

Spring 2022

Analysis of Public Relations

Andrea Watson
anichols5@murraystate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/bis437>

Recommended Citation

Watson, Andrea, "Analysis of Public Relations" (2022). *Integrated Studies*. 414.
<https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/bis437/414>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Murray State's Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Integrated Studies by an authorized administrator of Murray State's Digital Commons. For more information, please contact msu.digitalcommons@murraystate.edu.

Analysis of Public Relations

Andrea N. Watson

Murray State University

Abstract

The public relations profession is a person's ability to communicate to various publics on behalf of a person, organization, or a place of business to build positive relationships and create awareness of a brand. The field of public relations is important in today's society. PR requires expertise in communication in order to maintain and help meet an entities' mission, vision, and goals. Through a close examination of communication skills, types of public relations, the effectiveness of communication in public relations, PR ethics, and the future of PR, we analyze the communicative profession of public relations.

Introduction

Our world thrives on communication. It is an essential part of day-to-day life. It is especially important in the world of business where there are hundreds of occupations that require communications skills. Public relation is a field that is dedicated to communicating with an audience on behalf of an individual, a company, or an organization. PR professionals are both senders and receivers of communications. They are responsible for listening to messages from a public audience and responding to them with expert communication skills. Their job is to communicate effectively while simultaneously maintaining a positive image of their client.

Public relations is much more than putting out client fires and sending messages to audiences. It's a communicative art form. Taking words and crafting them into beautiful messages to evoke feeling, appreciation, and fondness for a company or person is the act of a true PR specialist. Specialists identify their audiences and create messages that appeal to their wants and needs. This can include company stakeholders, investors, customers, employees, and more. They have the ability to send the right messages to the right people at the right time.

Through this paper, I will show the importance of the communication and communication skills in public relations. I will cover why communication skills are essential, the different types of communicative jobs in PR, the effectiveness of communication in PR, ethical communication

in PR, and what research projects the future of PR looks like with the standards set by today's society.

The Importance of Communication skills in PR

In public relations, communications skills are your most important tool. The *Vahalian Journal of Economic Studies* states in an article entitled Promoting corporate image by communication and PR strategy that "Public relations help establish and maintain a communication line permitting the understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between organization and citizens." (Iacob 2015) With the profession relying so heavily on communication, PR specialists must display expert knowledge about the different models of communication and be able to utilize them appropriately.

A recent campaign that embraced communication models and utilized communication skills appropriately was the Mask Up Kentucky campaign. The Mask Up Kentucky campaign started in the fall of 2020 and continued through late 2021. This campaign was a plea to all Kentucky residents to mask up during the Coronavirus pandemic. Kentucky Governor, Andy Beshear, desperately pleaded with Kentuckians to wear a mask in order to stop the spread of covid in order to protect our neighbors, friends, and family. The campaign featured many advertisements, commercials, Facebook live conferences, and more of the governor and other influential Kentuckians masking up to protect themselves and others. The mask-up campaign

was widely talked about amongst Kentucky residents. It was also the source of many confrontations between citizens and the Kentucky government.

The communication model that identifies with this campaign is the public information model. This model is a one-way communication model that places an emphasis on true facts. This campaign used many facts and statistics about the coronavirus that would encourage people to wear a mask. For example, The Journal of American Medicine states “ Primary benefits of wearing a mask include limiting the spread of the virus from someone who knows or does not know they have an infection to others. Masks also remind others to continue practicing physical distancing.” (Desai & Aronoff, 2020) The Mask Up Kentucky campaign listed these exact reasons to encourage people to “mask up.”

The journal Public Relations Review states “Facebook is not only a monopoly in the corporate sense but also in the social sense. Billions of people use the company’s platform to stay in touch with friends and family.” (Distaso et al., 2015) Every day Andy Beshear would do a Facebook live and talk about how COVID was affecting Kentucky residents. Thousand upon thousands of people of all different ages would tune in to these daily talks with Governor Beshear. Through his Facebook lives, the campaign was able to use the public relations RACE formula. The campaign creators were able to research and target their audience, create a game plan, communicate with the Kentuckians, and evaluate the success of their campaign just through Facebook lives alone.

The PR team behind the Mask Up Kentucky campaign demonstrated communication skills correctly and in turn, made the campaign a success. The public relations specialists behind the campaign displayed communication skills in many different ways. They first crafted a message. They then chose a communication model that best suited their campaign. Next, they chose a medium to send their message through that would reach their target audience. Lastly, they communicated with Kentucky Residents.

There is more to communication than just communicating in public relations. Having prior knowledge and education about communication is essential to the success of a message. Knowing what to say, how to say it, and where to say it is all part of the communication process needed to send a successful message to a PR practitioners intended audience.

Knowing what to say is a big part of communication skills, especially in the field of public relations. One thing that many PR specialists will experience in the PR world is a PR crisis. It is inevitable that a crisis will happen and the public relations specialist will ultimately be responsible for communicating on behalf of the client.

In the peer-reviewed journal *The Journal of Service Marketing*, I examined an article entitled How to handle PR disasters, An Examination of the Impact of Communication Response Type and Failure Attributions on Consumer Perception. This article was published in July 2009 by Anna S. Matilla, a Marriot professor at Penn State University. The article

discusses in depth how communication response in crisis affects consumers' trust in businesses.

In the introduction of the article, Matilla notes how important it is for consumers to have trust in an organization or business. She acknowledges that in today's society business' reputation has never been more in danger with the uprising of the media. The ability to publicize scandals and problems on a wide scale is detrimental to corporations because it significantly affects consumers' trust. Trust is everything to a business. Matilla highlights many different PR crises such as Martha Stewart's stock sale expose, FEMA's poor response to Hurricane Katrina, and more to demonstrate how easily and quickly a consumer's trust can be lost. This makes PR communication and response that much more important as they have the key to rebuilding trust.

As vulnerable as corporations are right now with the continuous development of the media, Matilla writes that having a crisis management plan and policy in place is necessary. The author stresses the importance of assessing the situation first before initiating a response as so many companies are quick to play the blame game. Through research involving a price-gouging hotel during hurricane Katrina, Matilla examines the concept of crisis communication management and trust repair and how it affects consumers in the midst of a PR crisis.

In the article, the author mentions how there are two courses of action when it comes to responding to a PR crisis. A company can either deny such actions or apologize for whatever

crisis might've occurred. Whichever course a company takes has a big impact on trust repair. In some cases, denial may be the correct response while in other cases an apology would go much further with consumers. Matilla believes that whichever course of action is selected needs to be determined after careful consideration. She states in her article that "The notion of responsibility is at the core of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory." (Matilla, 2009) *The Journal of Crisis and Risk Communication* defines the theory as "Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT; Coombs, 2007) is a commonly used theoretical framework in crisis communication research. It provides a way to better understand the organization's crisis response in light of its reputation. SCCT posits that an organization's reputation can be protected during a crisis if appropriate communication response strategies are selected" (Oh et al., 2021) Research suggests that being well versed in communication and communication theory is essential to a PR specialist. The ability to make decisions for a client must exemplify expert communication techniques and knowledge.

Knowing about communication and different communication theories for PR may be an important part of the profession. Some of the most important skills lie in the most basic parts of communication. We communicate in two ways, verbally and nonverbally. Communicating verbally in PR may look like press conferences, pitching ideas for PR campaigns, speaking to investors, etc. A specialist must know how to communicate with their audience on a level that the audience gets. However, research shows that PR specialist can take their communications skills up a level by incorporating nonverbal communication. An article from *Marketing of Scientific and Research Organizations* relates that "With media

consumption trending towards shorter-form, media-rich content, the way PR practitioners create, tell and package stories for brands needs to adapt to reflect the wants and needs of the audience. For many public relations practitioners, this means more imagery, videos, and graphics need to be used in support of the more traditional elements of public relations activity — taking an integrated, multimedia approach to communications — to generate favorable outcomes that align with their client's business goals.” (Jakus, 2018)

According to Jakus, just verbal communication is not enough with the rise of digital media. By incorporating graphics, videos, pictures, and more PR practitioners are able to communicate with their intended audience on a higher level creating greater understanding and overall more impressive delivery of a message. By exhibiting high levels of communication skills, research indicates that PR practitioners may be more successful in their careers and for their clients. The International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction states “Social media sites are considered an important platforms tool for maintaining existing relationships, receiving recent activity news, and obtaining a large network with relatively little effort. Moreover, individuals use social media to obtain gratifications such as passing time, sociability, and social information.” (Kircaburun et al., 2018) There are many platforms available. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, and Reddit, exists just to name a few. People can have a bias when deciding which platforms to turn too for their media depending on their intended purpose. Some may use Instagram to follow celebrities and influencers. Some may follow Reddit and Twitter for in-depth discussions about the world. Some may use Facebook

to keep up with friends and families. The reasons behind choosing a platform are endless and it is up to the PR professional to know what platform to use to reach what audience they want.

One communication skill that PR practitioners must possess to have success is the ability to identify their audience and know how to communicate with them effectively. Someone who works in PR will work with different audiences, otherwise known as publics in public relations terms. A public is a group of people who have a shared interest in an organization, company, or client. A PR specialist will tailor messages to fit their key public needs. Something that also affects PR communication is personal demographics. An article entitled Social media usage and acculturation: A test with Hispanics in the U.S “People can participate in multiple social media platforms without changing their physical locations, and they are likely to behave in accordance with the cultural connotations implied by a particular platform.” (Li & Tsai, 2015) People who identify as a certain gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. decide to consume media that they feel a connection. On social media for example, people will create online communities. An example of this would be a Facebook group for LGBTQ+ community. Consumers will absorb content that they feel they fit into and it is important for a PR specialist to be able to identify what their intended public's interest are. For example, a PR practitioner may be designing a campaign for a client that wants to communicate with the Hispanic community. In order to do this, a good communicator and PR practitioner will study the demographic, learn about their communicative needs and display those needs while communicating with the Hispanic community. The practitioner may incorporate visuals and more to help with the

communication and deliver a message that appeals to the Hispanic public on behalf of the client.

Something that a PR specialist should also consider when communicating with an audience is their audience's media literacy skills. Media literacy is the ability to understand the media. People will consume media that they understand and it is imperative that a PR professional can identify what medium is going to connect with their audience the most. This can differ in physical and cognitive aspects. Physically, people may consume media that they can read, see, or hear based on health issues. For example, someone who is deaf may choose to read a press release rather than listen to a press release. Cognitively, a person will choose media that is on the same level of understanding as them. Someone who is not familiar with politics could opt for a tweet that summarizes a political campaign versus a detailed write up about a campaign that can be found on the CNN or Fox website. The Newspaper Research Journal believes that media literacy training could help with media perception. The journal states "In addition to being critical consumers of news, citizens need to understand the news process and imperatives behind journalistic work to analyze the news. Learning how to evaluate content is the most important and difficult part of becoming media literate because "critical evaluation rests on a substantial body of knowledge regarding the broader social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts in which media content is produced.?" Informing participants of the journalists' goals and role in a democratic society should increase their knowledge of the broader context in which media are produced and this, in turn, may reduce hostile media perceptions." (Vraga, Tully, & Rojas, 2009) While the journal speaks

primarily about journalist, the same could be applied to PR professionals. While the education system continues to churn out students with strong media literacy skills, PR professionals have an increased chance of message retention as long as the PR professional is skilled in using appropriate communication channels.

Lastly, the key to any good publicist is to be an informed one. This can be tough with the number of platforms available to the publics today. There are social media platforms, newspapers, television, the radio, and all kinds of different mediums for people to reach. The *Catalan Journal of Communication and Cultural studies* even states “New spaces have appeared and communicators no longer manage to find out about everything that is being said about organizations as there are now many issuers.” (Huertas & Capriotti, 2015) With so many different avenues of communication, how does a publicist keep up? A way to alleviate this concern is to have a routine. PR specialists must have a set routine. By checking all the different platforms they are less likely to miss things that they need to address. No one wants to be blindsided by an issue, however, if you are in a habit of keeping up with the media then you are less likely to be caught off guard.

In the article *Integrating Social Media into PR Plans* Holly Potter says “Today, our clients’ clamor for a blog, a Facebook page, a YouTube channel or a Twitter handle, convinced they hold the solution to their problem. Yet the faulty logic still holds true. An individual tactic — no matter how popular — cannot substitute for a solid PR strategy.” (Potter, 2010) The

amount of media makes it especially easy for things to go viral. There are so many platforms to address, by having a plan, you are likely to get messages out quicker to numerous media outlets. In this profession, it is important to address things quickly so they do not spiral out of control and the public does not feel that your client is being neglectful.

In today's world, everything is driven by the media. Media often drives us to make the choices that we do in our daily lives. It can influence us to think the way we do about certain subjections and situations. With the media so profoundly in the center of everyones lives communication skills in the PR profession are important. The goal of a public relations practitioner is to deliver messages and gain interest and success for their client all while using communication. The more knowledgeable a practitioner or specialist is about communicating the more likely they are to communicate successfully with different publics.

Types of public relations

There are different types of communication professions in public relations. There is media relations, community relations, internal communications, crisis communications, public affairs, and social media communications. Though all of these are different kinds of PR, they all have something in common and that is the word communication. Each type of PR is important to the profession and demonstrates the need for communicative expertise.

The first type of communication that I would like to discuss is media relations. When we think of the media we usually think about the news media. Media relations is exactly how

it sounds. Developing a relationship with the news media. In media relations, public relations practitioners will actually bypass stakeholders and consumers and take their communication straight to the news. PR practitioners in media relations are contacting and communicating with editors, news reporters, and journalists in more in hopes of taking their client's information or message and creating awareness through the news. One might ask there self, why would a PR practitioner bypass the public and go straight to the news media. While this is an understandable inquisition, a research publication about universities and media relations summarizes why a PR practitioner would take their communication right to a news source.

In the *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* authors, Nicole Lee and Patrick Merle write "News coverage is important to university marketing because media coverage can influence how audiences think about certain topics and how they associate organizations with issues (Scheufele, 1999). Further, media coverage plays an important role in developing an organization's reputation (Kiouisis, Popescu, & Mitrook, 2007; Panico, Raithel, & Michel, 2014). Although an organization may sacrifice control over the message, earned media coming from editorial sources is often seen as more credible than advertisements or owned media (Eisend & Küster, 2011." (Lee & Merle, 2018) Though the research is speaking directly about university communications, it can also be true for other organizations. The news has had a big impact on

what people do, think, and say. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic people relied on the news media for information about what they should do to protect themselves from the

virus, what people think about the virus, and how people communicated with other people about the virus. In the case of the COVID pandemic listening to the media and following what the media said ended up being life-changing across the globe. That is how influential the news media is on people. In a PR sense, it's equally important. The way that the media takes a PR practitioner's message and translates it across the news media is very important to a client. The association between the organization and the news media can make an organization by gaining awareness and creating relationships with audiences or break an organization by doing the opposite. It also creates a reputation for the organization. If you are consistently seeing good news about an organization the more likely they are to have a good reputation.

When PR practitioners utilize media relations for communication about an organization, they are also building credibility. While there is factual information that floats around on the internet, many people still rely on the news for credible information. Media relations is good for a public relations specialist because conveying messages through somebody that is already deemed as a credible source, it adds to the credibility of their own message.

The media relation part of public relations is beneficial to the practitioners that use it. Without media relations, many organizations and PR firms would suffer without them. Through media relations, many practitioners are able to gain their organization a following, build a bond with audiences, and create a lasting impression on their clients.

The second type of communication in public relations is community relations.

Community relations in public relations is where a public relations practitioner communicates with the community on behalf of an organization to build a beneficial relationship with both the community and the client. For example, Chobani is a yogurt brand loved by many. The Chobani company noticed that in the community there was a need for jobs for refugees. Chobani decided to hire these refugees exclusively and supply them with benefits, but not just any benefits. The Chobani brand goes above and beyond to provide for its employees. They provide double the minimum wage, maternity, and paternity leave for both parents, and give shares of the company to their workers. In this case, working alongside the company, the PR team was able to identify an issue within the community and respond to it by communicating a hiring opportunity. This not only benefitted Chobani, but it benefitted the community by creating really good job opportunities for those who were in need.

Community relations does a lot for a company and a business by creating opportunity for the community and a relationship with the organization. One way that community relations operate is by hosting corporate social responsibility campaigns. In *Public Relations Review* an article states “In particular, corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaigns on the part of corporations which seek to foster positive interactions among corporations and rural community members may result in more solid relationships, greater trust, and better capability to address shared problems.” (Jin & Lee, 2013) This can be a multitude of things. This can be an act of philanthropy, a social mission, or an act to sustain the community. You will hear of many different companies funding a wing to a local hospital, a library, or a university. All of

these are examples of social responsibility. Practitioners are not just responsible for sending messages but for hearing them. When the public communicates a need for an upgrade at the hospital or library, the practitioner can act on that and communicate it to executives. The executives can act on that message and give the people what they need. By communicating the public needs to the client, the practitioner is actively building trust between the corporation and its public. The specialist has the ability to help foster a special bond creating a greater sense of community.

The third type of public relations is internal communications. Internal communications is a type of public relations where a public relations specialist acts internally for an organization. Internal communications are important because it is a way for a specialist to communicate with the company and its employees exclusively. The type of material they communicate may be anything from policy change to how the business is doing. PR practitioners must establish quality relationships within the organization to create a transparent relationship between the employees and executives.

In an article entitled Evaluating internal public relations using the critical incident technique published in the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, the authors express the sentiment “Employees are among the most important stakeholders of any organization. They are more than just parts of their organization; they basically live the organization they are working for. The relationship between an organization and its employees is affected by the quality and nature of the internal communication.” (Zwijze-Koning et al., 2015) Employees

are the backbone of any organization. Communication with them needs to be open, honest, and motivating. PR practitioners who are in internal relations have a duty to both the executives and the employees to build a strong relationship between the two. If the practitioner fails to communicate on a level that lacks openness and honesty company morale shifts and the company suffers. The journal *Public Relations Review* says “Defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind, the benefits of employee engagement include increased productivity, decreased attrition, improvement of an organization's image and reputation, and increased financial returns.” (Karanges et al., 2015) Communication from an internal relations practitioner is meant to influence the company and create a positive working environment. Companies that have strong inter-workings are usually successful outside in the real world, like Chobani for example.

Crisis communications are the most thought of type of PR when someone talks about public relations. The crisis communications subsection of public relations is essentially the ability to collect information, analyze, and distribute a response to a crisis. The book *Public Relations Crisis Communications* says “The argument follows that if a crisis is discoverable it can be preventable; if it is not preventable, it can be controlled or minimized; if it cannot be controlled, it can be resolved. The use of communication to prevent, minimize, control and resolve crises is the cornerstone of public relations crisis management.” (Anderson-Meli & Koshy, 2020) A crisis is inevitable in the world of public relations. It is absolutely bound to happen at one point or another. It is vital to a client that a public relations specialist is ready at all times to handle a crisis and communicate with skills that are capable of fixing the crisis.

The key for practitioners in crisis management is to be ready. Crisis can strike at any time, night or day, and it does not discriminate amongst clientele. Like Koshy and Anderson - Meli said, public relations practitioners have the ability to minimize, resolve, and control crises. It is important for practitioners and clients to have a well-thought-out response plan. The practitioner must tune into the public through different mediums to see how the said crisis is being communicated, be able to analyze the data, and craft a quick response that repairs the situation.

Public affairs and public relations sound similar and have similar functions, however, public affairs differs in a couple of ways. Public relations tends to focus more so on the relationship between a business and the public. Public affairs mostly focus on communication that affects public response and invokes action.

A few days before a massive oil spill occurred in the Gulf of Mexico, Dawn dish soap launched a public affairs campaign dedicated to saving animal wildlife due to the oil spill. This campaign featured a bittersweet commercial featuring animals covered in oil and being washed in Dawn dish soap to clean the grease off of penguins, birds, seals, and more. At the end of the commercial Dawn pledged a great sum of money dedicated to saving animal wildlife and a plea to visit their Facebook page that would advise readers about the little things that they could do to help save wildlife in the aftermath of an oil spill. This campaign was highly successful and a great example of public affairs as it featured a call to action,

Public affairs can also be on an even larger scale than just environmental issues. It can also be used socially to inspire social change. For example, Nike's until we all win campaign communicated with society and encouraged people to speak out against racism and take a stand. In an advertisement, they encouraged viewers to do the opposite of their slogan - "just do it". The commercial instead said "don't do it" and featured an array of don't messages like don't sit back and let innocent lives be lost. Don't pretend there isn't a racism problem in America. Don't think you can't be a part of the change. This campaign spoke volumes to the public because it talked about a very real social issue. Nike inspired people to stand up and speak out against racism in this public affairs campaign.

The last type of public relations is social media communications. Social media communications have advanced the field of public relations significantly. The peer-reviewed journal *Public Relations Review* states "Social media platforms enable public relations practitioners and their stakeholders to interactively communicate with one another in various contexts, such as education, health, business, and crisis communication." (Wang et al., 2021) Social media allows practitioners to communicate and disseminate information quicker and with just the touch of a button. They are also able to receive feedback from their intended audience quicker. Social media can also be cheaper and less time consuming versus survey distribution and other data collection methods.

The most important thing about social media communication and why most public relations practitioners are turning to social media as a tool is because it is so popular in society today. Most people in the world own at least one social media page. It is important to public relations practitioners that they communicate on platforms that best suit their client and communication goals. For example, the soap brand Dove launched a social media campaign #NoDigitalDistortion. Many people are guilty of photo shopping their images before posting on social media. The campaign was created to promote body positivity, spread brand awareness, and send a message to readers and viewers that the Dove body brand supports bodys of all shapes and sizes and the need to photoshop photos is unnecessary, people are beautiful the way they are. This campaign was highly successful because it utilized social media platforms. Many people who regularly photoshop their pictures would be on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram would see this ad and appreciate the message Dove was sending to the public therefore building a positive relationship between Dove body care and social media users.

All different types of public relations are great contributors to the profession and do their part in advancing the field of public relations. At times one or two subgroup of PR may work in tandem to help a client and practitioner achieve a common goal. It is essential for public relations practitioners to be aware of all of the different types of PR so that they may choose a subgroup they feel that they can do their best work in and get the best outcomes for their client.

Measuring Effectiveness of Communication in public relations

As aforementioned, good communication skills in public relations are necessary to be successful within the profession, but what level of effectiveness does good communication in PR have on the public? In 2018, on an otherwise normal day, a woman named Jennifer Riordan was flying Southwest Airlines when a window on the plane broke open due to shrapnel from a blown engine, and Jennifer was sucked into the atmosphere. Unfortunately, Jennifer would succumb to her injuries. Immediately before the plane even landed news spread rapidly through the media and Southwest had a real PR crisis on its hand. The public, the passengers on the plane, Jennifer's family, as well as the Southwest family were reeling at the news about the loss of Jennifer.

From a public relations perspective, this is a huge crisis. The death of a customer through any company or organization is a tragedy. Directly after such terrible events, public relations practitioners go into crisis mode on behalf of their clients. As mentioned previously, a communication plan for a crisis needs to be in place. This can make or break a company's reputation. In the case of Jennifer Riordan, Southwest had a plan and swiftly placed that plan into action. Immediately Southwest PR team updated the higher-ups with information from social media as it came available from passengers who recorded cell phone videos from inside the plane. The team quickly developed a statement and released it to the public confirming the fatality and expressing the deepest of sympathies for Jennifer's family and all who witnessed

this horrific event. The Southwest logo was then changed from its bright primary-colored heart shape to a grey broken heart to display sympathy and passengers were compensated monetarily for their troubles. In the following weeks, Southwest would cite how the incident affected their revenue further accepting and expressing consequences and responsibility for the loss of Jennifer Riordan.

The Southwest team had all the aspects of good communication in public relations. They had a plan, issued a statement quickly, used nonverbal communication by changing social media imaging, and continued communicating how their company suffered the consequences of such a tragedy. Southwest would gain a following and even praise for how they handled the passing of Jennifer Riordan. Their crisis communication and response plan had gone above and beyond in this situation and had kept their reputation in good standing with the public. Good communication was very effective in this Southwest case.

The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art, and Communication states “The communicative process is not only about exchanging information but also about building positive attitudinal perceptions.” (Engin, 2022) Through communication, PR practitioners build positive relationships with their public in order to create a sort of bond with an organization. Like the Southwest case, the communication between the company’s public relations team and the public saved the brand in a time of deep crisis. Many other organizations have done the opposite and suffered the consequences of poor communication skills.

In 2021, rapper Travis Scott and promoting entertainment company hosted their annual Astroworld Festival in Houston, Texas. The event soon turned into tragedy as 10 concert goers were trampled and crushed to death due to crowd surge while simultaneously leaving thousands of attendees maimed and injured. The aftermath was highly publicized. Pictures of the bodies of the fallen surfaced all over social media platforms. Videos of people pleading for Travis Scott to stop the concert because people were seriously injured and even dead plastered the timelines of Tik Tok, Twitter, and Instagram. A true crisis for the PR team for Live Nation and Travis Scott.

The next day, after the concert, many people came forward to tell their truth about the event. Many felt that the entertainment company and Travis Scott were negligent and the event was poorly planned. All that was released in response to the lives lost and injured was an apology video on Scott's Instagram page by Scott himself and a two-sentence statement from Live Nation expressing sympathies for those who passed. Scott offered just 5,000 dollars apiece to help cover funeral expenses for bereaved families. The communication after the event was minimum. The lack of communication from PR teams for both Travis Scott and Live Nation to the public cost both Live Nation and Travis Scott their reputation. Today, less than a year later, Scott and Live Nation face years of litigation and a tarnished reputation.

The communication contrast greatly between the Southwest tragedy and the Astroworld tragedy. The communication on behalf of Southwest was perceived by their following as

heartfelt and sincere whereas the communication in the aftermath of Astroworld was not. Southwest was able to save its reputation, Travis Scott and Live nation were not. Two different crises involving death with two very different outcomes. Communication management can make all the difference and be effective in repairing relationships with a client in a time of tragedy.

By observing communication in both the Southwest and Astroworld events, a person may be able to devise how effective good communication is in Public Relations. One tragedy with good communication utilized by a public relations specialist ended positively while the other did not. However, there are other ways to determine the effectiveness of communication in public relations. In the book *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management* the authors Ehling and Dozier deduce “Once communication is properly regarded as a means to an end, tools for achieving some desired end state, communication managers and public relations practitioners must consider the effects of public relations programs. In organizations, where an MBO philosophy prevails, communication managers must set goals and objectives” (Ehling & Dozier, 1992)

While the effectiveness of just about anything can be measured by goal setting. This can be especially true in the public relations profession. As we now know, the goal of a public relations specialist is to send and receive messages both to and from the public while maintaining and building a positive relationship between the two. One way to measure the effectiveness of communication in PR is by listening to public response.

The public response can be received in many different forms. In today's society, the most common form of public response comes through social media. An article entitled *Is using social media "good" for the public relations profession?* In a critical reflection in the journal *Public Relations Review* author Chiara Valentini writes "Social media have been praised for their capacity to enable more symmetrical, two-way communications between organizations and their publics." (Valentini, 2015) Public relations specialists have the ability to communicate messages through social media and receive direct feedback from the public as well as stakeholder and investors. A great way to tell if your message was effective is to examine the feedback. By looking at the feedback and deciding whether the responses are positive or negative, a specialist will know if their message was successful or not. Social media is also a quick and cost-effective way to communicate with the publics. This makes communication even more effective through social media as it is not costly and a specialist can obtain immediate feedback from an audience.

Public Relations got its start in the press back in the early 1900s. Edward Bernay gained fame and is credited with being "The Father of PR". The *Public Relations Review* quotes Bernays in one of their articles. "The public's acceptance of public relations from 1930 onward could be found in what the media wrote about it—"a good index" in evaluating "the changing attitudes toward the new profession." (Rodgers, 2010) Bernays is right in his statement as the news media was a way to monitor how people felt about the public relations profession. It is also a way to measure the effectiveness of public relations. How the media

portrays your client and how often your client is mentioned in the media is a direct reflection of a PR practitioner's abilities. A PR practitioner is responsible for bringing awareness to their client. The number of mentions can display the level of communication a specialist is displaying on behalf of an organization. A good publicist will communicate with the media and promote their client earning them good standing and a strong relationship with the media. The less a practitioner talks and the less your organization is talked about in the media shows that communication is not as effective as it could be.

One more way to measure the effectiveness of PR communication is whether or not key facts are displayed amongst different mediums and platforms. *Public Relations Tactics* says “With repeated use, key messages and proof prints ensure the dissemination of clear, consistent and compelling information. Such statements serve as the foundation for your branding, marketing, and public relations efforts, and should be reflected in all written and spoken communications.” (Weatherhead, 2012) Key facts are facts about the organization that you think consumers should know. This can be company's mission, vision, and goals. If your key messages are being communicated across the media then you'll know that public relations are doing their part and communicating effectively.

Marketing of Scientific Research journal writes “Applying effective measurement and evaluation to communications campaigns is vital in the field of public relations. It provides justification for why an activity was carried out, allowing marketing professionals to assess whether the campaign achieved the objectives that it set out to meet. Of equal importance,

evaluation provides insight to help shape the future activity of a particular organization, service, brand or product, leading to better decisions and improved outcomes.” (Jakus, 2018)

The evaluation of how effective communication is behind PR is essential to the practice. If a practitioner doesn't regularly monitor the success of their communication, they would not know if they are reaching their communication goals. No matter how the evaluation takes place, it must be checked and maintained on a regular basis for goal monitoring and improvement.

Ethical communication and public relations

The word ethics or ethical is defined as moral principles. There is a lot of discussion and research that revolves around ethical communication in the field of public relations. Throughout history, public relations has earned a negative mark relating that PR practitioners are unethical because they spin the truth and manipulate it for corporate gain. This started with Edward L. Bernays who was deemed as “The Father of PR”. Though he was one of the first pioneers of public relations, in history many deemed Bernays as unethical in his practices. Bernays would often use propaganda to speak to the public’s emotions for his own and his client’s financial gains. For example, one of his first clients was the American Tobacco Association. His client was losing money so in order to generate revenue Bernays used cigarettes as a way to communicate with women. Bernays told women that smoking cigarettes was no longer a thing that should belong to men only and that if women started smoking cigarettes they could have

power over men. Bernay's knew that cigarettes would not do this. Though his words worked on women and cigarette sales soared, he was manipulative in his actions. He used an unethical tactic - manipulation.

In light of Bernay's primitive tactics and the stain it left on the public relations profession the Public Relations Society of America developed its own code of ethics in the 1950s to combat unethical behavior within the profession. The book *Cases in Public Relations Management: The Rise of Social Media and Activism* details the PRSA code of conduct. "The PRSA code has six core values: advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness." (Swan, 2014) The PRSA acts as a guide to help professionals in public relations act and communicate ethically.

Advocacy in public relations is essential to the practice. The PRSA advocacy statement in the code of ethics reads "We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent. We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate." (PRSA 2022) Public relations specialists are responsible for advocating for their clients. This means that the PR associate is responsible for communicating for their organization and doing so in a positive and professional manner.

Advocacy goes beyond just communicating professionally. Advocacy is a promise to stand behind the client during the good and the bad times. For example, in 2021 H&M clothing stores released an advertisement that many felt was racially insensitive. Racism is a

very hard accusation to stand behind, especially since it does not align with most of the population's morals and more importantly the PR practitioner's morals in this scenario. This is where the advocating and the ethics part kicks in. The practitioner has an ethical promise to advocate for their client. While a practitioner may feel that H&M's advertisement was racially unjust, the practitioner has the responsibility to advocate for H&M even if they felt the ad was wrong. They are responsible for speaking on behalf of H&M and rebuilding trust and relationships with the public.

The second focus in the PRSA's code of ethics is honesty. PRSA's honesty clause states "We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public." (PRSA 2022) Many people do not associate the term public relations and honesty together often as some public relations incidents have shown all but honesty. This can be as big as lying in a press conference for an organization or something as small as deleting a bad product review on a social media platform. Honesty works in two ways in public relations. A PR specialist has to communicate honestly with their client and has to communicate honestly on behalf of their client. The whole premise of public relations is building relationships. What is a relationship without honesty?

Honesty in public relations can be difficult, especially when it comes to bringing disappointing or devastating news to your client. It is important that a PR specialist is very honest and transparent when being honest with the client so that the appropriate message can

be extended to the public. For example, in 2017 the soda brand Pepsi released a commercial with supermodel Kendall Jenner. The advertisement featured Ms. Jenner modeling in a photoshoot with a protest happening nearby. Jenner sees this protest in the commercial and decides to leave her photoshoot in order to join the protest. She then walks up to a police officer and offers him a can of Pepsi. Pepsi released this commercial with the intended message that Pepsi could bring people together. Pepsi and Jenner received major backlash especially since the commercial was released at the height of the Black Lives Matter movement. Pepsi thought that the commercial would be well received. Jenner has done interviews where she revealed she too thought that she was confident that the commercial would be successful and that it was a great act of social responsibility. In the wake of the commercial, it was very important for the practitioner to turn to the Pepsi executives and tell them about the backlash. It is hard to tell someone that something that they were proud to be a part of was received horribly. The Pepsi brand really was proud of the commercial and to go to them with such awful news would be intimidating for any PR practitioner. Nobody likes to be the bearer of bad news, however, bad publicity is bad publicity and the need for crisis communication is so important in the face of backlash. Though intimidating, a PR practitioner must be honest with their client and let them know the real extent of the damage. Sugarcoating anything in this situation could skew a public response furthering the damage that neither the PR practitioner nor the organization wants. Honesty and transparency are essential when communicating with a client.

The other part of honesty in public relations is communicating honestly on behalf of the client. A practitioner should never be asked to lie or deceive for a client. A PR specialist has a duty, to be honest with the public. In order to foster relationships with the public, a PR practitioner must establish trust and what is trust without honesty? Just like communicating with clients, a PR practitioner must be transparent and honest with their audience. This will help the PR practitioner build credibility and build relationships with the media who can in turn help build a relationship between the client and the public.

Credibility plays a big role in public relations. The American Behavioral Scientist journal states “The mass media serves as an important forum in which journalist, public relations professionals, advertising practitioners, politicians, and issue advocates (as well as many others) try to educate, inform, pursue, and influence media audiences’ overall perceptions of media credibility.” (Golan, 2010) It is important that publics get their news and information from credible sources. Credibility is everything when it comes to consuming media because it is so influential in how we live our lives. The book *Fake News, Bias, and Media Literacy* states “Understanding media bias, but knowing media bias exist have a dangerous effect. In some cases, people will invent stories and try to give them credibility by claiming that the media is too biased to report them. This can further complicate things; people are aware that the mainstream media does ignore certain stories, but it can be difficult - sometimes impossible - to figure out which stories are truly being ignored and which are being promoted by people who want to sway the opinions of other.” (Lombardo, 2020) During COVID-19 it was and still is vital that people gather information from credible sources so that

they could get the cold hard facts and guidance needed to make life-altering decisions such as wearing a mask, obtaining the vaccine, and social distancing. Many people who chose to listen to biased un-credible sources lost their life due to misinformation and, ultimately, lack of credibility. PR practitioners must remain credible to build a following a better represent their client while communicating accurate information with the public and media.

The third pillar in the code of ethics is expertise. PRSA states “We acquire and responsibly use specialized knowledge and experience. We advance the profession through continued professional development, research, and education. We build mutual understanding, credibility, and relationships among a wide array of institutions and audiences.” (PRSA, 2022) With the continuing development of the media and the ever changing public attitude, it is important for a PR professional to communicate and practice PR with up-to-date knowledge and information about the profession. In an article from *Public Relations Tactics* author Bob Noltenmeier writes “PR continuing education today exists in many forms and presents ample opportunities to advance practitioners' careers at any age and level and to erüiance the profession through effective and transparent practices.” (Noltenmeier, 2012) By continuing education and staying informed, practitioners can better serve their organizations and communicate with the public on a level that is understandable and speaks to all who tune in.

The fourth staple in the PRSA ethical code is independence. The independence clause in the code reads “We provide objective counsel to those we represent. We are accountable for our actions.” (PRSA, 2022) Independence in the field of public relations can be tricky. When

we think of being independent, we think of acting freely and not under the influence of another being. The code states that PR practitioners offer objective counsel. This means that when they are pitching or communicating with a client they remain neutral in all aspects and offer counsel that is beneficial. It also states that PR practitioners are accountable for their own actions and that if anything were to go wrong, they must accept responsibility.. Being independent and accountable can mean more thought. In an ethical view, it could be evaluating an ethical dilemma, speaking up, and simply doing the right thing.

A publication from *Ethics and Public Relations* says “ Public relations professionals know the values of key publics involved with ethical dilemmas, and can conduct rigorous ethical analyses to guide the policies of their organizations, as well as in communications with publics and the news media. Careful and consistent ethical analyses facilitate trust, which enhances the building and maintenance of relationships – after all, that is the ultimate purpose of the public relations function.” (Bowen, 2007) When a PR practitioner comes into contact with an ethical dilemma, they must analyze the situation in all aspects. This means they must analyze how it affects them, their client, and the public. Factors that could influence a decision include legality, financial, personal morals, etc. After careful consideration, a PR practitioner must make a decision.

Another important key factor of ethical independence is being able to speak up and communicate concerns in the case of an ethical dilemma. In a study published in the journal

Public Relations Review research shows “While only 34.3% (36) respondents answered that they rarely faced ethical conflict, 65.7% (69) respondents said they had experienced an ethical conflict.” (Kang, 2010) More often than not a PR professional will experience an unethical dilemma. When that happens, it is important to be able to back up why you think something is unethical as well when speaking out. Practitioners must be well versed in ethics and be able to support their reason for why they feel something is unethical. By doing so, a practitioner shows professionalism. Notably, it is important to report unethical findings if needed. If a PR professional knows something unethical is taking place and not reporting it that alone is unethical. Sometimes communicating and standing up for something unethical taking place can be life-changing for those involved. Practitioners owe it to themselves, their clients, and publics to be independent and stand up against unethical practices and behavior.

Part of being ethically independent in public relations can sometimes be just doing the right thing. Doing the right thing in an unethical situation is for the most part for the good of everyone involved. It is especially important and has benefits for the practitioner. While standing up or doing the right thing can be intimidating as a professional, it's the right thing to do. In the way the world is today, almost no wrongdoing goes unnoticed. By not doing the right thing a PR specialist put their credibility and reputation on the line as well as their clients.

The fifth pillar of the PRSA code of ethics is loyalty. The code of ethics states that under loyalty “We are faithful to those we represent while honoring our obligation to serve the

public interest.” (PRSA, 2022) Loyalty is defined as having an allegiance or an obligation to someone, in this case, it would be a client. It's ethically important for a PR practitioners to remain loyal to whomever they represent in all scenarios. There has to be trust and communication between a client and a practitioner in order for them to have a working, strong relationship. Organizations put a lot of trust into a practitioner as they are one of the main sources of information to the public for their organization. They are responsible for strengthening public bonds and communicating an organization's messages on their behalf. If a practitioner is not loyal, the organization may not feel entirely secure in pursuing a relationship with the practitioner and may look elsewhere for representation.

The second part of the loyalty statement reads “While honoring our obligation to serve public interest.” This basically means that you are still advocating for the common good while maintaining loyalty to the client. The *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* says “ By focusing on relationships and then communicating that focus to key publics, an organization produces more loyalty. Loyalty results from “known organizational activities that demonstrate openness, trust, commitment, and investment” . Public relations communicates to customers and members that they have been heard and their voices have made a difference.” (Stoker, 2005) While a PR practitioners is remaining loyal to the organization they are simultaneously communicating ethically with the public while building awareness and relationships with an intended audience.

The last point in the code of ethics is fairness. A PR practitioner must be fair and respectful when dealing with everyone they come in contact with on a day-to-day basis such as

clients, publics, the media, etc. A PR practitioner must uphold and appreciate the concept of free expression. They also must treat all clients as equals and offer them the same amount of respect and opportunity.

Ethical codes are common amongst professions as it sets the precedent of what is to be expected of all whom pursue a career within the specified field. While the code of ethics is voluntary for PR professionals and is optional. It shows that ethical communication can make a big difference in PR practices, client to practitioner relationships, and publics to organizations' bonds. Ethical communication is not a law and is not enforced, however, in today's society not much is left in the dark. Lies and deception eventually come to light and in the end practitioners, businesses, and organizations suffer consequences. PRSA works to spread awareness of its code of ethics and better serve the public relations profession with ethical and just communication.

The Future of public relations

The communication standards set in today's society is affecting the future of PR and the expectations set for those who decide to enter the profession. Not only is there more importance placed on ethics, but there is also a newfound appreciation for many different education, skills, and even personality traits. *Public Relations Review* writes "Similarly, in earlier days, public

relations practitioners needed to demonstrate personality, character, intelligence, education or experience, and administrative ability. Recommended personality traits included a sense of humor and the ability to get along with others; character traits included being “ethical in all kinds of dealings” ; intelligence requirements included the ability to listen and write well; educational background included knowledge of how media worked and how public opinion could be researched; and administrative ability included a willingness to learn about industry-specific “business” and an understanding of accounting.” (Sha 2011)

Education is one of the most important parts of getting into the profession. Many PR agencies look for at minimum a four year bachelors degree in the field of public relations. However, research indicates discrepancy about the curriculum obtained in those four years of school and how it actually relates to the field of public relations in the real world. An article in *Public Relations Review* states “Establishing an internationally recognized benchmark of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors for both entry and mid/senior-level practitioners is necessary for future-proofing and professionalizing the growing practice of public relations.” (Manley & Valin, 2017) Through this statement, we see the value that education has in becoming a public relations practitioner.

In the article entitled “The Skills Required for Entry Level Public Relations: An Analysis of Skills Required in 1000 PR Job Ads” in *Public Relations Review*, the author challenges the education and professional overlap in knowledge when it comes to educating future PR professionals. While some principles like strong work ethic, the ability to

communicate, and writing skills are agreed upon by both professionals and educators, other skills were up for debate amongst the two.

One of the major disagreements discussed by the authors in this publication is that there is a distinct difference between what education and professionals think PR specialists should possess versus what they actually possess upon entry into the profession. Professionals found entry-level PR professionals were lacking in areas such as storytelling, communication, public speaking, critical and creative thinking, and more. The authors divulged that there was a difference in desired areas. Professionals preferred PR graduates to be proficient in regards to ethics, cultural perspective, and social issues. Educators believed that employee communication, PR law and regulations, and PR theory were more important.

In the article, the authors compare different job advertisements for entry-level PR professionals and advanced professionals. Skills that could be found in both jobs included writing, verbal communication, and media relations. The ability to write proficiently across different mediums and platforms was highly requested as well. There was very little differentiation between the two ads. The only difference was that advanced PR required research issues and crisis management while entry-level PR required new media skills.

Meganck, Smith, and Guidry conducted a survey sent through LinkedIn and other professional networks and discuss their finding within this publication. The survey inquired

what skills were frequently listed in entry-level PR positions and how the skills listed relate to the job PR job titles. The idea behind the survey was to identify the skills most highly sought after so that educators may reevaluate current curricula and change the curriculum to align with the demands of the professional world so there is little discrepancy between what is expected and what is actually being hired into the field of public relations.

The results are as follows. Of the 1000 job listings observed the top skills requested were communication skills with most job openings specifically requiring written communication. Closely behind communication requirements came educational requirements, organization skills, proficiency in software programs, and social media skills. The study found that different job titles required more specific skills. For example, jobs entitled public relations assistants did not have leadership skills as a requirement while PR Coordinator jobs did.

There is a very clear gap between educational expectations versus professional expectations. While educators and professionals can agree that some skills are important across the board, other skills are needed in order to join the competitive workforce. By conducting this survey and publishing this article, the authors are proposing a solution to a workforce problem. If the curriculum can be reevaluated and adjusted by researching and listening to the skills required for PR, the educational system can send better and more qualified PR graduates into the world.

While education is essential to the field and the future of public relations, there are other practices that are becoming more important as we advance the field of PR. Corporations

and organizations are looking for practitioners that are well versed in corporate social responsibility. According to *International Journal of Management Reviews* “CSR has moved from ideology to reality, and many consider it necessary for organizations to define their roles in society and apply social and ethical standards to their businesses” (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010) More and more businesses are turning to corporate social responsibility because if they contribute, they are more likely to be seen in a positive light by their following.

Understanding what corporate social responsibility is essential to public relations practitioners. Corporate social responsibility is how a corporation contributes to societal, environmental, and economic needs for the common good. It's important for practitioners to know what it is because the corporation depends on them for community outreach. The practitioner will be responsible for listening to community concerns and reporting back to executives. This can help executives decide how they would like contribute. From here, the practitioner can develop a PR plan and communicate with it executives to hopefully put a plan into action that will fulfill corporate social responsibility.

In public relations there is an expectation for public relations practitioners to be personable. Personality goes a long way within the profession. Company's want to work with people who are outgoing, communicate appropriately, carry themselves professionally, and are witty. Personality traits differ from person to person. In a research publication published in public relations review, the author put together a nation wide telephone survey-conducted in

two separate years that worked to see how the public perceives public relations practitioners. *Public Relations Review* says “Analyses also revealed that personality, intellectual, and ethical traits recurrently emerged as the dominant attributes of a practitioner for both years.” (Callison et al., 2014) Not only do organizations look for personality traits, they want a practitioner who is ethical and is capable of making ethical decision. Also clients want to work with a practitioner who is an intellectual and can provide them with PR goals that will take their business to the next level.

Professional practicing PR must also know business 101 in order to communicate with investors, executives, and stake holders. A publication in *Public Relations Review* says “In its recent report regarding the standards for a master's degree in public relations, the commission concluded that all graduates should “gain an understanding of business principles that would include, but not necessarily be limited to, management, marketing, accounting, economics and finance.” When PR practitioners know about business, accounting, and economics they are able to understand and work with their clients better. For example, if a company looks at MRSA data points and sees that people aged 50-75 years olds are consuming less of their products than another, they may use PR tactics to speak specifically to that age group. Having accounting knowledge makes it easier to tailor PR goals to match the need of the economic goals.

The future of public relations lies in the hands of new PR graduates. Public relations is changing. What was once a profession that many frowned upon because of past practitioner

mistakes continues to develop into a more serious and admired profession. The standard that are expected of PR professionals today continue to evolve and create better well rounded PR practitioners. They no longer just possess only superb communication skills. They have prior knowledge about ethics, their duty to society, how the corporate world works. The more the field of public relations and its expectations evolve, the better PR professionals will be in the future.

Closing

In summary, the public relations profession is essential to the world of business. Public relations practitioners are often the front line for an organization. They have the opportunity to grow businesses, damage control issues, communicate with different audiences, and create meaningful bonds between an organization and a public. When marketing and advertising can only do so much, PR professionals step in and fill the void when needed. To help a business succeed and meet its mission, vision, and goals a public relations specialist must be knowledgeable about all aspects of the profession including skills, types of PR, the effectiveness of PR, ethics, and what the future of the industry looks like.

The need for communication skills is essential to job function. It is a PR professionals number one tool. Without it, there is no job function. The entire profession is based on the ability to communicate in a way that promotes and protects an organization. Communication

skills are vital to a practitioner. Communication is how not just people in PR but anybody in the world is able to build a functioning relationship.

Understanding communication theory and the need for communication skills can go a long way in public relations. It helps a public relations professional understand the way messages are sent and received. Although it is a basic function, it is essential to the communication process in the PR world. The purpose of PR is to inform the public about an organization and build positive relations with investors, customers, employees, and more. Without communication skills and knowledge about how communication works, messages can get lost in translation and be easily misconstrued. In turn, the relationships between customers, investors, employees, and the organization become strained because there is a disconnect in communication. The organization does not get the recognition its seeking and profits suffer and the publics do not really know what the company is about. Possessing the very much needed communication skills are essential to a public relations specialist because the profession and its success is totally reliant on the ability to communicate effectively.

Understanding the many types of PR and its functions in the industry is also helpful to a public relations professional. The seven different types of PR feature communication obviously, but communication within each subgroup functions differently. Communication can be verbally, through social media, on behalf of companies, on behalf of governments and social movements, and so much more. The possibilities are endless. Evaluating the different subgroup in PR is helpful for an aspiring public relations professional because they all

specialize in a different types of communication. From college, a specialist has the opportunity to pick a sub group they feel that they feel best suits their best communication style and find a position in that specific sub group. For example, a PR professional that feels that they are best with social media communication may look for a position within the social media communications. Somebody who might have majored in public relations but minored in journalism might find that they best fit in the media relations world. A specialist is able to hone in on their communicative abilities and choose the best fit for them. PR is a diverse field and there is opportunity for everyone who enters the profession.

Like any profession, the key to measuring success is through evaluation. Public relations does not differ in this matter. Though there isn't a set standard way across the profession to measure the success of the communication in public relations, there are a few indications that are telling of how a PR professional is succeeding in the industry. The first and obvious evaluation is the success of a message. Is the message that the PR specialist is sending being received well? If the messages are being received well and it is building those highly sought after strong relationships between clients and their intended publics. Goal setting is also a great way to identify if PR is working. If goals are continuously being met and clients are happy then a PR professional will know that their communication is effective and PR is working.

Ethics in PR are essential to communication within the field. Ethics are the basis of what makes a person who they are. A PR professionals ethics will ultimately translate across

their work. A PR professional that has good ethics are capable of making the ethical decisions sometimes required within public relations. The ethical standards set by the Public Relations Society of America helps hold PR specialist accountable and is a great tool for PR professionals to resort to when ethics are in question.

Ethical communication in public relations is not necessary or required per se. However it does help PR professionals operate in a way that yield positive results, career success, and lasting bonds with clientele . Advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness compose the code of ethics. PR professionals are expected to abide by these for the sake of keeping the profession honest and breaking the reputation the public relations profession was once branded by. Keeping communication channels ethical allows for better decision making, creates a positive environment and company attitude. This also allows relationships built between PR professionals and organizations as well as organization and publics to have a foundational element in any relationship, trust.

Understanding the projected future of public relations is also important for current and aspiring public relations practitioners. The education behind the profession is important to the success of a specialist. The profession is continuously evolving, especially with the new developments in social media and media in general. Furthermore, PR specialist are now being held to a higher educational standard. Communication though very much important is not enough as business knowledge not requires more attention.

Not only is educational requirements making a mark in the PR world, but so is the need for upstanding, ethical, outgoing PR professionals. Research indicates that professional qualities as well as personal qualities are of equal importance within the field. By acknowledging the standards set for current and future PR practitioners the public relations profession becomes more elite and an ever bigger asset to the world of business.

This topics covered in this paper indicate the importance of communication in the field of public relations. Skills, PR types, ethics, effectiveness, and the standard for PR practitioners are all based on communication. Public relations is a diverse and creative field. A person who becomes a PR practitioner has the ability to take words and create messages that impact business and society. The profession offers creative freedom for public relations specialist and the opportunity to use communication as a means for building lasting relationships between organizations and publics.

References

Myers. (2020). *Public Relations History: Theory, Practice, and Profession*. Taylor and Francis.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351033015>

Silvia Elena Iacob. (2015). Promoting Corporate Image by Communication and PR Strategy. *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies*, 6(2), 75–.

Desai, & Aronoff, D. M. (2020). Masks and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). *JAMA : the Journal of the American Medical Association*, 323(20), 2103–2103. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.6437>

DiStaso, M. W., Vafeiadis, M., & Amaral, C. (2015). Managing a health crisis on Facebook: How the response strategies of apology, sympathy, and information influence public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 41(2), 222-231.

Mattila. (2009). How to handle PR disasters? An examination of the impact of communication response type and failure attributions on consumer perceptions. *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 23(4), 211–218. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876040910965548>

Oh, Yoo, K.-H., & Owlett, J. (2021). Focusing on the “Public” in public relations: The importance of Person-Centered Messages (PCMs) in crisis communication on Twitter. *Journal of*

International Crisis and Risk Communication Research (Print), 4(1), 93–128. <https://doi.org/10.30658/jicrcr.4.1.4>

Dalibor Jakus. (2018). Visual communication in public relations campaigns. *Marketing Instytucji Naukowych i Badawczych*, 27(1), 25–36. <https://doi.org/10.14611/minib.27.03.2018.07>

Kircaburun, Alhabash, S., Tosuntaş, Ş. B., & Griffiths, M. D. (2018). Uses and Gratifications of Problematic Social Media Use Among University Students: a Simultaneous Examination of the Big Five of Personality Traits, Social Media Platforms, and Social Media Use Motives.

International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 18(3), 525–547. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-018-9940-6>

Li, & Tsai, W.-H. S. (2015). Social media usage and acculturation: A test with Hispanics in the U.S. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 45, 204–212. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.12.018>

Vraga, E. K., Tully, M., & Rojas, H. (2009). Media literacy training reduces perception of bias. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 30(4), 68-81. Huertas, & Capriotti, P. (2015). Trending topics and key issues in Public Relations. *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, 7(2), 123–128. https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs.7.2.123_2

Holly Potter. (2010). Integrating Social Media Into PR Plans. *Public Relations Strategist*, 16(3), 40–.

Engin ÇELEBİ. (2022). MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS: A RESEARCH ON LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL

INSURANCE COMPANIES. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication*, 12(2), 280–290. <https://doi.org/10.7456/11202100/00>

Dozier, D. M., & Ehling, W. P. (1992). Evaluation of public relations programs: What the literature tells us about their effects. *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, 159-184.

Valentini. (2015). Is using social media “good” for the public relations profession? A critical reflection. *Public Relations Review*, 41(2), 170–177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.11.009>

Rodgers. (2010). The press and public relations through the lens of the periodicals, 1890–1930. *Public Relations Review*, 36(1), 50–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.10.012>

Key Message Development. (2012). *Public Relations Tactics*, 19(6), 16–.

Dalibor Jakus. (2018). The measurement and evaluation of PR communication. *Marketing Instytucji Naukowych i Badawczych*, 30(4), 137–156. <https://doi.org/10.14611/MINIB.30.12.2018.17>

Lee, & Merle, P. F. (2018). Media relations and universities: an assessment of digital newsrooms. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 28(2), 232–246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2018.1467991>

Jin, & Lee, S. (2013). Enhancing community capacity: Roles of perceived bonding and bridging social capital and public relations in community building. *Public Relations Review*, 39(4), 290–292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2013.08.009>

Zwijze-Koning, De Jong, M. D. T., & Van Vuuren, M. (2015). Evaluating Internal Public Relations Using the Critical Incident Technique. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 27(1), 46–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2014.924840>

Karanges, Johnston, K., Beatson, A., & Lings, I. (2015). The influence of internal communication on employee engagement: A pilot study. *Public Relations Review*, 41(1), 129–131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.12.003>

Anderson-Meli, & Koshy, S. (2020). *Public Relations Crisis Communication: A New Model* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429287763>

Wang, Cheng, Y., & Sun, J. (2021). When public relations meets social media: A systematic review of social media related public relations research from 2006 to 2020. *Public Relations Review*, 47(4), 102081–. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102081>

Swann. (2014). G. PRSA Member Code of Ethics. In *Cases in Public Relations Management* (pp. 587–593). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203523391-23>

Lombardo. (2020). *Fake News, Bias, and Media Literacy*. Cavendish Square Publishing LLC.

Golan, G. J. (2010). New Perspectives on Media Credibility Research. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 54(1), 3–7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764210376307>

Bob Noltenmeier. (2012). Get schooled: How PR continuing education can help your career.

Public Relations Tactics, 19(10), 10–.

Bowen, S. A. (2007). *Ethics and public relations*. Gainesville, FL: Institute for Public Relations.

Kang. (2010). Ethical conflict and job satisfaction of public relations practitioners. *Public Relations Review*, 36(2), 152–156. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.11.001>

Stoker. (2005). Loyalty in Public Relations: When Does It Cross the Line Between Virtue and Vice? *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 20(4), 269–287. s15327728jmme2004_4

Manley, & Valin, J. (2017). Laying the foundation for a global body of knowledge in public relations and communications management. *Public Relations Review*, 43(1), 56–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2016.10.018>

Meganck, Smith, J., & Guidry, J. P. . (2020). The skills required for entry-level public relations: An analysis of skills required in 1,000 PR job ads. *Public Relations Review*, 46(5), 101973–101973. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101973>

Lindgreen, A., & Swaen, V. (2010). Corporate social responsibility. *International journal of management reviews*, 12(1), 1-7.

Sha. (2011). 2010 Practice Analysis: Professional competencies and work categories in public relations today. *Public Relations Review*, 37(3), 187–196. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.04.005>

Ragas, Uysal, N., & Culp, R. (2015). “Business 101” in public relations education: An exploratory survey of senior communication executives. *Public Relations Review*, 41(3), 378–380. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.02.007>

Callison, Merle, P. F., & Seltzer, T. (2014). Smart friendly liars: Public perception of public relations practitioners over time. *Public Relations Review*, 40(5), 829–831. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.09.003>