

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:** formal and 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:** organization development, 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, video, broadcast, mass, social, personal – practitioners must master all. (**Additional training needed:** diffusion process, methods of persuasion, graphic psychology, information mapping.)
6. **Champion.** Every group needs a positive motivator. 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 4: Educator

19. I spend a great deal of time educating and training colleagues/clients about communications and public relations.

Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree		Undecided
1	2	3	4	5	

20. Though I work in the area of public relations, I feel everyone in the organization is responsible for our organization's good reputation.

Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree		Undecided
1	2	3	4	5	

21. I have helped the average employee in my organization understand their role as a public relations ambassador for the organization.

Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree		Undecided
1	2	3	4	5	

22. My CEO/boss understands what good public relations is and what it isn't.

Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree		Undecided
1	2	3	4	5	

23. I'd like to teach or lecture about the profession of public relations to others.

Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree		Undecided
1	2	3	4	5	

24. I enjoy working on a cross-disciplinary team and educating my colleagues about how public relations principles apply to what we're doing

Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree		Undecided
1	2	3	4	5	

Section 4: Educator -- Total # of Points: _____

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>		
Researcher																											
Counselor																											
Strategic Planner																											
Educator																											
Communicator																											
Champion																											

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.