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# PUBLIC RELATIONS REVIEW

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and Comment*



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# Public Relations Review

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## Introduction

The Public Relations literature, a fraction of which is captured for this 1997 edition of the Public Relations Bibliography, is richer than ever. A review of general circulation periodicals and selected trade and professional journals provides ample evidence that public relations is discussed, analyzed, dissected and put together again by most, if not all, the professions and trades. It is a major and integral part of almost every professional practice and vocation.

A total of 36 different classifications of topics are in this latest edition of the Public Relations Bibliography, encompassing a broad range of practices, principles, publics, and issues that make up an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding and the practice of public relations. Titles and descriptions have been culled from nearly 200 periodicals and publishers' flyers.

The primary public relations tool continues to be communication, beginning with the written word, but spreading to all of its many forms of presentation and delivery systems. But communication is only the tool. The goal is to be read, heard, believed, understood, and to effect attitude and behavioral change. This relies on the clarity of the message and credibility of the source. Thus, the beginning of all public relations literature are Business Credibility and Ethics.

Communication technology has impacted on the theory and practice of public relations more than on any other profession and practice. It has created more communication modes and greater speed of delivery of public relations messages, and has earned an important place in the public relations literature. This literature is classified under Communication Graphics and Technology.

The Bibliography next turns its attention to the variety of organizations which public relations represents, and the publics it serves. This public relations literature is designed to enrich the professional's understanding of organizations and organizational or group behavior; and the publics defined by their demographics, values, and lifestyles. A large part of the Bibliography serves those purposes.

We all receive our messages from different channels and in a variety of forms, and the Public Relations Bibliography contains titles under all these modes and channels of communication.

Since effecting attitude and behavioral change is a gradual process, public relations also is concerned with forecasts and trends, issues management, and research methods. Freedom of expression is guaranteed, but it has limits imposed by court decisions and legislation, and the court of public opinion. This opens up public relations literature to research, law, government relations, public affairs, and lobbying, public opinion and persuasion.

Increasing global competition has turned the attention of public relations practitioners to cultural differences and how to overcome them. This literature is found under Public Relations Profession and International Relations.

Several other trend indicators surfaced in this latest annual update of a sampling of Public Relations-related literature:

1. Heavy emphasis in the literature is on open communication with employees, opening wider the doors to upward communication, and even to the company's financial records. The new management buzzword is empowerment, and this literature is found in two sections: Management and Employee Relations.

2. Much of the literature examines the public relations role in serving the public interest by helping to develop environmentally friendly company policies, products and services; cause marketing, community relations and professional practice. These titles are to be found in Business Responsibility and in Public Relations: Profession sections.

3. Much emphasis also is given to public relations methods of reducing the ill-effects on employees and the company reputation resulting from downsizing and re-engineering, also to be found under Employee Relations, Issues and Crisis Managements.

As in past years, we were guided by a 1988-published study of the Body of Public Relations Knowledge financed by the Foundation, now Institute, for Public Relations Research and Education. This study tested the hypothesis of Dr. Edward Bernays, who insisted to his death that Public Relations is an applied behavioral science. The hypothesis was found to be true.

The value of this published edition of the Public Relations Bibliography is in screening mountainous amounts of literature, much of it repetitive. Search of data bases produces thousands of titles and abstracts in 1996 alone. However, the editor of the bibliography found primarily a manual search more manageable. This enabled the editor to screen the periodicals that are more readily accessible to practitioners in their offices, public and university libraries

This published edition is a supplement, rather than substitute, for referring to data bases for up-to-the-minute information in all relevant areas of Public Relations practice.

In addition to the richness of its literature, the public relations literature also has a history, beginning with the first publication of a comprehensive bibliography by Dean Scott W. Cutlip in 1957. Since then public relations bibliographies have

been published regularly, annually since 1976 by the Public Relations Review, with only a few omissions.

## HOW TO USE THIS BIBLIOGRAPHY

Decisions to choose titles for this bibliography were culled from titles in nearly 200 periodicals, chosen for their reference to the practice and profession of public relations, broadly defined as based in the liberal arts of persuasion, management function with a marketing objective and communication as principal tool. Book titles were taken from flyers and brochures from 30 major publishing houses and university presses.

The recommended way to use this bibliography is as a guide to topics to search in data bases, and to continue manual searches in later issues of periodicals named on the last page of the bibliography. Titles conclude with the last issue of periodicals for 1996.

Scanning the titles and abstracts of the articles and books in this bibliography will give readers a dramatic view of the broad depth and expanse of the profession of public relations; the knowledge and skills effective practice require; and the variety of periodicals that report on public relations-related issues and topics.

To obtain more in-depth abstracts and complete articles, users should refer to the data bases. If not there, they can refer to the nearest university or public libraries. Libraries subscribe to an inter-library loan service for periodicals and articles they do not carry.

Practitioners also should not hesitate to ask public relations educators for help in their searches. Most educators feel this is their contribution to the advancement of the profession. Educators also have public relations students to enlist in searches. Several articles under Education suggest that student interns are assigned to research as one of their learning experiences.

Ulrich's International Directory of Periodicals has the most complete list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of periodicals cited in this bibliography. Readers Guide to Periodical Literature also contains names and addresses of the periodicals listed here, and publishes quarterly updates of titles of articles under classifications similar to those of this bibliography. Public Relations Society of America has greatly expanded its readers service to members, and will mail or fax reprints of articles from its reference library.

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