

## Global Public Relations in an Interdependent World



### After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

Appreciate the diversity of public relations practice in other nations

Know the various cultural values that shape a nation's communication patterns

Understand how public relations plays an important role in the global economy

Gain insight on how foreign governments and corporations influence U.S. legislation and policies

Appreciate the major role of NGOs in shaping public opinion

Understand the job opportunities available in global public relations

## What Is Global Public Relations?

*Global public relations*, also called international public relations, is the planned and organized efforts of a company, an institution, or a government to establish and build relationships with the publics of other nations. These publics are the various groups of people who are affected by, or who can affect, the operations of a particular organization or even an entire industry. Increasingly, in today's global economy, almost all public relations activity has international aspects.

International public relations can also be viewed from the standpoint of its practice in individual countries. Although public relations is commonly regarded as a concept developed in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, some of its elements, such as countering unfavorable public attitudes through publicity and annual reports, were practiced by railroad companies in Germany as far back as the mid-19th century, to cite only one example. See pages 70–71 in Chapter 2 for a capsule summary of historical development in various nations.

Even so, it is largely U.S. public relations techniques that have been adopted throughout the world, even in authoritarian nations. Today, although in some languages there is no term comparable to *public relations*, the practice has spread to most countries, especially those with industrial bases and large urban populations. This is primarily the result of worldwide technological, social, economic, and political changes and the growing understanding that public relations is an essential component of branding, marketing, and public diplomacy.

## Development in Other Nations

Public relations as a career has achieved its highest development in the industrialized nations of the world such as the United States, Canada, and the European Union (EU). It tends to develop more rapidly in nations that have (1) multiparty political systems, (2) a relatively free press, (3) considerable private ownership of business and industry, (4) large-scale urbanization, and (5) relatively high per capita income levels, which also impact literacy and educational opportunities.

The explosive growth of the public relations industry in China is an example. The nation, although lacking democratic institutions, has experienced rapid industrialization, major urbanization, and considerable growth in per capita income. Public relations revenues for the past several years have experienced double-digit gains, and China is now the second largest national economy in the world.

The United States and European nations began exporting their public relations expertise to the People's Republic of China in the mid-1980s. Hill & Knowlton, for example, claims to be the first U.S. agency to launch a public relations event in Tiananmen Square. The year was 1985 and its Beijing operation was a hotel room with three U.S. professionals and a locally hired employee. Today, almost every major global public relations firm has a Beijing or Shanghai office to represent U.S. and European companies in the Chinese market.

Global public relations firms are also buying stakes or affiliating with successful Chinese firms. Porter Novelli, for example, is affiliated with Blue Focus, one of the largest Chinese-owned firms in the country. Gyroscope, a consultancy, estimates that there are about 2,000 public relations firms in China, but most of them are one- or two-person operations primarily dealing with publicity, media relations, and staging events. Gyroscope notes, "The vast majority of PR spending is on low-value,



#### International Expo Enhances China's Reputation

Countries often use major expositions as a public relations and marketing strategy to attract worldwide attention and generate favorable public perceptions. The Shanghai Expo attracted millions of visitors and was a showcase displaying China's modern economy. Above is the Chinese pavilion.

low-worth publicity, inexpertly planned and delivered, with a small number of clients and agencies focusing on high-value, high-worth strategic consultancy.”

Fueling the development of public relations in China have been several major international events. The Beijing Olympics in 2008 placed China on the world stage, and the Shanghai Expo of 2010 affirmed China's influence on the global economy. The six-month Expo attracted an estimated 70 million visitors, and 193 countries erected pavilions and other exhibits.

The Internet and social media have also expanded the opportunities for organizations to conduct public relations and marketing campaigns that directly reach the Chinese consumer. Although there is no Facebook or Twitter access in China, there is the micro-blogging site Weibo that has 320 million users. Sean Fitzgerald, EVP of Ketchum's China office, told *PRWeek*, “Weibo has provided consumers with an immediate and powerful voice about brands.” A number of brands such as Nike and Pizza Hut have Weibo accounts, and public relations firms often create and manage the content. Other home-grown social media sites also are popular. A Kinsey consulting report found that 95 percent of the Internet users in China's major cities are also registered on a social media site.

Working in China has its challenges. One is the nature of the press, which is state-owned or highly controlled. Although the media are getting more sophisticated, Chinese journalists are still poorly trained and underpaid. As Cindy Payne, director of Asia Pacific Connections, says, “Journalists in China are arguably the worst paid, so to offset the reality of public transportation woes, you are expected to provide a travel allowance.” This practice is part of the “pay for play” culture in which it's common

for many Chinese publications and broadcast outlets to require payment for printing a news release or interviewing an executive on a talk show. This practice was highlighted in Chapter 3 on page 117.

Current development of the public relations industry in other nations is given below by thumbnail sketches from around the globe. See also the Multicultural box on page 552 about reaching out to the Muslim world.

**Brazil** This is the largest nation in South America in terms of population (200 million) and its booming economy makes it a major player in the world economy. There are about 1,000 public relations firms, primarily in the Rio de Janeiro and the Sao Paulo area. Brazil will also host the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, which will generate more development of its public relations industry. Brazil has become a mature business market, and companies are now beginning to recognize public relations as essential to generating revenues and building reputation. In addition, the public relations industry in Argentina and Chile also are well developed.

**Dubai and Middle East** Dubai, as part of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has become the financial and airline hub in the region. Many international companies have offices there that have also fueled the influx of major global public relations firms. In general, the public relations industry in the region is relatively immature and the preparation of news releases is the primary activity. Development is somewhat hampered by low literacy, lack of trained personnel, and government controlled media.

**India** The Indian market, with more than 1 billion people, is a major market for products, services, and public relations expertise. There are at least 1,000 large and small public relations firms serving the subcontinent, but training and educating qualified practitioners continues to be a major problem. The Public Relations Society of India has increased professionalism among practitioners, but much of the work involves getting visibility in the media. The country's population makes it an attractive location for foreign investment and international public relations firms but government bureaucracy is a continuing handicap. On the bright side, Indian firms are now expanding to the global market, and the level of public relations is getting more sophisticated.

**Indonesia** The major growth is in public relations firms specializing in digital communications to communicate information about brands and services. The reason is that mobile phone penetration is more than 100 percent and its citizens send more tweets than any other nation. It also ranks fourth in the world in terms of active Facebook users. The public relations profession, however, is still evolving. Many companies still perceive public relations personnel primarily as publicists. Recruitment of trained talent is also a problem.

**Japan** Business and industry are still at the stage of perceiving public relations as primarily media relations. Public relations firms and corporate communications departments work very closely with the 400-plus reporters' clubs that filter and process all information for more than 150 news-gathering organizations. Major advertising

The future of China lies in exporting Chinese brands to the world. That means increasing the value of the "Chinese product" and the "Chinese brand." PR has a vital role in building and maintaining brand value—and a nation which cannot master PR is at an enormous disadvantage.

*Public relations executive in Gyroscope's report*  
The Public Relations Landscape in China



and Finland also have a culture of CSR, environmental sustainability, labor rights, and gender equality high on the political agenda, so public relations counselors often facilitate programs in these areas.

**Thailand** The nation has a great deal of foreign investment and is becoming established as an assembly center for automobiles. It's the primary hub in Southeast Asia for international tourism, and a number of public relations firms and corporations have well-qualified staffs to handle traditional media relations, product publicity, and special event promotion. The major user of public relations services is the government, spending \$350 million in a recent year. Digital communications are evolving, but the traditional media (30 newspapers in Bangkok alone) remain the primary distribution channels for public relations personnel.

**Turkey** The country is the economic giant in the region and has a fairly modern communications infrastructure. Public relations firms do traditional media relations, but there is increasing focus on regulatory and political monitoring for clients. Sustainability and CSR projects are receiving more emphasis, but public affairs work is done mostly in-house. Social media as a major platform for public relations is still in its early stages. Recruitment of talent is difficult because fluency in English is expected of job candidates.

## International Corporate Public Relations

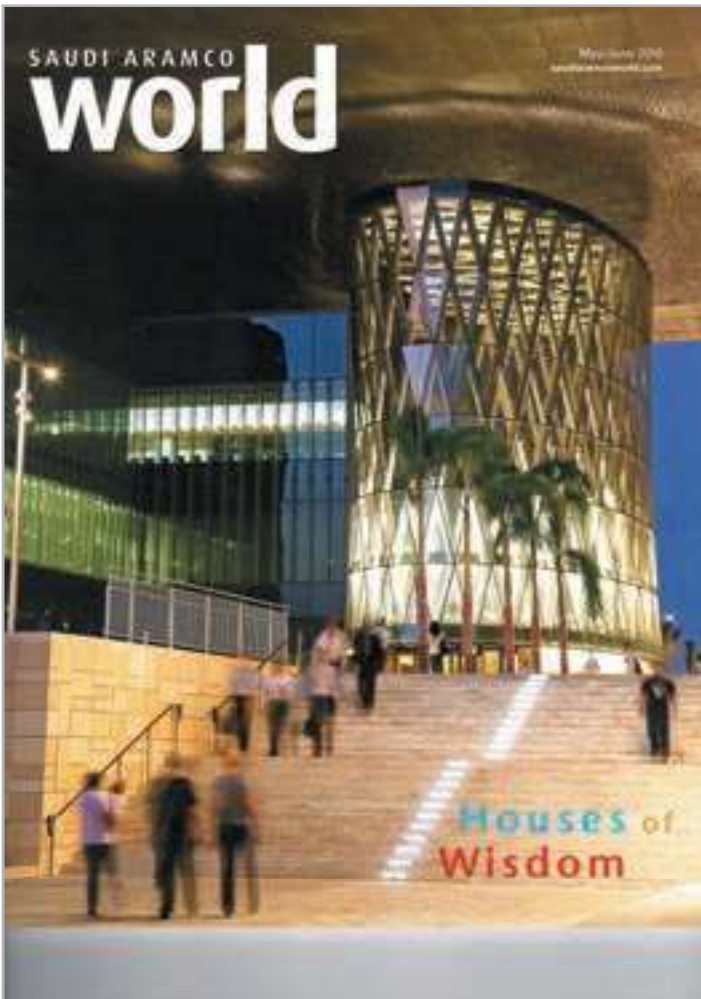
This section explores the new age of global marketing and addresses the differences in language, laws, and cultural mores that must be overcome when companies conduct business in foreign countries. We also discuss how U.S. public relations firms represent foreign interests in this country as well as U.S. corporations in other parts of the world.

### The New Age of Global Marketing

For decades, hundreds of corporations based in the United States have been engaged in international business operations, including marketing, advertising, and public relations. All these activities exploded to unprecedented proportions during the 1990s, largely because of new communications technologies, development of 24-hour financial markets almost worldwide, the lowering of trade barriers, the growth of sophisticated foreign competition in traditionally "American" markets, and shrinking cultural differences, all of which bring the "global village" ever closer to reality.

In the case of Coca-Cola, probably the best-known brand name in the world, international sales account for 70 percent of the company's revenues. The major growth area for both Coke and Pepsi is the developing nations. In addition, large U.S.-based public relations firms such as Burson-Marsteller and Edelman are now generating between 30 and 40 percent of their fees serving foreign clients.

Today, almost one-third of all U.S. corporate profits are generated through international business. At the same time, overseas investors are moving into American industries. It is not uncommon for 15 to 20 percent of a U.S. company's stock to be held abroad. The United Kingdom, for example, has a direct foreign investment in the United States exceeding \$122 billion, followed by Japan and the Netherlands, with nearly half that sum each, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.



### Saudi Aramco World Magazine

International corporations often publish high-quality magazines for distribution to opinion leaders in various nations to increase visibility and enhance their reputation and brand. This quarterly magazine of Saudi Aramco is designed to increase cross-cultural understanding of the Middle East and the Muslim world, where the company has extensive oil operations.

Fueling the new age of global public relations and marketing is the pervasive presence of the Internet. It allows every corporation to have instant contact with any and all of its operations around the world, but the downside is that any problem or crisis in one plant or country is instantly known throughout the world. In addition, satellite television, fax, fiber optics, cellular telephone systems, and technologies such as integrated services digital network (ISDN) enable a blizzard of information via voice, data, graphics, and video. For example, Hill & Knowlton has its own satellite transmission facilities, and General Electric has an international telecommunications network, enabling employees to communicate worldwide using voice, video, and computer data simply by dialing seven digits on a telephone.

In terms of international media, Cable News Network (CNN) is viewed by more than 200 million people in more than 140 countries. England's BBC World Service also reaches an impressive number of nations, including the 40-plus member nations of the British Commonwealth. A number of newspapers and magazines are also reaching millions with international editions. The *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times* have daily editions in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Other publications, such as the *Economist*, have worldwide distribution.

Much of the jousting for new business takes place on Western European terrain, where the EU is a formidable competitor with U.S. firms in the global market. Although hampered by recession in recent years, public relations expenditures have increased significantly. Many European com-

panies extensively use advertising, marketing, and public relations strategies to lure business from nations around the world.

Although the EU promoted the phrase "a single Europe," corporations and public relations firms still face the complex task of communicating effectively to 400 million people in 25 countries speaking multiple languages. Differences in language, laws, and cultural mores among countries are a continuing challenge to culturally sensitive public relations practice. There also is a need for both managers and employees to act locally and think in global terms. Already, Burson-Marsteller, with offices in many countries, is spending more than

\$1 million a year on training tapes and traveling teams of trainers to foster a uniform approach to client projects.

## Language and Cultural Differences

Companies operating in other nations are confronted with essentially the same public relations challenges as those operating in the United States. Their objectives are to compete successfully and to manage conflict effectively, but the task is more complex on an international and intercultural level.

A good example of cultural differences is the crash of a Korean-based plane upon landing in San Francisco. Asiana executives issued some apologies in Korea, but issued few statements in the United States and didn't arrange for any media representatives outside Korea. One Asiana spokesperson told the *Wall Street Journal*, "It's not the proper time to manage the company's image." By U.S. standards, the airline was slow to respond to the intense media interest in the crash. U.S. airlines, for example, have crisis plans and full-time teams to handle the emotional and logistical nightmare of a crash and deal immediately with providing information to the media and the public.

The Korean handling of the Asiana crash illustrates the point that public relations practitioners need to recognize cultural differences, adapt to local customs, and understand the finer points of verbal and nonverbal communication in individual nations.

Experts in intercultural communication point out that many cultures, particularly non-Western ones, are "high-context" communication societies. In other words, the meaning of the spoken word is often implicit and based on environmental context and personal relationships rather than on explicit, categorical statements. The communication styles of Asian and Arab nations, for example, are high context.

In contrast, European and American communication styles are considered low context. Great emphasis is placed on exact words, and you are expected to derive meaning primarily from the written or verbal statements, not from nonverbal behavior cues. Legal documents produced in the West are the ultimate in explicit wording.

Geert Hofstede, a company psychologist for global giant IBM, studied national/cultural differences among employees around the world back in the 1970s and came up with five basic cultural dimensions. Today, students still rely on his typology to understand various national cultures. Professors David Guth and Charles Marsh of the University of Kansas summarize Hofstede's cultural dimensions in their book *Adventures in Public Relations: Case Studies and Critical Thinking*:

1. **Power distance** measures how tolerant a society is about unequally distributed decision-making power. Countries with a high acceptance of power distance include Mexico and France. Countries with a low acceptance include Austria and the United States.
2. **Individualism**, as contrasted with collectivism, pits loyalty to one's self against loyalty to a larger group. Countries in Asia and Latin America gravitate toward collectivism, while the United States, Canada, and most European countries gravitate toward individualism.
3. **Masculinity/femininity** contrasts competitiveness (traditionally masculine) with compassion and nurturing (traditionally feminine). Masculine nations include Australia, Germany, and Japan. Feminine nations include Sweden and Spain.



4. **Uncertainty avoidance** measures how well a society tolerates ambiguity. Nations that have difficulty tolerating uncertainty include Japan, Belgium, and Greece. Nations that tolerate ambiguity include Great Britain, the United States, and Sweden.
5. **Long-term versus short-term orientation** measures a society's willingness to consider the traditions of the past and carry them into the future. China and other East Asian nations tend to have long-term orientations in terms of a process or plan evolving over a number of years. The United States, in contrast, has a short-term orientation. Americans, for example, get impatient if recovery from a recession takes more than one or two years.

Public relations professionals and American executives must keep Hofstede's dimensions in mind as a general guide, but they must also be sensitive to the cultural differences that present themselves on a daily basis. Some examples:

- In China, tables at a banquet are never numbered. The Chinese think such table assignments appear to rank guests and that certain numbers are unlucky. Thus it's better to direct a guest to the "primrose" or the "hollyhock" table.

on the job

## A MULTICULTURAL WORLD

### Reaching Out to the Muslim World

Islam is the world's second largest religion after Christianity and is increasingly being recognized as a major consumer market. The demographics are quite impressive. The global Muslim population is expected to increase 35 percent over the next 20 years from 1.6 billion today to 2.2 billion by 2030.

The public relations and marketing challenge, however, is how to effectively reach such a diverse group in terms of geography and culture. In terms of geography, 60 percent of the Muslim population lives in the Asia/Pacific region with Indonesia's 235 million Muslim constituting the largest percentage. Only 20 percent live in the Middle East and North Africa, while the remaining 20 percent are

located in various communities throughout Europe and the Americas.

The cultural background is also diverse. Yusuf Hatia, senior VP of Fleishman-Hillard in Mumbai, India, writes, "Muslims live in every country, represent every race and come from every social and economic class." And although they share common religious beliefs, he says they have their own local practices and national culture.

Despite the geographical and cultural diversity, Muslims around the world have one thing in common—the consumption of Halal products. The Halal food market, for example, is about 17 percent of the global food industry and worth about \$650 billion annually. In addition, the Halal pharmaceutical market is worth

about \$500 billion while the Halal cosmetics market is estimated to be a \$13 billion industry. As a result, more companies than ever are producing Halal products and making a special effort to include Muslims in their overall public relations and marketing strategies.

Hatia writes, "For brands that find ways to enhance and engage the Muslim consumer, the rewards are rich. And smart, compelling communications will play a critical role in targeting a consumer market that already represents nearly a quarter of humanity."

Source: Hatia, Y. (2013, June). Muslim world woefully underserved by PR sector. *O'Dwyer's Public Relations Report*, 14.

- Americans are fond of using first names, but it's not proper business etiquette to do so in Europe and Asia unless you have been given permission.
- Americans should avoid using expressions such as “full-court press” or even “awesome” or “cool” since many foreigners will have no idea what you are talking about.
- In the United Kingdom, the word *scheme* refers to a business proposition and holds no connotation of deceit as it does in the United States.
- Early morning breakfast meetings are not conducted in Latin America; by the same token, a dinner meeting may not start until 9 or 10 P.M.
- In Thailand and other Asian cultures, it's inappropriate to criticize an employee in front of others because the employee will “lose face.” Also, it's a crime in Thailand to make disrespectful remarks about the royal family, particularly the king.
- In Latin America, greetings often include physical contact such as hugging the other person or grabbing him or her by the arm. Men and women commonly greet each other with a kiss on the cheek in Argentina and Chile.
- News releases in Malaysia should be distributed in the four official languages to avoid alienating any segment of the press.
- Gift giving is common in Asian cultures. Executives, meeting for the first time, will exchange gifts as a way of building a social relationship.
- In Muslim nations, particularly the Middle East, men should not stand near, touch, or stare at any woman.

The good news, particularly for most Americans, is that English has become the language of international business and tourism. See the Insights box below.

Other suggestions for American travelers abroad are given in the Insights box on page 554. Americans and others not only must learn the customs of the country in which they are working, but they also should rely on native professionals to guide

## on the job

# INSIGHTS

### English Is the World's Dominant Language

English is often described as the world's bridging language between the citizens of various nations. A Turk visiting France, for example, won't get very far using Turkish so it's common for him and his French hosts to use English as the bridging language.

Indeed, 1.5 billion people in the world speak English, and English is the primary language in more than 50 nations. In addition, more than 2 billion people are estimated to be learning English, and it has become the international language of business.

English is also the major language of the Internet. The top five languages of users are as follows:

English	565 million
Chinese	510 million
Spanish	165 million
Japanese	99 million
Portuguese	83 million

## on the job

# INSIGHTS

### Traveling Abroad? How to Make a Good Impression

**B**usiness for Diplomatic Action Inc., a nonprofit organization, works with U.S. companies to improve the reputation of the United States around the world. To that end, it has compiled guidelines on how business travelers (as well as tourists) should behave abroad. Here are some tips from its brochure “World Citizens Guide”:

**Read a map.** Familiarize yourself with the local geography to avoid making insulting mistakes. Knowledge of current events and public issues is a real plus.

**Dress up.** In some countries, casual dress is a sign of disrespect.

**Talk small.** Talking about wealth, power, or status—corporate or personal—can create resentment. Bragging about America’s greatness is a real turnoff.

**No slang.** Even casual profanity is unacceptable.

**Slow down.** Americans talk fast, eat fast, move fast, and live fast. Many other cultures do not.

**Listen as much as you talk.** Ask people you’re visiting about themselves and their way of life.

**Speak lower and slower.** A loud voice is often perceived as bragging.

**Exercise religious restraint.** In many countries, religion is not a subject for discussion.

**Exercise political restraint.** Steer clear . . . if someone is attacking U.S. politicians or policies. Agree to disagree.

**Learn some words.** Learning some simple phrases in the host country’s language is most appreciated.

them. Media materials and advertising must be translated, and the best approach for doing so is to employ native speakers who have extensive experience in translating ad copy and public relations materials. On some occasions, despite the best intentions, a company stumbles. See the Ethics box on page 557.

### Foreign Corporations in the United States

Corporations and industries in other countries frequently employ public relations and lobbying to advance their commercial and political interests in the United States. A good example is China’s Huawei Corporation, the world’s second largest telecoms manufacturer with \$35 billion in revenues. The U.S. Congress has barred Huawei from selling its equipment in the United States because of alleged connections with the Chinese military, so Bill Plummer, president of external affairs for Huawei, spends a great deal of time and effort in Washington trying to “unravel, undo, and dispel the myth and innuendo, misinformation, and disinformation.”

Lobbying by foreign companies is a major activity. The Center for Public Integrity (CPI), for example, reported that in a six-year period, 700 companies with headquarters in about 100 nations spent more than \$520 million lobbying the U.S. government. The Center’s analysis continued, “Over that time, those companies employed 550 lobbying firms and teams of 3,800 lobbyists, more than 100 of whom were former members of Congress.”

Companies from the United Kingdom top the list, having spent more than \$180 million during the six-year period. This included BP (British Petroleum) and the pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline, which has extensive operations in the United States. BP, on the other hand, lobbies on matters relating to environmental standards and oil and gas issues. Companies from Germany were second on the list, spending about \$70 million on lobbying. Swiss corporations were third, with about the same expenditures, and Japanese companies were fourth, spending about \$60 million during that six-year period.

On a global level, there is intense lobbying to influence negotiations on a global climate change treaty. The fossil fuel industries and other heavy carbon emitters are using public relations strategies and lobbying to slow any progress on the control of greenhouse emissions. According to a report by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, “Employing thousands of lobbyists, millions in political contributions, and widespread fear tactics, entrenched interests worldwide are thwarting the steps that scientists say are needed to stave off a looming environmental calamity.”

The Center for Public Integrity, which partnered with the journalists on its report, says lobbying can be seen most clearly in developed nations because they have disclosure regulations. In the United States, for example, CPI says, “There are now about 3,000 climate lobbyists—five lobbyists for every member of Congress—a 400 percent jump from six years earlier.”

Carl Levin, vice president and senior consultant of Burson-Marsteller, Washington, D.C., lists five major reasons foreign corporations retain public relations counsel in the United States:

1. To hold off protectionist moves that threaten their companies or industries
2. To defeat legislation affecting the sale of their products
3. To provide ongoing information on political, legal, and commercial developments in the United States that could affect their business interests
4. To support expansion of their markets in the United States
5. To deal with a crisis situation that threatens the financial health or reputation of their organization

## U.S. Corporations in Other Nations

Many U.S. corporations are global in scope, with employees, products, manufacturing plants, and distribution centers around the world. Wal-Mart, for example had 2012 worldwide revenues of \$469 billion and employed 2.2 million worldwide. McDonald’s has 34,000 restaurants in 118 nations and 1.8 million employees. On a smaller scale, Starbucks has 18,000 stores in more than 60 nations and 149,000 employees. In Japan alone, Starbucks has 1,000 stores. The revenues generated by such global giants dwarfs the total GNPs of many nations and affects the lives of millions.

Consequently, they, and hundreds of other U.S. companies, engage in extensive public relations and lobbying activities in other nations for virtually the same reasons that foreign countries lobby in the United States. The total amount expended on public relations and lobbying abroad is not known because U.S. companies don’t have to report such expenditures to the U.S. government. Google, however, illustrates the

Not surprisingly, international trade was by far the most common issue foreign companies reported lobbying on, followed by defense and taxation.

*The Center for Public Integrity*

point. Google spent \$18 million on lobbying in 2012, and a large percentage of these expenditures were for lobbying in Europe against anti-trust and privacy regulations proposed by the EU.

Public relations professionals who work for Google, as well as a host of other American companies are heavily involved in global activities, because their work involves the companies' employees and operations in many nations. The corporate headquarters usually decides what key messages will be communicated worldwide, but relies on public relations staffs and local public relations firms in each country to ensure that the messages are properly translated and implemented. Many of these corporations also retain global public relations firms such as Edelman and Burson-Marsteller to provide services from offices in major cities around the world. The global efforts of public relations firms were discussed in Chapter 4.

At the start of the 21st century and in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, American companies have faced a number of challenges abroad: competing with other large corporations headquartered in other nations; dealing with sustainable development; being boycotted by nations that disagree with American foreign policy; and striving to act as good corporate citizens at the local and national levels.

David Drobis, a former senior partner and chair of Ketchum, outlined some of these challenges in a speech before the International Communications Consultancy Organization (ICCO). Drobis declared that one major challenge is to better communicate to the world's people the economic advantages of globalization. The *Economist*, for example, has also called globalization a massive communications failure because the public and private sectors have done such a poor job of communicating globalization's benefits, being transparent about their activities, and building important alliances.

Drobis believes that public relations professionals are best suited to explain the benefits of globalization. These benefits must be communicated to three key groups: (1) company management; (2) nongovernmental organizations, known as NGOs; and (3) international institutions such as the United Nations.

Every organization is going to have to deal with new rules and expectations for communication as the world becomes more competitive and as organizations interact with new markets.

*Ray Kotcher, CEO of Ketchum, at the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) World Congress in Beijing*

**Corporations** The first group is the companies themselves, which must realize that international capitalism has a bad connotation in many parts of the world. Companies, according to Drobis, have done little to correct this view despite the efforts of a few highly responsible companies who have outstanding programs. He asserts, "Companies must take into consideration a broad group of stakeholders as they pursue their business goals globally. And by doing so, there are tangible and intangible business benefits. In this way, good corporate citizenship is not a cost of doing business, but rather a driver of business success. What's good for the soul is also good for business."

Drobis adds, "Companies that pursue initiatives—be they related to the environment, labor standards, or human rights—are rewarded with improved business success in a number of areas, including shareholder value, revenue, operational efficiencies, higher employee morale and productivity, and corporate reputation." One continuing issue is the use of cheap labor in developing economies to produce goods, which is highlighted in the Ethics box on page 557.

on the job

## ETHICS

### Would You Buy a T-Shirt made in Bangladesh?

One of the deadliest industrial accidents in history took place on a sunny day in Bangladesh. In an instant, a garment factory collapsed killing 1,100 workers. In the rubble were clothes being made for some of the world's leading retailers such as Wal-Mart, the Gap, and Benetton.

The tragedy made worldwide headlines and placed the uncomfortable spotlight on the ethics of a supply chain that churns out underwear, jeans, and T-shirts produced

by millions of workers making the lowest wages in the world. NGOs and consumer advocates light up the Internet and social media with critical comments about the ethics of retailers who supported such a system, and there were even calls for the boycott of various companies who used sweatshop labor in Bangladesh. Retailers also faced street protests. The United Students Against Sweatshops, for example, staged demonstrations against the Gap in a dozen cities.

The outcry brought a mixed reaction from retailers. Some, like Wal-Mart, claimed it had no "authorized" production at the collapsed factory. Benetton also claimed a hazy knowledge of its own supply chain and only acknowledged involvement after news photos of garments found in the wreckage displayed Benetton tags. The Walt Disney Company, on the other hand, announced that it was stopping production of its products in Bangladesh. Other European retailers, however, took the initiative to



*(continued)*

announce a joint agreement titled the Accord on Fire and Building Safety. It committed companies to a five-year program to do independent safety

inspections of factories and even pay for numerous safety improvements.

Absent from the agreement were 14 American retailers who declined to take responsibility for forcing suppliers to upgrade safety standards and even provide funding for upgrades. Wal-Mart, claiming that the agreement would make the company liable in U.S. courts, offered another plan. It proposed to hire an outside auditor to inspect plants and publish the results on its website. Plants with fire and safety issues would have to make the necessary renovations or risk being removed from the list of authorized factories.

Critics of the proposal, however, say such voluntary efforts have a poor track record. Bob Ross, a critic of sweatshops who teaches sociology at Clark University, told the *Wall Street Journal*, "Without a legally binding contract that the European retailers have signed, it's just putting lipstick on a pig."

With that in mind, what do you think is the ethical responsibility of retailers to ensure that their products are produced in a safe environment? Would you be willing to pay more for a T-shirt if it was made in a plant that met minimum fire and safety standards? Some retailers say the lack of safety is the government's lack of regulatory oversight and not their problem. Would you agree?

The issue of sweatshop labor and plant safety raises serious reputation issues for companies in terms of sales. If it looks like you don't have control of your supply chain—even if it's a third party—that can change your reputation.

*Heather Wilson, EVP of Ogilvy Public Relations*

**NGOs** The second group that must be convinced of the benefits of globalization is nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The annual Edelman survey measuring public trust of various institutions continually places NGOs at the top of public trust, and they are extremely influential as watchdogs on corporate behavior throughout the world. British NGO ActionAid, for example, blasted Associated British Foods for exploiting loopholes to avoid paying taxes that would have sent 48,000 Zambian children to school. And Starbucks backed down after Oxfam exposed the company's efforts to trademark the names of various Ethiopian bean varieties without paying for the right to use Ethiopian names on its products.

Although NGOs often expose corporate misdeeds, American companies have come to realize that NGOs can also become an important seal of approval and branding. Indeed, major mainstream NGOs such as the World Wildlife Federation and Greenpeace are working with corporations on sustainable development programs. The *Financial Times* notes, "A new type of relationship is emerging between companies and NGOs, where NGOs act as certification bodies, verifying and, in many cases, permitting the use of their logos, showing that products and services are being produced in socially responsible and environmentally friendly ways."

Indeed, hundreds of nongovernmental organizations expend considerable energy to get international support for their programs and causes. Organizations such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, and even a number of groups opposed to globalization have been effective in getting their messages out via the Web, e-mail, social media, and demonstrations. They have been successful not only in setting the agenda for discussion issues, but also in influencing legislation at the national and international levels. A good example is Oceana's efforts to preserve the world's fisheries, which is highlighted in the PR Casebook on page 559.

NGOs like Oxfam and Christian Aid are going for the one source of power that's still left, and that's corporations.

*Robert Blood, founder of Sigwatch in the Financial Times*

# PR Casebook

## NGO Campaign Goes After Fishing Subsidies

**N**ongovernmental organizations, commonly known as NGOs, have become very influential in terms of shaping public opinion on global issues because the public widely perceives NGOs as being highly sincere and credible. For example, Oceana, an international conservation group, influenced the World Trade Organization (WTO) and national governments regarding the threat of overfishing.

Oceana worked on a three-year campaign to generate support from and action by the WTO to reduce nations' subsidies to their fishing fleets. The campaign, "Cut the Bait," used an extensive communications program to convince the WTO that reducing or eliminating subsidies would be the greatest contribution to preserving the world's oceans. A series of steps were involved in the campaign.

*Step One* Oceana commissioned scientists at the University of British Columbia to assess the extent of fishing subsidies. The study found that governments were spending a combined total of \$20 billion annually in subsidies to the fishing industry, an amount equal to 25 percent of the world's fish catch.

*Step Two* Extensive interviews were undertaken with WTO officials, country diplomats, and other trade experts to gain technical and political insights. In addition, Oceana did a political analysis of the U.S. Congress on environmental issues. It also reviewed existing public opinion research and did a content analysis of how the media were covering the issue to date.

*Step Three* A communications strategy that included media relations, advertising, events, and stakeholder advocacy was established to increase visibility on the issue and create pressure on WTO representatives. Science-based messages were used, and Oceana also created a life-size mascot, called "Finley the Fish," to establish a highly visible logo that would appeal to the public. Other collateral materials produced were magnets and a snow globe containing Finley surrounded by floating boats with fish hooks and money "confetti."

*Step Four* More than 500 meetings were conducted with WTO delegations. More than 175 briefings were conducted with U.S. trade and congressional offices. Technical briefings were conducted in Geneva, headquarters of the WTO, by scientists and experts. In addition, scientists were mobilized for advocacy. A letter signed by 125 scientists from 27 nations was sent to the WTO director general. Other activities included sponsoring billboards in Geneva saying, "Stop Fishing Subsidies" and enlisting television and movie celebrities to make public statements. Oceana also partnered with 11 other environmental groups, who publicly provided support.

The outcome was gratifying to Oceana. As a result of its "Cut the Bait" campaign, the WTO produced a first-draft agreement on fishing subsidies that included most of Oceana's recommendations. The agreement, as of 2009, had not been ratified but the draft agreement still remains the basis for negotiations. Nine nations, including the United States, have also strongly endorsed Oceana's recommendations, and even the U.S. Congress passed a resolution supporting the reduction of fishing subsidies.

In terms of media coverage, Oceana generated more than 1,000 media placements—including in influential publications such as the *Financial Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*—in 37 nations. The campaign and the resulting media coverage also positioned Oceana as the leading spokesperson on fishing subsidies and related WTO negotiations. The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) awarded Oceana a Golden World Award for an outstanding campaign by an NGO.





One study by StrategyOne, the research arm of Edelman Worldwide, showed that media coverage of such organizations more than doubled over a four-year period, and NGOs were perceived by the public to be more credible than the news media or corporations when it came to issues such as labor, health, and the environment. Thought leaders, for example, indicate that they trust NGOs more than government or corporations because they consider the NGOs' motivation to be based on "morals" rather than "profit." Public Affairs Council President Doug Pinkham has said the StrategyOne report should be taken as a "wake-up call" by large corporations that have failed to embrace greater social responsibility and transparency.

**International Institutions** The third group is international institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and even the United Nations. Drobis says these organizations are unfairly criticized as being undemocratic, but fairly criticized for being nontransparent. An article in *Foreign Affairs* puts it this way: "To outsiders, even within the same government, these institutions can look like closed and secretive clubs. Increased transparency is essential. International organizations can provide more access to their deliberations, even after the fact."

## Public Relations by Governments

The governments of virtually every country have multiple departments involved in communicating with political leaders and citizens in other nations. Much effort and billions of dollars are spent on the tourism industry to attract visitors, whose expenditures aid local economies. Even larger sums are devoted to lobbying efforts to obtain favorable legislation for a country's products; for example, Costa Rica conducted a public relations and lobbying campaign to convince the U.S. Congress to reduce tariffs on the import of its sugar.

Conflict and war between nations also lead to extensive public relations efforts by both sides to influence world public opinion that their actions are justified. Both Russia and Georgia, for example, hired American public relations firms to help each country convince the world that the other side was the aggressor in 2008 when a war broke out over the somewhat disputed territory of South Ossetia. Russia claimed it was responding to an unprovoked attack on the Russian population of Ossetia (officially part of Georgia), but the Georgians claimed that giant Russia was bullying the small former Soviet Republic. "This is part of warfare these days that you get your story out," Kleine Brockhoof, a German journalist, told *PRWeek*. See the Social Media in Action box on page 561 about Syria's use of the social media as a weapon of war.

Countries engage in persuasive communication campaigns for a number of reasons. Burson-Marsteller's Carl Levin says their goals when dealing with the United States are to:

- Advance political objectives
- Assess probable U.S. reaction to a projected action by the country
- Advance the country's commercial interests—for example, sales in the United States, increased U.S. private investment, and tourism
- Assist in communications in English

on the job

# SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACTION

## Wars and Conflict: Governments Enlist Social Media as a Weapon

**P**resident Assad of Syria in mid-2013 was in the middle of a civil war, which has claimed more than 100,000 lives, but you would never know it if you accessed his Facebook page, Twitter account, or the government's account with Instagram.

The photo sharing site, Instagram, is a particular favorite. Assad's staff posts numerous photos of him and his glamorous wife surrounded by adoring crowds. According to Zeina Karam of Associated Press (AP), "The photos

The sophisticated PR campaign is striking for an isolated leader who has earned near pariah status for his military's bloody crackdown on dissent.

*Zeina Karam, reporter for AP*

show a smiling Assad among supporters, or grimly visiting wounded Syrians in the hospital. He is seen working in his office in Damascus, an Apple computer and iPad on his desk. His wife, Asma, who has stayed largely out of sight throughout the conflict, features heavily in the photos, casually dressed and surrounded by Syrian children and their mothers."

The Assad regime also has a YouTube channel for posting videos of alleged atrocities by the rebels against his regime, but the Free Syrian Army also uses YouTube and other social media to post videos of alleged atrocities by the Syrian military. In a conflict where there are no foreign journalists on the ground, such videos become the staple of nightly news throughout the world. The rebels also arrange Skype interviews with journalists outside the country and have even hired

a New York public relations firm to represent them.

Erik Sass, in a posting on [www.mediapost.com](http://www.mediapost.com), comments "The days when the horrors of war could be filtered by newspaper editors and TV news producers are over, thanks in large part to social media, which allows users to post and share raw, uncensored photos and video footage of violent conflict, including the terrible consequences for civilians. This development has opened up a whole new arena in the battle to shape public opinion, leading to tit-for-tat social media exchanges between combatants."

The Israeli–Palestine conflict, for example, is now fought in social media. Hamas distributed a video of a father carrying his 11-month-old son killed by an Israeli artillery shell. Not to be outdone, the Israeli government countered with a picture of an Israeli baby, covered in blood, who was wounded by a Hamas rocket attack.

- Help win understanding of and support for specific issues that undermine the country's standing in the United States and the world community
- Modify laws and regulations inhibiting the country's activities in the United States

Under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) of 1938, all legal, political, fund-raising, public relations, and lobbying consultants hired by foreign governments to work in the United States must register with the Department of Justice. They are also required to file reports with the attorney general listing all activities on behalf of a foreign principal, compensation received, and expenses incurred. See the next Insights box for a list of U.S. public relations firms representing various nations.

## on the job

# INSIGHTS

### U.S. Firms Represent a Variety of Nations

The following is a representative sample of contracts signed by U.S. public relations and lobbying firms, primarily based in Washinton, D.C., to work on behalf of foreign governments, as reported in various issues of *O'Dwyer's Newsletter*:

**Glover Park Group.** A \$250,000 monthly retainer with the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to generate more favorable media coverage and U.S. administration support for the military junta that replaced President Morsi in a coup.

**Fleishman-Hillard.** \$420,000 to assist Singapore with message development, media relations,

organizing responses to "as-it-happens" news, and social media counseling.

**GGR Government Affairs.** \$540,000 to help Gambia win economic and political support from the United States and non-government organizations to fund its adolescent and adult female education programs.

**Roberti + White.** \$360,000 to counsel Cyprus on political developments in the United States and maintain contact with the White House, Congress, and journalists.

**Podesta Group.** \$960,000 to assist Iraq with developing a strategic

communications plan that would help the United States better understand its priorities and concerns. The firm will maintain contact on behalf of Iraq with members of Congress, reporters, and non-governmental officials.

**The Harbour Group.** \$180,000 to conduct a public diplomacy program for the Libyan National Transitional Council and the country's U.S. embassy. The contract includes (1) setting up meetings with U.S. policymakers, reporters, and academics; (2) development of website content; and (3) establishing social media platforms.

Normally hired by an embassy after openly bidding for the account, the firm first gathers detailed information about the client country, including past media coverage. Attitudes toward the country are ascertained both informally and through surveys.

The action program decided on will likely include the establishment of an information bureau to provide facts and published statements of favorable opinion about the country. In many cases, a nation may also use paid issue advertising in publications such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Financial Times* that reach a high percentage of opinion leaders and elected officials. The Republic of Kazakhstan, for example, placed full-page ads in major American newspapers after its national elections to reinforce public perceptions that it is a democracy. The ad's headline was "Today, Kazakhstan has another asset besides oil, gas and minerals. Democracy."

Appointments are also secured with key journalists and editors to persuade them to publish or broadcast favorable stories about the country or its leaders. In other cases, the objective is to frame a particular issue in a way to generate favorable coverage for a government's actions or policies. See the Insights box on page 563 about Kazakhstan's favorable coverage on CNN.

on the job

## INSIGHTS

### A CNN Report on Kazakhstan: News or Propaganda?

Americans don't know much about the central Asian nation of Kazakhstan so CNN produced a special report about this oil and resource-rich nation sandwiched between Russia and China. "Eyes on Kazakhstan" was a half-hour collection of nine short segments that focused on the country's booming energy industry, opportunities for foreign investors, and the modern capital city.

But the series was not exactly what it seemed. It was sponsored by several state-owned agencies, but the reports only made a vague reference about "sponsorship originating from the countries we profile." Online clips did mention that the series was made in "association" with Samruk-Kazyna and the Astana Economic Forum. Research by Max Fisher of Atlantic Magazine, however, found that both of these organizations were part of a state-run holding company with strong ties to the current government.

Fisher also found that the CNN reporter calling Kazakhstan a "strong and vibrant economy" conducted an interview with a man introduced only as an "energy expert" that had effusive praise for the government's management of the economy. What the viewers were not told, however, was that the "expert" was a government employee and head of the Eurasian Economic Club of Scientists'



Association headed by the president of Kazakhstan. In another segment, an "economist" was interviewed about sending talented students abroad for study, but it was also not disclosed that he headed an entire department of the president's office. This, says Fisher, is like CNN interviewing an executive of the Ford Motor as an unbiased "auto expert" who might give comment on the merits of Ford's cars and trucks.

In sum, the CNN series was the result of Kazakhstan making a major investment in lobbying and public relations to combat unfavorable media coverage about its human rights record, the dictatorship of the country's president (in office for more than 20 years), and attract foreign investment for a rapidly growing economy.

Arranging "sponsorship" of the CNN series by government controlled organizations no doubt was considered a major accomplishment.

Fisher writes, "Whether CNN chose to label present and former government employees as unbiased 'experts' without noting their connections or was simply unaware of those links, it's an odd moment of convergence between one of the largest news networks in the world and the lobbying campaign of this far-flung Central Asian oil exporter."

*Source:* Fisher, M. (2012, July 20). CNN's Effusive Coverage of Kazakhstan Is Quietly Sponsored by Its Subject. Retrieved from *Atlantic Monthly* ([www.theatlantic.com/International](http://www.theatlantic.com/International)).

Briefings are also held for business executives, and leaders of various public policy groups who are then encouraged to write op-eds or give presentations supporting the foreign government and its policies. In many cases, the primary audiences are key members of congressional committees, heads of various governmental agencies, and even the White House staff. These people are often invited to visit the client country on expense-paid trips, although some news media people decline on ethical grounds.

Gradually, through expert and persistent methods of persuasion (including lobbying), public opinion may be changed, favorable trade legislation may be passed, foreign aid may be increased, or an influx of American tourists may go to the country.

Some of the toughest problems confronting public relations firms who work for foreign governments include:

- Deciding whether to represent a country, such as Belarus or Zimbabwe, whose human rights violations may reflect adversely on the agency itself
- Deciding whether to represent nations such as Ecuador, Bolivia, or Venezuela whose governments are extremely critical of U.S. Latin American policies.
- Persuading the governments of such nations to alter some of their practices so that the favorable public image sought will reflect reality
- Convincing a client nation that controls or owns its media that the American press is independent of government influence and coverage won't always be favorable.

Why do some U.S. firms choose to work for other governments, perhaps even those that are unpopular? Says Burson-Marsteller's Carl Levin: "I do not think it is overreaching to state that in helping friendly foreign clients we also advance our national interests. And we help in ways that our government cannot."

Levin may be correct, but representing an unpopular country such as North Korea or even a nation with political strife can have its pitfalls. Ruder Finn's contract with the new Maldives government after a military-backed coup, for example, caused a group of protestors outside its London office to protest the firm's involvement with what they considered an illegal government.

In another situation, Washington Media Group (WVG) found it necessary to resign an account with the Tunisian government as the regime came under increasing international criticism that eventually touched off the Arab Spring. WVG president Gregory Vistica, in his resignation letter to the government, wrote, "Recent events make it clear the Tunisian government is not inclined to heed our counsel regarding meaningful reforms." He continued, "Indeed, the government's current actions and activities have undermined, or in some cases completely undone, whatever progress we have made in improving Tunisia's reputation."

A nation's reputation is extremely important in an age of instant communication and global trade, so nations spend considerable amounts of money and effort on what is called "reputation management." A case in point is China, which has ramped up its public relations and lobbying efforts in recent years to counter criticisms (and fears) in the United States about its growing economic and military power. It hired the Patton Boggs firm to lobby on a wide range of issues before Congress, including trade tariffs, intellectual property, currency exchange rates, and Taiwan.

In the modern age, whichever nation's communication methods are most advanced, whichever nation's communications capacity is strongest . . . has the most power to influence the world.

*President Hu Jintao of China*

In addition to using American public relations firms, the Chinese government has embarked on a massive global effort to enhance its image and reputation. The Beijing Olympics and the Shanghai Expo, for example, did much to generate positive media coverage around the world and alter popular misconceptions of China.

China is also expanding its influence worldwide by creating TV networks, starting English-language newspapers, leasing radio stations on all continents, and broadcasting TV news to a worldwide audience in six languages. The UK's *Guardian Weekly* notes, "Beijing's response is typically massive and ambitious: a \$6.6 billion global strategy to create media giants that will challenge agenda-setting western giants such as News Corp, the BBC, and CNN." On another level, China has greatly expanded its outreach to educational institutions around the world. See the Insights box below.

on the job

## INSIGHTS

### China's Educational Outreach to the World

Countries use a variety of "public diplomacy" initiatives to enhance their national reputation and influence opinion leaders in other nations. One such initiative is an extensive program by China to establish Confucius Institutes at universities around the world.

Hanban, an agency affiliated with China's Ministry of Education, was started in 2004 for the purpose of "enhancing the world's understanding of Chinese language and culture, deepening the friendship between China and the rest of the world, and promoting global cultural diversity." By 2009, Hanban had established and funded almost 350 Confucius Institutes in more than 80 nations and regions around the world.

A sampling of American universities with Institutes includes the University of Tulsa, the University of Florida, Northwestern University, Stanford University, Texas A&M



University, and the University of Minnesota. Confucius Institutes on such campuses provide instruction on Chinese culture and language by providing teachers, partnering with various university academic departments, and donating instructional resources.

The number and distribution of teaching resources to schools is impressive. According to a recent annual report by Hanban, (1) 1.3 million volumes of teaching materials were donated to more than a thousand institutions in 100

(continued)

nations, (2) 2,000 teachers and volunteers were sent to 109 nations to teach Chinese, (3) 16,512 secondary school teachers from 47 nations received language training, and (4) *Everyday Chinese* is published in 38 languages.

Hanban also has an extensive international exchange program. More than 800 primary and secondary school principals, for example,

visited China in a recent year. In addition, 800 foreign high school students visited China and participated in “Chinese Bridge” summer camps. University students also receive funding to visit China and learn about Chinese culture and language. The government also has an extensive scholarship program for foreign students to study at Chinese universities.

The Chinese government believes the rapid acceptance of Confucius Institutes is evidence of a global desire to build positive relationships through communication and cooperation. Additionally, the government suggests that the Institutes help China interact with the world in hopes to building mutually beneficial relationships.

## American Public Diplomacy

The American government is the major disseminator of information around the world. This is called *public diplomacy*, because it is an open communication process primarily intended to present American society in all its complexity so that citizens and governments of other nations can understand the context of U.S. actions and policies. Another function is to promote American concepts of democracy, free trade, and open communication around the world.

The United States Information Agency (USIA), created in 1953 by President Dwight Eisenhower, was the primary agency involved in shaping America’s image abroad. USIA, in many ways, was the direct descendant of George Creel’s Committee on Public Information (CPI) during World War I and Elmer Davis’s Office of War Information during World War II. See Chapter 2.

After World War II, the new threat was the outbreak of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc nations in Eastern Europe. The Cold War was a war of words on both sides to win the “hearts and minds” of governments and their citizens around the world.

Some early USIA activities included (1) the stationing of public affairs officers (PAOs) at every American embassy to work with local media, (2) publication of American books and magazines, (3) distribution of American films and TV programs, (4) sponsorship of tours by American dance and musical groups, (5) art shows, (6) student and faculty exchange programs such as the Fulbright Program, and (7) sponsorship of lecture tours by American authors and intellectuals. The USIA was abolished in 1999 after the end of the Cold War and the implosion of the Soviet Union, but many of these activities continue today under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State, which has an undersecretary of state for public affairs and diplomacy.

The 9/11 attacks on the United States created a new impetus to “sell” America and the U.S. decision to invade Afghanistan and Iraq. The cry was to “win the hearts and minds” of the world’s people and to gain public, as well as international, support for U.S. actions. Diplomatic efforts have had mixed results, and American foreign policy is still not popular in many of the world’s capitals. Perceptions of the United States however, have improved in recent years primarily as a result of President Obama’s popularity around the world as a charismatic leader, although the current Republican Congress holds him in much less esteem.

The public affairs section of the U.S. Department of State is the official voice of the United States government and often has to react almost instantly to issues that seriously affect U.S. standing abroad. In 2012, for example, an American film-maker produced an anti-Muslim video that, via the Internet, immediately incited violence in the Middle East. Large protests against the film involved tens of thousands of people in Pakistan. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued a statement that the United States government had absolutely nothing to do with the video. The State Department also purchased time on Pakistan television to re-assure Muslims that the U.S. had great respect for the Muslim religion. In the United States, such films are considered free speech. In countries where the media are controlled by the government, citizens have a hard time believing that an independent filmmaker could make such a film and distribute it.

One major vehicle of communication is the Voice of America (VOA), which was created in 1942. It traditionally broadcast news, sports, and entertainment around the world via shortwave, but VOA has also established AM and FM radio transmitters throughout the world. In addition, the agency supplies many radio and television stations throughout the world with various news, music, and talk programs free of charge. The VOA also offers audio streaming on the World Wide Web. The worldwide audience for VOA is difficult to judge, given all the distribution methods, but estimates are that it has several hundred million listeners.

More recently, Congress has set up radio and television services focusing on Iraq and the Middle East. Radio Sawa injects news tidbits written from an American perspective into a heavy rotation of American and Middle Eastern pop music. A similar radio service aimed at Iranian youth is Radio Farda. On the television side, the U.S. government started Al Hurra. According to the *New York Times*, Al Hurra is “a slickly produced Arab-language news and entertainment network that [is] beamed by satellite from a Washington suburb to the Middle East.”

VOA, and services such as Radio Sawa, are not directed at U.S. citizens. Under the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, Congress prohibited the government from directing its public diplomacy efforts toward Americans, because of fears that the government would propagandize its own citizens.

Funding for public diplomacy has somewhat increased under the Obama administration, but changing American policies is a much more difficult political process. Judith McHale, chief of U.S. public diplomacy efforts, told an audience in Europe that President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton recognize public diplomacy as a key cog in restoring U.S. leadership around the world: “They recognize public diplomacy as an essential ingredient of 21st century stagecraft.”

U.S. sponsored radio and TV broadcasts remain critical weapons in the struggle for freedom around the world.

*James K. Glassman, chair of the Broadcasting Board of Governors*

## Opportunities in International Work

The 21st century, according to many experts, represented a new golden age of global marketing and public relations. The expansion of nations in the EU, the economic and social reforms in the former Soviet Union, and the rise of China, Korea, and Brazil as major economic powers has hastened the reality of a global economy.

The decision to seek a career in global public relations should ideally be made during the early academic years, so that a student can take multiple courses in international relations, global marketing techniques, the basics of strategic public



relations planning, foreign languages, social and economic geography, and cross-cultural communication. Graduate study in international business and international relations is an asset.

As a desirable starting point, students should study abroad for a semester or serve an internship with an organization based in, or with operations in, another nation. Practically every campus has an international studies office that has semester abroad programs and also contacts with organizations that arrange international internships. Students may apply for the Fulbright Program, which funds travel and study abroad. Rotary International also offers a student foreign study scholarship as well.

Taking the U.S. Foreign Service examination is the first requirement for launching a diplomatic career, but many recent graduates can also join a public relations firm, a corporation, or a non-profit with global offices that eventually leads to international travel and foreign assignments. All it takes is desire, initiative, and persistence to have a career in international public relations.

## Summary

### What Is Global Public Relations?

- Public relations work today involves dealing with employees, customers, vendors, communities, and government officials in multiple nations.
- Public relations is a well-developed industry in many nations around the world. China, in particular, has a rapidly expanding public relations industry that is getting more sophisticated every year.

### International Corporate Public Relations

- In the new age of global marketing, public relations firms represent foreign interests in the United States as well as the interests of American corporations around the world.
- The practitioner must deal with issues of language and cultural differences, including subtle differences in customs and etiquette and even ethical dilemmas such as paying for news coverage.
- A great deal of public relations work for companies and governments involves lobbying a nation's elected officials or government agencies for favorable trade agreements.
- Nations also use global public relations to enhance their global image and gain influence in various regional and international groups.
- NGOs are now major players in setting the agenda for discussion of global issues and influencing the policies of corporations and governments.

- NGOs are widely believed to be more credible by the news media and the public on issues such as labor, health, and the environment, partly because they are perceived as lacking the self-interest ascribed to governments and corporations.
- There is increasing evidence that giant corporations are adopting a more accommodative stance and cooperating with activist NGOs to form more socially responsible policies.

### Public Relations by Governments

- Most governments seek to influence the foreign policies of other countries as well as the opinions and actions of their publics. These communications can range from promoting tourism to influencing trade policies and promoting foreign investment.
- U.S. public relations firms work for foreign governments, helping them advance their political objectives and commercial interests, counseling them on probable U.S. reactions to their proposed actions, and assisting in communications in English.
  - War and conflict between nations usually results in a barrage of public relations activity on both sides to justify their actions. The Russia–Georgia conflict, as well as the Israel–Palestine impasse, are examples.
- The U.S. government refers to its international information efforts as *public diplomacy*, which involves activities to enhance understanding of American

culture and promote U.S. foreign policy objectives. The VOA radio broadcasts are part of this program.

#### Opportunities in International Work

- As global marketing and communications have expanded in recent years, so too have opportunities for international public relations work.

- Fluency in a foreign language is a valued skill but not a prerequisite; also important is a background in international relations, global marketing techniques, social and economic geography, and cross-cultural communication.

## Case Activity Promoting Tourism for Turkey

Turkey has a problem. It's a Muslim country and many Americans have become hesitant about visiting a nation that they perceive is part of the Middle East where there is political unrest and even terrorism. Many don't know that Turkey is relatively stable, has a secular government, and has a strong European orientation.

Indeed, Turkey remains a virtual treasure-house of art, culture, and cuisine that would appeal to seasoned travelers looking for a new experience and destination. There are Roman ruins, exotic shopping in the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul, and the new jazz sounds of Turkish musicians. Istanbul, by all accounts,

is one of the most vibrant and interesting cities in the world that has been a crossroads of civilizations for centuries.

The Turkish Culture and Tourism Office has retained your public relations firm to conduct a media relations program in the American press (and to some extent the European media) to increase awareness of Turkey as a desirable tourist destination. Develop a public relations plan that will use appropriate media and events to reach various audiences. Your plan should outline possible feature stories for print and broadcast media, use of social media, and special events or promotions.

## Questions For Review and Discussion

1. What is global public relations? What are some of the reasons for its growth in recent decades?
2. The field of public relations develops best in a nation that has some special characteristics. What are some of those characteristics?
3. How does public relations contribute to the global operations of large companies?
4. What objectives do foreign nations seek to accomplish by hiring U.S. public relations firms to represent them in America?
5. What do you mean by the new age of global marketing? What are the challenges and opportunities?
6. Islam, the second-largest religion in the world after Christianity, is seen as a major consumer market by multinational companies. What are the PR challenges of reaching out to this diverse group in terms of culture and geography?
7. Non-governmental organizations like Greenpeace and WWF have footprints in many countries across the globe on sustainable development programs. What makes them successful?
8. Why should companies consider public relations and marketing outreach to the Muslim population of the world?
9. How are social media now being used by nations in times of conflict and war?
10. Part of a company's reputation depends on maintaining an ethical supply chain for its products. What should U.S. retailers do about the safety hazards of plants in Bangladesh?
11. Foreign governments often influence coverage of their nations through lobbying and public relations efforts. Name some examples from the text.
12. What is China doing to enhance its international reputation and promote itself as a leading nation in the global economy?
13. Wars and conflicts involve fierce public relations activities on the part of warring nations. Discuss with some examples from the text.
14. If you decided to have a career in global public relations, would you choose a global corporation, an international NGO, or the U.S. foreign service? Explain your rationale.