1.0 OBJECTIVES

Through the earlier four blocks, you have been made familiar with the various aspects of Public Relations. By now, you would have hopefully grasped the concept of Public Relations, understood the process, recognised its need, analysed its application in the public and private sector, education, government, voluntary organisations, etc. In this Block, we will be looking into the practical aspect of public relations.

The generation of goodwill, understanding and image building are the chief objectives of public relations and this is achieved through varied communication strategies. This unit is designed to explain to you the use of mass media and other devices termed as 'tools' of communication. We will examine some of the important and common public relation tools. By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

* relate the role of communication to public relations effort;
1.1 INTRODUCTION

Public relations, as you know, is the “art of creating mutual understanding between an organisation and its various “publics”. “Publics” in Public Relations parlance mean those group or groups of people whose opinion has a direct bearing on the functioning of an organisation. A typical organisation will have employees, shareholders, dealers, stockists, government, media and the public at large, as its “Publics”. In fact, publics for different organisations will vary according to the nature of the organisation. To reach these “Publics”, the Public Relations practitioner has to decide the media and the channels which will be most suitable. If an organisation has to disseminate information to a rural audience, where the literacy rate is negligible, what should be the best media which is cost effective? Newspapers obviously, will not be suitable, because the concerned target audience are unlettered. Then what options does the Public Relations practitioner have? Depending on the availability of the budget, it can be radio, TV, interpersonal communication or traditional media. In order to make communication effective, you have to keep in view the message, the media and the audience.

In this unit, we will discuss the various media available to public relation persons for reaching the varied target groups and their relative advantages or limitations. The choice of media will obviously depend on the audience, availability of funds and the time frame and the objectives of the message.

1.2 PUBLICITY MEDIA

Media used for publicity are necessarily the mass-media. Mass media as the name suggests are media which reach the mass spread over a vast area simultaneously. The Press, TV, Radio, Films and documentaries among others, comprise the publicity media. Mass media constitute a nation’s public information system—a system in which the Public Relations practitioner play an important role by disseminating information. Let us examine the media options available to a public relations practitioner and how best he/she can use it for achieving the communication goals. Choice of publicity media will, however, depend on the needs of the organisation and aims of publicity, kind of audience to be reached and the aims of publicity, kind of audience to be reached and the available budget.

1.2.1 The Press

The role of the Indian Press in the country’s struggle for freedom being well known to you, should serve as a sufficient indicator about the power of the press as a fundamental institution, which reflects and moulds public opinion. In India, despite the factors of illiteracy and the advent of TV, newspapers continue to be the dominant medium which set the public agenda, disseminate information and shape public opinion.

The press in India has grown in size, circulation and specialization at all levels—national, regional and local. Besides the business / financial dailies the national and local dailies tool
have regular columns on industry, trade, development etc. Thus, publicity through the press is a popular and effective tool with maximum impact. The government, public and private sectors, and non-profit organisations use columns of newspapers to disseminate information to their publics.

There is a growing crop of specialised magazines catering to professional groups, business and industry. The explosion of magazines is seen even in regional languages for new audience with new interests. Besides the general circulation magazines and news magazines, there are periodicals catering to lucrative market of consumers, shareholders, tourism, textiles, women, computers, automobiles, etc. Magazines have become livelier, glossier and interpretative in content.

Magazines are attractive in appearance, have excellent reproduction quality and can be kept for reference. They are read at leisure and have a longer life span. This makes magazine publicity a must for organisations who can reach selected audience through chosen periodicals.

Publicity through Press:

The Public relations person, as the spokesperson of the organisation decides how and when the activities, policies or programmes of the organisation are to be projected to the public through the press. Information may be given to the press in a variety of ways like press release; features, article backgronders, etc.

It is important for you to remember as a PRO, that information of your organisation has to compete with similar information emanating from various other organisations; so you must be careful about the newsworthiness and timing of your news releases to ensure its publication.

News releases:

News from organisations, also known as press releases is the most common type of publicity. Organisations serve as source material for media and hence they should provide such news and facts which will be of interest to the readers, whether the content has to do with planned activity like a major order bagged, or with spontaneous event like an accident. The following must be kept in mind while preparing a press release:

1) Indicate clearly the name or organisation, address and telephone number along with the sender’s name, designation, etc.

2) The date for release should be indicated.

3) Content should be newsworthy, error-free and written in a journalistic style and typed on one side of the sheet only.

4) It should be brief and unambiguous.

5) It should have a headline and should be signed.

6) It should be released well on time for publication.

Illustration No. 1

- Examples of newsworthy items, in the business columns of a national daily, deserving of publicity

**NLC Contract for Siemens-BHEL Consortium**

MADRAS, NOV. 16. Neyvei Lignite Corporation (NLC) has awarded a Rs. 107 crore contract for life extension programme (LEP) of power house TS-I to Siemens-BHEL consortium for revamping four boilers and six TG sets.

The consortium with the latest technology and capability of both the organisations will undertake the programme and complete the same in a phased manner in the next two years. The boiler components will be supplied by BHEL Tiruchy and the TG and auxiliaries by Siemens. The project management and site execution will be undertaken by the BHEL power sector, southern region, Madras.

This will extend the life of the existing units for 15 years. BHEL has also developed elaborate inhouse capability to cater to such life extension of thermal power stations.
Indo-Dutch Proteins’ Hyderabad Unit

From our staff reporter

HYDERABAD Nov. 16. Indo-Dutch Proteins Limited will be setting up a Rs. 12-crore multi-product egg processing plant near Hyderabad in collaboration with B V Nederlandse Industrie Van Ei-Produkten of Holland.

The processed egg products will be used extensively in bakery items, pasta, vermicelli, and ice creams and also in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

The company, promoted by Mr. S.C. Reddy, Mr. S.Krishna Kumar and Mr. J.B. Reddy, is slated to tap the capital market next month to part finance the project. The joint venture envisages technology transfer, equity participation and marketing of products over the next seven years.

Kandla Port’s new jetty

BOMBAY. Nov. 16. The Kandla Port Trust has finalised a contract with Trafalgar House Construction India Ltd. (formerly Cemindia) for constructing the third oil jetty at a cost of Rs. 12 crores. It will be used for unloading oil from ships up to 45,000 dwt capacity.


Editorials/Articles/Features:

A public relations person, having good rapport with the media and having sufficient persuasive skills, can recommend subjects for editorials by providing background material and suggesting possible lines of approach. A sufficient knowledge of the editorial policy helps to identify the most suitable medium. Newsworthy material on special events, anniversaries, landmarks achieved, major policy changes or any controversial issues could serve as themes for editorials.

Columnists are always on the lookout for newsworthy material. At the same time, industry, trade and business houses often need publicity through feature articles to fulfill their marketing objectives. A feature or article thus becomes an ideal tool to talk about a common problem and suggest their product as the solution. These articles could be prepared by the public relations personnel or got done through a columnist by appropriate briefing.

Letters to the Editors:

This is yet another means that could be used by the public relation person to put forward the views of the organisation to inform people to correct a wrong impression. Since letters to the editor are a feedback from the public, those letters which make a forceful point, do get published without difficulty.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Answer the following questions.

   ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of the Unit.

1) State the advantages of magazines as a medium for publicity.

2) State three essential criteria for the success of a news-release.
Activity 1

Read the illustration provided of news items accompanying the section on Press-release. Now look through some issues of nation or financial dailies for spotting news-items based on newsreleases. Make a list of news-worthy events for an organisation on which news releases could be sent.

1.2.2 Television

Television has great force and scope as a publicity medium—a medium which allows the use of the printed words, spoken word, pictures in motion, colour, music, animation and sound effects, all blended into one. With satellite communication having become a reality, the impact of TV is persuasive, worldwide and powerful. TV has come to be a dramatic and the most intimate mass medium. It has prestige value too, besides having an important role to play in our socio-economic development. Hence TV is an effective medium for developmental news also. Both, the Public Relations practitioners and the mass media depend on each other for news. Depending on the occasion the Public Relations practitioner can approach TV with a news release about his organisation and similarly a TV station representative can approach him for news. Public Relations practitioners can make use of the medium by providing filmed news release to the TV stations. The news release will not be accepted, if it is too sales-oriented or resembles a paid commercial advertisement. The best approach will be to take a low profile approach in which the company presents facts of or information or educational nature. Non-profit organisations have better chances of publicising their activities over Doordarshan as they are non-commercial. With the arrival of cable television and growing competition among television companies, the publicist in India has unprecedent opportunities to cash in on. Industrial news, business programmes, development features, interviews, talks, discussions, analytical programmes can all be used with great advantage besides the use of short telefilms, or sponsoring of popular programmes.

How to prepare publicity material for TV?

The very first decision is to decide on news-worthy subjects. TV being a visual medium, it will pay dividends to make the news releases or features, action oriented and colourful for greater impact.

The second step is to identify a producer for the purpose. TV stations accepts professional U-matic tapes and not unprofessional half-inch video tapes which are used in marriages, birthday parties, etc. Ideally, a TV news release should not exceed 90 seconds. The story should be arranged in an “inverted pyramid” style. The most important news should be arranged in the beginning and the less important in descending order so that the editor, with one look at the release picks up the important sequences. After the film footage is shot, the edited version will need voice cast, music, etc., which should also be carefully selected. You can send an edited film clip with a written script indicating the visual input in the film alongside, to enable the news reader to lend his/her voice over.

On special occasions, like a major landmark achieved by our company, or a crisis situation say a fire, or any disaster, the TV team may approach you for coverage. As a Public Relations practitioner, you must facilitate the coverage by providing them access to the place and supply background information about the occasion. Whenever the coverage is after a crisis situation, the management’s point of view should be included.

1.2.3 Radio

Radio, like TV, can be effectively used in Public Relations. In India the radio covers more than 90% of the population. It is a mobile medium with a flexibility no other medium can
Public Relations Strategies

match. Even though radio is a mass medium, it possesses the qualities of a direct personal medium as it uses the spoken word and human voice for the most part to convey its message.

**How to use Radio as a Public Relations medium**

We are aware that news bulletins are broadcast over the radio at fixed intervals throughout the day. The Public Relations practitioners whether from the private or the public sector, can use radio as outlets for news about the company’s performance and news developments etc. The All India Radio’s code however does not permit mention of the name of a private company in a news bulletin or news reel. News is selected for broadcast based on its news worthiness to the listeners.

A radio news release should be written in radio style so that it can be used by an announcer without much editing.

Besides news, the All India Radio has a number of programmes pertaining to current affairs, industry, panel discussions, etc., which can be appropriately utilised by the practitioners. In fact, AIR especially the local stations, look for development stories. Public relation personnel can serve as a news source for the broadcasting stations. Popular programmes can be sponsored by the company.

**1.2.4 Films**

The shift in our dependence from words to picture, has made for the most profound changes in the way we think, learn and see the world. Film/documentaries make a powerful impact on the audience because of their audio-visual qualities. Films can be made on different formats like 35 mm, 16 mm and video.

As a Public Relations professional we need not necessarily be expert film makers, but we do need a working knowledge about the various aspects of film making. This will facilitate decision-making, appreciating the inputs and providing guidelines to the producer.

Films as a Public Relations medium can be utilised in the following ways. They can be used for the internal or external public. It could even be a documentary on the organisation. One could even sponsor a film for the Films Division under the Information & Broadcasting Ministry.

When a producer is hired, the public relations person is expected to provide guidelines on the aim of the film, content, length, presentation, background material and information about the target audience. Films could be used for training employees, educating consumers, development efforts for community relations or to build motivation among employees, or safety precautions, or company's achievements or even for coverage of special occasions.

**1.2.5 Video**

In the last ten years or so, most of the films, except those for theatrical viewing, are being produced on the video format. The video tape has revolutionised communication in the field of entertainment, information and education. Video equipment has the advantage of playing back the image and the sound immediately. It does not need processing as in the case of film.

It is possible to reshoot on the same film, if, the results are not satisfactory. Synchronised sound is possible with every video recorder and if necessary different sound tracks can be superimposed on a sound track, using a different language or dialect. Video tapes can be updated; in other words a few shots can be replaced for updating the programme without disturbing the rest of the programme. Video also has the choice of computer backed special effects. When we compare the cost and time frame, video works out economical.

Video has its disadvantages also. The equipment is delicate and susceptible to moisture. The video tapes may get jammed or damaged with repeated use. As compared to film the videotape has a shorter life span.

Video tapes are both professional and non-professional. The half-inch unprofessional equipment does not have much scope for editing. The editing is done form tape to tape, but the professional equipment has the advantage of other facilities like dissolver, freeze and other special effects for dramatic effects. As film making is expensive, time-consuming and cumbersome, more and more Public Relations professionals use video films.
1.2.6 New Technologies

Besides the use of popular media, organisations may have to resort to other approaches to communication. While a local organisation may derive adequate satisfaction from using local media and the very simple and traditional media like bulletin boards, posters or even rural fairs/festivals, the more aggressive and large corporations like multinationals, have to use the more sophisticated technologies like E Mail, Facsimile, teleconferencing etc. for exchange of information. Computing, data communication facilities and use of network linked through high-capacity multipurpose satellites in international system, affords worldwide access to specialised information.

Technological innovations have opened up a vast range of possibilities, each of which has immense potentials, depending on the situational needs.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Answer the following questions.

  ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this Unit.

1) What do you understand by mass media? Indicate some of the major media used by the publicist.

2) How can the radio be used as publicity medium?

3) What are the important pre-requisites for making a newsclip for television?

4) Suggest some themes for public relation films.
1.3 ORAL COMMUNICATION

Oral communication is used as a medium chiefly in employee communication for training them or informing them about the company's policies. It is also used in consumer, dealer, community and stockholder relation programmes. Oral communication may be carried on through meetings, telephone calls, public address system, panel discussions, counselling etc. Informed conversation between supervisors and subordinates also fall under this category. However, formal communication programmes are the responsibility of the public relation department. Oral communication is very effective, speedy, and with little expense. However, it has limitations in that it may be forgotten quickly or partly understood as one cannot refer back to it. Let us examine some major tools of oral communication.

1.3.1 Meetings

A Meeting is the coming together of two or more persons. It could be just a meeting of two department heads, a small group meeting, committee meeting etc. Yet every meeting is arranged with some purpose e.g. to resolve conflicts, brief the employees, solve problems, obtain reactions to a new scheme etc.

Meetings are planned by sending notices containing the agenda, well in advance to members, to enable them to prepare for the meeting. All arrangements must be made for smooth conduct of the meeting. Listening is important and hence every participant must be given a chance to speak. The chairman must initiate, direct and control the discussions and facilitate reaching of conclusions.

1.3.2 Speeches

Formal speeches are the quickest way of conveying information. Preparation of speeches and sometimes delivering the speech are jobs of the Public Relations department. Speakers must be trained and knowledgeable. The Public Relations department may also form a speakers' bureau from among the volunteer speakers who are the executives of the company and possess competence on the relevant subject. The public relations department may help in research, speech writing and training of speakers.

The content of the speech must be newsworthy and of public interest. The timing and venue should be considered carefully. Any crisis message should be conveyed in a dignified and composed manner. Voice should be well modulated with sufficient pauses in between.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Answer the following questions.
     ii) Compare your answers with ones given at the end of this Unit.

1) Meetings may be arranged for some purposes like:

2) Notice for meeting must contain the:

3) is responsible for controlling discussions at a meeting.

4) is a group of speakers who possess competence and skill in public speaking.

5) Oral communication in an organisation includes
1.4 PRINTED LITERATURE

Every organisation, whether in business or service, whether commercial or non-profit making, needs publicity literature to promote its products, services or activities. These can take various forms like house journals, annual reports, brochures, catalogues, booklets, leaflets, direct mail etc. The objective of all these remain more or less the same—to inform or persuade a target audience about a product, service or idea. We will now examine a few of these in detail to find out more about their mode of use.

1.4.1 House Journal

In the last chapter, we learnt that mass media reaches out to many people at the same time. It is difficult to know whether or not the target audience we wanted to reach out to really has read, seen or listened to a message. In selective media, in contrast, the target audience is identifiable. A house journal among others is a selective media and we can identify the audience.

There are tow types of house journals: Internal and External.

The internal journal is one of the important tools for effective employee communication. The external house journals, however, aim at some segments of external ‘publics’ like dealers, shareholders, etc. A third type is a combination of both internal and external, meant for employees as well as external publics.

The primary objective of a house journal is to create a forum for exchange of thought and vision on various issues concerning an organisation and its employees. A house journal, if carefully produced, serves as an important link between a management and its various employees. With corporations becoming larger, multi-dimensional and multi-locational, a house journal reaches employees belonging to different disciplines, cadres and interests, thus bridging the gap and creating a fellow-feeling among them.

Formats of house journals differ depending on management philosophy and availability of funds. Some may have a newspaper format and be just functional, while some others could have a booklet form with varying degrees of lavishness.

How to bring out a House Journal

The Public Relations person in an organisation ideally would be the editor of the house journal. Before publishing the journal, decisions about its editorial policy/objects must be got approved from the management. A look at a house journal can reveal whether the organisation is an open or a closed one. A journal of a closed organisation tends to be a one-way channel of communication, putting the company’s views to the employees. Such magazines are obsessed with coverage about top executives especially the Chief Executive Officer/Chairman/Managing Director of that company. An open company on the other hand ensures the editorial integrity of its publications and could have its employees contributing the news items and articles. The editor in this case will have the freedom to present stories according to the readers’ interest. When the readers’ letters are published, employees have a genuine opportunity to put forth their point of view, and the house journal, like any other reading material, competes for reader’s time. Hence, if a journal is to meet its communication objectives, it must be attractive enough to compel attention and must be of interest to those who read it.

In bringing out a successful house journal, the following steps have to be gone through.

Planning :- Develop a concept that best serves the company. Get management the format (i.e., the size whether to have tabloid format or a magazine format) and periodicity of the publication approved. This will, however, depend on the aims of the journal, target audience, and availability of budget.

Organising :- Once we have taken the approval of the management, we will have to organise staff to get going with the job. The more frequent the number of issues, the greater the need for more staff. It is advisable to develop a brand of freelancers / correspondents from among our external “publics”, if the house journal caters to them. We, however, have to take care to chose only those who have a flair for writing. A detailed schedule for collection/writing of stories, production, printing, mailing, etc. is to be worked out and adhered to strictly.

Publishing :- We must inculcate the habit of planning several issues ahead in addition to the
one being worked on at the time. Being an editor, we must travel as much as we can. We must
be where the action is, to have first hand information about the event. As the journal reflects
the style of the editor, we must strive to develop a ‘personality’ for our house journal.

**Distribution** :- The purpose of a house journal is not served till it reaches the target audi-
ence. We must select the quickest and most economical means possible to get the journal
into the hands of the readers. Some companies distribute the journal to their employees at
their work place, others mail it to their homes to ensure that it reaches the family members as
well. In order to get feedback, it will be appropriate to include a questionnaire to elicit views
about the articles which are liked most or disliked by the employees, and the reasons for that.
This will help in improving the content.

With the advent of video technology, many progressive companies have come out with video
magazines for employee communication. Cable TV network is used in their townships to
reach out to the employees in their homes.

### 1.4.2 Annual Reports

Not long ago, Annual Reports were drab-looking journals without much thought about their
presentation. Not any more. Annual reports have come to be recognised as an important Pub-
lic Relations tool for corporate communication. With more and more organisations going
public, annual reports can serve as prestige publications to be sent to the shareholders and
attract prospective investors. Although the Public Relations department of a company does
not have a direct responsibility for preparing the balance sheet and the statements of ac-
counts, it does advise the management on the overall approach of the report, the theme of the
chairman’s statement and on the format and presentation of the Report.

Apart from registered shareholders, there are other segments of the financial public, whose
interests have to be kept in view while providing information through the Annual Report. They
are :

a) the investing community in general, the potential shareholders who are on the look out
for investing in a suitable company;

b) the banks, financial institutions, etc.

c) the financial press;

d) the business community in general.

As a Public Relations professional, we could seek the services of a professional advertising/
designing agency to handle the assignment. The profile of the company during the year under
review can be projected in the Director’s report. It could be made attractive and colourful
with the use of glossy paper and graphic aids like bar charts, diagrams, pie charts and photo-
graphs of the development activities of the company.

Care should be taken to choose a right printer who has the expertise in printing Annual Re-
ports. Bringing out Annual Reports is a statutory requirement. It is to be published before the
Annual General Meeting. Hence, a strict time schedule must be worked out with the printer. In
fact, most of the printers are busy printing Annual Reports of different companies at the same
time, hence, we must take care in selecting that printer who has the capacity to undertake the
job and deliver the goods on time. An Annual Report needs planning to the minutest detail. As
the Annual Report contains Balance Sheets, we must be careful about proof reading to avoid
errors. It is advisable to get the final proofs cleared from the Company Secretariat Depart-
ment which has prepared the manuscript and the statement of accounts.

### 1.4.3 Photographs

Photographs have tremendous potential to attract the attention and offer proofs of facts or
events. Photographs, whether for purposes of news or for purposes of record e.g. inaugura-
tion of new premises, installation of machinery or hosting of a conference, provide a great
creative opportunity to a public relations practitioner and serve as an important tool. They can
also be used to illustrate house journals or other company literature.

Good skill, imagination and quality of prints are important to high quality photographs. Pho-
tographs may be taken by a staff photographer or a professional photographer may be com-
misioned. Unlike in news photographs, the photographs that are to be used for displaying
purposes in a public relations programme, can be planned in detail well ahead. A creative industrial photographer can be briefed on your needs. You would have time to study different possibilities and choose the best. Dramatic use of light and shade can also make black and white photographs very arresting.

Photographs must be kept catalogued for every reference and should be properly captioned when issued to the press.

1.4.4 Brochures

A brochure is a multi-panel publication that covers information usually on a specific subject. A brochure is also called a pamphlet, a flayer or a folder. A booklet has much the same purpose as a brochure except that it has more pages that may be stapled together rather than folded.

Organisations need brochures and booklets for a variety of reasons: to explain a new programme, process, a product, a new building plant, or laboratory, to ask for donations, or to sell a product by describing its virtues. Such publications are reasonably inexpensive, relatively fast to produce, and are attractive to read, if prepared carefully.

Although as a Public Relations person, one can have the services of a professional designer or a professional agency to go about the job, it is useful to know the basis so that one can guide the production.

The first step is to identify the aim of the brochure. In other words, what problem is it going to solve? What information is it supposed to disseminate to the target audience?

The copy or the text is the most important part of the brochure. It is not possible to write long copy because of the size of the brochure. We should identify the person who will write the copy. He can be from within the organisation or from the advertising agency. The copywriter must be given the right brief so that he can develop the text. Pictures, graphs, charts must also be selected carefully to go with the copy.

A brochure may have a fold configuration of four, six or eight panels. In deciding the number of folds, the ease in handling and reader's comprehension must be kept in mind. Reading should be smooth from one panel to another.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: i) Answer the following questions.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this Unit.

1) While preparing an Annual Report, the publics whose interests are to be kept in mind include ......................................................

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2) For public relations person, photographs serve the purpose of ..............................

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3) A brochure aims at .................................................................

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4) The chief aim of a home is .................................................................

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1.5 ADVERTISING

Advertising is defined as "any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor". It is called product advertising when it is used to promote sales of goods and services. In contrast to this, when space or time is brought for disseminating messages, aimed at creating a favourable public image of a company, it is called 'institutional' or corporate advertising. Public service advertising e.g. AIDS prevention, traffic safety etc. which are aimed at public welfare also come under public relations advertising.

Public relations advertising can be a very effective tool in informing and educating the public. The advertiser has full control over the timing and content of messages which can be communicated widely through the use of any medium. Public relations advertising aims at promoting favourable attitudes among the public for the organisation, so as to attract and maintain shareholders, build goodwill within the community to improve employee relations and morale, educate consumers, secure goodwill of dealers and suppliers, and keep the government informed. The themes used in public relations advertising will depend on the objectives of the campaign. More on this will follow in Unit III of this block.

1.5.1 Miscellaneous Communication Tools

In the face of tough competition in the market place where similar products vie with one another, it is necessary to promote the products of services continuously. Consumer durables and capital goods like suit cases, refrigerators, electronic goods, need a large number of support literature unlike small items like chocolates, candy bars or ice-creams. With the modern retailing techniques, products have to really sell themselves. This has led to aggressive publicity at the point of purchase or retail outlets. As a Public Relations person in charge of publicity we will have to decide on these kinds of promotional activities, including promotional literature, referred to as P.O.P. material (point of purchase), because of its ability to influence purchase decisions, this is again an important tool that can be put to use. There have been a lot of innovations in this media. Some of the options can be:

- Stickers, posters, labels to serve as reminders
- Racks or bins for display of products, window display
- Identification on the pack
- Speciality gifts like calendars, diaries, pens, key chains, etc.
- Provision of any necessary leaflets, catalogues, etc., to assist customer's decision to buy.

1.5.2 Direct Mail

Direct mail in some circumstances is the most powerful and certainly the most cost-effective Public Relations tool for disseminating of messages, announcements. It is also called a selective marketing technique. Direct mail is both a selective and a flexible medium. It is selective because it is addressed to only those people we want to reach. It is flexible because the number of letters we mail can be increased or reduced according to the situation. Besides, we are in full control of the content and timing of the message. Direct mail can be a friendly and personal medium of reaching out to a specific target audience, at a comparatively low cost.

Whatever is sent in a direct mail, a brochure, or a small sample of the product, it should be accompanied by a letter addressed to the recipient by his/her name, outlining benefits likely to be of interest specifically to that reader. The material has to be designed and copy written in such manner so as to create an instant rapport with the recipient.
Check Your Progress 5

Note: i) Answer the following questions.
ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this Unit.

1) List some items that can serve as P.O.P material for a publicist.

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2) State some advantages of direct mail as a medium for public relations.

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3) Differentiate between product advertising and institutional advertising.

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1.6 MEDIA RELATIONS

Media relations from the most basic activity of public relations. Media relations, in fact, take a good part of the practitioner's working day and are exacting and demanding.

Some of the tools for maintaining effective media relations include organising of press conferences, holding press briefings and arranging press visits or facility tours for the media men. Let us discuss these one by one.

1.6.1 Press Conferences

As a Public Relations practitioner, it is our sole responsibility to organise the press conferences. A press conference is generally used as the occasion for the release of news simultaneously to all media, provided the subject is newsworthy. This leads to an immediate question: when should we organise a press conference? The answer is—'as seldom as possible'. We should not fall to the temptation of calling a press conference, if the subject does not demand discussion between our organisation's spokesperson and the media. In such cases, a press release will sufficiently do the job. If, however, our organisation has to announce a major policy change or speak about a labour-management rift, or launch a product which requires demonstration, the occasion demands a face-to-face dialogue and not a one-sided statement. This calls for a press conference.

Let us consider the following carefully before holding a press conference:

- decision about the spokesperson who will address the press conference. Remember, as public relations persons we need not address a press conference. Ideally, it should be done by the head of the organisation or a department.

- Prepare a press kit which must contain a press backgrounder, news release, pictures, literature about the organisation, a writing pad and a pen or a pencil.
Public Relations Strategies

- Make a list of invitees from the media carefully.
- Decide a venue which is accessible to the media persons.
- Make arrangements for the transportation of media persons from a convenient place to the venue and return journey.
- Decide the timing. It should neither be too early or too late in the day. The conference should end at such a time, that the media persons are able to get back to their place and work for filing the story on time.
- Arrange hospitality.

In fact, as a public relations officer, we should be in control of the press conference from start to finish. After the chief spokesperson and the media persons have taken their seats, we must give self-introduction and introduce the spokesperson who will be addressing them. After a brief address by the spokesperson on the subject matter, the floor is opened to the media persons to ask questions. Set a time as to how long we would like the conference to continue. Depending on the occasion the ideal duration should be between 45 minutes to one hour.

Normally, after setting the conference in motion, we should take a seat and not interfere. At times, we may have to intercept to rescue the spokesperson who may have been cornered by a reporter's question.

For good media relations, it is important to establish a personal rapport with the media persons. It can't be achieved in a day but concerted efforts must be made in this regard. Press conferences should not be the only occasions when we meet the press. It serves our cause better if we have a friendly press.

1.6.2 Press Briefings

Press briefings are different from press conferences in that they are informal and do not require elaborate arrangements. Press briefings can be both proactive and reactive. By proactive, it is meant, that certain clarifications or point of view is required to be given after a crisis situation. In this case, some media persons are invited for press briefings. In case of critical issues, besides an informal briefing given by the spokesperson, a written statement may also be handed over to avoid misquotation. In case of reactive press briefings, a press person seeks an audience with the chief spokesperson for seeking certain clarifications or to have his point of view, before filing the story.

1.6.3 Press Tours

In press tours or facility visits much of the exercise is similar to organising a press conference. More elaborate arrangements are, however, required to be made as it may involve transporting the party to a long distance. The occasion could be a landmark achieved, commissioning a project or a crisis situation like an accident. Both occasions need careful planning and organisation. While inviting a reporter to join the press tour, it is always advisable to write to the editor or chief of the bureaus of different newspapers. In case of formal tours, sufficient notice must be given, because the concerned reporter may have to be spared for a number of days from the place of work.

As a Public Relations person, you would do well to give detailed considerations to the following before organising a press trip:

- List of media men
- Suitable travel arrangements
- Accommodation at site
- Briefing press party at site
- Background Information
- Hospitality

It is necessary that a responsible representative of the organisation accompanies the press
party and personally supervises hospitality arrangements.

Check Your Progress 6

Note:  
   i) Answer the following question.  
   ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1) Indicate some of the major tools of media relations.

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1.7 EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions cover a very diverse series of events, ranging from major international trade fairs to small local activities organised by a community. Exhibition can be of a general nature of communication and help to increase the reputation and the image of the company. It can become a meeting place for existing customers, potential customers and help to identify new sales area/outlets. New products can be launched. It also enables in assessing performance of the competitors in terms of product, service and presentation.

Exhibitions and fairs can also contribute towards generating inquiries and booking orders. In fact, products can be exhibited and demonstrated in a relaxed atmosphere. The prospective customers are generally in ‘buying mood’.

Planning an exhibition should involve the following considerations:

1) A clear idea of what is to be achieved through the exhibition.  
2) A convenient and appropriate timing.  
3) A budget drawn up with allocations for each item.  
4) Designing of the stand and preparation of other display devices like posters, photographs, animated flow diagrams, murals, sculptures, audio visual aids, etc.  
5) Arrangements made for publicity, advertising, press conferences and preparation of literature for distribution.  
6) Insurance, transport, lighting, hospitality, receiving of VIP visitors, allocation of duties, emergency precautions to be taken care of.  
7) Visitors’ inquiries answered fully and a visitors’ book provided to help evaluation efforts.

Exhibitions are an expensive media. The costs include expenditure towards space, designing, construction of stalls, transport, delivery, hospitality, insurance, printed literature for distribution, advertising, etc. Hence, it is necessary to plan it well so that maximum benefit accrue from it.

1.8 OPEN DAYS

Open house is an important tool to build rapport with the community/neighborhood where the plant is located. It is also a widely employed way of building pride and morale among the employees and their families. The Public Relations departments organise visits for employees’ families and community at large, to visit the plant to see the product manufacturing process and a tour of the company. There may be exhibits, films and other activities also. This is done on a few chosen days in a year which are referred to as ‘open days’. The visiting public may also be provided with hospitality by plant owners.
It is important, however, to make suitable arrangements to receive visitors, answer questions and take them on a guided tour. This entails the provision of trained guides and also hospitality for the visitors.

It is usual in many industry-conducted tours to provide refreshments to visitors at the end of the tour. If, however, the factory is situated out of town, and it has taken a long time for the visitors to reach there, it is advisable to offer refreshments on arrival. Factories producing eatables, generally not only offer the visitor refreshments, but may also present gift packs - for example, a chocolate factory or a biscuit factory can present their products which surely will be appreciated by the visitors and help in creating goodwill.

Delhi Milk Scheme, when it was set up, organised open houses for school children. The children were treated with flavored milk on their visits. Similarly, Coca Cola organised such visits. The visitors were also gifted with bottle openers, trays with ‘Coca Cola’ logo painted on them as momento.

In fact open houses and tours of the plant should be geared to serve a wide range of audiences, from employees, community members, press, to elected representatives of parliament and legislative assemblies.

1.9 SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events are the most visible component of a community relations programme. The events, however, must be well chosen. The special events should reinforce key messages that we are trying to communicate to any target audience. The special events can range from participating in a community related activity e.g. a local festival, to sponsoring a national or international event. ITC one of the leading corporate sector organisations in India, organises music concerts every year known as “ITC Sangeet Sammelans”. Besides providing a forum for upcoming artists, it honours veterans and famous artists. Free entry passes are distributed to community through their outlets. The programmes have become so popular that people look forward to this in advance.

In planning any special event, large or small, it is important to have a management structure that is ultimately responsible for the event, and to make timely decisions. The event itself needs publicity for better response from the target audience.

Check Your Progress 7

Note : i) Answer the following questions.

ii) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this Unit.

1) What are the advantages and limitations of exhibitions as a public relations tool?

2) What is ‘Open House’? How is it conducted?
1.10 LET US SUM UP

This unit has enabled us to examine some practical aspects of public relations activity. We have seen that communication is an integral part of public relations and therefore various devices and media must be used judiciously by the public relations practitioner to reach the goals of communications. The choice of the media and the tool depends on the target audience and the aim of the message.

Broadly, the publics of a company include the employees, shareholders, dealers, suppliers, consumers, government, media and the community at large-each of these having diverse interests. Hence communication in order to be effective, must be specific to these target audiences. In short, the audience, message and media should be well matched.

For reaching vast publics, publicity messages will have to be disseminated through mass media which includes the press, radio, TV and films. Devices or tools of publicity will include news releases, press conferences, features, interviews, documentaries, advertising, etc. For reaching selected audience, there are other tools and media like the bulletin board, correspondence, direct mail, etc. We learnt the advantages and limitations of the various media available so as to make suitable choices.

We also categorised broadly the kinds of communication in an organisation as being oral communication and written/printed communication. You were given some useful hints on making effective speeches and organising successful meetings.

We had a look at the tools for printed communication like the house journal, Annual Reports, brochures, promotional literature, advertising and direct mail. Planning, organising and publishing of these was also briefly explained to you.

You were also made familiar with the use of other tools like exhibitions, open house, special days etc. which can be widely employed for employee relations and community relations. We also learnt the need for cultivating media relations so as to get sustained support for publicity activities. With the use of right tools and choice of right media, well designed messages can help to put the organisation’s image in the right perspective to its various publics.

1.11 GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Audio-Visual Communication</strong></th>
<th>Communication by means of electronic devices which usually involve a screen and visual images, as contrasted with printed materials.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broadcast</strong></td>
<td>The dissemination of programmes or messages by radio or television.</td>
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<td><strong>Brochure</strong></td>
<td>Usually refers to a printed piece containing six or more pages.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Closed Circuit TV</strong></td>
<td>Live video tape or film material transmitted by cable for private viewing on a TV monitor.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>The art of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another through verbal and/or visual symbols. Requires sender, message and receiver.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Communication</strong></td>
<td>The entire range of public relations activities of a corporation as a whole, rather than activities designed for its individual segments.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Mail</strong></td>
<td>The promotion of ideas, products or services by letters of advertising sent to a carefully selected list of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Communication</strong></td>
<td>The two way transmitting of information to and from management and employees by various media, letters, newsletters, magazines, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Going Public</strong></td>
<td>The process by which a company issues and sells stock.</td>
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### Public Relations Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Journal</td>
<td>A company publication aimed at its employees and/or other target groups. It can be internal, external, or a combination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaflet</td>
<td>A printed piece, usually with four to six folds, for inexpensive distribution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>The people charged with the responsibility of determining organisation or corporate policies and planning and directing its operations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mass Medium</td>
<td>Directed at and reaches a wide variety of people, rather than directed towards a specific audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Relations</td>
<td>The relationship between the company and all the various media of communication, including print and electronic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Release</td>
<td>A written communication usually containing information of a timely nature sent to all news media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Conference</td>
<td>A gathering of members of the news media, both print and broadcast, to cover an announcement usually too complicated to convey in any other manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlet</td>
<td>Almost synonymous with booklet or brochure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Press Kit</td>
<td>Usually a folder containing background material, photos, illustrations, news release, etc., distributed at a news conference as source material to media persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public (Plural: Publics)</td>
<td>Any group of people bound together with a common interest which a public relations programme seeks to influence, i.e., stockholders, customers, legislators, media employees, etc. The need to define public(s) is a primary responsibility of a Public Relations operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive Public Relations</td>
<td>Anticipating events, circumstances, or situations, often through the execution of contingency plans. Basically offensive, and aggressive public relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive Public Relations</td>
<td>A policy of responding to a given set of circumstances, situation, or event after the fact. Basically defensive Public Relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Event</td>
<td>A situation or happening designed to influence opinion, such as an anniversary, reception, grand opening, sporting event, product introductions, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.12 SUGGESTED READING

- Bill Cantor; *Experts in Action-Inside Public Relations*; New York; Longman; 1984.
- T.Colin Colson; *Public Relations in Your Business*.
- Peter Jackson; *Corporate Communication*.
- Richard W.Darrow; *Public Relations Handbook*.
- Dan J.Forrestal; Chicago, Dartnell, 1968.
- J.M. Kaul; *Public Relations in India*. 

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Check Your Progress 1

1) Attractive appearance, good reproduction quality, longer life span, selective audience, prestige value etc.

2) Newsworthy content, timing, brevity.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Mass media are directed at and reach a very vast public. Such media as Television, Press, Radio and films comprise the mass media used by the publicist.

2) Radio reaches over 90% of our population. Public relations practitioner can use this medium to convey interesting and newsworthy information about their organisation. News release can be used in programmes on news, current affairs, development news, discussions, etc. Interviews may also be used for publicity purposes.

3) The following points are important:
   i) deciding on newsworthy information about the company which will appeal to TV audiences.
   ii) identifying a producer.
   iii) use of professional U-matic video tape.
   iv) Arranging for shooting.
   v) items arranged in sequence of importance.
   vi) clip not exceeding time frame of 90 seconds.

4) Documentary on the achievement of the company, information to employees, training, improving motivation, educating consumers, development efforts, etc.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Resolving conflicts, briefing employees, solving problems, obtaining reactions.

2) Agenda

3) Chairman

4) Speakers' Bureau

5) Meetings, public speaking, counselling, panel discussions, informal talks, telephone conversation

Check Your Progress 4

1) shareholders, investing community, banks and financial institutions, financial press, business community in general.

2) proof of events for publicity, serving as a record, displaying at exhibitions, illustrating company literature.

3) providing information to the target audience about a product, serving or an idea.

4) to create a forum for exchange of information and ideas between management, employees and external publics.

Check Your Progress 5

1) Stickers, posters, racks or bins for display of products, product packaging, leaflets, catalogue, speciality gift items like diaries, keychains etc.
2) It is a selective and flexible medium and the message can be personal in nature sent out to specific target audience. It affords full control of message and timing besides being a low cost medium.

3) An advertisement aimed at promoting sale of goods or services is called product advertising while those messages that aim at creating a favourable image of the company are called institutional advertising.

Check Your Progress 6

1) Some of the major tools of media relations include: Personal Contact, Press conference, Press briefs, facility visits for the press men, TV clips and press releases.

2) For organising a successful press conference, we should consider the following carefully: Decide about the aim of the conference. If interaction between the spokesman and the media is required, only then should we think of convening a press conference. The spokesperson who will address the conference needs to be identified. List of media person to be invited needs to be prepared.

Press kit to be prepared which should include a press note, pictures, if needed, a writing pad and pen/pencil. decision about the venue, transportation of invitees and hospitality for them are some of the pre-requisites for organising a successful press conference.

Check Your Progress 7

1) An exhibition, if properly planned can become a very important tool of communication. An exhibition can demonstrate the products and generate business. It helps to book orders. some of the limitations of this medium, however, are that it is difficult to know how many ‘right’ people visited the exhibition. It is an expensive tool. It is difficult to evaluate its utility in tangible terms.

2) An ‘Open House’ is an event whereby an organisation invites members of the community/neighborhood where the company is located to let them see product manufacturing and other aspects of the company. The idea behind an ‘Open House’ is to build up pride and morale among the employees and their families. It also helps to promote good community relations.

A few days in a year may be set apart for it and the audience identified for the plant visit. Transportation/hospitality and guiding the visitors a tour of the premises must be taken care of meticulously.