

## THE SIX ROLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS

In the revitalization of the court of public opinion underway since the 60s, a broader scope has been opened to public relations professionals. The innumerable case problems shared with us each year mandate six roles for the contemporary practitioner:

1. **Researcher.** All sound public relations begins with research, and ends with it, in the form of evaluation. More than half the steps in the public relations process involve research. (**Additional training needed:** informal research techniques, data analysis.)
2. **Counselor.** A basic skill, whatever your job. It does no good to be a great tactician or strategist if you can't persuade colleagues to adopt your ideas. (**Additional training needed:** O.D., organizational behavior, systems theory, persuasion theory, policy sciences, diplomacy.)
3. **Strategic Planner.** This enables organizations to move from a reactive mode to a proactive mode. The strategic planner aligns activities with specific goals and understands how to measure successes. (**Additional training needed:** trend analysis, futures research, behavior change theory.)
4. **Educator.** Public relationships are not created or "handled" by us but by everyone in the organization, at every level. Must be made aware of this responsibility and trained to carry it out. Our job is to do the teaching & coordinate their efforts. (**Additional training needed:** learning theory, group psychology, motivation.)
5. **Communicator.** Our original assignment, now immensely complicated by emerging technology. Internal, external, print, film, broadcast, mass, personal – practitioners must master all. (**Additional training needed:** diffusion process, the six methods of persuasion, graphic psychology, advertising, information mapping.)
6. **Cheerleading.** Every group needs cheering on or up. Basic human psychology. Who is better able, or situated, to do it than the public relations department? (**Additional training needed:** cultural anthropology, listening & empathy skills, recognition & reward programming, feedback systems.)



## Section 2: Counselor

7. When persuading my boss/colleagues to consider their options for a decision, I build my case by thinking through the pros and cons of each option and identifying potential outcomes of those options.

Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Undecide

1
2
3
4
5

8. I know I've done a good job when my fellow managers/clients think that my ideas are their ideas.

Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Undecided

1
2
3
4
5

9. Though it is easier to do the work myself, I chose to support others in getting it done.

Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Undecided

1
2
3
4
5

10. More often than not, my ideas are listened to and integrated into the final products

Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Undecided

1
2
3
4
5

11. I am usually successful in getting the CEO/boss/client to listen to and follow my advice.

Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Undecided

1
2
3
4
5

12. I'm skilled at finding third party advocates outside the organization to help me build my case inside.

Strongly Disagree
Strongly Agree
Undecided

1
2
3
4
5

Section 1 **Counselor**. Total # of Points: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 3: Strategic Planner**

**13. I enjoy developing a roadmap of our department's activities and checking on our progress toward identified goals on a regular basis.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Undecided

**14. I understand how our department goals fit into the big picture of our organizational goals.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Undecided

**15. I am good at identifying long-term goals and I understand how the tactics we employ are contributing to those goals.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Undecided

**16. Prioritizing audiences and identifying desired outcomes is usually easy for me to do.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Undecided

**17. I enjoy spending time with colleagues planning things out, dividing tasks and looking at the end goal.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Undecided

**18. I will recommend abandoning a strategy or tactic when it looks like it is not furthering our organizational goals.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Undecided

<p>Section 3: Strategic Planner - Total # of Points: _____</p>
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## Section 5: Communicator

**25. I am comfortable as the media spokesperson for the organization and can deal with reporters appropriately.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                 2                 3                 4                 5                 Undecided

**26. I feel my points are heard and understood most the time by colleagues/clients.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                 2                 3                 4                 5                 Undecided

**27. I like public speaking and giving presentations.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                 2                 3                 4                 5                 Undecided

**28. My networking skills are strong.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                 2                 3                 4                 5                 Undecided

**29. I am skilled in social media techniques and I am comfortable using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, writing blogs, etc.**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                 2                 3                 4                 5                 Undecided

**30. I am skilled in most of the standard communication vehicles (newsletters, brochures, annual reports, internet and intranet communication, etc.)**

Strongly Disagree                      Strongly Agree  
1                 2                 3                 4                 5                 Undecided

Section 5: Communicator -- Total # of Points: ____
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**CHARTING YOUR ROLE SCORES:** Plot your total score in each category by making a mark or shading the corresponding number.

	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	
<b>Researcher</b>																										
<b>Counselor</b>																										
<b>Strategic Planner</b>																										
<b>Educator</b>																										
<b>Communicator</b>																										
<b>Cheerleader</b>																										

If you agree with the premise that each of these roles is important to being a successful public relations practitioner, then you may want to strengthen those areas that fall below “17” (through further training or education) or find other ways to compensate for that missing piece by seeking out colleagues to work with who are strong in those skills.

For those ratings between “18” and “24”, pay closer attention to the need to exercise those skills for your own benefit and the benefit of your employer.

For those ratings “25” and over, be sure that you don’t rely exclusively on the skills you are most comfortable with or enjoy the most. They may not always be the best answer to a problem or opportunity.