



Behind Every Good Company is Great Public Relations

“Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some hire public relations officers.” Those words, spoken by historian Daniel Boorstin, have never been truer than in today’s corporate climate. Those who are dedicated to their public relations careers find themselves always “on”; always working to promote their company. They don’t miss any opportunity to ensure that the message is heard at every turn. Gone are the days of public relations being solely for the celebrities.

PR, or [public relations](#), is a must for large companies. However, many feel their PR departments are the “cure all” and can fix any public scandal or problem that emerges. This simply isn’t true. But, a good PR person can certainly affect the public’s view on any number of company announcements. From being accused of hiring illegal immigrants to a very public and scandalous affair among company leaders, the [public relations department](#) can often determine how such news items play out in the media and ultimately how quickly they become yesterday’s news. It’s not surprising that experienced PR personnel usually do quite well when negotiating salaries and bonuses.

The better the relationship between your company’s PR department and the media, the more advantageous it is for the corporation as a whole. If you can’t depend on your [public relations rep](#) to successfully pull off a media release regarding labor relations or any other uncomfortable event, then it’s time to reconsider your choice for your company’s media contact. To say this person must be likeable, convincing, authoritative, and even physically attractive is an understatement. Although it’s an unwritten and certainly unspoken rule, personal appearance counts. You need to be “camera friendly”, and physically attractive.

PR specialists have many titles, including public affairs representatives, communications agents, company points of contact, and many others; but it all comes down to the person who acts as the liaison between a company and the general public. He or she must be well versed, objective, convincing, must remain cool under pressure, and must, at all times, provide thorough information. It’s a fine line between revealing too much about any particular subject and providing enough so that it doesn’t appear as though anything is being hidden from the public. Often, the PR representative is the bearer of bad news, but there are many times, when your company PR agent provides good news from a company standpoint. New contract awards, which translate into new jobs, expansion announcements, and other information that

are of the public’s interest offset the times when bad news is broken.

Other responsibilities of a [public relations specialist](#) include researching, providing inputs for company manuals and employee guidelines, remaining current with global issues to ensure company representatives aren’t traveling to unstable international areas, scheduling conventions and tradeshows, and writing bid proposals for the companies. Many PR reps find themselves providing statistics and other confidential information during shareholders’ meetings and staff meetings.

Public relations is an exciting field, albeit a bit overwhelming at times. Most PR reps have assistants and sometimes entire departments for their support. With so many media reports, proposals, event coordination, and other events to take care of, an assistant is vital, especially in larger companies. As with most executives, the assistant is the one who makes sure meetings are attended, flights are caught, and engagements are kept.

For those who choose Public Relations, most thrive on the fast pace and the stress that’s sometimes involved with walking the fine line of responsibilities to the public as well as to their employers. They must be organized, and be able to speak with authority and clarity; a healthy knowledge of psychology is of course, always a bonus. Human nature plays a big part in these positions. Hours are long, but rewarding, and deadlines are always looming.

Educational requirements vary from company to company. Most of them, who have degrees, are usually in communications and business areas, or sometimes in journalism. Even so, most employers are more interested in the candidates’ skills and experience than in their education. And for those who are wondering whether or not there will be jobs available as we tread further into the recession, the answer is an absolute yes. In fact, the job outlook is considered excellent for all fields related to public relations.



PR Job Pointers

For those who don't mind unpredictable events, long hours, and travel, and can work well under stress, public relations is often a first choice. The pay is excellent but determined by many factors, mostly the size of the company and its budget. The job is both rewarding and exciting. One final note — in a survey done in late 2006, 87% of all companies surveyed indicated a growing need for a solid public relations specialist

and/or department. Of those, more than two-thirds anticipated adding to their staffs within twelve months. The trends from 2008 reflect those anticipated changes, as more companies, even as they were undergoing lay-offs due to current economic times, found themselves adding to their staffs, those who could improve the companies' public image.

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