Planning a Public Relations Programme
Campaigns/Programmes/events are designed to accomplish specific organizational objectives.

A PR plan identifies what is to be done, why and how to accomplish it.

Public relations can use a PR programme or PR campaign or PR event to communicate with target publics.
• PR event- is a once-off occurrence, the purpose is to disseminate information to a specific target on a once-off basis

• PR campaign- has a specific beginning and an end;
  • lasts longer than an event;
  • The purpose is to get support for an issue/person/organization;
  • it builds up to a particular point;
  • there can be a cycle of campaigns
PR programme - similar to a campaign but it has no preset end;
- responds to an anticipated need for continuous dissemination of information to relevant publics;
- reviewed periodically;
- purpose is to create and maintain understanding between an organization and its publics.
There are three situations that require a public relations program:

1. Conducting a remedial program to overcome a problem or negative situation (declining sales)
2. When the organization needs a specific project to launch a product or service (show casing benefits of a service or product)
3. When the organization wants to reinforce efforts to preserve its reputation
Five (5) Principles of a successful campaign/programme

- Assessment of needs, goals and capabilities of priority publics
- Systematic campaign planning and production
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation
- Establishing complimentary roles of mass media and interpersonal communication
- Selection of appropriate media for priority publics
The process of planning a PR campaign

- It involves basically four (4) steps

- Abbreviated as Research Action plan Communication Implementation Evaluation (RACE) or Research Programming Implementation and Evaluation (RPIE)
  - Research - using research to define a problem, situation / opportunity
  - Action planning – developing objectives and strategies to address situation/opportunity
  - Communication implementation - using communication tools to meet campaign objectives
  - Evaluate - measure the results of the plan.
Elements of a Program Plan

- Situation Analysis
- Objectives
- Audience
- Strategy
- Tactics
- Calendar/timetable
- Budget
- Monitoring and evaluation
Step One - Research

- Research is a systematic gathering of information to describe and understand situations, check assumptions and public relations consequences (Cutlip et al, 2005)

- Use formal or informal research to obtain information about the problem or opportunity

- Use research to determine the problem or opportunity
  - Analyse the problem or opportunity
Analyse the situation using the SWOT formula.

- SWOT is an abbreviation for strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Strength and weaknesses are internal factors while opportunities and threats are external factors.
- Understand how the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are contributing to the situation before developing communication strategies.
- Internal analysis: strength and weaknesses of the organization.
- External analysis: threats (what could stop the organization from addressing its problems or pursuing an opportunity; opportunities-what the organization could do).
• There is a possibility of combining the internal and external factors to inform strategies

• **SO**- strategies to focus on organizational strengths to capitalize on opportunities

• **ST**- strategies to use organizational strengths to counter external threats

• **WO**- strategies address and improve organizational weaknesses to take advantage of external opportunities

• **WT**- strategies correct organizational weakness to defend against threats.
Construct the situation

- Write a descriptive paragraph to summarize the situation.
- After summarizing the situation, identify problems, challenges and potential barriers to solving the problem.
Activity

- You want to introduce a new service for the community. Use the SWOT analysis to determine any strengths or weaknesses that could support or hinder the successful introduction of the service.
Step 2- Action Planning

- Called **action** because the organization starts to make plans about an issue or situation
- Focus on resolving the situation or capitalizing on an identified opportunity
- Flip the problem/opportunity into a goal
- Identify what can be done to achieve the goal (Goals provides direction for strategic plan)
- Set objectives (objectives provide specific and measurable outcomes, necessary to meet the goal)
• Goal/s
  • ‘end’ points toward which effort is directed
  • Tell you where you are going or where you want to be
  • Usually broad in nature

• Objective
  • A strategic step along the way to achieving a goal
  • Specific achievement and targets to help achieve your goal
example

- **Goal**: make student orientation more dynamic and enjoyable

- **Objective**: increase student evaluation scores by 30% by end of the next orientation session
In setting objectives consider the SMART formula:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Time-frame
Types of objectives

- Informational objectives: concentrate on message exposure, comprehension or retention
- Attitudinal objectives: create attitudes, reinforce existing attitudes or change existing attitudes
- Behavioral objectives: to create new behaviors, intensify existing behaviors or reverse existing negative behaviors
Audiences

- **Segment audiences** - segment groups within publics based on demographics, geographics and psychographics.
- Create communication based on self interest (consider communication that ties to needs, values and goals of the target publics)
- Choose communication channels - identifying medium through which you can reach target publics
- Opinion leaders can be channels and use multiple points of contact.
Strategies

- **Strategies** to help meet objectives and the ultimate goal.
- Strategies provide means by which objectives are reached.
- Tie the strategy to the objective- activity must be related to the problem, the objective and the target audience of the message. Actions have to be tied to the needs of the issue/opportunity.
Tactics

- Identify communication tactics to execute strategy. Tactics are tools used to transmit the appropriate message to the target audience.
  - News release
  - Events
  - Social media campaigns
  - Newsletters etc
Calendar

- Determine timetable for the campaign
- Timing of the campaign (note when key messages are most meaningful)
- Scheduling of tactics: sequencing of various tactics or activities
- Compiling a calendar: advance planning. (think ahead to make things happen in the right sequence and right time)
  - Create a timeline with all activities and responsible persons for a specific activity
Budget

- No plan is complete without a budget
  - Allows you to establish how much is needed for developing and implementing a PR program

- Budget:
  - staff time - cost for writing
  - Out of pocket expenses - collateral materials such as news release, media kits, video news release

- Always allocate about 10% of the budget for contingencies or unexpected costs
Step Three - Communication Implementation

- Applying tactics to strategies while adhering to time schedules, budget and keeping people informed.
- Monitor every step of the implementation process.
- Monitoring can help change the direction of campaign, re-allocate resources, re-define priorities to achieve objectives.
Step Four- Evaluation

- Systematic assessment of a program and its results
- Evaluation related back to the stated objectives of the program
- Objectives must be measurable to determine whether the campaign accomplished its purpose
- Benchmark survey to measure people’s perception before and after a campaign
- Evaluation offers accountability to self and client
  - Gives you the ability to tell clients and employer what has been accomplished
- Learn what was done wrong or right (can assist improvement of performance)
Five methods of evaluation

- Measurement of production
- Measurement of message exposure
- Measurement of audience awareness
- Measurement of audience attitudes
- Measurement of audience action
Summary of Planning Process

- 1. Audit

- *Where are we now?*

  - Analyze existing data
  - Audit of existing communication
  - Attitudes research, loyalty
  - Media audit
  - Desk research
  - Gather inputs
  - Establish benchmarks
2. Setting objectives

*Where do we want to be?*

- Align PR with strategic objectives
- Breakdown into specific measurable PR objectives
- Pre-testing
3. Strategy & plan

How do we want to get there?

- Decide strategy
- Decide tactics
- Decide type and level of research to measure outputs (media analysis, literature uptake, etc), out-takes (focus groups, surveys, etc) and outcomes (share price, sales, audience attitude research, behavioural change)
4. Ongoing measurement

Are we getting there?

- Media content analysis
- Audience research
- Polls
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Inquiries, sales, etc
5. Results & evaluation

How did we do?

- Evaluate results
- Capture experiences & lessons
- Review strategy
- Feed back into continuous planning process

**Example**

- **Goal:** to become the world’s largest tortilla corn-chip brand

- **Objective**

  Drive consumer engagement in contest via submission and video views on program website in the **next 6 months**

- **Audience**

  16-24 year olds, technology savvy group

- **Strategy:** invite young people to develop Doritos super bowl ads and award the winning consumers a $1 million

- **Tactics:** Promotional activities, Social media,
References


Can you think of a public relations campaign that influenced your behavior, attitude or opinion. What was it about that campaign that influenced you?