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**Broadcasting In Thailand**

**By**

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**SEMINAR ON COMMUNICATION TRAINING  
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**Country Paper: Broadcasting in Thailand**  
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Radio broadcasting was introduced in Thailand in 1928 as a pet project of H.R.H. Prince Purchatra Chayakorn of Kampaengpetch, a son of King Rama V. Since then, the national broadcasting service has come a long way, taking in stride the significant changes in Thailand. When the country switched to constitutional monarchy in 1932, the National Broadcasting Service became increasingly important in promoting and accelerating the democratisation of the country.

At present the National Broadcasting Service (NBS) of Thailand consists of a major station, Radio Thailand. This is the Home Service, acting as the mother station from which major newscasts are relayed over all radio stations in the country. The NBS also consists of four regional centres in the North, the Northeast and the South, local radio and television stations in the provinces, an international transmission in 10 languages (Radio Thailand External Service) and an educational network covering the entire country.

Broadcasting services undertaken by the Public Relations Department is under the supervision of a deputy director-general. Each service has its own director and administration officer, programme producers, announcers, reporters and clerks. The headquarters in Bangkok is served by the Local News Division, the Foreign News Division, the Technical Division, the Engineering Division and the Public Opinion Survey Division.

Specialised training for personnel is carried out by the School of Public Relations which is within the Technical Division. The School was established in 1961 to provide in-service training programmes for media practitioners in the country.

Recruitment of Personnel

The recruitment of broadcasters and other types of personnel is carried out regularly by the Office of the Secretary of the

Department--through its personnel division--and by the Office of the Civil Service Commission.

Openings are widely publicised in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Civil Service Commission. The application period and the examinations are also clearly stipulated in the regulations. University graduates and other diploma and certificate holders vie for the jobs at the ratio of over 100 applicants for each job opening.

Specific requirements of the organization can be satisfactorily met by means of fair competition. According to the law--and in view of the existing situation--the Department does not limit itself to accepting only graduates in journalism and mass communications. It does acquire certain qualified personnel by means of offering scholarships to successful graduates to study in certain areas, and by transferring some officials from other government agencies.

Broadcasters working with the National Broadcasting Service of Thailand are mostly liberal arts, law, economics, education, political science and journalism graduates. However, there are few journalism graduates--especially those majoring in radio and television--since these are new fields of study in Thailand.

#### Assessment

Despite only a handful of graduates in journalism and mass communications in the service, some initial conclusions can be drawn:

1. A good journalist can come from any discipline, journalism included, provided he has the right personality and the right attitude.
2. Enthusiasm and concentration are required during the entire career of journalists.
3. Regular training and refresher courses are essential.
4. A quest for new knowledge and a flair for investigation must be ever-present. Journalists and communicators can easily lag behind the public they are supposed to inform.
5. Graduates of journalism and mass communication schools do not necessarily have an advantage and cannot be readily put into service. They often lack practical knowledge and a real understanding of the audience.

Are universities and institutes of higher learning in a good position to produce qualified personnel for the broadcast media?

In theory, they are qualified. In fact, more and more specialised courses are being offered for students. Yet in practice, such academic institutions are in many ways limited.

To start with, they are not in a position to admit only those students with the aptitude and inclination to be communicators. A great many of the graduates are only equipped with theories and degrees, but are not effective with the written or spoken word at all. It is rather discouraging to listen to a fourth-year student majoring in broadcasting mumbling over a microphone without realising that he is not getting the message across.

One major shortcoming of universities is the direct result of regulations governing them. Universities require graduates and post-graduates to play the roles of lecturers and advisers. The majority of these trainers have no connection with media organisations and no practical knowledge. Experienced journalists are in most cases not qualified as lecturers. They can be only invited guests. The training of future journalists is, therefore, undertaken in a different context, and sometimes in opposite direction with the requirements of the media organisations

Lastly, and more importantly, university graduates are filled with pride. They tend to look at other people with contempt. They not only would not learn to do their jobs, but also fail in their bid to serve the society and the public.

Can good and qualified communicators be carved out to serve specific needs or media organisations?

They certainly can be, if they are equipped with a proficiency in the language, have a pleasant personality and are public-conscious. There always remain the danger of losing good communicators through popularity and fame. In the print and broadcast media, one often gains followers and admirers. At a certain point, one becomes excessively self-confident. In reality, one cannot gain full command over the audience. Fame and glamour could spell the end of a good communicator.