

# Public Relations

Principles and Practices

IQBAL S. SACHDEVA

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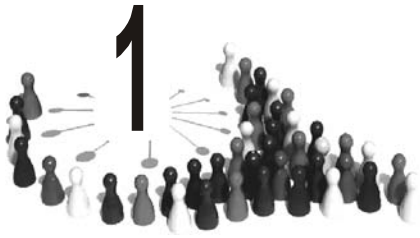
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# Public Relations Fundamentals

## Chapter Outline

- The inter-dependent world
- Definitions of public relations
- Public relations practice
- Strengths of a public relations professional
- Duties and responsibilities of a public relations manager

## THE INTER-DEPENDENT WORLD

Famous philosopher, Aristotle, said, ‘Man is a social animal’. Gone are the days, when people could be self-reliant and self-sufficient in meeting their needs of survival. Today, the society has come to acquire a paradigm of ‘inter-dependence’ so that every person is dependent on another for the satisfaction of their needs. This has culminated into a situation where corporations and the public relate to each other.

There is hardly an individual or an organization, which is able to accomplish their goals without the help from public. Business people depend on customers for sales and profits; organizations depend on employees for productivity and quality of their products; industry relies on several engineers and skilled men and women to produce products that satisfy human needs, like food, clothing, cars, and homes; society depends on the government to provide utilities, and law and order; the younger generation depends on schools and colleges for education and career advancement; and men and women of all ages depend on religious institutions for spiritual and moral guidance. All these have culminated



into a great need for relationships and communications among all people at all levels.

The birth of democracies worldwide and the concept of 'power to the people' have generated the importance of people's opinions on various issues concerning the human race. Today, matters are not resolved by the use of force or wars, but by the exchange of ideas and opinions, popularly called 'public opinion'. As such, our society can be said to have been arranged into opinion groups sharing various values and ideas among the group members. Never before in history has the opinion of an individual or groups of people or 'public' been more vital to the success of business, social, religious, and political institutions than at present times.

The inter-dependence of people, businesses, governments, and social and religious organizations, has given birth to a new philosophy and a function of management, which has come to be known as 'public relations'.

### DEFINITIONS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Unlike several seasoned professions or disciplines, there is no single definition, which can be considered competent and comprehensive enough to define public relations. As such, there are about 500 definitions on the subject, for the simple reason that any one who experienced and practised public relations, coined their own definition from their own experiences.

However, some of the definitions given in Exhibit 1.1 make interesting reading and are relevant. These are some of the leading definitions that several professionals have attempted to write to streamline the profession.

But Dr Rex F. Harlow, a well known American professional, undertook the task of collecting such definitions published since the turn of the century, breaking them into major elements, and classifying the basic, central ideas that these definitions included. From his analysis of 472 definitions, he produced a working definition that is both conceptual and operational:

*Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change; serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication as its principal tools.*

However, the 35<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the Public Relations Society of America, in November 1982, presented a more competent and comprehensive definition (See Exhibit 1.2), highlighting the roles and goals of public relations

**EXHIBIT 1.1** Definitions of public relations

‘Relations with the general public, as through publicity; specifically, those functions of a corporation, organization, etc, concerned with attempting to create favourable public opinion for itself.’

– *Webster’s New Word Dictionary*

‘Public Relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and executes a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.’

– *Public Relations News, USA*

‘The purpose of Public Relations practice is to establish a two way communication to resolve conflicts of interest, and to establish understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information.’

– Sam Black—a British PR practitioner

Public Relations is ‘The management function which gives the same organized and careful attention to the asset of Goodwill as is given to any other major asset of business.’

– John W. Hill

‘Public Relations is a combination of Philosophy, Sociology, Economics, Language, Psychology, Journalism, Communication, and other knowledges of a system of human understanding.’

– Herbert M. Baus

‘Public Relations is the attempt by information, persuasion and adjustment to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or institution.’

– Edward L. Bernays

‘Public Relations is ‘the communication and interpretation and communication of ideas from an institution to the publics and the communication of information, ideas and opinions from those publics to the institution, in a sincere effort to establish a maturity of interest and thus achieve the harmonious adjustment of an institution to its community.’

– Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center

‘Good performance, publicly appreciated because adequately communicated.’

– *Fortune* magazine

in the total structure of today’s complex, pluralist, and inter-dependent society. The definition brought out the importance of activities, their results as well as the knowledge needs of a professional.

A study of the foregoing definitions, leads us to conclude with an ethical statement.

*Public relations is ninety per cent doing good and ten per cent communicating about it. Public relations cannot and should not gloss over the bad deeds of an organization to make them look good, but can and should professionally help to get credit for a job well done by the organization.*

## PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

The several definitions and their understanding helps us to draw an outline of the functions of public relations practice in an organization, as the following:

1. Public relations is a top management function and deserves as much attention as given to the other assets as manpower, money, material, machinery, etc.
2. Public relations has the responsibility of establishing relationship between an organization and its various constituent public groups like employees,

**EXHIBIT 1.2** Public Relation Society of America's official statement on public relations

Public relations helps our complex, pluralistic society to reach decisions and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions. It serves to bring public and public policies into harmony.

Public relations serves a wide variety of institutions in society such as businesses, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations, foundations, hospitals, and educational and religious institutions. To achieve their goals, these institutions must develop effective relationships with many different audience or publics such as employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders and other institutions, and with society at large.

The managements of institutions need to understand the attitudes and values of their policies in order to achieve institutional goals. The goals themselves are shaped by the external environment. The public relations practitioner acts as a counsellor to management, and as a mediator, helping to translate private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action.

As a management function, public relations encompasses the following:

- Anticipating, analysing, and interpreting public opinion, attitudes, and issues which might impact, for good or ill, the operations and plans of the organization.
- Counselling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account their public ramifications and the

organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.

- Researching, conducting, and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programmes of action and communication to achieve informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing, financial fund raising, employee, community, or government relations and other programmes.
- Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy.
- Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities, in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.

Examples of the knowledge that may be required in the professional practice of public relations include communication arts, psychology, social psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and the principles of management and ethics. Technical knowledge and skills are required for opinion research, public issues analysis, media relations, direct mail, institutional advertising, publications, film/video productions, special events, speeches and presentations.

In helping to define and implement policy, the public relations practitioner utilizes a variety of professional communication skills and plays an integrative role both within the organization and between the organization and the external environment.

*Formally adopted by PRSA Assembly, 6 November 1982.*

customers, dealers, vendors, shareholders, media, community, government, parliamentarians, etc.

3. Public relations is considered to be the eyes and ears of a company, as it monitors the awareness levels, opinions, attitudes, behaviours, and responses of various publics.
4. As public relations is considered to be the catalyst of change, it is entrusted with the duty of engineering changes in the awareness, opinions, attitudes, and behaviours of the publics.
5. Public relations is also expected to evaluate and measure the impact of organizational policies, procedures, and actions on various publics.
6. Public relations also plays an advisory role of counselling the management

to modify and adjust those policies, procedures, and actions conflicting with public interest in the interest of smooth functioning of the organization.

7. Public relations is the watch dog of corporate interests and public expectations and as such counsels the management for the formation of new policies, procedures, and actions, which are mutually beneficial to organization and publics.
8. Since the public relations professional is expected to be communications specialist, the job entails the focused responsibility to maintain a two-way communication between publics and the organization.
9. Public relations monitors the winds of change, has anticipation of the crisis and works as an early warning system, for gearing up the management grapple with the eventualities.

Sam Black, in his book *Practical Public Relations*, sums up the functions of public relations discipline, to avoid confusion or misunderstanding of certain organizational actions and behaviours (Black 1996).

Public relations practice includes:

1. Everything that is calculated to improve mutual understanding between an organization and all with whom it comes in contact, both within and outside the organization.
2. Advice on the presentation of the 'public image' of an organization.
3. Action to discover and eliminate sources of misunderstanding.
4. Action to broaden the sphere of influence of an organization by appropriate publicity, advertising, exhibitions, films, etc.
5. Everything directed towards improving communication between people or organization.

Public relations is not:

1. A barrier between the truth and the people.
2. Propaganda to impose a point of view regardless of truth, ethics, and the public good.
3. Publicity aimed directly at achieving sales, although public relations activities can be very helpful to sales and marketing efforts.
4. Composed of stunts or gimmicks. These may be useful at times to put across ideas, but fail completely if used often or in isolation.
5. Unpaid advertising.
6. Merely media relations, although media work is a very important part of most public relations programmes.
7. Political in central and local government. It is to promote democracy through full information and not to advance the policy of any political party.

To cap all the foregoing definitions, public relations is a two-way communication between an organization and target groups for the following three benefits:

1. It resolves conflicts of interest.
2. It seeks common ground/areas of mutual interest.
3. It establishes understanding based on truth, knowledge, and complete information.

This is the process, purpose, and practice of public relations.

In other words, public relations practice is not a strategic exercise to manipulate people for the benefits of the organization, but has a mediator role to establish a win-win situation between the organization and the publics, for a lasting relationship. Refer to Exhibit 1.3 for definition of public relations.

## **STRENGTHS OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONAL**

Specific personality traits, skills, and talents are the prerequisites for those who seek public relations (PR) as a career (See Exhibit 1.4). Landing in PR by chance and not by choice is fraught with pitfalls and can be a threat to success. The strengths, can undoubtedly be cultivated, through training and education in the discipline.

### **Has Excellent Communication Skills**

Ability to communicate is the specialization area for a PR professional. Their major job responsibility in an organization is to solve the communication problems of the company. This ability makes them a distinct person in the organization as compared to hundreds of other people working in a company. They should have a natural flair for verbal and written language.

### **Has Good Knowledge of Media**

Media relations in many organizations is a major part of the job responsibility of a PR person. It is but natural that they should have a thorough knowledge of the working of media – print, electronics, or Internet media. Their ability to get along well with the media professional, can be an asset to the organization, which helps the company to generate lot of favourable media coverage and resultant good corporate image.

### **Understands the Management Process**

Since public relations is a top management function, the PR person should thoroughly understand the functioning of the management. Their knowledge of management science and particularly organizational behaviour helps them to have a sense of direction in carrying out their public relations role.

**EXHIBIT 1.3** The Definition of PR—a middle published in *The Observer of Business and Politics*

# The definition of PR

ONE day, at the Bangalore Press Club, I bumped into a Kannada intellectual, Gavacha, with a bushy salt-pepper beard. He was already in high spirits when I introduced myself to him as a PR man.

‘Oh, PR?’ he said. ‘Wining, dining and mutual appreciation is, perhaps, the most appropriate description of the profession.’

Embarrassed a bit, I said, ‘not really. PR is a demure profession of building bridges of understanding amongst people.’

‘I think, you PR guys are known as the “Gin brigade” of a company’ said Gavacha in a lighter vein.

‘When a company starts making profits, enough profits, it thinks of looking for the most charming lady in town to make her the PRO’ he said.

‘Public Relations is an important management function. It starts the day a business is set up, and ends, perhaps, a day after a business is wound up,’ I asserted in an effort to defend the profession.

‘No,’ said Gavacha, ‘when a company is in trouble, the chips are down and profits shrink, the first causality is the charming lady. After all, what has she been doing there, except smiling, shaking hands and doling out goodies.’

‘That is the fallacy of the Indian business who thinks that the charming lady is the last to be hired and the first to be fired.

Smiles and shakehands is just about 10 per cent of the job. In fact, PR is 90 per cent doing good job and 10 per cent talking about it. More than the beauty, it is the brains that count here.’

‘You don’t need a lot of brains for the job. I have seen PR guys handling a rare Scotch for the boss, manage a tough plane or train ticket for him, fix a bureaucrat or a politician or even broken hearts....Looks do count here,’ said Gavacha with conviction.



‘Agreed that looks count everywhere. But the PR is now an organised profession. So much so that more than 20 national conferences have been held in India.’

‘Yea! the fun-loving and self-seeking men and women invented 20 glamorous opportunities to have a good time at corporate expense,’ he retorted.

‘But some serious-minded delegates produced papers to bring out professionalism,’ I exerted.

‘But only to eulogise their buddies. The PR profession is still struggling for recognition and you have miles to go. I understand that some self-styled pseudo-PRs have hijacked the movement,’ he said.

‘Yes! but it’s everywhere that some unethical self-seekers creep into institutions and try to take the movement after their molds and motives. But the movement lives,’ I consoled Gavacha, putting my hand on his shoulder.

‘Yes! but the time is now that you PR guys should get serious, get organised and get the profession a rightful place as a management discipline’; preached Gavacha.

Our talk was broken with the arrival of Sivan on the scene, with his usual broad face and pipe tucked in between his large moustache, another PR man.

Sivan worked for an industrialist-turned-politician and was a high-flying executive who could pull wires in Delhi sitting right in Bangalore.

‘You are getting serious on a beautiful evening like this,’ he interjected. ‘Let’s enjoy our drink.’ Asking us to lift our glasses and say ‘Cheers: Sivan said, ‘I will give you the real definition of PR. It means ‘Pee Yaar!’

And we all clicked our glasses with a loud laughter. ■

Source: *The Observer*, 4 October 2000.

**EXHIBIT 1.4** Strengths of a PR professional**Should have Business Acumen**

The main business of any organization is to generate and expand a profitable venture. A PR person should have the necessary business sense and actively contribute to the bottom lines in the balance sheet of the company. Well exposed as they are expected to be, they can be a contributor of great business ideas and opportunities for the growth of the organization. Sure enough they should not be a cosmetic attachment to the organization, but an active player in the process of its progress.

**Is Highly Creative**

Creativity makes for a creative organization, which stands out distinctly in the business world. PR professional should be competent and courageous enough to have 'out of the box thinking' to inspire the organization and its members to adopt new and unusual ideas essential for its growth and prosperity. Being a communications specialist, they should have the imagination and style to communicate creatively to the publics relevant to the organization's business.

**Has Flair for Writing**

More often than not, a public relations person is a resource person for media. One of their major obligation is to feed the media with news, stories, and articles



of journalists' interest, which may highlight the contributions of the organization towards national growth and prosperity. Information about launch of new products, new achievements, new innovations and other human interest items that deserve highlighting, have to be presented to the media in an accurate and ready to publish form. No surprise, sometimes a business newspaper carries about fifty per cent of the editorial material contributed by public relations. Therefore, the flair to write like a journalist is not only desirable but essential.

### **Should be a Great Motivator**

The leadership qualities in the professional should come to their help to motivate people to perform at their optimum level. Their verbal and written communication skills will stand in good stead for them to trigger enthusiasm amongst people in the organization.

### **Gets along with most Difficult People**

Getting along with people is an art. The world is a difficult place and people's behaviour is difficult to predict. The challenge of getting along with people, particularly more difficult people, calls for a cool mind and pleasant peaceful disposition which the professionals must master.

### **Has Drive and Enthusiasm**

Enthusiasm is contagious. There may be frustrations, personal or professional, but a PR person should never let them out, instead demonstrate ample enthusiasm and drive to do their job of enthusing others to keep the organizational morale high for success.

### **Is a Good Listener**

Listening is one sure way of learning and gathering feedback for making the necessary changes and adjustments for a PR practitioner. Listening is an art which calls for keeping one's own ego and emotions under control. The sensitive feedback if gathered properly through attentive listening, can provide a sense of direction for professional plans and strategies.

### **Has Good Sense of Anticipation**

A PR person should have a radar like-sense of anticipation about the shape of things to come. They are the one who are responsible for ringing the early warning bell about the crisis which may be brewing or the new opportunities knocking at the door.

### **Has Tolerance for Frustration**

Every new idea or value system will meet opposition and has to be advocated in



the mutual interest of the publics and the organization. The initial opposition will cause sizable frustration. But determined professionals, who have made up their mind about the cause or issue, will not flinch in their efforts. However, the public relations person should put up a brave front, absorb frustration, and emerge victorious.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER**

The public relations manager will report directly to the managing director and will be responsible for all public relations operations for the company. These include publicity, employee communications, internal and external publications, community relations, public relations support to marketing, manufacturing, personnel and finance divisions, etc.

### **Employee Communications**

The public relations manager will work closely with personnel department in establishing first class communications between management and employees. These will be established by weekly news sheets, employee publications, support of sports activities, special events and other means of keeping employees informed in terms of promoting productivity, efficiency, discipline, regular attendance, safety and quality, etc.

### **Internal and External Publications**

The public relations manager will be responsible for editing, publishing, and production of all PR publications issued by the company. These can include a weekly news sheet, a monthly or bi-monthly employees' newspaper, and a dealer's publication and other outside publications for spreading goodwill amongst various company related publics.

### **Community Relations**

Under the direction of managing director, the public relations manager will establish and maintain a good relationship with the community adjacent to the plant as well as with the national community. This will involve planned tours; representation of company at local functions; cooperation with local officials, schools and charities; liaison with local government officials, etc.

### **Media Relations**

The public relations manager will be responsible for all relations with the local and national, both print and electronic media for transmission of company information for publicity. They will be responsible for acting as spokespersons

for the company and will be responsible for answering all questions from the representatives of the media during press meets. They will also maintain a record of press coverage obtained for the company, for submission to management on monthly basis.

### **PR Support to Marketing**

The public relations manager will maintain constant liaison with the sales and marketing divisions and will provide all possible public relations and publicity support to marketing division. Such support will include product and institutional publicity, assistance in launching new products, development of market related publicity material, counsel and guidance on the public relations aspects of marketing, publication of the dealer magazine and assistance in dealer relations.

### **PR Budgeting**

With inputs and approval from the managing director and other directors of the company, the public relations manager will prepare the annual public relations budget and will maintain control of public relations expenditures so that budget levels do not exceed.

### **PR Support to Financial Operations**

The public relations manager will coordinate his/her activities with the finance director for the publication of annual financial report to share holders, handle release of information to the press, and organize the logistics for the annual general meeting of the company share holders.

### **PR Agency Coordination**

The public relations manager will be responsible for selection and liaising with the designated public relations consultancy for briefing, planning, finalizing, and executing the public relations plans and programmes, as finally approved by the managing director. They will also be responsible for managing the financial aspect of this company–agency relationship.

### **Website Management**

The public relations manager, in consultation with the managing director, sales and marketing director and in coordination with the public relations agency, will keep updating the company website for proper projection of company image. They will also keep a track of the visitors to the site and keep the scores for reporting in their monthly activity report.

**EXHIBIT 1.5** Ten commandments for a PR professional

1. Be frank, fearless but polite, polished, and positive. Smile.
2. Develop trust with management—be a guide, friend, and counsellor.
3. Be genuinely interested in people, and problems. Listen and empathize.
4. Make creativity your forte. Conceptualize ideas into words and visuals.
5. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate—Up, down, sideways.
6. Build a sound media network and be responsive to mediapersons.
7. Don't white wash or glorify lies or half truths to mislead people.
8. Endeavour constant intellectual updates and be a culture vulture.
9. Organize your life—Plan your work and work your plan.
10. Generate organizational excitement to build a 'win-win' environment.

**Monthly Reports**

The public relations managers will submit a report of their activities each month to the managing director in accordance with the management's monthly report guidelines.

Exhibit 1.5 highlights the ten commandments for a PR professional and Exhibit 1.6 details the PR objectives of a company.

In conclusion, let us look at an outline of the system of writing a monthly PR report to the management for a multi-national company (See Exhibit 1.7).

**EXHIBIT 1.6** Public relations objectives of a company

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|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stronger contribution to employee relations, with the purpose of helping to increase individual productivity, reduce absenteeism, and build stronger 'family feeling' amongst all employees.</li> <li>2. More scientifically-directed effort to help build stature, identity, and acceptance of the company as a progressive, contributing corporate citizen of the national and plant area communities.</li> <li>3. Specific public relations programmes co-ordinated with sales and marketing, to help build the quality reputation for all company products.</li> <li>4. Closer co-ordination with sales and marketing in supporting specific marketing operations, introducing new products, dealer relations, and sales training.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Better advance planning, in cooperation with management, to optimize the contributions of public relations to achievement of corporate objectives and solution of major corporate problems.</li> <li>6. More planning and review, on an annual, quarterly and monthly basis, to ensure that the public relations programme is being directed specifically to the advancement of the company's most important goals.</li> <li>7. More 'imagineering' in the creation and operation of purposeful public relations projects and in institutional and product publicity.</li> <li>8. Planned contribution to better communications throughout the company among all its elements.</li> <li>9. The continued upgrading of all public relations personnel.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

**EXHIBIT 1.7** Guidelines to PR managers for writing a monthly PR report**Timing**

Monthly reports to the director of public relations are due at the headquarters by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Plan to mail them as soon as possible after the first.

**Reporting by Category**

The report should be concise, clearly written, and fully explain the role played by public affairs.

Follow this outline:

**Major and noteworthy activity**

List here in some details what you consider to be your most important activities of the month. Items listed here need not be repeated elsewhere.

**Community relations** Mention all projects planned or completed that involve public affairs working directly with various segments of the community or supporting company projects. Subjects will range from civic betterment projects and company facilities available for community use to helping solve environmental problems and keeping the public informed about plant situations.

**Sales and marketing support** Describe support to sales campaigns, introduction of products and dealer grand openings through press kits, releases, and special events. Also cover publicity and displays provided in conjunction with fairs and vehicle shows and demonstrations.

**Programmes and projects** List here press conferences in support of sales, support for corporate and local company programmes and events, employee communication projects, hosting of office/plant visitors, special assignments from management, etc.

**Racing** Cover advance and follow-up publicity on local events, special media programmes, operation of hospitality centres, hosting of dealers and other VIPs, development of special exhibits.

**Media results** Briefly describe significant newspaper, magazine, TV, and radio coverage of company news.

Also list local stories prepared, adapted and distributed, and releases for local use. Report the total number of press clippings generated on a monthly and yearly basis.

**Publications** Mention new publications; special publications; changes in format, frequency or distri-

bution; and special editions. Call attention to special stories and unusual efforts by editors and writers.

Also list the current production status of all publications.

**People** Report any change in public relations staffing, honours won by the members of the department and any other significant personal news dealing with outside activities, illness or family status changes.

If a news item about you or your activities does not fit under any other category, list it separately at the end.

Avoid attaching a large number of clips, but do include any major story you've collected during a month.

**General comments** Your monthly reports serve several purposes:

1. Informing him about your activities and showing your effectiveness
2. Generating story and picture leads and ideas for the editors of company publications
3. Providing material for use in the house journal
4. Updating various divisions at headquarters on country developments

It is important, therefore, that the public relations manager in each country files a report each month. A brief report that hits only the highlights is acceptable occasionally if there is no time for the longer form.

**Press Release Suggestions**

For best results, plan the content of your press releases before you begin to write. According to John Stahr in *Write to the Point, the Byoir Style Book*, most experienced writers follow these guidelines:

**Analyse** Take an objective look at the whole subject about which you are writing. Decide what is good about it, what is bad about it; what is interesting about it; what is dull about it; what the central fact is; what its tributary facts are; what you want the reader to decide from what you say about it.

**Organize** Make a few notes. Think for a time. Make an outline, if it is a long piece. Decide what you are going to say first, then how the second and third and subsequent things attach.

**Think about your audience** Do your best to think like them. What would catch your attention? What would keep your attention? What would make the kind of permanent impression that you want to make?

One thing that often comes up in any discussion of style is the matter of length of sentences. Short sentences and paragraphs undoubtedly are desirable. They are easy to understand. They can be useful as a mental punctuation tactic in a text that otherwise, of necessity, is running to fairly long ones.

But the short sentences are not necessarily better than long ones in every context. Perhaps the best formula, Stahr says, is: 'Just tell the story'.

### **Policies on Publications**

**General publications** To assure accuracy and uniformity, copy for anniversary, recruiting, plant tour or similar brochures produced by international subsidiary companies that describe the company policies and operations worldwide should be submitted to corporate public affairs at headquarters for approval before being sent to the printer.

Publications with strictly local content, such as those of plant employees, dealers, and sales personnel, are exempted from the approval process, however.

**Employee and consumer publications** Every issue of your publications must carry the name and address of the publisher and the name of the editor, as required by law in most countries. Some countries require even more information, such as the name of the printer.

Inclusion of the editor's name gives readers and potential contributors an identity to whom they can address requests, complaints, story leads, pictures, and other communications.

### **Use of the Corporate Name**

Use the correct form of the corporate name in all correspondence with third parties, and in all documents. Publications stories and press releases should also conform when referring to the present company in headquarters.

### **Release of Company Information**

**Release of technical information** Written approval is needed for the release of any company technical information. Fax/e-mail requests to corporate public affairs at headquarters for clearance with the patent and trademark department, and, depending on the subject matter, to the vice president of engineering, research and development and technical services.

In each case, your written request for approval must specify the exact purpose of the release and the same release may not be made for another purpose without your submitting another request in writing.

'Technical information' is information of any kind which can be used, or adapted for use, in the design, production, manufacture, utilization, or reconstruction of articles or materials. The information may be in the form of a model, prototype, blueprint, photo, motion picture, slide, or operating manual or even a technical service.

**Release of non-technical information** You are your company's contact with newspapers, magazines, and television and radio stations for publicity or news. Employees other than company officers who want or need to communicate with the media directly must obtain your permission to do so.

Any lecture, talk, and address concerning the organization to be delivered outside the company also needs your advance approval.

**Release of information on capital programmes** You need permission to release public media information on any major capital investment project, for a new plant, and expansion or modernisation. Fax/e-mail your request to corporate public affairs at headquarters for clearance with the worldwide president, and/or appropriate region vice president. The managements of international subsidiary companies do not have the authority to approve releases of capital information.

In addition, the timing and manner in which approved investment information is to be released must be coordinated by public affairs.

Organization's employee, dealer and sales publication are considered to be 'public media' because they are seen beyond the company circle and, therefore, should also follow the approval procedure on stories dealing with capital projects.

### **Communications with Shareholders**

All formal communications with your company's shareholders through annual reports, quarterly reports or other messages addressed to all shareholders as a whole need the approval of the director of public relations at headquarters.

Approval is not required for responses to letters from individual shareholders, however.

### **Policies Covering Company Trademarks**

**Trademarks appearing on merchandise** With the growing practice of putting corporate trademarks on toys, model kits, racing jackets and caps and other merchandise, you expect to receive requests for approval of such usage from other firms, organization or individuals. Authorization to use company trademarks frequently is granted because of anticipated

publicity value to the company but only by written licence.

Fax/e-mail complete information on each request, including the name and address of the proposed user and how the trademark would be used, to the director of public relations at headquarters.

Following approval, a written license will be executed by the patent and trademark department to the party intending to use the trademarks.

Officers of the international subsidiary companies may not grant trademark authority.

**Publicity or sales use of trademarks** Requests for the third-party use of company trademarks in a sales promotional or publicity manner also require the drafting of a written licensee. Fax/e-mail full details to the director of public relations at headquarters.

The PR manager should always be alert for unauthorised use of company trademarks by third parties. Report such usage to the patent and trademark department at headquarters.

**Trademarks used in advertising** Requests by persons or companies outside the organization for the use of company references in their advertising should be faxed/e-mailed to the director of advertising at headquarters for approval in conjunction with the law and patent and trademark departments and the appropriate product division vice president.

This approval process covers use of the company's name, logotype, product names, and trademarks plus photographs or descriptions of company facilities, equipment, or manufacturing processes.

## Summary

In conclusion, the corporations world over have adopted, practised, and implemented their well thought out and planned programmes, in a perennial manner, and have benefitted tremendously from the public relations effort.

In the inter-dependent world of today, it is important for an organization to establish harmonious relations with several publics, employees, customers, dealers, vendors, government, media and community, etc. to generate understanding and suitable response to companies policies, procedures and actions.

Organizations no longer can adopt a fixed or tough stance on issues, but must adjust to

the changing social, economic, and political environment.

Public relations has roles and goals of monitoring and advising the organizations in the mutual interest of the organization and publics, about the policies, procedures, and actions. It also has the responsibility of engineering changes conducive to business.

Last but not the least, public relations professionals are expected to be communication specialists and have responsibility to keep the flow of two-way communication between the organization and publics, but they definitely are not propagandists, which has negative connotations.

## Key Terms

**Conflict of interest** A situation that can arise if a person or firm acts in two or more separate capacities and the objectives in these capacities are not identical

**Goodwill** The value of a business over and above its tangible assets

**Pluralistic society** The existence or toleration of a diversity of ethnic groups or different cultures and views within a society

**Propaganda** In general, a message designed to persuade its intended audience to think and behave in a certain manner



**Public opinion** The general attitude or feeling of the public concerning an issue; the voice of the people

**Publicity** Type of promotion that relies on public relations effect of a news story usually carried free by mass media. The main objective of publicity is not sales promotion, but creation of an image through editorial or 'independent source' commentary

**Publics** Communities of people at large (whether or not organized as groups) that have a direct or indirect association with an organization: Customers, dealers, vendors, employees, investors, media, community, government, students, etc.

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## Concept Review Questions

1. Select any four definitions of public relations and explain why they are the most appropriate for describing the profession.
2. What is public relations and what is not? Why? Describe and explain in detail.
3. What are the strengths that a public relations person must possess to be a successful professional?
4. What are the duties and responsibilities of a public relations manager in an organization? Explain.
5. Discuss the policies pertaining to a company's trademarks.

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## Project Work

1. Develop a hypothetical list of public relations objectives of a computer manufacturing company.
2. Write a monthly activity report for the information of the managing director of your company where you are working as public relations manager.
3. Develop an imaginary advertisement for inserting in *The Economic Times* on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of your company.

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