

PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS (Planning & Implementation)

In a public Relation Campaign planning is indispensable. For any Corporation, Planning forms the basis of its foundation. It determines the objectives of the organisation and the strategies adopted to fulfill the same.

★ There are certain pre-requisites for formulating a plan

- ① Access to information input i.e. Research or fact finding
- ② Analysis of information data and statistical interpretation of data
- ③ channels of communication i.e. selection of media
- ④ Comparison of similar Campaign undertaken by the industry, and
- ⑤ Evaluation and feedback on the basis of SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) of the organisation, a plan is formulated which comprises four elements:-
 - ⑥ Reason - why the need for campaign?
 - ⑦ Objective - what is proposed to be achieved?
 - ⑧ Means - what channels of communication will be adopted?
 - ⑨ Cost - How much money will be spent.

→ The management has to be given a concrete reason for conducting the PR activity. The reason may form the Campaign theme

→ Once the management is convinced about the necessity of the programme - Specific goals of the Campaign are to be spelt out

→ Objectives are to be made, keeping in view the different public

→ The right channels of communication must be chosen to reach the various public. Questions like "which media will have the best reach for the target audience?" must be answered

→ The Timing is essential factor to be considered while launching the public relation campaign

→ Last but not the least 'Cost factor' which determines whether the public relations Campaign is feasible and within the limits of the organisation

→ An organisation must have "emergency plans" to deal with the unexpected, dramatic and disastrous situations.

Evaluation and feedback

→ The purpose of a public relations Campaign is always to tilt the public opinion in its favour by placing the facts before the public.

Hence, another factor which assumes importance in the planning programme is evaluation.

→ "The proof of the pudding is in the eating", so goes the saying. Thus evaluation is important to determine whether the public relations activity has been effectively and to what extent it has influenced public opinion.

Evaluation justify the time and money spent on the public relation programme.

Studies are conducted to evaluate the PR programme which include

- Pre-testing of message:- Public relations message has to be accurate, honest and credible to avoid any misinformation.
- Analysis of Data:- The impact on the public by Survey Conducted.
- Media study:- careful study of media the communication process and channels of communication to be chosen.
- Collection and Interpretation:- collection of public opinion and assessment of the effect of PR activity.

PUBLIC OPINION :-

Kuppuswamy defines public as "a spontaneous collection of people in response to a certain kind of situation". To clarify the concept to you further, it is issue/controversy that holds the public together. You must however note that the members of the "public" are heterogeneous and are not one composite group. Public is not limited by size or enclosed within some geographical boundaries.

Opinion according to Webster's "Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary", is "a view, judgement or appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter". An opinion is stronger than an impression and weaker than positive knowledge. It implies a conclusion thought out, yet open to dispute. A more or less settled opinion is a "sentiment" and, it

held firmly, a 'conviction'. A 'view' is an opinion more or less coloured by bias.

Definition of Public opinion

Public opinion is an expression of a belief held in common by members of a group of public on a controversial issue of general importance. The public opinion-formed process emanates from the expressed individual opinions of members of a group of public ~~can~~ whose views are subject to the influences exerted by the group.

The Dictionary of Mass Communication defines public opinion as the expression of all members of a group, who are giving attention to a given issue. The process starts with an interaction of individual attitudes, mind-sets and beliefs concerning an issue.

Public opinion is usually expressed after controversy, dispute and debate over some controversial questions, which concern the welfare, doctrines, and value system of a group. ~~Public~~

Public opinion is aroused, whenever a contemporary issue or question of some concern arises about which the members of the group are likely to have disagreement. An issue is a situation or occurrence which threatens to disturb the prevailing values, beliefs and attitudes of a group, creating more or less of a crisis, and arousing discussion and the expression of public opinion.

Public opinion is not simply the opinion of the majority of a group. On each issue, the interested public will divide itself into two or more different points of view, which will not necessarily be contradictory or mutually exclusive.

Thus Public opinion is the complex of beliefs expressed by a significant number of persons on an issue of general importance. Public opinion is a potent force to reckon with particularly for a public relations functionary.

Opinion formation :-

→ The basic objective of public relations is to measure, analyze, and influence public opinion which develops from the attitudes.

of individuals comprising the public. Therefore, it is important to understand the meaning of attitudes, why people hold the attitudes they do, and their role in the opinion-forming process.

Attitudes are the feelings or moods of a person for or against some person, organisation, issue, or object. They represent the predisposition of an individual to evaluate controversial questions in a favourable or unfavourable manner. Simply stated, an attitude is a way of looking at situations. An expressed attitude is an opinion

Changes in attitudes may occur under various conditions e.g. the existing attitude no longer provides us the satisfaction or if our aspiration get raised. changes in attitude can be brought about through communications by creating new beliefs, or by appealing to the emotions to arouse favourable or unfavourable attitudes.

Appeals to the physical, social and economic needs of people are considered to be effective in changing their attitude e.g. the ads for insuring life property etc.

How is public opinion formed

- ① Public opinion is formed by individuals composing a group, who express their own opinion on a controversial issue.
- ② Public opinion is a composite opinion resulting from the interaction of the individual opinions of the members of a group.
- ③ The transformation of individual opinion into public opinion, by group stimuli, is a distinctive characteristic of the public opinion process.
- ④ The metamorphosis is sometimes referred to as the 'group mind' which is the combined opinions of individuals in the group. This is what we call public opinion.
- ⑤ Public opinion involves a transformation of individual opinion into group opinion. ~~the opinions of people~~ brought about by the influence exerted by the members of a group on an individual's opinion. The opinions of people in a group are influenced by what they ~~read~~ hear from opinion leaders, other members of the group, or persons outside the group; what they read in newspapers, ~~magazines~~

magazines, and books; what they see in life about them or on T.V.

⑥ Apart from group pressures, individual opinions are influenced by their needs, emotions, experience, heredity, culture, economic status and education. Out of the intermixture of individual attitudes, opinions and the opinions of the group emerges public opinion.

PROPAGANDA :-

- ~~Pro~~ It is a deliberately evolved and guided Campaign to influence people to accept a given view, sentiments or value (Wilbur Schramm, Process and Effect of mass Communication) In the propaganda process opposing views are dumped in a dust bin. The end is dominant and the means are subservient to this end. The issue under consideration is not analysed to find its merits or positive points. Rather, it is thrust upon the masses to create positive attitude towards it, without caring for its rational or moral implications.
- In public discussions, propaganda alters or modifies the views of people by influencing their emotional attitudes and feelings. Its objective is to implant an attitude in the minds of people that is deemed natural or logic.
- Propaganda leads to collective actions. It is different from advertising in the sense that advertising tries to influence the actions and thought process of individuals.
- Propaganda ~~create~~ tries to create a conviction and gets an action performed accordingly to the Commission. Those who share a conviction, get emotionally linked to one another. So they support one another on the issue and the causative factors are primarily emotional. Hence, Schramm opines that propaganda operates to put an end to discussion and reflection.

Propaganda is characterized by one of the following

- ① use of words with double meaning.
- ② appeals to prejudices of people and arousal of negative emotions like fear, hatred etc.
- ③ evasion of truth, suppression of facts, distortion.

- ④. provocation, playing up trivia
- ⑤ presentation of only one sided arguments
- ⑥ repetition

Methods of Propaganda.

Wilbur Schramm outlined the three methods through which propaganda operates

- ① Define the Facts :- Propaganda can be done by misrepresenting facts and supplying wrong sets of information to the public.
- ② Use In-group Outgroup Attitudes :- Two opponent groups create the feelings of dissent and even venom. The groups in question try to create or retain unity, brotherhood and harmony among themselves. These groups also teach their own members to despise other (oural) groups. This is called In-group Out-group attitude.
- ③ Use Emotional Attitudes :- The propagandist can identify the emotional attitudes and prejudices that are already present in people. He creates an association between these attitudes and prejudices and his basic thought that he wants to perpetuate through his propaganda. Hence pre existing opinions and attitudes of people are smartly used by the propagandist to create favorable responses for his thoughts.

LOBBYING :-

- ① It is an essential part of public affairs, but has been discussed as a separate function by Cutlip et al. According to these authors, lobbying is a specialised part of PR that builds and maintains relations with the government primarily for the purpose of influencing legislation and regulation.
- ② A lobbyist is essentially a PR specialist. He must know people (in the govt and bureaucracy) who would help him achieve his goal. He should also be aware of the legal framework operations of court, parliament, legislative assemblies, and other local bodies.

- ③ Many experts aver that lobbyist "collect the influence" they earn by working with government. Later they "sell the influence" to MNCs, large corporate groups, and other special interest groups, most of which, could be business cartels.
- ④ According to Cutlip et al, "Getting the folks back home to take up the cause is referred to as grass root lobbying" It is a part of many PR efforts that are done to affect public policy. In some cases, responses come from front-groups that are constituted to misguide policy maker.
- ⑤ At least in India, lobbying is almost always accompanied by monetary exchanges. If the exchange is not monetary in nature, it may involve a transfer of assets, quotas, or other benefits to the person being influenced. In either case the person being influenced who is showered such favors by the lobbyist ultimately stands to gain in materialistic terms. Human would remain human!
- ⑥ A lobbyist is in touch with the top brass of a nation, firm, the media, or social service groups. Hence he is literally a mine of information. He is polite, receptive to ideas, and slow in his actions. He is never in a hurry to meet his goals. He needs right set of information at all times.
- ⑦ Ironically, lobbying has been quite often to serve the basic interest of some business groups or political factions in India. In the west, lobbying is a respected word, though.

Examples

- ① The Jewish lobby has always remained active in the US Congress.
- ② The lobbying effort of the Indian diplomats in Washington forced President Bill Clinton to issue statement in favour of India and against Pakistan.
- ③ Successful lobbying helped India keep Pakistan away from the Commonwealth. The latter remained suspended till date from this organisation.