

PUBLIC RELATIONS - CONTENT AND MODELS

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Abstract: *The former part of the paper presents the content and the models of public relations. The activity of public relations may be performed on two distinct levels: counseling, which involves identifying the problems through research and field data analysis, solution finding and their application within an action plan, namely, the plan of strategy application elaborated by the organization management. The latter part of the paper deals with the characteristics of some public relations models.*

Keywords: *public relations, modeles, characteristics.*

1. CONTENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Many specialists have defined public relations as a process, a series of actions, respectively, changes or functions that lead to a certain result. In this sense, they considered the process of public relations linearly, which took another dimension later, thus formulating cyclic models.

According to the American professor John Marston, public relations presuppose four specific functions, exerted as follows:

- the Research of the attitudes as to the identified problem;
- the Action of a certain organization that confronts with this problem;
- the Communication of the programs necessary in order to facilitate comprehension and support;
- the Evaluation of the effects that the communication campaign has had on the public.

Consequently, we deal with the R-A-C-E formula. This type of definition is a combination between the standard definition, which includes operational elements and the key word type definition.

Another form is R-O-S-I-E, launched by Sheila Clough Crifasi, which is explicated, as follows:

- Research;

- Objectives;
- Strategies;
- Implementing;
- Evaluation.

It is also worth retaining R. Kendall's R-A-I-S-E formula [2] (Fig. 1):

- research and analysis – hands-on data are collected and analyzed so as to identify problems;
- policy formation – adequate solutions to the existent problems are being looked for; the solutions are integrated within the public relations strategy;
- programming – actions are gradually scheduled in time and they are to be performed in accordance with the adopted strategy;
- feed-back – the effects produced by the public relations strategy implementation are registered;
- analysis, assessment and adjustment of the strategy used (program assessment and adjustment) – in accordance with the registered data within a cycle, certain modifications of the public relations strategy may be applied.

To Scott M. Cutlip and his collaborators, public relations are integrated within a vaster process, where the main objective is the adjustment of organization to the environmental influences. This process consists of four distinct elements (Fig. 2):

- defining the problem;
- planning and programming;
- action and communication;
- evaluation.

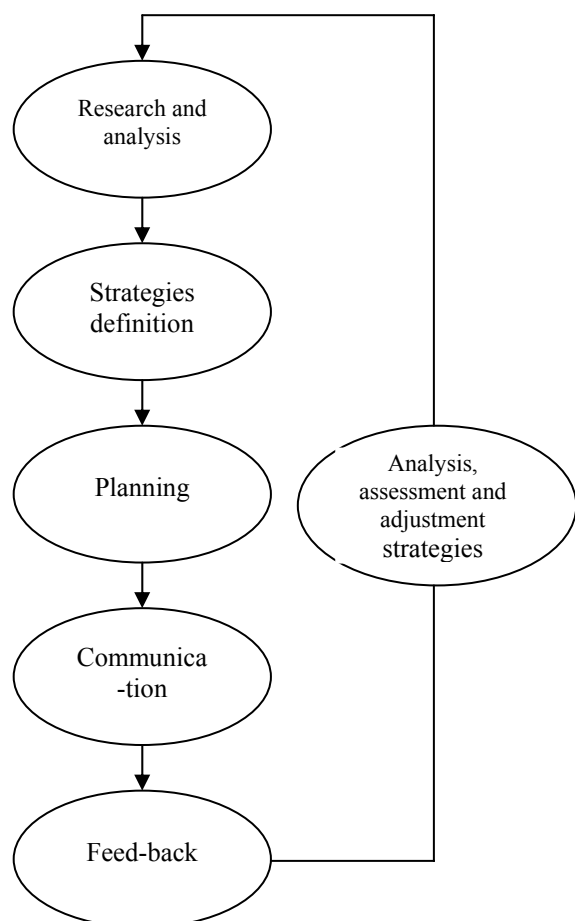


Fig. 1 Cyclic shape of public relations (variant)

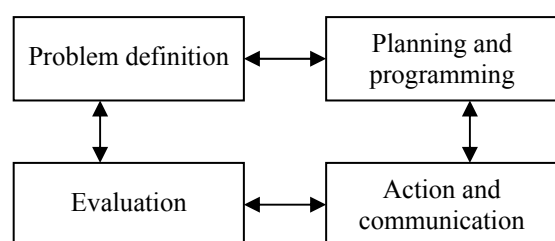


Fig. 2 Cyclic shape of public relations (variant)

distinguish the public relations from other areas of activity such as journalism, marketing, a.s.o., specialists have proceeded describing them more thoroughly, through a presentation of a set of activities which are topic-related. In this respect, Public Relations Society of America has adopted a list of main activities to be dealt with within the public relations, as following:

- counseling – which involves the ensuring of management assistance with regard to the policies to be adopted, the relations which are to be maintained / developed, as well as strategies defining for adequate communication within the strategic plan of the organization;
- research – through which attitudes and public behavior are established for the purpose of public relations strategy planning. Such generalizations may be used for:
 - a) mutual understanding generalization;
 - b) public influencing and persuading;
- media relations – mass- media collaboration for advertising or self-interest achievements of the organization;
- publicity – planned message spreading by media selected messages meant to promote the organization interests;
- employees/member relations – reaction towards the organization members / employees’ preoccupations, information need and motivation;
- community relation – planned activity, performed for the purpose of preserving the environment for both the organization and community;
- public affairs – development of efficient implication in public policies and guidance of an organization towards the adjustment to public expectations. The term is used by governmental agencies in order to describe their public relation activities;
- government affairs – governmental structure relationships with other state institutions (legislative, judicial institutions, national and regional agencies etc.). The lobby made on behalf of the organization may be part of a governmental program;
- issues management – identifying and

The activity of public relations may be performed on two distinct levels: counseling, which involves identifying the problems through research and field data analysis, solution finding and their application within an action plan, namely, the plan of strategy application elaborated by the organization management. The distinction between the two levels is visible, yet, in order to clearly

- directing the public' areas of interest which may affect the organization;
- financial relations – creating and maintaining the investors' trust and promoting cordial relationships with the regional financial sector. Such phrases as “relationships with investors” or “relationships with share-holders”;
- industry relations – contacting other companies / firms and commercial associations with similar fields of activities;
- fund-raising – needs proving and encouragement of the public for organization support, especially through financial support;
- multicultural relations – contacts and relationships with people belonging to various cultural groups;
- special events – interest stimulation upon an individual, product or organization by organizing a major event: by such events, the organization may interact with the public in order to see the latter's point of view;
- marketing communication – combination of activities meant to sell products, services or ideas, including publicity, collateral materials, promoting, direct messages, sale exhibitions, special events.

2. MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

According to the communications fluxes, the quality of the sent information, its value of truth and the goal for which the communication is performed, the specialists in the field established several models of public relations, as follows:

a) The pressagency / publicity model (Fig. 3) – characterized by a unidirectional communication, from the organization to the public, in which the truth does not mean the essential quality of the sent information. The goal of the communication is a propagandistic one, to promote the organizations' faiths, and the communication strategies used are not enclosed in a theoretical based matrix.

This model appeared in the second half of the 19th century, being specific to the public relations actions performed during 1850-1899.

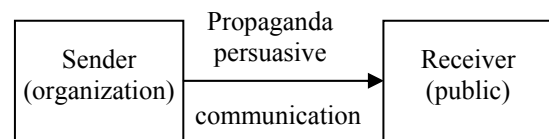


Fig. 3 The Pressagency / publicity model

b) The public information model (Fig. 4) – its main idea consists of transmitting to the public the most information about the organization. It is a one-way communication, non-based theoretically, but that uses the real and as complete as possible information.

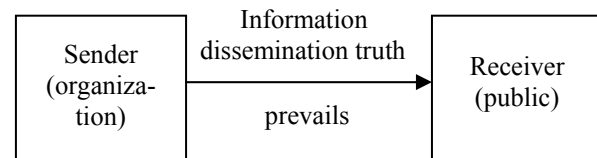


Fig. 4 The public information model

c) The two-way asymmetrical model (Fig.5) – renounces the one-way communication and moves on to a self-adjustment two-way system, using in this purpose, the feedback. The information fluxes are asymmetrical, and it is the organization that controls the communication.

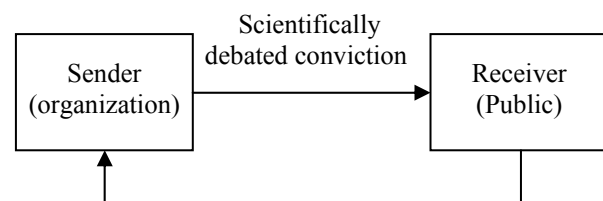


Fig. 5 Two-way asymmetrical model

d) The two-way symmetric model (Fig. 6) – the feed-back becomes an identification modality of those public's needs that can be covered by the policies used by the organization. The public's interest counts equally for the organization and for its own interest and the public relations will be successful when both types of interests reach the maximum position. The communication control is no more strictly done by one of the parties, but any of them, which justify the two-ways and the symmetry of the model can initiate it.

A long-term partnership is established between the organization and the public,

where each part assumes its own responsibilities.

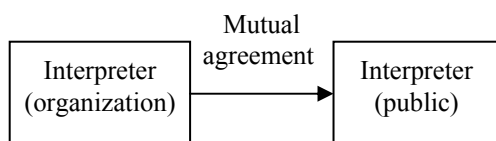


Fig. 6 The two-way symmetric model

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME PUBLIC RELATIONS MODELS

Source: J. Gruring, ToddHunt Managing Public Relations Harcent Brasce Javanovich College Publishers, 1984.

The model (Table 1) contains three fundamental elements:

- the organization, placed in the hub and defined according to the activity field, respectively according to the locality/region/origin country where it has its headquarters ;
- types of public, placed on the exterior of the wheel
- the communication channels, placed like spokes, which connect organization and the public categories.

The model author identified nine standard types of public and nine communication channels, as follows:

- **types of public:**

- media – local, regional, national, international, written media, radio and television, specialized media (specific to the domain of the organization’s activity, etc.);
- government – local, national or supranational;
- financial institutions – banks or other institutions that administer investment funds, opinion leaders in the financial, banking field, such as analysts and journalists;
- costumers – the ones that receive the products and the services of the organization for which they can pay (directly or indirectly) or not. Clients can be internal (from within the organization)

or external, and the option of being a client may be an individual or administrative decision;

- general public – anyone who manifests an interest related to the organization, including possible and former employees and costumers or any other person who can influence decision making or opinions about the organization;
- internal public – every employee or professional associations and unions that have the task of representing the employees in their relationship with the manager;
- local public – local community, including members of other types of public, such as employees, local media and local administration;
- influencing groups – pressing groups, groups of volunteers, professional associations, chambers of commerce, political groups, and any other kinds of associations that can influence the public opinion or decision making that affects the organization;
- the trade – service or distribution trade partners, project partners, etc.

- **communication channels:**

- media relations – declarations for the media, press conferences, interviews, documentation visits for journalists or other ways through which the media can get informed about the activity of the organization;
- tête-à-tête meetings in small groups, personal presentations – these are ways of communication with small public groups;
- impersonal presentations – video, multimedia, displays, etc.;
- products or services – these are message carriers while quality, design and price are the elements that can influence the relationship between the public and the firm/organization ;
- literature – fliers, brochures, guide books, bulletins, magazines, journals, manuals, annual reports, etc.

Besides the written content, their form of presentation is also important (design, paper quality, printing quality, etc.):

Table 1 Characteristics of some public relations models

Characteristics	Model			
	Advertising management	Public Information	Two-way and asymmetric	Two-way and symmetric
Purpose of communication	Propaganda	Information dissemination	Scientifically debated conviction	Mutual agreement
Information Quality (informational flux)	E > R	E > R	E > R with feedback	Interpreter Interpreter
Issued in	1850	1900	1920	1960
Model promoters	P.T.Barnum	Ivy Lee	Edward L. Bernays	Edward L. Bernays
Percentage of use	15%	50%	20%	15%

- the logo, the heading, the employees' uniforms, the machinery, and even the building architecture can be things that speak for the personality of the organization;
- the advertisement – can send messages about the organization;
- mail – composition and style (writings, faxes, e-mails) speak for the organization;
- markets are generally used for presentations, special offers, competition, etc.

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