**Bonga University**

**College of Social Sciences and Humanities**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

Course Title**: Introduction to Public Relations and Practical Attachment**

Course code: EnLa3103

ECTS: 5

Status: Parallel

Targeted audience: 3rd year DELL students

Course Instructor: Eyasu Yaya

Email: eyasuyaya89@gmail.com

**Course description**

The course is designed to systematically cover the concepts, origins and development of public relations. It deals with organizational communication and its types. It examines the similarities and differences between Public relations and the neighbouring disciplines such as journalism, advertising and marketing. It is also intended to develop students’ understanding of the role of communication in public relations. Public opinion and persuasion, ethics and professionalism of the discipline in managing and developing public relations practices in various contexts are also the concern of the course. To know the field of public relations calls for involvement in it and familiarity with its literature and trends; to provide for such active engagement, the course will be conducted in a student-centred approach and sometimes with lecture fashion.

**Course objectives**

After completion of this course, the students (you) will be able to:

* understand the concept of Public Relations
* Explain the origins and development of Public Relations
* Explain the organizational communication and its structure
* Understand the role of communication in Public Relations practices
* Acquire the essentials of public opinion and persuasion
* Equip themselves with a preliminary knowledge of ethics and professionalism in public relations.
* Understand the role of public relations for different organizations

**Course Contents**

**Chapter One: Introduction to the Course (1**st and 2nd **week)**

* 1. Public relations defined
  2. Public Relations activities
  3. Public Relations departments and firms

1.4 How public relations differs from Journalism

1.5 How public relations differs from Advertising

1.6 How public relations differs from Marketing

1.7 Roles and responsibilities of the Public Relations officer

1.8 Public relations and its process

**1.9. History of Public Relations**

19.1. History of public relations in the world

1.9.2. History and practices of public relations in Africa

1.9.3. Education and training in Africa

1.9.4. History and practices of Public relations in Ethiopia

**Unit Two: Concept of Organization and Organizational Communication**

* 1. Meaning of Organization
  2. Types of Organizational Communication
     1. According to Organizational structure
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**Chapter Three: Communication: The Backbone of Public Relations (3rd week)**

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**Chapter Four: Public Opinion and Persuasion (4**th **week)**

4.1. What is public opinion?

4.1.1. Opinion leaders as catalysts

4.1.2 The Media Role

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**Chapter Five: Ethics and Professionalism in Public Relations (5**th **weeks)**

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5.3.3. Professional privilege

5.3.4. Social responsibility

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**Chapter One: Public relations: An Introduction**

**Learning Objectives**

* After completing this unit, you are expected to: Write a definition of public relations that emphasizes building and maintaining relationships between the organization and the public
* Identify the similarities and differences between public relations and other related fields such as journalism, marketing, and advertising.
* Identify the major components of public relations
* Explain the communication and counselling roles of public relations practitioners
* Identify the duties and responsibilities of public relations practitioners

This section provides you with a brief overview of the concept of public relations in terms of a positive organizational management function. This chapter specifically discusses public relations components and specialized practice, and what distinguishes it from other management functions and activities. It also shows the roles and responsibilities of the public relations personnel.

Before you embark on reading the notes given below, please, try the following activities.

**☺ Activity 1.1**

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***Dear learner, can you write some key words that you think should be included while defining public relations.***

* ***Write the definition of public relations in your own words.***

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**The importance of Public Relations**

Every organization, big or small, has a story (facts about upcoming events, details about past accomplishments, objectives, opinions, philosophies, goals) to tell—and it is the job of PR professional to narrate those stories professionally. When business and organizations have news to announce—an event to publicize, a product to launch, a new idea to introduce—they need to get their message out. They need to project a positive public image. To do all that, they need what is known as *public relations*. This is because all the information that is distributed by public relations ultimately shapes the public’s perception of that organization—in other words, its images and everything.

**1.1. Definition of Public Relations**

As the term, public relations has come to mean many things to many people, creating a specific definition is hard. Some scholars consider it as a philosophical and moral concept. Others define it by looking at what public relations do in practice. The basic purpose of public relations is, more or less the same in all sectors- governments, public and private concerns, and other institutions.

**☺ Activity 1.2**

***The following section will give you an idea of public relations and the scope of its operations. Read the definition and compare your definition with it.***

Many scholars have tried to define public relations by some of its most visible techniques and tactics, such as publicity in a newspaper, a television interview with an organizations spokesperson, or the appearance of a celebrity at a special event.

These people failed to understand that public relations is a process involving many subtle and far reaching aspects. It includes research and analysis, policy formation, programming, communications and feedback from numerous publics. Generally speaking, public relations practitioners operate on two distinct levels: as advisers to their clients or to an organization’s top management and as technicians who produce and disseminate messages in multiple media channels.

There are two reasons why it is hard to formulate a public relations definition that brings all public relations scholars into an agreement. The first one is because public relations’ concept is a complex and hybrid subject. It draws on theories and practices from many different fields such as management, communications and psychology.

The second reason is the definition of public relations changes as the society, politics, market, etc. of and a particular country changes. This shows the definition of public relations is bound to the moment of thought and action of the society in which the PR practitioner does his (her) work. Without a doubt, then, a discussion of PR is necessarily a discussion of the society or societies in which it is practised.

Having said this, there are various general definitions offered by different professional associations and individuals. But before we see their definitions, let’s have a look at the separate concepts of the words “public” and “relations” in the context of the profession.

**☺ Activity 1.3**

***Dear learner,***

***What are publics to you?***

***How do you define the word public/s?***

***Pause your reading for a moment and think about groups of people around your work/ school area that have a common interest, and list them.***

**Publics:** come in many forms and sizes. Publics are informal unorganized groups of people who have an interest in common, like vegetarians, diabetics, health enthusiasts, voters, customers etc.

All organizations have multiple publics that they affect and/or are affected by. The public relations persons in those organizations develop strategies to reach each of those publics in ways that are meaningful to them (the publics). In other words, one of the concepts of PR is the idea that these groups- or publics- have different information needs and exert different demands on organizations. Understanding these differences is a vital skill of PR.

Some examples of publics with whom public relations professionals work to develop relationships are the media, local community, employees, activist groups, government officials, consumers, similar organizations, and political constituents.

**Relations**-relationships are all possible types. We have relationships by rank-superior to inferior or vice versa, and equal to equal. We have relationships such as friendly, suspicious, jealous, hostile, etc. We have all complications due to the presence of two sexes. A relationship may be active or passive; good or bad or it may be neutral. At any rate, the relationship is there to be accepted, ignored or altered as desired.

**☺Activity 1.4**

***Dear learners,***

***Think of the relationships you have with different types of people.***

***How many different types of relationships do you have?***

***Try to put them under three categories.***

**Types of relationships**

Experience has shown the world may be divided into three sets of people. These are *those who know you and like you; those who know you but do not like you; and those who neither know you nor care.* The **aim** here should be to reach a position where those who know you and like you **stay that way;** whereas those who know you and do not like you **change their opinion**, and those who neither know you nor care **wish they could meet you and do business with you.**

Public relations concerns about any organization, commercial or non-commercial. It exists whether we like it or not- you cannot decide to have or not to have public relations. Public relations consists of all communications with all the people with whom an organization has direct or indirect contact. An individual also experiences public relations, unless he or she is utterly isolated and beyond human contact.

**Modern Shorthand Definitions**

The British Institute of Public Relations gives a comprehensive definition of public relations: “A public relations is a deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics” (Berhanu 2008:225).

We can deduce from this definition that

1. It is ‘the planned and sustained effort’– meaning that PR activity is organized as a campaign or program and is a continuous activity, it is not haphazard.
2. Its purpose is ‘to establish and maintain mutual understanding’\_ that is, to ensure that the organization is understood by others. This mutual understanding is thus between an organization and its publics, since many groups of people are involved.

Other definitions of PR include:

* *Persuasive communication designed to influence specific publics.*
* *The winning of public acceptance by acceptable performance.*
* *Doing good and getting credit for it (Performance then Recognition)*
* *The science and practice of applying credible media for favourable communication.*

Perhaps the best way to approach a definition of public relations is to consider it as a process that “harmonizes” long term relationships among individuals and organizations in a society. Five principles are listed to this process:

1. *Honest communication for credibility*
2. *Openness and consistency of actions for confidence*
3. *Fairness of actions for reciprocity and goodwill*
4. *Continuous two-way communication to prevent alienation and build relationships*
5. *Environmental research and evaluation to determine the actions or adjustments needed for social harmony.*

This approach recognizes three realities of today’s increasingly democratic, globally interdependent social system: (1) The economic and social stability of an organization depends greatly on public opinion, (2) All people have the right to information that will affect their lives, and (3) unless communication achieves continuous, accurate feedback, the organization will not accurately be able to assess how it is viewed by its publics and to adjust its actions appropriately.

Stated another way, in the words of Reddick “Public relations is the *lubricant* which makes the segments of an order work together with minimum friction and misunderstanding.” The goal of effective public relations, then, is to harmonize internal and external relationships so that an organization can enjoy not only public goodwill but also stability and longevity.

Overall, at its simplest form public relations is a way to approach how an organisation wants to relate to its many stakeholders. It involves the cultivation of favourable relations for organizations and products with its key publics through the use of a variety of communications channels and tools.  It is as much a specific discipline with its own body of knowledge and theories.

**The keywords to remember in defining public relations follow:**

**Deliberate:** Public relations activity is intentional. It is designed to influence, gain understanding, provide information, and obtain feedback (reaction from those affected by the activity).

**Planned:** Public relation activity is organized. Solutions to problems are discovered and logistics are thought out, with the activity taking place over a period of time. It is systematic, requiring research and analysis.

**Performance:** Effective public relations are based on actual policies and performance. No amount of public relations will generate goodwill and support if the organization is unresponsive to community concerns.

**Public Interest:** The rationale for any public relations activity is to serve the public interest, and not simply to achieve benefits for the organization. Ideally, public relations activity is mutually beneficial to the organization and the public; it is the alignment of the organizations self-interests with the publics concerns and interests.

**Two-way Communication:** Dictionary definitions often give the impression that public relations consists only of the dissemination of informational materials. It is equally important, however, that the definition include feedback from audiences. The ability to listen to is an essential part of communication expertise.

**Adapt:** to make fit or suitable by changing or adjusting to new or changing circumstances. All successful organizations adapt to the constantly changing circumstances they face. If they don’t, they will-some sooner and some later-find it hard to continue pursuing their mission.

**Mutual:** Webster defines ‘mutual’ as reciprocal, then states: reciprocal implies a return in kind or degree by each of two sides of what is given or demonstrated by the other. An organization must negotiate with other organizations, groups, and individuals in their environment to establish mutual understanding and make that environment one in which they can all exist together.

One of the main purposes of Public Relations is to open the lines of communication between an organization and its publics so that they can talk, listen to, and negotiate with each other. When they do that, they can learn to understand each other’s needs, ideas, and concerns. They learn how they can work together to make life in the same environment (neighbourhood, city, country, world, etc.) better for all of them.

This, sometimes, means compromising by each side giving up something that is important to them in order to accommodate the other side. Sometimes that means agreeing to disagree, but to understand and respect each other’s side. Sometimes that means coming up with something entirely new that neither side had considered before.

**Management Function:** Public relations is most effective when it is part and parcel of the decision making of the top management. Public relations involves counselling and problem-solving at high levels, not just the releasing of information after a decision has been made.

To summarize, a person can grasp the essential elements of public relations by remembering the following words: ***deliberate ……. planned ……… performance …….. Public interest ……….. Two-way communication …. Adapt…management function.***

**☺Activity 1.5**

* ***Can you think of some other words to be added in the above list?***
* ***What major activities can you think of as duties of PR officer?***

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**1.2 Public Relations activities**

A rough guide to the main activities in public relations

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| PR activity | Explanation | Example |
| Internal communication | Communicating with employees | In-house newsletter, suggestion boxes, etc. |
| Corporate PR | Communicating on behalf of the whole organization, not goods or services | Annual reports, conferences, ethical statements, visual identity, images |
| Media relations | Communication with journalists, specialists, editors from local, national, international and trade media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and web-based communication | Press releases, video news releases, press conferences |
| Business to business | Communicating with other organizations, eg, suppliers, retailers, etc | Exhibitions, trade events, newsletters |
| Public affairs | Communicating with opinion formers, eg. local/national politicians, monitoring the political environment | Presentations, briefings, private meetings, public speeches |
| Community relations/  Corporate social responsibility | Communicating with the local community, elected representatives, etc. | Exhibitions, presentations, letters, sports activities and other sponsorships |
| Investor relations | Communicating with financial organizations/ individuals | Newsletters, briefings, events, |
| Strategic communication | Identification and analysis of situation, problem and solutions to further organizational goals | Researching, planning, and executing a campaign to improve the ethical reputation of organization |
| Issues management | Monitoring political, social, economic and technological environment | Considering the effect of the presidential campaign on an organization |
| Crisis management | Communicating clear messages in fast changing situation or emergency | Dealing with the media after a major rail crash on behalf of police, hospital or local authority |
| Events management exhibitions | Organizing complex events, exhibitions | Annual conferences, press launch, trade shows. Eg. the inauguration anniversary of BongaUniversity celebrated in December 2017. |

So far, we have tried to see the definition of public relations and some important words that should be included while defining public relations. We have also seen the basic activities of public relations. Now let’s see how public relations differs from other related concepts, including journalism, advertising, and marketing. But first, let’s see the two forms of public relations – PR department and PR firms.

**1.3 Public relations departments and firms**

The two basic types of operations in the PR industry are PR departments and PR firms. PR departments are PR offices that are established within governmental and non-governmental organizations and they give service only to the organization they belong to. PR firm, on the other hand, are individual establishments that function independent of any organization and they give services to whoever wants their services.

From the PR practitioners’ perspective, advantages and disadvantages are working on a public relations department. The advantages are:

1. Generally good salaries
2. Health insurance benefits in the western world
3. The opportunity to work with a group of professional peers

**Disadvantages**

1. Laborious (needing much time and effort) approval process before production and distribution of information
2. Lack of understanding by the management of the public relations functions (but in our country not only do managements fail to understand the function of PR but also PR practitioners themselves do not seem to have understood the functions of PR)
3. Lack of advancement opportunities in a small departments of companies
4. Involvement in routine activities (activities that change little over a period of time)

From the companies’ perspective, there are advantages and disadvantages of using PR firms too.

1. Objectivity- this means, the firm can analyze a client’s needs or problems from a new perspective and offer a fresh insight
2. Variety of skills and expertise- this means, firms have specialists in speech, writing, etc.
3. Extensive resources- a firm can have abundant media contacts and works regularly with numerous suppliers of products and services. It has research materials including data information banks and experience in similar fields.
4. Offices throughout the country- a national PR program requires coordination in major cities. Large PR firms have staffs (offices) in many cities or even around the world
5. Special problem solving- a firm may have extensive experience and a solid reputation in desired areas.
6. Credibility- a successful PR firm has a solid reputation for professional and ethical work. If an organization is represented by such a firm, a client is likely will get more attention among opinion leaders, in mass media, government and financial community.

**Disadvantages**

There are several complaints about PR firms

* 1. Being superficial for a client’s unique problems. While objectivity is gained from an outsiders’ perspective, PR firms do not understand thoroughly the client’s business or needs
  2. Lack of full-time commitment- PR firms work for different organizations, or they have many clients to serve and therefore no single client can monopolize all the resources of the firm.
  3. Need for prolonged briefing period- some companies become frustrated because time and money are needed for a PR’s firm to research the organization and make recommendations. Consequently, the actual start of PR program may take weeks or months later.
  4. Resentment of internal staff of the use of outside counsel
  5. Need for strong direction by top management
  6. Costs- expensive in general
  7. **Similarities and differences between public relations and journalism**

**☺Activity 1.6**

Please attempt the questions set here, before reading the notes given.

1. ***What major differences would there be among the following professionals: Journalist, publicist, and public relations officers?***
2. ***Do you see any common ground where these three professionals overlap?***

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Now read the following part and see whether the points that you have written are any close.

* Public relations practitioners and journalists are similar for the reason that in both cases practitioners write for mass audiences and they also use similar writing techniques to communicate with various publics. Nevertheless, the two fields differ essentially in **scope**: Public relations has a wider scope ranging from counselling to issues management; **objective**: journalists are expected to provide objective news while public relations officials are advocates; **audiences**: journalists write for the general public while public relations officials write for the specific public, and **channels**: basically journalists use one channel while public relations officials use several channels.
  1. **Public Relations and Advertising**

**☺Activity 1.7**

* ***List down the major difference that you observe between public relations and advertising?***

Just as many people mistakenly equate publicity with public relation, there is also some confusion about the distinction between publicity (one area of public relations) and advertising.

**Publicity** – or information about an event, an individual or a group, or a product is disseminated through the news media and other channels to attract favourable public notice. The practitioner who prepares and distributes the information is often called a publicist.

**Advertising-** is paid space in print (newspapers, magazines), including billboards, and time in electronic media (radio, television and the internet). Organizations and individuals contract to purchase space and time and an advertisement is almost always broadcasted or printed exactly as the purchaser has prepared it. Publicity, as distinguished from advertising, appears in broadcast news programs and in newspaper and magazine stories. The prepared copy is sent to the news department (not the advertising department) and gatekeepers (reporters and editors) modify the material according to news requirements. In other words, there is no guarantee that an organization’s news release will be used or will appear in the form in which it is prepared. There are other differences between public relations activities and advertising. Please take a look at the following table. It gives you more on that:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Advertising** | **Public relations** |
| * works almost exclusively (except billboards) through mass media outlets * addressed to external audiences- primarily consumers of goods and services * is readily identified as a specialized communication function * is often used as a communication tool in public relations and public relations activity often supports advertising campaigns. Advertisings function is to sell goods and services | * relies on a number of communication tools- brochures, slide presentations, special; events, speeches, news releases, feature stories, and so forth. * presents its message to specialized external audiences (stockholders, vendors, community leaders, environmental groups, and so on) and internal publics (employees).is broader in scope, dealing with policies and performance of the entire organization, from the moral of employees to the way telephone operators respond to calls * the function is to create an environment in which the organization can thrive. The latter calls for dealing with economic, social, and political factors that can affect the organization |

The major disadvantage of advertising, of course, is the cost. Because of this, companies increasingly are using a tool of public relations- product publicity- that is more cost-effective and often more credible because the message appears in new context.

**☺Activity 1.8**

* ***What do you think are the similarities and difference between public relations and marketing?***

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**1.6 Public Relations and Marketing**

Public relations is distinct from marketing in several ways, although their boundaries often overlap. The function overlap, for example, because both deal with an organization’s relationships and employs similar communication tools to reach the public. Both have the ultimate purpose of assuring an organization’s success and economic survival. Public relations and marketing, however, approach this task from somewhat different perspectives, or world views.

The difference is illustrated by the descriptions of each field that a distinguished panel of educators and practitioners in public relations and marketing developed during a colloquium at San Diego State University, USA. They formed the following definition of public relations

***Public relation is the management process whose goal is to attain and maintain accord and positive behaviours among social groupings on which an organization depends in order to achieve its mission. Its fundamental responsibility is to build and maintain a hospitable environment for an organization.***

The group define marketing’s goal in different terms: ***Marketing is the management process whose goal is to attract and satisfy customers (or clients) on a long- term basis in order to achieve an organization’s economic objectives. Its fundamental responsibility is to build and maintain markets for an organization’s products or services.***

In other words, public relations is concerned with building relationships and generating goodwill for the organization; marketing is concerned with customers and selling products and services.

James E. Grunig (2005), put the differences between public relations and marketing in sharp contrast: ***…the marketing function should communicate with the markets for an organization’s goods and services. Public relations should be concerned with all the publics of the organization. The major purpose of marketing is to make money for the organization by increasing the slope of the demand curve. The major purpose of public relations is to save money for the organization by building relationships with publics that constrain or enhance the ability of the organization to meet its mission.***

Grunig points out a fundamental difference between marketing and public relations in terms of how the public is described. Marketing and advertising professionals tend to speak of **“target markets,” “consumers”** and **“customers.”** Public relations professionals tend to talk of **“publics,” “audiences,”** and **“stockholders.”** These groups may be any publics that are affected by or can affect the organization. According to Grunig, “Publics can arise within stockholder categories- such as employees, communities, stockholders, governments, members, students, suppliers, and donors, as well as consumers.”

We have cleared the ground by looking at the different definitions of public relations. We have also seen the distinction between public relations and other related concepts. In the following section, we are going to study about the different roles and responsibilities of the public relation officer. Before going through the next part, try to give your own answer for the following question.

**☺ Activity 1.9**

* ***What do you think are the major duties and responsibilities of public relations personnel? (The definitions provided in section 1.1 will give you some clue)***

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Now read the following section and compare your thoughts

**1.7 Roles and Responsibilities of PR Officer**

Over time, practitioners adopt patterns of behavior to deal with recurring situations in their work and to accommodate others’ expectations of what they should do in their jobs. Few major public relations roles describe much of the practice. At one time or another, however, practitioners play all of these and other roles to varying degrees, even though a dominant role emerges as they go about their day-to-day work and dealing with others.

Public relations people work for all kinds of organizations from hospitals, schools, government, sports teams, theatres, movie stars, television stations corporations, and “not-for-profits” like the Red Cross Association of Ethiopia, Tigray Development Association (TDA), even churches and mosques--almost any kind of organization you can imagine!

Their job is:

* + - To let people know about their organization’s purposes and needs.
    - To listen to what people think about their organization.
    - To build good working relationships with groups of people who affect or are affected by their organization.
    - To help their organization establish and maintain a good reputation that is based on good performance.

Some public relations professionals are part of the management team that makes major administrative decisions about how the organization will operate, what it will do, how it will treat the people and groups of people who affect or are affected by it, and how it will act in the environment.

Other public relations professionals are technical experts who plan, organize, and produce a wide variety of materials, videos, web sites, publications, special events, meetings, and other activities designed to help them communicate to and develop relationships with a variety of different groups of people, which they call “publics.”

As a result, public relations thinking is factored into management decision making. The major responsibilities of a public relations practitioner can be summarized as follows:

* Advise management on different issues
* Participate in policy decisions
* Plan public relations programs
* Attend conferences and deliver speeches
* Write speeches to others
* Obtain speakers for organizational meetings
* Organize news conferences
* Talk to editors and reporters
* Produce media such as press releases, leaflets, booklets, magazines, newsletters, feature articles, etc. for employees and the external public
* Plan the launch of new products and services
* Act as the organization’s spokesperson

**What makes a good PR practitioner? Necessary qualities**

The demands of PR consultants or PR managers are very great. Consequently, the PR man or woman has to be sufficiently humble and adaptable to be able to accept that in PR one never stops learning. The following seven attributes sum up the necessary qualities that a good PR practitioner needs to have, no matter what his or her background may be.

1. Ability to get on with all kinds of people; this means understanding, sometimes tolerating people, not flattering them.
2. Ability to communicate: that is, the ability to explain using spoken or written word or by visual device such as photography
3. Ability to organize: that calls for patient planning
4. Personal integrity in both professional and private life
5. Imagination: that is a creative sense, as when designing a house journal, writing a script for a film or videotape, planning campaigns and seeking solutions to problems
6. Ability to find out: that is to have ready access to information. The PRO is often expected to be to be an oracle
7. Ability to research and evaluate the results of a PR campaign, and learn from these findings

**1.8 Public Relation and its process**

Wilcox says that the process of public relations activity was articulated by Marston in the RACE acronym and consists of four key elements: Research, Action and planning, communication and Evaluation. The process is outlined as follows:

* + - 1. Research- what is the problem?
      2. Action and Planning- What is going to be done about it?
      3. Communication- how will the public be told?
      4. Evaluation- was the audience reached and what was the effect?

Another approach, according to Wilcox, is to think of the process as never -ending cycle in which six components are linked in a chain.

Research and

Analysis

Policy formation

Program assessment and adjustment

Programming

Communication

Feedback

In the conceptualization of public relations as a cyclical process, feedback- or audience response- leads to the assessment of the program, which then becomes an essential element in the development of another public relations project. The feedback originates in research and is concluded by an evaluation. The process of public relations constitutes both giving and receiving information. Awareness by practitioners of the cyclical process is a prerequisite for an accurate understanding of public relations.

Generally, a PR practitioner has to follow the steps hereunder to accomplish his/her organization’s goals.

1. Identifying existing relationships- in modern society, institutions have many relationships. A college, for example, has relationships with its internal public (students and its stuff), and with its external publics (neighbourhood, the community, other collages, local administrators, etc.). Each of these constituencies is called a public- hence the term public relations.
2. Evaluating the relationships- through research, the PR practitioner studies these relationships to determine how well they are working. This evaluation is an ongoing process. A college may have excellent relations with one of its publics one year, but it may not be the same the next year because of various reasons.
3. Design policies to improve the relationships- the job of PR people is to recommend policies to top management to make these relationships work better, not only for the organization but also for the partners in each relationship.
4. Implement the policies- public relations is not a mass medium itself, but PR often uses the media as tools to accomplish its goals.

**☺ Activity 1.10**

* ***Which one of the above mentioned roles of public relations is the ideal role for any public relations personnel? Why?***
* ***What personalities do you think you need to have in order to perform your activities well?***

**Test Your Understanding**

**Evaluate your understanding of the key topics covered in this chapter by attempting the following questions.**

* How does public relations differ from journalism? Advertising? And Marketing?
* What key words characterize the essential elements of public relations?
* Describe five different roles of public relations practitioners.
* Select three qualities of a good PR practitioner (which you think are more important than others) from the above listed seven personalities.

**1.9. History of Public Relations**

**Learning Objectives:**

Dear learner, after studying this unit, you will be able to:

* Identify where and when public relations began as a discipline.
* Name major historical leaders in public relations and describe their contribution to the development of public relations.
* Compare and contrast the practices of public relations in Africa with the practices in Ethiopia.

Practitioners who lack an understanding of how PR evolved/developed cannot consider themselves professionals. Knowledge of the history of the field is essential if today’s practitioners have to benefit from the ideas generated by their predecessors. The following section briefly looks at the ways PR has been used in the past and how it has changed during the last century.

**1.9.1. History of public relations in the world**

Given the difficulty of defining public relations, it is not surprising that its history is full of confusion. Should we start with flags and Roman coins as early examples of corporate identity, or go back as far as cave paintings? What about the leaflets that circulated in the late 18th and early 19th centuries? The rise in literacy and printing presses in the 19th century led to many reforming campaigns concerning health, suffrage, education conducted by pamphlet and newspaper articles. Are these examples of early PR?

Generally, it can be said the practices of PR has started during early times. The practice of persuasion is a skill that started long ago. Aristotle one of the ancient Greece philosopher wrote rhetoric- meaning to convince people. But PR, as you know it today, is a 20th-century phenomenon. PR practitioners today not only persuade but also inform, create ideas and make things happen.

One of the earliest PR practitioners is Edward L. Bernays. Bernays started his career of PR in the 1920s, he then retired in 1962. He wrote the first book, Crystallizing Public Opinion, in 1923. This book laid down the principles and ethics by which PR should be governed. He was invited to start the first PR education course at New York University in 1924. Bernays’ understanding of the psychology of persuasive communication may well have been influenced by his uncle Sigmund Freud. Besides, his wife and other practitioners contributed to the development of the profession.

***Ivy Lee*** is the man who convinced America that the Rockefellers were not heartless "Scrooges" and pushed many other big businesses onto the American people. Lee was never loved by America, however. Besides having his name kicked around Congress for his supposed muckraking, Lee also accidentally aligned himself with Germany during the time after World War I. His true goal was to end the worldwide depression through an end of reparations and war debt payments from Germany. However, this correlated his name to the likes of Hitler and caused the latter part of his life to be shadowed by this misunderstanding.

***Carl Byoir*** seemed destined for greatness. In 1917, Byoir was asked to join the World War I Committee on Public Communication. It was there that he made his greatest contribution to the war effort. He designed a campaign that targeted non-English speaking draft-eligible men; the campaign was a success and added 75,000 men to the United State's war effort.

In the past public relations exhausted all available outlets for disseminating information and as designs grew more complex and inventions became more common public relations was strengthened. The telephone, television and radio, all helped foster the public relations industry and facilitate its expansion.

Over the last two decades, the public relations industry has been generously enhanced by the advent of more convenient technology. Agencies are now able to utilize satellites to transmit information much faster and more efficiently. In addition to being able to reach multitudes of people almost effortlessly, software and computing techniques are making the transmissions more professional and persuasive with graphics and designs. The common-place of computers has also fueled the explosion of public relations and would seem to dictate that the industry could only be headed upward.

Today, public relations has developed into a multi-million dollar industry. Most modern developments in public relations are linked with political reform movements, as public relations is an important part of politics, playing a major part in who becomes elected and what laws are passed. Politicians use public relations to keep themselves in good standing with the public, which is very necessary for their job. What began as mere publicity has grown to include many other uses, from interpreting public opinion and its impact on an organization to researching ways of helping a business to maintain its goals.

**1.9.2. History and practice of public relations in Africa**

The public relations profession in Africa achieved momentum only during the last two decades. As in other parts of the world, many African practitioners enter the profession through journalism, often being trained abroad since few facilities exist locally.

African public relations practitioners have a different role than their U.S. counterparts. In the West, it is assumed that PR practitioners should be socially responsible. In the Third World, PR practices are designed to be consistent with political ideologies, levels of development, and sociopolitical controls. African public relations practitioners are thus expected to be team players on the side of the government. In politically unstable Africa, governmental public relations used to present an image of a unified country.

The development of PR on the African continent has been influenced by the availability of mass media. For example, Nigeria, with its extensive system of mass communication, has a thriving, professional public relations community. The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) was established in 1963, and after the oil boom, public relations exploded. By 1993 the NIPR had 2000 members as well as a constitution and a code of ethics.

Egypt- for reasons of history, culture, and geography- has influenced public relations beyond its borders. The “godfather” of the public relations profession in Egypt, Prof. Dr. Mahmoud El Gohary, founded the Arab Public Relations Society (APRS) in 1966, first in Egypt and then in other Arab and African countries.

The Zimbabwe Institute of Public Relations (ZIPR) was founded in 1957 and has made enormous progress. Among the principal players were George Foot and Helen Tinker, who received both an IPRA Golden Award and a UN Award for a PR program on AIDS awareness. By 1993 ZIPR had 207 members, most of them working in the capital city.

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) was established in 1971. The Sudan Public Relations Association was founded in 1973, and the Public Relations of Uganda originated in 1976.

By 1981, 9 of the 56 national public relations associations in the world were in Africa. The public relations associations of Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana, Uganda, Cameroon, Swaziland and Zimbabwe are registered with IPRA.

Federation of African Public Relations Association (FAPRA) was formed in Nairobi in 1975 with the aim of uniting the Francophone and Anglophone parts of Africa. Some say the FAPRA has had little effect for the development of the profession – largely because of a lack of resources, communication difficulties, and the lack of general professional direction in the field of public relations. The 16th FAPRA public relations conference, which took place in Accra, Ghana, in March 2003, was attended by more than 200 members from the African continent.

The East African Public Relations Association (EAPRA), in cooperation with the PRSK, hosted the second EAPRA conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 2003. The theme was “Excellence in public relations- opportunities and challenges towards successful strategic public relations.”

**1.9.3. Education and training in Africa**

Public relations education in Africa ranges from formal tertiary diploma, degree, and post-degree courses to in-service training by employers and government ministries (such as the Tanzanian Government’s initiative to train their most senior communication officials in strategic public relations in 2003.

Formal public relation is most active in Egypt, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Nigeria. At the tertiary level, many PR programs in Africa are taught as part of a bachelor’s degree in communication, mass communication, or journalism. In Ethiopia, public relations courses are offered as part of a bachelor’s degree in Journalism and languages at tertiary level. The University of Nigeria offers an M.S. degree program in public relation

**1.9.4. History and practices of public relations in Ethiopia**

The history of public relations in Ethiopia as a means of spreading fame may go back to ancient times. The story of the Queen of Sheba indicates that she carried a variety of gifts to Jerusalem to benefit from King Solomon’s wisdom. In the middle ages, for example, the fame of the legendary Prestor John had spread in Europe and this may have heightened Ethiopia’s image partly because of tales taken by explorers following their return to the country.

The connection between the history of public relations and of the civil service may not be far-fetched. On the 5th May 1961, the Civil Service Agency was established. The setting up of the agency contributed to the emergence and development of public relations because the restructuring of government departments and institutions based on the newly introduced concepts of organization and management brought into focus public relations at the highest level. Press and public relations offices were incorporated in governmental institutions and their previous low positions, that were clerical in character, were recognized and elevated to managerial status in organizational charts though this change seems more of theoretical than practical since PR practitioners did not take part in management decisions most of the time.

On the other hand, restrictions on freedom of the press had an adverse effect on the press output of public relations offices and departments and indirectly affected the growth of public relations.

Well-known PR practitioners during the last imperial were Ato(s) Mamo Widineh, Mearigu Bezabih, Teferi Wossen, Tesfeye Gesses, Negash Gebremariam, Ayele Gulte, to mention only a few. Most of them were practicing journalism before or after taking up PR duties.

Ato Mamo Wudineh believes that PR began even before the Italian occupation when Ethiopia was trying all it can to avert the onslaught of the invasion. He said the Ministry of information was the outcome of public relations on the part of the Ethiopian government. He explained that the creation of PR offices within the government and other departments was an outcome of the desire to cope with press criticisms

Dr. Solomon Ali, formerly public relations head of the Ministry of Information, wrote in 1998 a paper on public relations in Ethiopia during his stay in Scotland for training. He mentions the fact that Alem Public relations Consultant was the first public relations consultancy firm established by Derege Deressa, Hanna Deressa and Sibhat Gebre Egziabher in the late 1960s. The firm was closed down by the order of the military government.

**Summary of the History of PR**

It is well documented that the practice of public relations has been going on since the beginning of civilization itself. While the first exhibitions of public relations were inadvertent and simply an attempt at persuasion, the later uses were well crafted and took on more of the aspects we relate to. Public relations today and modern public relations in general, owes itself to three key men: Carl Byoir, Edward L. Bernays, and Ivy Lee.

***Carl Byoir*** designed campaigns that targeted non-English speaking draft-eligible men and added 75,000 men to the United State's war effort during I world war. ***Edward L. Bernays***, known as the father of modern public relations, invented techniques that are staples of today's public relations career field. ***Ivy Lee*** helped many big businesses in American to gain ground and acceptance within the public.

The role that public relations in Africa plays is different from the role it plays in the western world. In the west, it is assumed that PR practitioners should be socially responsible. But African public relations practitioners are expected to be team players on the side of the government.

Public relations education in Africa ranges from formal tertiary diploma, degree, and post degree courses to in-service training by employers and government ministries. At the tertiary level, many PR programs in Africa are taught as part of a bachelor’s degree in communication, mass communication, or journalism. In Ethiopia, public relations courses are offered as part of bachelor’s degree in Journalism and languages at tertiary level.

The history of public relations in Ethiopia as a means of spreading fame may go back as far as the time of the legendary Queen of Sheba. The setting up the Civil Service Agency on the 5th May 1961, contributed to the emergence and development of modern public relations.

**Test Your Understanding**

**Assess your understanding of the key topics covered in this chapter by attempting the following questions.**

* Which organization was the first to employ public relations in order to win the hearts and minds of audience? What were the techniques applied?
* When did public relations originate?
* Who was known as the father of public relations? And what were the things he introduced to the field of public relations?
* What was the difference between the history of public relations in the western world and Africa?
* At what level is public relations education given in Africa?
* What is common in teaching public relations for most African countries?
* How is public relations education given in Ethiopia?
* Which African country trains public relations at master’s degree level?
* Which office is considered as contributed for the emergence of modern public relations in Ethiopia?

**Unit Two: Concept of Organization and Organizational Communication**

**Objectives of the Chapter**

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be expected to:

* Define the meaning of organization
* Identify the types of organizational communication
* Explain the concept of organizational structure

**2.1. Meaning of Organization**

The organizational communication involves the process of planning and development of strategies in a manner to reach the desired results (Vlăduţescu, 2013; Gîfu & Teodorescu, 2014).

Organizational communication is the process by which groups of people convey company goals and the way to reach them. Organizational communication is an integral part of effective management practices within the workplace: productive and thoughtful dialogue can make or break an organization and the relationships within it.

Organizational communication simply refers to communication that takes place in business environments.

Weihrich and Koontz state that the function of communication in the organization is to connect the employees of that organization in order to reach mutual goals.

Hence, the importance of communication in the organization is important because of:

* the company’s goal setting and their carrying out,
* the development of plans towards their realization, • human and other resources management in the most successful and appropriate way,
* the choice, the progress and the performance evaluation of the organization members,
* the management, guiding, motivating and creating a climate in which people want to contribute,
* the control over realization. (Weihrich & Koontz; 1994, 538.)

**2.2. Types of Organizational Communication**

The importance of organizational communication in a business environment cannot be underestimated. The way employees communicate with each other, with managers or with external stakeholders such as customers and partners reflects on the business itself. As a result, it’s vital to be aware of the kind of communication in which you are participating. There are four types of organizational communication

**3.2.1. Communication according to Organizational Structure**

**I. Formal Communication**

Formal communication is associated with the formal organizational structure of the company. Ideally, communication flows smoothly, accurately and timely through the proper channel appropriate to the specific company. For instance, seniority will dictate how communication will flow from one department to another or from specific managers to specific employees. Certain tools and technologies are often used to aid in a formal communication.

Such communication is that which is associated with the formal organization structure and the official status or the position of the communicator and the receiver. It travels through the formal channels officially recognized positions in the organization chart.

Formal communication can have several forms.

* Meetings
* Conferences
* Telephone calls
* Company newsletters
* Performance reviews

The strength of formal communication is that it standardizes communication, ideally benefiting the clarity of each message. Its primary weakness is that it undermines the free and uninterrupted flow of communication, which is what defines informal communication.

The main advantage of formal communication is that the official channels enable the routine and standardized information to pass without claiming much of managerial attention. Essentially, executives and managers may devote most of their precious time on matters of utmost significance.

**II. Informal Communication**

Informal communication is also known as ‘Grapevine’. It is free from all sorts of formalities because it is used on informal relationships between the parties, such as friendship, membership in the same club or association.

Persons at the executive levels also use informal communication when they find it difficult to collect information from the workers. Such communication includes comments, suggestions etc. It may be conveyed by a simple glance, gesture, smile or mere silence.

Managers and executives also favour the growth and development of the informal network of communication off and on. This process serves a very useful purpose in disseminating certain information which, in the general interest of the organization, cannot be transmitted through the official channels.

Informal communication includes casual, social and personal messages in the organization. Also referred to as the grapevine, informal communication and messages involving person-to-person communication networks of employees that are not officially sanctioned by the organization. This type of communication cannot be prevented. The strength and weakness of informal communication is that it is spontaneous and quick. This can lead to meaningful insights or inaccurate, misinterpreted and distorted information.

**2.2.2. Communication according to Direction**

**I. Downward Communication**

Downward communication flows from superiors to subordinates. This typically takes the form of orders, instructions and policy directives to people at lower levels in the company. Examples include feedback on job performance and information about policy and procedures.

Communication which flows from the superiors to subordinates is referred to as downward communication. In an organizational structure, the executives must exercise their powers to achieve the desired objectives which imply that they may be engaged in issuing orders, instructions and policy directives to the persons at the lower levels. This may be called downward communication. Under downward communication, immediate performance of a job is expected.

Katz And Kahn have identified live elements of downward communication

* Specific task directives; Job instructions.
* Information designed to produce understanding of the task and its relation to other organizational tasks; job rationale.
* Information about organizational procedures and practices.
* Feedback to the subordinate about his performance.
* Information of an ideological character to inculcate a sense of mission, indoctrination of goals.

Communication from superior to subordinate can be face to face as well as through written memos, orders, job descriptions etc.

***Cluster approach down a chain of command***

If communication has to pass through many levels of authority on its way down, there is delay as well as direction of the message because of the editing and simplifying etc. Communication in a cluster is faster and more effective than communication down in a chain of command.

**II. Upward Communication**

Upward communication flows from subordinates to superiors. This is the opposite of downward communication; it originates from people at lower levels and is directed to those who are above them. Examples include suggestion statements, reactions, reports and proposals.

In an upward communication, the persons from the lower level are expected to have communication with those who are above them.

Upward Communication can be divided into four categories on the basis of what employee says:

(i) about himself, his performance and problems,

(ii) about others and their problems,

(iii) about organizational policies and practices, and

(iv) about what needs to be done and how it can be done.

The main features of upward communication are:

(1) it is condensed and summarized as it passes through various levels in the hierarchy. It gives feedback on the extent of effectiveness of downward communication. This feedback is used for improving communication effectiveness.

(2) It provides the management about the viewpoints, reactions, attitudes, feelings and morale of employees.

(3) It provides means of control.

(4) Finally, it gives information and date for decision making.

Upward communication may get distorted owing to the nature of superior- subordinate relationships. An employee is not likely to give any information which may affect him adversely. Moreover, he may transmit wrong information to impress his superiors. It flows through many media e.g. chain of command, suggestion boxes, personal contacts, attitude and morale surveys, grievance procedure, private lines, labor unions etc.

**III. Horizontal Communication**

The Horizontal communication flows from people who are on the same level of the organization. This type of directional communication enables people to interact with their peers without involving people at other levels in the company. Examples include the communication between subordinates of one boss or between managers.

Communication takes place between two or more persons who are subordinates of the same person or those who are working on the same level of organization, the communication is known as horizontal (lateral) communication.

The communication between functional managers or among subordinates working under one boss, the communication between managers of various factories is the examples of such communication. Horizontal communication may be oral as well as written.

Horizontal Communication satisfies peoples’ needs to know from their own peers without taking into account other levels in the organization. It is really difficult for an organization to function efficiently without such horizontal communication flows. Although the formal organization design does not provide for such communication flows, it is needed for the coordination and integration of diverse organizational functions.

Since organizational horizontal communication ordinarily do not exist in facilitation is left to individual managers. Peer to peer communication necessary for co-ordination and can also provide social need satisfaction.

**2.2.3. According to Way of Expression**

**I. Oral or Verbal Communication**

Oral communication is a direct communication between two individuals. In oral communication both the parties i.e., sender and receiver exchange their ideas through oral words either in face to face conversation or through any mechanical or electrical device such as telephone, teleconference etc. When it is face to face, the person communicating can ask questions or explanations or sometimes when the communication is not properly understood, he can clarify meaning.

Oral communication is generally possible where there can be either a direct contact or message to be conveyed is not of permanent nature. Meetings and conferences, lectures and interviews are other media of such communication.

Oral communication enjoys certain advantages communication which may be enumerated as follows:

(i) Oral communication has the distinct advantage of being quick and prompt. It provides the opportunity to both the transmitter and receiver of the message to respond directly.

(ii) Oral communication facilitates close contact and thus fosters mutual exchange of ideas, facts, understanding and cooperation.

(iii) Oral communication through direct contact undoubtedly inculcates in the subordinates a sense of self-importance which in turn acts as a motivating factor.

(iv) Oral communication further enables the superior to make a quick appraisal of subordinate’s action and reaction to any message transmitted. This obviously helps the superior to minimize and avert conflicts, redesign plans and programmes according to the need of time and circumstances.

(v) The personality of the communicator is brought to bear in the communication process. This has good effect on the subordinates and they understand the communication properly.

(vi) It can bring a friendly and co-operative team spirit.

However, the following are the disadvantages of the oral communication:

(i) There is a possibility that the spoken words may not be clearly heard or understood.

(ii) It is not good for lengthy communications.

(iii) It requires the art of expressing accurately and appropriately, and listen to others emphatically.

(iv) It is inadequate where specific performance of policies and rules is needed.

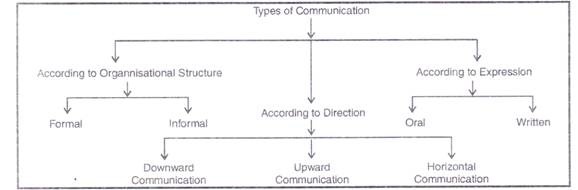
(v) The inexperienced subordinates do not follow the facial expressions and the tone of manager’s voice.

**II. Written Communication**

Written communication is the communication where the message or information exchanges by written words. When the communication is reduced to black and white (writing), it is called written communication. This includes written words, graphs, diagrams, pictures, etc. Written communications are extensively used in organizations.

Sometimes, this form of communication becomes indispensible as in the case of rules, orders, schedules or policy matters etc. The circulars, magazines, notes and manuals are some common forms of written communication.

It may be asserted from general observations that in all types of organizations both oral and written communication is in practice. Which form should be used and applied? Much depends on the message, its importance to receiver, and implication to functional aspects of the organization.



* 1. **Organizational Structure**

[Communication](https://www.managementstudyhq.com/overview-of-communication.html) is a very important part of any organization. It takes place among business entities, within markets, various groups of employees, buyers and sellers, service providers and clients, salesperson and prospective buyers, and within the organization and with the press.

Communication can be**internal, external, upward, downward, formal, informal, lateral,**

**Chapter Three: Communication: The backbone of PR**

**Unit Objectives:**

Upon completion of this unit, you are expected to:

* Explain the role of Communication in PR
* Identify the major levels in communication

The main goal of communication is to inform, persuade/motivate/influence, or achieve mutual understanding. Communication may take the form of news releases, news conferences, special events, brochures, speeches, newsletters, posters, and the like.

This stage is referred to as strategies and tactics/ or outbound (travelling away from) communication. In a PR plan, communication is the implementation of a decision. It is also the process and the means by which objectives are achieved.

**Definition**: Effective communication involves achieving one’s goals in a manner that, ideally, maintains and enhances the relationship in which it occurs. The definition suggests several important characteristics of communication competence.

**There is no “ideal” way to communication**

There are many kinds of competent communication. Some very successful people are serious, whereas others use humour; some are unreserved, whereas others are quiet; and some are straightforward, whereas others hint diplomatically.

The type of communication that succeeds in one situation might be a huge mistake in another. The mood your friend is in. The fact that whether the person you are communicating with is a peer or family member, and the culture of the person affect the effectiveness of your communication.

**Competence is situational**

You may be competent in some areas and less so in others. You might deal quite skillfully with peers but feel clumsy interacting with people much older or younger, wealthier or poorer, or more or less attractive than you. Although competent communication varies from one situation to another, scholars have identified several common denominators that characterize effective communication in most contexts.

**A wide range of behaviours- to be able to choose their actions from these wide ranges of behaviours**. Poor communicators are either constant jokers or aggressive or they are quiet in almost every situation.

**Ability to choose the most appropriate behaviour**

Simply possessing a large array of communication skills isn‘t a guarantee of effectiveness. It‘s also necessary to know which of these skills will work best in a particular situation. What is appropriate for one person won‘t be appropriate for another one at all.

**Skill at performing behaviours**

After you have chosen the most appropriate way to communicate, it‘s still necessary to perform the required skills effectively. There is a big difference between knowing *about* skill and being able to put it into practice. Public relations’ work is all about communication. After the research is conducted, the public relations practitioner designs a program to communicate with different publics. This makes communication to be the implementation stage of the public relations process.

But there are certain things that the PR communicator considers when planning a message on behalf of an employer or a client. In order to communicate effectively, communicators should ask themselves a series of questions before preparing any communication materials.

**Is the material (intended to convey messages) appropriate?**

A. For the sender? B. For the recipient?

**Is it meaningful?**

1. Does it stick to the subject? b. Is it geared to the recipient‘s interest, not the sender‘s?

**Is it memorable?**

a. In phraseology or metaphor? b. Through the use of visual or aural devices?

**Is it understandable?**

1. In both denotative and connotative language? b. Graphically or aurally?

**Is it believable?**

a. Does the audience trust the spokesperson?

b. Does the communication exhibit expertise in the subject matter?

Many a wrongly directed or unnecessary communication has been created or dropped by using a screen like this. But communication should determine exactly what objective is sought through the communication besides to examining the proposed content. The five objectives listed below can be the possible objectives for a communicator:

**Message exposure-** making messages available to all people through various channels of communication so that intended audiences are exposed to the message in various forms

**Accurate dissemination of the message-** So that the intended audience trusts the message and retains all or part of it

**Acceptance of the message-** based on its view of reality, the audience not only retains the message but accepts it as valid.

**Attitude change-** the audience not only believes the message but makes a verbal or mental commitment to change behaviour as a result of the message.

**Change in overt behaviour**. Members of the audience change their current behaviour or begin a new behaviour.

**Models** are theoretical and simplified representations of the real world. A model is not an explanatory device by itself, but it helps to formulate a theory. It suggests relationships, and it is often confused with theory because the relationship between a model and a theory is close. “A model is a consciously simplified description in graphic form of a piece of reality. A model seeks to show the main elements of any structure or process and the relationships between these elements.” (McQuail 2000)

Model is a structure of symbols and operating rules which is supposed to match a set of relevant points in an existing structure or process. Models are indispensable for understanding the more complex processes. So a successful pictorial model offers three major advantages:

* They **organize concept-** by ordering and relating systems to each other and by providing us with images of the whole that we might not otherwise perceive. **Models explain processes** by providing in simplified way information which would otherwise be complicated or ambiguous.
* **They predict outcomes-** by assigning probabilities to various outcomes, and hence for formulating a hypothesis in research the most general terms of models of communication are Sender (encoder), a channel, a message, a receiver (decoder), in effect, a context in which communication occurs and feedback- any process by which the communicator obtains information about whether and how the intended receiver has indeed received the message.
* **Two-step flow theory**

A study conducted in 1940s by **Lazarsfeld** and his colleagues reveals that ideas often flowed from the mass media to opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of society.

**Characteristics of successful communication**

* Communication is considered as successful if the message is received by the target audience. It also has to get the audience's **attention**, must be **understood**, must be **believed**, must be **remembered**, and ultimately must be **acted upon.**
* **Receiving the Message-** a message is received by the audience when the sender and the receiver have a shared experience (a common language and even an overlapping cultural or educational background).
* It also gets acceptance if there is two-way communication, or when the communication between the sender and the receiver is balanced.
* **One-way communication**, from sender to receiver, only disseminates information and is less effective than two-way communication. The most effective two-way communication, of course, is two people talking to each other. Small-group discussion is also effective. In both forms, the message is fortified by gestures, facial expressions, intimacy, tone of voice, and the opportunity for instant feedback. If the listener asks a question or appears puzzled, the speaker has an instant cue and can rephrase the information or amplify a point.
* **Barriers to communication** tend to mount as one advance to large-group meetings and, ultimately, to the mass media. Organizational materials can reach thousands and, through the mass media, even millions of people at the same time, but the psychological and physical distance between sender and receiver are considerably lengthened. Communication is less effective because the audience no longer is involved with the source.
* No immediate feedback is possible, and the message may undergo distortion as it passes through mass-media gatekeepers. As they implement communication strategies, public relations personnel need to give it careful attention, although it is impractical, indeed nearly impossible, to disseminate messages widely on a one-to-one basis.

**Paying Attention to the Message**

Although in PR much emphasis is given to the formation and dissemination of messages, this effort is wasted if the audience pays no attention. Much of the recent findings on media’s effect on audience (such as the uses and gratifications theory and Klapper’s selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention) place emphasis on the active role of the audience.

Rather, the audience is made up of individuals who demand something from the communication to which they are exposed, and who select those that are likely to be useful to them. Its basic premise is that the communication process is interactive. The communicator wants to inform and even persuade; the recipient wants to be entertained, informed, or altered to opportunities that can fulfill individual needs. In other words, audiences come to messages for very different reasons.

While talking about paying attention, it is important to know the following points:

1. Exposure doesn't equate with attention, memory or understanding   
2.Audiences are Active   
3. According to Uses and Gratification Theory, people use media to:

* find out what is happening (surveillance)
* be entertained
* reinforce their opinion and identity
* decide between buying a product/service

4. Strategies for active and passive audiences --Passive: need style and creativity, such as photos, illustrations, catchy slogans, use of celebrities. --Active: more detailed information, such as brochures, speeches, articles, etc.

Other Attention Getting Concepts:

**Appeal to the senses of hearing and sight** (83% of learning is accomplished through sight; hearing accounts for 11%). For this reason, speakers often use visual aids.

These figures have obvious implications for the public relations practitioner. Any communication strategy should, if possible, include vehicles of communication designed to tap the senses of sight or hearing or a combination of the two. In other words, a variety of communication tools is needed, including news releases, photos, slide presentations, videotapes billboards, newsletters, radio announcements, video news releases, media interviews, and news conferences.

**Raise need level**; "hook" by offering something of their benefits. Another research suggests that audience attention can be generated if the communicator raises a “need” level first. The idea is to “hook” an audiences’ attention by beginning the message with something that will make its members’ lives easier or benefit them in some way.

Public relations writers should also be aware that audiences’ attention is highest at the beginning of a message. Thus, it is wise to state the major point at the beginning, give details in the middle, and end with a summary of the message. Another technique to garner audiences’ attention is to begin a message with a statement that reflects audiences’ values and predispositions.

* **Understanding the Message**

Communication can take place only if the sender and receiver have a common understanding of the symbols being used. The degree to which two people understand each other is heavily dependent on their common knowledge of word symbols. Even if the communicators speak the same language and live in the same country, the effectiveness of their communication depends on such factors as education, social class, regional differences, nationality, and cultural background. Another issue that helps audience understand a message is making it simple and clear.

Besides, as a public relations practitioner, you have to use examples, symbols, acronyms, and slogans; avoid jargon, clichés (overused expressions) and hype (propagandistic) words, euphemisms (vague), and discriminatory language

**Believing the Message**

Do members of the audience perceive the source as **knowledgeable** and **expert** on the subject? Do they perceive the source as **honest** and **objective** or just representing a special interest? Audiences, for example, ascribe lower credibility to statements in an advertisement than to the same information contained in a news article because news articles are selected by media gatekeepers.

**Source credibility** is a problem for any spokesperson for an organization because of perceived bias. Even organization executives, whom the media rate as the most knowledgeable sources within an organization, get low rating. The problem of source credibility is the main reason that organizations, whenever possible, use respected outside experts or celebrities as representatives to convey their messages.

The hope is even if organizations are perceived initially as not being very credible sources; people may retain the information and eventually separate the source from the opinion. A second variable in believability is the context of the message. Action (performance) speaks louder than a stack of news releases.

A barrier to the believability of messages is the audience’s predispositions. People will not believe a message contrary to their predispositions unless the communicator can introduce information that causes them to question their beliefs. This can be solved by making the target audience aware that circumstances have changed. Giving information about new developments or discoveries, and using an unexpected spokesperson also helps in solving the problem. This is an unthreatening way to break through a person’s opinions.

**Remembering the Message**

Many messages prepared by public relations personnel are repeated extensively, for several reasons: Repetition is necessary because all members of a target audience don’t see or hear the message at the same time. Not everyone reads the newspaper on a particular day or watches the same television news program. Repetition reminds the audience so that there is less chance of a failure to remember the message.

If a source has high credibility, repetition prevents erosion of opinion change. Repetition helps the audience remember the message itself. Studies have shown that advertising is quickly forgotten if not repeated constantly. Repetition can lead to improved learning and increase the chance of penetrating audience indifference or resistance. Researchers say that repetition, or redundancy, also is necessary to offset the “noise” surrounding a message. The key effective communication and retention of the message is to convey information in a variety of ways, using multiple communication channels.

**Acting on the Message**

Public relations personnel communicate messages on behalf of organizations to change perceptions, attitudes, opinion, or behaviour in some way. Marketing communications, in particular, has the objective of convincing people to buy good and services.

**Roger’s diffusion of innovations theory and the message’s adoption process**

Rogers distinguishes four crucial steps in the process of diffusion and adoption:

* the knowledge of the innovation itself (information)
* the communication of the innovation (persuasion)
* the decision to adopt or reject the innovation (adoption or rejection) and
* the confirmation of the innovation by the individual (Servaes 1999: 24).

The role of mass media lies in the first stage of the process.

On the other hand, the crucial task (influencing individuals to develop an attitude favourable to a certain organization) was left to interpersonal communication. But it does not necessarily mean that a person needs to go through all the stages to adapt a given idea or product.

**Media of Public relations**

***News Release***

A **news release** (or **press release**), the most widely used PR tool, consists of one or more typewritten sheets of information (usually 8½ by 11 inches) issued to generate publicity or shed light on a subject of interest. A **press kit** (or **media kit**) supports the publicity gained at staged events such as press conferences or open houses. Such a kit includes a basic fact sheet of information about the event, a program or schedule of activities, and a list of the participants and their biographical data.

The news release is a simple document whose purpose is the dissemination of information in a ready- to- publish form. Editors of print and broadcast media to whom news releases are sent judge them on the basis of news interest for their audience and timeliness, and in some instances on their adaptability to the medium’s form. No payment is required for the publication or broadcast. Editors want the main facts to be stated at the beginning paragraph of a release, for quick recognition.

A news release faces intense competition when it arrives on the editor’s desk, against a number of other releases. As they scan the releases, editors make almost instant decisions, assigning each release to one of the three categories.

a) obvious news: copy that is certain to be used

b) may be- stories possibly worth developing if a reporter has the time

c) discard- releases of insufficient interest to the receiving editor’s audience and those of marginal value that would require too much effort to develop.

News releases that are prepared according to the criteria described in the following sections have the best chance of being accepted for publication, assuming that their content is news worthy.

Physical appearance

–Use plain white A4 size paper (8 ½ by 11 inch paper)

* Identify the sender in the upper- left- hand corner of the page, listing name of the organization, its address, contact person’s name and address
* Below the identification, state for immediate release if the material is intended for immediate publication or indicate the desired publication time; for example, to be released at 6:00 pm. Feb. 12 if a time restriction is necessary.
* Leave two inches of space for editing convenience before starting the text
* Start the text with a clearly stated summary lead containing timely, relevant and important information
* Leave wide margins, double space the copy to give editors room in which to edit the material
* Never split a paragraph from one page to the next.
* If the story exceeds more than a page, put the word “more” at the bottom of that unfinished page.

**Content**

There are few essential rules for content:

* begin the news release with a tightly written summary lead and state the fundamentals- who, what, when, where and why- early in the copy
* Be concise, edit the copy to remove excess words and jargons
* Never use technical language in release intended for a general audience
* Be contained that every fact and title in the release is correct and that every name is spelled properly

**A fact sheet-** is a quick reference tool for reporters. It summarizes the key points about an event, a product or a company to help reporters get a quick grasp or overview.

A newsletter- is designed as an informal publication to deliver information to a target audience at regular intervals. Newsletters are frequently used by:

* Corporations to communicate with employees and stakeholders
* Non-profit agencies and associations- to reach members and friends
* Sales organizations to deliver information to representatives in the field

***Photography***

Photos of events, products in use, new equipment, or newly promoted executives can lend credence or interest to a dull news story. In fact, a photo tells the story faster.

***Feature Articles***

Many publications, particularly trade publications, run feature articles-or *soft news* about companies, products, or services. Such articles may be written by a PR person, the publication’s stuff, or a third party (such as a free-lance business writer). Feature articles give the company or product credibility. Editors like them because they have no immediate deadline and can be published whenever the editor chooses.

**Chapter Four: Public Opinion, Persuasion, propaganda and PR**

**Learning Objectives**

* After completing this section you are expected to:
* explain what constitutes public opinion and how it is formed,
* describe what is meant by persuasion and what affects it, and
* Select the appropriate techniques that apply in public relation activity.

**Public opinion and public relations**

Public opinion must be understood and dealt with PR professionals. This is because it provides the psychological environment in which organizations can prosper or perish. PR practitioners should know what constitutes public opinion and how this major force is formed. They should also constantly engage in interpreting shifts in public opinion and at the same time attempting to influence it through persuasion and communications.

**Public opinion: Definition**

Public opinion- is the sum of individual opinions on an issue affecting those individuals. Or, it is the collection of views held by persons interested in the subject. Thus, a person unaffected by, or uninterested in (and perhaps unaware of) an issue does not contribute to public opinion on the subject. Unusual events play an important role in swinging public opinion temporarily from one extreme to another.

**Opinion leaders and their characteristics-** are people who are knowledgeable and articulate about specific issues. They are:

* Highly interested in the subject or issue
* Better informed on the issue than the average person
* High consumers of mass media messages
* Early adopters of new ideas
* Good organizers who can get other people to take action

According to sociologists, there are formal and informal opinion leaders.

* **Formal**- because they are elected as leaders or officials. E.g. presidents of companies or heads of membership groups. The late TDA’s chairman, Araya Zerihun.
* **Informal** opinion leaders- may be role models who are admired and respected because they can exert peer pressure on others to go along with something.

People such as Haile Gebresilasie, Prof. EfremYishaq can be examples of such opinion leaders. Such people can be influential because they can attract attention and make people aware of a topic.

Understanding public opinion and how it is formed is fundamental to PR because such knowledge enables the practitioner to:

* Effectively monitor shifts in public opinion
* identify formal and informal opinion leaders who should be reached with specific messages

**The idea of Persuasion**

* It is pervasive in our lives. It is difficult to imagine any human activity in which persuasion does not exist.

**Persuasion** can be defined as communication designed to influence choices.

Or, it can be defined as any communication, intended or not, that causes a change in the receivers’ attitude, belief, or action.

**Persuasion** can be used to:

* Change or neutralize hostile opinion
* Activate positive but hidden attitudes
* Preserve favorable opinion

The most difficult persuasion task is to turn hostile opinion into favorable ones. The task is much easier if the message compatible with the person’s general inclination towards a subject because persuasion here reinforces of strengthens favorable opinions.

**Factors in persuasive communication**

A number of factors are involved in persuasive communication, and the public relations practitioner should be knowledgeable about each of them.

* Audience analysis- you should know your audience. This helps you to make your message compatible with group values.
* Source credibility- expertise and sincerity
* Clarity of messages- Complexity causes failure
* Suggestion for action-provide detailed data and ideas on how to do it.
* Use statistics, comparisons, surveys, examples, evidences, emotional appeals, etc.
* Timing and context- E.g. conservation of water during drought (appropriate because the drought time)
* Audience participation- audience involvement through discussion and decision-making

**Ethics of persuasion**

* PR practitioners must conduct their activities in an ethical manner.
* The following ethical devices should be kept in mind by every PR professional.
* Do not use false, fabricated, misrepresented, distorted or irrelevant evidence to support argument or claims.
* Don’t intentionally use suspicious or illogical reasoning.
* Don’t represent yourself as informed or an expert on a subject when you are not
* Don’t use irrelevant appeals to divert attention from the issue at hand.
* Among the appeals that commonly serve such a purpose include attacks on the opponent’s character, reference to terms such as God or devil because they cause positive or negative reactions.
* Don’t ask your audience to link your idea or proposal to emotion-laden values, motives, or goals to which it actually is not related.
* Don’t deceive your audience by concealing your real purpose, yourself interest, the group you represent, or you position as an advocate of view point.
* Don’t over simplify complex situations into either/or polar views or choices.
* Don’t pretend certainty when tentativeness or degree of probability would be more accurate
* Don’t advocate something in which you don’t believe yourself.

**Propaganda and its techniques**

Definition:- Propaganda can be defined as the systematic, widespread promotion of certain set of ideas, doctrines, etc. to further one’s own cause. The word had a positive connotation around 17th century. It took extremely negative connotations in the 20th century. Today’s connotations of propaganda include deceit and lie which opposing groups accuse each other of using.

The difference between PR and propaganda is:

* PR must be credible, whereas propaganda is liable to invite suspicion or, at least disagreement.
* Propaganda aims at keeping the government in power but PR aims at getting its services understood and used properly.

**Propaganda techniques**

* ***Testimonials***- frequently used to achieve credibility. If some well known person drinks coca-cola, everybody is interested (will feel safe) to drink it.
* ***Bandwagon***- is the implication or direct statement that “Everyone wants the product why not you?”
* ***Transfer***- the technique of associating the person, product or organization with something that has high or low credibility depending on the intention of the message.

Public relations student should be aware of the above techniques to ensure that he or she does not intentionally use them in such a way as to deceive and mislead the public.

**Chapter Five: Ethics and Professionalism**

**Introduction**

Every society has to live by certain rules, standards and codes of behavior. All of us, whether in our work or in our private life, are expected to have certain standards of behavior and we expect those with whom we have dealings with to have them too. In other words we are expected, and we expect others, to behave in an ethical way.

Ethics are defined as set of moral values held by an individual or group. It is the act of mind for distinguishing what is right from what is wrong, determining which is just and which is unjust; and deciding which act is fair and which is not. The term ethics also has a lot to do with common values like loyalty, openness, fairness, integrity, honesty and so forth.

It is the act of mind for distinguishing what is **right** from what is **wrong**, determining which is **just** and which is **unjust**; and deciding which act is **fair** and which is not. The term ethics also has a lot to do with common values like **loyalty**, **openness**, **fairness**, **integrity**, **honesty** and so forth.

There are three basic value orientations; these are

(1) absolutists,

(2) existentialists, and

(3) situationalists.

The absolutist believes every decision is either “right” or “wrong”, in spite of its consequences. The existentialist, whose choices are made without a prearranged value system, decides on the basis of immediate rational choice. Situationalist decides based on the harm the act may cause. The professionals of public relations may fall somewhere between the three categories.

In the meantime, media scholars strongly propose public relation professionals to take five stakeholders into consideration while they are in an ethical dilemma.

* The public interest,
* The employer,
* The professional organization’s code of ethics, and
* Their personal values.
* **Codes of Ethics**
* Code of ethics may contain a few general principles and key values (lists virtues like honest, loyalty, integrity, expertise, etc.) that you may think are necessary even in your common sense.

**Code of conduct in PR**

Professional organizations, such as The Institute of Public Relations (IPR) have written or perceived ethical standards, or codes of conduct, by which they expect their members to abide by.

One of the main objectives of these organizations is to set out and establish and sometimes prescribe standards of professional and ethical conduct and ensure the observance of such standards. The code clearly sets out what is, and is not, expected of members in all their dealings.

**Some Common principles and code of ethics** from the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), the Global Alliance for Public Relations GAPR and the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

* A member shall conduct his or her professional life in accord with the public interest.
* A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity with carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process.
* A member shall deal fairly with the public, with past and present clients, and with fellow practitioners giving due respect to the opinions of others.
* A member shall adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth avoiding extravagant claims or unfair comparisons and giving credit for ideas and words borrowed from others.
* A member shall not knowingly disseminate false and misleading information. He/she has to take proper care to check all information prior to its dissemination.
* A member shall not engage in corrupting the integrity of channels of communication
* The code also prohibits serving undisclosed interest and forbids also representing conflicting or competing interests and damaging the professional reputation or practice of another practitioner.