

Lesson 9- The Public Relations Process— RACE(Research ,Action ,Communication, Evaluating):

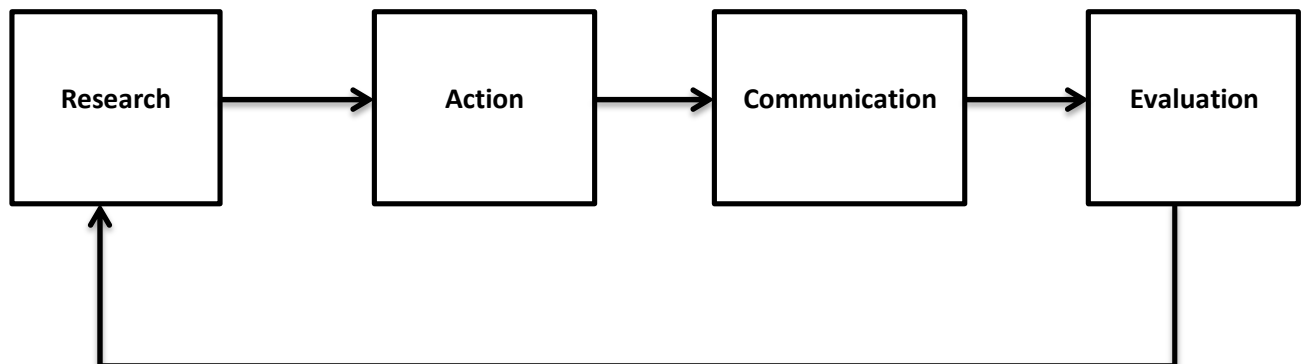
Public relations works best when it is a strategic management function. Strategic public relations are focused on achieving goals and objectives that contribute to the overall purpose and mission of an organization. To be strategic, public relations practitioners need accurate information about the situations they face, the audiences they communicate with, effectiveness of their communication efforts, and the overall impact the program has on building and maintaining relationships with critical stakeholders, without whom the organization could not fulfill its purpose. Public relations practitioners may be tempted to start with tactics—such as press releases, a blog, an event, and so on—but these first should be determined by research, to help inform the overall goals and strategies of the function, otherwise they may be wasted efforts.

The P.R. managers mentioned the P.R. cycle as:

1. Using research to analyze the organizations' situation and to accurately define the problem or opportunity in such a way that the public relations efforts can successfully address the cause of the issue and not just its symptoms.
2. Developing a strategic action plan that addresses the issue that was analyzed in the first step. This includes having an overall goal, measurable objectives, clearly identified publics, targeted strategies, and effective tactics.

3. Executing the plan with communication tools and tasks that contribute to reaching the objectives.
4. Measuring whether you were successful in meeting the goals by using evaluation tools.

The figure (1) shows the function cycle of the P.R.



(Figure .1.) P.R. Functions Cycle

step-One- Research : Research is an essential part of public relations management. Research is the strategic foundation of modern public relations management. Here is a closer look at why scholars argued that conducting both formative and evaluative research is vital in modern public relations management:

- a- Research makes communication two-way by collecting information from publics rather than one way. Research allows us to engage in dialogue with publics, understanding their beliefs and values, and working to build understanding on their part of the internal workings and policies of the organization.

- b- Without conducting research the management does not have reliable information that means public relations is based on experience or instinct, neither of which play large roles in strategic management.
- c- Research allows us to show results, to measure impact, and to refocus our efforts based on those numbers.

Types of Research:

Research in public relations management requires the use of specialized terminology. The term **primary research** is used when we collect unique data in normally proprietary information, firsthand and specifically relevant to a certain client or campaign. Primary research, because it is unique to your organization and research questions, is often the most expensive type of data to collect this type of research include many methods like (survey, questionnaires, polls, observations, interviews).

Secondary research refers to research that is normally a part of public domain but is applicable to our client, organization, or industry, and can be used to round out and support the conclusions drawn from our primary research. Secondary research is normally accessed through the Internet or available at libraries or from industry and trade associations. Reference books, encyclopedias, and trade press publications provide a wealth of free or inexpensive secondary research. Managers often use secondary research as an exploratory base from which to decide what type of primary research needs to be conducted.

There is another classification for the research including (Quantitative Research/ Qualitative Research)

Quantitative Research:

Quantitative research is based on statistical generalization. It allows us to make numerical observations such as —75% of families say that they

would purchase the package tours again.¶ Statistical observations allow us to know exactly where we need to improve relationships with certain publics, and we can then measure how much those relationships have ultimately improved (or degraded) at the end of a public relations initiative. For example, 85% prefer to stay in hotel (x) when they visit city (y). Quantitative research allows us to have a before and after snapshot to compare the numbers in each group, therefore allowing us to say how much change was evidenced as a result of public relations' efforts.

In quantitative research, the entire public you wish to understand or make statements about is called the population. The population might be any group that you would like to study. From that population, you would select a sample to actually contact with questions. Probability samples can be randomly drawn from a list of the population, which gives you the strongest statistical measures of generalizability. A random sample means that participants are drawn randomly and have an equal chance of being selected. The larger the sample size (number of respondents), the smaller the margin of error and the more confident the researcher can be that the sample is an accurate reflection of the entire population. There are many methods to choose samples (nonprobability and probability). Methods of Quantitative Data Collection helps management to set public segmentations, Segmenting publics in this manner is an everyday occurrence in public relations management. Through their segmentation, public relations managers have an idea of who will support their organization, who will oppose the organization, and what communications—messages and values—resonate with each public. After using research to identify these groups, public relations professionals can then build relationships with them in order to conduct informal research, better understand their positions, and help to

represent the values and desires of those publics in organizational decision making and policy formation.

Qualitative Research:

The second major kind of research method normally used in the public relations industry is qualitative research. Qualitative research generates in-depth, —quality information that allows us to truly understand public opinion, but it is not statistically generalizable. Qualitative research is enormously valuable because it allows us to truly learn the experience, values, and viewpoints of our publics. It also provides ample quotes to use as evidence or illustration in our strategy documents, and sometimes even results in slogans or content for use in public relations' messages. Qualitative researches use many methods such as (In-depth interview, Focus groups, Case studies, Participant observation).

Qualitative research is particularly adept at answering questions from public relations practitioners that began —How? or —Why? This form of research allows the researcher to ask the participants to explain their rationale for decision making, belief systems, and values, thought processes, and so on. It allows researchers to explore complicated topics to understand the meaning behind them and the meanings that participants ascribe to certain concepts. Public relations managers often use qualitative research to support quantitative findings. Qualitative research can be designed to understand the views of specific publics and to have them elaborate on beliefs or values that stood out in quantitative analyses. Managements usually used both methods to get the right information.

In addition to the public analysis, P.R. research should also include an organizational analysis. One common way to do this is to conduct a

(S.W.O.T.) analysis, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

The public relations practitioner needs to know how to —position the organization in the face of the situation – whether it's a problem or an opportunity. Once the (S.W.O.T.) analysis has been completed, the public relations practitioner will be more effective in (maximizing strengths, minimizing weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, guarding against threats).

Another kind called (P.E.S.T) analysis for the environment which consist of (Political, Economic, Social and Technological) analysis.