

PUBLIC RELATIONS: A MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

TOPIC 1: DEFINING PUBLIC RELATIONS

- 1. Public Relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.**
- 2. Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.**

3. Public Relations is distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics.

WHAT DOES PRS' DEFINATION SUGGEST?

- **Public Relations is the management of problems or issues**
- **Keeps management informed on public opinion**
- **Defines and emphasises responsibility of management to serve public interest**
- **Helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilise change**

- **Serve as early warning system to help anticipate trends**
- **Use research and sound ethical communication techniques as its principal tools**

PUBLICS

Publics can be internal or external. A public is a group of people who share interests or concerns, affected by, and affecting organisation or its actions. May be latent/passive

HOW DOES PUBLIC RELATIONS EARN PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE?

▪ Public relations forms, builds and maintains relationships between an organization and its publics by finding common interests. Failures usually stem from communication breakdowns.

WHAT IS THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS?

- **Growth and trends in business created the conditions for the public relations profession to develop.**

TYPICAL 12 FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

- 1. Trusted counsel—advise and anticipate**
- 2. Internal communication—engage employees and build trust**
- 3. Media relations—develop public trust and support**
- 4. Community relations—establish public trust and support**
- 5. External communication to customers/ stakeholders/ investors, etc.—build public trust and support**

6. Research and strategise

7. Plan

8. Implement, execute and communicate

9. Evaluate

10. Publicity and special events

11. Issues management

12. Crisis communication

PUBLIC RELATIONS PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

- **To control publics**
- **To direct what people think or do in order to satisfy the needs and wants of an organisation**
- **To respond to publics, reacting to developments, problems or initiatives of others**
- **To achieve mutually beneficial relationships among publics by fostering harmonious interchange**

PUBLIC RELATIONS LAW AND ETHICS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

1. ACT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

➤ **Find the greater good for the majority of the people.**

2. USE HONESTY AND INTEGRITY AS YOUR GUIDE.

3. ENSURE ACCURACY AND TRUTH.

- **Do not disseminate false and misleading information.**
- **If you accidentally do make an error, correct it immediately with all audiences.**

4. DEAL FAIRLY WITH ALL PUBLICS

- **Respect yourself and respect others.**
- **When you move to a new position, leave proprietary materials related to your old job behind.**

MORE SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES DEFINING HOW PUBLIC RELATIONS IS PRACTICED

❖ ACCURATELY DEFINE WHAT PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES AND TACTICS CAN ACCOMPLISH.

➤ **Do not guarantee results for areas beyond your control.**

❖ MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS.

➤ **Ensure transparency with all audiences, from employees to external publics.**

➤ **Maintain ethical relationships with government, regulatory agencies, media, colleagues and all audiences.**

❖ **SAFEGUARD CONFIDENCES.**

➤ **Build trust through protection of confidential information.**

➤ **Secure the privacy of organization and individuals.**

❖ **DO NOT DAMAGE THE REPUTATION OF OTHERS.**

➤ **Be careful during agency pitches.**

➤ **Stick to the facts and avoid the gossip.**

❖ **AVOID CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.**

- **Disclose interests of yourself and others.**
- **Get consent to represent conflicting views or competitors; maintain the related knowledge in two different areas.**
- **Be ready to publicly identify your clients, sources of information, etc.**

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Here are the steps in the ethics decision-making process:

- **Define the specific ethical issue or conflict.**
- **Identify internal and external factors (legal, political, social, economic) that may influence the decision.**
- **Identify the key values.**

- **Identify the audiences who will be affected by the decision and define the public relations professional's obligation to each.**
- **Select ethical principles to guide your decision-making process.**
- **Make your decision and justify it.**

1. DEFINE THE SPECIFIC ETHICAL ISSUE OR CONFLICT.

Is it ethical to disseminate deceptive information regarding the financial condition of my company on which a number of key publics may rely?

2. IDENTIFY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS (LEGAL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC) THAT MAY INFLUENCE THE DECISION.

- Do state laws require a particular decision or disclosure?**
- What do company values, policies and/or procedures require?**

3. IDENTIFY THE KEY VALUES.

- **Loyalty—As a professional, commitment to your employer often comes before other obligations.**
- **Advocacy—As a responsible advocate, consider both the company's interests and the interests of the publics that may be affected by the decision.**

- **Honesty**—Consider obligations to tell the truth in advancing the company's interest and in communicating to the public.
- **Independence**—Retain objectivity in counseling the employers on a course of action that is in the company's best interest both today and into the future.

4. IDENTIFY THE AUDIENCES WHO WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE DECISION AND THE PR PROFESSIONAL'S OBLIGATION TO EACH.

Consider the company/employer, board of directors, shareholders/ potential shareholders, government, financial analysts, financial media, employees, publics, profession, society, other stakeholders.

5. SELECT ETHICAL PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE YOUR DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

- Protecting and advancing the free flow of accurate and truthful information is essential to serving the public interest and contributing to informed decision making.**
- Maintaining the integrity of relationships with media and government regulatory agencies is central to public relations practice and in the best interest of the greater public.**
- Truth and accuracy are underpinnings of our profession.**

6. MAKE YOUR DECISION AND JUSTIFY IT.

- **The public relations professional's greatest loyalty is typically to the client/employer; you are obligated to provide counsel and communications support that serves the best interest of the organization.**
- **At the same time, responsible advocacy requires that the interests of those affected by the decision be considered as well.**
- **In this case, numerous publics could both rely on this information and be adversely affected.**

LAWS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS

COPYRIGHT LAW: Two major goals of copyright laws are to protect the original creator of the work and to provide economic incentive for new knowledge.

▪ **The statutory definition expresses that copyright exists in “original works of authorship in any tangible medium of expression. . . from which they can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated”.**

- **Any written sources that are not original should be cited in following works.**
- **In addition, Internet references also should adhere to traditional copyright procedures for securing appropriate permissions and/or indicate proper citations.**

COMMON LAW COPYRIGHT

- **An author who creates a tangible expression of his or her ideas immediately acquires common law copyright of the work.**
- **This right continues until the author dedicates work to the public by a general publication, or surrenders common law right to obtain specific statutory copyright protection.**

- **The purpose of copyright law is to protect an author's intellectual production.**
- **The dividing line between common law copyright and statutory copyright is publication.**
- **Statutory copyright is a legal word or act—the act by which the author makes the work available to the world while retaining control of the creative expression.**

TWO TYPES OF PUBLICATION

1. General publication is any overt act that indicates the intention to surrender one's right to control one's creative expression and allow the public to copy the material. If there is a general publication and the author has not obtained statutory copyright and does not use the copyright symbol, c, he has no further right to prevent the use by the public.

2. Limited publication, such as delivery of a manuscript to a possible purchaser, does not cause the author to lose any common law rights.

STATUTORY COPYRIGHT

- **To obtain statutory copyright, an author must submit to the Library of Congress and display the copyright symbol c on the material.**
- **Creative expression of ideas is subject to copyright.**
- **Securing a statutory copyright is simple.**
- **Notice/use of the copyright symbol must be on the very first copy sold or publicity distributed.**

OWNERSHIP OF COPYRIGHT FOR PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARTWORK

- **The contract between your organization and the non-employee who takes photos or creates artwork determines who owns the copyright.**
- **The copyright owner determines use and the cost of use of the creative work.**

- **Be clear about the ownership of both the negatives and hard copies of photos or artwork in the contract you develop with your legal counsel.**
- **The organization owns an employees' work done on behalf of the organization.**

THE LAW OF DEFAMATION

- **Defamation is a statement of fact that is substantially false about someone who can be identified and that tends to injure that person's reputation.**
- **Written or pictorial defamation is known as libel;**
- **spoken or verbal defamation is known as slander.**

- **To qualify as defamation, the statement must be untrue.**
- **To be defamed or damaged, an exposed person or organization must prove three conditions were present: hatred, contempt, ridicule.**
- **Damage must also be proven.**
- **Reports of official proceedings are privileged and cannot be charged with libel.**

▪ **To be actionable for libel, five elements must be present:**

1. defamation,

2. identification,

3. communications (publication/ broadcast),

4. fault (malice or negligence), and

5. damage (in absence of fault ,provable damages or injury).

▪ **Since a public figure puts himself or herself out before the public, actual malice must be proven by a public figure.**

FAIR COMMENT

- **This privilege insulates a reporter or publication against defamation (libel or slander).**
- **Not a license to circulate derogatory information, the information must be related to community interest with the subject.**

- **Fair comment is a recognized defense against a libel action, based on the argument that the statement was either true or privileged (taken from a public document).**
- **Be aware that although truth is the traditional defense against libel, truth is hard to prove.**
- **Fair comment, which involves privacy, should not be confused with fair use, which involves copyright.**

FOUR LIBEL DEFENCES

1. Truth,

2. Privilege,

3. Fair comment (all defined above)

4. Retraction.

❖ Retraction is a full and prompt apology that helps mitigate damages.

FAIR USE

- **This law allows use or parts of copyrighted materials without violating copyright laws and without paying a royalty or fee when used for: criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship or research.**
- **Drawing the line as to what is fair use is one of the most difficult problems of copyright law.**
- **Fair use originally applied to printed works.**

- **With the advent of digital technology and the Internet, fair use now also applies to the redistribution of music, photographs, videos and software.**
- **Fair use is usually determined on the special facts of each case.**
- **If you begin to question how you're using something or how much you're using, be cautious.**

▪ **Public relations professionals should note that fair use does not apply to commercial use.**

▪ **Fair use that involves copyright should not be confused with fair comment that involves privacy.**

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

This legal term describes rights or entitlements that apply to the ownership and use of certain types of information, ideas or other concepts in an expressed form.

THE LAW OF PRIVACY

- **This law, important for public relations professionals to know, ensures an individual's right to be left alone and can be violated if names, likeness, and/or information is used for commercial purposes.**
- **It differs from defamation and is a practical effort to protect the individual who does not relish the unexpected appearance of his or her picture, story or testimonial in the public media.**

▪ The publication need only injure the feelings of the person, even though it may not have any effect on his or her reputation.

▪ Many violations evolve from advertising, which is deemed worse than articles because of the potential for direct profit.

- **Securing permission from the individual protects the public relations professional.**
- **While use of employee photos in employee publications isn't specifically covered, it is a good idea to protect your employees' right of privacy by obtaining signed waivers.**

FOUR TORTS OR, I.E., KINDS OF WRONGFUL ACTS OR DAMAGES, TO PRIVACY EXIST:

- 1. Appropriation: Taking of some element of a person's name or likeness for advertising or trade purposes without consent, such as using a celebrity's photo without permission and signed releases.**
- 2. Intrusion: Invading a person's solitude, such as taping without permission.**

3. Public disclosure of embarrassing private facts:

Truth is not necessarily a defense here (medical information, sex-crime victim identity, name of juvenile offender, embarrassing poses). Reputation need not be harmed.

4. False light: Putting a person in a false position

before the public, misleading the public to make a person appear other than he or she is (misrepresentation). Reputation need not be harmed.

ROLE OF PR PRACTITIONERS

- **Technicians. Provide services such as producing publications (e.g. news release and newsletter). Technicians hold lower positions within organisations than problem solvers.**
- **Problem solvers. Ask clients or senior management to rethink or clarify problems and to look for innovative solutions. Problem solvers belong to management, with responsibility for decision-making and policy formation. They are part of what is known as the dominant coalition of management.**

PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

- **‘Advertising is visibility, public relations is credibility’.**
- **PR and marketing working together in a campaign would complement each other, both to improve sales and to create a longer-term position in the marketplace.**
- **PR objective is to use information to strengthen the bond between the organisation and the customer – not necessarily to increase sales-**

**in the short term, but to engender loyalty,
selling more by building commitment over the
long term**

PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- **PR is seen as ‘public persuasion through the mass media’**
- **What makes the principal demarcation between propaganda and public relations even more ironic is that, is the practice of propaganda which gave birth to the modern public relations industry.**
- **Engineering of consent and power to shape public opinion**
- **Publicity as a necessary and effective tool to soothe public hostility, either real or potential, toward business’**

PR: WRITING THE NEWS

- **Provide news media with an information subsidy using press releases**
- **PR firms also flood newsrooms with VNRs**
- **High degree of material in news derived from handouts to the press**
- **56% of stories had begun life as news releases**
- **90% of news stories are 'based on the calculated messages of the actors involved and 58.2 percent relied on information routinely supplied to journalists.**
- **Even quality press have a substantial debt to information subsidies from government PR sources.**

RELATIONS WITH MEDIA

- **Get to know your media – who writes for which area**
- **Decide what news is – names, money, impact**
- **Do not use jargon**
- **News release**
- **Never suggest to a journalist or photographer that you have a good story or picture**
- **Never say ‘No comment’, always say, ‘I need to check some details before I get back’**
- **Don’t avoid the issue**
- **Do not be frightened by foot-in-the-door television**
- **Politely ask journalists their names and use them**

- **Write 'more' or 'ends' on the bottom of page one**
- **Include contact information, including after-hours contact**
- **Adhere to journalistic style**
- **Make sure story is newsworthy and appropriate to media outlet**