

CAM Diploma in Marketing Communications

Academic Session 2009 – 2010

Syllabus



Public Relations (PR)

10 credits at Level 4

Aims and objectives

The aim of this unit is to provide candidates with an understanding of the role that public relations plays in:

- Developing, enhancing, defending and promoting an organisation's, or an individual's, reputation
- Supporting employee or internal communications
- Assisting transactions, commercial or otherwise, of an organisation

It will encourage candidates to assess the range of stakeholder relationships that public relations practitioners need to sustain and examine the various techniques available, including on and off line media, for transmitting messages.

It will also provide knowledge of the organisational and professional context in which people working full-time in public relations.

Assessment Methodology

Examination

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss the various definitions of public relations and the varying ways in which PR is practiced in both a consultancy and in-house context
- Demonstrate the ways in which self-regulation, legal frameworks and professional ethics apply to the practice of PR
- Analyse a range of contemporary PR techniques and evaluate a range of situations under which they should be applied
- Explain the various media channels (traditional and digital) available to a PR practitioner and be aware of how to communicate effectively with the media
- Suggest appropriate PR action in relation to specific scenarios; including the ability to define publics, provide advice on timing and costings for plans
- Illustrate the relevance of techniques for other allied disciplines, such as psychology, neuroscience, advertising, that are being adopted and applied by the modern PR practitioner

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

Element 1: Definitions, concepts and contexts (20%)

1.1. Explain contemporary definitions of the following:

- Definitions of PR: CIPR, PRCA, PRSA
- Reputation
- Stakeholder management and engagement

- Propaganda and spin
- 1.2. Discuss the role that public relations plays in defending and promoting an organisation's reputation:
 - commercial
 - public sector
 - not for profit
 - 1.3. Analyse the ways in which PR interacts with other elements of the marketing mix and other corporate disciplines:
 - Advertising, Direct Marketing, Sales Promotion, Marketing and Research
 - Digital communications
 - CSR
 - Public Affairs
 - 1.4. Evaluate the link between PR and branding in terms of both developing and managing a brand:
 - Build reputation and credibility
 - Protect brand from attack
 - Manage crises that might damage the brand
 - Reach opinion leaders and opinion formers
 - 1.5. Demonstrate an understanding of how market research can assist PR:
 - Market analysis
 - Benchmarking
 - Techniques for evaluating impact e.g. attitude shifts
 - 1.6. Explain how various concepts apply to international public relations:
 - adaptation,
 - standardisation
 - localisation
 - 1.7. Illustrate the relevance of various concepts to PR:
 - reputation
 - influence
 - stakeholder engagement
 - persuasion
 - two-way communication
 - emotional versus rational appeals

Element 2: Media Relations (20%)

- 2.1. Explain the media channels available:
 - print
 - broadcast
 - digital
- 2.2. Discuss how PR practitioners liaise and negotiate with the media in order to maximise coverage:

- Building relationships with the media
- What to write
- When to write

2.3. Prepare standard types of communication used with journalists:

- Press releases
- Diary notes
- Feature articles
- Opinion pieces
- Topical comment
- Digital based news releases

2.4. Review techniques used by PR practitioners to secure news and feature items:

- Sell-in
- Social media
- Blogs/forums
- Interviews
- Briefings

2.5. Provide an assessment of the core techniques used to prepare individuals for media appearances:

- Background media search
- Topic assessment
- Identification of questions
- Development of narrative
- Rehearsal
- Agree tone

2.6. Recommend ways to measure and evaluate media relations:

- Output, Outtake (takeout), Outcome
- Specialist agencies
- Awareness, Attitude, Behaviour
- ROI
- Advanced media coverage assessment (positive/negative, page, mentions, context)
- Benchmarking

Element 3: Specialist Areas of PR (20%)

3.1. Explain the role of internal communications and employee relations in developing and maintaining positive internal stakeholder relationships leading to business performance:

- Employee engagement
- Change management
- Briefings
- Presentations
- Intranet

3.2. Review the context and core techniques of Financial PR:

- Analyst relations
- Financial journalists
- Financial results (full year and interim)
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- IPOs

3.3. Explain how PR supports Corporate Social Responsibility policies:

- Fit between CSR policy and reputation
- Writing a CSR policy
- External communication on CSR
- Internal communication on CSR

3.4. Demonstrate a working knowledge of contemporary public affairs practice:

- Engaging stakeholders:
 - MPs,
 - Civil servants,
 - Shareholders,
 - Customers,
 - Clients,
 - Trade associations,
 - Think tanks,
 - Business groups,
 - Unions
 - The media
- Lobbying
- Issue management
- CSR information dissemination
- Influencing public policy
- Building and maintaining corporate reputation

3.5. Illustrate how PR programmes need to be adapted for international publics:

- Adaptation,
- Standardisation
- Localisation

3.6. Show how digital techniques are influencing public relations practice:

- Web
- Blogs
- Forums
- SMS/MMS
- Twitter/Yammer
- Social media releases
- Digital mapping

3.7. Devise a corporate ID programme:

- Elements of visual identity –
 - Logo
 - Colour palettes
 - Typeface/font

- Uniforms
- Merchandise
- Corporate identity guidelines

Element 4: Planning, Issues and Crises (20%)

4.1. Prepare a plan for a communications audit:

- Objectives
- Audiences to consider
- Areas to explore (e.g. structures, quality of communications, effectiveness of messages)
- Background research
- Types of interview
- Style of reporting (e.g. by theme, department etc)
- Recommendations
- Timings
- Budget
- Summary

4.2 Evaluate the need for the following types of PR activity in an organisation:

- Issues management
- Crisis management
- Lobbying
- Pressure group relationship management

4.3 Devise PR strategies in response to the findings of a communications audit and argue the business case for such a strategy:

- Target audience
- What we want them to do
- Why we want them to do it
- Message
- Rationale

4.4 Set out PR campaigns which include:

- Context
- Objectives
- Tactics
- Timetable
- Budget
- Evaluation recommendations

Element 5: In-house, consultancy, ethics and regulation (20%)

5.1 Assess the various structures for organising in-house and consultancy teams in terms of building client relationships:

- Discipline
- Profit centre

- Geography
- Fit with other roles e.g. marketing, corporate affairs

5.2 Explain the role of PR consultancies:

- Creation (for a client) of trust and understanding with:
 - Employees
 - Customers
 - Shareholders
 - Investors
 - Government
 - Local community
- Development of PR plans and campaigns to meet client objectives

5.3 Assess the advantages and disadvantages of different types of consultancy that can be hired in terms of their suitability for purpose:

- Freelancer/contractor
- Seconded
- Sector specialist
- Independent consultancy
- Full service (possibly part of wider group)
- International group

5.4 Explain the process by which a consultancy is appointed:

- Brief
- Long list
- Credentials
- Short list
- Pitch
- Evaluation
- Appointment
- Legals
- Agree work plan and methods of evaluation

5.5 Review the techniques available for developing and maintaining client/consultancy relationships:

- Briefing
- In-house surgeries
- Peer review
- Regular meetings
- Less frequent strategic reviews
- Clear roles and points of contact
- Pro-active advice
- Providing wider counsel

5.6 Evaluate the various ethical frameworks that PR practitioners draw upon:

- Professional codes (e.g. CIPR)
- Legal adherence
- Public barrister principle
- Guardian of reputation

- Codes of conduct (e.g. civil service)

5.7 Explain the legal and self regulatory controls within which PR operates:

- Legal (e.g. libel, misrepresentation)
- Statutory bodies (PCC/OFCOM)
- Voluntary codes
- Professional and ethical behaviour