

Public Relations and Related Concepts

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- The nature of public relations is quite broad and as such it includes a wide range of activities which are sometimes confused as public relations rather than elements of public relations.
 - We shall take a look at some of these concepts and attempt an explanation of the differences and similarities between them and public relations.

Publicity:

- However in a technical sense, it is more limited and defined, so that it means free publicity which is provided essentially by the press. **It is the practice of placing newsworthy and factual information written in a journalistic and editorial format published in the news media at no cost.**
- An example of publicity is a situation where a company issues a news release about a new product or new functions of an existing product. Should Pakistan produce its first air plane for instance, it will be given wide, free publicity.

Press Agency:

- Unlike a news agency, a press agency **deals with staging newsworthy events that are designed to attract the attention of the public by publicising them in the media.**
- Such events include press conferences, trade exhibitions, fashion shows, etc. These must be distinguished from events that happen daily. They are rather pseudo-events because they are stage-managed for the purpose of being reported by the media.

Lobbying:

- In a technical sense, lobbying is a professional **attempt designed to influence the government or any authority to change a public programme or policy in favour of an organisation, a cause, a group, an event e.g. organising a petition drive against a cause, e.g. open letters in daily newspapers or magazines.**
- Dry cell manufacturers in Nigeria did this a few years ago to draw government attention to the unbridled importation of dry cell batteries. Lobbying is a legal thing when it has points, information and logical reasons.

Merchandising:

- This deals with **blending an acceptable appearance**. It is part of promotion. You blend the product or person with the real it or him, so as to win acceptance and patronage from public for a group, a product, service, cause or an idea e.g. the grooming of a positive image by a politician who acts, dresses and speaks like a real native even though he is from somewhere else, e.g. during political campaigns when politicians dress like the native people he is going to speak to.
- In commercial merchandising, most products are designed to convey messages by their packs. You know that normally people do not patronize badly packaged products.

Promotion:

- This involves moulding or mobilising opinion favourably to an organization to get it to support a worthy cause, e.g. the mounting of events or fund raising programmes for motherless babies' homes.

Personal Selling:

- This talks about a personal effort involving a person who is attempting to persuade other people on behalf of a product, a group, an idea, etc, e.g. religious crusaders who go from door to door.

Human Relations:

- Human relations deals with **an individual's ability to develop and maintain a personality type as well as image that is capable of successful and spontaneous interpersonal relationship with other people.** Human relations is relating well with others. It talks about manners and character. Good human relations is the basis of good public relations.

Persuasion:

- It is a fundamental assumption in public relations that effective public relations is persuasive, not intimidating or forcing. Persuasion is any mass communication effort designed to change public opinion, beliefs, attitudes as well as action.

Communication:

- This is a process of sharing ideas with other people. In a professional sense, it is a means of sending information from one person to another. Public relations in all its forms embraces communication in one form or the other.