

An Assortment of Public Relations Definitions

reflecting various theories, philosophies, and phases of public relations practice

Public relations is the engineering of public consent.

Edward Bernays,
***Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923)**

Public relations is the gentle art of letting the other fellow have your way.

Nielander & Miller,
***Public Relations* (1951)**

Public relations is planned, persuasive communications designed to influence significant publics.

John Marston,
***The Nature of Public Relations* (1963)**

Public relations is the activities and attitudes intended to analyze, adjust to, influence, and direct the opinion of any group or groups of persons in the interest of any individual, group, or institution.

Richard Weiner,
***Dictionary of Media and Communications* (1990)**

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics.

Dr. Rex Harlow
Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education

Philosophically, public relations is all of the activities by which an individual or an organization seeks recognition; presents its interests and perspectives to various audiences; and establishes its integrity and credibility.

David Finn
co-founder and CEO of Ruder Finn Public Relations (1995)

Public relations exists to help an organization achieve its goals by ensuring that the right public thinks the right thing.

Simon Moore,
***An Invitation to Public Relations* (1996)**

Public relations is the art of getting believed.

Ivy Ledbetter Lee (1914)

Public relations is the effort to produce goodwill in the company's various publics so that these publics do not interfere in the firms profit-making ability.

Raymond Simon,
***Public Relations: Concepts and Practices* (2nd ed., 1980)**

Public relations is the deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.

British Institute of Public Relations

Public relations is the management function through which management responds to and attempts to influence an organization's environment.

Baskin & Aronoff,
***Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice* (2nd ed., 1988)**

Public relations specialists make flower arrangements of the facts, placing them so the wilted and less attractive petals are hidden by sturdy blooms.

Alan Harrington,
***Forbes* (Aug. 1992)**

P.R. is gift-wrapping. Whether delivered in plain or fancy paper, truth is truth, and the public ultimately comprehends it. The trick is packaging truth on your own terms.

*Michael Levine,
Guerrilla P.R. (1994)*

Public relations is the managed communication behavior of an organization.

*Grunig & Hunt,
Managing Public Relations (1984)*

Public relations is presenting a client in the best light so that the client will benefit financially and with positive recognition.

*Dick Delson
Los Angeles public relations practitioner (1991)*

Public relations is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends.

*Cutlip, Center, and Broom,
Effective Public Relations (7th ed., 1994)*

Public relations is organizational programs that promote the exchange of influence and understanding among organizations' constituent parts and publics.

*Baskin & Aronoff,
Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice (3rd ed., 1992)*

Public relations is communicating what you believe in to important audiences, at the right time, to achieve a goal.

Frank Walton, vice president of Ruder Finn Public Relations (1995)

Public relations is linking the general public to social and political issues of interest.

*Lyle Gregory
Hollywood booking agent and social activist (1991)*

Public relations practice is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders, and implementing planned programs of action which serve both the organization's and the public's interest.

World Assembly of Public Relations (Mexico City; 1978)

Public relations is the skilled communication of ideas to various publics with the object of producing desired results.

*Harlan & Scott,
Contemporary Public Relations (1955)*

Public relations is the business of creating and changing attitudes.

*Harold Burson
chairman and CEO of Burson Marsteller*

Public relations is the management function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.

*Denny Griswold,
publisher of Public Relations News*

Public relations has become a communications medium in its own right, an industry designed to alter perception, reshape reality and manufacture consent.

*Mark Dowie,
former editor/publisher of Mother Jones magazine*

A public relations professional is a bridge builder, ... building long-term relationships between a company or an organization and its publics based on two-way communication.

*Peter Jeff
Grand Rapids, Michigan public relations practitioner*