

What is public relations good for? assignment

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What is Public Relations Good For? There are many people who think they know what public relations is, but for the most part they don't understand the importance that public relations offer. Public relations the key to every organization, without it they couldn't function. Most definitions of public relations contain two concepts, communication and management. Public relations is the way in which organizations communicate to their public. Organizations use public relations specialist to gain the trust and approval of the public.

Public relations doesn't exactly have a universal definition, however, the Public Relations News has described public relations as "... the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance" (Hunt 5-6). What this means is that public relations is not meant for the lower levels of an organization, it should be handled by the upper management where company policies and ideas are developed and conducted.

It also means that public relations cannot be successful if it is based on guesses and wishful thinking. Public relations rely on up to date research about what the public interests and needs are. The emphasis on the public's interests is what differentiates public relations from advertising or propaganda. Probably the most important part of the definition is the "action to earn public understanding and acceptance." The main idea of public relations is based on the concept of gaining the understanding and acceptance of the public.

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In order to be successful in this field you have to earn the trust of the audience (Bronzan, 4-5). The history of public relations dates back as far as the exchange of ideas, plans, or products. Although the term “ public opinion” wasn’t actually created until the eighteenth century, the acknowledgement of its existence and importance extends as far back as the early Greek philosophers. Everyone from Julius Caesar to the Roman Catholic Church has used public opinion to use propaganda to their advantage.

Public relations in American history reaches back to the founding founders. Leaders of the Revolutionary War such as Samuel Adams, Thomas Paine, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin recognized the power and influence that propaganda had and used public relations support their cause. Some of the methods these men used include banners, posters, and slogans. A famous example of public relations in action was the Boston Tea Party. As the 18th century moved into the 19th century, it became clear that public relations was a necessity in business and politics.

As the nation began to rebuild after the Civil War, President Andrew Jackson acquired the services of Amos Kendall to assist him. The President lacked efficient communication skills, so with Kendall’s help with newspaper articles, speeches, and news releases, Jackson’s public opinion soared. Kendall was also able to manipulate the press, stage events, organize political rallies and control political party activities. Kendall’s ideas help lead to the creation of the public relations field (Bronzan 8). In 1914 Ivey Lee, the father of public relations, was hired as the personal advisor of John D.

Rockefeller, Jr. At the time the Rockefellers' positive image was non-existent because of the lack of concern towards public welfare, so Lee was hired to change that. To eliminate the persistent public bitterness toward his employer, Lee developed what became known as the press release. Using press releases and carefully staged media events, Lee was able to turn the Rockefellers' image into a positive one. Public relations continued to grow and be recognized as a necessity during the 20th century. Following World War I, another public relations pioneer came to the lime light of the field.

Edward Bernays wrote the first public relations text in 1923, and taught the first public relations course at New York University. This book included the first techniques and theories of public relations. With his help the American College Publicity Association (later known as the American College Public Relations Association) was established (Sykes lecture). During World War I, both the Allies and the Germans made extensive efforts to influence public opinion using propaganda. When the United States entered the war, Congress created the Committee of Public Information to change American's opinion in favor of the war effort.

By the end of the war, public relations had grown into an important means for swaying public opinion. Public relations today is a powerful part of an organization's success or failure. In order for any organization to succeed over time, there are certain basic duties that need to be fulfilled. Each organization must accept the obligations of public responsibility, seek ways to communication with the public, and be prepared to face any unforeseen obstacles. To fulfill these requirements the organization must recognize several conditions that concern public relations.

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It is necessary that the importance of public relations is accepted, the personnel be recognized as professionals, and that management realize that public relations important and must be appointed to the highest level (Bronzan 16). In the world of public relations there are multiple areas which need to be attended. Some of these areas include media relations, crisis management, public affairs, fundraising, and special events. One of the best advantages a public relations professional can have is a good relationship with the media. Without the media's support, a public relations specialist's job can be quite difficult.

The media's main objective is to report the facts to the public. It's the public relations specialist's job to have his or her organization be perceived as well possible. There are many dos and don'ts when working with the media.

Being cooperative and accessible at all times are two things that every good public relations professional is. Some other tips for success with the media include: 1. Getting to know the media personnel. Having a good professional relationship can be very beneficial to your organization. 2. Speak with the media to find out what they want and need, and produce the information when it is needed. . Make sure press releases are sent to the correct person in the correct department. Be aware of personnel changes within the media group. 4. Treat media personnel with respect, honesty, and fairness.

Developing a reputation as an honest and respectful publicist is a crucial. 5. Have an " open door" policy in terms of providing information to the media.

The more you are willing to cooperate with the media, the more success your organization will have (Scannell 4). Here are a few things to avoid if you hope to be successful in dealing with the media. 1.

Never lie or try to cover up mistakes that occur in your organization. The truth will always be uncovered eventually. Getting caught in a lie will only hurt your credibility with the media. 2. Always keep your composure when addressing the media, don't lose your temper. 3. Don't go looking for trouble while addressing the press. 4. Don't try to hinder the news with cover-ups or trickery. It gives the impression that your organization is trying to hide something. 5. Avoid overemphasizing the facts of the story. Exaggerating damages credibility and reliability of your organization (Steir 78-79).

There are many available tools within media relations that may or may not work to the advantage of the public relations specialist. Being able to utilize these methods is a major factor in whether your organization will be able to gain the public's trust and loyalty. Some of these approaches include radio, television, news releases, annual reports, and visual media. When radio first came out during the 1920s, it was the first electronic media. This was an important development because it gave the public an alternative to the print media. Since then radio has become a powerful tool in public relations.

Radio offers a fairly inexpensive way for organizations to get their message out and repeated over and over in a local area. Two common formats radio uses are paid advertisements and public service announcements (Hunt 137). When you want to get your organization's message across in the exact content you want using a paid advertisement is an effective means to go about it. The amount of airtime and the time slot available to you will depend on the size of your budget. Time spots when there are more listeners, like the morning commute, will obviously cost more than late night broadcasts.

Public service announcements are very similar to paid advertisements, except public service announcements are free. Radio stations are required to provide a certain amount of public service broadcasts from government agencies, charities, and other non-profit organizations per year to keep their broadcast licenses. These “ free advertisements” can be a very useful and economical way of reaching the public. The down side to this method is that public service announcements usually get the air time that no one else wants, so the size of the listening audience may be smaller than your organization is hoping for (Hunt 138).

The print media is an effective method when getting your message across, but if you’re serious about reaching the larger audiences, television is your best bet. An article might reach 5-10 million readers in a popular magazine, but a 30-second time slot during primetime can reach as many as 50 million people. Another advantage television has is its simplicity. Reading a newspaper takes time and effort where watching TV is effortless and entertaining (Hunt 157). Just like radio, television stations are required to provide a certain amount of airtime for public service announcements.

This provides an excellent chance for those same organizations to get some free coverage. The down side to this, like radio, is that the public service announcements get the time slots that no one else wants. If your organization doesn’t want to go this route, there’s always paid advertisement. Another method of getting your organization television coverage is to be a guest on a talk show. Many organizations have had guest spots on talk shows such as “ The Today Show” or “ Good Morning

American” where speak about their organization. Another way public relation specialist use television is through video news releases.

Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in video news releases. Video news releases are 30 second to 5 minute videotapes prepared for news broadcasts. These video news releases are either be used in whole or are cut down for content. One of the dangers in producing video news releases is that it can appear to be advertising. Public relations specialist should use caution if they decide to use this type of media (Hunt 161). At first glance, the daily newspaper appears to be put together by reporters. However, public relations specialists actually prepare the raw materials, ideas, facts, and quotes.

The information is brought to the media in the form of news releases, either as a fact sheet, biographical sketch of a person being profiled, photographs, and other relevant material. Occasions where news releases are appropriate include milestones in an organizations history such as anniversaries, new products or services, winning of awards, completions of training periods, and opinions of the organization officials concerning the public. News releases are also useful with negative new such as the firing of employees, loss of a contract, or other tragedies (Hunt 85-86).

An annual report’s main purpose is to provide information for the information seeking public that wants financial data about your organization. Most organizations target the stockholders and financial analysts as the main audience of their annual reports, but there are still other publics out there you should consider. They may include important customers and suppliers,

community leaders, committee members who effect your organization, local media, business publications, or financial institutions (Hunt 321).

As a public relations specialist there is always something to take into consideration to improve the next annual report. Questions you may want to ask might include how your audience can be better served, are there any new developments or products that should be brought to the publics attention, could a new format or layout make your report more interesting and effective, and making sure all the information is understandable (Hunt 319). Another type of media that is available to public relations specialists are visual aids.

However, a common problem in public relations is that many public relations professionals like to stick with one particular visual media. Since they are more comfortable with the one type of visual media, or aren't familiar using the other types of visual medias, they seem to get caught in a rut. Before making a decision on which media to use, the public relations specialist should look at all the advantages and disadvantages of each kind of visual media. Some of the more popular visual medias are still photography, slide shows, and videos.

The public is used to photo displays, which makes this a safe medium to use. Many viewers are comfortable with this type of media because they can look at each picture at their own pace. For this reason still photography is considered one of the most personal visual medias. The advantage that photographs has over other visual medias is that still photographs can be cropped or trimmed to eliminate parts of the picture or form unusual shapes

to fill in a certain lay out. Although still photographs are familiar, they often lack the novelty that television can provide.

Another down side to still photograph is with the freedom to go at your own pace, some people might skip over or speed through sections so fast that the important parts of your message are missed (Hunt 264). Slide shows are easily produced, which is why some public relations professionals prefer to use them. Not only are slide presentations easy to create, but they can also be edited just as easy. Another advantage with this type of media is that the pace is set by whoever is in charge of the projector, so they can go slower for more interested audiences or faster if the goal of the presentation is to touch the key points.

The downside to using this type of visual media is boredom. If the slides used are dull or poorly organized, your going to lose your audience's interest. There is also danger in having the slides in the wrong order, which looks very unprofessional (Wilcox 65-66). Video is a very effective medium to use because of its availability and simplicity. Most institutions have plenty of video equipment, and most people know how to use video equipment. The lights don't have to be off in a room to use video, which makes note taking much easier for the viewers.

A third advantage to using video is that the tape can be stopped for discussion, questions, or spoken commentary (Hunt 267). The available video systems may limit audience size, trying to view a tape on a nineteen-inch monitor in a square room with fifty people is awkward. Frequent use of a tape may affect the quality of the visuals and the sound (Hunt 267). How an

organization reacts during times of crises can be just as important as the crisis itself. An organization must deal with the issue or incident at hand, and the crisis that might develop as a result if the problem is not dealt with correctly and swiftly.

Organizations are not just judged by the way they deal with the crisis, but also on how effective they are in addressing the needs and concerns of the public. Crisis management teams help organizations manage a variety of difficult situations. Some of these situations may include poor financial performances, questionable business practices, product recalls, and environmental issues. Here are a few ways to deal with a crisis in your organization (Benn 86). 1. Prepare for a crisis before hand. Organizations should be aware that a crisis could and probably will happen someday.

Taking the appropriate steps to be ready for the worst is a must in the public relations professional. If an organization is not prepared, they may find themselves in a world of hurt during the crisis. 2. Have a quick response. When a crisis occurs, a rapid response is crucial. An organization should respond as soon as possible. Within an hour of determining that a crisis may exist, the organization should have an initial statement ready for the media that provides the known facts and a statement that explains when further details will be available.

The first 24 hours of a crisis are the most important. The longer you wait to inform the public, the more likely rumors are to surface. 3. Take responsibility for you actions. Accepting responsibility of a crisis shows integrity and responsibility. A lack of commitment or concern can cause the

perception that your organization is conceited. 4. Release all known information. It is important to keep the media and the public informed about what is happening and what else to expect.

By providing accurate information, organizations can establish credibility with the media and ensure accurate news reports. Helping the media will ensure that your organization's side of the story is heard and that media coverage is fair. 5. Correct any false information. Never let incorrect information go unchallenged. It is important to correct material that is inaccurate. Errors are usually based on false information. 6. Make sure everyone is on the same page. Only designated personnel should be addressing the media and public.

It is important that the spokespersons are prepared to handle the media's questions. To ensure consistency, each spokesperson must be aware of what the others are saying to maintain a consistent message. 7. Develop alliances. Organizations should realize the need for credible alliances in the event of a crisis. In order for these alliances to work, organizations must create their relationships ahead of time. That way when a crisis occurs these relationships may be used to support your organization's practices or arguments. 8. Use the media to your advantage.

When the media seems hostile, it's usually because an organization has withheld some information. Allowing the media to be your ally before a crisis occurs can make a huge difference in the media's reaction towards your organization. The media should be considered a helpful tool between your organization and your audience, not an opposition. 9. State your case.

Saying “no comment” isn’t the best way to deal with the media. A common mistake made by organizations is the lack of communication with the public, which causes them to assume your organization has something to hide. 10.

Don’t overreact. It is crucial for an organization to keep its cool during times of crisis. Knowing the difference between bad publicity and a crisis is important when deciding how you’re going to respond. Whatever you do, don’t panic (Edelman). For many organizations, usually non-profit or those with smaller budgets, fundraising is an important part of keeping the group going. Without adequate funding, no matter how good your organization may be, you’re doomed for failure. Some of the important tools for a successful fundraiser are good publicity, promotion, organization, and personnel.

Another important part of fundraising is figuring out what is acceptable in your community and what will produce the most funds. The concept of combining a fundraiser with a public attraction is a successful technique. For example, if you have a raffle ticket sale at a college football game, the outcome of your fundraiser will be more of a success than if the fundraiser was held on its own. Other fundraising methods include sales, drawings, and banquets. As long as you have a good cause and follow these steps, you should be able to organize a successful fundraiser (Johnson 105).

Selling items and services is a traditional fundraising technique. Items such as books, pizzas, programs, cups, light bulbs, candy, bakery items, flowers, calendars, and coupon books are just a few of the numerous items that can be sold door-to-door or at a group sale. There are many different strategies that can be used to sell things. Linking sales with special events or at

sporting events, and relating a holiday with your sale are very effective methods (Sherry, 25-26). Drawings are another effective method in fundraising.

With all kinds of different contests of chance, you should have no problem finding one. For example, a 50/50 drawing takes the proceeds from the ticket sales and divides it into two halves. One half goes to the fundraiser and the other half is prize money (could have one winner or split the money between multiple winners). Raffle tickets are another type of drawing that selects ticket numbers out of a hat and whoever has the matching number wins that certain prize (Steir 197-198). Public relations serves an important part on college campuses as well, especially the athletic programs.

The public relations department on a college campus controls everything from the halftime activities to the reaction plan in the event of a crisis. Like any other organization, college athletics also needs public relations to be successful. However, most college athletic teams require a more aggressive public relations program because the financial basis of the department depends directly on the win-loss records. In addition to using the methods of public relations mentioned earlier, athletic programs should use the following guidelines. 1. Inform the public about the athletic program. . Create confidence in your programs. 3. Develop support for your programs. 4. Contribute to the needs of the public. 5. Construct a code of conduct in your program that meets the requirements of public approval (Helitzer 71). No organization can succeed for a prolonged period of time without public support. That is why every company or non-profit organization needs public relations. In today's world it is no longer a question of whether or not to have <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-public-relations-good-for-assignment/>

public relations, but rather which type of public relations will serve your organization the best.