UNIT 11 : WRITING FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

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11.0 INTRODUCTION

Communication plays an essential role in effective public relations. To say that communication is the nervous system of an organisation, will not been an exaggeration. Public relations facilitates the flow of communication in its desired form between the organisation and all its stakeholders.

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The stakeholders for any organisation can be broadly divided into two, viz., the internal stakeholders and the external stakeholders. To achieve the organisational goals, the PR practitioners need to work on the trinity: namely, audience, message, and medium for effective communication. To quote the Public Relations Association of America (PRSA), "Public Relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics."

11.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the importance of communication in PR
- Gain the skill of writing for internal publics
- Formulate the writings for external publics
- Know the nuances of writing for media

11.2 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

As explained in the Introduction of this Unit, two-way communication is essential for public relationsand written communication is especially significant.

The type of communication and the selection of the tool depends on the stakeholders whom it is intended to address.

11.2.1 Identifying the Stakeholders

The stakeholders or the target audience can be defined as those critical groups of people upon whom rests the success of an organisation. It is important for the PR practitioner to find where the various stakeholders are located, what their expectations are from the organisation, and why the organisation is dependent upon them. Every organisation deals with a variety of stakeholders that can be broadly divided into two, namely internal and external stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders broadly comprise of employees, shareholders, and families of employees.

External stakeholders encompass policy makers, opinion leaders, competitors, professional bodies, special interest groups, media, customers (industrial, wholesalers, dealers, consumers), potential employees and the public at large.

An organisation has certain communication obligations towards its stakeholders which need to be articulated by the PR practitioner. The public relations function serves as a link between the management and its different stakeholders. It must ensure responsibility and responsiveness in policy and information to the best interests of the organisation and its stakeholders, and in this process, communication gains great significance.

11.2.2 Identifying Communication Channels

In order to reach out to a disparate set of audiences, the public relations practitioner needs to identify the most suitable media vehicles they can access.

Some of the media for internal and external target audiences (TA) include the following:

Media for internal Target Audiences (TA)

The media for addressing the internal audiences broadly includes, interpersonal communication, brainstorming, house journals, video, idea boxes, Intranet, social gatherings, etc.

Media for external Target Audiences

The media used to reach out to the external audiences, encompasses mass media, conferences, exhibitions, meets, Internet and the selective media, etc.

Check Your Progress: 1

Note: 1) Use the space below for you answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. List the various stakeholders in Public Relations.

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2. Discuss the various communication channels for different target audiences in Public Relations.

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11.3 COMMUNICATION WITH INTERNAL PUBLICS

As we have discussed, internal stakeholders broadly comprise employees, shareholders, and families of employees.

11.3.1 Segmenting Internal Publics

As in case of the external publics, internal stakeholders are also diverse; so the public relations practitioner needs to understand the complexities before deciding on the content and channels for transmitting the messages to them.

Audiences are often segmented on the basis of their demographic profiles and psychographics.

An organisation that looks like a composite unit from outside is but a bundle of complexities from within. When looked at carefully, people who work in an organisation are divided by gender, age, educational qualification, hierarchy, location, salaries, and attitudes. At a social level, they tend to be divided by caste, religion and color. Public relations has to win over all these divisions and diversities, which other departments may or may not be

suited to do. Sitting with HR (Human Resource) desk would give data about the entire workforce immediately.

Lyn Smith opines that while working on communication strategies, it would a good idea to remember the following:

- Front-line staff prefers to hear the news straight from line managers.
- Creative and specialists are generally sensitive people, so should be handled sensitively.

Media needs to be selected carefully to reach out to various stratas of employees.

11.3.2 Employee Communication

Employee communication is about managing relationships. There is always a tussle, especially among the marketing, HR and public relations departments, as to who would handle employee communication. As employees are very important stakeholders of an organisation, it is better if the PR department handles employee communications.

Employee communication can be through various media, such as magazines, blogs, video conferencing, brainstorming, events, idea boxes, and a host of other channel. It is an area in which the marketing or HR departments do not possess necessary expertise.

11.3.2.1 Genesis of Employee Communication

Michael C. Brandon cited three major phases of employee communication but did not specifically label them. *Lyn Smith* has adapted these as follows:

Stage One (pre-1960): In this phase, the predecessor was industrial relations, the goal was to improve employee morale; the emphasis was on individual orientation and solidarity; the attitude was warm and personal; and the focus was on people.

Stage Two (mid 1960s-1980): Here the predecessor was journalism; the goal was to deliver news; the emphasis was on facts; the orientation was towards reporting; the attitude was cool and skeptical; and the focus was on events.

Stage Three (late 1980s): During the current phase the predecessor is marketing; the goal is to implement strategy; the emphasis is on the organisation; the orientation is towards aiding the management; the attitude is business oriented; and the focus is on strategic objectives.

11.3.2.2 The Content of Communication to Employees

The pertinent question to ask before one decides on the various channels of communication is what to communicate. In fact 'what' (content) would determine 'where' (channels) to communicate. The PR department should ideally have a small cell within it that would handle internal communication. The choice of people in this cell should preferably fall on 'peoples' persons, in other words, those with great communication skills and understanding of human psyche.

Experts suggest that the senior management should first be encouraged to think about what needs to be communicated. A video or a house journal should be seen as a tactic in strategy, rather than a strategy in itself.

An ideal employee communication should have a mix of stories related to the organisation and employee achievements, namely how the organisation is doing, the challenges of time, competitive edge, expectation from employees, futuristic plans, awards won by organisation, etc. For employees, motivational stories on people who have made a difference, stories of courage and grit, their achievements in areas beyond work such as sports and culture, etc. would find enthusiastic readers because such stories concern the people they know personally. It is important to include the achievements of their family members, especially children, and devote some space to employees' written contributions in the journal or their skills like photography, sports, artistic abilities etc. All like to see their names in print; how well the piece is written really does not matter, but the feeling behind it does.

Employee communication media include house journals, video magazines, interpersonal communication, brainstorming, fun days, employees' blogs etc.

While taking the decision on the choice of the media, the public relations professional will have to consider the:

- most effective media
- most efficient media
- most credible media

As discussed earlier, it is important to know the target audience threadbare so that the communication is decided keeping in view the demographics and psychographics.

11.3.2.3 Various Media for Internal Communication

Employee communication can be a really satisfying part of the public relations job but it is at the same time quite demanding. The management and those who are affected by the communication would judge any goof up severely. There are no two views that publicrelations, of which employee communication is a part, is a top management function. Therefore, great caution and a balancing act is required to ensure that communication is not seen as a mouthpiece of the management. At the same time, the aim of the communication is also to reflect the management's perspective and ethos.

Internal communication often requires designing and producing media materials, which broadly include a whole range of employee magazines, films, AVs, instruction materials, safety manuals, bulletin boards, etc. What medium is the best for which message and vice-versa are eternal questions that constantly haunt professional communicators.

The range of media for internal communications is immense but not all organisations use all channels. It depends on how much importance the organisations give to the functions, location of the projects and the interest the team takes in the activity.

Induction Literature/Information Kiosks

When new staff members join a company, it takes them time to get accustomed to the organisational culture. Good companies make all efforts to help new

entrants feel comfortable through various means, which may include a welcome letter, an induction training programme, through literature or an interactive medium, such as a CD ROM/DVD, an electronic information kiosk, and Internet. All these media are aimed at informing such employees on how the organisation works, on its hierarchical structure, the decision making process, its product range, locations, etc.

House Journals

A house journal is the most popular channel for employee communication. However, not all journals are interesting from the perspective of employees' interest. Bringing out a nicely packaged journal with coloured pictures is no guarantee that the journal would be popular. The basic aim of a house journal is to provide employees with a communication forum through which they can not only get informed and motivated but also participate in. A journal that has the company's CEO on various pages is often touted by the employees as 'His Master's Voice' and thus is not respected. On the other hand, a column on the CEO's interfaces with the employees on the issues that concern them would in all probability be appreciated. The PR head is ideally the editor of the journal.

House journals come in various shapes, sizes and periodicities. The two popular sizes however are tabloid and the magazine size. While most house journals are complimentary,some are nominally priced. It would be a good idea to write 'for internal circulation' on the cover of the house journals; the statutory information must be published each year and the copies of the journal, as stipulated, must be submitted. Registered journals get some postal discounts.

A house journal can cover topics in a number of areas, such as the organization's achievements, fulfillment of targets, future plans, human interest stories, social news, employee contributions, etc. The mailing list may encompass employees, distributors, agents, opinion makers and other external publics. The bottom–line for a house journal is that it must satisfy the needs and interests of its readers. Human interest should be the governing principle for stories. Too many uninteresting figures and technical details are unlikely to interest readers.

The steps for publishing a house journal:

Planning:

The first step is to develop a concept that serves the organisation goals the best. The decision about the size, format and periodicity may be taken after brainstorming session with the team and the management. The popular formats are tabloids and magazine. While obtaining the management's approval, a format must be decided and the approval presentation should ideally include suggested titles, masthead designs, some page dummies, suggested paper, and an indication of the expenditure envisaged.

Organising:

Organising is all about putting together a network. Once the management's approval has been obtained, the public relations head must organise the staff to get the job going. The greater the frequency, the greater the need for staff.

Depending upon the size of the PR department at the corporate office and availability of PR staff at projects, proper networking for news gathering should be made. In the absence of regular staff, it is advisable to develop a band of "freelancers" for writing. It is a great feeling to see one's name in print. The employees will jump at the idea. Discretion, however, should be used in selecting the right people for the job. The immediate step is to work out a strict schedule for collection, writing of stories, production and printing.

Publishing:

A professional PR practitioner plans several issues ahead in addition to the one being worked on. As an editor, the PR practitioner must inculcate the habit of reaching out to people and places. It is not possible to write interesting editorials, cover stories and human interest write-ups while sitting glued to the corporate seat. Every good house journal should have a definite "personality" and that is the responsibility of the PR man. In order to bring out the publication on time, one should involve as few executives as possible in the clearance of text/copy.

Distribution:

A journal loses its value if it does not reach the targeted public on time. The quickest and the most economical means possible must be selected to reach out to the readers. Some organisations distribute the journal at the place of work, while others mail it to employees' homes. The obvious advantage of the latter means is that the potential reader is relaxed at home and can read the journal leisurely. Also, the family members can have access to the publication.

Feedback:

APR practitioner must appreciate the importance of feedback. In order to make the publication popular, it is necessary to make it reader oriented. Organised feedback through a questionnaire survey could be undertaken to examine the extent to which employees are satisfied with the publication. The shorter the questionnaire, the higher the response. In fact, a one-page questionnaire should suffice.

Closed-Circuit/In–House Television

In-house TV is a great medium in linking up a scattered audience in an office and township. Many companies telecast addresses by the CEO to employees and their families during times of crises. The interim management at Satyam uploaded a video on its Intranet to address the concerns of employees. The video was later shared with the news channels also, to inform people at large about the management's initiatives for the thousands of employees.

Employee Blogs

This is a newer strategy but is catching up fast. *Sun Microsystems* promotes employee blogging, with its CEO, Jonathan Schwartz, taking the lead. It is said that thousands of netizens visit the blog. The blog was created 'to improve' both communications with the public and collaborations with attitude developers and programmers who author third party applications

for Sun's systems'. Today, 3000 out of 32,000 Sun employees are active bloggers.

Southwest Airlines encourages its employees to blog as it believes it to be another communication tool, which can be handled without incurring any additional cost. Employees were skeptical in the beginning but not anymore. According to company sources, the site has had more than 200 posts and 4000 public responses in about nine months. Many of those who wish to share their experiences and their concerns, etc. access '*Nuts about Southwest*.'

According to analysts, some new companies have adopted blogging more rapidly than those that have been on the scene for long. Some of the companies that have adopted blogging include Infosys, TCS, Rediff, Milagrow, HCL, Cleartrip, Gridstone, Fritolay, and Naukri.

Idea-Boxes

The concept of idea boxes is to create a channel through which the management encourages employees to submit innovative ideas in various areas of activity. The management discusses the ideas and rewards those which can be implemented. Idea boxes are placed in various places throughout the office and the employees can drop in their ideas on issues that may include, improving systems and processes, or even put in their complaints. When sifted and seen closely this medium helps to track employee perceptions on various issues, areas of their concerns, and their possible contribution to innovations.

Shop-Floor Discussions

Shop-floor discussions can be great morale boosters, both for employees and managers. The discussions can be on many subjects relating to work, targets, or issues that crop up suddenly. Motivating employees is an important task for management and public relations can play a very significant role by coining motivational messages. The management often complains about the lack of motivation on the part of the employees and forms its own perception about the reasons for this. It is important to partner with employees in day to day work and brainstorm with them when finding solutions to a problem.

Bulletin Boards

A bulletin board in an organisational context can be described as a channel for the continuous flow of news and messages concerning employees. They come in various sizes and shapes; some look mundane while others are well designed. Bulletin boards have a fixed periodicity. They are generally placed at the exit gates of the shop-floors, but can also be seen inside the assembly lines.

Apart from circulars and notices, bulletin boards have become a sought-after medium by production heads for motivating employees to reach the production targets. Displaying shift-wise production details on bulletin boards also encourages competition among different shifts.

A corner of the board can also be set aside for social news relating to employees and their family members.

11.4 COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNAL PUBLICS

We have discussed that external stakeholders encompass policy makers, opinion leaders, competitors, professional bodies, special interest groups, media, customers (industrial, wholesalers, dealers, consumers), potential employees and the public at large. The media for communication encompasses mass media, conferences, exhibitions, meets, selective media, etc.

The organisation chooses the media and tools for the communication depending upon their size, capacity and requirements.

11.4.1. Importance of Media in External Public Relations

Today media is all pervasive. It has become a vital source of information for people. Media has become the intermediary through which most of the public relations is achieved. Be it the costumers, policy makers, the opinion leaders, the competitors, professional bodies, special groups, media has its reach, hence media relations becomes an essential part of public relations.

11.4.2 How does Public Relations Fit in the Scheme of Things for Media?

The raw material for media is information that comes from various sources and what the reporters gather on their own. In other words, media depends both on primary and secondary data. Reporters sometimes may use one source in filing their story or multiple sources for making investigative stories. Public relations is a platform for accessing both kinds of sources of information for the media.

11.4.3. Writing for the media

A Public relations professional has to do a lot of writing. Such writing is not generally ascribed to him/her. The media writing broadly would cover the following:

1. News releases
2. Press handouts
3. Press notes
4. Rejoinders
5. Features

11.4.3.1 Various Kinds of Press Releases

There are many kinds of press releases, some of which are discussed below:

Announcement Release:

A new product, the opening of a new plant, an innovative drug, the latest annual report, or a new policy are occasions for an announcement release.

Created Press Release

An announcement often is not attractive enough to catch media attention. Hence some "dressing up" is done to get good coverage, or get coverage when there is 'news lull'. Inviting a celebrity or an expert to the premises often attracts media attention.

Spot Press Release

While the above two can be planned, as the name suggests "Spot" release is written spontaneously, more often when a crisis situation happens, like the closing of a plant, adverse effect of a drug resulting in deaths/ ailment, accident in a factory, an airplane crash etc.

Response News Release

The media has many sources of information and often news about an organisation reaches them from sources other than public relations. A consumer activist group, an environmental lobby or a competitor may make an adverse comment on your organisation. On such occasions, the corporate communication manager will have to be ready to come up with a response release.

Feature News Release

Developmental stories and features on topical issues can be worked at leisurely and supplied to the media. Media often takes up these stories for weekend reading or as fillers on weekdays.

Bad" News Release

In a reactive situation, especially a crisis, much like the Spot release, the organiations volunteer to supplying news not so conducive to their image. But then, it becomes a necessity at times, in the interest of sharing information and winning credibility of being the first to share information. A crisis situation always attracts media attention, so instead of media asking for the happening, it works better if the organisation volunteers with the news.

11.4.3.2 Factors for Writing Effective Press Releases

A news release must meet the basic news criteria. Some of these include the following:

Timeliness:

Timeliness implies that the event is new. Timeliness also may depend on what is happening in the world around you and also within your organisation.

Relevance or consequence:

Events and organisations have relevance if the media can see a potential impact on their readers and viewers.

Proximity:

It implies that the news is local or has a local connection, if using a local media. If the news were of national and international importance, the mainstream media would often take it.

Prominence- the VIP impact:

Generally people attract attention and important people attract more attention. A visit by a minister, an international expert or a celebrity would have news value for the media.

Rarity/Unusual:

People enjoy a break from the routine and so do media. Small unusual events lighten a page or a program and help the media fill empty space. For instance, the Times of India has a "Bizarre" column that includes unusual stories from all over the world.

Human Interest:

Readers are interested in other people, even if they are not related. The daily work, triumphs, tragedies and relationships of people being people have an inherent reader or viewer interest. Media and PR can both contribute to this regard.

11.4.3.3 Structure of a News Release

Most writers speak of the foolproof "five Ws and one H" formula to cover an event. This covers- **who; what; when; where; why; and how.** Which "Ws" are to be given preference in the first and second lead is a matter of judgment. Perception about this varies between the organisation that issues the release and the media that receives it. To illustrate, it is not uncommon for an organisation to start the release with what its CEO has to say. The media generally prefers to pick up the crux of the story, if it has readers' interest in it. The quote, if found suitable for the story is then taken. It also depends who is saying it, the CEO of an unknown company or a stalwart like Ratan Tata or Narayanamurthy.

The Lead

The news lead must meet the basic media requirement of getting the story across in the first sentence or two. Some experts talk of the "20 second rule". If you have 20 seconds to tell a friend about your story, what would you say? Write that down, and you have the first draft of a summary lead.

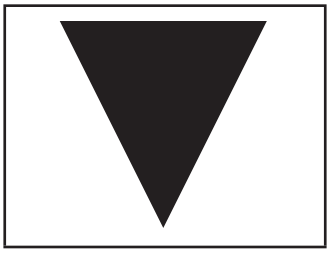
The Body

What is the story about? A summary lead should contain that. What's in it for the reader? Provide a reason for further reading, followed by more details about the happening, building on the first lead. The last paragraph often should contain general information or background about the source of the news, person who is the focus of the story etc. For example, if a news release is about the launch of a new movie by a production house, the last para should ideally contain the background about how long has the production house been in business, how many movies has it made, including some very successful ones. The names of the partners, or which company owns that production house can also be indicated.

Inverted Pyramid

There may be many ways of writing a press release, but one has to bear in mind that the media is always short on time, hence it is important that you write a release that is news worthy and written in "media-style", i.e., the way a reporter would write his/her story. Over a period of time press releases written in 'Inverted Pyramid' style have gained acceptance in the media circles.

Graphic 11.1 The Inverted Pyramid



What is an Inverted Pyramid Style?

It is defined as writing the most important information in the first one or two paragraphs to cover the essential 'Five Ws and one H'. As you proceed writing a press release, you have to ensure that you write from the most important facts to the less important facts as symbolised by the inverted pyramid. The wider base at the top signals the most important facts. As the width of the pyramid keeps shrinking, the facts also have to be lesser in significance.

If the press release is written in this professional style, it helps the news desk or the reporter in picking up the story as soon as it reaches him/ her without wasting time in trying to find news and news value from a long press release. It is generally said that the reporters and the news desk use their scissors mercilessly when they do not find relevance in the story in the first or second paragraphs of the news release.

The media may or may not take your headline, but the news release must always carry a headline so that the crux of the news is reflected instantly.

Many research studies suggest that a majority of press releases never see the light of the day. They are binned, without a second look. Some of the **reasons of rejection** as said earlier also include the following:

- The release has blatant publicity stuff for which paid space could have been the answer
- It does not have news value from media's perspective
- It is an old story
- It is badly written.

In a nutshell, keep in mind the following when writing a news release:

Exhibit 11.2 Checklist on News Release Writing

1) Write tight and get to the point
2) Avoid vagueness
3) Don't be redundant
4) Write for your readers
5) Proofread, read aloud, and let it sit
6) Don't plagiarise
7) Story should answer the 5 Ws and H but not necessarily in one paragraph.

The next exhibit has all the elements that should find place in a news release.

Exhibit 11.3 Model News Release Format

Organisation's name (use company letterhead preferably)
Address
Date
Contact
Name
Phone (office/after office hours/home)
Fax
E-mail
News release: For immediate release /or for publication/broadcast on or after… (Indicate time and date)
Leave space for sub-editor to write headline
Headline (optional, but it's better to write)
Lead paragraph: (this must attract reporter's/news desk's attention immediately. It must encompass the story and make the sub-editor decide why he should include the story in reader's interest. Always double-space the story. Leave a couple of inches margin on the left for editing marks. Use the inverted pyramid format for the story.
When the press release ends, write "ends" or put a star mark to indicate closure. At the beginning of the page, write key word and page number/ total pages.

Ground Rules for News Release for Broadcast Media

From the point of view of news, the content of news release for print and broadcast media would be the same, however, in –practice, the content of the release would be driven by the audio/video availability. Rarely would a television channel take a dry story, unless the situation is too critical and the visuals are not available. Many channels run such stories with 'file shots'. Broadcast writing is writing for sound/visuals. The writing for broadcast should be able to capture speech and speech patterns so that the copy sounds natural when spoken on air. One also has to be able to write to time. Any normal story would be taken for between 30-60 seconds. As the listeners and viewers of broadcast media can't see the attribution marks (" ") so one has to be careful. Use one of the two alternatives:

- Use direct attribution: e.g. the CEO….. Mr… says that ……
- Use actualities: i.e., a tape of CEO making the statement.

Write out numbers from one to nine and numerals for numbers from 10 to 999. Write words for numerical figures that are long, complex or may not be obvious to the speaker, such as thousands, millions, second, thirds fourth etc. Write years as numerals such as *2009*.

11.4.3.4 Press Handouts

A press handout is generally distributed to press persons at a press conference. The handout contains salient points of the issue for which press conference

has been invited. It is the job of the PR person to keep the issue in focus. A press hand out also helps the scribe in quoting the source of news, if he missed any point during the conference.

11.4.3.5 Press Notes

PR and media persons are interdependent on each other for news. In a press conference or during a press brief, the chief executive throw insights about various issues, which the reporters may be noting down. Smart corporate communication practitioners also note down such things and prepare a press note, which may be given exclusively to someone on demand. This would ensure accuracy on what the spokesperson said. In fact, as far as VIPs are concerned, press notes generally are given to scribes at the end of such meetings, to avoid being quoted out of context. Often, we hear, spokespersons complain for being misquoted in the media.

11.4.3.6 Rejoinders

A rejoinder in media parlance means the response from an individual or an organisation against a news report. A factually wrong news item may invite a denial from the aggrieved party. It is very important to look at the news item microscopically and be sure before responding with a rejoinder on which would be better strategy, taking up with the media or keeping silent. Similarly in case of a denial, be sure before you deny to the media that what the spokesperson said was really untrue. Many a times, the scribes record interviews, either seeking prior permission, or without a formal permission. There is no point losing face when the media can prove your claim otherwise.

11.4.3.7 Style Considerations

Individual media have their distinctive styles and conventions of writing and broadcasting. If one has to send a general Release then following a generic style is a safe bet. Some media houses have style books, but not all. Those who have to write or supervise media writing, it would help if a regular reading of some important papers and watching news channels is undertaken to absorb the style of individual newspapers and channels.

11.4.3.8 Feature Writing

Feature writing is an important part of corporate communication writing. Features can be written for both mass media and media for internal communication like house journals aimed at employees.

What is a Feature?

From the corporate communication perspective, a feature story is one that does not have topical relevance, or urgency, but has appeal for readers. One scholar has defined features as those stories, which focus on a special angle of the news, e.g., human interest stories, profiles, issues or general topics. Features can be written on variety of subjects like people, case studies, research findings, history of a brand/ organisation, special/commemorative occasions etc.

The greatest difference between news writing and feature writing, according to analysts is the style of approaching the subject. While most of news releases are bound by the Five Ws and one H or the inverted pyramid style,

a feature can be creative and innovative in approach to hold people's interest. A feature writer can use narrative lead, chronological lead, descriptive lead, anecdotal lead or a teaser lead to attract reader's curiosity and interest.

An important difference between a news item and a feature is that in the former, the climax is at the top, while in the latter, the climax can be gradually built until the end to retain reader's interest.

Check Your Progress: 2

Note: 1) Use the space below for you answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What are different types of press releases?

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2. Discuss the various factors for writing an effective press release.

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11.5 THE NEW AGE MEDIA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

The new age media has brought about a paradigm shift in employee communication. Many companies now use the **digital media** to connect with their employees. In the Indian context, both Infosys and Satyam Computers use **Internet** and **Intranet** to connect to thousands of their employees scattered in various continents and countries.

Le's take an **Example** of a popular method: Satyam Computers launched a Web radio station called **Planet Satyam** in 2008 to connecting to its over 50,000 workforce. According to Satyam sources, the station is patterned on You Tube. The station operates from its radio and television studio located at its Leadership Centre Hyderabad. All employees can connect live to important internal messages through radio talk shows, panel discussions, and interviews with business leaders. The management has a plan to take the feedback from its clients on service delivery and quality and play it back to its workforce.

Satyam also launched its **Satyamstarpower.Com,** a Web portal to showcase the creative talents of its associates and employees worldwide. The company claimed it to be the first of its kind, lending a new dimension to Satyam's 'fun@work' initiative that involves its associates and families in social and recreational activities sponsored by Satyam. The Satyamites are encouraged to post their abilities reflected through various forms such as painting, singing, writing etc. which are rated by colleagues.

Infosys intranet, connecting its about 70,000 employees across 18 countries, is called ***Sparsh***(Touch). It is Infosys' primary channel of news and official information and provides a communication platform and networking avenues for Infosys' employees.

The rating agency Nielson Norman selected it as one of the best Intranet sites for its award 'Intranet Design Annual 2007: The year's 10 best Intranets' and Infosys is the only Indian Company to have received the award. The other recipients include Electrical Power, (US), Comcast (US), Daimler Chrysler AG(Germany), The Dow (US), The National Geographic Society(US), The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds(UK), and Volvo Group(Sweden).

11.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we looked at what can truly be said to be the heart and soul of public relations practice, viz. writing for internal and external publics. We discussed in detail the various tools and media for public relations. We also looked at the interdependence of media and corporate communication and the need for mutual respect for each other's domain.

A public relations practitioner has to do a lot of writing for the publics, which is not ascribed to him/her. Various kinds of media writing like house journals, press releases, rejoinders, and features were discussed with tips on style and content.

11.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress: 1

1. List the various stakeholders in Public Relations.

The stakeholder or the target audience can be defined as those critical groups of people upon whom rests the success of an organisation. It is important for the PR practitioner to find where the various stakeholders are located, what their expectations are from the organisation, and why the organisation is dependent upon them. Every organisation deals with a variety of stakeholders that can be broadly divided into two, namely internal and external stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders broadly comprise employees, shareholders, and families of employees.

External stakeholders encompass policy makers, opinion leaders, competitors, professional bodies, special interest groups, media, customers (industrial, wholesalers, dealers, consumers), and the public at large.

An organisation has certain communication obligations towards its stakeholders which need to be articulated by the PR practitioner. The public relations function serves as a link between the management and its different stakeholders. It must ensure responsibility and responsiveness in policy and information to the best interests of the organisation and its stakeholders, and in this process, communication gains great significance.

2. Discuss the various communication channels for differ target audiences in Public Relations

In order to reach out to a disparate set of audiences, the public relations practitioner needs to

indentify the most suitable media vehicles they access.

Some of the media for internal and external target audiences (TA) include the following:

Media for internal TA

The media broadly includes interpersonal communication, brainstorming, house journals, video, idea boxes, Intranet, social gatherings, etc.

Media for external TA

The media encompasses mass media, conferences, exhibitions, meets, selective media, etc.

Check Your Progress: 2

1. What are different types of press releases?

There are many kinds of press releases, some of which are discussed below:

Announcement release

A new product, the opening of a new plant, an innovative drug, the latest annual report, or a new policy is occasions for an announcement release.

Created Press release

An announcement often is not attractive enough to catch media attention. Hence some "dressing up" is done to get good coverage, or get coverage when there is 'news lull'. Inviting a celebrity or an expert to the premises often attracts media attention.

Spot Press Release

While the above two can be planned, as the name suggests "Spot" release is written spontaneously, more often when a crisis situation happens, like the closing of a plant, adverse effect of a drug resulting in deaths/ ailment, accident in a factory, an airplane crash etc.

Response News Release

The media has many sources of information and often news about an organisation reaches them from sources other than public relations. A consumer activist group, an environmental lobby or a competitor may make an adverse comment on your organisation. On such occasions, the corporate communication manager will have to be ready to come up with a response release.

Feature News Release

Developmental stories and features on topical issues can be worked at leisurely and supplied to the media. Media often takes up these stories for weekend reading or as fillers on weekdays.

"Bad" News release

In a reactive situation, especially a crisis, much like the Spot release, the organisations volunteer in supplying news not so conducive to their image, but then in the interest of sharing information and winning credibility of being the first to share information. A crisis situation always attracts media attention, so instead of media asking for the happening, it works better if the organisation volunteers with the news.

2. Discuss the various factors for writing an effective press release.

A news release must meet the basic news criteria. Some of these include the following:

Timeliness:

Timeliness implies that the event is new. Timeliness also may depend on what is happening in the world around you and also within your organisation.

Relevance:

Events and organisations have relevance if the media can see a potential impact on their readers and viewers.

Proximity:

It implies that the news is local or has a local connection, if using a local media. If the news were of national and international importance, the mainstream media would often take it.

Prominence- the VIP impact:

Generally people attract attention and important people attract more attention. A visit by a minister, an international expert or a celebrity would have news value for the media.

Rarity/Unusual:

People enjoy a break from the routine and so do media. Small unusual events lighten a page or a program and help the media fill empty space. For instance, the Times of India has a "Bizarre" column that includes unusual stories from all over the world.

Human interest:

Readers are interested in other people, even if they are not related. The daily work, triumphs, tragedies and relationships of people being people have an inherent reader or viewer interest. Media and PR can both contribute in this regard.

11.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Black Sam, (1993), *The essentials of Public Relations,* Kogan Page Publishers
- Cutlip Scott M, Center Allen H and Broom Glen M(2006),*Effective Public Relations, ninth edition*, Prentice Hall Publishers
- Jethwaney Jaishri, (2012), *Corporate Communication, principle and practice, second impression,* Oxford University Press
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11.9 GLOSSARY

Announcement Release: A new product, the opening of a new plant, an innovative drug, the latest annual report, and a new policy are occasions for an *announcement release*

"Bad" News release: refers to an organisation issuing a press release after a crisis voluntarily and proactively in the interest of sharing an adverse happening with public at large.

Denial: A factually wrong news item may invite a denial from the aggrieved party through a press release.

Electronic Media: A term used for broadcasting media, viz. radio an television.

Feature News Release: Refers to writing a developmental story on a topical issue.

Inverted Pyramid Style: It is defined as writing the most important information in the first one or two paragraphs to cover the essential 'Five Ws and one H' (who, what, when, why, whom and How).

New Media: Refers to the Internet, social networking sites and the blogsphere.

Media Reach: Refers to the percentage of people in various SEC categories accessing media

Media Characteristics: refers to the relative strengths and weaknesses of each medium keeping in view its inherent characteristics.

Media Relations: a term used for maintaining working relationship with representatives of the media fraternity who cover the organisation.

Press Briefings: A press briefing is different from a press conference in that it is informal and does not require elaborate arrangements.

Press Conference: Press conference is an occasion when an organisation invites a cross section of media reporters through a formal invite at a designated time and place.

Press Handouts: Generally distributed to press persons at a press conference.

Press Notes: Generally written by the corporate communication manager while the spokesperson is interfacing with media. It is handed over to the scribes so that the spokesperson is not quoted out of context.