

Public image makes up 63% of the value of most companies today. When there's a mishap or when the company's reputation breaks down, it affects the company's entire corporate existence and its affiliates. It takes around 4 to 7 years to overcome a negative reputation. Hence it has become important for a company to invest in good public relations strategies to maintain a beneficial relationship with the public.

Public Relations:

Public relations is a strategic communication process companies, individuals, and organizations use to build mutually beneficial relationships with the public.

A public relations specialist drafts a specialized communication plan and uses media and other direct and indirect mediums to create and maintain a positive brand image and a strong relationship with the target audience.

Objective Of Public Relations

The main objective of public relations is to maintain a positive reputation of the brand and maintain a strategic relationship with the public, prospective customers, partners, investors, employees and other stakeholders which leads to a positive image of the brand and makes it seem honest, successful, important, and relevant.

Functions Of Public Relations

Public relations is different from advertising. Public relations agencies don't buy ads, they don't write stories for reporters, and they don't focus on attractive paid promotions. The main role of public relations is to promote the brand by using editorial content appearing on magazines, newspapers, news channels, websites, blogs, and TV programs.

Using earned or free media for promotion has its own benefits as information on these mediums aren't bought. It has a third party validation and hence isn't viewed with scepticism by the public.

The functions of public relations manager and public relations agencies include:

1. Anticipating, analysing, and interpreting the public opinion and attitudes of the public towards the brand and drafting strategies which use free or earned media to influence them.
2. Drafting strategies to support brand's every campaign and new move through editorial content.
3. Writing and distributing press releases.
4. Speechwriting.
5. Planning and executing special public outreach and media relations events.
6. Writing content for the web (internal and external websites).
7. Developing a crisis public relations strategy.
8. Handling the social media presence of the brand and responding to public reviews on social media websites.

9. Counselling the employees of the organization with regard to policies, course of action, organization's responsibility and their responsibility.
10. Dealing with government and legislative agencies on behalf of the organization.
11. Dealing with public groups and other organizations with regard to social and other policies of the organization and legislation of the government.
12. Handling investor relations.

Types Of Public Relations

According to the functions of the public relations department/agencies, public relations can be divided into 7 types. These are:

- **Media Relations:** Establishing a good relationship with the media organizations and acting as their content source.
- **Investor Relations:** Handling investors events, releasing financial reports and regulatory filings, and handling investors, analysts and media queries and complaints.
- **Government Relations:** Representing the brand to the government with regard to the fulfilment of policies like corporate social responsibility, fair competition, consumer protection, employee protection, etc.
- **Community Relations:** Handling the social aspect of the brand and establishing a positive reputation in the social niche like environment protection, education, etc.
- **Internal Relations:** Counselling the employees of the organization with regard to policies, course of action, organization's responsibility and their responsibility. Cooperating with them during special product launches and events.
- **Customer Relations:** Handling relationships with the target market and lead consumers. Conducting market research to know more about interests, attitudes, and priorities of the customers and crafting strategies to influence the same using earned media.
- **Marketing Communications:** Supporting marketing efforts relating to product launch, special campaigns, brand awareness, image, and positioning.

Public Relations Examples

PR stunts or strategies range from donating to an affected community to running a brand activation stunt in a mall. Some of the examples of successful public relations campaigns are:

Google's Fight Ebola Campaign

The outbreak of Ebola virus in 2014 was critical as it was spread among many countries and took many lives. Google, to help the people in need and to build up a positive brand image, started a donation campaign where it pledged to give \$2 for every \$1 donated to the cause through its website.

The public relations strategy attracted the media attention and resulted to be a huge success as Google raised \$7.5 million.