# Unit -14 : PUBLIC RELATIONS AS MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

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## 14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand what makes Public Relations a Management Function
- know what roles do Public Relations Managers and Practitioners Playing in an organisation

## 14.2 INTRODUCTION

Public Relations emerged as one of the strongest weapons of modern world to deal with increasingly complex life situations and extremely competitive markets. So, in the new millennium, Public Relations turned out to be a management tool for 'Reputation management', 'Image management' and 'Crisis management' of any kind, involving institutions, organisations, industries, personalities etc.

Unlike advertising, PR has always been about more transparency,

fact based and more mutually beneficial.Hence, PR managers, using PR,are supposed to streamline communication among the internal publics and with the external publics and creating trustworthiness for image building and safeguarding reputation, making an important part of management function.

## 14.3 IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN MANAGEMENT

Public Relations is a very crucial part of Management.In fact, it can be considered a powerful tool for smooth management of any organization.

- Public Relations

Edward L Barneys , the father of modern Public Relations, defines the profession as, “Public Relations is an attempt by information, persuasion and adjustments, to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or situation.”

While, the Public Relations Society of America calls PR ‘a strategic communication process’ the British Council of Public Relations calls PR, ‘a deliberate, planned and sustained effort’.

In whatever way you define PR, it aims for mutually beneficial understanding and relation between an organization and its publics.

- Management

Management is as much the administration of an organization or business or government body, as it is the process of dealing with or controlling people and situations. The art of management involves setting the strategy of an organization and coordinating the efforts of its employees to accomplish its objectives through the application of available resources, such as financial, natural, technological and human resources.

The father of scientific management theory, Henry Foyal (A French Engineer), stated a few principles of good management, which definitely need to be kept in mind by the Public relation professionals,who are responsible for planning and executing programmes, to establish and

maintain company image and relations within and outside the organization. PR professionals are the managers of good public relations;they are managers in crisis, managers in dealing with media, managers in executing effective corporate social responsibility activities, and managers for the overall smooth functioning of the organization.

Now, if we accept Public Relations as management, a few of HenryFoyal's, important management principles can be clearly seen being part of PR activities.

Like:

- Authority and responsibility
- Proper Division of Work
- Discipline
- Unity of Direction
- Subordination of individual interest to give priority to larger interest of the organization and its publics.
- Proper Heirarchy
- Equity

  Etc.

When applied by PR professionals, the above mentioned principles of management can be used to manage situations and activities,making these, useful tools for planning, process management, decision making, coordination and control.

If we closely look into the present professional scenario across the globe, one of the most important areas of PR in contemporary times is effective Corporate Communications. It is a set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating a favourable point of view among stake holders, of a company. It aims at presenting the company as a responsible corporate citizen.

In a more precise way, we can say that Corporate Communication is a combination of PR tools and Marketing tools, making it a management tool and function for good management. The corporate credibility is maintained through proper planning and sticking to an effective strategy. Proper corporate communication promotes the company profile, mobilises internal and external

support and attracts international collaboration for organisations.

Hence, in Corporate Communication, PR becomes an essential management function. But it has to be effectively used in evaluation of public attitudes and opinions and formulation and implementation of a company's procedures and policy regarding communication with its internal and external publics.

### 14.3.1 Role of PR department in an organization:

The PR team Involves in communication of all kinds for;

- ***Management of Employee and Managerial team Relations.***

The PR team will work closely with the personnel department and the top brass to maintain good relations between the two

- ***Management of Media Relations***

The PR team deals with the media of all kinds and tries to maintain a good image with them which in turn helps maintain a positive image among the publics and stakeholders. The team should have regular distribution of press releases to the media regarding any positive development in the establishment, should well manage media tours and press conferences whenever required for promotion of products, ideas and image enhancement. But, a good PR manager knows that, when necessary, a company has to give the correct information to the media even if it is negative to the company's image, especially in situations involving Crisis management

- ***Keep pace with technology for better image building***

The team also has to maintain the organisation's image on the social media and keep up with the advancements in the digital media to have interactive and participative communication at times with its publics inviting feedback and participation. The PR team can sometimes create a forum for public debate. This helps the PR manager to learn the desires and interests of clients and based on

that practice an effective management of company functioning and production can be chalked out.

- ***Managing relations with the community***

The PR managers need to keep in touch with the community residing in close vicinity of an industry, a corporate establishment or an institution, and keep constant tab on whether the functioning of the organization is in any way affecting the well-being of the community. Sometimes, the PR team has to serve as the advocate of the publics, not only internal, but also for public outside an organization. Sometimes the PR manager needs to question a company's decisions on how it will benefit community. The PR managers need to come up with effective CSR plans to help the community develop well, and in return maintain goodwill of the public for the company.

- ***Managing good relations with Government bodies***

The Government functionaries need to be kept in good humour in order to function smoothly and achieve business goals. The government policies can have effect on an organisation's functioning, for which the PR team has to be aware of what the Government expects and has to frequently familiarize the state functionaries on their progress and plans, and proper reasoning has to be worked out by the PR team when a new project has to be given a green signal by the Government.

Corporations and organisations have to use good PR management to reach out to legislators or politicians to seek favourable tax, regulatory and other treatment. They also need to portray themselves as enlightened employers supporting human resource. Here the most important factor for successful dealing is maintaining of transparency.

- ***Website management***

The PR managers have to look into what is being updated in the company website and how it is affecting the opinion of the stake holders, and image of the company. They must work towards incorporating information on website which enhances the image of the company and reaches out to majority of people to inform them about the organisations plans and achievements.

- ***Managing the timely and quality based publication of all literature concerning the organization, including Annual report and Journals.***

A good quality publication with equal contribution of majority of the employees and departments help maintain good internal relations. House journals, or in house magazines with contribution from talented employees brings a sense of belonging among them. Highlights their literary skills, and also involves contribution from family members if something remarkable is given.

The team also has to manage all departments for a balanced annual report involving every ones' contribution. The published literature has to be managed in a way that it also educates the public on the various aspects and vision of the organisation.

The PR team also has to manage good internal public communication with the help of circulars, newsletters, posters and briefing on notice boards etc. to maintain transparency within the organization. They also have to facilitate two way communication among authority and employees through in-house publication.

- ***Crisis management***

The PR manager is the face of an organization at the time of any crisis it gets into. It becomes an utmost necessity for the PR manager and the team to maintain credibility and ethics at the time of any crisis and have enough tactfulness to drive the organization out of any crisis without causing a long term damage to its image. A crisis

could be of any kind. It could be with the external public, in which case the media needs to be managed well, the government functionaries need to be taken into confidence and the community has to be positioned in place where the outcome of the crisis management benefits them as much as it does the organization. Here, the PR manager has to activate the company's social conscience and foster the goodwill of those affected by the crisis. This in turn will also help earn goodwill of the internal publics.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

Q. 1. Who is the father of modern Public Relation?

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Q. 2. What do you mean by corporate communications?

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## 14.4 PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A TOOL OF MANAGEMENT

With increasing competition in the market, not just the corporate sector, or the Public sector units, but also educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, even celebrities and political figures take the service of PR professionals for image building and business enhancement. PR is used not just for better publicity and networking but also for better marketing. The PR managers can balance a proper networking of public, media and the government bodies, and many of them also have expertise in enhancing international business relations.

Public relations managers plan and direct the creation of material that will maintain or enhance the public image of their employer or client.

Some involve in fundraising, coordinate campaigns that also bring in donations from organizations. They meet face-to-face with highly important donors and also apply for grants.

Duties of Public relations managers, apart from writing of suitable material for media and publics, or designating an appropriate spokesperson or information source for media inquiries,can also include identifying main client groups and audiences and determining the best way to reach them. They help clients communicate effectively with the public and develop their organization's or client's corporate image and identity, assist and inform an organization's executives and spokespeople, devise advertising and promote programs, assign, supervise, and review the activities of the staff.

The PR managers assign, supervise, and review the activities of staff, sponsor corporate events to help maintain and improve the image of their organization or client.Public relations managers also observe social, economic, and political trends that might ultimately affect their organization, and they recommend ways to enhance the firm's image based on those trends.

They also work with advertising, promotions, and marketing managers to ensure that advertising campaigns are compatible with the image the company or client is trying to portray. For example, if a firm decides to emphasize its appeal to a certain group, such as young people, the public relations manager needs to make sure that current advertisements are well received by that group.

All these activities makes PR an important tool for management.

### 14.4.1 Traits in PR Managers:

Aristotle said, "Man is a social animal."

Every person or institution or organization is interdependent on each other in present scenario, for proper functioning and better productivity. This interrelation is maintained by PR professionals by proper management of PR traits in them.

Important traits PR managers need to have:

- Should be a person with good communication skills.
- Should have proper managerial skills like foreseeing situations, patience, and presence of mind.
- Ability to make quick decisions.
- Proficient in writing skills
- Have Creativity and innovation
- Have clarity and completeness of ideas
- Should be a great motivator (Good motivation nurtures employee relations)
- Should be a good listener and an impressive speaker. (Good Public relations is a two way process)
- Should have knack for technology (Today communication with larger masses is possible only when one keeps up with technology)
- Tactful in all situations
- Ethical even when under pressure or in crisis. There can be flaws in the kind of information given out by an organization to its publics. There is possibility of different ethical aspects to the content, timing of message and the medium used. It is the duty of a PR manager to maintain truth and accuracy, and avoid contradictory statements to the concerned public, for a long term gain of the organization.
- Should be able to attend public and corporate events on a regular basis is order to build good networking and maintain good will.

### 14.4.2 PR Strategies

- Using Integrity and fairness as criteria for all business decisions
- Maintaining an emphasis on quality of products or services
- Openly sharing truthful information with all publics.
- Actively seeking input from publics and being responsive to their concerns
- Renewing a commitment to local communities
- Creating forums to encourage dialogue with constituencies.

### 14.4.3 Technology: The latest and most essential tool for management by a PR manager:

As mentioned earlier also in the chapter, PR managers are today well aware of the fact that digital technology is an inseparable part of PR activities, and it is used in a practically different way than ever before. Like we can say for instance, cellphones are no longer just devices we use to talk to one another. They are also used for online shopping, learning and getting the most up to date news from around the world etc.

As digital technology has evolved, the methods to measure effective online public relations effectiveness has also improved. The Public Relations Society of America, which has been developing PR strategies since 1947, identified five steps to measure online public relations effectiveness.

1. Engagement: Measure the number of people who are engaged with an item (social shares, likes and comments).
2. Impressions: Measure the number of people who may have viewed an item.
3. Items: Measure any content (blog posts, articles, etc.) that originally appeared as digital media.
4. Mentions: Measure how many online items mention the brand, organization, or product.
5. Reach: Measure how far the PR campaign managed to penetrate, overall and in terms of a particular audience.



## 14.5 LET US SUM UP

- Public Relations emerged as one of the strongest weapons of modern world to deal with increasingly complex life situations and extremely competitive markets. So, in the new millennium, Public Relations turned out to be a management tool.

- Edward L Barneys , the father of modern Public Relations, defines the profession as, “Public Relations is an attempt by information, persuasion and adjustments, to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or situation.”
- Unlike advertising, PR has always been about more transparency, fact based and more mutually beneficial.
- Management is as much the administration of an organization or business or government body, as it is the process of dealing with or controlling people and situations.
- Few of Henry Foyal’s, important management principles can be clearly seen being part of PR activities, like:
  - Authority and responsibility
  - Proper Division of Work
  - Discipline
  - Unity of Direction
  - Subordination of individual interest to give priority to larger interest of the organization and its publics.
  - Proper Heirarchy
  - Equity
- With increasing competition in the market, not just the corporate sector, or the Public sector units, but also educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, even celebrities and political figures take the service of PR professionals for image building and business enhancement. PR is used not just for better publicity and networking but also for better marketing.
- Public relations managers also observe social, economic, and political trends that might ultimately affect their organization, and they recommend ways to enhance the firm’s image based on those trends. They also work with advertising, promotions, and marketing managers to ensure that advertising campaigns are compatible with the image the company or client is trying to create.

- In present times, one of the most important domains of PR is effective Corporate Communications. It is a set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating a favourable point of view among stake holders, of a company. It aims at presenting the company as a responsible corporate citizen. In a more precise way, we can say that Corporate Communication is a combination of PR tools and Marketing tools
- Role of PR department in an organization can be summerised in the following way
  - Management of Employee and Managerial team Relations.
  - Management of Media Relations
  - Keep pace with technology for better image building
  - Managing relations with the community
  - Managing good relations with Government bodies
  - Website management
  - Managing the timely and quality based publication of all literature concerning the organization, including Annual report and Journals
  - Crisis management.
- Five steps to measure online public relations effectiveness.
  - Engagement: Measures the number of people who engaged with an item (social shares, likes and comments).
  - Impressions: Measures the number of people who may have viewed an item.
  - Items: Measures any content (blog posts, articles, etc.) that originally appeared as digital media.
  - Mentions: Measures how many online items mention the brand, organization, or product.
  - Reach: Measures how far the PR campaign managed to penetrate. overall and in terms of a particular audience



## 14.6 FURTHER READING

1. Banik G.C. (2002); Effective Public Relations in Public and Private Sectors, Mumbai : Jaico Publishing
2. Bahl Sushil (1994); Making PR Work, New Delhi :Wheeler Publishing
3. Fernandez Joseph (2004); Corporate Communications:A 21st Century Primer, New Delhi : Response books
4. Mark Heinz W, V.C, Harold K. (2008); Management: A Global Entrepreneurship Perspective, New Delhi : Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company



## 14.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q. No 1 :** Edwards L Barneys.

**Ans to Q. No 2 :** Corporate communication is a combination of PR tools and marketing tools making it a management tool and function for good management.



## 14.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very Short Questions:**

Q. 1. What is the importance of Public Relations in management function?

Q. 2. Why is Public Relations considered an important management tool?

Q.3. Why good PR management is called a two way process? What important traits should a PR manager have to prove for the above saying to be true?

**B. Short Questions** (Answer each question in about 150 words):

Q. 1. Mention five steps to assess effectiveness of PR in online media.

Q. 2. Define Public Relations. What do you understand by management?

Q. 3. Describe five important traits to be maintained by a PR manager.

Q. 4. Mention any five principles of management as stated by Henry Foyal.

**C. Long Questions** (Answer each question in about 300-500 words):

Q. 1. How managing relations with community can be considered a good PR management function?

Q. 2. Why ethics and transparency remain two inseparable aspects of Good PR management?

Q. 3. How does good media management prove the efficiency of a PR manager?

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