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Chapter One

The Concept of Public Relations

Introduction

‘PR is constructed in an attempt to be all things to all people simultaneously’ – L’Etang (1996b: 16)

The statement by Etang tells the *intention (the why)* of deploying a PR and **(the what)** employers/companies supposedly expect from a practitioner.

However, the world understands with regard to the current status of thinking and practicing of PR across the globe is far more complicatedly. According to Amisha, M. & Robina, X. (n.d.) PR is practiced in different organizational contexts, from *in house government* or *public affairs* to *corporate communications* roles in small, medium, large, listed, and not-for-profit organizations. Therefore, this multifaceted nature of PR profession has been a point of argument among scholars/practitioners whether which body of knowledge it is categorized.

For instance, *public sectors (mainly service providers)* PR is different from *private/business enterprises (mainly product providers)* PR that, according to Alison, T. (2007), in the first, PR is mainly practiced to *change or shape* public’s *attitude* on services, programs, policies or informing/warning the importance/danger of something to the *general public*, aiming *favorable image/reputation* for the organization. Whereas, in the second type of organization, PR is more of *promoting specific products*, mostly targeting *specific consumers* to escalate/maximize profit. So, these and many peculiarity of PR practices brought doubt whether to classify the field as an *‘art of media’* or a *‘business & management’* subject area (Sandra, O. 2007: 8).

Seeing the marketing role of PR, people from Media and creative arts, approach PR through journalism, film, radio and photography production (for events/publicity, etc.). Others on the other hand, approach it through a management orientation, based on planning and control in line with business strategy/management (ibid). Whatever, the PR society is currently striving to create a global body of knowledge and to do that, it is important to define the profession of PR. In fact, PR as a functional department of any organization, the contributions it makes is beyond what multidisciplinary theorists assume. Due to its holistic nature, it is always **not easy** to specify *the essence of PR* or what it does in an organization. However, scholars and institutions in the field, made a great deal of research and discussions or debates to come up with some conciliating (representative) concepts of what PR is or capable of. Hence, this course aims to explore *definitions, types, models* and distinction of PR from related activities/fields, such as *advertising, management, journalism* and *propaganda*. Nevertheless, these will not solve the dilemma of trying to ‘explain’ PR in a phrase; the fact remains that, it is a complex and hybrid subject. So, what is PR anyway?

1.1. PR Definitions

Any characterization is drawn from thoughts, behaviors, or actions that the owner possesses or shows to the outside world. Seemingly, describing a PR profession/practice has always been based on what it does. So, the definition of PR could be drawn from two distinctive routes for it is generally practiced from two contexts to achieve different purposes.

According to Mehta and Xavier (n.d.), the nature of PR practice can be *communicative* or *operational* and it can be based on a *short-term campaign* or a *long term strategic plan*. Consequently, the definitions of PR have

taken both the operational form which describe the type of activities that make up the PR practice and the largely conceptual form that have been reflecting the evolving nature and understanding of the PR function (Skinner, 1994). The preferred definitional dimensions of the profession come from the various conceptualizations of PR that have been put forward over the past years by both academics and professional practitioners.

For example, according to the Roman University Communication Institute (2000), PR ('sematikos' in Greece) means, *—to signify or to get people to believe things and do things* (p.1). While, the broader and ideal meaning of PR as stated in Grunig, et.al., (2006), could be *a continuous, two-way symmetrical, inter-personal, inter-organizational or intra-organizational communication*, that is practiced using different mass media (communication channels) to create, maintain and foster relationships or reputations.

Seemingly, Macnamara, (n.d.) stated, the term 'public relations' is used to include, issues such as, public affairs, corporate relations, corporate affairs, corporate communication and other broadly synonymous terms. In addition, as the definition by the 1978 World Assembly of Public Relations Associations, Mexico:

Public relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organization leaders and implementing planned programs of action which will serve both the organization's and the public interest (Wilcox et al.2003: 6 quoted in Alison, T. 2007:4).

According to the UK Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) which is Europe's largest professional body in the field:

Public relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding & support and influencing opinion & behavior. It is the planned & sustained effort to establish & maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (Gregory, A. 2010: 3).

Adding, Rex Harlow lightly touched through 472 definitions of public relations to come up with the following paragraph:

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an 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 ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Harlow, quoted in Wilcox et al. 2003: 7 & Alison, T. 2007: 4).

Speaking of the PR definitions, Sunday, O. provided a wonderful thought saying:

The power of a well-defined PR program should be able to solve some societal and organizational problems, because PR can be regarded as a powerful instrument for the reconstruction, transformation of industrial, technological, educational, political and socio-economic development.

From the above few definitions of PR, one can infer that the concept is a little larger and sophisticated. Through their communication, some PR practitioners work to build or maintain relationships with the diversified stakeholders that are important to the organization and its goals. Some exhaust to build or enhance organizational reputation that can keep the business operational/competitive. Today, most PR practitioners are

responsible for monitoring and responding to changes in the external environment, including issues, expectations, relationships, and at the same time, contribute to maintaining effective working environments within the organization through employee communication (Sandra, O. 2007).

Obviously, public relations is still at a relatively emerging stage in its development in many parts of the world, particularly Africa; a fact which at least partially accounts for the diversity of views about precisely *what the practice involves* and *how it can be managed* effectively. Though, definitions made by the above institutions and others might provide some perspectives about *why* and *how* public relations is practiced. Then, the global public relations theory has come to the profession as extension plan of practices to every corner of living world.

As Grunig (2009) hypnotized, a P.R. should fall in the middle between standardization and individualization in such a way that can be replicated across nations, companies, different social or business settings. In the theory called, *excellence theory* ‘, where Grunig and colleagues contended that, though the generic principles(set) of P.R. theories seems inapplicable to other environmental contexts at an abstract level, there are a set of practices that could be applied universally but with slight contextualization (Grunig, 2009).

Therefore, the Global Alliance of Public Relations Associations [GAPRA] founded in 2000, developed a declaration of principles which, among others stated, a profession’s characteristics should be based on *acceptance of duties for a broader society* than merely one’s clients or employees’. It seems subsequent that, today, countries, organizations or publics around the globe are adapted to the practice of professional P.R. activities (Moss, Verčič, & Warnaby, 2002; Public Relations Through Time, 2012 & Miller, 2012).

The component parts of Grunig and Hunt’s famous definition of public relations are as follows:

- **Management.** The body of knowledge on how best to coordinate the activities of an enterprise to achieve effectiveness.
- **Communication.** Not only sending a message to a receiver but also understanding the messages of others through listening and dialogue.
- **Organization.** Any group organized with a common purpose; in most cases, it is a business, a corporation, a governmental agency, or a nonprofit group.
- **Publics.** Any group(s) of people held together by a common interest. They differ from audiences in that they often self-organize and do not have to attune to messages; publics differ from stakeholders in that they do not necessarily have a financial stake tying them to specific goals or consequences of the organization. Targeted audiences, on the other hand, are publics who receive a specifically targeted message that is tailored to their interests.
- **Public relations.** A conduit, a facilitator, and a manager of communication, conducting research, defining problems, and creating meaning by fostering communication among many groups in society. Also referred to as *corporate communication*, *marketing communication*, and *public affairs*.

Activity 1: Please, form a group of 3 or 4 people/students and discuss the following points briefly.

- A. Why do you think public relations is so difficult to define?
- B. Which of the existing definitions seems most appropriate/suitable for the PR field of 21st c? Why?
- C. From your practical/observational experience, which concept/definition of PR is widely asserted among organizations/groups/individuals in Ethiopia? Why do you say so?
- D. What should be done next, to shape/improve the understanding of the public/employers/organizations about the PR or its roles?

The PRSA definition and other modern definitions of public relations emphasize the building of mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and its various publics. A more assertive approach, however, is offered by Professor Glen Cameron, at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He defines public relations as the “*strategic management of competition and conflict for the benefit of one’s own organization—and when possible—also for the mutual benefit of the organization and its various stakeholders or publics.*”

*It isn’t necessary, however, to memorize any particular definition of public relations. It’s more important to remember the key words that are used in most definitions that frame today’s modern public relations. The key words are:

- **Deliberate:** Public relations activity is intentional. It is designed to influence, gain understanding, provide information, and obtain feedback from those affected by the activity.
- **Planned:** Public relations activity is organized. Solutions to problems are discovered and logistics are thought out, with the activity taking place over a period of time. It is systematic, requiring research and strategic thinking.
- **Performance:** Effective public relations is based on actual policies and performance. No amount of public relations will generate goodwill and support if the organization has poor policies and is unresponsive to public concerns.
- **Public interest:** Public relations activity should be mutually beneficial to the organization and the public; it is the alignment of the organization’s self-interests with the public’s concerns and interests.
- **Two-way communication:** Public relations is not just disseminating information but also the art of listening and engaging in a conversation with various publics.
- **Management function:** Public relations is most effective when it is a strategic and integral part of decision making by top management. Public relations involves counseling, problem solving, and the management of competition and conflict.

To summarize, you can grasp the essential elements of effective public relations by remembering the following words and phrases: deliberate . . . planned . . . performance . . . public interest . . . two-way communication . . . strategic management function. The elements of public relations just described are part of the process that defines today’s public relations.

1.2. The Functions of Public Relations

1.1. The Function of Public Relations

In 1982, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) adopted the following definition of public relations that helps identify its purpose: “**Public relations**¹ helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.” Public Relations Society of America (2009b). In its “Official Statement on Public Relations,” PRSA goes on to clarify the function of 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 private and public policies into harmony.
- Public relations serves a wide variety of institutions in society such as businesses, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations, foundations, hospitals, schools, colleges and religious institutions. To achieve their goals, these institutions must develop effective relationships with many

different audiences or publics such as employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders and other institutions, and with society at large.

- The managements of institutions need to understand the attitudes and values of their publics in order to achieve institutional goals. The goals themselves are shaped by the external environment. The public relations practitioner acts as a counselor to management and as a mediator, helping to translate private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action. Public Relations Society of America (2009a).

1. A conduit, a facilitator, and a manager of communication, conducting research, defining problems, and creating meaning by fostering communication among many groups in society. Also referred to as *corporate communication*, *marketing communication*, and *public affairs*.

As such, the public relations *field* has grown to encompass the **building of important relationships between an organization and its key publics through its actions and its communication**. This perspective defines the field as a management function and offers insight into the roles and responsibilities of public relations professionals. The PRSA definition, however, is not perfect: A main weakness of that definition is that it requires public relations “to bring private and public policies into harmony.”

Public Relations Society of America (2009b). In reality, we know that the relationships an organization has with all of its publics cannot always be harmonious. Further, that definition obligates us to act in the best interest of both the organization and its publics, which could be logically impossible if those interests are diametrically opposed. A few examples would be class action litigation, boycotts, and oppositional research and lobbying; despite the negative nature of those relationships, they still require public relations management and communication.

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

1.2. Naming the Public Relations Function

A plethora of terms has come to be associated with modern-day public relations practice. Because of the disreputable beginnings of public relations that we will briefly discuss next, it is often the case that organizations will choose to name their public relations function by another moniker. These various terms create much confusion about the responsibilities of public relations versus overlapping or competing organizational functions. The term corporate communication is the most common synonym for public relations in practice today, Bowen et al. (2006) followed by marketing communication and public affairs. We view the term corporate communication as a synonym for public relations, although some scholars argue that corporate communication only applies to for-profit organizations. However, we view **corporate communication**⁵ as a *goal-oriented communication process that can be applied not only in the business world but also in the world of nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations, educational foundations, activist groups, faith-based organizations, and so on*. The term public relations often leads to confusion between the media relations function, public affairs, corporate communication, and marketing promotions, leading many organizations to prefer the term corporate communication.

We believe that the key component of effective public relations or corporate communication is an element of **strategy**⁶. Many scholars prefer to use the phrase **strategic public relations**⁷ to differentiate it from the often misunderstood general term public relations, or “PR,” which can be linked to manipulation or “spin” in the minds of lay publics. **Strategic communication management**⁸, strategic public relations, and corporate communication are synonyms for the concept displayed in the preceding definitions.

To scholars in the area, public relations is seen as the larger profession and an umbrella term, comprising many smaller sub-functions, such as media relations or public affairs or investor relations. The sub-functions of public relations will be delineated later in this chapter. Academics tend to use the term public relations, whereas professionals tend to prefer the term corporate communication. Do not be distracted by the name debate and the myriad of synonyms possible. Whatever name you prefer or encounter, a strong body of knowledge in the field, based on academic study and professional practice, has solidified the importance of the concepts supporting the strategic communication function that we will discuss in this text.

The Subfunctions of Public Relations

Before we delve deeper into the profession, we would like to introduce you to the subfunctions or specialties within public relations. Think of the public relations function as a large umbrella profession encompassing many subfunctions. Those subfunctions are often independent units within an organization, sometimes reporting to public relations and sometimes reporting to other organizational units such as legal, marketing, or human resources. Learning the subfunctions and the lexicon of terminology associated with this function is crucial to understanding how to manage an integrated and effective public relations function. The following subfunctions will be discussed in more detail later in this volume.

Although there are many subfunctions that make up public relations, most people would identify two major types, corporate and agency. **Corporate**⁶, or “in-house,” is a part of the organization or business. It functions to create relationships between an organization and its various publics. The second type of subfunction is associated with the **public relations agency**⁷; its purpose is to assist organizations in a specific area of expertise.

Issues Management

Issues management⁸ is arguably the most important subfunction of public relations. Issues management is the forward-thinking, problem solving, management-level function responsible for identifying problems, trends, industry changes, and other potential issues that could impact the organization. Issues management requires a formidable knowledge of research, environmental monitoring, the organization’s industry and business model, and management strategy.

Typical Corporate Public Relations Subfunctions

It is important to note that each subfunction may differ according to organizational structure and size. Sometimes the public relations subfunctions overlap and one department (or even one person) is responsible for many or all of these activities.

Large organizations, particularly those with multiple locations doing business internationally, will sometimes have multiple units covering just one of these subspecialties in public relations. Oftentimes the public relations function is structured with a separate department handling each of the responsibilities.¹

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5. A goal-oriented communication process that can be applied not only in the business world but also in the world of nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations, educational foundations, activist groups, faith-based organizations, and other groups. Generally synonymous to the term *public relations*, it is also referred to as *strategic public relations* and *strategic communication management*.
 6. A plan or method employed toward the accomplishment of a specific goal or goals.
 7. A goal-oriented communication process more commonly referred to as *corporate communication*. May also be referred to as *strategic communication management*.
 8. A goal-oriented communication process more commonly referred to as *corporate communication*. May also be referred to as *strategic public relations*

Media Relations

9. A largely technical function of corporate public relations, it is based on the technical skill of producing public relations materials called *outputs*. It is often the most visible portion of an organization's public relations because it deals with external media.
10. An organization's actions and messages, such as news releases and podcasts, that result from adapting to environmental changes. Outputs are related to tactics.
11. A subfunction of corporate public relations responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with an organization's communities. It often includes oversight of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility (CSR).
12. A subfunction of corporate public relations that involves publicity and product promotion, targeting specific public consumers. Also known as *integrated marketing communications* and *integrated communications*.

The **media relations**⁹ subfunction is likely the most visible portion of public relations that an organization conducts because it deals directly with external media. The media relations subfunction is a largely technical function, meaning it is based on the technical skill of producing public relations materials, or outputs. **Outputs**¹⁰ are often related to tactics, and examples of tactics include news releases, podcasts, brochures, video news releases for the broadcast media, direct mail pieces, photographs, Web sites, press kits, and social media (digital media).

Community Relations

As the name implies, the **community relations**¹¹ subfunction is responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with an organization's communities. Normally this territory implies a physical community, as in the borders of manufacturing facilities with their residential neighbors.

Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Oftentimes the functions of strategically donating funds or services and a corporate social responsibility endeavor are part of the public relations department's efforts. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 requires corporations to hold to a code of ethics and to report on their socially responsible conduct. The public relations subfunction responsible for this reporting usually is called the CSR unit or department and often is combined with or managed by community relations.

Financial and Investor Relations

Many managers do not realize that public relations is the function responsible for writing an organization's annual report, quarterly earnings statements, and communicating with investors and market analysts. This type of public relations normally requires experience with accounting and financial reporting.

Marketing Communications

Marketing communications¹² is also known as integrated marketing communications or integrated communications. Publicity and product promotion targeting the specific public consumers is the focus of this subfunction. Public relations strategies and tactics are used primarily through a press agency model meant to increase awareness and persuade consumers to try or buy a certain product.

Government Relations and Public Affairs, Including Lobbying

The public affairs of an organization are the issues of interest to a citizenry or community about which an organization must communicate. Government relations handles maintaining relationships with both regulatory agencies and appointed and elected officials.

13. The branch of corporate public relations that works with intra-organizational personnel in order to maintain an effective and satisfied workforce.
14. A type of public relations that involves planning for and reacting to emergency situations and risk management.
15. A type of public relations that typically communicates and maintains relationships with legislators, press secretaries, and other governmental officials.
16. A public relations subfunction that is responsible for maintaining good relationships with members of an organization or group that share common goals and require membership. Examples include alumni and activist groups.
17. A public relations subfunction that is responsible for building financial support in the form of donations or government grants.

Internal Relations

Maintaining an effective and satisfied workforce is the job of **internal relations**¹³. Public relations professionals who specialize in internal relations have the primary responsibilities of communicating with *intraorganizational* publics, executives, management, administrative staff, and labor.

Typical Public Relations Agency Subfunctions

In addition to the general media relations activities offered by many public relations agencies, seven specializations or subfunctions commonly exist.

Crisis Management

Crisis management¹⁴ involves both planning for and reacting to emergency situations. Organizations have a need for quick response plans and fast and accurate information provided to the news media that public relations agencies specializing in crisis or risk management often provide and implement in the case of a crisis.

Lobbying

As an adjunct to the government relations or public affairs unit of the corporation, an external **lobbying**¹⁵ firm may also be hired. Lobbyists normally have expertise with the industry for which they are hired to communicate, and maintain relationships with legislators, press secretaries, and other governmental officials. They often provide educational documents, policy analysis, and research to those in government on behalf of clients.

Member Relations

The public relations subfunction known as **member relations**¹⁶, as the name implies, is responsible for maintaining good relationships with members of an organization. These members may be alumni, donors, members of activist or support groups, or virtually any group distinguished by a commonality and requiring membership.

Development and Fund-Raising

The public relations subfunction of **development fund-raising**¹⁷ often overlaps with member relations in that it seeks to build support, particularly in the form of financial donations or government grants.

Polling and Research

Polling and research are carried out to such an extent within public relations that specialized firms exist to conduct these activities full time, usually on a contract or retainer basis. It should be noted, however, that very large organizations often have their own research “departments” within one or more public relations subfunctions.

Sports, Entertainment, and Travel Public Relations

Specialized forms of public relations exist as public relations subfunctions for each of these very large industries.

Advertising

Although advertising is a separate profession from public relations, it is usually employed as part of a public relations campaign.

1.2. Components of Public Relations

1.2.1. Publics

Publics in public relations differ based on the organization type

Publics defined

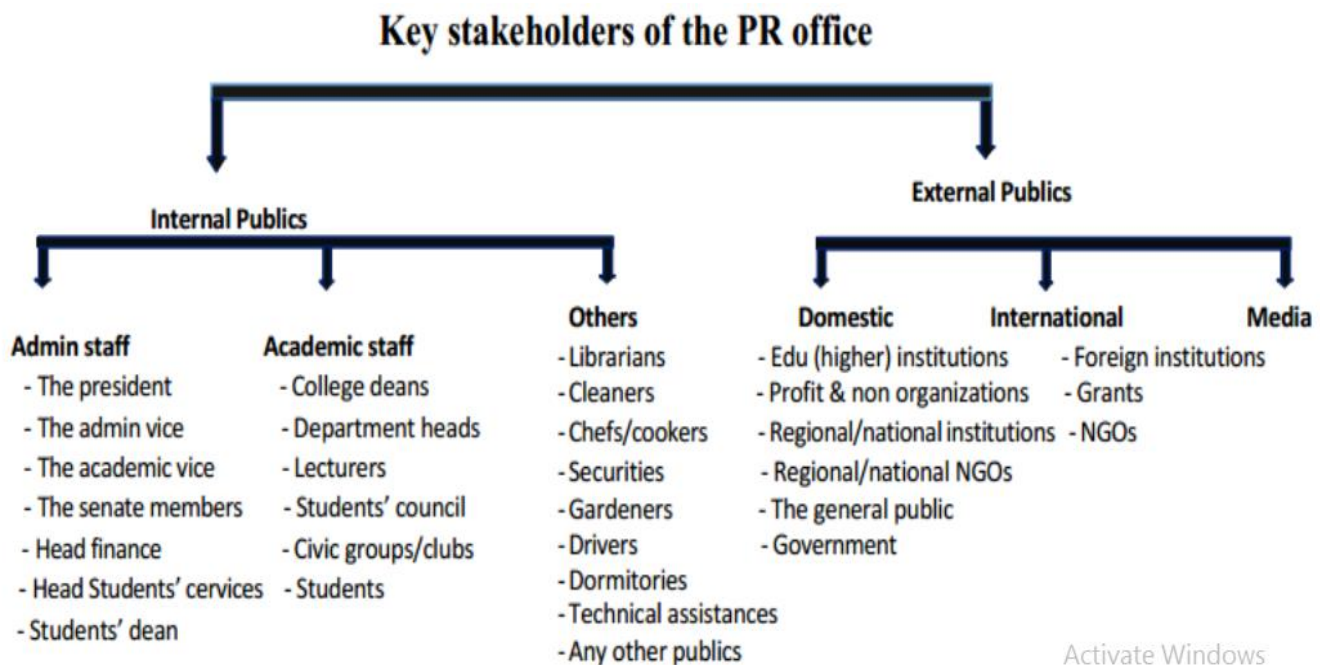
According to Dennis Wilcox and Glen Cameron (2007), “*publics are close people who can be affected by the organization’s activities or can affect the organization*”. The effect the organization cause or they cause to the organization can be positive or negative.

Employers make for a public and employees are another public; the government is a public and citizens constitute another public, and so on, each of these groups is a public of the sort, tries to attract a different audience with its own tools and techniques.

Activity 2: Points for discussion

Dear students, can you list some types of organizations and their target publics?

Example: a sample **public** for a university can be;



Generally, Publics are a group of similar individuals; an assortment of persons having the same interests, problems, circumstances, goals. It is from such persons that opinion emanates. Public is a varied creature; it comes in many forms and sizes. Public has a multitude of wants and desires; it has its likes and dislikes, sometimes, strong likes and strong dislikes.

1.2.2. Relations

Human wants to create the need to establish relations with one another. The representative wants of the individuals will profoundly affect their relationship. To understand any relationship, therefore, one must understand the wants of those involved.

'Relationships are of all possible types. We have relationship by ran-superior to inferior, inferior to superior, and equal to equal. We have relationship by sentiment-benevolent, Friendly, suspicious, jealous, hostile.

A relationship may be active, or it may be passive it may be good or it may be bad, or it may be neutral. At any rate, the relationship is there to be accepted, ignored or altered, as desired.

Some Possibilities that Would Call for Public Relations

- **Adverse publicity:** To inform the truth or correct issues and thereby removing the misunderstanding.
- **Competitive:** To overcome the resistance (pre-set mind condition).
- **Controversy:** To eliminate the contradictory conditions in between the organisation and the public.
- **Catastrophe:** Announcement of any unfavourable issues.
- **Crisis:** Whenever threats arises.
- **Promotional Opportunity:** To inform the new service / policy which call for Public Relations to make wider publicity.

1.3. Roles and responsibilities of Public Relations officer

The profession of public relations is *multifaceted* and *quite challenging*. A public relations professional must have *skills* in *written* and *interpersonal communication*, *media relations* and *social media*, *research*, *negotiation*, *creativity*, *logistics*, *facilitation*, and *problem solving*. Indeed, those who want a challenging career with plenty of variety often choose the field of public relations.

Specific Responsibilities the PR Officer

- Contribute as core team member on client accounts
- Create and maintain media lists, editorial calendars, speaking, and award matrices
- Monitor daily news of clients
- Submit speaking abstracts and award nominations
- Distribute news releases
- Write, proof, and edit a variety of PR, marketing, and social media materials
- Help develop compelling pitches to journalists and key bloggers
- Respond to journalist queries
- Develop agency agendas, recap reports, clip, and monthly reports
- Assist with development of strategic PR, marketing, and social media plans
- Participate in social media engagement for clients and agency

An organization's reputation, profitability, and its continued existence can depend on the degree to which its targeted public supports its goals and policies. Public relations specialists—also referred to as *communication specialists* and *media specialists*, among other titles—serve as **advocates** for clients seeking to build and maintain positive relationships with the public. As managers recognize the link between good public relations and the success of their organizations, they increasingly rely on public relations specialists for **advice** on the strategy and policy of their communications.

Public relations specialists handle organizational functions, such as **media**, **community**, **consumer**, **industry**, and **governmental** relations; political campaigns, interest-group representation; conflict mediation; and employee and investor relations. Public relations specialists must understand the attitudes and concerns of community, consumer, employee, and public interest groups to establish and maintain cooperative relationships between them and representatives from print and broadcast journalism.

Public relations specialists **draft press releases** and contact people in the media who might print or broadcast their material. Many **radio** or **television special reports**, **newspaper stories**, and **magazine articles** start at the desks of public relations specialists. Sometimes, the subject of a press release is an organization and its policies toward employees or its role in the community. For example, a press release might describe a public issue, such as health, energy, or the environment, and what an organization does to advance that issue.

Public relations specialists also **arrange and conduct programs** to maintain contact between organization representatives and the public. For example, public relations specialists set up speaking engagements and **prepare speeches** for officials. These media specialists represent employers at community projects; make film, slide, and other visual presentations for meetings and school assemblies; and plan conventions.

In government, public relations specialists may be called *press secretaries*. They keep the public informed about the activities of agencies and officials. For example, *public affairs specialists* in the U.S. Department of State alert the public of travel advisories and of U.S. positions on foreign issues. A press secretary for a member of Congress informs constituents of the representative's accomplishments.

In large organizations, the key public relations executive, who often is a vice president, may develop overall plans and policies with other executives. In addition, public relations departments employ public relations specialists to write, research, prepare materials, maintain contacts, and respond to inquiries.

People who handle publicity for an individual or who direct public relations for a small organization may deal with all aspects of the job. These public relations specialists contact people, plan and research, and prepare material for distribution. They also may handle advertising or sales promotion work to support marketing efforts.

In addition to the ability to communicate thoughts clearly and simply, public relations specialists must show creativity, initiative, and good judgment. Decision-making, problem-solving, and research skills also are important. People who choose public relations as a career should have an outgoing personality, self-confidence, an understanding of human psychology, and an enthusiasm for motivating people. They should be assertive but able to participate as part of a team and be open to new ideas.

Today, public relations is a *complex* and *multi-faceted profession* that requires *integrity, creativity, dedication*, and a *sense of purpose*. Therefore, the day-to-day activities of a public relations professional vary depending on the individual's job and level of responsibility.

Activity 3: Questions for Discussion

- How would you define public relations?
- What are the functions of public relations?
- 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?
- What are some of the reasons that call for a PR engagement?
- How would you exemplify “Communicative Vs Operational” PR?
- Explain the concept of Strategic Vs tactical PR

Chapter Two

Evolution of Public Relations

2.1. Ancient Beginnings

The concept of public relations is probably as old as human communication itself. In many ancient civilizations, people were persuaded to accept the authority of government and religion through common public relations techniques such as interpersonal communication, speeches, art, literature, staged events, and publicity. None of these endeavors were called public relations, of course, but their purpose and effect were often the same as those of today's modern practice.

Herodotus, writing about the Persian Wars, noted that the Greeks carved messages on stones near watering holes to demoralize the Ionian fleet. And Alexander the Great publicized his battlefield victories by sending glowing reports back to the Macedonian Court. In India, Emperor Asoka (273–326 b.c.) was communicating with his subjects through messages on large stone pillars erected at major crossroads. The Rosetta Stone, dating back to 196 b.c., was basically a publicity release touting an Egyptian pharaoh's accomplishments. Similarly, the ancient Olympic Games were promoted to enhance the aura of athletes as heroes in much the same way as the 2012 games in London.

Julius Caesar was probably the first politician to publish a book, *Commentaries*, which he used to further his ambitions to become emperor of the Roman Empire. He also organized elaborate parades whenever he returned from a successful battle to burnish his image as an outstanding commander and leader. After Caesar became a consul of Rome in 59 b.c., he had public proceedings posted on walls throughout the city. These *Acta Diurna*, or "Daily Doings," was probably one of the world's first newspapers.

Saint Paul, the New Testament's most prolific author, also qualifies for the public relations hall of fame. According to James Grunig and Todd Hunt, authors of *Managing Public Relations*:

The apostles Paul and Peter used speeches, letters, staged events, and similar public relations activities to attract attention, gain followers, and establish new churches. Similarly, the four gospels in the New Testament, which were written at least 40 years after the death of Jesus, were public relations documents, written more to propagate the faith than to provide a historical account of Jesus' life.

1.4. The growth of modern public relations and Key personalities in Public Relations

1.4.1. The 1800s: The Golden Age of Press Agency

The 1800s was a period of growth and expansion in the United States. It also was the golden age of the press agent, which Webster's New World Dictionary defines as "a person whose work is to get publicity for an individual, organization, etc." The period was also the age of hype, which is the shrewd use of the media and other devices to promote an individual, a cause, or even a product or service, such as a circus.

Press agents were able to glorify **Davy Crockett** as a frontier hero to draw political support away from Andrew Jackson, attract thousands to the touring shows of Buffalo Bill and sharpshooter Annie Oakley, make a legend of frontiersman Daniel Boone, and promote hundreds of other personalities.

These old-time press agents played on the credulity (having or showing too great a readiness to believe things) of the public in its longing to be entertained. **Advertisements and press releases were exaggerated to the point of being outright lies.** Doing advance work for an attraction, the press agent dropped complimentary tickets on the desk of a newspaper editor, along with the announcements. Voluminous publicity generally followed, and the journalists and their families flocked to their free entertainment, with scant regard for the ethical constraints that largely prohibit such practices today.

The Legacy of P. T. Barnum

The individual who best represents the hype and press agency of the 19th century is **Phineas T. Barnum**, the great American showman. He was the master of what historian Daniel Boorstin calls the *pseudo-event*, which is a planned happening that occurs primarily for the purpose of being reported. Barnum used flowery language, exaggeration,

controversy, massive advertising, and publicity to promote his various attractions in an age when the public was hungry for any form of entertainment.

Barnum first gained fame in 1835 as the exhibitor of Joice Heth. She was an African American who was billed as George Washington's nursemaid, which would have made her 161 years old. Barnum and his advance man, Levi Lyman, encouraged public debate about her background and age because it generated not only media coverage but the sale of tickets as the public came to see for themselves. In the 1840s, another Barnum exhibit that generated controversy (and much media coverage) was the Fejee Mermaid, a stuffed creature that was half-monkey and halffish. Barnum quoted some clerics who said it might be possible to merge species, but that the public should come to his American Museum in New York and judge for themselves—which they did in great numbers.

Thanks to Barnum, Tom Thumb became one of America's first media celebrities. He was a midget, standing just over 2 feet and weighing 15 pounds, but he was exceptional at singing, dancing, and performing comedy monologues. Barnum made a public relations event of the marriage of "General" Tom Thumb to another midget. He even got extensive European bookings for Thumb by introducing him to society leaders in London, who were enchanted by him. An invitation to the palace followed, and from then on Thumb played to packed houses every night. Barnum, even in his day, knew the value of third-party endorsement.

Another Barnum success was the promotion of Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale." Lind was famous in Europe, but no one in America knew about her beautiful voice until Barnum took her on a national tour and made her one of America's first pop icons. He obtained full houses on opening nights in each community by donating part of the proceeds to charity. As a civic activity, the event attracted many of the town's opinion leaders, whereupon the general public flocked to attend succeeding performances—a device still employed today by entertainment publicists.

American railroads, in particular, used extensive public relations and press agency to attract settlers and expand operations. As Andy Piasecki, lecturer at Queen Margaret University College in Edinburgh, Scotland, describes it:

The expansion of the railroads was dependent on publicity and promotion. This is hardly surprising that any investment in western expansion was dependent on finding a population. Many railroad companies were colonization agencies as much as they were transport companies. Without people, no railroads could be sustained and because there were, at this time, few people out West, they had to be brought in . . .

Consequently, such companies as the Burlington and Missouri Railroad promoted Western settlement from England and other European nations. The company set up an information office in Liverpool that distributed fact sheets and maps and placed stories in the local press. In addition, the railroad promoted lectures about migrating to the American West. According to Piasecki, "The pièce de resistance for the Burlington was a kind of early road show . . . an elaborately illustrated lecture with 85 painted views, each covering 250 square feet."

1.4.2. 1900 to 1950: The Age of Pioneers (Public Information Model)

By the start of the 20th century, public relations had begun to reinvent itself along journalistic lines, as the emphasis shifted from the hype and press agency of the Barnum era to the idea that facts and information were more effective strategies.

Two factors were involved in this shift. First, the press agent model didn't really fit the operations and objectives of large corporations. Second, the new field of public relations attracted journalists, who were more comfortable with objectivity and the dissemination of information.

Ivy Lee: The First Public Relations Counsel

The leading pioneer in this new approach to public relations was Ivy Ledbetter Lee, a former business journalist for the New York Times, the New York World, and the New York American. He began as a publicist, but shortly expanded that role to be regarded as the first public relations counsel.

When Lee opened his public relations firm, Parker and Lee, in 1905, he issued a declaration of principles that signaled a new model of public relations practice: public information. Lee's emphasis was on the dissemination of truthful, accurate information rather than distortions, hype, and exaggerations.

One of Lee's first clients was the Pennsylvania Railroad, where he was retained as a "publicity counselor" to handle media relations. His first task was to convince management that the policy of operating in secret and refusing to talk with the press, typical of many large corporations at the time, was a poor strategy for fostering goodwill and public understanding. When the next rail accident occurred, Lee provided press facilities, issued what is claimed to be the first news release of the modern age, and took reporters to the accident site. Although such action appeared, to the conservative railroad directors, to be reckless indiscretion, they were pleasantly surprised that the company received fairer press comment than on any previous occasion.

It wasn't long before other railroads also adopted a more open information policy. By 1912, Lee had become the executive assistant to the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which Scott Cutlip, in his comprehensive history of public relations, calls "the first known instance of a public relations person being placed at the management level."

One of Lee's major accomplishments was the 1913–1914 railroad freight hike campaign. The Pennsylvania Railroad, after years of rising expenses, needed a 5 percent railroad freight rate hike to remain in business, but there was considerable public opposition and also a skeptical Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). Lee believed the public and the ICC could be persuaded to accept higher rates if they were given the facts and made aware of the situation.

All these efforts paid off. Public opposition declined, and chambers of commerce around the country bombarded the ICC with resolutions supporting the railroad. The ICC approved the 5 percent rate hike. St. John concludes, "Lee's propaganda campaign for the Pennsylvania Railroad is a landmark in the history of public relations."

Lee counseled a number of companies and charitable organizations during his lifetime, but he is best known for his work with the **Rockefeller family**. In 1914, John D. Rockefeller Jr. hired Lee in the wake of the vicious strike-breaking activities, known as the *Ludlow Massacre*, at the Rockefeller family's Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) plant. Lee went to Colorado to do some fact-finding (research) and talked to both sides. He found that labor leaders were effectively getting their views out by talking freely to the media, but that the company's executives were tight-lipped and inaccessible. The result, of course, was a barrage of negative publicity and public criticism directed at CF&I and the Rockefeller family.

Lee, drawing on his rate hike experience, proposed a series of informational bulletins by management that would be distributed to opinion leaders in Colorado and around the nation. The leaflets were designed to be thought pieces about various issues concerning mining, manufacturing, and labor. In all, 19 bulletins were produced over a period of several months and sent to a mailing list of 19,000. Even at this early time, Lee recognized the value of directly reaching opinion leaders, who, in turn, were highly influential in shaping public discussion and opinion.

Lee organized a number of other public relations activities on behalf of CF&I during 1914 and 1915, including convincing the governor of Colorado to write an article supporting the position taken by the company. Lee also convinced Rockefeller to visit the plant and talk with miners and their families. Lee made sure the press was there to record Rockefeller eating in the workers' hall, swinging a pickax in the mine, and having a beer with the workers after hours. The press loved it.

Rockefeller was portrayed as being seriously concerned about the plight of the workers, and the visit led to policy changes and more worker benefits. As a result, the United Mine Workers failed to gain a foothold.

Lee continued as a counselor to the Rockefeller family and its various companies, but he also counseled a number of other clients. For example, he advised the American Tobacco Company to initiate a profit-sharing plan, the Pennsylvania Railroad to beautify its stations, the movie industry to stop inflated advertising, and the New York Subway to promote various stops along its route, such as the Museum of Natural History, as a way to increase ridership.

He is remembered today for his four important contributions to public relations: (1) advancing the concept that business and industry should align themselves with the public interest, (2) dealing with top executives and carrying out no program without the active support of management, (3) maintaining open communication with the news media, and (4) emphasizing the necessity of humanizing business and bringing its public relations down to the community level of employees, customers, and neighbors.

1.4.3. Edward L. Bernays: Father of Modern Public Relations (Scientific Persuasion)

Lee's public information model is still used today, but a new approach to the practice of public relations, introduced in the 1920s, emphasized the concept of *"scientific persuasion."* A leading proponent of this new approach was Edward L. Bernays, who, through brilliant campaigns and extensive self-promotion, became known as the *"Father of Modern Public Relations"* by the time of his death in 1995 at the age of 103.

Bernays, who was the nephew of Sigmund Freud, believed public relations should emphasize the application of social science research and behavioral psychology to formulate campaigns and messages that could change people's perceptions and encourage certain behaviors. Unlike Lee's public information model, which emphasized the accurate distribution of news, Bernays's model was essentially one of advocacy and scientific persuasion. It included listening to the audience, but the purpose of feedback was to formulate a more persuasive message. Professor Emeritus James Grunig of the University of Maryland, a major theorist in public relations, has labeled this the two-way asymmetric model, one of four classic models that are outlined in the preceding chapter.

Bernays became a major spokesperson for the "new" public relations through his 1923 book *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, which outlined the scope, function, methods, techniques, and social responsibilities of a public relations counsel—a term that was to become the core of public relations practice.

The book, published a year after Walter Lippmann's insightful treatise on public opinion, attracted much attention, and Bernays was even invited by New York University to offer the first public relations course in the nation. Bernays, over the course of his long career, had many successful campaigns that have become classics. Here is a sampling:

- **Ivory Soap.** Procter & Gamble sold its Ivory Soap by the millions after Bernays came up with the idea of sponsoring soap sculpture contests for school-aged children.

In the first year alone, 22 million schoolchildren participated in the contest, which eventually ran for 35 years. Bernays's brochure with soap sculpture tips, which millions of children received in their schools, advised them to "use discarded models for face, hands, and bath."

- **"Torches of Liberty."** During the Roaring 20s, Bernays was hired by the American Tobacco Company to tap the women's market by countering the social taboo of women smoking in public. His solution was to have beautiful fashion models march in New York's popular Easter Parade, each waving a lit cigarette and wearing a banner proclaiming it a "torch of liberty." By making smoking a symbol of liberation, the sale of cigarettes to women skyrocketed. Later in his life, Bernays said he would have refused the account if he had known the dangers of tobacco.

- **Light's Golden Jubilee.** To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Thomas Edison's invention of the electric light bulb, Bernays arranged the worldwide attention-getting Light's Golden Jubilee in 1929. It was his idea, for example, that the world's utilities would shut off their power all at one time, for one minute, to honor

Edison. President Herbert Hoover and many dignitaries were on hand, and the U.S. Post Office issued a commemorative two-cent postage stamp. Bill Moyers, in an interview with Bernays in 1984, asked, "You got

the whole world to turn off its lights at the same time. That's not influence, that's power." Bernays responded, "But you see, I never thought of it as power. I never treated it as power.

People want to go where they want to be led."

Journalist Larry Tye has outlined a number of campaigns conducted by Bernays in his book *The Father of Spin: Edward L. Bernays & the Birth of Public Relations*. Tye credits Bernays with having a unique approach to solving problems. Instead of thinking first about tactics, Bernays would always think about the "**big idea**" of how to motivate people. The bacon industry, for example, wanted to promote its product, so Bernays came up with the idea of doctors across the land endorsing a hearty breakfast. No mention was made of bacon, but sales soared anyway, as people took the advice and started eating the traditional breakfast of bacon and eggs.

Bernays, during his long, 20th-century-spanning life, constantly wrote about the profession of public relations and its ethical responsibilities—even to the point of advocating the licensing of public relations counselors. One historian described him as "*the first and doubtless the leading ideologist of public relations.*"

Although he was named by Life magazine in 1990 as one of the 100 most important Americans of the 20th century, it should be noted that Bernays had a powerful partner in his life, **Doris E. Fleischman**, who was a talented writer, ardent feminist, and former Sunday editor of the *New York Tribune*. Fleischman was an equal partner in the work of Bernays's firm, interviewing clients, writing news releases, editing the company's newsletter, and writing and editing books and magazine articles.

1950 to 2000: Public Relations Comes of Age

During the second half of the 20th century, the practice of public relations became firmly established as an indispensable part of America's economic, political, and social development.

The booming economy after World War II produced rapid growth in all areas of public relations. Companies opened public relations departments or expanded existing ones. Government staffs increased in size, as did those of nonprofits, such as educational institutions and health and welfare agencies. Television emerged in the early 1950s as a national medium and as a new challenge for public relations expertise. New counseling firms sprang up nationwide.

The growth of the economy was one reason for the expansion of public relations, but there were other factors, too:

- Major increases in urban and suburban populations
- The growth of a more impersonalized society, represented by big business, big labor, and big government
- Scientific and technological advances, including automation and computerization
- The communications revolution in terms of mass media
- Bottom-line financial considerations often replacing the more personalized decision making of a previous, more genteel society

Many citizens felt alienated and bewildered by such rapid changes, cut off from the sense of community that had characterized the lives of previous generations. They sought power through innumerable pressure groups, focusing on causes such as environmentalism, working conditions, and civil rights. Public opinion, registered through new, more sophisticated methods of polling, became increasingly powerful in opposing or effecting change.

Both physically and psychologically separated from their publics, American business and industry turned increasingly to public relations specialists for audience analysis, strategic planning, issues management, and even the creation of supportive environments for the selling of products and services. Mass media also became more complex and sophisticated, so specialists in media relations who understood how the media worked were also in demand.

Typical of the public relations programs of large corporations at midcentury was that of the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA). Heading the operation was a vice president for public relations and advertising, who was aided by an assistant public relations director and advertising manager. Departments included community relations, product publicity, motion pictures and exhibits, employee publications, the news bureau, and speech writing.

The 1960s saw Vietnam War protests, the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, interest in women's rights, and a host of other issues. Antibusiness sentiment was high, and corporations adjusted their policies to generate public goodwill and understanding. Thus, the idea of issues management was added to the job description of the public relations manager. This was the first expression of the idea that public relations should be more than simply persuading people that corporate policy was correct.

During this period, the idea emerged that perhaps it would be beneficial to have a dialogue with various publics and adapt corporate policy to their particular concerns. Grunig labeled this approach *two-way symmetrical communication* because there's balance between the organization and its various publics. In other words, the organization and the public can influence each other.

The 1970s was an era of reform in the stock market and investor relations. The Texas Gulf Sulfur case changed investor relations forever by establishing the idea that a company must immediately disclose any information that may affect the value of its stock. The field of investor relations boomed.

By the 1980s, the concept of public relations as a management function was in full bloom. The term *strategic* became a buzzword, and the concept of management by objective (MBO) was heavily endorsed by public relations practitioners as they sought to prove to higher management that public relations does indeed contribute to the bottom line. Many definitions from this time emphasized public relations as a management function. As Derina Holtzhausen of Oklahoma State University notes, "Public relations management highlights organizational effectiveness, the strategic management of the function through strategic identification of publics, and issues management to prevent crisis." The PRCasbook on page 85 highlights some classic campaigns.

Reputation, or *perception*, management was the buzzword of the 1990s. BursonMarsteller, one of the largest public relations firms, decided that its business was not public relations but, rather, "perception management." Other firms also declared that their business was "reputation management." Inherent in this was the idea that public relations personnel should be experts in issues management, crisis communications, and environmental monitoring to build credibility and trust among internal and external audiences and enhance the organization's reputation for corporate responsibility.

Activity 4: Discuss the following ideas

1. Who are the prominent pioneers of the Public Relations profession?
2. Who is P.T. Barnum and how is he important in the history of modern PR?
3. Who is Ivy Lee and how is he important in the history of modern PR?
4. Who is Edward L. Bernays and how is he important in the history of modern PR?

Chapter Three PR Models

3.1. Grunig and Hunt's four models

James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) suggested four perspectives in which PR is practiced then and today. Their suggestion is based on two dimensional combinations of *directions* of communication— *one-way versus two-way*, and *purposes* of communication— *asymmetrical versus symmetrical*. The models describe the different forms of communication (relationship) between an organization and its stakeholders. These are, the *Press Agency*, the *Public Information*, the *Two-way Asymmetrical* and the *Two-way Symmetrical* models of PR (Alison, T. 2007 & Stephen, W. 2012).

Model	Type of Communication	Characteristics
1. Press agent or publicity	One-way communication	Uses persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organisation desires.
2. Public information model	One-way communication	Uses press releases and other one-way communication techniques to distribute organisational information. The public relations practitioner is often referred to as the in-house journalist.
3. Two-way asymmetrical model	Two-way communication (imbalanced)	Uses persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organisation desires. Does not use research to find out how stakeholders feel about the organisation.
4. Two-way symmetrical model	Two-way communication	Uses communication to negotiate with the public, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organisation and its stakeholders

Table 1: James Grunig and Todd Hunt's Four Models of Public Relations (1984).

3.1.1. The Press Agent/Publicity Model

This model is a one-way communication from the press agents to their publics that uses persuasion and manipulation to influence the behavior of an audience regarding organization's goods, services or ideology. It is usually a one-way communication to sell products or services without any quantitative analysis of the results and the press agent invests no time in research and even in the discussion of ethical concerns. It is *a propagandistic public relation* that seeks media attention in any way possible with the aim of behavior manipulation. According to Stephen & Grunig, *Press agency* is the model where information moves *one-way* from the organization to its publics, which is synonymous with *promotions* and *publicity*.

A press agent or publicist aims to secure coverage for a client, and *truth is not an absolute requirement*. It is obvious that Celebrity PR has increasingly influenced the news content of daily newspapers, magazines as well as broadcast media. Publicity/promotion is nothing but providing contents for a proliferation of media outlets, products or services through public figure individuals, which is *not always over-concerned* with the *factual accuracy* of information. So, accuracy of information and credibility of sources are not priorities with this kind of model (Alison, T. 2007, Stephen, W. 2012 & James E. Grunig & Todd, H. 1984).

Public relations people operating under this model are constantly looking for opportunities to get their organization's name favorably mentioned in the media. This is probably the kind of activity that most people

associate with public relations. Nonetheless, this type of PR is most common in show business – **celebrity PR** – where individuals are promoted through media coverage. Grunig and Hunt point out that ‘practitioners in these organizations concern themselves most with **getting attention** in the media for their clients’ (1984: 25). **Understanding** is not necessary for this kind of PR, which is likely to measure success in column inches or airtime. Press agents are the figures at the center of any ‘**hype**’, and have also been derogatively called ‘**flacks**’ by journalists. A communication theorist Daniel Boorstin called activities like these ‘**pseudo-events**’ – activities created solely for **publicity purposes** (Alison, T. 2007).

With roots in the 19th century, press agents worked to influence public opinion by creating news (Simpson, 2014). The press agency/publicity and the public information models both stress information via outgoing information from the organization to the public and the relative absence of feedback. Scholars like Haywood, (2002) consider the act as a one-way communications value, constantly transmitting but never receiving; they are all mouths and no ears. Press agency model applies when a public relations program strives only for favorable publicity in the mass media, often in a deceptive way, which sometimes considered as propaganda. Thus, **propaganda** is not about communication between an organization and their publics; it is about **miscommunication**. Its first aim is to dissolve communication between people in order to disable their ability to form publics. In this case, propaganda cannot be taken as the function of public relations since its basic purpose is to create constraints to communications or one sided information flow.

3.1.2. The Public Information Model

Public information is the second model which is practiced basically to inform the public. It does not seek to persuade or change the attitude of the public directly but to disseminate any relevant information to the mass audience. Thus, it is predicated that if the public has sufficient, relevant and truthful information about the organization, then the public will believe and behave to what the organization desired. In Public Information Model, the job of PR practitioners, (also referred as; ‘the journalists in residence’), is to report information objectively about their organizations to the public through mass media and controlled media such as newspapers, brochures and direct mail. Grunig and Hunt (1984) indicated that, this communication (PR) model provides information to people – where **accuracy is important**, indeed essential. The model does not seek to persuade the audience or change attitudes; rather, its role is similar to that of an in-house journalist releasing relevant information to those who need it. The practitioner also may not know much about the audience, and tends to rely on **one-way communication**, from sender to receiver (Sunday, O).

While One-way communication is the feature of the public information model, tools such that, press releases, brochures, even static Web content are tools used by these information dispensers. They tell the story and hope someone is paying attention (Simpson, 2014). Today's practitioners (and students training to be practitioners) greatly benefit by understanding the crucial role that the news media plays in public life, how to deal with the media and, more generally, how external communications efforts can be used to advance the work of public agencies (Theaker, 2007). Since the past two/three decades, local and central governments continue to practice public information communication. For example, Press releases giving details of committee decisions, budget allocation, or movement of personnel are typical public information activities. In recent years, the shift from public to private sector utilities has placed a similar emphasis on the need to explain pricing policies to customers. Besides, many large organizations have improved their ‘**transparency**’ – the availability of information to the public. Much of this has been improved – or driven – by developed technology via the internet (Theaker, 2007 & Stephen, W. 2012).

Case: Ivy Ledbetter Lee

The pioneering public information *counselor* was a man named Ivy Ledbetter Lee, who revolutionized public relations practice at the time with the idea of telling the truth. Lee studied at Harvard Law School, but went on to find a job as a journalist. He worked as a successful business journalist trying to obtain information about the highly secretive US industrial conglomerations that dominated the economy of the time. At the turn of the twentieth century, Ivy Lee realized that he had a real ability for explaining complicated topics to people, and had the idea of being a new kind of press agent. Rather than tricking the public, Lee saw his role as one of educating the public about truthful facts and supplying all possible information to the media. Ivy Lee opened the third public relations agency in the United States in 1904, representing clients such as the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Rockefeller family, and the Anthracite Coal Roads and Mine Company. Lee felt that business secrecy was a poor strategy and declared his principles to the press:

This is not a secret press bureau. All our work is done in the open. We aim to supply news. This is not an advertising agency; if you think any of our matter properly ought to go to your business office, do not use it. Our matter is accurate. Further details on any subject treated will be supplied promptly, and any editor will be assisted most cheerfully in verifying directly any statement of fact. Upon enquiry, full information will be given to any editor concerning those on whose behalf the article is sent out.

Grunig and Hunt (1984 p. 32.), claimed Lee became the first public relations practitioner to issue a code of ethics in 1906, based on his declaration that **“the public be informed”**— to replace railroad tycoon Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt’s infamous statement, **“The public be damned”** (Hiebert, 1966 p. 54.). Ivy Lee ushered in a more **respectable form of public relations** that is **objective** and **factual**. His public information approach is still in use today, especially in government reporting, quarterly earnings statements, and similar reports intended simply to inform.

Lee gave recommendations for different corporations on the value of (practicing) public information PR. For instance, he consoled a railroad company to tell the truth about an accident instead of concealing it, which in return, increased the Company’s reputation for its fairness. He also advised the Rockefeller family on how to respond to the Ludlow Massacre at the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. He guided them how to culminate the crisis and plant/counter their image as greedy capitalists by publicizing the money they gave to charity. However, Lee’s own reputation was destroyed in the 1930s when he tried to advise Nazi Germany on how to improve German–American relations (Theaker, 2007).

3.1.3. The Two-way Asymmetrical Model

In this model, a PR/communication is two-way which introduces the idea of feedback or two-way communication. However, it is asymmetric or imbalanced for the goal is anything but persuasion to trigger a transaction, thus the popularity of an organization/product with marketers (Simpson, 2014). Since persuasive communication relies on understanding of the attitudes/behavior of the targeted publics, planning and [communication] research are so vital. In this case, the feedback is primarily to help construct a better message (Botan & Hazleton 1989:23) so as to get into the psychology of audiences and produce (sell) tailored messages that enable the achievement of organizational (business) goals effectively. For this reason, the model is labeled as persuasive communication because the intended change is in the audience’s attitude or behavior rather than in the organization’s practices. Grunig and Hunt (1984) also call it, **‘scientific**

persuasion’ and Grunig (1992: 39) argues that the asymmetrical model of PR may be *unethical* as it is ‘a way of getting what an organization wants without changing its behavior or without compromising’.

L’Etang (1996c: 113) on the other hand points out that, the ‘concept of *free will*’ is important in separating *persuasion*’ from its negative connotations of *manipulation*’, *coercion*’, *“brainwashing”* or *propaganda*’. Today, propaganda is seen as undesirable and persuasion as suspicious – which partially accounts for the general distrust of public relations (Theaker, 2007).

Examples of positive persuasive communication might include *public health campaigns*, such as reducing smoking or encouraging safer driving habits. These campaigns depend on theories of social psychology and much audience research. It is easy to argue that while the organization – in this case the government – clearly benefits from reduced health care costs and fewer motoring fatalities, the person changing his or her habits (the persuadee) also clearly benefits from a longer, healthier life (ibid).

Another timeless example is political campaigning at elections, where each candidate seeks to influence their constituents. However, the recent discussion of political ‘spin’ raises the possibility that tactics used legitimately in elections are now being used in government, instead of the more traditional public information approach. But in recent years the media has paid more attention to the process by which political information reaches the public – very useful material for the student of public relations (ibid). Practitioners of this model use *social science theories* and research on attitudes and behaviors *to persuade publics* to accept the organization's point of view or to behave as the organization wants (Rhee, Y. 2004). In this role practitioners actively engage in persuasion with the goal of bringing target publics to a certain way of thinking through *advocacy* (Guth and Marsh 2005:7).

Persuasion is not of course limited to the public sector and the two-way asymmetric public relations is probably the most widely used type of PR. Most businesses – indeed most public relations – today try to persuade key publics that their goods or services are *reliable*, *safe*, and *cost-effective* and so on. *Advertising* is perhaps the most extreme version of this approach and some theorists (like Chomsky) say, persuasion often slides into propaganda, because the outcomes are largely enjoyed by the advertiser, not the consumer (ibid).

Expertise or knowledge in your communication department to perform these tasks: Persuade a public that your organization is right on an issue, get publics to behave as your organization wants, manipulates publics scientifically, use attitudes’ theories in a campaign with the dominant coalition the organization believes how public relations should be practiced. In public relations, the broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave before beginning a public relations program. One should examine attitude surveys to ensure whether the organization and its policies are described in such a way that its publics would most likely accept it; [Research-Objective-Program-Evaluation (ROPE)]. After completing a public relations program, research should be done to determine how effective this program has been in changing people’s attitudes; [Research-Action-Communication-Evaluation (RACE)] (Rice & Atkin 2001).

3.1.4.The Two-way Symmetrical Model

This model usually attempts to find a mutually advantageous solution to problems and a P.R. uses communication to negotiate with publics, resolve conflicts, and promote mutual understandings and respect between the organization and its public(s) (Theaker, 2007). This implies the two-way symmetrical model

allows for more input from publics that can provide innovative solutions and corrective discourses, both essential for sound strategic PR management. However, the weakness of this model is the imbalance of relationship among the management and the public.

Hence, the two-way symmetrical model casts PR in the role of mediator versus persuader. Under that circumstance, PR experts listen to the concerns of both clients (organizations) and key publics and help them adapt to one another. So, it seems the PR professional must represent the interests of all parties and believed to work well with enlightened management who take a long-term effect. However, it is a utopian model, for these clients are rare to be found nowhere in the world. This is mainly because in the two-way symmetrical model, communication is balanced in that it adjusts the relationship between the organization and its publics through negotiation and compromise. It describes a level of equality of communication not often found in real life, where each party is willing to alter their behavior to accommodate the needs of the other. As a result, Grunig and Hunt (1984) labeled it as, ‘**the ideal model**’ of PR. According to J. Grunig & L. Grunig, in the symmetrical model, “**understanding**” is the principal objective of public relations rather than one-sided persuasion. Hence, practitioners of this model use planned communication to manage conflict and to improve understanding with publics. They also use research to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or persuade publics (Theaker, 2007& Rhee, 2004).

Generally speaking, the practice of PR can be conceptualized as media publication [**information supply/publicity/advertising**], public propaganda [**manipulation**], asymmetrical [**persuasion**] and symmetrical [**negotiation**] purposes. These practical dimensions also determine the communication direction whether it is a one-way **dissemination** or two-way **interaction** (Grunig, & Hunt, 1984). In conclusion, PR practices are and should be based on PR/Communication theories that help a practitioner predict how events and actions are related. Consequently, the use of theories in the PR practice is mandatory especially in the today communication environment (Ben & Jerry, 2010).

Activity 5: Discuss the following ideas

4. Grunig and Hunt say that two-way symmetric communication is the ideal model. Do you think this is possible? Is persuasion a dirty word?
5. Who is Ivy Lee and how is he important in the history of modern PR?
6. Looking at different communication contents on print or broadcast, which model is predominantly practiced in Ethiopia? What consequence do you think does it entail in a business?
7. How would you fit the following examples of public relations into Grunig’s and Hunt’s four models:
 - A. Campaign to reduce teenage pregnancy.
 - B. Launch of a new car.
 - C. The Public Relations Handbook 16
 - D. Leaflet giving details of new bank charges.
 - E. Invitation to discuss plans for new supermarket.

Chapter Summary

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 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.

Activity 6: Questions for Discussion

- Who is Edward Bernays, and how is he significant to the public relations profession?
- What is spin, and why is it counterproductive 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?

Chapter Four

4. Fundamentals of Public Relations Writing

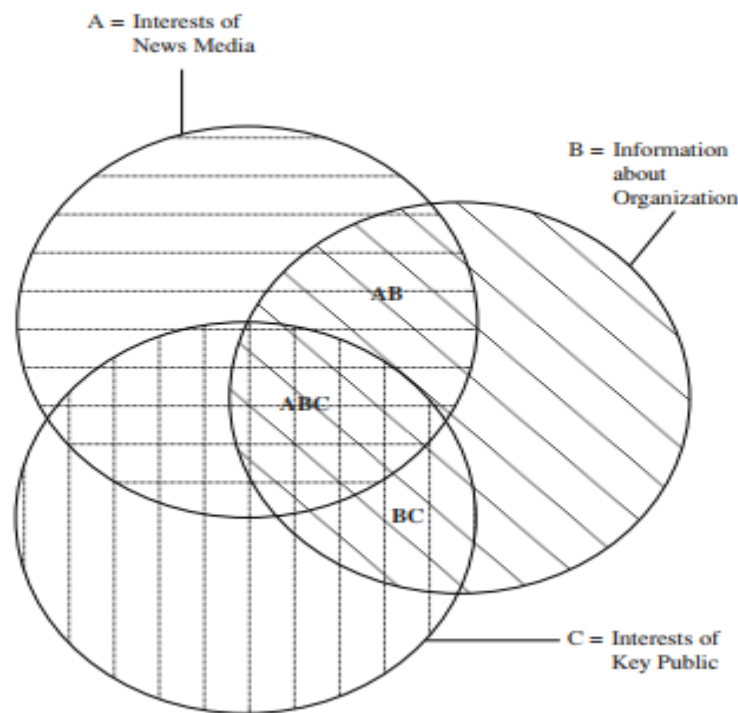
4.1. News

What is news? News is an elusive concept. Dictionaries tell us what we already know: News is new information, something reported, something newsworthy. How wonderfully vague! Journalists and public relations practitioners, past and present, have tried to define news because having a common understanding about news is especially important to public relations writers, who are continually trying to anticipate what the gatekeeper will consider to be news.

A **gatekeeper** is a person who controls the flow of information—such as the editor of a newspaper or newsletter, a radio or television news director, or a Webmaster. Gatekeepers consider information, and then evaluate it in light of the needs and policies of their particular medium and the presumed interests of their audience. Then they decide whether the information has enough news value to be offered to the audience.

In the end, it all boils down to this: News is what the editor or news director says is news. The media call the shots. It doesn't matter if you and your boss or client thinks the information is important. If the media gatekeeper doesn't think it's news, it's not news. No appeals process.

The Venn diagram in Exhibit 5.1 graphically shows that news is the information in overlapping circles of interest for the media gatekeeper and public relations practitioners.



This model shows overlapping circles representing the various interests of the organization, the news media and the key public. **Media relations focuses** on the AB area (news), which represents the interests of the news media that coincide with information about the organization. Public relations writers, however, are particularly interested in the ABC area (strategic news), where the key public also is interested in the same issues as the news media. The BC area (direct information) represents the potential for the organization to take its message direct to its interested publics without using the news media.

Circle A indicates the interests of the news media, Circle B information about the organization, and Circle C the interests of a key public.

The AB area denotes newsworthy information about the organization that the media might be interested in reporting. The media gatekeeper is focused on the people who read the newspaper, listen to the radio newscast and view the television broadcast. Frankly, the gatekeeper doesn't care much about Circle B, though you and your boss care deeply about it. **Your job, as public relations person, is to find out where Circle A overlaps Circle B.** Then call this to the attention of the media gatekeeper.

The ABC area represents news of interest not only to the news media but also to an organization's key public. This is the information of particular value to a public relations writer, because it is newsworthy information that the public will look for or at least will be attentive to. If you find that you have information in the BC area, look for ways to present it to your public through organizational or advertising media. Or reshape or enhance the information to make it of more interest to the news media. Consider the AC area, which indicates information not involving your organization that is of interest both to the media and the key publics. Look to these agendas for opportunities to insert their organizations into the news of the day.

4.1.1. News Interest

Your job as a public relations writer is to know the mind of the gatekeeper, understanding media and anticipating audience interests. To accomplish this, you need a good working definition of news. The best method of approaching a definition of news is to look at the **criteria for news** or **interest value** that the gatekeepers use to determine the news value of information. News has certain observable characteristics, particular elements that, when present, transform information into news.

Journalists have identified the following elements of news, also known as **news values**: *action, adventure, change, conflict, consequence, contest, controversy, drama, effect, fame, importance, interest, personality, popularity, prominence* and *proximity*. These descriptors offer clues about what editors and news directors are looking for when they judge the news value of any story.

For the public relations writer, we might look at a simpler listing. **Four characteristics are especially important for the public relations writer: *Significance, Localness, Balance and Timeliness*.** Adding these together provides us with a good working definition: **News is information about significant and local interest, presented in a balanced and timely manner.** These elements are basic to virtually all news releases that are used by the media. Two other elements of news value—*Unusualness* and *Fame*—are not crucial, but they can enhance the likelihood that information will be considered newsworthy.

An easy way to remember these elements of news interest is to memorize the acronym ***SiLoBaTiUnFa***, made up from the first two letters of each of the elements.

4.1.2. Generating News

A public relations writer cannot create something from nothing, but you can orchestrate situations that become newsworthy. In fact, part of your usefulness to employers and clients, as well as much of your benefit to the media, lies in your ability to develop newsworthy activities. There are three crucial points to effectively generating news for your organization:

- First, know the media, their news formats and the elements of newsworthiness that they consider important.

- Second, know your organization, especially its mission and its goals. Together, this information provides the framework for creating news opportunities that serve the needs of the media, the purposes of the organization and the interests of the publics.
- Third, know your publics and ask yourself the following question: What is happening within my organization that may be of interest to our publics?

A key to generating news is to link your organization to a topic already on the public and/or media agenda. This is called creating a **news peg**. Think of a peg in your closet on which you hang your jeans. It's there; you just need to use it. The same is true with a news peg. It already exists as a topic of interest to the news media; you simply need to hang your organization's message on it. Where do you find a news peg? Read the newspaper. Follow television and radio news.

4.1.3. Public Relations Tools and Tactics

***News releases** also known as a **press release** or **media release**, is one of the most frequently used tactics or tools in the public relations practice. A media release can be either a **news release** or **feature release**. News releases present **hard news** and **feature releases** offer human-interest stories. The most commonly distributed release is a news release.

Although publicity is a strategy used by many public relations practitioners, those who specialize in working with the media are called **publicists** and **media relations specialists**. Releases are sent to a media gatekeeper, such as a print journalist or television producer who determines the stories that appear in a publication or on a broadcast. The most common form of media release is the news release, which conveys information that is considered newsworthy and is written in an **inverted pyramid** format. The inverted pyramid format begins with a clothesline lead of information, including the elements of who, what, when, where, how, and why. Next, facts and details are developed in the body of the release, supporting the lead sentence.

The release generally concludes with related, but less significant, information on the topic. Some practitioners place a boilerplate at the end of the release, which is a paragraph describing the organization releasing the information.

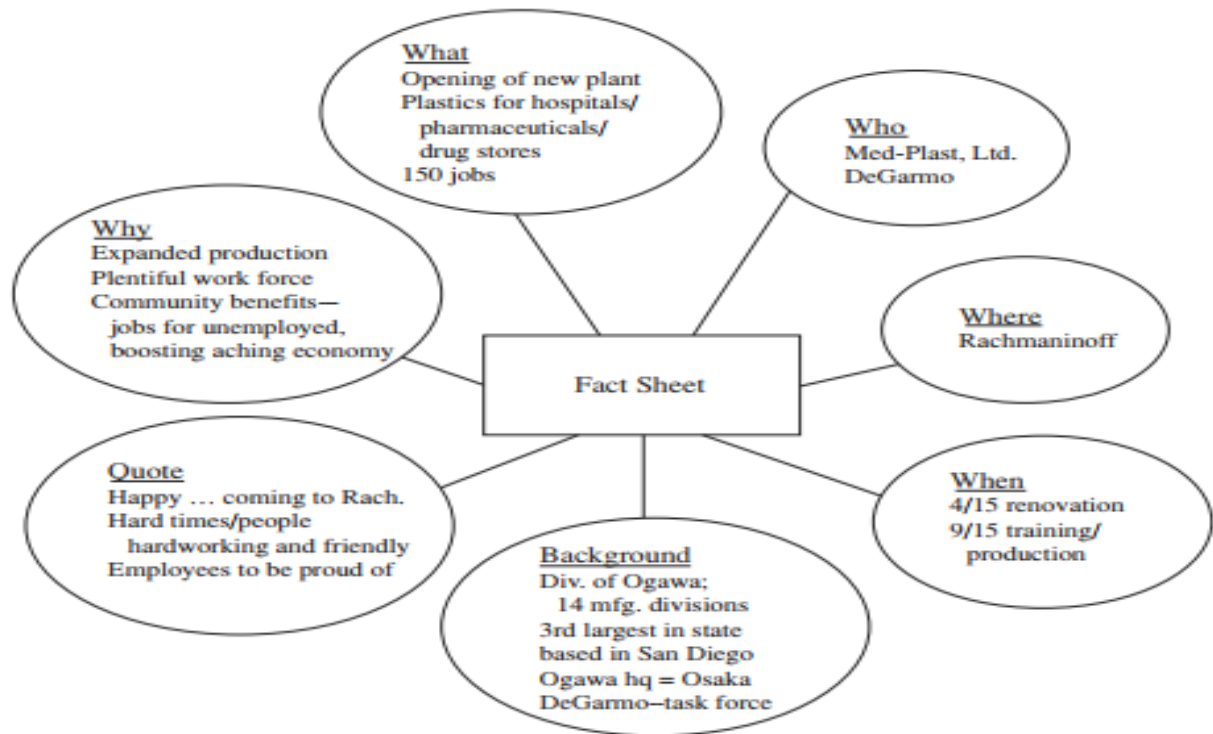
4.1.3. Writing Formats of News releases

Public relations writers use many different formats to present news about their organizations. Some of the most basic are fact sheets, factoids and event listings.

4.1.3.1. Fact Sheets

Fact sheets, which are the easiest way to disseminate information to the news media, provide information stripped down to the bare facts. Essentially, they are bits of strategic and newsworthy information that public relations writers give to reporters to provide a basis for stories the reporters will write. They answer the standard journalistic questions — **who, what, when, where, why** and **how**. They might also provide background information, benefit statements, quotes and other information that the public relations writer thinks would be useful to the reporters.

Exhibit 5.2—GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR NEWS FACT SHEET This model graphically displays the various elements of the fact sheet depicted in Exhibit 5.3.



2

Exhibit 5.3—FACT SHEET This fact sheet presents the same information displayed graphically in Exhibit 5.2. Note that, as a fact sheet, it focuses on a new event (the opening of a new plant).

MED-PLAST, LIMITED

A DIVISION OF OGAWA INDUSTRIES

123 MAIN STREET ☐ CENTRAVILLE XX 12345

Regina VanDerPlanck ☐ Vice President Corporate Communications ☐ (123) 555-12345

Fact Sheet: New Textile Plant

Jan. 23, 2003

Who

Med-Plast, Limited (a division of Ogawa Industries)

John DeGarmo, president and CEO

What

Opening new plant

Manufacturing plastic materials for hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, drug stores

Hiring 150 production workers

Where

Rachmaninoff (Mathewson County), small town with 57 percent unemployment

When

Staggered hiring schedule

Renovation of former Central Rails plant begins April 15

Training and production begins Sept. 15

Why

Textiles Limited wishes to expand production

Seeks new plant in area with a plentiful work force

Prefers community that could benefit from this expansion

Benefits

New jobs for currently unemployed workers

Boost to ailing small-town economy

Quote

DeGarmo: "I'm happy about the prospect of coming to Rachmaninoff. The town has had some tough times, but the people here are hard working and friendly. They are the kind of employees any company would be proud to have."

Background on Textiles Limited

Based in Centerville

It is the state's third-largest producer of medical plastics

DeGarmo is a member of Manufacturer's Task Force on Depressed Communities

Background on Ogawa Industries

Based in San Diego

Nationwide company

4.1.3.2. Factoids

In addition to *event-based* fact sheets that serve as substitute news releases, a related communication tool can provide *background on issues, programs* or *products*. These *factoids* are brief bits of information about an organization and/or the programs or issues it deals with. Factoids, also called *breaker boxes*, simplify complex information, thus helping reporters and editorial writers, as well as readers, become familiar with topics of concern to an organization.

Note that whereas fact sheets deal with events, factoids deal with issues. For example, a hospital preparing for a high-profile type of experimental heart surgery may prepare a factoid to explain to reporters the various surgical terms, techniques and equipment involved. Factoids also may provide an overview of the history of an organization or a program, or it may identify milestones in its development. Such factoids could be useful not only to reporters but also to many other publics.

Exhibits 5.4 and 5.5 show examples of actual factoids. **Note** that the organizations call them fact sheets; be careful to distinguish in your mind between *event-based fact sheets* and *issue-based factoids*, regardless of what they are called. **Note** also the difference in style between Exhibit 5.4 from St. Thomas University, which *clusters* the information into *sections*, and Exhibit 5.5 from Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, which presents a series of *brief summaries* of various studies. Both organizations have posted this information at their Web sites.

Exhibit 5.4—FACTOID This factoid explains a program at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., to recycle books and distribute them in Africa. Note that the factoid provides background information on the program rather than solid news that would be found in a fact sheet.

Recyclable: **BOOKS**

WE RECYCLE:

- All books, hard back or paper back.

WHERE TO RECYCLE:

- Stack unwanted books next to any corridor recycling containers for pick up.
- If you have a large number of books you would like recycled, please call the recycling coordinator at (96)2-6388 to arrange a mutually agreeable pick up time.
- The dean of students office collects books for the Books for Africa Foundation in St. Paul. At the end of each semester a collection table for the books is staffed in the lower atrium of Murray-Herrick near the bookstore during the book buy back periods. During the school year, books may be taken to the dean's office in Rm 100 MHC. Books may also be left at the Recycling Center on the loading dock of the Physical Plant.

Activity 7: Questions for discussion

- What is news? Explain briefly
- What are news values?
- What are crucial points to effectively generating news?
- What are the formats of writing news release?
- Explain news interest.
- Discuss the factsheets and factoids.

Facts About **BOOKS:**

- Books are a very recyclable commodity. Buying used course books reduces paper consumption and reduces the strain on tight student budgets. Used course books may be sold and purchased from the UST Bookstore (962-6850) or through the book co-op sponsored by the Arnold Air Society in Foley Theatre (962-6320).
 - Public libraries are outstanding examples of community recycling. One book can be read by hundreds if not thousands of people. The use of library books reduces the consumption of our environmental resources. Check out the nearby Saint Paul Public Libraries the next time you are looking for a good read!
 - St. Paul has a wealth of book stores who buy and sell used books. Some stores in the UST vicinity worth investigating for your reading needs or for the cash value of unwanted books include:
Midway Book Store 1579 University Ave.
Half Price Books 2041 Ford Parkway
Harold's Book Store 186 W 7th St.
Cheapo Books 80 Snelling Ave. N.
 - Books for Africa, the designated charity for UST textbooks, gives our donated books to schools and libraries in 18 African countries including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Namibia, Zambia, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Malawi, and South Africa. It is estimated that 25 Africans will read each book sent.
-

Exhibit 5.5—FACTOID This factoid by Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) provides summaries of information from several different research studies. The information is presented to give a background on the tragedy of teen suicide, an issue important to the organization. PFLAG offers this information on its Web site: www.pflag.org in its education section.

Schools & Youth



For the past three years, Safe Schools have been one of PFLAG's top priorities, locally and nationally. In 2000, PFLAG launched its multi-year *"From Our House to the Schoolhouse"* safe schools campaign. We recognize that schools are "ground zero" in our efforts to curb homophobia. GLBT youth face unspeakable harassment and abuse in schools. What's more, young people are learning in schools that it's acceptable to hate GLBT people. The average high school student hears 25 anti-gay slurs daily; 97 percent of high school students regularly hear homophobic remarks. This harassment takes its toll: Gay students are far more likely to skip classes, drop out of school and/or commit suicide.

Know Your Facts:

Students Are NOT Safe in Schools

- In a study of students in public high schools, **97% report regularly hearing homophobic remarks** from their peers. *Source: Making Schools Safe for Gay and Lesbian Youth: Report of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, 1993.*
- The typical high school student hears **anti-gay slurs 25.5 times a day**. *Source: Carter, Kelley, "Gay Slurs Abound," in The Des Moines Register, March 7, 1997, p. 1.*
- In a 14-city study of gay, lesbian and bisexual youth, **80% reported verbal abuse**, 44% reported threats of attack, 33% reported having objects thrown at them and 30% reported being chased or followed. *Source: A. R. D'Augelli and S. L. Hershberger, Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth in community settings: Personal challenges and mental health problems, American Journal of Community Psychology 21:421, 1993.*
- In a study of 4,159 Massachusetts high school students, **31.2% identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual were threatened/injured with a weapon at school** in the past year compared to 6.9% of their peers. *Source: Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS), Massachusetts Department of Education, 1997.*
- In 73 schools in Washington State, **111 incidents of anti-gay harassment and violence have been reported in the past 5 years**, with about 1/3 of these incidents serious enough to warrant possible criminal allegations. *Source: The Don't Even Know Me: Understanding Anti-Gay Harassment and Violence in Schools: A Report On the Five Year Anti-Violence Research Project Of the Safe Schools Coalition of Washington State, 1999.*
- In Seattle, **34% of students identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual reported being the target of anti-gay harassment or violence at school** or on the way to or from school, compared to 6% of heterosexual students. *Source: The 1995 Seattle Teen Health Risk Survey. Over 8,400 Seattle high school students completed the survey.*
- In Michigan, **28% of school personnel surveyed determined their school environment emotionally unsafe for sexual minority youth**. *Source: 1997 survey of 300 superintendents, school counselors and psychologists in public and private schools in five Michigan counties, conducted by the Gay, Lesbian Straight Teacher's Network.*
- In a national survey, youth described being called lesbian or gay as the **most deeply upsetting** form of sexual harassment they experienced. *Source: American Association of University Women, 1993. A total of 1,632 field surveys were completed by public school students, grades 8-11, in 79 schools across the U.S.*

Exhibit 5.5—*continued*

They Are At Risk

- Studies on youth suicide consistently find that lesbian and gay youth are **2 - 6 times more likely to attempt suicide** than other youth and may account for 30% of all completed suicides among teens. *Source: Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1989.*
- Service providers estimate that **gay, lesbian and bisexual youth make up 20-40% of homeless youth** in urban areas. *Source: The National Network of Runaway and Youth Services. To Whom Do They Belong?: Runaway, Homeless and Other Youth in High-Risk Situations in the 1990's. Washington, D.C. The National Network, 1991.*
- In a study of 4,159 Massachusetts high school students, **46% who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual had attempted suicide in the past year** compared to 8.8% of their peers, and 23.5% required medical attention as a result of a suicide attempt compared to 3.3% of their peers. The same study found 18.4% of the gay, lesbian and bisexual students had been in a physical fight resulting in treatment by a doctor or nurse compared to 4% of their peers, and **22.2% skipped school in the past month because they felt unsafe en route to or at school**, compared to 4.2% of their peers. *Source: Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS), Massachusetts Department of Education, 1997.*

PFLAG makes schools safer in ways nobody else can. As families, our voices carry tremendous weight in schools. And because PFLAG is in over 440 communities in the nation, our work is localized, reaching even some of the smallest schools in rural America.

4.1.3.3. Calendar Listings

Calendar listings are brief announcements of upcoming activities in various types of community calendars or community bulletin boards. *Calendar listing* or *event listing* refers to a brief note about upcoming events and community activities.

When planning calendar listing, begin with a plan that first identifies and analyzes the key publics and then defines your objectives. Then write a brief announcement consistent with examples from the relevant publication or broadcast media. Finally, send the announcement to the proper person. On many newspapers, the city desk does not handle the community events listings. If you send your announcement there, it may end up in the trash. Instead, send it to the calendar editor, events coordinator, or perhaps the public service director.

4.2. Memoranda (Memos)

Memos are documents that pass along information inside an organization. The most basic memos are brief—a few paragraphs to a page long. Memos are used for the following:

Purpose

Inform about new developments.

Inform about upcoming events.

Example

Some important changes have been made to the company profit-sharing plan that you need to know about.

Next Tuesday is “Take Your Son or Daughter to Work Day,” and we want to encourage you to take part in that special day.

28 | Page

Confirm verbal decisions and agreements.

Provide program and activity progress reports.

As we discussed this morning, I will begin planning the June 10 news conference.

The annual meeting is one month away, so I thought I should update you on our progress in planning this event.

Every memo is written (1) to someone; (2) by someone else; (3) at some point in time, (4) about some subject. These are the four items that should be included in the standard memo heading:

Memorandum

To: Deborah Pearson
From: James Curry
Date: November 15, 2002
Subject: Annual Meeting Progress Report

There are variations of the heading. Some organizations begin the memo heading with the date or always include job titles. It's a good idea to include job titles when the sender and recipient are not well acquainted.

When writing memos, use proper spacing. Single space between sentences within a paragraph, and double space between paragraphs. Leave some white space between the last line of the heading and the first paragraph of the memo. Paragraphs may be indented, depending on the style your organization prefers. Regarding the content of memos:

- Clearly state the memo's purpose in the first sentence. Don't waste time on details that prevent the reader from quickly seeing your reason for writing, as the following paragraph does:

A few days ago, I called and left a voice mail message for you about a project I am working on. I need to speak with you and get some information that will help me write an article for the employee newsletter on the employee diversity training workshops.

A better opening paragraph gets right to the point with fewer words:

I would like to arrange an interview with you to talk about the upcoming employee diversity training workshops. The information will be used to write an employee newsletter article.

- Emphasize the most important points in the body of the memo. Write short sentences and paragraphs. Use "I," "you," and "we" to keep it direct and personal:

First, I would like to get a quote from you on the value of these workshops to employees and what the company hopes to achieve by running these workshops. I also need some additional facts:

- The days, times and locations of the workshops.
- The content and format of the workshops—what will employees learn and in what activities will they take part
- Measures you will use to evaluate the success of the workshops.

- In the closing, say what you will do next or what you want the receiver to do. Avoid using general statements such as, “I look forward to hearing from you.” Make your call-to-action specific:

I need this information by Friday, June 9. Please e-mail your responses to me by that date.
Thank you.

OR

I would like to meet or talk with you by phone for 20 to 30 minutes sometime during the week of June 5-9. I will call you this Friday, June 2, to arrange a convenient day and time for the interview.

There are times when a longer memo is justified. Many public relations professionals create *planning memos*, which present program plans in memo format to others within the organization. The same memo heading is used but the document runs several pages in length. Each program planning element is detailed, from the situation analysis to evaluation methods.

A short paragraph at the beginning of the memo introduces the content that follows, and a brief conclusion reinforces the strengths and benefits of the plan. Subheads are used to separate each section. Planning memos also make greater use of **numbered items**, **graphics**, and **bullet points** to make the content easy to read and certain items jump off the page. For example, use numbers when listing program goals, highlight strategies in **italics**, and list key tactics under each strategy with **bullets**.

4.3. Newsletters

What’s a newsletter? Dictionary.com defines it as: “periodically published work containing news and announcements on some subject, typically with a small circulation.” The Internet has a proliferation of newsletters and ezines—short for “electronic magazines.” *Newsletters* usually are distributed by email or an email attachment, while *ezines* reside on Websites. When a new edition of an ezine is available, a link to it often is distributed by email. A newsletter often is rated as the single most important benefit of membership in an organization. *Subscriber newsletters* operated as businesses carry valued information to people willing to pay substantially for it, and these newsletters often are monitored by the business press for trends and other news.

4.3.1. Criteria for Successful Newsletters

Several criteria affect the success of any newsletter:

- It must fill an unmet need (It must be able to do things for its audience other media can’t.).
- It must convey information in some unique way so people will pay attention to it.
- It must be distributed in a way that is efficient and regularly reaches its intended audience.
- There must be a person or a staff of people interested in it, skilled enough to produce it and with time committed solely to its production.
- It must be a serial publication (Vol. #, No. #) issued with enough frequency that its contents remain timely in the eyes of its readers.

Technical and Content Considerations

There is no best way to prepare a newsletter. The writing style may range from informal to formal, but it is always keenly focused on the interest of the group at hand. Some newsletters are simply prepared on a computer, printed, photocopied, folded and mailed. Others are elaborately designed and printed on fine-quality paper. Budget, of course, is a key factor in determining the appearance and method of reproduction.

The important point to remember is that the newsletter's content, not its appearance, counts most. If the content is perceived as important by readers, you have accomplished your purpose.

4.3.2. Formats of Newsletter

The best format for a specific printed newsletter is a curious blend resulting from content, budget and readers' convenience. If the intent is, as in most newsletters, to write tight, edit tighter and present information in almost-bulletin form, an 8.5-by-11-inch page size may be perfectly suitable. Readers who keep backfiles of the newsletter in binders or in cabinets like the convenience of an 8.5-by-11-inch sheet size. Copies of newsletters that routinely get routed from office to office within an organization also seem to work better in an 8.5-by-11-inch page size. If your newsletter routinely runs longer pieces, especially feature material, a larger page size—such as 11-by-17 inches or tabloid—may be more appropriate. If pictures and graphs are important parts of each issue, larger sheet sizes may be needed.

Format also requires that you weigh the relative merits of vertical versus horizontal layout of content. Small sheet sizes can accommodate either vertical or horizontal displays, if they are done skillfully. Nevertheless, horizontal displays of content are usually more attractive in larger sheet sizes. That apparently is a function of the more pleasing proportions produced by the vertical length of a large sheet size, such as 11-by-17 inches.

Unless your budget is generous, money may restrict your choice of formats as well as the extent to which you can afford to use visual materials and color. Four-color printing can hit your budget hard, but is very important if your distribution is large. Of course that drives down the unit cost. It also, as noted previously, influences the frequency of your newsletter and the number of pages per issue. Word processing programs like Word and WordPerfect provide templates that simplify and speed the production of newsletters. Some templates are part of the program installed on your computer; others are provided without charge online by the software company.

Although it is important to know about the criteria that can make a newsletter successful, it is equally important to know about the types and functions of newsletters.

4.3.3. Types and Functions of Newsletters

The main purpose of newsletters is to communicate regularly with members of a special public. Sharing information sustains the unity of those bound together only by a special interest.

4.3.3.1. Employee and Member Newsletters

Good managers know that the success of the company or institution rests on the cooperation and support of employees as much as on their own managerial skills. As an organization grows, however, it becomes increasingly difficult to communicate policy or other information on a personal basis. A newsletter may serve this purpose.

An organization's endurance depends on maintaining its membership base and attracting new members. Frequently a newsletter is a periodic reminder of the organization and invites or structures the member's participation in the organization's activities.

Though, the timeliness of newsletter information may suffer from the production and delivery process in both the employees and members' case. There's something to the term ***snail mail***. For employees, email systems may be a better delivery system for messages that need immediate attention, and members of organizations often turn to Web sites for news and updates.

Internal Communication – Newsletters nevertheless are an effective channel of internal communication. Their content is carefully selected, written and presented to convey a common experience and a feeling of belonging, and to promote identification and unity with the group.

Personal Touch – Newsletters are often expected to help humanize what may otherwise be viewed as an impersonal relationship. Because of this, a common thread of content runs through newsletters: a focus on accomplishments.

Employee newsletters often focus on work-related accomplishments. For example, an employee maybe given special recognition in the company's newsletter for having developed a new materials-handling system that saves the company thousands of dollars annually. The company is obviously better because of the employee's contribution, which is acknowledged among his or her peers in the newsletter. Such recognition also implies that others can get the same kind of treatment if they contribute beyond the normal call of duty.

4.3.3.2. *Special-Interest Subscriber Newsletters*

The term *special interest* describes group relationships bound by a common interest other than as an employee or a member. The purpose of these newsletters is **to communicate information about the special interest** that binds the group. Information is thus highly targeted and seldom presents anything not directly related to the interest of the group. Writing style is often informal and, depending on the field of interest, may involve jargon. For example, a newsletter for personal computer hackers may be filled with **computerese**. If you are really interested in communicating fully, though, you'll minimize the jargon and stay with simple English.

What's significant about special-interest subscriber newsletters is that the information has to be substantive enough that people feel they are getting value for their money. They are paying for information about lifestyles (traveling, health, economics); earning money or investing it; computers (new software and technology updates); hobbies (gardening, scuba diving); collecting (everything from antique glassware to baseball cards); or renovating old real estate (from houses to office buildings). Subscription newsletters offer a lifeline to important information for people concerned with these and other topics.

4.4. Brochures and handbooks

Brochure is a term most people are familiar with. The problem is, it doesn't mean the same thing to everyone. If you ask them to tell you what a brochure is, you'll get a rainbow of explanations. That's because the term can mean *booklets*, *fliers*, *circulars*, *leaflets*, *pamphlets* or *tracts*. The difference between a brochure and these other pieces is sometimes a judgment call, so here are some quick guidelines for you to consider.

When the term **brochure** is used in its narrow sense, it signifies a printed piece of six or more pages, published only once and distributed to special publics for a single purpose. Brochures aren't serial publications like newsletters.

A **booklet** is basically a piece of at least eight pages, stitched on the spine. It often is small enough to fit into a pocket or small purse. **Fliers** and **circulars** are usually single-sheet pieces printed on one side that may be mailed, often in bulk, or distributed directly, like those you may find stuck on your car's windshield in a parking lot.

A **leaflet** is similar but it is usually folded, although not stapled or trimmed. A **pamphlet** is also folded and usually has more pages. A **tract** is a pamphlet or booklet whose content promotes a political or religious point of view.

A *flier*, also called a handout, is a one-sheet printed form of collateral material. Like other communication tactics or tools used in public relations, a flier must appeal to a particular target audience, contain a key message, and attempt to achieve a specific objective. Some objectives might include increasing awareness about a service, educating a target audience about a program, or encouraging a key public to attend an event.

Often $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches in size, a flier must be succinct, have few words, and include type or graphics that appear in broad strokes. Since space is limited, uncomplicated graphics and clean typefaces are preferable.

They

are printed on one side of a sheet, have a short shelf life, and are not folded. Fliers, along with brochures, newsletters, and posters, are considered a form of direct media rather than mass media and are generally posted on bulletin boards, placed in information racks, and handed out interpersonally.

Often they are used as miniposters, which means that the message should carry at a distance of 10 feet. If they are placed on counters or inserted into the fold of a newsletter, the information does not need to carry over a distance. As a tool of persuasion, fliers should adhere to publication principles. They should attract attention, stimulate interest, create a desire to act, and contain claims that are supported by facts.

Relatively inexpensive to produce, fliers are timely and disposable. Many have a single purpose, such as to announce an event or inform a specific target audience about something of interest. Whatever the method of distribution, fliers must be able to attract attention in a cluttered environment and should adhere to the principles of layout and design. An effective design should include a layout with proper *balance*, in which elements are arranged either symmetrically or asymmetrically along an implied axis; *dominance*, or an attention-getting element that stands out by its size, tone, or shape; *unity*, a sense that the message is an integrated and cohesive whole; *proportion*, the spatial relationship of elements similar in nature; and *flow*, which promotes eye movement and direction.

What these pieces have in common is more important, including:

- Message statements are always singular.
- Their purposes are to persuade, inform and educate.
- They are published only once, but multiple printings of some are common, with or without updates.
- They must attract and hold the attention of their own publics.
- Because they aren't parts of other media, they are their own delivery systems.
- They must have clear writing and be visually attractive.

The creation of a brochure is a complex process that includes six basic steps:

1. Clearly define its purpose.
2. Develop an organizing concept for it.
3. Write the content.
4. Design the presentation of information, including format and the use of type, visuals, paper, space and color.
5. Produce the brochure, including the selection of a method of reproduction.
6. Distribute the brochure. This might include posting a digital version on your organization's public Internet site or a private intranet site.

4.4.1. Designing Brochures

The fourth step in creating a brochure is designing. It includes several major elements: *format*, *type*, *paper*, space and color. Each of these elements may be worthy of a complete book. What follows are selected

comments intended to give you a general sense of direction. They are not, and can't be, definitive in such limited space.

4.4.1.1. Format

First of all, a brochure format should complement the content and the method of distribution. Suppose the purpose of a new brochure you're assigned to write for a bank client is to promote the use of the bank's electronic (paperless) banking system. You learn that the brochure will be inserted with monthly statements to customers. The content of the brochure will not demand much space and the brochure must fit into statement envelopes. With those two pieces of information, you can begin to shape the message to a complementary format.

Because an 8.5-by-11-inch sheet of paper will fold to fit easily into a regular business envelope, you can begin with that size of paper. Now you must decide whether it will be done in a **flier format** (one wide column printed on one side) or in a folded-page format. Because the sheet must be folded to fit into the statement envelope, it makes sense to design the format as a six-page folder where each page measures 3.667-by-8.5 inches.

Consult Figure 18.2 and look at 2A and 2B. The first folding option, 2A, is called a **gatefold**. When folding back page one so you can see the second page, it is much like opening a swinging gate—thus the name. **Accordion fold** is the name applied to 2B because it folds and unfolds like the bellows of an accordion. Folder options 1A and 1B, called **four-page folds**, do not work well for this project because its page dimensions don't fit into the statement envelope. Folder options 3A, 3B and 3C are referred to as **eight-page folds**. Folder options 4A and 4B represent standard **12-page folds**. Folder options 5A and 5B represent **16-page folds**. Folder options 3, 4 and 5 usually are used with much larger paper stocks, like 17-by-22 inches.

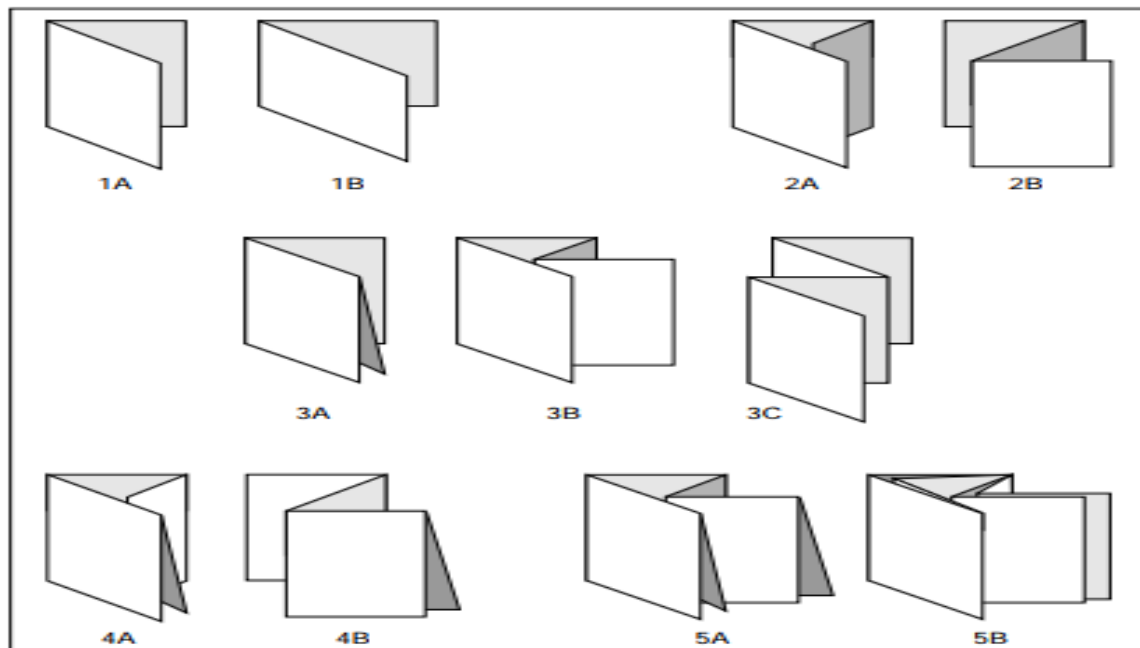


FIGURE 18.2

Brochure Folding Styles

These are the most common folder options used when producing brochures.

A different kind of project might call for something **other than a folder-type brochure**. For example, if you're doing a recruiting piece for your university, you may end up with a 36-page, 8.5-by-11-inch **booklet** in full color. If that's the case, you'll work with an 8.5-by-11-inch format and adjust the number of pages to those needed to display the content fully. The key thing to remember about these larger formats is that the

number of pages must always be in multiples of 4-, 8-, 12- or 16-page flats. A *flat* is the number of pages on one side of a large uncut sheet of paper stock. The use will depend on the press sizes available from your printer and the number of pages in the brochure. Look at Figure 18.3 for illustrations of the most common flats. Booklets like these usually are stapled along the spine, but some are pasted.

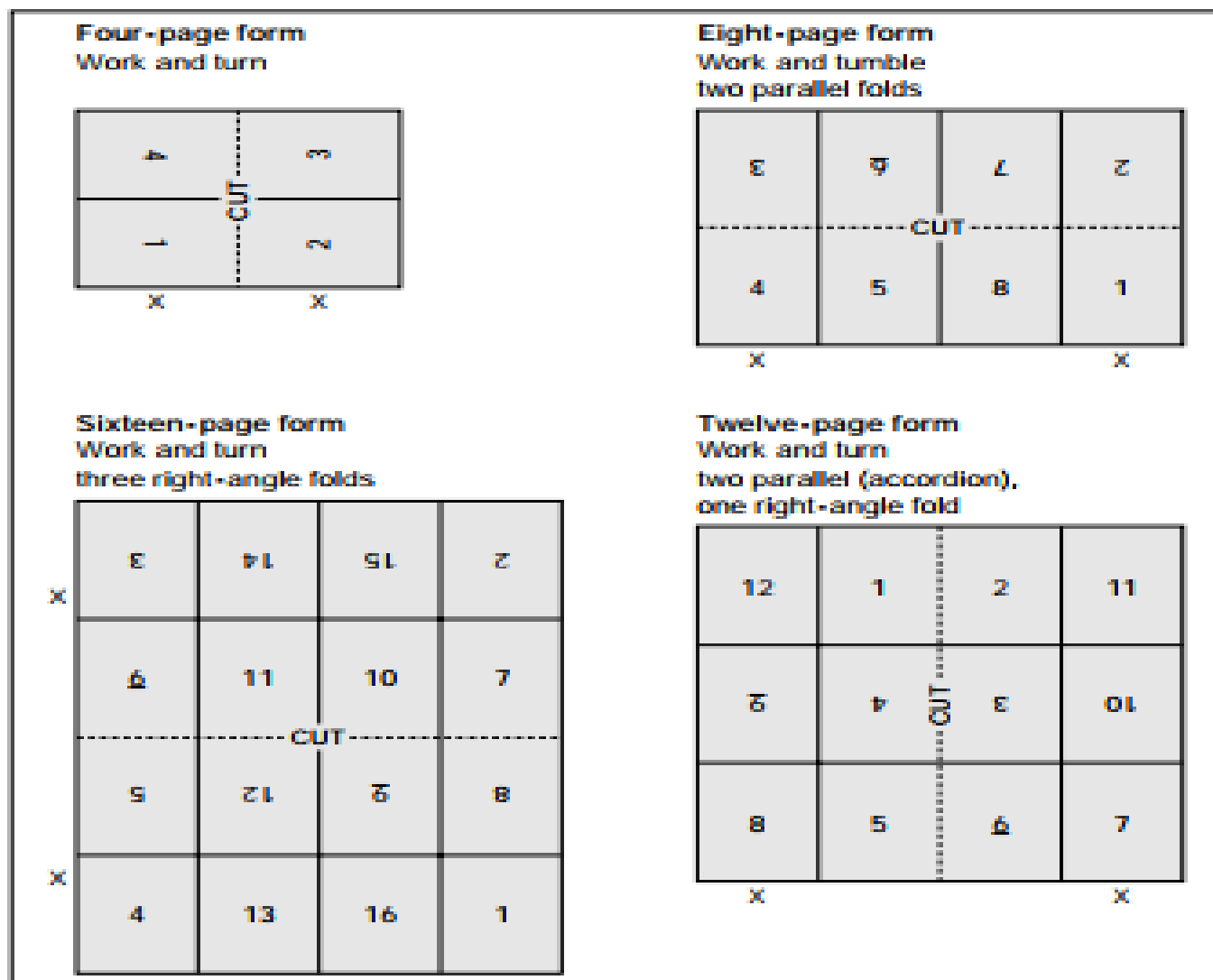


FIGURE 18.3

Most Common Page Flats for Large Paper Stock The actual size of a brochure is determined by its content. Selection of a printing flat is based on the number of pages in a brochure and the size of the printing press on which it will be reproduced. Flats are always done in multiples of 4, 8, 12 or 16 pages.

4.5. Magazines and Annual reports

Magazines are published quarterly or monthly, but annual reports, as the name indicates, are published once a year and report on the previous year. The magazines may be for internal publics primarily or external publics primarily and occasionally for a mix. Organizations may publish a variety of magazines, but each should have a clear and distinct purpose that sets it apart from the others. Corporate annual reports are published mainly for shareholders but are widely distributed to financial analysts, brokers, bankers,

prospective employees and many other publics. Nonprofit organizations like the Ford Foundation publish annual reports for contributors and numerous other publics.

4.5.1. Magazines

Even though the contents of Internet and intranet sites have replaced printed publications in many organizations, magazines still can be powerful public relations tools, whether they're published in digital or printed form. They allow *greater depth of treatment* than most other media, permit *more vivid and attractive display* and enable writers to compose messages for *specific target publics*. Printed magazines have a longer life, and they have more “pass-along” readership.

Sometimes the public is internal—when a magazine is published for the employees of an organization, for example. Sometimes it is external, like that of *Frontiers*, published by BP plc, which goes to selected industry, media and community leaders. By one estimate, more than 10,000 public relations magazines are published in the USA. Many such magazines now are published only on Web sites to increase their availability and eliminate printing and distribution costs.

The success of these publications is determined in part by *format, illustrations, design, editing* and *proper distribution*. But the most important element of any magazine is the *writing*— its *quality*, its *relevance* and its *appropriateness* for the target readers. The most beautifully designed, illustrated and printed magazine in the world cannot sustain success without well-written articles, because it won't communicate much.

Magazines are good communication tools for organizations. But are they as good as they can be? No. Who can

make them better? Writers. Who are the writers? You. At least, you expect to be. So it is you— not “them”— who will improve company magazines and other publications.

Form versus Substance: That's not a small challenge, because it seems that everyone interested in the organization is *more concerned with the substance of your writing* than with your writing skills. That's no license to lessen your attention to proper grammar, syntax and other technical matters. Rather, it is an indication of the trap that some writers fall into: They substitute form for substance. What you must strive for both good *form* and *substance*.

Good substance is defined as what interests readers. There is growing uneasiness among employees about how they relate to their organizations. Many don't have the depth of personal identification with or loyalty to their organizations that was characteristic some years ago. They sense they are interchangeable pieces in a chess game being played by management. They feel frozen out of decisions about which moves to make and why. If they get jumped, they are summarily removed from the board.

As a writer, you can help. But you can do this only if you listen carefully to your readers and are sensitive to their information needs. When you identify those needs, meet them. Just choosing the right word can make the difference in whether or not you convey your meaning and—if you do—what the emotional reaction might be. In the ORC report, the findings show that employee-effective words satisfy three criteria:

1. **Familiarity:** Employees know the word well enough to define it.
2. **Understandability:** In workers' dictionaries, *capitalism* may be understood differently.
3. **Emotional impact:** Beyond familiarity and understanding, a word might trigger a different emotional reaction from employees than from management.

A current example might be the word *downsizing*, which management might see as positive (that is, becoming more efficient), but employees probably see as negative (that is, firing a lot of people). The H&K

study cited identifies 30 words and 25 phrases that show how inflated language used by management during a steel strike made matters worse. For instance, instead of the word *accrue*, simpler words like *pile up* or *collect* would have been better understood. Similarly, the phrase *exclusive function* should have been translated into *sole right*. Both study results came from talking to people to find out what worked for them. Such consultation is important if the publication is to be useful.

Some people think that magazines and other employee publications are perhaps expected to carry too much of the communication load for organizations. That may be true. But it is certainly true that employees place more value on information they get from personal sources than from impersonal ones. You can't change a magazine or other publication from its impersonal form, but that's no reason for you as a writer to treat your readers impersonally. Talk to them. Listen to them. See things through their eyes. Be them. Then write to them. Focus on the substantive information they want and need. If you do these things well, maybe you can make your magazine a lot better.

4.5.2. Functions of Magazines

6.5.2.1. Employee Publications

Most organizations have a publication of some sort for employees. Often the employee publication is a full-fledged magazine; sometimes it looks more like a newspaper or newsletter. But whatever the format, the writing in employee publications should follow most closely the style of magazine articles. Why? Because even if an employee publication looks like a newspaper or a newsletter, it rarely functions as a medium for hard news.

Employee publications can help generate support among employees for corporate goals and objectives. Articles can build employee morale and enhance job satisfaction, thus boosting productivity. Publications can create a broader understanding among employees of the problems a company faces.

You must orient the writing to the reader. Explain the significance of events from the point of view of the employee—not from the point of view of the board of directors. In other words, don't relate verbatim a new company policy as handed down from on high. Explain the policy and tell what it means to the reader. But explain it in an interesting way: Find a good angle, write a good lead and make the article as human and dramatic as possible.

4.5.2.2. Association Publications

Members feel very involved in their associations and look forward to receiving the publication that their membership fees entitle them to. Even the government of the USA has associations with membership fees and publications such as the *Smithsonian* from the Smithsonian Institution.

Other well-known associations that have magazines include the National Geographic Society, the American Automobile Association (AAA), the National Wildlife Federation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and various social groups such as college sororities and fraternities. The American Association of Retired Persons publishes *AARP The Magazine*, which has the largest circulation of all USA magazines, more than 22 million—double *Reader's Digest's* 10 million. Some of the publications carry advertising from external sources and others have only house ads or no advertising at all.

4.5.2.3. Trade and Industry Publications

Most trade and industry publications are of little interest to anyone outside a particular area of business. But for people in the business, these magazines are a major source of information. You can find the *Cattleman* in most cattle raisers' homes or offices and the *Grocer* in most food store owners' and managers' offices.

Although most of these trade and industry publications are the product of associations, they differ somewhat from the lifestyle or interest associations that produce such publications as *National Geographic*. If anything, though, their readers are even more dedicated and more enthusiastic. If you go to work for a trade or industry publication, you'll find that the smallest mistake will result in countless phone calls, faxes and letters to the editor.

4.5.2.4. Corporate Publications for the Public

More companies are producing magazines about their product line, offering advice and services. Health maintenance organizations (HMOs) publish magazines about their services. Manufacturers like Sony are likely to have more than one publication. Sony publishes *Sony Style* and *Sony Electronics*.

Although these are published for customer convenience and information, their purpose is to establish brand loyalty.⁴ Slick and expensive, these publications do have subscriptions, but the subscriber costs are generally low, intended to cover marketing and distribution costs. Subscribers also benefit from coupons in the publications and special prices to subscribers.

Another type of corporate magazine sells image. One of the most impressive magazines of this type is *Saudi Aramco World*, published by Aramco Services Company. The oil company uses its magazine to share information about the history, art and culture of the Middle East. There is no charge for this publication, which goes to a limited audience of appreciative readers. Another, a slick four-color magazine, *food & family*, is published by Kraft Foods North America, Inc. and includes feature articles, full-page ads and recipes touting its products while building its image.

Promoting an image is, of course, a major role for many organizational magazines. But there's another type of publication that also contributes significantly to an organization's image—the annual report.

4.5.2. Annual Reports

First, you need to know that a corporation whose stock is publicly traded is required to prepare not one but *two* annual reports. One is the SEC Form 10-K annual report to the Commission. The other is the annual report to the company's shareholders.

The SEC Form 10-K is prepared in a format decreed by the SEC that is plain—no graphics, no photos, no color, just black type on white paper. Because it is a legal document, it usually is prepared by accountants and attorneys, and it must be transmitted electronically to the SEC. On the other hand, the annual report to shareholders is a principal public relations responsibility and is printed on paper.

Annual reports are publications required of publicly held companies as a way of documenting fiscal soundness and chronicling the year's events. Whether public, private or nonprofit, many annual reports seem to have one thing in common—*obscure language*.

Here's one sentence from a real report—a good example of how *not* to write:

“Net Profits from the sale or disposition of a Partnership property are allocated: first, prior to giving effect to any distributions of Sale Proceeds from the transaction, to the General Partner and the Limited Partners with negative balances in their capital accounts pro rata in proportion to such respective negative balances, to the extent of the total of such negative balances; second, to the General Partner, in an amount necessary to make the balance in its capital account equal to the amount of Sale Proceeds to be distributed to the General Partner with respect to the sale or disposition of such property and third, the balance, if any, to the Limited Partners.”

Some obscurity may come from meeting regulatory requirements of publicly held companies, but that does not justify it in the annual reports of private and nonprofit organizations. Indeed, the SEC itself encourages

simple writing. It publishes *A Plain English Handbook — How to Create Clear SEC Disclosure Documents*. The handbook is available free on the SECWeb site, <http://www.sec.gov>. It contains details on the following writing tips:

- Use the active voice with strong verbs.
- Don't ban the passive voice; use it sparingly.
- Try personal pronouns.
- Omit superfluous words.
- Write in the "positive."
- Use short sentences.
- Replace jargon and legalese with short, common words.
- Keep the subject, verb and object close together.

4.5.3. Speeches

A public relations, or PR speech, announces important developments such as new products, company reorganizations, new staff, new offices, expansion and community events the company sponsors or participates in. The speech may also be necessary to respond to a negative event that affects the company. Keep in mind that speech is spoken at about 80 to 150 words per minute, so a 10-minute speech would be from 800 to 1,500 words depending on how fast or slow you speak.

4.5.3.1. Techniques of Speech Writing

Audience

Determine who the audience/s is/are. For example, a speech that outlines the company's financial performance addressed to the employees of the company right before a layoff is different than a speech that announces a strategic joint venture that is directed toward newspaper editors and reporters. Another factor to consider is whether the speech is given live and in person to the audience, if it's broadcast through television or radio, or presented through a webcast.

Objectives

Answer the question of why you're giving the speech before you start writing. Focus on the objective of the speech. Cover only one or two main points in the speech. More than that can be confusing to the audience. Determine what you want the audience to do when you end the speech. Offer a strong call to action in the conclusion.

Headline

A catchy headline grabs the attendees' attention just like it does in a written press release. For example, rather than announcing your business has a new product that saves time, the headline could be: What would you do with an extra 30 minutes each and every day? The subtitle could be: That's how much time you'll save with our new gizmo. Scan newspaper headlines to get ideas for the headline and subtitle.

Points

A press release covers the five Ws of who, what, when, why and where concerning the subject of the release in the first paragraph. A PR speech should do the same. Each subsequent paragraph then elaborates on each of the five Ws. The most important facts are covered first with the least important toward the end of the speech. Another way to look at a PR speech is the first paragraph tells the audience what you're going to tell them in summary form. The middle of the speech goes into the details. The end of the speech tells the audience what you've told them and has the call to action.

Format

Since the speech is oral you might not think the font of the text is important. However, you need to be able to see the speech without holding it up to read from it or losing your place. Use a font that is big enough for you to see when you place the speech on the podium. If you're using a laptop to display a computerized slide show presentation during the speech, color code the paper so you know when to change the screen. Teleprompters placed on either side of the podium allow you to make eye contact with the audience when you turn from one teleprompter to the other. The print on the teleprompter has to be big enough for you to see from the podium. Don't depend only on the prompter. Have a copy of your speech with you in case the teleprompter malfunctions.

Jokes and Humor

When humor works it really sets the mood for the speech, engages the audiences and gets their attention. When it doesn't, the speech is off to a slow start. Jokes can backfire, resulting in the audience being puzzled, confused or even irritated. Before giving the speech, practice telling the jokes to colleagues to get their reaction.

Chapter Five

5. Ethics in Public Relations

Communication ethics is the notion that are governed by their morals which in turn affects **communication**. Generally speaking **communication ethics** deals with the moral good present in any form of human **communication**. This includes interpersonal **communication**, mass mediated **communication**, and digital **communication**.

What does it take to be successful public relations professional?

The traits and skills you will need to be successful in the field of public relations go beyond “liking people.” In fact, “liking people” is not a skill or trait that will land you a job. Saying you “like people” as a qualification for a public relations job is a red flag for most interviewers. After all, liking and working well with people are skills needed in most jobs. In general, no matter which public relations specialty you consider, public relations practitioners and executives agree that the following personal traits, skills and basic knowledge are “musts” for successful practitioners:

Personal traits:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • Tenacity/ perseverance • Curiosity • Ability to handle criticism • Sense of humor • Drive to succeed • Pragmatic • Empathic • Ability to see future opportunities • Gregarious/sociable • A compromising spirit • Resourcefulness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong work ethic • Cultural sensitivity • Confident • Dependable • Accountable • Optimistic • Flexible • Energetic • Willingness to learn • Enthusiasm • Self-starter • Creativity |
|--|--|

Learned skills:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impeccable/flawless communication skills • Excellent interpersonal skills • Finely honed listening skills • Scrupulous/ thorough attention to detail • Ability to multi-task • News junky • Good negotiator • Strategist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective networker • Organizational skills • Ability to think on your feet • Social and cultural savvy • Ability to connect and communicate with all types of audiences • Ease in talking to strangers • Ability to analyze and solve problems • Stickler for timely, thorough follow-up |
|---|--|

Knowledge:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding news value • A liberal arts understanding of the world • Persuasion concepts and tactics • Public relations and communications theories • Uses of research and forecasting • Multicultural and global issues • Management theories and approaches • Organizational behavior and development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building strategies • Societal and cultural trends • Codes of ethics • Legal and regulatory requirements and constraints • Marketing and finance • Media roles and information needs • Understanding of journalists and their jobs • Planning models and their application |
|--|--|

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