Functions of a PR Agency

Media in the Contemporary World

Public Relations as a Profession

* The way business students are attracted to advertising agencies, media students should be attracted to PR agencies.
* There are so many PR agencies in the country.
* There are several personals also doing PR independently.

• Ad agencies rely on aesthetic value of visuals and writing used in an ad whereas PR agencies solely use on the combination and flow of words.

• Strategic planning -- campaign creation and execution

• Key messaging -- distilling stories into accessible messages

• Media relations -- outreach to reporters, producers and editors

• Writing -- press releases, collateral copy, speeches, web copy, etc.

• Event planning -- parties, press conferences, etc.

• Social media -- leading and cultivating the online conversation for clients and the agency

• Graphic design -- likely for much larger agencies, art direction

• Video production -- again, for larger agencies, video content.

• Media training -- role playing for clients going

into real interviews

• Presentation coaching -- helping clients maximize their presentations

• Spokesperson duties -- stepping in as the face

of clients

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conferences, etc.

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The Most Important Function of a PR Agency

• Writing press releases and articles

• Getting them placed

• Identifying beat journalists

• Media monitoring.

• Feeding information to media with

undisclosed sources.

• Managing interviews.

• Crisis management.

A press release serves a number of purposes.

• It is used to announce an event.

• Can be used to educate the media about a topic.

• In any case, it fulfills the need of having

something important in writing.

• And the best thing is that it is FREE OF COST.

• While you want to be thorough and include all

the information, and the underlying data, you

also need to be short and snappy.

• If your release is too wordy, it will likely be

ignored.

• An ideal press release doesn’t exceed more

than a page.

**Prepare Yourself**

• Before you write your release, sit down and list the points you wish to make. Be clear.

• While you need to include enough background information to educate, you don't need to say everything in the release.

**Answer Queries**

• The first paragraph should include the "five W's" -- who,

what, where, when, and why.

• The next paragraphs should include an expansion on the purpose of the event, and some history of what led up to it.

• Be simple and explain the basics. Don't assume that the person who will be reading the release will necessarily be up to date on recent developments in your issue.

**Give Some Space to the Spokesperson**

• The release should include a quote from the

spokesperson for your organization. Try to be

pithy, clear, and to the point. This will very often be

the quote used in the print media. Make it count.

**Close it**

• Finally, include a brief description of the organization. This is particularly important if you are a new organization, a re-formed organization, or as yet unknown to the media.

**Contact Details**

• Mention contact details of the person who can answer any queries on the subject addressed in your press release.

• At times reporters and editors make a story from their own spin making your press release the basis for their story. Their inability to contact you for information may give rise to speculative writing destroying the whole purpose of your story which was meant for communicating factual position.

• Remember that press release do not occupy paid space and it is at the discretion of the newspaper to make any amends which it deems feasible.

**Translation**

• Translation is the other half of this job. It is surprising that most PR agencies and companies don’t really care about translating a press release and English releases are also sent to Urdu newspapers. Remember that due to shortage of time newspaper translator may pick 3-4 sentences of your release for translation or even do a lousy job on an idea which was otherwise beautifully worded in English.

• Please make a note that in our country Urdu readership is far greater than the English readership.

**Timing**

• Morning newspaper editors and reporters usually

reach their offices after 3:00pm and work late hours till

midnight. 3:00pm to 5:00pm is the right time for

sending press releases. Appearance of anything sent

after 5:00pm than depends on the importance of the

issue. In principal the chances of appearance start

diminishing the later it gets after 6:00pm.

**Better Avoid Sundays**

• You may notice that most of the space in Sunday editions of different newspapers is occupied by advertisements. In fact at times there are more ads than news. So the chances of occupying space with your PR are minimum on Sundays.

• **Chase Them**

• All press releases should be followed with a press call. Be thorough with your calls. This is when your past dealings with media people are important. Be persistent. Just because your story was not covered after your last call, or even the last ten calls, does not mean that it will not be covered this time. Sometimes it depends on what else newsworthy is going on at that time.

• In many ways the press calls you make are more important than the press release. It is during the call that you have the opportunity to really sell your story. In addition, press calls give the reporter the opportunity to ask questions.

• It is during press calls that important relationships are built with the media.

**You Better Rehearse**

• Think through what you have to say very carefully before you ever lift the receiver. Write it down or rehearse. Start with the less important calls in order to smooth and develop your "rap." Be concise and clear. Always get the "who," "what," "where," and "when" out first.

**And Don’t Lose Heart**

• What does not get a response the first time, only builds for your next call. No call is a wasted call. Each one helps keep your cause in the forefront for the next release.

• Newspapers allocate different sectors to

different journalists as beats.

• For example Oil & Gas, Health, Education, Power Supply, Civic Issues, Business & Economy etc are all beats.

• Depending on your client or the company with which you are associated you need to develop a list of beat journalists of that particular beat.

• Once you identify them, next comes the

relationship building part.

• Exchange of information, answers to queries, interviews of company officials and press releases will be interaction points with these journalists.

• Media interaction is an important part of an

overall public relations effort.

• This provides your company free space to put across your point and you should make every effort to make most of it.

• Unlike an advertisement you have the luxury to discuss many issues.

Ask the following questions. The idea is to fully

prepare you before the meeting:

1. What is the angle of the interview? Is it to discuss an industry issue? Is it to discuss some issues in the company? Is it only to get advertisement support?

2. Is the interview for Television, Radio, Print or the Internet?

3. Will the reporter be interviewing anyone else for the same

story?

4. How much time will you have for the interview?

5. What is the date the story will air/appear?

• **Exchange Company Information and Profiles**

• **List of Questions**

• **Add Your Own Questions**

• **Look for the Publication/Program**

• **Send Qs to the Relevant Departments**

• **Compile Answers**

• **Anticipate Qs.**

• **Add Value**

• **Add Value**

• **Add Illustrations**

• **Avoid Jargon**

• **Off the Record**

• **Use Background to Your Advantage**

• **Personal Appearance**

• **Prior Arrangements in Case Interviewer is**

**Visiting**

• **Prior Arrangements in Case Interviewee is**

**Visiting**

• **No Interruptions**

• **Post Interview Follow-up**

• **Word of Thanks**

ENDS