

## Newspaper public relations department

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**Newspaper Public Relations Department**

What is Public Relations? The most popular definition is:

A planned, deliberate and sustained effort to establish and maintain an understanding between an organisation and its publics.

For this discussion, the organisation is the newspaper; its publics are its readers.

And, as the definition has it, the object is to mount a:

- \* Planned,
- \* Deliberate, and
- \* Sustained effort,

to maintain an UNDERSTANDING.

Public Relations is a modern day necessity created by the forces that increased the tempo of the world.

This tempo has cast people into many diversified groups. All seeking different objectives. But all working towards common advantages and progress.

In the old days, social, economic, political and religious classifications were simple and distinct. Today, things are so complex. So different.

This is the age of visibility. Being good and doing good is not enough. You or your newspaper company must be perceived to be good.

Because public opinion is everything.

It will be appreciated that diverse, instant communication has changed the world much more than man has his institutions for living in that world.

Public Relations started as publicity because one group of people wanted to tell another group about itself.

Over the years, public relations has come to include many other functions besides publicising someone or a group of people.

Today, public relations plays a number of roles, including:

- \* Telling different groups what others think of it.
- \* Tells a group what it must do to win the goodwill of others.
- \* Plans ways and means of winning that goodwill.
- \* Carries out activities to win it.

If you consider the many functions of public relations, you may also say that it helps an organisation and its publics accommodate each other.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1787:

Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I would not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.

CRITICISM: In recent years, the print and broadcast media have been criticised for their aggressive investigative reporting. And often the solutions offered on the editorial pages are unpopular with readers.

What is the role of the Press in reporting on the political process, controversy and terrorist groups.

Is its role one of advocacy or solely objectivity.

Is it possible for reporters and photographers to be totally objective and candid while working in tense, emotional and often dangerous situations?

Psychiatrists and behavioural scientists question the possibility of complete objectivity at such times.

As the role of the newspaper in society changes and becomes more complex, so does the role of public relations for newspapers.

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING

### START WITHIN

Whatever type of public relations we may be talking about, it must all start within.

- Internal PR:
- \* In-house Magazine
  - \* Recognition
  - \* Letters of appreciation
  - \* Discipline
  - \* Motivation
  - \* Taking phone messages for colleagues.

YOU ARE IN THE PEOPLE BUSINESS:

- \* Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press
- \* Dress Code
- \* Language/Keep appointments
- \* Knowing your business
- \* Cultivating contacts
- \* You are ambassadors for your newspaper
- \* Accurate Reporting
- \* Are you Respected

PUBLIC SERVICE BUREAU... Information on:

- \* Weather
- \* Budget figures
- \* Traffic conditions
- \* Election results
- \* Airline arrivals/departures
- \* Hot Line
- \* Action Line

PLANT TOURS...proper brochures... film shows.

SPECIAL EVENTS: In conjunction with charities...  
fund raising (for needy) concerts etc...sports...  
fashion shows....art competitions ...essay writing  
contests.

All aimed at involving the reader and enhancing the  
newspaper's image.

NEWSPAPER PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT: Will also organise  
visits by VIPs. Design invitations. Handle guest lists.