culture. Public relations is a people-focused profession. Therefore, major changes in people's lives – technological, socio-economical, and political – bring changes in the ways public relations professionals identify, build, and sustain relationships between organizations and their stakeholders.

Here are some of the major changes and trends affecting the public relations profession (read **PR Trends** slide).

(**Internet** slide) Let's begin, then, with the Internet – one of the most profound developments in the history of mass communication. The World Wide Web has changed everything from the way we personally interact, to the way commerce is conducted, to how nations govern.

One of the major public relations advantages of the Internet is that it allows organizations to communicate directly with their stakeholders without media gatekeepers. Before the Internet, organizations relied exclusively on traditional media outlets to reach those stakeholders who were too large or too difficult to reach through organizational media (e.g., brochures, flyers, etc.). That meant the media was ultimately in control of the message – unless it was purchased through advertising. Organizations can reach stakeholders directly through their websites with unfiltered messages.

One of the other advantages of the Internet is the speed at which messages may be disseminated. Organizations can spread their messages worldwide within days – if not hours. For example, the KONY 2012 video, sponsored by Invisible Children, has been viewed more than 100 million times – making it the most watched "viral" video of all time.

The speed of message dissemination can also be a problem if the message is negative or false. A lie can travel around the world faster than ever before. A public relations practitioner can go to bed at night with everything fine, and then wake the next morning to a public relations crisis.

In 2001, MIT student Jonah Peretti forwarded a customer service email exchange with Nike to 10 of his friends, and soon it went "viral" (i.e., it spread extraordinarily fast and was viewed worldwide). Suddenly, Nike had a public relations issue.

All of this means that with the Internet, organizations have to manage their reputations 24/7. A big part of this new ongoing reputation management is being transparent (show **Transparency** slide). Stakeholders are expecting – even demanding – that organizations show greater honesty and openness. Stakeholders want to know about organizational policies, procedures, standards and ethics.

If organizations want to develop mutually beneficial relationships with their stakeholders, they will need to be more transparent. Also, while "spin" has never been advocated by PR professionals, it has become increasing counterproductive to long-term public relations goals.

Another trend in public relations is the need to demonstrate "performance with purpose" (show **Performance with Purpose** slide). Stakeholders are increasingly expecting businesses to be using their profits to "do good." The public has always – to some degree – believed that businesses should not make a profit at the expense of the communities in which they operate. Also, because of societal expectations, most big companies have traditionally given to charities – either monetarily or by "lending" employees as volunteers. But "performance with purpose" is different.

While the main goal of a business is to increase shareholder value, that's no longer enough. There's a "new bottom line" that is pushing businesses toward using their wealth, expertise, logistical expertise, etc., to help solve societal problems. Even traditional concepts of capitalism are being challenged by business people and academics who believe that "creating a bigger pie" (as opposed to a "fairer" distribution of existing slices) is the way to increase prosperity for everyone.

Michael Porter of Harvard Business School coined the term “shared value” to describe this new form of capitalism that seeks to create wealth for the entire “supply chain” (i.e., any entity involved in the creation and distribution of a particular product or service). With this reinvented form of capitalism, there is also much more cooperation between the private and public sectors.

For public relations, “performance with purpose” has meant helping organizations demonstrate their commitment to the communities in which they operate through “evidence-based” strategies. These strategies highlight the specific actions taken by the organization to support organizational rhetoric. Businesses can no longer just say they’re doing good; they must back it up with evidence.

One of the most important changes in public relations in the past five years has been the rise of social media (show **Social Media** slide). Today, no public relations program can afford to be without a social media strategy. It has become the main way to interact with many key stakeholders. And it changed the way public relations is performed. Now, instead of creating periodic campaigns, organizations must engage in on-going conversations with their stakeholders through social media.

The first step in a social media strategy is to listen. Organizations must listen to what is being said about the company, the product, the service, the industry – before talking. A good analogy is a party. If you go to a party where you don’t know anyone, the best strategy is to join a conversation by listening first. Once you get a feel for the conversation, and have a clear understanding of the nature of the situation and the people involved, you can begin to contribute.

Once an organization begins a social media strategy, it can’t stop. It needs to continue to engage its publics through Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. That takes a lot of work and often requires one dedicated social media professional. That person is sometimes called the “community manager.” It’s his or her job to help the organization stay engaged online with its stakeholders and help create compelling content that is designed to “pull” stakeholders in (show **Push vs. Pull** slide). Contrast this with traditional “push” strategies that “push” content to their stakeholders through news releases, billboards, flyers, brochures, among other tactics.

The fact is, we are all in the content creation business now (show **Content Creation** slide). We need to create compelling content that keeps our stakeholders interested, engaged, and interacting with us. Compelling content also has the opportunity to "go viral" significantly extending the organization's reach.

The last major trend in public relations is its global expansion (show **Global Expansion** slide). While public relations began as a profession in the United States, it is now truly a global phenomenon. In fact, the fastest growing markets are in the BRIC countries.

Also, in the last 30 years, the world's largest public relations and advertising agencies have been purchased by one of five global communication conglomerates (**read the list from slide**). These conglomerates have subsidiary companies in every major business center in the world ensuring total coverage of communication needs clients worldwide.

Discussion Questions

What is one of the major advantages the Internet provides to public relations professionals?

What is a challenge the Internet poses for public relations professionals?

What does organizational transparency look like?

How do organizations demonstrate "performance with purpose"?

Describe what a "community manager" does.

What is the first step in a new social media strategy?

Name one of the top five global communication conglomerates.

PR Trends

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AJEEP 2012

PR Trends

- The public relations profession continues evolve.
- The Internet offers challenges and opportunities.
- Transparency is more important then ever.
- Performance with a purpose on the rise.
- Social media has become a key strategic tool in relationship building and “public engagement.”
- Push vs. Pull strategies (Era of Content Creation)
- Global expansion of the profession.

Evolving Profession

- As media changes, so does the PR profession.
- PR adapts to societal needs/situations.
- PR adapts to technological changes.

The Internet

- The Internet and World Wide Web has allowed organizations to communicate directly to stakeholders.
- The speed of communication has increased dramatically.
- Messages/ideas (whether true or false) can spread around the world within hours.
- 24/7 reputation management.

Transparency

- Stakeholders are expecting (demanding) greater organizational transparency.
- Honesty and openness are more important than ever before.
- Spin has become increasingly ineffective and counter-productive to long-term PR goals.

Performance with Purpose

- Greater expectation that businesses are helping to solve local, national, and global issues.
- A new “bottom line”
- “Shared Value”: Capitalism reinvented (Michael Porter)
- Increased private/public cooperation.
- Evidence-based strategies

Social Media

- Social media has become one of the most important channels of communication between organizations and stakeholders.
- On-going conversations vs. campaigns
- Listening is first step to launching social media campaign.
- The rise of the Community Manager.

Push vs. Pull

- "Push" strategies **push** information to stakeholders (e.g., news releases, bill boards, flyers, brochures).
- "Pull" strategies are based on <u>creating content</u> that **pulls** in stakeholders (e.g., YouTube videos, interactivity on websites, "crowd sourcing").

Content Creation

We are all in the content creation business now.

Global Expansion

- The fastest growth in the PR industry is in the **BRIC** countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China).
- The world's largest public relations agencies are mostly part of 5 global communication conglomerates:

  Omnicom, WPP, Interpublic Group, Publicis Groupe, and Havas.