

# Public relations departments and firms

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Name: Instructor: Course: Date: Public relations departments and firms

Public relations, as viewed in the past, were confined within the mandate of communication with the press. That communication was mostly one-way, and its main purpose was to disseminate information. The department's role and function was restricted to merely being a mouthpiece of the organization especially when the organization needs to quell any negative perception in its publics.

The transition was made from a press agent to a managerial role. The modern function has evolved to ensure a two-way communication channel is maintained. The modern public relations departments focus on fostering goodwill with its publics.

Its functions may overlap with other departments such as marketing but integrating the activities of the various departments serves to achieve the organization's goals. The channels through which the public relations department has to use will significantly affect the efficiency of the department. The use of the information and advice given by the department will either hinder or promote the department's activities. The key activities of public relations are to create publicity of the company's products or services; to create and maintain positive media relations; to foster goodwill between the company and its publics; to maintain communication with representative governments and lastly to maintain a good relationship with its employees.

The four job levels of a public relations department include research into the field the organization is in; acting on the information acquired from the research; communicating the information to relevant departments, or even

dissemination of information to the publics. The final role is the evaluation of the results obtained with respect to the set objectives. Line functions are those that are concerned with the attainment of the company's objectives. They directly affect the organization's bottom line and operating revenue.

Staff functions offer support to line functions and their activities include investigation, research and advisory roles. Public relations fall in the staff functions category since the results of their functions serve to enhance the company's visibility to its publics but do not directly affect the company's profitability. The public relations department is in constant communication with the organization's publics. It possesses current information that the other departments may lack. Hence, its role as a compulsory advisor to the organization is suitable and is in line with the department's functions. This role would not be adequately filled by any other department.

Its advice is valuable to the organization and therefore, compulsory that the public relations department advise the organization on matters relating to their publics. The difference between the vice-president and the director is the span of responsibility that each has. The vice-president is in charge of more staff, and his department is in charge of the public relations of a much bigger firm, which comes with its own challenges. Considering that the functions of the public relations department and other departments overlap, friction may occur as far as execution of duties is concerned.

Similar duties between the marketing and public relations departments in terms of marketing strategies may be a source of the conflicts, such as the use of publicity verses advertising to promote products. The overlap of

communication responsibilities between the public relations and human resource departments may arise in friction. A clear separation of duties may remedy these impending conflicts. Human resources, by virtue of dealing with the human capital in the organization, should have the sole responsibility of handling all affairs related to the employees. Despite the fact that public relations deals with communication, this should be restricted to the publics and perhaps with the departments.

An overlap of function may occur if the margins are not clearly drawn. This also unifies the department responsible for the employees. The seven services that a public relations officer may offer are: research and information provision; promotion of products or services; publicity of the client; management of the client's reputation; management of the public's impression of the client; propagation of propaganda, and the fostering of goodwill in the client's publics.