

SOLUTIONS MANUAL



The
**Practice of
Public
Relations**
TENTH EDITION



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Part I: Evolution

Chapter 1: What is Public Relations, Anyway?

Teaching Perspective

Chapter 1 seeks to clarify the function. It explains that there is no one generally accepted definition of public relations, but rather many approaches to a definition. It explains partially that because of this fractured identity—the practice of public relations is often misunderstood.

But—and here is the key “but”—the chapter makes crystal clear that the essence of public relations lies in the ethical underpinnings of the field. Public relations, stated simply, come down to “doing the right thing.” And the chapter tries to reinforce to students, the importance of this thesis; that it is “telling the truth” that lies at the essence of public relations counsel. “Spin,” the chapter suggests, is antithetical to that thesis. Spin, in other words, is the “enemy” to professional public relations professionals. Teachers should work hard to hammer home this concept. That’s why beginning in Chapter 1 and continuing throughout the text, ethical questions are featured prominently.

The chapter also stresses the importance of public relations as a planned process to influence public opinion—one that answers to top management and deals directly with the critical publics on whom an organization depends.

The importance of candid and truthful communications lies at the heart of the Martha Stewart Case Study at the chapter end. Subject of the “Voice of Authority” Interview at the conclusion of Chapter 1 is Harold Burson, arguably the most revered public relations practitioner in the world today.

Among topics discussed in Chapter 1 are:

- Prominence of public relations.
- What is public relations?
- Planned process to influence public opinion.
- Public relations as management interpreter.
- Public relations as public interpreter.
- The publics of public relations.
- The functions of public relations.
- The curse of “spin.”
- Technical/attitudinal requirements for public relations work.

Speaking of Ethics: Communicating Terror -- in English

The tactics and techniques of public relations have become so pervasive and powerful, alas, that they have been embraced by bad people as well as good.

The emergence of Osama bin Laden as public enemy no. 1 in the winter of 2001 also ushered in a new level of public relations warfare. Bin Laden's communications became "big news" throughout the world. But by 2005, the terrorist's hate speech Arabic-language missives were becoming old hat.

That's when bin Laden recruited English-speaking terrorists to rattle Al Qaeda's sabers. While the English language broadcasts seemed to dissipate in 2006, one point was incontrovertible: Terrorists had mastered the use of global communications methods as an effective weapon in their worldwide attack.

Discussion Starters

1. In a world linked by satellites, fax machines, personal computers, cellular technology, and the like—how one communicates becomes increasingly more critical.
2. Public relations is a planned process to influence public opinion, through sound character and proper performance, based on mutually satisfactory two-way communication.
3. Public relations means different things to different people. It is a confusing term to most, who are unfamiliar with its functions.
4. Planning is a key factor in effective public relations. The success of a public relations program depends on knowing the goals for which communications is intended.
5. Performance is the most critical component. You can't have effective communications without proper performance.
6. Advertising and marketing promote products and services. Public relations promotes an institution.
7. Among the United Way's most important publics are its donors, its employees, and the recipients of its charity.
8. Seven functions of public relations practice are: 1) writing, 2) planning, 3) researching, 4) publicity, 5) media relations, 6) consumer relations, and 7) government relations.

9. Effective public relations is about truth, honesty, and integrity. “Spin” is the enemy.
10. Technically, public relations professionals must have knowledge of a) the public relations field, b) communications, c) technology, d) current events, e) business and f) management. Attitudinally, public relations professionals must a) be pro-communications, b) be advocates for their organizations, c) be oriented toward counseling, d) be ethical, e) be willing to take risks, and f) be positive.

Case Study: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Queen Martha

The public relations saga of Martha Stewart, one of the nation’s and the world’s best known business icons, is a case for the ages.

Martha Stewart lost everything—her position, her company, her investment assets, her reputation, and her freedom—primarily because she failed to listen to common sense public relations advice.

While she was never charged with insider trading, she was charged—and convicted—of lying to federal prosecutors.

What Martha Stewart should have done upon being confronted by the feds was acknowledge that she lied, explain that she panicked upon being faced with a crime, and plead for mercy in the court of public opinion.

Instead, Martha chose to listen to her lawyers, who counseled her to keep quiet and let them handle matters in court. They did, she lost, and the Martha case became a cautionary tale for anyone faced with crisis to listen to savvy public relations counsel.

Answers:

1. It was tepid and most un-Marthalike. Her silence after being faced with accusations only caused people to believe she was hiding something. She couldn’t have handled it worse.
2. When in doubt, tell the truth. As Mark Twain said, *“It will amaze your friends and confound your enemies.”*
3. I would have recommended that she go public, acknowledge her mistake, and ask for understanding and forgiveness. Once that admission was made, Martha would have been free to continue to plead her case in public forums.

4. It was the first right decision she made. And it helped turn the tide on public opinion. Finally, she had decided to confront the situation in a realistic way.
5. Martha Stewart ought to explain fully what happened in the ImClone situation. She ought to set the record straight and keep moving forward with her various projects. The truth shall set her free.
6. Yes.

Chapter 1 Review Quiz (* Indicates Correct Answer)

1. Public relations can be defined as:
 - A. Marketing a firm's products.
 - B. Management of communications between a firm and its publics. *
 - C. Publicizing the products of a firm.
 - D. Advertising to sell products.
2. A valid definition of public relations is the following:
 - A. An organization's efforts to win the cooperation of groups of people.
 - B. Persuasive communications designed to influence specific publics.
 - C. The art of analyzing trends, predicting their outcomes, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs to serve both the organization's and the public's interest.
 - D. All of the above. *
3. The job of a public relations professional is very much that of a/an:
 - A. Interpreter. *
 - B. Mouthpiece.
 - C. Skill.
 - D. Advertising agent.
4. The "essence" of the practice of public relations is:
 - A. Promotion.
 - B. Marketing.
 - C. Truth. *
 - D. Publicity.

5. The Internet has had _____ impact on public relations.
- A. Minimal
 - B. Some
 - C. Negligible
 - D. Significant *
6. Often in a political campaign, the vote of the _____ is critical.
- A. Traditional
 - B. Marginal
 - C. Uncommitted *
 - D. Active
7. Effective public relations means practicing _____.
- A. Proper product packaging.
 - B. Obfuscation and subterfuge.
 - C. Aggressively posturing a difficult point of view.
 - D. Ethics, truth, and credibility. *
8. The key element of the R-A-C-E process of public relations is _____.
- A. Action. *
 - B. Audience.
 - C. Analysis.
 - D. Attention.
9. Winning goodwill for an organization can be done relatively quickly.
- A. True.
 - B. False. *
10. The key to public relations today is product publicity, impressive tours, and a smile at the teller's counter.
- A. True.
 - B. False. *
11. Two leading public relations organizations are the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators.
- A. True. *
 - B. False.

12. Public relations is effective as a temporary, defensive measure to compensate for management misjudgment.

- A. True.
- B. False. *

13. Supervisors, clerks, managers, stockholders, and the board of directors are examples of “external” publics.

- A. True.
- B. False. *

14. Immediately after 9–11, President Bush received high approval ratings. But in his second term, Bush’s popularity plummeted. Did public relations skills enter into this?

Yes indeed. President Bush improved as a communicator after 9–11. His frequent public appearances and speeches served to bolster the war effort. And his strong suit was expressing humanity to the families of wounded service people and others. He came across as sincere and believable, if not exceptionally articulate.

In the out-years of his presidency, Bush did a poorer job of explaining the lingering Iraq War. Revelations of mistreatment of prisoners by U.S. troops and even instances of American soldiers killing civilians were also not handled well, in a communications sense, by the Bush administration.

15. If you were the head of the Democratic/Republican Party and learned a lobbyist had subsidized a congressman’s trips and lifestyle, in violation of congressional ethics rules, what would you recommend?

Take immediate action and announce it to the American public. The key to proper public relations is full disclosure of all facts. Integrity and credibility, particularly of the people’s chosen representatives, cannot be compromised.

Chapter 1: Essay Examinations

1. Describe the practice of public relations.

Public relations is a process that “harmonizes” long-term relationships among individuals and institutions. There is no one definition. But the proper practice of public relations involves: 1) researching the attitudes of the public about an organization, idea, product, or individual, 2) identifying action within the organization that answers the public need, 3) communicating to the public about that action, and 4) evaluating the results of that communications program.

2. Discuss the concept of “spin.”

“Spin” means defending your client—right or wrong, truthful or untruthful, honest or dishonest. It is anathema to the proper practice of public relations and should be dismissed and disdained by any practitioner. What some do is “spin” the truth in behalf of political and public relations clients. But the best counselors don’t “spin;” they communicate “truth.”