

## Chapter 20 Journalism Today

### Journalism and Public Relations

- Both journalists and public relations practitioners research and write stories ultimately for the public
- Public relations practitioners usually have degrees in journalism because they need:
  - Good writing skills
  - The ability to translate complicated information into clear, readable stories
  - An understanding of journalists' definitions of news
- The more newsworthy the story and the closer it is to journalistic style, the more probably it will get into the news lineup.
- Journalists in turn need practitioners for story ideas and as sources.
- The best practitioners:
  - Know their client or organization well
  - Locate information quickly
  - Arrange interviews with experts and top executives when needed

### What Is Public Relations?

- Public Relations - Planned and continuous communication designed to promote and organization and its image, products or services to the public.
- Practitioners:
  - Write news releases
  - Produce video news releases
  - Orchestrate viral campaigns online
  - Research markets
  - Evaluate the success of publicity
- Success depends on quality of writing within material submitted to journalists

### Public Relations Agencies

- PR Agencies - Represent companies or other organizations either throughout the year or for special events.
  - Handle multiple accounts simultaneously.
  - Write and edit a company's print and online communications:
    - News releases
    - Newsletters
    - Brochures
    - Blogs
    - RSS newswires
    - Tweets
    - Webcasts
    - Websites
    - Video
  - International conglomerates usually hire worldwide agencies to handle

their public relations needs in different countries and cultures.

#### Corporate, Nonprofit and Government Public Relations

- Public relations practitioners in corporate, nonprofit or governmental settings have two audiences they communicate with
  - Internal Audience - Work to keep company employees informed about the organization.
    - Officers
    - Employees
  - External Audience - Promote a positive image of the organization by identifying different publics and researching the best way to reach them.
    - Consumers
    - Investors
    - General public
    - Business associates
    - Suppliers
    - Government officials
    - Industry advocates
    - Community activists
    - Opinion leaders
    - Tools and skills:
      - Developing press kits that contain information about the company
      - Setting up speakers' bureaus
      - Staging events
      - Filming news clips
      - Writing public service announcements
      - Holding meetings
      - Designing promotional materials
      - Tweet
      - Blog
      - Search for earned media

#### Becoming a Public Relations Practitioner

- Many major in journalism
- A survey of members of the Public Relations Society of America found that professionals consider a news reporting course more important for public relations majors than any course in public relations.
- Many companies hire former reporters and editors as public relations practitioners because journalists had writing skills that are essential to the job.

#### Working With News Media

- Public relations practitioners use the media to get information about their client to the public.
- Determine which media outlets will best serve their purposes.
- Know the writing styles, deadlines and other procedures of each target medium.

- AP Style
- A press release must be newsworthy and well written.
- "Shotgunning" - Sending a news release to multiple departments in a news organization; ineffective.
- By sending news releases to the right editor, practitioners increase the likelihood the release will be used and decrease the chance of harming their reputations by wasting an editor's time.

#### Elements of a News Release

- Journalists use news releases for several reasons:
  - They are newsworthy
  - They are well written
  - They include important information that the public can use.
  - They are not advertisements
  - They are localized
  - They are timely
- List a contact person and a follow-up
  - Reporters might want to follow up a news release to verify information or answer a question.
- Send the release on time
  - A news release received too close to deadline is less likely to be published or broadcast because editors have little or no time to verify information or get answers to questions.
- Use journalism's "5 W's"
  - Who
  - What
  - Where
  - When
  - Why
- Write well
  - A news release is written so readers with varying education levels can understand it.
  - Language is concise and simple.
  - Grammar and spelling are perfect.
  - Write in the active voice.
- Localize information
  - How does the information affect people in a community?
  - Localizing can mean reflecting a psychological as well as geographical closeness.
- Provide visuals
  - Visuals catch the eye of readers, draw them into the story and illustrate major points.
  - Keep them simple and to the point.
- Provide links

#### Types of News Releases