

## Chapter 3 Public Relations

### ◆ CHAPTER CONTENT

#### KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Explain what public relations is.
2. Describe how public relations works.
3. List common public relations tools and their functions.
4. Name and discuss what is trending in public relations.

#### CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter focuses upon the role of public relations in an organization and explores how goodwill can be developed effectively in a marketing communication program. It discusses the different types of public relations programs, planning and tools, and also ways of gauging their effectiveness.

#### CHAPTER OUTLINE

##### WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

- **Public relations** is a fundamental communications discipline covering a wide range of functions that helps an organization connect with the people it touches. Public relations is used to generate goodwill for an organization.
- The Public Relations Society of America defines public relations as follows: **Public relations** is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. By **publics**, we mean all the groups of people with which a company or organization interacts: employees, members, customers, local communities, shareholders, other institutions, and society at large. Another term for publics is **stakeholders**.
- Public relations is practiced by a wide range of organizations: companies, governments, trade and professional associations, nonprofit organizations, the travel and tourism industry, educational systems, labor unions, politicians, organized sports, and the media. Most organizations have in-house public relations departments that handle the organizations' public relations work, although many also hire outside public relations agencies.
- Public relations is a dynamic, global profession. On one level, it is a tactical function in that public relations staff produce a variety of communication tools to achieve corporate image objectives. On a higher level, it is the management function that

monitors public opinion and advises senior corporate executives on how to achieve positive relationships with various audiences to effectively manage the organization's image and reputation.

### Public Opinion

- Public relations programs are built on an understanding of public opinion on issues critical to the organization, such as the company's impact on the environment and its local community or workers' rights and how the company deals with employees. **Public opinion** is a consensus of what a group of people who share a common interest think about a particular issue.
- ***Principle:** Public relations is the conscience of the company, with the objective of creating trust and maintaining the organization's integrity.*
- To design effective public relations programs, the public relations strategist researches the answers to two primary questions about public opinion. First, which publics are most important to the organization, now and in the future? Second, what do these publics think? Particular emphasis falls on understanding the role for each of the publics of **opinion leaders**, important people who influence the opinions of others.

### Reputation: Goodwill, Trust, and Integrity

- Public **goodwill** is the greatest asset any organization can have. A well-informed public with a positive attitude toward an organization is critical to the organization's survival. This is why creating goodwill is the primary goal of most public relations programs.
- Sometimes a totally unexpected crisis can threaten an organization's respect and trust. Beyond responding to immediate issues, a public relations program that is tuned to creating goodwill operates as the conscience of the organization. Creating goodwill demands that both public relations professionals and the clients they represent act with integrity.
- To underscore the importance of acting with integrity as a prerequisite to creating goodwill, most public relations organizations have created codes of ethics. The Public Relations Society of America's *Code of Ethics* spells out core values of conduct, such as advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness.
- A reputation of integrity involves more than image. Image is a perception based on messages delivered by the advertising and other marketing communication tools. Reputation, however, is based on an organization's actual behavior. Image mirrors what a company says about itself, but reputation reflects what other people say about the company.

- **Principle:** Reputation is earned based on what you do, not what you say about yourself.
- The value of a good reputation is hard to measure. Although considered a soft asset, one that is not usually included in a company's financial statements, it can be significant in determining company and brand value.
- Research has shown that in the face of bad publicity, advertising only fans the flames and makes the company appear unconcerned. Communicators must find ways to authentically connect with their audiences.
- The Arthur W. Page Society, a professional association for senior public relations and corporate communication executives and educators, offers seven principles, known as the Page Principles, to guide the actions and ethical behavior of all public relations and communications professionals.

### How Public Relations Contributes to Brand Perception

- Public relations, like advertising, contributes significantly to brand perceptions. In integrated programs, advertising and public relations aim at selected targets with different but complementary messages. Advertising and public relations specialists share a joint responsibility to promote a brand, and at times their efforts converge.
- Advertising creates consumer awareness and motivation that delivers sales for a brand. The goal of public relations specialists is to communicate with various stakeholders and manage the organization's image and reputation, creating positive public attitudes, and building strong relationships between the organization and its constituents.
- Ultimately, the difference between the two is that public relations takes a longer, broader view of the importance of image and reputation as a corporate competitive asset and addresses more target audiences. Public relations and advertising also differ in how they use the media, the level of control they have over message delivery, and their perceived credibility.
- Here are some specific differences between public relations and advertising:
  - **Media use:** In contrast to buying advertising time and space, public relations people seek to persuade media gatekeepers to carry stories about their company. **Gatekeepers** include writers, producers, editors, talk-show coordinators, and newscasters.
  - Although public relations has a distinguished tradition, it is often mistaken for **publicity**, which refers to getting news media coverage. Publicity is focused on the news media and their audiences, which is just one aspect of public relations, and it carries no direct media costs.

- **Control:** In the case of news stories, the public relations strategist is at the mercy of the media gatekeeper. There is no guarantee that all or even part of a story will appear. Public relations writes the story, sends it to the media, and crosses their fingers that this story will appear. To exert more control, some organizations use **brand journalism**, in which they can create content in media they own using journalism-style stories about their brand or organization.
- See the *Matter of Practice* feature in the text for information concerning emerging employment opportunities in the public relations field.
- **Credibility:** The public tends to trust the media more than they do advertisers. This consumer tendency to confer legitimacy on information simply because it appears in the news is called **the implied third-party endorsement factor**.

## HOW DOES PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK?

- The word *relations* in *public relations* refers to relationships with various stakeholders. In fact, the main subspecialties in the field—public affairs, media relations, employee relations, and financial relations—call attention to important relationships with such groups as the general public, the media, employees, and the financial community. Figure 3.1 outlines the various publics, partners, or stakeholders, for a multinational company. The term **relationship marketing** introduces a point of view in marketing planning that evolved from public relations.

## Aspects of Public Relations that Focus on Relationships

- The key publics addressed by relationship management programs in public relations are media, employees, members, shareholders, others in the financial community, government, and the general public. Here are the specialty areas that focus on these relationship programs:
  - **Media relations.** The area that focuses on developing media contacts, that is, knowing who in the media might be interested in the organization's story, is called **media relations**. A successful relationship between a public relations person and editors and producers is built on a public relations person's reputation for honesty, accuracy, and professionalism. If that reputation is tarnished or lost, the public relations person can no longer function effectively as a liaison between a company and the media.
  - **Employee relations.** Programs that communicate information to employees are called **employee relations**. A related program is called **internal marketing**, which deals with communication efforts aimed at informing employees about marketing programs and encouraging their support.

- *Financial relations.* All of the communication efforts aimed at the financial community, such as press releases sent to business publications, meetings with investors and analysts, and the annual report, are referred to as **financial relations**.
- *Public affairs.* Corporate communication programs with government and with the public on issues related to government and regulation are called **public affairs**. Public affairs includes **lobbying**, which occurs when a company provides information to legislators in order to get their support and vote on a particular bill. It also includes communication efforts with consumer or activist groups who seek to influence government policies. **Issue management** is another term for this function. In addition to government relations, public affairs programs also monitor public opinion about issues central to the organization's interest and develop programs to communicate with the public about these issues.
- *Community relations.* The scope of community relations has grown from a focus on the local community to encompass a larger meaning. This focus has expanded to include consideration of diverse communities, especially the underrepresented and underserved.

Companies can build community relations through **cause marketing**. When companies associate themselves with a good cause by providing assistance as well as financial support, the practice is called **cause marketing**.

- *Consumer relations.* One area where advertising and public relations overlap is the growing field of consumer relations. It is defined as building relationships with people who buy things in the United States and elsewhere around the globe. Building sales and brand relationships are major objectives.
- The greatest strength public relations contributes to an integrated marketing communication program is its potential to help organizations establish credibility in the eyes of consumers. Public relations uses unbiased, implied third party endorsement to communicate information about an organization's products and practices.

### **Aspects of Public Relations that Focus on Particular Functions**

Other areas of public relations, such as corporate reputation management, crisis management, marketing public relations, and public communication campaigns are distinctive because of their focus rather than their target audience.

- *Corporate Reputation Management*  
The area that focuses on an organization's image and reputation is called **corporate relations**. The overriding goal of **reputation management** in a corporate relations program is to strengthen the trust that stakeholders have in an organization. Because corporate reputation is a perception, it is earned through deeds, not created by advertising.

- Crisis Management

There is no greater test for an organization than how it deals with a crisis. The key to **crisis management** is to anticipate the possibility of a disaster and plan how to deal with the bad news and all the affected publics.

Preparing for a potential crisis helps organizations weather the storm. By analyzing the potential for emerging crises and identifying resources to cope with them, an organization can be ready to respond quickly and meaningfully. A quick response is essential.

An effective crisis plan can help both to avoid crises and ease the damage if one occurs. A plan outlines who contacts the various stakeholders who might be affected, who speaks to the news media, and who sets up and runs an on-site disaster management center.

- Public Communication Campaigns

Used as a way to change public opinion, **public communication campaigns** also discourage socially harmful behaviors, such as driving in areas with air pollution problems. Sometimes they are engaged in counter-marketing as they try to negate the impact of other advertising messages. Taken to the global level, public relations intersects with public diplomacy.

- Fundraising

The practice of raising money by collecting donations is called fundraising. It is used primarily by nonprofits and directed to potential donors. Professional fundraisers know how to make the initial contacts and use other marketing communication tools in a way that inspires people to participate. Sometimes fundraising is called **development** or **strategic philanthropy**.

- Is public relations the career for you? A short exercise appears in the text to help students answer that question.

## WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS?

- Public relations uses a variety of marketing communication tools just as advertising does. Advertising is particularly useful in sending out corporate image and reputation programs. Direct marketing is sometimes useful in sending out corporate or institutional publications. The internet is important because the corporate website is one of the primary ways to disseminate information about an organization. Public relations activities, such as publicity and corporate advertising, can help drive traffic to the corporate website. Sales promotion is used in support of public relations activities, such as special events.
- Planning how to use these tools for a public relations campaign is similar to planning an advertising or IMC campaign. An acronym for the parts of a strategic plan for public relations is RPIE, short for Research, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation.

- As the media landscape has evolved in the digital age, so has the role of public relations in integrated marketing. Public relations now plays a central strategic role, especially integrating social media. The public relations practitioner has many tools, which we can divide into three categories: paid, owned, and earned media.
- **Paid media** are traditional measured media, primarily in an advertising format, such as print and broadcast, in which the sponsoring company or organization pays for the promotion.
- **Owned media** are those channels owned and controlled by the sponsoring organizations such as websites, blogs, sponsored events, and publications about the brand, such as news releases. The company or organization controls the messages but does not control how or when the message is delivered.
- Consumers and mass media, not the brand owners, control the mentions and comments about the brand in what is known as **earned** media, which makes it the most credible media option. The result is positive word of mouth, viral communication, and publicity hits and mentions.
- Although it's hard to measure, earned media is undeniably valuable, as long as the coverage is positive. However, sometimes such coverage can damage a brand's reputation. This is why some companies monitor the internet to see what is being said about them so that they can respond to protect their reputations, if it's something negative.
- How should organizations respond to negative information on the internet or social media? Entrepreneur Mark Suster warns about the dangers of overreacting. "If you make a major mistake, own it early," he advises. "If negative information is posted and you believe your company is in the right, see if the story gets much reverberation. If it's not picked up repeatedly in the media, social or otherwise, resist the temptation to respond because the response itself might make people aware of the issue unnecessarily."

## Advertising

Public relations programs sometimes employ advertising as a way to create corporate visibility or increase its goodwill with its various stakeholder audiences. The primary uses of advertising are house ads, public service announcements, and corporate advertising.

### House Ads

- An organization (or a medium such as a newspaper, magazine, or broadcast station) may prepare a **house ad**, which is an ad for use in its own publication or programming. Consequently, no money changes hands. These house ads are often managed by the public relations department.

### Public Service Announcements

- The ads for charitable and civic organizations that run free of charge on television or radio or in print media are **public service announcements (PSAs)**. These ads are prepared just like other print ads or commercials, and in most instances ad agencies donate their expertise and media donate time and space to run them. The Advertising Council represents a PR effort for the entire advertising industry and has produced most of the PSAs you see on television and in print.
- Getting donated time and space is not easy. The PSA directors at various media receive a barrage of public-service campaigns every week on different issues and they have to choose which ones to run. There is no guarantee which markets will see the campaign elements and there is no guarantee that the same people will see the print and TV versions of a campaign. Some PSA campaigns do not get any airtime or print placements.

### Corporate Advertising

- With **corporate advertising**, a company focuses on its **corporate image** or viewpoint. There is less emphasis on selling a particular product unless it is tied in to a good cause. For that reason, the ad or other campaign materials may originate in the public relations department rather than the advertising department.
- **Corporate identity advertising** is another type of advertising that firms use to enhance or maintain their reputation among specific audiences or to establish a level of awareness of the company's name and the nature of their business.
- Sometimes companies deliver point-of-view messages called **advocacy advertising**. One example of this is GE's Ecomagination campaign that has been previously mentioned. Another example is P&G's campaign for Dawn liquid dishwashing soap. The soap, known to be tough on grease yet gentle connects naturally with its advocacy effort to rescue birds and marine mammals harmed by oil spills. This campaign, which aims to inspire people to get involved, proved timely in light of the massive BP oil spill in 2010. Donating 12,000 bottles of Dawn to animal rescuers on the Gulf Coast, P&G enhanced its reputation and built goodwill based on its longstanding marketing relationship between wildlife rescue organizations and the brand.

### **Media Relations**

- Next, we will move away from controlled messages and consider the various tools and techniques used by media relations specialists to get publicity in the news media on behalf of a company or a brand.
- Media relations is seen as the most important core competency for public relations professionals. **Media relations** specialists know media that would be interested in stories about their companies. They also develop personal contacts with reporters and editors who write regularly on topics related to their organization's industry. In addition to personal contact, the primary tool used in media relations is the news release, along with press conferences and media tours.



### News Releases

- The **news release** is the primary medium used to deliver public relations messages to the various external media. Although the company distributing the news release controls its original form and content, the media decide what to present and how to present it. What the public sees, then, is not necessarily what the originating company had in mind, and so this form of publicity offers less control to the originating company.
- The decision to use any part of a news release at all is based on an editor's judgment of its news value. **News value** is often based on timeliness, proximity, impact, or human interest.
- News releases must be written differently for each medium, accommodating space and time limitations. Traditional journalism form is followed. The more carefully the news release is planned and written, the better the chance it has of being accepted and published as written.
- The majority of news releases are delivered by email, although they can be delivered in a number of different ways. Sometimes a company is hired that specializes in distribution. Effective news releases for the internet should be brief and succinct. Recommendations for format are listed in the textbook.
- **Video news releases** contain video footage for a television newscast. They are effective because they show target audiences the message in two different video environments: first as part of a news report and then later in an advertisement. Of course, there is no guarantee that such a release will be used.

### Pitch Letters

- Ideas for **feature stories**, which are human interest stories rather than hard news announcements, have to be "sold" to editors. This is done using a **pitch letter** that outlines the subject in an engaging way and sells a story idea. Companies use this form to feature interesting research breakthroughs or corporate causes. Not only is the distribution of press releases moving online, but the letters pitching editors with story ideas are moving online also.

### Press Conferences

A **press conference**—an event at which a company spokesperson makes a statement to media representatives—is one of the riskiest public relations activities because the media may not see the company's announcement as being real news. Companies often worry whether the press will show up for a press conference. Also, they wonder if the press will ask the right questions or instead will ask questions the company cannot or does not want to answer.

- To encourage reporters to cover press conferences, companies may issue a **media kit**, usually a folder that provides all the important background information to members of the press, either before or when they arrive at the press conference. The risk in offering media kits (also called press kits) is that they give reporters all the necessary information so that the press conference itself becomes unnecessary.

### Media Tours

- A **media tour** is a press conference on wheels. The traveling spokesperson makes announcements and speeches, holds press conferences to explain a promotional effort, and offers interviews.

### **Publications**

- Organizations may provide employees and other publics with pamphlets, booklets, annual reports, books, bulletins, newsletters, inserts and enclosures, and position papers. The SEC requires that all publicly held companies publish an **annual report**. The annual report is targeted to investors and may be the single most important document the company distributes.
- Some companies publish material in print and online, often called **collateral material**, to support their marketing public relations efforts. Corporate publications, marketing, and sales promotion departments and their agencies also produce training materials and sales kits to support particular campaigns.
- Zines provide another outlet for businesses. At the **eZinearticles.com website**, contributors write their own content and publish it online, making it available for others to publish on their own sites as well. The site doesn't like overtly promotional content, but the company can provide a service piece related to its business.

### **Other Tools**

In addition to advertising, publicity, and publications, public relations practitioners have various types of materials and activities in their professional toolkits.

### Videos, CDs, Podcasts, and Books

- Videos and podcasts have become major public relations tools for many companies. They are an ideal tool for distributing in-depth information about a company or program. With the advent of simplified electronic publication, corporate books have also become popular.

### Speakers and Photos

- Many companies have a **speaker's bureau** of articulate people who will talk about topics at the public's request.

### Displays and Exhibits

- Displays and exhibits, along with special events and tours, may be important parts of both sales promotion and public relations programs. Displays include signage and booths, racks, and holders for promotional literature. Exhibits tend to be larger than displays; they may have moving parts, sound, or video and usually are staffed by a company representative. Booth exhibits are important at trade shows, where some companies may take orders that generate much of their annual sales.

### Special Events and Tours

- Some companies stage events to get maximum publicity and generate positive attitudes toward the sponsors by celebrating milestones, such as key anniversaries and introductions of new products. These are high-visibility activities designed to get maximum publicity. A classic special event is the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, a tradition started in 1924. Corporate sponsorship of various sporting events has evolved into a favorite public relations tactic.
- Events can also be important in internal communication. Learning objectives and employee buy-in are often accomplished through meetings, seminars, and workshops sponsored by a company, typically in conjunction with training materials and other publications. To facilitate internal marketing, **town hall forums** are sometimes used. Forums provide management with an opportunity to make a presentation on some major project, initiative, or issue and invite employees to discuss it.
- In addition to media tours, tours of all kinds are used in public relations programs, such as plant tours and trips by delegates and representatives. The campus tour used by colleges in recruiting new students is another example.

### **Online Communication**

While the internet and social media have changed communications forever, they have not replaced human relationships as the essence of societal communication. Nor have the new techniques replaced human relationships as the essence of the practice of public relations, according to public relations practitioner and author Fraser Seitel.

- Brand journalism, email, **intranets** (which connect people within an organization), **extranets** (which connect people in one business with its business partners), internet advertising and promotions, websites, social media such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter have opened up avenues for public relations activities.

### External Communication

- Corporate websites have become an important part of corporate communication. These sites can present information about the company and open up avenues for stakeholders to contact the company. Website newsrooms distribute a company's press releases to the media and other interested stakeholders.

### Internal Communication

- Email is a great way for people at separate work sites to communicate. You can get a fast reply if people at the other end are checking their email regularly and it is inexpensive. A public relations downside is that email can be used in court. Some of the most damaging evidence the federal government presented against Microsoft in its 1998 antitrust suit came from email messages exchanged within the company.

- Internal company networks have great benefits. Intranets and corporate portals encourage communication among employees in general and permit them to share company databases, such as customer records and client information.

### **WHAT'S TRENDING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS?**

1. Mobil communications will continue to grow.
2. Visual storytelling will be increasingly important.
3. **Real-time marketing**, messages based on current events, will present opportunities.
4. Educational video content will become more important.
5. Attempts to go viral will continue to try to get a crowd involved.
6. Digital security will be a continuing concern.
7. Twitter users will need to become more sophisticated.
8. Brand owners will continue to integrate marcom tools to create one consistent voice.
9. The use of cause marketing will increase as a way to address challenging social and environmental issues.
10. Measuring the effectiveness of public relations efforts will continue to evolve as traditional methods don't fit digital media.

## **END-OF-CHAPTER SUPPORT**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **3-3. Explain why public opinion is important to the success of public relations.**

Public relations programs are built on an understanding of public opinion on issues critical to the organization, such as the company's impact on the environment and its local community or workers' rights and how the company deals with employees. The public relations strategist researches the answers to two primary questions about public opinion to design effective public relations programs. First, which publics are most important to the organization, now and in the future? Second, what do these publics think? Public opinion differs from mass opinion in that public opinion examines specific subgroups rather than a more general mass audience. Particular emphasis falls on understanding the role for each of the publics of opinion leaders, important people who influence the opinions of others.

**3-4. Compare and contrast the practice of advertising with the practice of public relations.**

The objective of advertisers is to create a level of consumer awareness and motivation that delivers sales. The goal of public relations specialists is communicating with various stakeholders, managing the organization's image and reputation, and creating positive public attitudes and goodwill toward the organization. Ultimately, the difference between the two is that public relations takes a longer, broader view of the importance of image and reputation as a corporate competitive asset and addresses more target audiences. Public relations and advertising also differ in how they use the media, the level of control they have over message delivery, and their perceived credibility.

**3-5. In analyzing public relations tools, compare the use of paid, owned, and earned media. Explain the difference between the three categories.**

Paid media are traditional measured media, primarily in an advertising format, such as print and broadcast, in which the sponsoring company or organization pays for the promotion. Owned media are those channels owned and controlled by the sponsoring organizations such as websites, blogs, sponsored events, and publications about the brand, such as news releases. The company or organization controls the messages but does not control how or when the message is delivered. Consumers and mass media, not the brand owners, control the mentions and comments about the brand in what is known as earned media, which makes it the most credible media option. The result is positive word of mouth, viral communication, and publicity hits and mentions.

Although it's hard to measure, earned media is undeniably valuable, as long as the coverage is positive. However, sometimes such coverage can damage a brand's reputation. This is why some companies monitor the internet to see what is being said about them so that they can respond to protect their reputations, if it's something negative.

**3-6. What are the primary tools of media relations?**

Publicity is an uncontrolled message, and media relations is seen as the most important core competency for PR professionals. The news release is the primary medium used to deliver public relations messages to the various external media. Although the company distributing the news release controls its original form and content, the media decide what to present and how to present it. What the public sees, then, is not necessarily what the originating company had in mind, and so this form of publicity offers less control to the originating company. The decision to use any part of a news release at all is based on an editor's judgment of its news value. News value is often based on timeliness, proximity, impact, or human interest. Video news releases (VNRs) contain video footage for a television newscast. They are effective because they show target audiences the message in two different video environments: first as part of a news report and then later in an advertisement. Pitch letters, press conferences, and media tours are used as well.

### 3-7. What is the impact of digital and social media on public relations and IMC?

As the media landscape has evolved in the digital age, so has the role of public relations in integrated marketing. Public relations now play a central strategic role, especially integrating social media.

Because corporations cannot control messages generated by consumers and communicated through social media, public relations specialists have an opportunity to play a significant role in online reputation management. However, the greatest strength public relations contributes to an integrated marketing communication program is its potential to help organizations establish credibility in the eyes of consumers. Public relations uses unbiased, implied third party endorsement to communicate information about an organization's products and practices.

The expansion of significant employment opportunities in this growing profession is expected to continue, particularly in the light of the growing impact of social media.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**3-8.** Why is public opinion so important to the success of public relations? In how many different ways does it affect the success of a program like the Always #Like A Girl campaign?

*Public opinion is a consensus of what a group of people who share a common interest think about a particular issue. Public relations programs are built on an understanding of public opinion on issues critical to the organization. To design an effective public relations program, the public relations strategist must first be able to answer to two primary questions about public opinion. First, which publics are most important to the organization, now and in the future? Second, what do these publics think?*

*Girls and young women remain the most important public for the Always brand, and will continue to be in the future. To find out what girls and young women were thinking, P&G commissioned a research study that unearthed key insights. The Always #Like a Girl campaign was constructed around what those insights revealed about this public, and the campaign's strength rested in its laser-focused response to those insights – a confidence building campaign that turned a phrase previously interpreted as an insult into a statement of empowerment.*

**3-9.** In 2009, Oprah Winfrey suggested to her viewers that they could get a free meal at KFC if they printed out an internet coupon. Oprah's endorsement created demand from 4 million new customers that franchises could not meet. Is all publicity good publicity? Or was this just a bad idea that hurt the client? Organize into a team, pick a point of view, and prepare to present it to your classmates. You might also propose how you would handle such a situation.

*Some students will take the point of view that ‘all publicity is good publicity’ and focus upon the huge amount of free media exposure KFC received as a result of this incident. Others will describe this incident as a debacle that resulted from poor planning and quite possibly damaged consumer perception of the brand, as well as the company’s reputation. Regardless of which side is taken, students must acknowledge that a crisis ensued that required immediate attention by the company. KFC responded by allowing disappointed consumers to receive a replacement coupon entitling them to a free meal at a later date. This ameliorated the pressure placed on their franchisees to give away free product, while also allowing the company to make good on its original offer to its consumers.*

## TAKE-HOME PROJECTS

**3-10. Portfolio Project:** Identify a local organization in your community that might benefit from a public relations plan. Study the organization’s situation, identify a problem that can be addressed with public relations, and outline a plan to help the organization. Prepare your proposal in a 3-page (maximum) paper.

*Students may want to incorporate some of the following tips for small businesses to communicate their messages more effectively. They are:*

- ***Wrap your story around a bigger idea.*** Find a broader context or news hook for your product or service and show how your company fits into it.
- ***Keep it short and personal.*** When reaching out to journalists, a few quick sentences via email, free of industry jargon and explaining who you are and what your business is, will usually suffice. Try to keep the first email readable without having to scroll down. Also, referring to past works by journalists shows you understand their area of coverage.
- ***Pay attention to Web basics.*** Building a website and getting good rankings on search engines such as Yahoo! and Google can help customers find businesses – especially new ones. Consider blogging as a way to tell your story and interact with the public.
- ***Host events.*** These don’t have to be expensive, but small themed events with food and drink for customers can be a good draw, particularly on streets crowded with multiple merchants.
- ***Seek out brand ambassadors.*** Find customers willing to talk up your product to others and encourage their word-of-mouth marketing with discounts or first looks at new products and sales.
- ***Publish a newsletter.*** It sounds old fashioned, but with so much information coming to people online these days, a mailed paper newsletter to customers can seem more personal than mass emails and help your business stand out.

**3-11. Mini-Case Analysis:** Study Häagen-Dazs’s efforts to solve the problem of the disappearing honeybee colonies on its website. Look at the corporate social responsibility program on Ben & Jerry’s website. Compare and contrast their efforts to be good corporate citizens.

*By following this link, [https://www.haagendazs.us/about/news/freeconeday\\_buzz](https://www.haagendazs.us/about/news/freeconeday_buzz), students can learn about Häagen-Dazs’s efforts to address issues regarding honeybees. This effort began in 2008 and it is now tied to a sales promotion entitled ‘Free Cone Day.’ On Ben & Jerry’s website, students can click on the “Issues We Care About” link to read about the wide range of socially responsible activities in which the company is involved, including fair trade, democracy, racial justice, and observation of Peace Day.*

## **TRACE NORTH AMERICA CASE**

Read the TRACE case in the Appendix before coming to class.

**3-12.** Reviewing the public relation tools in this chapter, identify at least two tools you could use effectively on a national basis to increase the impact of the “*Hard to Explain, Easy to Experience*” campaign.

## **◆ ADDITIONAL MATERIAL**

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Individual Assignments**

1. Locate a public relations professional with a nonprofit organization in your community. Interview that person to learn about the role of public relations in their organization, and how it helps advance and maintain relationships with key publics in the community. Why is public relations critical in a nonprofit organization that is often operating on a limited budget? Write a 500-word report on your findings.
2. Using the tools and techniques discussed in this chapter, create an outline for a public relations campaign plan for a student organization on your campus. How will the plan be conceived, implemented, and carried out? Finally, how will it be evaluated? Share the plan outline with the student organization’s key leaders and gauge their reaction to it.

#### **Think-Pair-Share**

1. Both General Electric and Procter & Gamble are mentioned in your text as companies that have excelled in the area of advocacy advertising. Have students pair off and allow each to visit one of the two websites below to explore that company’s advocacy campaign. Explain how it has helped build goodwill and enhance the company’s reputation. Can either of these campaigns be considered an example of corporate



social responsibility or cause marketing? Explain your response. As a team, compile a brief report that summarizes the strengths of each and how the company behind it has benefitted.

- [www.dawnsaveslives.com](http://www.dawnsaveslives.com)
  - <http://ge.ecoimagination.com>
2. Crisis management is an important part of public relations. There is no greater test for an organization than how it deals with a crisis. To learn more about this, have one student in the pair identify a company that was challenged by a crisis and handled it well, and the other student in the pair identify a company that was also challenged by a crisis but handled it poorly. As a team, report to your class on the experiences of the both companies. Include in your report the extent to which both companies adhered to or ignored *The 13 Golden Rules of PR Crisis Management* outlined in the Forbes Magazine article accessible by following the website link below.

**Link:** <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2017/06/20/13-golden-rules-of-pr-crisis-management/#5f1c40c31bcf>

## OUTSIDE EXAMPLES

1. Learn more about the role of ethics in public relations by visiting the Public Relations Society of America online at <http://www.prsa.org>. From the homepage, type “Ethics” in the search box and read the code of ethics. What does it tell you about the state of the PR profession and the ethical dilemmas that practitioners encounter every day? Compare and contrast these ethical guidelines with the ethical guidelines governing brand communications that were presented in Chapter 18 of this textbook. Summarize your findings in a brief report.
2. Howard Rubenstein, founder and CEO of Rubenstein Public Relations, Inc., is considered an elder statesman in the public relations profession. Go to YouTube.com to watch him in an interview with Douglas Simon. What are the key points Mr. Rubenstein makes in this interview and in what ways do they reflect the principles discussed in this chapter of the textbook? Also visit Rubenstein Public Relations, Inc.’s website ([rubensteinpr.com](http://rubensteinpr.com)). Review the entire site, while paying special attention to the services offered and the case studies. In general, how does this firm contribute to an organization’s brand communication efforts and add value to a brand? Summarize your findings in an eight-slide PowerPoint presentation to your class.