

Definition:

The professional maintenance of a favorable public image by a company, organization or famous person. The state of relationship between the public and a company, organization or famous person. This is different from marketing, because there are no products or services being promoted.

What kind of jobs can you find as PR specialists?

- ✓ Agency work: PR agencies take on client projects and distribute work to their employed specialists.
- ✓ Consultation: PR specialist working for themselves and taking on independent clients.
- ✓ In house: A large public company will bring on a specialist to create content for their website, internal communications (newsletter or bulletins), and also annual reports, etc.

5 Main Categories of Public Relations:

- Media Relations: people who work to gain publicity from the media in regards to new product, news, or Good Samaritanship.
- Government Relations: Communications for policies between the different levels, research translated into consumable language, surveys, publications, white papers, etc, rules and regulations, website content.
- Investor Relations: This is someone who works for a corporation that creates communication material such as the quarterly report on the business progress, annual report, speeches for the AGM and other presentations.
- Community Relations: All organizations like to be a part of their community. Not only as money makers, but as a good neighbor and corporate citizen. When organizations mobilize their staff and resources for a good cause, this is called community relations. It leaves a solid impression on the general public that there are real people who care behind the corporate logos they see on TV.
- Crisis Management: When things go wrong, especially in public, these specialists are called in to minimize the exposure, and communicate quickly and effectively so that the organization's reputation and goodwill is intact. They create strategies to prepare the organization for various potential pitfalls that could have serious negative consequences/results.

Why use Public Relations:

- ✓ It is good to get coverage from an independent source.
- ✓ Reach: massive readership.
- ✓ It's free or cheap, so doesn't cost a lot compared to advertisement.
- ✓ Leverage: it adds credibility to your organization.
- ✓ Long term plan: goodwill can not be bought; rather, it is relationship building on a continuous basis, the pay off is not seen so quickly.
- ✓ It fits in with marketing, branding and the new trend of "word of mouth advertising" method.

How to approach the Media:

Under the Canadian Radio and Broadcasting Council rule, all media presentation in Canada has to have at least 10% non-profit content. This means that charities and non-profits have a much easier time securing media exposure than traditional businesses.

Do your research: follow the publication and find out who their writers are; what their style of writing is and what issues are important to them. Tailor your press release or letters to the editor to appeal to the right person. Chances then of your submission being published are a lot higher than just a standard (more generalized) press release.

If you want in-depth coverage, do not send your standard PR kit to everyone. Instead approach one media and give them the inside scoop and the exclusivity.



Earnings.

- Average annual earnings for salaried public relations specialists was \$43,830 in May 2004.
- The middle 50 percent earned between \$32,970 and \$59,360, the lowest 10 percent earned less than \$25,750, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$81,120.
- Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of public relations specialists in

May 2004 were:

- ✓ Advertising and related services: \$50,450
- ✓ Management of companies and enterprises: \$47,330
- ✓ Business, professional, labor, political, and similar organizations: \$45,400
- ✓ Local government: \$44,550
- ✓ Colleges, universities, and professional schools: \$39,610

Job Outlook.

Keen competition likely will continue for entry-level public relations jobs, as the number of qualified applicants is expected to exceed the number of job openings. Many people are attracted to this profession because of the high profile nature of the work. Opportunities should be best for college graduates who combine a degree in journalism, public relations, advertising, or another communications-related field with a public relations internship or other related work experience. Applicants without the appropriate educational background or work experience will face the toughest obstacles. Employment of public relations specialists is expected to grow faster than average for all occupations through 2014. The need for good public relations in an increasingly competitive business environment should spur

demand for public relations specialists in organizations of all types and sizes. The value of a company is measured not just by its balance sheet, but also by the strength of its relationships with those on whom it depends for its success. With the increasing demand for corporate accountability, more emphasis will be placed on improving the image of the client, as well as on building public confidence.

Employment with public relations firms should grow as firms increasingly hire contractors to provide public relations services rather than support full-time staff. In addition to positions arising from growth, job opportunities will also result from the need to replace departing employees as turnover is inevitable in any industry.

Employment.

Public relations specialists held about 188,000 jobs in 2004. Public relations specialists are concentrated in service-providing industries such as advertising and related services; health care and social assistance; educational services; and government. Others worked for communications firms, financial institutions, and government agencies. Traditionally, public relations specialists are concentrated in large cities, where press

services and other communications facilities are readily available and many businesses and trade associations have their headquarters. Many public relations consulting firms, for example, are in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington, DC. There is a trend now, however, for public relations jobs to be dispersed throughout the country, closer to clients.

PR Resources

- Schools:
 - ✓ Simon Fraser University Communications Program.
 - ✓ Royal Roads University Journalism Program.
 - ✓ UBC Journalism Program.
 - ✓ Kwantlen University College Communications Program.
 - ✓ Langara Public Relations Program.
- Associations:
 - ✓ Canadian Public Relations Society Vancouver (www.cprsvancouver.com)
 - ✓ International Association of Business Communicators BC Chapter (www.iabc.bc.ca)
 - ✓ High Tech Communicators Exchange (www.htce.org)



Nature of the Work.

An organization's reputation, profitability, and even its continued existence can depend on the degree to which its targeted "public" supports its goals and policies. Public relations specialists—also referred to as communications specialists and media specialists, among other titles—serve as advocates for businesses, non-profit associations, universities, hospitals, and other organizations. They build and maintain positive relationships with the public on behalf of the organization. As managers recognize the importance of good public relations to the success of their organizations, they increasingly rely on public relations specialists for advice on the strategy and policy of such programs.

Public relations specialists handle organizational functions such as media, community, consumer, industry, and governmental relations; political campaigns; interest-group representation; conflict mediation; and employee and investor relations. They do more than "tell the organization's story." They must understand the attitudes and concerns of the community, consumer, employee, and public interest groups and establish and maintain cooperative relationships with them and with representatives from print and broadcast journalism.

Public relations specialists draft press releases and contact people in the media who might print or broadcast their material. Many radio or television special reports,

newspaper stories, and magazine articles start at the desks of public relations specialists. Sometimes the subject is an organization and its policies toward its employees or its role in the community. Often the subject is a public issue, such as health, energy, or the environment, and what an organization does to advance or sustain that issue.

Public relations specialists also arrange and conduct programs to maintain contact between organization representatives and the public. For example, they set up speaking engagements and often prepare speeches for company officials. These media specialists represent employers at community projects; make film, slide, or other visual presentations at meetings and school assemblies; and plan conventions. In addition, they are responsible for preparing annual reports and writing proposals for various projects.

In government, public relations specialists—who may be called press secretaries, information officers, public affairs specialists, or communication specialists—keep the public informed about the activities of agencies and officials. For example, public affairs specialists in the U.S. Department of State keep the public informed of travel advisories and of U.S. positions on foreign issues. A press secretary for a member of Congress keeps constituents aware of the representative's accomplishments.

13 Essential Tips to Ensure Your Press Release Makes the News.

- Make sure the information is newsworthy.
- Tell the audience that the information is intended for them and why they should continue to read it.
- Start with a brief description of the news, then distinguish who announced it, and not the other way around.
- Ask yourself, "How are people going to relate to this and will they be able to connect?"
- Make sure the first 10 words of your release are effective, as they are the most important.
- Avoid excessive use of adjectives and fancy language.
- Deal with the facts.
- Provide as much contact information as possible: main individual(s) to contact, address, phone, fax, email, website address.
- Make sure you wait until you have something with enough substance to issue a release.
- Make it as easy as possible for media representatives to do their jobs.
- Prepare your 7-11 second sound bites for the radio stations from your organization's President, and media spokesperson on potential questions that reporters might ask downloadable in your online press room.
- Prepare 8 minute B-roll (a video compilation of 5 second video footage about your organization, and news story) DVD that you can send to TV stations, or downloadable in your online press room.
- Personalize the press release in the body of the email to the journalist/reporter of each media outlet. Do not attach word document, and media kit to the email, and DO NOT mass blast the media.



Nature of the Work (continued).

In large organizations, the key public relations executive, who often is a vice president, may develop overall plans and policies with other executives. In addition, public relations departments employ public relations specialists to write, research, prepare materials, maintain contacts, and respond to inquiries.

People who handle publicity for an individual or who direct public relations for a small organization may deal with all aspects of the job. They contact people, plan and research, and prepare materials for distribution. They may also handle advertising or sales promotion work to support marketing efforts.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement.

There are no defined standards for entry into a public relations career. A college degree combined with public relations experience, usually gained through an internship, is considered excellent preparation for public relations work; in fact, internships are becoming vital to obtaining employment. The ability to communicate effectively is essential. Many entry-level public relations specialists have a college major in public relations, journalism, advertising, or communication. Some firms seek college graduates who have worked in electronic or print journalism previously. Other employers seek applicants with demonstrated communication skills and training or experience in a field related to the firm's business—information technology, health, science, engineering, sales, or finance, for example.

Many colleges and universities offer Bachelor's and postsecondary degrees in public relations, usually in a journalism or communications department. In general, most colleges will offer at least one course in this field. A common public relations sequence includes courses in public relations principles and techniques; public relations management and

administration, including organizational development; writing, with emphasis on news releases, proposals, annual reports, scripts, speeches, and related items; visual communications, including desktop publishing and computer graphics; and research, focusing on social science research and survey design and implementation. Courses in advertising, journalism, business administration, finance, political science, psychology, sociology, and creative writing are also helpful. Specialization is offered in public relations for work related to business, government, and non-profit organizations.

Many colleges help students gain part-time internships in public relations that provide valuable experience and training. Membership in local chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America (affiliated with the Public Relations Society of America) or in student chapters of the International Association of Business Communicators provides an opportunity for students to exchange views with public relations specialists and to make professional contacts that may help them find a job in the field.

Working Conditions.

- Some public relations specialists work a standard 35-to-40 hour week, but unpaid overtime is common.
- Occasionally, they must be at the job or on call around the clock, especially if there is an emergency or crisis.
- Public relations offices are busy places; work schedules can be irregular and frequently interrupted.
- Schedules often have to be rearranged so that workers can meet deadlines, deliver speeches, attend meetings and community activities, and travel.



Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement (continued).

A portfolio of published articles, television or radio programs, slide presentations, and other work is an asset in finding a job. Writing for a school publication, television or radio station provides valuable experience and material for one's portfolio.

Creativity, initiative, good judgment, and the ability to communicate thoughts clearly and effectively are essential in this occupation. Decision-making, problem-solving, and research skills are also important. People who choose public relations as a career need to have an outgoing personality, great self-confidence, strong understanding of human psychology, and an enthusiasm for motivating people. They should be competitive, yet able to function as part of a team and open to new ideas.

Some organizations, particularly those with a large public relations staff, have formal training programs for new employees. In smaller organizations, new employees work under the guidance of experienced staff members. Junior members often maintain files of material about company activities, scan newspapers and magazines for appropriate articles to clip, and assemble information for speeches and pamphlets. They also may answer calls from the press and the public, work on invitation lists and details for press conferences, or escort visitors and clients. After gaining experience, they will move on to write news releases, speeches, and articles for publication or plan and carry out public relations programs. Public relations specialists in smaller firms usually get all-around experience, whereas those in larger firms tend to be more specialized.

The Universal Accreditation Board accredits public relations specialists who are members of the Public Relations Society of America and who participate in the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations process. This process includes both a readiness review and an examination, which are designed for candidates who have at least 5 years of full-time work or teaching experience in public relations and who have earned a bachelor's degree in a communications-related field. The readiness review includes a written submission by each candidate, a portfolio review, and dialogue between the candidate and a three-member panel. Candidates who successfully advance through the readiness review and pass the computer-based examination earn the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation.

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) also has an accreditation program for professionals in the communications field, including public relations specialists. Those who meet all the requirements of the program earn the Accredited Business Communicator (ABC) designation. Candidates must have at least 5 years of experience and a bachelor's degree in a communications field and must pass written and oral examinations. They must also submit a portfolio of work samples demonstrating involvement in a range of communications projects and a thorough understanding of communications planning.

Employers may consider professional recognition through accreditation as a sign of competence in this field, which could be especially helpful in a competitive job market.

How to get promoted.

Promotion to supervisory jobs may come to public relations specialists who show that they can handle more demanding assignments. In public relations firms, a novice might be hired as a research assistant or account coordinator to start, then be promoted to account executive, senior account executive, account manager, and eventually vice president. A similar

career path is followed in corporate public relations, although the titles may differ. Some experienced public relations specialists start their own consulting firms. (For more information on public relations managers, see the Handbook statement on advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales managers.)



Related Occupations.

Public relations specialists create favorable attitudes among various organizations, interest groups, and the public through effective communication. Other workers with similar or related jobs include advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales

managers; demonstrators, product promoters, and models; news analysts, reporters, and correspondents; lawyers; market and survey researchers; sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing; and police and detectives involved in community relations.

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Anaesthesiologist M.D. Offers Expert Defence/Plaintiff Case Analysis of Potential Medical Malpractice

Charlottesville, VA -- April 12, 2001 -- Before you invest time and money defending or proceeding with an anaesthesia-related medical malpractice case, check with expert board-certified anaesthesiologist Joseph A. Stirt, M.D. Whether you are a defence or plaintiff attorney, Dr. Stirt can not only tell you if you have a case but also how best to structure it, based on a detailed medical review.

No newcomer to cases involving possible anaesthesia-related malpractice, Dr. Stirt has 15 years of experience. Presented orally or as a written report, his in-depth analysis can save you hours of preparation and thousands of dollars. He is prepared to step in at the last minute when another expert suddenly withdraws from a case. Availability and rapid response make his service unique.

According to Dr. Stirt, "The question I get most often is, 'Is it malpractice?' My job is to sort out the bad outcomes due to occurrences that fall within the standard of care from those that do not. The question of whether a case involves negligence is one that looms over every potential malpractice action. If answered correctly, it can save both defendants and plaintiffs from mental anguish and ill-advised pursuit of a defence or lawsuit."

Dr. Stirt serves on the faculty of a major U.S. medical school affiliated with a top-rated tertiary care medical center. He sits on state medical boards as an expert reviewer and expert witness in anaesthesiology. He has written books, book chapters, and numerous scientific papers, as well as articles in the medical-legal literature, received honours and awards in medical teaching and scholarship, and has 18 years of academic anaesthesia experience ranging from Post Anaesthesia Care Unit Director and Outpatient Surgical Unit Director to his current position as Clinical Associate Professor of Anaesthesiology.

Dr. Stirt is a diplomat of the American Board of Anaesthesiology and the National Board of Medical Examiners. He has been an invited reviewer and lecturer in anaesthesiology throughout the U.S. and Europe and has appeared on CNBC.

Accessibility is a unique and important aspect of Dr. Stirt's services. His expertise in anaesthesiology is available at any time. He does not work on a contingency fee basis. Your initial telephone consultation is free.

For information: <http://www.anesthesiologyexpert.com> or
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