

The Practice Of Public Relations 11th Edition

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The increasing role of public relations as a crisis management function: An empirical examination of communication restrategising efforts among destination organisation managers in the wake of 11th September, 2001

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS: crisis management, public relations, situational theory, crisis communication, strategic communication

The 11th September terrorist attacks on the USA have greatly impacted on the tourism industry, causing managers to restructure their communication programmes. This national investigation illustrates the increasing role of public relations as a crisis management function. The study sought to determine if public relations activities are increasing and advertising activities are decreasing among tourism managers in the wake of 9/11. Examined within a crisis communication framework, the situational theory developed by Grunig served as the theoretical underpinning for the study. In particular, the study examines how messages are

being restructured, primary publics are being refocused and communication tactics (channels) are being retooled among convention and visitors' bureau (CVB) managers (destination organisation managers). Employing a web-based survey to randomly selected CVB communication managers throughout the USA, findings indicate that since the attacks use of public relations tactics for promotional purposes has increased while use of advertising tactics has decreased. Additionally, more than one-quarter of the tourism managers have redirected their primary public focus and nearly half have redesigned their promotional messages to support revamped organisational objectives.

INTRODUCTION

The four functions of management (planning, leading, organising, and controlling) are definitively cited throughout the business and management literature. But throughout the past decade much of this literature has begun including 'communicating' as a fifth management function. The rationale behind this addition is solid. Communication is one of the key components in the strategic planning process. Combined, strategic planning and communication form 'strategic communication', which has earned a highly re-

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The Practice of Public Relations 11th Edition is a seminal text in the field of public relations, offering a comprehensive overview of the principles, strategies, and techniques that practitioners use to manage communication between organizations and their various stakeholders. As the field of public relations continues to evolve in response to technological advancements, social media, and changing public expectations, this edition serves as a crucial resource for students, educators, and professionals alike. The book encompasses a wide array of topics, from the foundational theories of public relations to practical applications in diverse organizational contexts.

Understanding Public Relations

Public relations (PR) is often misunderstood as merely a communication tool or a marketing

strategy. However, it encompasses a broader scope of activities aimed at building and maintaining a positive image for individuals, organizations, and brands. PR involves managing relationships and fostering effective communication with various stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, media, and the general public.

The Definition and Purpose of Public Relations

The practice of public relations can be defined as:

- Strategic Communication: Crafting messages that align with an organization's goals.
- Relationship Management: Building and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders.
- Reputation Management: Protecting and enhancing the reputation of an organization.

The primary purposes of public relations include:

1. Creating Awareness: Informing the public about organizational activities, products, or services.
2. Building Credibility: Establishing trust between the organization and its stakeholders.
3. Crisis Management: Responding effectively to negative events that could harm an organization's reputation.
4. Engaging Communities: Fostering relationships with local communities and addressing their interests and concerns.

The Evolution of Public Relations

Public relations has undergone significant changes since its inception. Understanding this evolution is crucial for contemporary practitioners as it provides context for current practices.

Historical Milestones

1. Early Beginnings: The origins of public relations can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where leaders used communication to influence public opinion.
2. The Press Agency Era (1850s-1900s): This period saw the emergence of press agents who sought media coverage for their clients, often using sensationalism.
3. The Public Information Era (1900s-1950s): Led by figures like Ivy Lee, this era emphasized transparency and factual reporting, focusing on disseminating information to the public.
4. The Two-Way Symmetrical Model (1960s-Present): This model advocates for mutual understanding and dialogue between organizations and their stakeholders, emphasizing feedback and relationship-building.

Core Concepts in Public Relations

The 11th edition of The Practice of Public Relations delves into several core concepts essential for effective PR practice.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is fundamental in PR. It involves:

- Setting Objectives: Defining clear, measurable goals that align with organizational mission and vision.
- Identifying Target Audiences: Understanding who the stakeholders are and tailoring messages accordingly.
- Developing Strategies and Tactics: Crafting detailed plans to achieve objectives, including choosing communication channels and methods.

Research and Evaluation

Research is critical in public relations for several reasons:

- Understanding Stakeholder Perspectives: Gaining insights into public perception and expectations.
- Measuring Effectiveness: Evaluating the impact of PR campaigns and activities on stakeholder attitudes and behaviors.
- Continuous Improvement: Using research findings to refine strategies and tactics.

Media Relations

Media relations is a vital component of public relations. It involves:

- Building Relationships with Journalists: Establishing rapport and credibility with media professionals.
- Crafting Press Releases: Writing informative and engaging press releases that capture media attention.
- Managing Media Coverage: Responding to inquiries and addressing any misinformation that may arise.

Tools and Techniques in Public Relations

The 11th edition of The Practice of Public Relations highlights various tools and techniques that PR practitioners use to communicate effectively.

Digital Communication

With the rise of the internet and social media, digital communication has transformed public relations, providing new opportunities and challenges:

1. Social Media Platforms: Utilizing platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for engagement and outreach.
2. Content Creation: Developing blog posts, videos, and infographics to convey messages creatively.
3. Online Reputation Management: Monitoring and responding to online mentions to maintain a positive brand image.

Events and Sponsorships

Organizing events and sponsorships can enhance visibility and foster relationships:

- Press Conferences: Hosting events to announce significant news or developments.
- Community Events: Engaging with local communities through sponsorships and participation in events.
- Trade Shows and Expos: Showcasing products and services to a targeted audience.

Crisis Communication

Crisis communication is a crucial aspect of public relations, particularly in today's fast-paced information environment. Effective crisis communication involves:

- Preparedness: Developing crisis communication plans that outline procedures and protocols.
- Timely Response: Quickly addressing issues to mitigate negative impact.
- Transparency: Providing accurate information to stakeholders during a crisis.

The Future of Public Relations

As the field of public relations continues to evolve, several trends are shaping its future.

Emerging Technologies

- Artificial Intelligence: The use of AI tools for data analysis, content creation, and audience engagement.
- Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality: Creating immersive experiences for stakeholders and enhancing storytelling.

Increased Focus on Ethics and Social Responsibility

Organizations are increasingly held accountable for their actions. Public relations practitioners must prioritize ethical considerations and demonstrate social responsibility. This involves:

- Transparency: Being honest and open in communication.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Promoting diverse perspectives within organizations and communication efforts.
- Sustainability: Addressing environmental concerns and promoting sustainable practices.

Conclusion

The Practice of Public Relations 11th Edition serves as an essential resource for understanding the dynamic and multifaceted field of public relations. By exploring its historical evolution, core concepts, tools, and techniques, the book equips readers with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complexities of modern PR practice. As the field continues to adapt to changing technologies and societal expectations, practitioners must remain proactive, innovative, and ethical in their approach to communication and relationship management. The insights gleaned from this edition will undoubtedly contribute to the development of future public relations professionals and the enhancement of the profession as a whole.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key themes covered in 'The Practice of Public Relations 11th Edition'?

The key themes include strategic communication, media relations, crisis management, digital PR, ethics in public relations, and the evolving role of social media in PR practices.

How does the 11th edition of 'The Practice of Public Relations' address the impact of social media?

The 11th edition emphasizes the significance of social media as a tool for engagement, reputation management, and real-time communication, providing strategies for effective online public relations.

What new case studies are included in the 11th edition?

The new edition includes updated case studies from major brands and organizations, highlighting successful PR campaigns and lessons learned from recent crises.

How does the book define the role of ethics in public relations?

The book defines ethics in public relations as a fundamental component that guides practitioners in making responsible decisions, fostering transparency, and maintaining public trust.

What is the significance of measurement and evaluation in public relations as discussed in the 11th edition?

Measurement and evaluation are highlighted as essential practices for assessing the effectiveness of PR campaigns, justifying budgets, and demonstrating the value of public relations to stakeholders.

Does the 11th edition cover the integration of public relations with marketing and advertising?

Yes, the 11th edition discusses the convergence of public relations, marketing, and advertising, emphasizing the importance of integrated communication strategies for achieving organizational goals.

What trends in public relations are identified in the 11th edition?

The edition identifies trends such as increased focus on data analytics, the rise of influencer marketing, the importance of corporate social responsibility, and the shift towards more authentic communication.

How does 'The Practice of Public Relations 11th Edition' prepare students for a career in PR?

The book prepares students by providing practical insights, real-world examples, hands-on exercises, and a comprehensive understanding of the principles and practices essential for succeeding in a PR career.

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