Readings in MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES



Edited by

Adesina Lukuman Azeez
Lambe Kayode Mustapha
Rasaq Muhammed Adisa
Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi

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Objectives

At the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain what International public relations imply.
2. Differentiate international public relations from domestic public relations.
3. Identify publics of international public relations.
4. Discuss duties and media of international public relations.
5. Understand how to plan international public relations programme.
6. Identify challenges of international public relations.
7. Understand international public relations policy.

Introduction

The 21st century has marked a watershed in the performance of business activities. More than ever, it has created an internationalised environment by which the sustained increase in business operations among nations of the world requires relationships management and engineering of consent, through international public relations activities. It must be acknowledged that by virtue of globalisation, organisational activities are no longer confined to national boundaries. Organisations stretch their activities beyond the frontiers of their home countries. As they become more and more multinational, they face new challenges posed by internationally linked stakeholders. They are challenged by the different conditions common to different countries, reflected in the form of culture, politics, and technology or media systems. Thus, deep understanding of dynamics of international transactions suffices as indispensable tool to international public relations managers to leverage on with a view to satisfying mutual needs and interests of both organisations and the multiple and diverse stakeholders.

Meaning of international public relations

Definitions of international public relations abound. However, for the purpose of clarity this chapter highlights a few of them. One of the commonly acknowledged definitions was offered by Nwosu cited in Okwuchukwu (2014, 966), which sees international public relations as "deliberately planned, systematic and researched activities of an organization or nation which are aimed at maintaining sound, productive and mutual relations with international publics such as customers, agents, government, business and non-business organizations". The point made here is that international public relations activities or programmes which transcend national boundaries are not by accident neither are they haphazardly executed. They are carried out with recourse to thorough research and for the purpose of achieving set objectives not only to the advantage of the organisation but also various groups that constitute the publics of the organisation. This is where "mutuality" is emphasised. In essence, international public relations occur when the geographical scope of a public relations campaign has been expanded to cover more than one national territory. Thus, time of the planning, research and communication that accompany public relations campaign at this level are all targeted at publics across national borders.

A similar self-explanatory definition was offered by Wilcox, Ault, and Agee cited in Ingenhoff and Ruehl (2013, p. 4), which describes international public relations as "the planned and organized effort of a company, institution, or government to establish mutually beneficial relations with publics of other nations". Probably, this informed Ingenhoff and Ruehl to summarily conclude that international public relations is primarily defined as country border-crossing communication activity of companies or any other type of organisation.

The definitions of international public relations seemingly draw inspiration from the traditional definitions of public relations advanced severally by researchers in the field of public relations. These traditional definitions stress the central aim of public relations which is the management of an organisation's relationships with internal and external

stakeholders. For example, the popular 1978 Mexican Statement cited in Ukwueze and Obi (2015, p. 151) construes public relations as "the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action, which will serve both the organization and the public interest". Even though research is not mentioned in this definition, it can be inferred that research and evaluation are paramount in public relations. The public relations executive does trends survey and analysis and, from the results, advises the organisation's leaders and plans programmes that will generate positive public interest (Omenugha, 2002).

In reference to the British Institute of Public Relations, Keghku (2005, p. 5) reiterates that "public relations is a deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding and goodwill between an organisation and its publics". Each of these definitions underscores the following words:

Deliberate: This refers to a conscious effort or activity aimed at achieving set goals. It further implies that public relations activity is not by accident. It is done purposefully and willingly because the management agreed with the activity.

Planned: This means absence of haphazard approach to achieve public relations but has to be systematic. This emphasises that once decision is taken on what to be done, proper planning must follow.

Sustained effort: This implies that once relationship is established with stakeholders and programmes or campaigns are carried out, organisations through public relations managers should work towards maintaining the relationship and impetus to campaigns. This can be achieved through strategic messages about the public relations activity on regular basis. The reason, according to Adegoke (2009) is to keep the publics abreast of developments in the organisation and infuse in the publics, a sense of belonging which in turn reinforces loyalty to the organisation, and engenders interest in the goods and services which an organisation produces and renders respectively.

Organisation: This entails aggregation of resources; human or material in order to achieve planned objectives.

Publics: This refers to all the varied stakeholders an organisation deals with. Public relations manager needs to develop sensitivity about the diverse publics, who are key to an organisation's operations, be they internal or external.

Mutual understanding: This term is a product of the principle of two-way communication. Mutuality refers to an acknowledgement that organisations and publics are inextricably tied together (Okwuchukwu, 2014). Since two parties (organisation and publics) are involved, both of them should be able to know what each other does. Much as it is incumbent upon the public relations manager to understand the hopes and aspirations of the organisation, he should provide knowledge to publics about the activities of the organisation using the media. Essentially, feedback generated from management and publics helps the organisation to adjust its operations and image, while the public is also rest assured that the organisation is responsive to its yearnings (Adegoke, 2009). Thus, the climate of mutual understanding is created between the organisation and its publics by public relations activities.

Relating the foregoing to international public relations Omenugha (2002) consolidates the perspective that when public relations is planned to bring mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics in various countries where the organisation operates, that public relations is said to be international. This includes use of public relations policies and programmes to project a favourable image of an individual, group of individuals, and government or nations in the global community.

Distinction between Domestic Public Relations and International Public relations

The cardinal distinction between domestic public relations and international public relations is on target publics. Whereas domestic public relations targets its activities to publics located within a country, the publics of the international public relations are found beyond national boundaries (Okwuchukwu, 2014). Specifically, the differences that characterise domestic and international public relations can be seen in some of the following ways:

Regulations: In international public relations, multi-nationals face several regulatory areas governing products, language, employees, taxation and so on. These relatively strange regulations injure promotional materials and other public relations programmes if not well managed.

Workforce: Multinationals have multicultural employees, who have diverse outlooks on working conditions. These include work hours, use of time and space, managerial styles and other work-related attitudes. This makes international public relations more strenuous compared to domestic public relations where employees are to a greater extent familiar with these conditions. Maddox (1993) explained this situation that employers no longer deal with one group of employees from the same country, but with employees of many nationalities in many different countries. As a result, even internal communication becomes highly complex, and the implications of this one environmental factor are enormous.

Diverse Publics: Multinationals have complex and dispersed cross-border publics that often mistrust organisations. In domestic public relations, there is absence of cross-border publics such as mobility of labour and minimal pollution whose resolutions require intercultural communication. Profoundly, interest groups, like non-government organisations, form global networks that place pressure on organisations in any country. Lesly (1992) corroborates that the unprecedented manner so many altering forces have been active at the same time has potentials of causing the social fabric to be transformed. These forces pull that fabric in diverse ways and add up to new milieus in which events are determined not by powerful leaders but by the mass of attitudes among groups of people that determine how all institutions and organisations can function.

Management complexity: Inexperienced international management also marks out international public relations. Another difference is noticeable in basic knowledge levels of senior managers with whom public relations functions. Senior managers in domestic organisations have the managerial acumen to effectively manage branches after spending years working into management. Nevertheless, when given the mandate to work at international front, the dexterity fades and dissolves. The obvious reason is that differences in culture constitute a unique problem that they had not anticipated. These managers have been unable to deal with these differences successfully (Maddox 1993). Therefore, managers who might

have been independent before now find themselves needing help in the international arena about sociocultural sensitivities.

Similarities between Domestic Public Relations and International Public relations

In as much as there are some differences between domestic and international public relations, there are areas of shared similarities between the two. These include the following ways. Accordingly, both:

Centrality of the media: Media is the channel public relations managers use strategically to achieve the objective of reaching target publics. Essentially, they use print (newspaper, magazine, outdoor), broadcast (television, radio, cinema), Internet/social media as well as special events including exhibitions, trade fairs and corporate social responsible activities.

Ethical standard: These standards are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Public Relations Associations Code of Athens which seek to guide the conduct of public relations and ultimately enthrone best practices among public relations practitioners.

Reputation-centred: Every organisation or nation has a distinct personality, reputation and integrity it would like to preserve. Reputation shapes perception and acceptability and it is on this note that corporate entities and nations of the world strive to preserve positive reputation earned over time.

Relationship management: Both identify and build relationship with publics. Despite the fact that different organisations deal with different publics, both domestic and international public relations strive to identify and establish cordial relationship with their specific publics. The rationale is to maintain all round atmospheres that satisfy mutual interests.

Anticipate problems: A proactive public relations forecasts what will constitute a clog in the wheels of its success. This is so done in order to forestall the problem or at least mitigate the harmful effects. This is why organisations need to properly evaluate proposed policies and programmes so as to receive the greatest support from its publics. However, some disruptions could be occasioned by unanticipated incidents that diffuse the

proactivity. For example, occurrence of natural phenomena could always take the proactive public relations manager off guard. This is where reactionary measures come in full force to contend the incidence.

Factors Responsible for the Rise and Growth of International Public Relations

Globalisation: Globalisation is a process that leads to greater interdependence and mutual awareness among economic, political, and social units in the world, and among actors in general (Guillén cited in Berggren & Nilsso, 2014). Given that multinationals do not operate in isolation but interdepend across national boundaries and more importantly have affiliates in foreign settings, there has been a need to establish public relations unit that will manage their affairs with a view to creating and sustaining trust and confidence among their global stakeholders.

Growth of big corporate organisations: The industrial revolution resulted in the emergence of big companies. This was marked by massive developments in industry, rail-roads and utilities leading to emergence of monopolies. From that time, small businesses have expanded into multinationals due to large patronage. This healthy development requires the prosperous organisations to engage the services of internal public relations strategies and tactics to sustainably educate their respective numerous publics on their activities.

Disenchantment with big institutions: With the emergence of multinationals was a corresponding concern on their activities resulting to conflict between organisations and members of societies. Private economic institutions, especially large corporations and various groups that felt marginalised emerged from longstanding complaints. Numerous social activists then started challenging the legitimacy of large institutions. The expression of these grievances that consequently brought some changes meant that large institutions would desperately need professional communication help in the guise of public relations managers.

Advancement in telecommunication and transportation system: Growth in the technological innovations and revolution in communication has contributed to the growth of public relations. Building on the 20th century revolution in communication, the advent of Internet and social

media have expanded communication horizon. Revolutions in information and communication technology have completely altered the way and manner people communicate. This culture was bolstered with the emergence of the Internet and World Wide Web which has radically intensified the spread of communication even further. The impact of the web on public relations practice has been remarkable.

Heightened public awareness: This is what Freitag and Stokes (2009) refers to as sophisticated publics. There is a growing awareness among members of society concerning their rights and expectations of corporate organisation. This mindset is imbued by government regulatory interventions in the form of affirmative action which makes it mandatory for business entities to carry out their corporate responsibility activities. To add impetus to this, the wind of democracy across the world emphasises on the need for effective communication with the activities of civil rights groups worldwide like the Human Rights Watch in defence of the hitherto marginalised. According to Freitag and Stokes (2009) as institutions grew and democracy became increasingly entrenched across the world, these two trends drove another – the increasing sophistication of the publics. This call for the increasing importance of persuasion and consensus in the era of globalisation making public relations became an imperative.

Professional bodies: Rise in international and national public relations bodies and professionals is also an important factor. These are regulatory bodies that seek to entrench professionalism in public relations industry. These bodies are on the increase leading to increased involvement of more professional firms in the many and diverse areas of international public relations. In acknowledgement of the rapidity with which public relations bodies proliferate with corresponding rise in professionals' level, Wilcox, Ault, Agee, and Cameron (2000) point out that the growth of international public relations was demonstrated anew with the founding of the Council of Public Relations Networks (CPRN) in 1997 and the Association of PR Firms (APRF) in 1998). Worthy of mention too, are the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, Pubic Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria, The Public Relations Society of America, British Institute of Public Relations, The Public Relations Society of India, Pan-Pacific Public Relations Federation, Centre for European Public Relations, and The

Inter-American Public Relations Federation. With the formation of these bodies, practitioners become more aware of the cardinal role of information management in organisation performance. Thus, professionalism is enhanced thereby serving as attraction factor for willing organisation to leverage on services rendered by public relations professionals.

Publics of International Public Relations

Publics in public relations is a broad concept. In the context of this chapter, it can be defined as the different groups of people an organisation involved in cross-border business has to communicate with on regular basis. That is to say, the publics of international public relations are group of people, institutions and organisations who have something in common, that is of interest to the organisation or international public relations manager. As Arceo (2005) explains, publics are also known as people that are affected by the operations or activities of an organisation. These groups could be internal or external to the organisation. Thus, they must be considered relevant to the organisation's operations and existence. Sidelining them could, therefore, lead to collapse of the company or institution (Akande, 2002). The publics of international public relations include the followings, among others:

Governments of sovereign nations: Sovereignty confers on countries the status of autonomy that makes them distinct from other countries marked by their geographical divide. By this arrangement, multinational corporations establish their operational base and the sovereign government qualifies as a public of such multinational because of the regulatory capacity of the government wherever such a firm operates.

Legislative houses of sovereign nations: Legislatures are law-making bodies of governments. Multinationals are in business and require some forms of regulations usually handed down through legislations. Legislative houses, therefore, serve as providers of law used in ensuring that multinational corporations operate legally and ethically. This makes legislative houses become undisputable publics which organisations lobby to have favourable legislation and policies.

Judiciaries of sovereign nations: By virtue of their existence, judiciary deals with law adjudication and interpretation. As custodian of the rules, regulations and most importantly, the constitution of sovereign nations, multinationals also need to approach them for litigation, adjudication and interpretation of operational laws. Thus, identifying judiciary as a vital public of international public relations is not an anomaly.

Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and International non-governmental organisations (INGOs): Members of multinational organisations are nationals of states. They can be (inter) regional, such as the European Union (EU), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or global such as the United Nations (UN), World Trade Organisation (WTO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and World Health Organisation (WHO). These organisations make collective decisions to manage particular problems of the global nature. These organisations represent every aspect of live including politics, social and economy the world over. Organisations like Oxfam, Red Cross, Greenpeace, and Amnesty International with large membership appear to arrogate to themselves the position of world conscience. It is not surprising they are known for campaigning against excessive profit that exploits citizens. This is why they invariably constitute vital publics for public relations managers to reckon with.

Stockholders and investors: These are people who have invested in businesses of international statuses commonly known as multinational corporations. As investors, they become owners of the organisations. They provide the required funds for the smooth running of multinationals. Therefore, they constitute a primary public that cannot be ignored.

Community members: Multinational corporations do not operate in a vacuum. They operate based on the principle that no man or entity is an island unto himself or itself. Every person or corporate organisation has one kind of affinity with the members of the community where s/he or it operates (Adegoke, 2009). Thus, each multinational has an operational base. This base is known as host community. It is necessary for

multinationals to cooperate with their host communities so as to have peaceful and mutually beneficial stay at such communities.

Financial institutions: Finance is vital in operations of multinationals. As financially viable and stable a multinational may claim to be, its survival depends on financial institutions that serve as sources for funds. Therefore, the relationship that exists between international financial organisations like the World Bank, the Paris Club and development banks is a testimony that multinationals rely on these financial institutions either to expand their financial base or overcome economic depression. Besides, these financial institutions regulate business conduct through instrumentality of rules and regulations in global business. This is why financial institutions are regarded as key publics of multinational corporations.

Mass media: This is the whole gamut of structure including equipment and media professionals through which activities of multinationals are transmitted. They serve as platform for multinationals to make known of their policies, programmes and activities. Examples include Channels, TVC News, Al Jazeera, CNN, Thisday, The Nation, Daily Trust. Stretching the media environment is the advent of social media with different platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Media organisations and professionals facilitate visibility of multinationals, be they local or international. They enable multinationals to engage and carry along all stakeholders for sustenance. This is necessary considering the competitive business environment multinationals find themselves in today. This probably informed Newsom et al. to advise that every public relations practitioner should establish a positive relationship with the media, which elicits extra consideration when the institution he or she represents may be under attack (cited in Sriramesh & Verčič, 2002).

Suppliers: It is obvious that each multinational has suppliers of various input and services. These suppliers may be middlemen in the chain of production which could engage in movement of raw materials or finished products to and from desired destinations. Given that most multinationals

prefer not to deal with consumers directly, they make use of major distributors, who serve as representatives in the areas of operations for the sake of convenience. Any attempt to ignore them will be serious business miscalculations. That is why multinationals include them into their publics network.

Customers and consumers: Production remains incomplete unless finished goods reach the final consumer. Customers may not necessarily be end users of products or services but play significant role in buying decisions. Without customers and consumers, there is no guarantee for production and ultimately, survival of the firm. These customers and consumers are demographically and psychographically diverse in nature with different demands on the company. Their satisfaction should be a priority to any multinational.

Means and strategies of International Public Relations

Mass media: This include international radio, television, newspaper, magazine and Internet. These have grown significantly with improved communication that enhances production and delivery of news to their respective destinations. Examples are Cable News Network, Al Jazeera, Channels, TVC News, the Punch, Guardian, Nigerian Tribune, Thisday and Daily Trust just to mention a few. These media have overseas circulation in cities like Beijing, New York, London, Moscow and Tokyo. They serve as avenue in the international public relations to place messages which could be advertising or other publicity materials. The strength of these media is that the international community looks at them as non-government owned and so ascribe to them more credibility as compared to government owned ones. There is, however, a danger for some of these media seem to have come from a background of a restricted information access. Therefore, it is of international opinion that they do not contain the whole truth. The advent of social media characterised with untrammeled access and ease of use extend the media space for international public relations to reach out to stakeholders.

Effective media relations: international public relations professionals use services of the media to facilitate the flow of information. Open door policy should, therefore, be the hallmark of international public relations managers. This avails them the opportunity to attract pressmen at all foreign embassies to come and seek clarifications on issues concerning their operations. Similarly, appropriate use of overseas correspondence enables them stick to datelines. The cordiality has to be extended also to overseas news agencies such as Reuters and Agence France Presse.

External house journals: This refers to publications originated from the organisation but are meant to be read externally. House journals have credibility of bringing feature stories world-wide and circulated internationally to acquaint their audience with the information about general opinion of such organisations. International public relations can use international public relations consultancies that are outside the organisation in which they work. These consultancies work on the various publics the organisation deals with most of the times.

Exhibition/trade fair: International exhibitions and trade fairs are deliberately conceived and designed to attract an international audience. They present the opportunity to offer the benefits of goods and services to the people globally. This is particularly true of major exhibitions for capital goods and business-to-business facilities generally. International trade fairs like Lagos and Kaduna International Trade Fairs organised yearly is one unique International Public Relations strategy to launder the image of Nigeria abroad especially in the aspects of technological breakthroughs. During fairs, there is interaction with foreign participants to sort out the way of enhancing the technological and societal development of both nations as well as corporate organisations.

Seminar: Seminar provides platform for participants to brainstorm and share knowledge. During the Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida administration, a seminar was organised under the auspices of the Nigerian Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO). The theme of the seminar was "Perspectives in Nigeria's Cultural Diplomacy". This seminar drew participants from the academia, private/public sectors of the

economy, embassies/high commissions and international organisations. The platform provided opportunity for then Minister of Information and Culture, Prof. Jerry Gana to appeal to diplomats in Nigeria to strive to acquire better knowledge and understanding of Nigeria's diverse cultures and other misconceptions on such values as honesty, integrity and justice.

Sponsorship: This includes sporting activities, educational and literary works. Sponsorship enhances the corporate image of the organisation or a sovereign nation. At different instances different tournaments are being won and this projects the positive image of such organisations and nation. In Nigeria, for example, the excellent performance of the Dream Team in Atlanta 1996 Olympic Games shot up Nigeria's image in the global media. This is why during such fiesta, multinationals like Total, AGIP, MTN, Milo prominently feature in the media. In the case of literary works, there are celebrated personalities like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche whose works depict to the word that the country has dependable persons with integrity.

Corporate social responsibility programmes: This is a mark of effective community relations. Multinationals participate in community development like roads construction, provision of social and educational facilities with a view to seeking acceptance on such occasions from those who are overly hostile to their operations. Through corporate social responsibility programmes and community relations, multinationals identify with hopes and aspirations of the host community or nation. This helps to correct the misconceptions, answer criticisms and repel attacks by publics, who are uninformed or misinformed about the organisation or country.

Duties and Responsibilities of International Public Relations Manager

International public relations play certain roles to satisfy organisations and accommodate others' expectations. The person who orchestrates this on behalf of organisations is the public relations practitioner. The roles of public relations were firstly introduced by Broom and Smith in 1979 which Cutlip and associates developed in 1994 into four major roles such

as Expert Prescriber, Communication Facilitator, Problem Solving Facilitator and Communication technician (Pritchard et al cited in Putra, 2015). As an Expert Prescriber, practitioners are regarded as experts on public relations and consequently they are seen as best qualified to handle public relations problems and identify solutions to them. As Communication facilitator, practitioners are cast as sensitive listeners and information brokers who act in a 'go between' role, facilitating communications. A Problem-solving facilitator collaborates with other managers to help define and solve organisational communication problems. Communication technician is where practitioners merely provide technical communications services such as writing releases and features for the media, preparing and editing newsletters and handling contacts with the media.

The practitioner is thus involved in management function in an organisation and is not divorced from execution of campaigns in a variety of settings. Variation in settings pre-supposes that duties and responsibilities of international public relations manager will reflect the setting, much as the principles to deploy may be the same. Some of the duties they discharge include but not limited to the followings:

Research: This is also known as environment scanning. International public relations manager carries out research pertaining to all aspects that affect the operation of business. They monitor the economic trends relating to growth, inflation, competitors, labour institutions, power supply, network of transport and telecommunication system, and finance opportunities. The aim is to acquaint themselves with prospects of establishing a viable business venture.

Forecasting trends: Business landscape is dynamic. Changes that may affect business activities could be sudden or gradual. Such changes could manifest politically, technologically, or culturally. Fobanjong (2004) contends that the obvious "golden rule" in the dynamics of business climate and international public relations is the awareness of and ability to adapt to change. Being alert will place the international public relations manager on guard to anticipate, especially changes that are gradual. This

often helps cushion the shock for those likely to be affected especially if it is achieved by constructive response and communication (Omenugha, 2002).

Stakeholders' relationship: Public relations essentially deals with building cordial relationship with stakeholders of the organisation commonly referred to as publics. These publics could be internal or external. Once relationship is established, conventional wisdom demands that it should be maintained to optimize achievement of mutual interest that serves as bond between the organisation and its numerous publics.

Implementing policies and programmes: Once decisions are taken on programmes and campaigns to be undertaken, the onus of seeing to it that they are logically executed falls on the international public relations manager. They may engage the services of other professionals in areas that they might lack the skills. For example, in producing a documentary or house journal, internal or external, they may not be proficient in photography or video recording. Therefore, relying on specialists will not be out of place.

Familiarisation with other cultures: It is the duty of the public relations managers to acquaint themselves with values, norms, and traditions that constitute culture of foreign countries of interest. This is premised on the fact that cultures across nations of the world are not homogenous. The implication is that what could be accepted in some countries may be considered a taboo in other countries. Lack of understanding about others' culture may lead some business practices to impinge on host culture thereby resulting to dissent and hostility. This is why programmes have to take recourse to cultural values of a country and that can only be achieved through an understanding of such cultures.

Writing and speaking: The international public relations manager is responsible for writing of feature articles, rebuttals, speeches, press releases, among others texts in the mass media or social media platforms. These are complemented with video clips and documentaries. Sometimes, circumstances may warrant the international public relations manager to

speak or prepare platform for the right person to speak. The rationale is to clear some sort of ambiguity and misconceptions about the operations, activities as well as corporate identity and image of the organisation. This is profound given that attacks could come from different fronts initiated by both competitors and deliberate falsehood from saboteurs to discredit the organisation.

Planning International Public Relations Campaigns

A campaign in general has been defined as an organised activity or operation designed to attain a political, social or commercial goal (Bobbit & Sullivan, 2014). A public relations campaign or programme can, therefore, be defined as a concerted effort of an organisation to build socially responsible relationships by achieving research-based goals through the application of communication strategies and the measurement of outcomes. For the purpose of this paper, we adopt the following Six-Point Public Relations Planning Model devised by Jefkins (1994) namely:

a. Situation analysis.
b. Defining objectives.
c. Defining publics.
d. Media selection.
e. The budget.
f. Implementation and control.

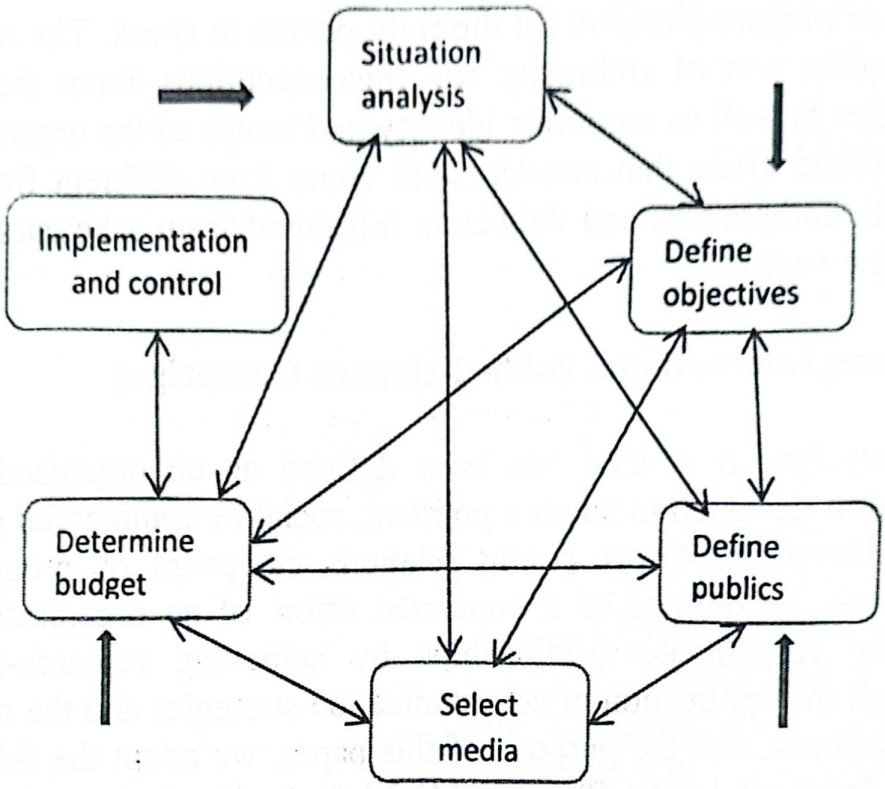


Figure 1: The interrelated PR planning process.
Source: Jefkins (1994)

The model shows a logical sequence beginning with situation analysis. This does not foreclose the fact that some aspects may not take place simultaneously as discussion on them reveals.

Situation analysis: This is also referred to as communications audit. The thrust of this initial stage is to define the current image which is the aggregate perception that the external publics have on the organisation and its products or services. Baines, Egan and Jefkins (2004) suggest that unless people determine where they are before they would be able to plan a successful public relations programme for the future. For example, it may be found that the organisation has attracted unjustified negative criticism, perhaps hostility, prejudice, apathy and ignorance. The need will arise to convert the negative perception to peace, acceptance, interest and knowledge. In other words, the current image could be about the organisation's current situation in the market, how it is perceived by customers or staff or how it is faring financially or it is being portrayed in the media. As a matter of necessity, research carried out should clearly

define the current situation with regard to the campaign. From this you can carry out a SWOT analysis to examine Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the current situation, and a PEST analysis to examine the external environment Politically, Economically, Socially and Technologically.

Defining objectives: Public relations objectives are meant to support the organisation's marketing objectives, which in turn should support the overall company and/or corporate objectives of the organisation. Once the organisation is able to identify the problem(s) it is facing, the next thing is to define the objectives of the campaign. The objectives are the projected or anticipated result of the PR activity. Each objective must be SMART: "S" stands for Specific which implies clarity and comprehensibility; "M" signifies Measurable which seeks to know if each objective can be measured in the evaluation; "A" stands for Achievable which means that in view of other factors (e.g. budget and timescale) what are prospects of achieving them? 'R" refers to Realistic which seeks to address the question: Are you being realistic given the resources you have? And "T" means Time which deals with when the campaign is scheduled to be achieved. In practical terms, public relations departments arrive at potential objectives through discussion with the directors or managers in charge of the departments, divisions or subsidiary companies (Baines, Egan & Jefkins, 2004). There is no rule of thumb when to formulate objectives in relation to conducting actual research. Depending on the situation, sometimes the objectives could precede research.

Identifying publics: Multinationals deal with various publics and they are duty-bound to identify each public relevant to the campaign. This is crucial to ensure the right message is communicated to the right target and efficiently too. Definition of publics is based on demographics (age, gender, education, work status), psychographics (taste and preference), geographic (location) and behaviouristic (current association with organisation). Different categories of publics are: Latent publics: groups that are confronted with a problem but are unable to recognise that the problem exists e.g., pupils; Aware publics: groups that are conscious of an existing problem but do not make attempt to surmount it e.g., teachers,

media, parents, and active publics: groups that are not only aware of an existing problem but also take practical steps to overcome the problem e.g., drug organisations and government.

Media selection: This refers to the choice of media outlet to use. Organisations have at their disposal a number of media outlets through which they send messages. Complementing the traditional media are the social media. Media selection determines the type of message to use. A message is a product that gives meaning to any media as it forms the main thrust of the communication. These messages to be presented in the selected media need to be clear, concise and easily understood. The importance of messages is appreciated for two reasons. First of all, they are essential in forming and shaping attitude and second, they show the extent to which communication is effective. No matter the appropriateness of messages, poorly selected media can render them ineffective. Therefore, as Baines et al. (2004) observe, in an industrialised country, with a wealth of newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations as well as social media, the media may be ready-made. In developing countries, however, such media may not only be inadequate, as they are incapable of reaching the poor and uneducated rural populace, who are in the majority but only focus on the urban, educated, literate, rich and elitist minority of the population (Baines et al., 2004). But in every kind of society, it may be necessary to create special media to reach certain publics and public relations practitioners need to factor this concern into their campaigns.

Budget: Budget is the financial projection of how much is to be expended and on what normally in a financial year. Budget is necessary in carrying out a campaign because it enables the planner to know what they will be capable of doing as well as determine media type to use. It also allows the planner to allocate money to the specific areas of the campaign so as to avoid waste of scarce resources. Monies are normally spent on operating costs which include distribution, administration, travel, production, seminars. Other areas include human (overheads, expenses, and salaries), equipment, telephones, furniture, and computers. Without budget all the planning efforts will be in vain.

Implementation and control or evaluation: This entails execution of international public relations programme. Any strategic programme that is properly managed does not terminate at execution stage. As Hunt and Grunig (1984) counsel, a programme that is managed strategically should transcend the point when the technicians have executed the programme. This suggests measuring of success of the campaign to determine if positive change has occurred. The evaluation or soul searching is a continuous process particularly in a long-term international public relations campaign. Therefore, it is critical to constantly review all specific elements. But evaluation is not restricted to post-campaign period. It can be conducted during the pre-campaign period to modify what is unlikely to work effectively. Similarly, during the campaign period, evaluation is necessary so as to refocus elements of the campaign that are not working as effectively as thought in the planning stages. The post-mortem evaluation is done based on qualitative or quantitative results. Qualitative results are not measured statistically but by experience and self-evident qualities like workers being more efficient and are fewer complaints. Quantitative results might show, for example, a percentage increase in awareness, large number of job applicants, and percentage increase in sales. All this is achieved through observation and research.

Challenges or Problems of International Public Relations

The meteoric growth in the practice of international public relations suggests that such growth will continue at a phenomenal pace. This growth is not without numerous constraints public relations practitioners and firms at the international level need to deal with. Identifying them will make it possible to explore ways of surmounting them. Few of these challenges will suffice.

A major problem that international public relations encounters is that of language, especially where it is alien to the practitioner. In spite of the fact that English language is commonly used as official language in many countries, not everyone speaks it. The implication is that messages will likely have to be translated into different tongues or else rendered graphically, which severely limits its contents. Translators do not always

yield fine meaning of message nuances. This demands the practitioner to get a reliable specialist in the language concerned to check and ascertain the true meaning of language used by the reader or listener. Taylor (2001) attests to this that slogan of corporate entities, marketing and advertising themes, and the translation of original materials require meticulous scrutiny and confirmation for international publics.

Related to language is a cultural differences which also constitute significant obstacles to international public relations. Language is an integral aspect of culture and has to be learned. Lustig and Koester explain that culture is a learned set of shared perceptions about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviours of a relatively large group of people (cited in Jiang, 2014). Culture varies from one society to another. As Sriramesh and White cited in Taylor (2001) suggest, international public relations will have to reflect the cultural and societal norms of the host nation. This will create unique public relations situations in every society with marked distinctions in different contexts. For example, due to differences in attitudes, beliefs and language, even a simple message may have very different meanings when transmitted to various cultures. Companies can often find themselves in huge trouble for unintentionally violating a cultural norm. A famous example, according to Wolfe (2017), is that McDonald's, attempting to break into the Middle Eastern market, placed the Saudi Arabian flag on one of its fast-food wrappers. McDonald's did not know that the flag contained a verse from the Koran, and in the Islamic religion throwing away printed words from the Koran is considered sacrilegious. This foible in international PR cost the company millions of dollars as it rushed to replace the wrappers.

Lack of trust is another challenge to international public relations business as a result of the activities of unscrupulous individuals, who have succeeded in duping their business partners. Sometimes, suppliers resort to falsification of documents or deliberate cheating in the guise of Advanced Fee Fraud commonly referred to as 419. Supply of sub-standard goods also constitutes a problem to international public relations business. There have been complaints regarding the supply of inferior goods, materials, and equipment ordered by individuals and companies. Attempts

to make replacement normally fail leading sometimes to prolonged litigations.

Another problem is dearth of finance. Financing business internationally requires huge capital outlay to meet such requirements like infrastructure, building machinery, wages and salaries. There may be insufficient finance sometimes occasioned by lack of knowledge of the sources and methods of international financing, legal and tax requirements as well as foreign exchange regulations and procedures. This infringes on prospects of expanding the business parameters of international public relations business.

Poor transport and telecommunication system also constitute a problem to multinationals. This is profound where they have affiliates in developing countries characterised by unworthy roads and weak broad band that leads to poor network service delivery. These problems are compounded by epileptic power supply thereby compelling organisations to resort to private alternate power supply.

The challenge that political instability poses to international public relations business cannot be ignored. One of the pull-factors for international public relations business is the level of political stability. Similarly, the survival of such business is a product of how stable is the political climate in a particular country. Unfortunately, the volatility witnessed in world countries does not augur well for businesses to thrive. This is why even where presence of multinationals is felt and political climate tends to be hostile, businesses relocate to climes where political landscape is promising, though at some cost.

International Public Relations Policy

International public relations policy means the course of actions or guiding principles meant to regulate the conduct of multinationals. Broadly, policies are considered expedient or advantageous not only to multinationals but also to the larger society including governments, political parties, or individuals. This probably informs Sloman's (1994)

observation that a policy influences the behaviour of a manager or managed objects. This is to avoid the unfair treatment of people. Policy differs from laws in the sense that while policy simply guides actions towards those that are most likely to achieve a desirable outcome, laws have compelling power to prohibit behaviour or action.

International public relations policy typically evolved to forestall some untoward effect that have been noticed in actions and inactions of corporate organisations, or to seek some positive benefits that can be mutually enjoyed by both corporate organisations that transact business across borders and their publics. This underscores what Lattimore et al. (2009) suggest that international public relations units must, therefore, plan their routine operations to avoid conflict with policy that guide their operations. This way, they would be striving to alleviate criticisms, enhance their corporate image and ultimately improve sales. To achieve this, Lloyd (1980) suggests that international public relations should adopt the following ways that typify international public relations policy:

i. Goods exported or imported are of the right specifications. This means no inferior materials or out-mode goods are supplied. In addition, organisations should ensure that promises and obligations are met at the right time and in the right manner.
ii. Identify the interest of the company with those of the host country in every possible way.
iii. Conform to local business practices except where efficiency clearly demands a change and then only after consultation with local authorities would organisations deviate.
iv. Decentralise authority to the local managers as much as possible through a programme for progressively nationalising the personnel of foreign affiliates.
v. There should be regular flow of information regarding all equipment ordered or supplied, and that after-sales services and technical advice are constantly available.
vi. Goods and services produced in the home country are advertised in selected media of the country to which the trading partners belong.

vii. The organisation should participate actively in all state and national programmes calculated to promote international peace and cooperation.
viii. There should be exchanges of visit from time-to-time and a regular training programme for dealers, distributors, salespersons and customers.
ix. Involve in trade and tourism benefit from international trading activities, and that the international associates are made aware of these fields of interests with emphasis on centres of culture, places of beauty and holiday resorts.
x. There should be mutual participation in trade exhibitions and conferences.

Conclusion

With globalisation, which heightens the level of interdependence of world economies, multinationals will continue to flourish thereby living their imprint in foreign countries. This equally demands for a corresponding rise in the use of international public relations practitioners. A fundamental issue is to keep track with the ever changing socio-cultural, political, and technological environments in the competitive global economic arena for a successful business. And this is why beyond simply understanding how business works, upholding ethical practices with a view to living up to business obligations is germane.

Learning Outcomes

In this chapter, you would have learnt:

1. What International public relations imply.
2. The difference between international public relations and domestic public relations.
3. Publics of international public relations.
4. Duties and media of international public relations.
5. How to plan international public relations programme.
6. The challenges of international public relations.
7. International public relations policy.

Discussion Questions

1. Differentiate international public relations from domestic public relations.
2. State and explain the publics of international public relations.
3. What would you consider to be media of international public relations?
4. Explain international public relations planning process in the context of Frank Jefkin's model.
5. Give and discuss factors that militate against effectiveness of international public relations.

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