

Public Relations Management

AHMAD ESSA ALYAQOUB

South Valley University, Faculty of Physical Education, Department of Sports Management

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Abstract: Public relations emerged because humans and organizations are social by nature and depend on communication to build understanding and trust. As societies and institutions grew more complex, studying and influencing public opinion became essential for success. Public relations is both a science—based on research and analysis—and an art that requires creativity and interpersonal skills. Its purpose is to create positive relationships between organizations and their audiences through honesty, transparency, and mutual respect. The philosophy of public relations emphasizes persuasion over coercion, beginning with internal communication before addressing the public. Ultimately, it aligns organizational goals with societal values, promotes social responsibility, and builds a positive reputation based on truth and cooperation.

Keywords: Public relations, creativity and interpersonal skills, mutual respect.

1. INTRODUCTION

By nature, humans are social beings who do not live in isolation. Life requires communication and cooperation, and individuals leave a positive or negative impact on others, which is reflected in their actions. Therefore, the adaptation of individuals and groups to social reality is essential for the common good. Similarly, organizations do not operate in isolation from their communities; they need them, and they need the community. Good relations and mutual understanding of roles are necessary. With the widening gap between organizations and their audiences, and the increasing number of these audiences, it has become imperative to understand the opinions of individuals and groups in order to formulate and explain policies, thereby gaining trust, respect, and support.

Democratic governments strive to gain public trust because the public is the implementer of policies, and their survival depends on public support. With the intertwining of interests, the diversity of desires, and the growing power of public opinion, understanding the motivations of the public and gaining their cooperation has become an integral part of the daily work of managers in all social, religious, political, and economic organizations. Hence, the need arose for specialists to cultivate positive relationships between institutions and their publics, leading to the establishment of public relations departments in ministries and organizations.

Public opinion has become a significant political, social, and economic force, necessitating an understanding of its formation, the means by which it is influenced, and the methods used to guide it. Public relations and public opinion represent two fundamental areas of media work today, requiring in-depth study and the selection of appropriate media channels for effective influence.

The function of public relations focuses on building strong connections between an organization and its internal and external audiences to achieve the highest levels of mutual understanding and comprehensive knowledge. This enhances internal productivity and strengthens external reputation and standing. Public relations is no longer merely an activity between an organization and its public; it has become a social philosophy that addresses the problems of the individual in modern society and helps them adapt to its developments, thereby achieving social harmony. The complexities of the modern city, the intertwining of interests, and the specialization of groups have created a need for organized, scientific methods to introduce groups to one another and gain their approval; this is the domain of public relations.

2. PUBLIC RELATIONS

2.1 Definition of Public Relations Management

The term "public relations" emerged in the late 19th century and became widespread in the mid-20th century. Its definitions are numerous, reflecting its use to describe a wide range of activities. Webster's Dictionary defines it as a set of activities

undertaken by organizations to create positive relationships with their various audiences and to explain themselves to society in order to gain its approval. This definition indicates that public relations is practiced in all institutions—governmental, non-governmental, industrial, commercial, and service-oriented—and that its goal is to build positive relationships with internal and external audiences.

This definition is criticized for considering public relations merely an "activity" and failing to recognize its scientific or artistic nature. Public relations is broader, encompassing measurement, analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation, all carried out by specialists. Christian views it as an effort to influence the public through the media to create a positive image of the organization, which supports it during crises and encourages its activities. The Institute of Public Relations defines it as a planned, deliberate, and supported effort to establish and maintain understanding and trust between an organization and its publics. The term "public" encompasses all groups with whom the organization interacts.

These definitions agree that the efforts are deliberate and planned, not ad hoc. A perspective has also been proposed that considers public relations a social philosophy of management expressed through policies and practices supported by reciprocal communication with the public, aiming for mutual understanding and a positive reputation; however, this description may seem too general. Seidel offered a definition emphasizing that it is an ongoing process of guiding an organization to gain the trust of its users and audiences through internal activity (self-criticism) and external activity (communication and dissemination).

The British Institute of Public Relations (1948) defined it as promoting understanding and strong connections between an organization and its groups, resulting in a positive reputation and lasting relationship. Researchers differ on whether it is a tactical art or a science. Art is associated with skill in dealing with people and gaining their trust, while science is based on organized facts and an empirical methodology. It is generally accepted that the relationship between art and science is close; public relations is both a science and an art: it is based on sociology and research methods, and applied skillfully and innovatively.

The conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. Public relations is a science based on codified theories and experiences.
2. It is an art that relies on practical skills and individual aptitude.
3. It requires specialists who gauge public opinion and advise management.
4. It is a means of preparing the public to accept new ideas and responsibilities.
5. It is based on understanding and cooperation between institutions and their publics.
6. It utilizes communication and research tools to achieve its objectives.
7. It has become a necessity in all institutions, at all levels, and in all societies.

2.2. The Philosophy of Public Relations Management

The fields of public relations are numerous (governmental, commercial, industrial, military, and political), but they share a common philosophy and similar tools, despite the different target audiences. This philosophy is based on the following principles:

1. Humans are social beings who need others to satisfy their evolving needs.
2. They are characterized by individuality and change; this necessitates considering differences in communication.
3. They are influenced by and influence social situations; communication breakdowns weaken the dynamism of relationships.
4. Persuasion respects reason and dignity, unlike coercion.
5. Starting with the internal audience before the external one (fair work environment, training, participation, innovation).
6. Aligning the organization's goals with the goals of society and establishing social responsibility.
7. Forming a sound public opinion through truthful reporting, especially during crises.
8. In government: Explaining development goals and plans and providing accurate information to enhance public oversight.
9. Ethical commitment: Honesty in form and content, consistency between words and deeds, and rejection of deception.
10. Organization and planning: Clear objectives.