



UNIT-6

Production of Public Relations Tools and Activities

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Explore various forms of communication media and their role in Public Relations

Unit 6

Production of Public Relations Tools and Activities

Public Relations Communication and Public Relations Material

For organisations, it is important to have a good reputation to experience significant growth. Building a good image can be accomplished by using communication media which make use of printed words, visual, and audio-visual as well as oral means of communications. One important tool required by the PR practitioner for building good images of companies is the ability to use communication to persuade people. Successful communication requires that messages must be “clear, accurate and credible”. Without communication, PR would not exist. PR uses communication to achieve a wide range of objectives such as creating awareness, correcting misconceptions, countering hostility, promoting confidence, and winning public acceptance of ideas which leads to positive feeling for all stakeholders.

Internal and External Communication

All communication can be classified as internal or external. Internal communication refers to transmitting information or messages to various stakeholders such as employees of an organisation to promote good working relationship and to resolve any issues of concern to them. External communication involves an organisation interacting with people outside of the organisation who have an interest in its activities or who are affected by the operations of the organisation. External communication is usually done to project a positive image of the company and to build its reputation.

A well-informed employee who has a good working relationship with management is a wonderful asset to have because an employee’s view counts toward improving the image of the company or damaging them image by what he tells outsiders about the company. The management needs to keep in mind that employees are an extension of PR staff so whatever they say should be taken as being credible. Management can build good relationships with employees by encouraging team spirit and making them feel part of the family using a variety of methods such as publications like house journals, manuals, newsletters, and magazines to keep them updated on the direction the company is heading.

The Printed Word

Organisations use printed words for all manner of communication by publishing:

- Manuals, handbooks, circulars, and guide books
- Annual Reports, Chairman's Speech to shareholders
- Internal House Journals, External House Journals, and Employee newsletters
- Trade bulletins, customer brochures.
- Folders, brochures, and pamphlets.
- Calendars, diaries, and pictorial albums.

Types of Publications and their Purpose

Category A

This includes manuals, guidebooks, handbooks which are used to communicate an organisation's rules and regulations, services, procedures to all employees, and other stakeholders who need this information.

Category B

This type of publication is used to reach target audiences who need to know how their investment is doing as well as to inform potential investor about the financial position of the company. Items published under this category include Annual Reports and the Chairman's Address to Shareholders.

Category C

Publications under this category include those mean to build a stronger bond between the employees and the organisation. Items include external and internal house journals and employee newsletters.

Category D

This includes brochures and trade bulletins to provide information to regular customers as well as potential ones. These publications inform customers of products and services available for them to purchase. The marketing department of the organisation is mainly responsible for these publications.

Category E

They form an aspect of an organisation's sales and promotion initiative and chronicle the organisation's activities, achievements, and future direction. This is mainly done to build up a good public image for the organisation as well as its products and service. Item published under this category include pamphlets, folders, and brochures and are used as part of publicity campaigns.

Category F

This category includes publications such as annual publications for employees, pictorial albums, calendar, and diaries. These publications are distributed to internal and external publics freely to promote goodwill.

Advantages of the Printed Media

Without mincing words or stringing together many sentences, it could be said that the printed media stands head over shoulder s above all other types of delivery media such as visual, audio-visual, audio, and oral forms of communication. This is due to the simple fact that printed words tend to offer more detailed information and it is also permanent unlike the others which present information in condensed form and people may even forget what was said unless, the information was recorded as it was being delivered.

Limitations of Printed Word

The main limitation of having printed media has to do with its inability to be effective in areas having low levels of literacy. In other words, other media have an advantage over printed media in terms of their ability to reach larger groups of people.

Impact of the Printed Word

Development of modern printing technology means that most printed media can be presented in attractive colours. Publishers make use of art paper and colourful photographs of products and major events to create publications that cause immediate attraction and evoke certain beneficial reactions in people. These printed publications can also be kept as future sources of reference materials.

Planning of Corporate Publications

Corporate publications are used to transmit information to the public. It forms part of an organisation's PR activities and it is usually outsourced for the materials to be designed and created according to the organisation's specifications. Corporate publications come in different forms such as brochures, folders, handbooks, trade journals, house journals, prestigious yearbooks, or office manuals. The functions or objectives (i.e. the occasion and theme) determine the type of layout and format to use. Bear in mind that there are no strict rules when it comes to how a corporate publication should be produced. The PR practitioner in choosing the right type of publication should be guided by experience, professional skills, budget available as well as good judgement to make the right call.

All corporate publications must highlight the culture and policies of the organisation in order to promote its image. Corporate publications should carry information which is clear, to the point, easy to understand, factual, credible, and free of errors.

Systematic planning is required to produce high quality corporate publications and the steps involved include the following:

- 1) Copy preparations
- 2) Full editorial instructions
- 3) Determining the size of publication and number of copies
- 4) Choice of paper to be used
- 5) Selection of type for composing
- 6) Estimation of size of composed matter
- 7) Preparing illustration/visuals/photographs
- 8) Layout
- 9) Binding style and cover for booklets/souvenirs, etc.
- 10) Distribution of printed literature.

Copy Preparation and Choice of Type

PR personnel need to have some knowledge of copy preparation, editing, proofreading, layout design, and printing to make positive contribution to the production PR materials even if an expert has already been hired to undertake the project.

Preparing Copy

Good copy preparation involves:

- Conducting well-researched topics
- Producing error-free material
- Having materials which are well-edited
- Paragraphs not being carried over to the next page
- Materials having pages numbered
- End of the copy material being clearly indicated

Choice of Type-faces

Five kinds of types recommended include Text, Italic, Gothic, Roman, and Script. To produce contrast, use different type-faces for heading, sub-heading etc. Photographs should be cropped with high quality background provided.

Format of Corporate Publications

There are no specific laid down rules for the form of corporate publications. The different organisations make use of different formats in terms of the size, shape, and form of the corporate publications. The different sizes of corporate publications produced are based on availability of funding, the theme of the occasion as well as on the level of attractiveness desired.

Sizes can be produced from standard sizes of printing paper from the following list:

Standard Sizes of Printing Papers (in inches)

CHART

STANDARD SIZES OF PRINTING PAPERS (in inches)				
Name	Broadside	Folio	Quarto	Octavo
IMPERIAL	22 x 30	22 x 15	15 x 11	11 x 7 1/2
ELEPHANT	23 X 28	23 X 14	14 X 11 1/2	11 1/2 X 7
ROYAL	20 X 25	20 X 12 1/2	12 1/2 X 10	10 X 6 1/4
MEDIUM	18 X 23	18 X 11 1/2	11 1/2 X 9	9 X 5 3/4
DEMY	17 1/2 X 22 1/2	17 1/2 X 11 1/4	11 1/4 X 8 3/4	8 3/4 X 5 5/8
CROWN	15 X 20	15 X 10	10 X 7 1/2	7 1/2 X 5
FOOLSCAP	13 1/2 X 17	13 1/2 X 8 1/2	8 1/2 X 6 3/4	6 3/4 X 4 1/4

- Broadside: denotes that the size stated is the whole sheet
- Folio: means that the size stated is one-half of a sheet. (Long side is divided by two)
- Quarto: is one-quarter of a sheet (determined by-dividing both dimensions by two)
- Octavo: means that the size stated is 1/8 part of a sheet (Long side of the sheet is divided by 4 and the sheet side by two)

With improvement in computer technology and the advent of desktop publication, it is now easy to print on a variety of paper using sophisticated printer setting to achieve a specific type of printing layout. This new development has contributed to the productivity and creativity of PR practitioners in producing a variety of corporate publication materials using different types of papers described below.

Layout of Corporate Publication

Layout is the term used to describe the arrangement of words, illustrations or images on a page of printed material to give the message or information an attractive appearance to promote higher patronage. For corporate publications, the layout should be well-thought out and designed to attract a wide readership and make an immediate impact on the reader. Layout styles may differ depending on the type of publication such as brochure or a folder. For best results, the services of a professional with competence in key principles of design should be secured to carry out the layout design.

Kinds of Paper

Each type of corporate publication will require different kind of paper. PR practitioners having knowledge of the kind of paper to use can contribute meaningfully to reduce the cost by choosing the right kind of paper for the printing house to use and avoid expensive wastage. This knowledge is a sort of safeguard and check on the expert who has been hired to print the material who may be tempted to buy more expensive papers.

The weight of the paper affects the cost of printing. The type of paper to use will depend on the budget available. Most organisations tend to use art paper for printing and gazed Japanese art card for multicolour covers.

Requirement of Corporate Publications

Manuals and Handbooks

Manuals and handbooks are used by organisations to communicate rules and regulations, services, and procedures to all employees and other stakeholders. These need to be reviewed from time to time to keep them updated. It is incumbent on management to ensure that manuals and handbooks are very accurate, authoritative and be able to withstand scrutiny from the laws of the land. Quality paper and strong bonding should be used to make them last longer.

Annual Reports

Annual reports are used to present information on profits and losses, assets and liabilities, and growth trends. These must be attractive to the eye and ideally printed with colourful illustrations, charts and pictures. The size of the annual report depends on the volume of content as well as whether it will include a resume and how detailed the resume will be if it is part of the report. The quantity of print out to produce will also depend on the number of shareholders. Most companies tend to place orders well in advance in order to have a guaranteed high quality reports; quality considerations should supersede the cost of printing.

The Chairman's Speech

As the captain and spokesperson of the organisation, the chairman leads with his unique set of skills and devices policies to guide the organisation. His speeches are accorded great importance. The chairman's speeches on special occasions carry much weight and are printed on good quality paper and distributed among the public and media to enhance the company's image.

Books

They are mainly used by companies to tell stories about the history of companies and their founders and also, to highlight the spirit and culture of the companies. Books, which are useful to readers, are highly patronised and leads to enhancement of a company's reputation.

House Journals

A house journal expresses management's commitment to the well-being of its employees. It talks about issues such as conditions of service, safety and security among other pertinent issues. The journal acts as the catalyst to foster good relationship between the management and employees.

The two types of house journal include the internal house journal meant for employees and the second type is known as the external house journal which is published for the benefit of external publics with interest in the organisation. The external public include shareholders, suppliers, dealers, and customers.

Most large organisations tend to focus more on the external journal on quality aspects of publication and less so on the internal with the excuse that the external will be going to the public domain. This practice must not be encouraged. Consistent quality should be maintained for both internal and external house journals. Alternatively, a single - house journal may be used for both publics to avoid this type of bias.

Employee Newsletters

This is an alternative to the house journal publication. Newsletters are simple with small number of pages (between 4-8 pages), having few images and printed in simple colour on glazed newsprint.

Trade journals

Trade journals are published to promote an organisation's products with information of specific features of the products also provided for the benefit of the customer.

Folders

Folders are publications which are oblong in shape and have varying width and length. They require sheets to be printed on both sides and then folded while making it easy to read the information contained therein. Folders are meant to convey information to people to read and digest quickly. Some folders also contain colourful illustrations.

Brochures

These usually come with colourful and attractive cover pages. However, the number of pages is usually few. They are used to promote products and improve an organisation's reputation.

Calendars and Diaries

They are costly publications primarily produced to promote public goodwill towards an organisation. These publications are mostly distributed to commemorate festive occasions.

Illustrations in Corporate Publications

Illustrations appear in the form of charts, sketches, and photographs in pages of corporate publications.

Photographs

Photographs are used to make quick impact. They may be images of famous people, special events, machines, or products. A group of images taken at an event can be used to portray a new story accompanied by a short passage. This is known as a photo montage. Photo montages are usually placed at the centrefold in publications due to the size. Besides, photo montage is a very effective tool to make a high impact.

Annual Reports and director's speeches require the use of graphics such as charts, diagrams, and pictures to explain information while brochures and journals often require the use of statistical figures to convey similar information. Graphical representation is more effective in highlighting an organisation's data in a manner to assist the public to form their own opinion. It is important to note that photographs should not serve as substitute for graphical representation and neither should graphics replace photographs.

Colour Transparencies

These are supplied by professional photographers to serve as supplements to printed words in newspapers and periodicals.

Sketches and Line Drawings

These find application in corporate publications such as folders and brochures instead of the normal photographs due to lack of space. They are mainly used to describe features of products. They include things like insignia, crests, logos, and trademarks, etc., which can be designed with aid of special computer applications.

Production of Corporate Publication

For effective results, corporate publications should have a good content, good format and layout, be printed on high quality paper and possess excellent printing finishes. The message in the content should be clear and understandable to the target audience using popular journalistic styles such as those produced by an experience journalist. Good format and layout is the job for an experience layout professional, while high quality printing using the right processes and method will produce an attractive final product.

Production of Folder

The best type of paper to use is an art card or art paper. The right tint should be used in case white paper is chosen for printing the material. Currently, people use a variety of tints for different folders to give an attractive look and text should be printed on the tint. Limited or minimum number of illustration is recommended due to size limitations. The number of illustrations to use is determined by theme or the content of the folder. Sometimes, diagrams may be used to depict statistical information. Always ensure that the printed content is not overwhelmed by the tint. The layout of the folder should be simple to make for easy reading. Also, allow space for border on all four sides. The title can be located on the first page with illustrations adequately positioned.

Production of Brochure

Brochures, pamphlets and booklets seem to be synonymous when describing corporate publications. These are usually 24-32 pages publications used to enhance the image of an organisation. Brochures are printed words used to provide information on companies' products as well as information on the operations of the companies. They come in different sizes depending on the occasion and theme. The PR practitioner may go for large size and more pages if the occasion is grand. Otherwise, a smaller size and a few pages will do. The content may include printed words, illustrations, graphical representations and with coloured or black and white photograph. Most organisations prefer to use art paper for their brochures to show prestige and enhance their image. It is common to use thick art card for the cover and thinner art paper for the inside pages. Multi-coloured covers make attractive brochures.

Production of Annual Report

Annual report should like and feel attractive and be of high quality printed material. The annual report is used to highlight profits and losses and other financial transactions of the organisation. The duty for producing a prestigious annual report lies with the PR department and in collaboration with the finance division to ensure the content highly informative and the design appropriate to convey the right message. Annual reports require the use of graphical content to convey information to stakeholders and they are best done in colour for attractiveness sake. The graphical portions are usually placed on the 2nd and 3rd pages to attract attention more quickly. Photographs look much better when printed on thick art paper.

Production of Manuals and Handbooks

Rules and procedures and other relevant information are compiled by the most competent and knowledgeable section of administration with the PR personnel relegated to overseeing printing duties. Standard size paper is used and important illustrations included. Pictures are not part of this type of publication.

Printing is done just like how statutory Acts are printed- left - side indents are used for the printed matter, leaving a wide margin for side or sub-headings. Manuals and handbooks should be updated periodically and the review number identified in the new edition.

Production of Calendars and Diaries

They are used to generate goodwill towards an organisation. They usually appear during special occasions and are designed in attractive and colourful format and contain information relevant to the public or text about the organisation. Most organisations tend to print three-in-one calendars which show the previous month, the current month and the next month all on the same page. Other rich organisations prefer to print pictorial calendar of their products. The PR practitioner works with professional designers to produce high quality calendars by guiding them on the type of content to use.

Producing a House Journal

Steps taken to produce a house journal include the following:

- i. Registration of the house journal with the Registrar of Newspapers;
- ii. Fixing of printing press;
- iii. Choice of paper for use in the production of the House Journal;
- iv. Securing of postal concession; and
- v. Compilation of a general mailing list.

CCTV, Video, and Cable TV for PR

Cable TV offers more opportunity to PR practitioners to send messages to specific target locations with bull-eye accuracy.

There are three golden rules when making PR programmes for Cable TV:

1. Knowing your programme
2. Knowing whom to contact
3. Brainstorming and devising a winning PR idea

To make a high impact and grab the viewers' attention, the message for Cable TV has to have a strong visual angle as well as a compelling story line. In other words, the film has to be quite original to get approval from the Cable TV operator before it can be aired. It is also important to identify the target audience quite clearly and to craft your message creatively and informatively before sending to the viewers and not just putting together "anything" for publicity's sake.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Public Relations Tools A Complete Guide, (2021), By Gerardus Blokdyk*
- ✓ *Cengage Advantage Books: Strategic Public Relations: An Audience-Focused, (2018), By Barbara Diggs-Brown*