

## Lesson 1- Public Relations History:

The idea of public relations has been around as long as people have sought to persuade other people to get them to do something, not do something, or keep on doing something. But public relations became a formal profession in America roughly between late 1800s and early 1900s. In the 1800s, public relations techniques were used to encourage settlement in the American West. Railroad companies – which were laying down new tracks across America – employed former journalists to create flyers and pamphlets that described the great opportunities in the American frontier. And many believe it was the railroad companies that first used the term

—public relations.¶

The late 1800s were known as the Age of the Press Agent. The characteristic feature of the age was hype – or exaggeration. Press agents were concerned more about creating legends and selling tickets about their clients. The man who is credited for moving the public relations profession to its next age was (Ivy Lee). In 1906, he published his —Declaration of

Principles¶ that advocated truthfulness and openness, and thereby announced P.R. into the Public Information Age. The main difference with this new age was the emphasis on the accuracy and honesty of the information issued by public relations people. Ivy believed that the best way to practice —public relations¶ was to make sure the public had truthful information. In 1923 (Bernays) published his landmark book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* and established the profession's theoretical foundations. Using theories first introduced by his uncle, (Sigmund Freud), (Bernays) wrote about how to move people to do what you want them to do. By doing so, he transitioned the public relations

profession into its third major age: scientific persuasion (and the two-way model).

The emphasis on business strategy ushered more public relations professionals into senior management where P.R. input could be made prior to policy formation or product creation. As a result, public relations became more effective because P.R. activities became more proactive and less reactive. With proactive public relations, organizations can plan and execute strategies and tactics on their own timeline – rather than having to react to a P.R. problem. It is in these reactive situations that organizations will be most tempted to spin – to make things look better than they are. While it is impossible to avoid reactive public relations entirely, many P.R. problems can be prevented through proper proactive planning.

In the beginning of the 20th century, public relations were narrowly focused on media relations/publicity. Consequently, most practitioners were former journalists who understood news and how to craft an effective media story. Public relations professionals always realized the importance of influence with senior management. Beginning roughly in the 1970s, public relations professionals began to increasingly identify themselves as —business people first, and communicators second.¶ As a result, public relations became more concerned with establishing measurable objectives matching with organizational goals, and demonstrating a tangible ROI (return on investment).

Today, with technology and information's revolution, public relations are much broader. In addition to media relations, public relations practitioners work in the following areas: employee relations, investor relations, community relations, public affairs, lobbying, and social media, among other areas. As the scope of the profession has expanded,

so has the skill set practitioners need to be successful. Writing continues to be the core skill public relations practitioners need to possess. But employers are also looking for research skills, good interpersonal communication, media and, critical thinking skills, and business knowledge (what makes businesses more effective).

Today, the trend is to combine advertising, marketing, and public relations into integrated marketing communications (IMC) or integrated strategic communications. Under these integrated models, public relations works much more closely with advertising and marketing to achieve consistent messages/strategies and realize cost efficiencies. Today, public relations is practiced worldwide. In fact, some of the profession's fastest growth is overseas – especially in developing countries and emerging markets. Any place or situation where public support is the key to an organization's success, public relations will be valued