




# Public Relations

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## Framing the Message



# Public Relations Changes Perception

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- Social media allow celebrities and politicians to communicate directly with their audience.
- Some celebrities, like Vin Diesel, have become social media superstars. Diesel's skillful use of social media has helped promote his *Fast and Furious* movie franchise.



# Public Relations

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- **Public relations** refers to the total communication strategy conducted by a person, a government, or an organization attempting to reach and persuade an audience to adopt a point of view.



# P.T. Barnum and Buffalo Bill

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- P.T. Barnum
  - Used gross exaggeration, wild stories, and staged events to secure newspaper coverage for clients
- William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill)
  - Hired press agents who used a wide variety of media channels
  - Shaped many lasting myths about rugged American individualism
  - Among the first to use **publicity**



# Big Business and Press Agents

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- Press agents in the 1800s
  - Hired by large industrial companies
    - Used by rail companies to gain government support
    - Utility companies also used PR strategies to derail competition and eventually attain monopoly status.
  - Used bribes and fraud to garner support and eliminate competition



# The Birth of Modern Public Relations

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- Ivy Ledbetter Lee
  - Understood the importance of public sentiment
  - Contained damaging publicity fallout from the Ludlow Mine strike deaths
- Edward Bernays
  - First to apply findings of psychology and sociology to PR
  - Taught the first PR class



# The Practice of Public Relations

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- More than 7,000 PR firms in the United States
- Growing academic field since the 1980s
- By 2011, Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) had more than 11,000 members, and over 300 chapters at colleges and universities.



# Approaches to Organized Public Relations

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- PRSA definition of PR
  - “Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.”
- Two approaches
  - Independent PR agencies
    - Burson-Marsteller and Hill & Knowlton
  - Corporate in-house PR staffs
    - Used by most companies and organizations



# Table 12.1: Top 10 Public Relations Firms, 2013 (By Worldwide Revenue, in Millions of U.S. Dollars)

Rank	Agency	Parent Firm	Headquarters	Revenue
1	Edelman	Independent	New York/Chicago	\$741
2	Weber Shandwick	Interpublic	New York	\$567
3	Fleishman-Hillard	Omnicom	St. Louis	\$551
4	MSL Group	Publicis	Paris	\$501
5	Burson-Marsteller	WPP	New York	\$466
6	Ketchum	Omnicom	New York	\$464
7	Hill+Knowlton Strategies	WPP	New York	\$390
8	Ogilvy Public Relations	WPP	New York	\$296
9	BlueDigital	BlueFocus Communication Group	Beijing	\$271
10	Brunswick Group	Independent	London	\$231



# Performing Public Relations

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- PR pays careful attention to the needs of its clients and the perspectives of target audiences.
  - Provides a multitude of services
    - Publicity, communication, public affairs, issues management, government relations, financial PR, community relations, industry relations, minority relations, advertising, press agency, promotion, media relations, social networking, and **propaganda**



# Performing Public Relations (cont.)

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- Formulating the message
  - Surveys
  - Focus groups
  - Social media analytic tools
- Conveying the message
  - Press releases
  - Video news releases (VNRs)
    - Public service announcements (PSAs)
  - Online options



# Performing Public Relations (cont.)

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- Media relations
  - PR managers
    - Secure publicity to promote clients
    - Act as the point of contact during crises
    - Recommend advertising to clients when it seems appropriate
- Special events
  - Raise a client's profile
  - Pseudo-event
    - Created solely to gain media coverage



# Performing Public Relations (cont.)

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- Community relations
  - PR firms encourage companies to participate in community activities.
- Consumer relations
  - Companies are encouraged to
    - Pay more attention to customers
    - Establish product service and safety guarantees
    - Ensure that all calls and mail from customers are answered promptly



# Performing Public Relations (cont.)

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- Government relations
  - Work to prevent burdensome government regulation
  - Lobbying
    - Attempting to influence lawmakers to support and vote for an organization's or industry's best interests
  - Astroturf lobbying
    - Phony grassroots public-affairs campaigns engineered by PR firms



# Public Relations Adapts to the Internet Age

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- Company Web sites are the home base for PR efforts.
- Companies can interact with audiences via social media.
- PR still needs to control messages.
  - Firms have edited company Wikipedia entries, and paid bloggers to promote products.



# Public Relations during a Crisis

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- *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in 1989 was benchmark for how April 2010 BP oil spill was judged.
  - BP's PR mistakes included multiple underestimations of damage done and the CEO's lack of empathy.
- Tylenol scare of 1982
  - Full disclosure, pulled products, replaced with more secure bottles