



PUBLIC RELATIONS – TOOLS

You have learnt in your earlier lesson that public relations is all about communicating effectively with the publics. But how is this managed ? This is done with the help of different channels of communication.

Have you come across the following:

- speeches delivered by experts
- small sheets of paper distributed with your daily newspaper
- advertisements on radio and television
- huge display boards along the roadside giving information about a particular product
- places where several products are displayed and sold..

These are examples of the different formats that are used in public relations.

What are these formats?

These include oral communication, printed word, broadcast messages, and exhibitions. In other words, these are the different tools used for communication in public relations.

In this lesson, you will learn about these tools and how exactly they enable the process of public relations.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- explain the meaning of PR tools ;
- identify the different PR tools ;
- describe oral communication ;



- classify different forms of printed communication ;
- state the importance of print and broadcast media as PR tools ;
- list the various forms of outdoor media ;
- state the significance of other forms of media in PR.

20.1 PR TOOLS

You have already learnt that the basic goal of public relations is:

- to attract public attention
- win belief
- achieve understanding and
- earn goodwill.

But how is this achieved. Let us answer this question.

You already know that in the process of public relations, any message is used to target a particular audience. Let us take the example of a school principal who has to address her students before their exams. She will have to prepare her talk effectively so that the students feel encouraged and motivated.

Consider the example of another message appealing to the public to participate in a campaign to keep the city clean. This may be broadcast through radio or television.

A website can also be used to provide information. You may try looking up the website of a university which gives vital information on the courses offered, procedure for applying for the course and so on.

All these are examples of tools or techniques used in public relations.

Let us now broadly classify the PR tools used to communicate to the public.

- Oral communication
- Printed and graphic communication
- Print media
- Outdoor media (electronic displays, hoardings, posters)
- Broadcast media (radio, television, films)
- Other media (websites, endorsements, exhibitions)

20.2 ORAL COMMUNICATION

You may recall what you have learnt about interpersonal communication in the first module. It is a two way communication.



Let us consider the example of a conversation between a student and a teacher: The student has not done well in her exams and the teacher wants to talk to her to find out the reason for her failure in the exam. The student is given an opportunity to express her problems and the teacher tries to console her and guide her so that she can do better in the next exam. This is an example of oral communication between a student and a teacher.

Oral communication is similar to interpersonal communication where there is a two way communication. This is also called face to face communication or person to person communication. This was the only form of communication when there were no means of modern communication.

Oral communication is a an effective PR tool which allows for questions and clarifications.

SPEECH AND INTERVIEW

You must have heard or seen the Prime Minister or President addressing the public on special occasions like Independence Day through the radio or television. Have you found their talk impressive? What have you learnt from their messages?

This is an example of a speech which is a primary form of oral communication. A good speech helps in effectively communicating to the public. If the speech is delivered before a live audience, it provides an environment for a two-way communication.



Fig. 20.1: Speech

You must have heard of the term ‘interview’. You may even have heard or seen an interview with a film star or cricketer on radio or television.

Now let us understand what the term ‘interview’ means. Interview is another form of oral communication where you find one person asking questions and

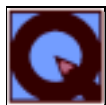


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the other answering them. The former is called an interviewer and the latter the interviewee. In this method, the interviewee gets an opportunity to impress the audience, fulfilling one of the goals of public relations.



Fig. 20.2: Interview



INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.1

1. Fill in the blanks with the most suitable word given in the bracket.
 - i) Oral communication is also called _____communication. (face to face, interpersonal, intrapersonal)
 - ii) _____ is an example of oral communication. (speech, website, poster)
 - iii) The basic goal of public relations is to _____ the public. (distract, offend, attract)
 - iv) _____ is a form of oral communication involving questions and answers. (speech, interview, campaign)

20.3 PRINTED AND GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

• **Fliers**

Have you come across single printed sheets of paper that are distributed along with your daily newspaper? You find that these give information about summer classes for children during school vacation, eating places in the neighbourhood, facilities offered by schools etc. You can see that they provide a lot of useful information about various services in your locality.

These sheets of paper which provide information are commonly referred to as fliers or handbills.

Therefore we can say that:

Fliers

- represent the simplest and easiest form of information tools used in public relations.

- were the first written material used for public relations
- are unfolded sheets posted on bulletin boards, delivered by mail or distributed by hand.
- present a single message rather than a series of separate message units.
- time specific and address a particular event
- serve awareness objectives through information.

Fliers can be made effective by enhancing their visual appeal.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thirty eight centuries ago, the Babylonians in Mesopotamia prepared fliers (carved on stone tablets) as part of a public education campaign to increase agricultural efficiency.



Activity 20.1

Collect fliers/ handbills which are distributed along with your newspaper for a month and write down the purpose for which they were developed. Did you find any one of them useful?

• Brochures

When the message to be conveyed must last longer in the minds of the audience, then one sheet of information, as in a flier, may not be sufficient. In such a case, a multi-page publication or in other words, more than one page of printed matter, is produced as a PR tool.

Depending on their size and purpose for which they are developed, they are called leaflets, folders or pamphlets. All these publications are called brochures.

We can therefore define a brochure as follows:

‘ folded sheet of information which can be read like a book and provides information which is relevant over a longer period of time’.

Let us see some examples of brochures.

A brochure produced by a university provides information about its campus, courses offered, fee structure, hostel facilities and so on for students who are seeking admission to its colleges.

Similarly, a travel agent brings out brochures which give information on tour packages organized by them for tourists.

• Newsletter

What exactly is a newsletter?

- It is a printed publication produced at regular intervals
- It is distributed to a particular audience seeking information.
- A newsletter should focus on information relevant to its public or audience





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Alumni – former students

- The content of a newsletter is presented in a writing style that is less formal and letter-like.

For example, a newsletter published by a college consists of information about activities conducted during a particular period, special achievements by students or teachers, retiring employees, new entrants etc. Such newsletters target not only the teachers and students but also the college alumni.

PRESS RELEASE

Let us now study about a press release which is different from the other forms of printed communication that you have so far studied.

A press release is the most important form of written communication used by a public relations professional to announce something to the media. It is mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the media.

How is a press release developed?

The text of the press release is written in the form of a story with an attractive heading so that the media quickly grasps and circulates the message through newspapers/radio/television/internet.



Activity 20.2

Prepare a brief press release on a cultural programme organized by your school.

20.4 PRINT MEDIA

You have learnt in an earlier module that newspapers and magazines form a part of print media. Now let us see how print media is used as a PR tool. You must have seen several advertisements appearing in newspapers and magazines. What do they consist of? They consist of textual messages as well as some visuals or pictures. These advertisements are examples of PR tools used in the print media. They are worked out effectively to attract the reader’s attention away from other competing advertisements.

But you find that advertisements appearing in newspapers and magazines are different in a number of ways. Let us list them.

Table 20.1

| <i>Newspaper advertising</i> | <i>Magazine advertising</i> |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally in black and white • Found in various sizes • More than one advertisement may be placed on the same page | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generally in colour • mostly full page • normally only one advertisement is placed on a page |



INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.2

1. Given below are a list of descriptions. Relate them to the respective form of printed and graphic communication that you have learnt in the lesson.

Description

Type of printed and graphic Communication

i) Written communication used to make an announcement to the media

ii) printed publication produced at regular intervals

iii) folded sheet of printed information which is relevant for a longer period

iv) unfolded sheet of printed information presenting a single message

2. Give any two differences between newspaper and magazine advertising.

20.5 OUTDOOR MEDIA

Have you seen huge boards displaying messages on a particular brand of mobile phone and dazzling in the night sky. This is what is called a **hoarding** and these days you find that many of the hoardings are electronically operated (electronic hoarding) to make them attractive and catch the attention of the viewers. This is an example of an outdoor medium which is a popular tool used in public relations.

Likewise, you must have read messages on milk and milk products written on bus panels and on huge boards at bus terminals, airports and railway stations where a lot of people come together. These forms of communication are commonly referred to as **poster media**.

Here, you will notice that the emphasis is on the visual messages or what is visible to the audience. The poster message carries a strong illustration with a meaningful headline. This form of communication is used to remind the audience about a certain product or idea.

Another form of outdoor medium are huge balloons suspended in the air with a message written on them. These are **hot air balloons** which can easily capture the attention of the public and thus help in public relations.



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Fig. 20.3: Hot air balloon

However, you find that some forms of outdoor media such as hoardings erected on the roadside provide very little viewing time for the viewer and thus do not help in effective communication.



Fig. 20.4: Advertising on bus panels

20.6 BROADCAST MEDIA

You have studied about the broadcast media such as radio and television in your previous lessons.



Let us take the example of the radio. You hear messages and music through this medium. The characteristic feature here is the sound which creates an impact on the listeners. Radio advertisements which combine music and messages is a typical example used for public relations.

Similarly, take the case of television. Here, you can see pictures or images as well as hear a message or music. These images have certain characteristic features. They are seen to move as well as make sounds, thus creating a huge impact on viewers. Reality music and dance shows, cricket matches which are sponsored by business organizations are examples of television being used to attract public attention to a particular product.

Now let us compare these with images and text found in the print (newspapers and magazines) and poster media. They are found to be static or in other words, they do not move.

Therefore, you can now see that the broadcast media offers possibilities for movement and sound, making it possible to present creative and attractive images.

Have you seen images on the internet? They offer scope for including movement and sound, making it a very appealing tool for communication. Promotional offers of cheap air tickets by airline companies provide examples of the internet being used a PR tool for communication.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.3

1. List any two forms of outdoor media with examples.
2. Fill in the the most appropriate word/s in the blank space:
 - i) Hoarding is an example of _____ media.
 - ii) Radio advertisements combine _____ and messages.
 - iii) Images and text in the print media are _____.
 - iv) Image on the internet offer scope for _____ and _____.
 - v) When messages are written on bus panels, this form of communication is called _____ media.

20.7 OTHER FORMS OF MEDIA

WEBSITES

Where do you find a website? On the internet? Some of you would have also seen a website.

Let us understand what a website is? A website is a collection of web pages and images which is accessible to the public through the internet.



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Fig. 20.4: Advertising through websites

The internet web is the most commonly used form of media for public relations.

Consider a situation when you have to travel to a particular city by train. The easiest way to obtain information on trains going to that city has been made possible by the Indian Railways through its website. You can even book tickets through this website. Compare this with a situation in which you have to go all the way to the railway booking counter for the same purpose. This is an example of a PR exercise by the railways for the benefit of the public.

From the above example, you can see that the internet web has enabled quick access to information and services. The internet is thus rapidly changing the way in which organisations provide services to their public.

The information in a website is presented in an easy and understandable format. Web pages are designed with catchy illustrations to make them attractive and thereby grab the attention of the public.

Can we now say that the internet web is an amazing tool for public relations communication.

**Activity 20.3**

Visit the website of All India Radio and write down your opinion on whether the messages and visuals you see there are useful and appealing?

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Have you heard or seen a celebrity or in other words, a well known person talking about a particular brand of soap or soft drink on radio or television? Here, you always find that a person who is likeable and familiar to the audience is chosen to describe a product and to persuade the public to use the product. This is what is referred to as '*celebrity endorsement*'.

Celebrity endorsement is a PR tool which persuades audiences to buy products such as soft drinks, soaps, eatables, clothes, toothpaste, beverages etc. by creating awareness/ interest in them through celebrities or popular people.



Activity 20.4

Have you come across products which were endorsed by celebrities? If so, have you been convinced about them and bought any of them? Write about your experience.

EXHIBITIONS

Have you ever visited an exhibition? Then you would have seen several products being displayed and sold in a large space in an open area or in huge halls. You may have even bought a few items. You would also have come to know about several new products available in the market.



Fig. 20.5: Exhibition

From this, we can say that:

- exhibition is another PR tool to enhance public relations activity
- the exhibits or items displayed leave a lasting impression on the minds of the people
- it involves participation of people on a large scale
- products can be exhibited and demonstrated in a relaxed atmosphere
- exhibitions provide scope for generating business



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However, you must understand that exhibition is an expensive tool and requires a lot of planning.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.4

1. What is a website ? How is it useful as a PR tool ?
2. Name two celebrities whom you have seen endorsing products on television.
3. List any two features of an exhibition.



20.8 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

→ **PR TOOLS**

- Oral communication (speeches and interviews)
- Printed and Graphic communication (fliers, brochures, newsletters, press release)
- Print media (newspaper and magazine advertising)
- Outdoor media (electronic displays, hoardings, posters)
- Broadcast media (Radio, Television and Internet)
- Other media (websites, endorsements, exhibitions).



20.9 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What do you understand by the term ‘PR tools’ in the lesson. List the different PR tools that you have learnt.
2. Explain the use of oral communication as a PR tool.
3. Differentiate between different types of printed and graphic communication with examples.
4. Describe the importance of broadcast media as a PR tool.
5. How is the print media used to communicate to the public. List the differences between newspaper and magazine advertising.
6. How are exhibitions and celebrity endorsements used to attract the attention of the public.



20.10 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 20.1** 1. i) face to face
ii) speech
iii) attract
iv) interview
- 20.2** 1. i) press release ii) newsletter iii) brochure iv) flier
2. Refer to section 20.4
- 20.3** 1. Refer to section 20.5
2. i) outdoor ii) music iii) static iv) movement, sound v) poster
- 20.4** 1. Refer to section 20.7
2. i) name of a filmstar ii) name of a cricketer iii) any other
3. Refer to section 20.7



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