SECOND EDITION

PUBLIC
RELATIONS

ENGAGEMENT
CONVERSATION
INFLUENCE
TRANSPARENCY
TRUST

Tom Kelleher

Public
Relations

SECOND EDITION

Tom Kelleher
University of Florida

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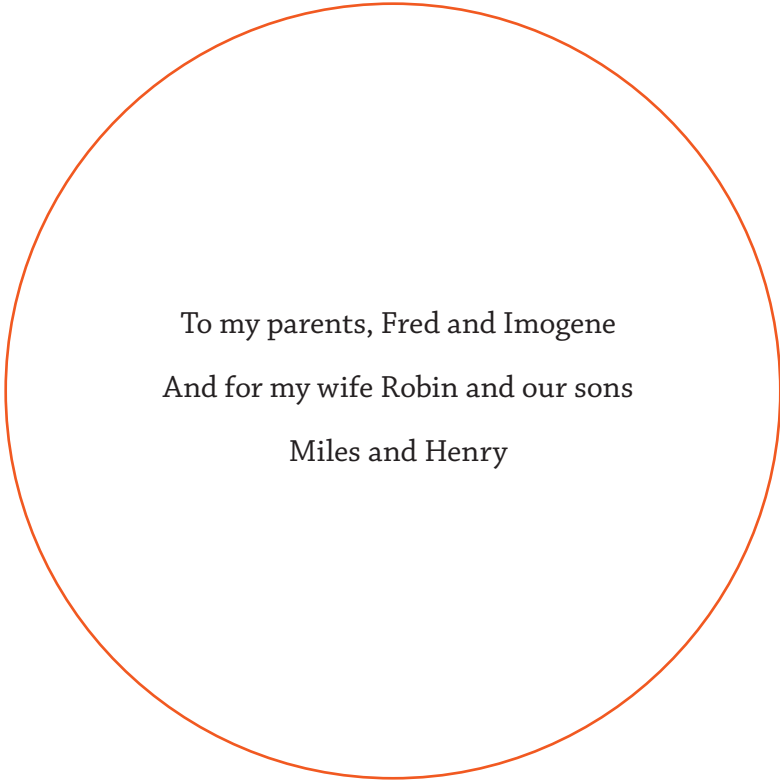
To my parents, Fred and Imogene

And for my wife Robin and our sons

Miles and Henry

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Preface

Writing the first edition of *Public Relations* and then developing the second edition to keep up with the times has kept me mindful of the pace of change in public relations. New technologies, new news, new cases, new faces—I've continued to try to keep the content fresh while retaining the lasting concepts that are still sound so that the lessons gleaned from each chapter can be applied to the next big app, meme, crisis, or event to fill our ceaseless newsfeeds. In addition, I have added videos to provide context for many of the case studies and examples included throughout the book and assessments to ensure students understand and can apply the concepts discussed.

The passage of time during the relatively slow cycle of writing, editing, revision and publication forces us to check how our *understanding* of the concepts and the lessons from yesterday's cases and examples can be *applied* in the present, and how we can use that knowledge to *analyze* unfolding trends and news. Unlike a status update, snap, tweet or post, the content of this text has to be *evaluated* on the knowledge it delivers more than on the momentary trends it taps.

Look at the citations and links in the references. There are hundreds of referrals that lead to countless additional resources—almost all of it freely available online. My goal for this book continues to be to offer a structure to work with so students can climb the pyramid of Bloom's taxonomy from recall to understanding to application to analysis to evaluation. For the most part, I've left the top of the taxonomy—*creation*—to students and their professors. Courses in public relations writing, multimedia production or campaigns will focus more on that part, and students will turn to other texts, trainings and online resources as they delve deeper into creating public relations tactics and programs on their own.

In any case, I am grateful for the time I've had to tweak the material and test its resilience across two editions. In a way, each of the case studies and examples is a little test. Does the moral of the story still resonate? Does the key point still hold? My highest hope for the second edition of *Public Relations* is still that it offers a cohesive enough foundation that teachers, students, and professionals can explore the changing world of public relations with mutual understanding and a common vocabulary.

NEW PERSPECTIVES

Scores of reviewers have taken time to offer feedback on countless drafts of both the first and second edition of *Public Relations*, and all of what you will read in the chapters that follow. Every single reviewer has helped improve the book in some way. Each one of them brings specific knowledge of

different areas of public relations, as well as different life experiences that have informed their feedback.

One of the specific challenges of writing the second edition was to include and acknowledge all these diverse perspectives and voices while retaining my own. Sometimes the shift is subtle—the choice of a geographical reference or current event. Other times the voices are represented much more directly with specific quotes or interviews via the "Voices from the Field" included with each chapter.

As a field of communication, public relations is dynamic and conversational. And conversational communication requires authenticity. My job as *author* isn't so much to be the *authority* but to be *authentic* in presenting the field in an engaging way.

Speaking of dynamic and authentic voices, I would be remiss in discussing the revisions made for the second edition of this text without a huge acknowledgement and thank you to Natalie Asorey. It was a tremendous stroke of good fortune for me when the University of Florida was able to hire Natalie as a lecturer here at about the same time as I began working on the second edition. Looking at her bio in the "Voices from the Field" for Chapter 6, you'll see why. Natalie brings to her students a wealth of public relations wisdom and experience in cross-cultural communication and social media. She most recently was in charge of social media at BODEN in Miami, where she managed the McDonald's USA account and led Escucha, the agency's social listening practice. Natalie contributed greatly to the insights and perspectives reflected in the extensive revisions to Chapter 10 ("Social Media and Mobile") and Chapter 13 ("Global"), all while maintaining the narrative flow that has become a hallmark of this book.

NEW TO THE SECOND EDITION

Trying to maintain the mantle of "the most contemporary introduction to public relations" has proved to be one of the greatest challenges in writing a second edition. Of course, social media and current events provided a bountiful supply of fresh stories and illustrations, but reviewer recommendations were key in making sure that the pursuit of shiny new examples did not come at the expense of important student learning outcomes. Sometimes the revisions meant filling gaps pointed out by reviewers. Other times new trends were taken into account to update the setting for contemporary cases and stories, such as direct-to-consumer (or DTC) communication and branding strategies (Chapter 7), social and visual listening (Chapter 10) and the gig economy (Chapter 14).

In addition to updating and replacing examples and illustrations throughout, the second edition features the following key revisions:

- **MOBILE & SOCIAL MEDIA:** Chapter 10, "Social Media and Mobile," more clearly highlights the tactical skills needed by public relations

practitioners today and how practitioners can use social media to listen to, engage with and build relationships with their publics.

- **GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES:** Chapter 13, "Global," heeds the advice of the 2017 report from the Commission on Public Relations Education, which recommends that students in introductory courses learn how the practice differs throughout the world, by integrating more examples and perspectives from outside the United States.

- **CAREER STRATEGIES:** Chapter 14, "Careers," covers personal branding as a career strategy with tips that guide students in building skill sets to bring to the dynamic public relations job market, including internships and jobs in agencies, corporations, nonprofits and NGOs.

- **NEW CASE STUDIES:** Fourteen new case studies highlight examples of public relations successes and failures. These include Papa John's, Crock Pot, IHOP, Medtronic, Bark Box, Gillette, World Bicycle Relief, Kelly Slater Wave Company, Burger King, Disney/Make-A-Wish, Tesla, Facebook, Vick's and MasterCard.

- **NEW INTERVIEWS:** Five new *Voices from the Field* interviews feature new practitioners giving practical advice on the skills students need to be successful in the industry: Rob Clark, VP of Global Communications and Corporate Marketing for Medtronic; Megan Kindelan, Director of Public Affairs for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Natalie Asorey, University of Florida Lecturer and former head of social media at BODEN; Tina McCorkindale, President and CEO of the Institute for Public Relations; and Patrick Ford, professional-in-residence at UF and former Burson-Marstellar worldwide vice chair and chief client officer.

- **NEW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Discussion questions and hands-on activities at the end of each chapter provide a jumping-off point for productive classroom discussions of every major subsection, learning outcome and case study.

- **NEW INTERACTIVE E-BOOK:** The enhanced interactive e-book includes integrated videos tied to several extended examples and case studies as well as additional assessments (multiple choice questions) tied to the main learning objective sections and end-of-chapter self-assessments.

Beyond these core content changes, the second edition features a refreshed design and art program that better signposts key examples, vivid images, and extensive social media and ethics coverage that continue to be hallmarks of the book.

ORGANIZATION

The second edition of *Public Relations* has four sections: (I) *Foundations,* (II) *Strategy,* (III) *Tactics,* and (IV) *Contexts.*

The *Foundations* section starts with Chapter 1, "Principled Public Relations," which presents classic definitions of public relations alongside the crowdsourced PRSA definition. Arthur Page's principles of public relations management provide a framework for introducing ethical practice. Professional organizations and codes of ethics are also introduced. The rest of the *Foundations* section identifies concepts that have always been core to good public relations. Chapter 2, "Public Relations Models through the Ages," covers public relations history with Grunig and Hunt's models and Lamme and Russell's taxonomy of public relations goals. The next two chapters apply scholarship on "Convergence and Integrated Communication" (Chapter 3) and "Relationship Management" (Chapter 4) to the contemporary practice of public relations.

The *Strategy* section includes all of the elements of the traditional four-step, R-P-I-E process. The section starts with "Research" (Chapter 5) and includes a discussion of formative and summative research to highlight the cyclical nature of strategy. Next is "Planning" (Chapter 6), followed by "Implementation" (Chapter 7), which covers action and communication in strategic programs and campaigns. The last chapter in the *Strategy* section, "Evaluation" (Chapter 8), returns to the importance of research with a focus on measurement and metrics for success in digital communication.

The *Tactics* section includes three major skill and technology areas: "Writing" (Chapter 9) and "Social Media and Mobile" (Chapter 10).

The *Contexts* section (Chapters 11–14) addresses the forces influencing the practice of public relations as emerging sociotechnical trends challenge public relations people to confirm, rethink or in some cases abandon past practices and ideas. Chapter 11, "Legal," discusses law and policy. Chapter 12, "Issues and Crises," covers the issues lifecycle and cases of conflict and crisis management. Chapter 13, "Global," covers global and cultural contexts that are broadening today's practice of public relations. Finally, Chapter 14, "Careers," delves into public relations careers with advice on personal branding and coverage of different areas of specialization and different types of employers.

POSITIONING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Consistent with the high standard set in the first edition, the second edition of *Public Relations* showcases an outstanding set of features and pedagogy to help students understand and learn the concepts. These include learning outcomes aligned with key UAB competencies, case studies, ethics topics representing key provisions of the PRSA Code of Ethics, "In Case You Missed It" (ICYMI) practical tips, Q&A's with professionals and scholars, bulleted summaries, discussion questions and activities and defined key terms. In addition, the interactive e-book includes videos associated with examples and case studies as well as a number of multiple self-assessment questions tied to the learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes

In addition to learning outcomes specific to contemporary public relations practice, each chapter opens with public relations learning outcomes aligned with the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) groupings of competencies (as outlined at http://www.praccreditation.org/resources/documents/2016-apr-KSAs-Tested.pdf). This ensures *Public Relations* continues to be professionally relevant.

Case Studies

Every chapter includes at least one extended run-in case study embedded in the text, and some chapters contain two or even three. These cases provide relevant, real-world examples to illustrate the important concepts introduced in the book.

Ethics Topics Mapped to the PRSA Code of Ethics

Ethics are integral to the first chapter and discussed in every chapter thereafter. Each of the six provisions for conduct in the PRSA Code of Ethics is covered to ensure students have a firm grasp of the code that governs and sets guidelines for the public relations industry.

In Case You Missed It (ICYMI)

End-of-chapter boxes summarize some of the most useful tips covered in the chapter, so students remember the most practical points.

Voices from the Field Q&As with Professionals and Scholars

Each chapter includes a Q&A with a practitioner or scholar offering additional from-the-field perspectives and insights into the success stories and cases presented in the chapters. These interviews give students a chance to see how the theories and concepts introduced in the book work in practice and also to gain some insights into ways they may enhance their chances for future success in public relations.

Captions

Queries included at the end of photo and figure captions prompt students to think more critically about the highlighted examples.

Bulleted Summaries

Summaries organized around the learning outcomes identified at the start of each chapter reinforce the key takeaways, so that students have a firmer understanding of the concepts they should have learned.

Discussion Questions and Activities

Questions and activities at the end of each chapter encourage students to demonstrate learning outcomes by discussing personal and professional experiences or by analyzing and evaluating online resources. Instructors can easily deploy these in face-to-face or online teaching as writing assignments or discussion starters that connect student learning outcomes with current events and technologies.

Glossary

Key terms are defined in the margins of the print text and hyperlinked to the bolded key terms in the interactive e-book, to reinforce key concepts. Flashcards (in the interactive e-book) also help students to review key terms in preparation for exams.

Videos (Interactive e-Book)

Between two and four videos appear in every chapter of the e-book. These videos provide context and expand on many of the examples and case studies included in each chapter.

Multiple-Choice Questions Tied to Learning Outcomes (Interactive e-Book)

Multiple-choice questions tied to the learning outcomes of the book and included at the end of every major heading and at the end of each chapter in the e-book provide students with opportunities for low-stakes assessment to make sure they understand the key terms, ideas, and concepts as they proceed through the reading.

Digital Study Guide

A robust Digital Study Guide available at www.oup.com/he/kelleher2e includes flashcards, videos and self-study quizzes. Additional materials, including summary videos, video quizzes, discussion and case study questions, and additional assignable quizzes, are available via an instructor LMS course package when students redeem the access code that comes free with every new print book and ebook.

- **FLASHCARDS:** Flashcards help students to review key terms and prepare for exams.

- **VIDEOS:** Videos related to many examples and case studies in the book help to further contextualize and reinforce ideas and concepts. In addition to being embedded in the interactive e-book, each of these videos is also available with multiple-choice questions in the interoperable cartridge to be assigned to students by the instructor.

- **MULTIPLE-CHOICE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:** Multiple-choice questions related to the learning outcomes of the book appear at the end of every major heading and also at the end of each chapter to test students' understanding of the material and help them prepare for exams.

- **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:** Discussion questions and activities from the end of each chapter are available in the interoperable cartridge to be assigned to students by the instructor. These questions and activities require students to engage in higher order thinking and apply what they have learned in each chapter.

- **SUMMARY VIDEOS:** Videos for each chapter provide context and insights into the importance of the chapter content and relevance to students for their future in public relations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Jeff Duclos	*California State University–Northridge*
Tasha Dunn	*University of Nebraska at Kearney*
James Everett	*Coastal Carolina University*
Michele E. Ewing	*Kent State University*
Patricia Fairfield-Artman	*University of North Carolina at Greensboro*
Barry Finkelstein	*Luquire George Andrews*
Robert French	*Auburn University*
Tamara Gillis	*Elizabethtown College*
Mark Grabowski	*Adelphi University*
Chris Groff	*Rutgers University*
Karen L. Hartman	*Idaho State University*
Christine R. Helsel	*Austin Peay State University*
Amy Hennessey	*Ulupono Initiative*
Corey A. Hickerson	*James Madison University*
Randy Hines	*Susquehanna University*
Sallyanne Holtz	*University of Texas at San Antonio*
Brad Horn	*National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum*
Nathan Kam	*Anthology Marketing Group*
Katherine Keib	*Oglethorpe University*
Natalie Kompa	*Ohio Dominican University*
Thomas A. Lamonica	*Illinois State University*
Keith Lindenburg	*Brodeur Partners*
Lisa Lundy	*University of Florida*
Sufyan Mohammed	*University of Scranton*
Aaron Moore	*Rider University*
Lisa H. Newman	*University of Cincinnati*
Dana Alexander Nolfe	*Bryant University*
Susan Pahlau	*Colorado Christian University*
Veronika Papyrina	*San Francisco State University*
Heather Radi-Bermudez	*Florida International University*
Kyle F. Reinson	*St. John Fisher College*
Nazmul Rony	*Slippery Rock University*
Risë J. Samra	*Barry University*
Jean K. Sandlin	*California Lutheran University*
Kathleen Stansberry	*Cleveland State University*
Marlane C. Steinwart	*Valparaiso University*
Robin Street	*University of Mississippi*
Dustin W. Supa	*Boston University*
Kaye D. Sweetser	*San Diego State University*
Philip Tate	*Luquire George Andrews*
Richard Waters	*University of San Francisco*
Susan E. Waters	*Auburn University*
Cynthia Wellington	*Webster University*
Brenda Wilson	*Tennessee Tech University*
Quan Xie	*Bradley University*
Alissa Zito	*Loyola Marymount University*

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TOM KELLEHER, Ph.D., is Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research in the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida.

Kelleher joined the UF faculty in 2014 after 13 years on the faculty at the University of Hawaii, where he anchored the public relations track. From 2010 to 2013, he served as Chairman of the School of Communications at the University of Hawaii, which offers two B.A. degrees (communication and journalism), an M.A. in communication, and a Ph.D. as part of an interdisciplinary program in communication and information science. He also served in the public relations department of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 2004 to 2006. He earned his B.A. from Flagler College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Florida.

Kelleher has designed and taught 22 different courses at three flagship state universities (Florida, North Carolina, and Hawaii) and has published in numerous journals including *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* and *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*.

In addition to the first edition of *Public Relations*, Kelleher also wrote *Public Relations Online: Lasting Concepts for Changing Media*, which was the first scholarly textbook in public relations to focus on the implications of social media and "Web 2.0" technologies for theory and practice. He served on the editorial board for *Journal of Public Relations Research* for nearly two decades, regularly reviews papers for the AEJMC public relations division, and for 12 years served as faculty advisor to his school's chapter of PRSSA. He has been a member of AEJMC since 1996, PRSA since 1999, and ICA since 2000.

Kelleher has worked in university relations at the University of Florida; science communication at NASA in Huntsville, Alabama; and agency public relations at Ketchum in Atlanta.

Principled Public Relations

This simple kitchen appliance became the villain in one of America's most viewed TV series. How did Crock Pot use humor to simmer down the public outrage?

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

1.1 Define public relations in terms of organizations, publics and the relationships between them.

1.2 Explain how public relations can serve a management function through key principles and values for ethical conduct.

1.3 Understand the importance of ethics in public relations.

1.4 Apply systematic ethical decision-making for public relations.

1.5 Identify international professional associations and become familiar with codes of ethics.

RELATED UNIVERSAL ACCREDITATION BOARD COMPETENCY AREAS

2.1 INTEGRITY • **2.2** ETHICAL BEHAVIOR • **3.3** COUNSEL TO MANAGEMENT
4.3 KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIELD • **5.5** LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Among Publix's publics are frequent shoppers, fans and coupon clippers, including the mother of two who developed the "I Heart Publix" website at http://www.iheartpublix.com/.

Are you part of a public for Publix?

Engagement. Conversation. Influence. Transparency. Trust. These concepts pepper workshops, seminars, articles and online discussions of what social and digital communication technologies mean for public relations. While essential for professional practice today, they have been at the heart of good public relations since long before Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

This chapter introduces classic definitions of public relations as well as a modern description crowdsourced by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). By and large the crowdsourced, social-media-era definition matches the classics that have been used in the teaching and practice of public relations for decades. While keywords like *publics, organizations, communication* and *relationships* may not be buzzworthy, these concepts have stood the test of time as key components in any sound definition of public relations.

Defining Public Relations

Publics—it's not a term you hear every day outside of classrooms and strategy meetings. I still recall vividly the first day in my very first public relations course. The professor started right in discussing the importance of relationships between organizations and publics. For a moment, I was confused about why we would spend so much time talking about relationships between organizations and *Publix*, the prominent southern U.S. supermarket chain ("Where shopping is a pleasure!"). Of course, he was talking about the plural of the term *public*, which did turn out to be important to our first lesson in public relations. In public relations, **publics** are groups of people with shared interests related to organizations.

General public—now here's a term, referring to everyone in the world, you probably do hear every day. How is the general public responding to today's news events? What's the best way to get our message out to the general public? Can we engage the general public on this issue? The first two questions are nearly impossible to answer, and the answer to the third question is probably "no." That is the problem with the general public. For all practical purposes the general public doesn't help us with strategy, and it doesn't help us identify any real people with whom we want to communicate.

Engaging in public relations means communicating with people who are part of specific groups with specific interests. Some of these publics are groups that have an effect on the **organizations** for which we work. These include large corporations, small businesses, nonprofits, schools, government agencies, **nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)** organized at the local, national, or international level, and even clubs and student groups—pretty much any group of people organized to pursue a mission. Others are people who are affected by our organizations. Most publics fit both criteria in that the influence is mutual.

Charity: Water (organization) appeals to Amazon shoppers (public) to raise money to bring clean drinking water to more than 37,000 people around the world (another public). That's public relations. Representatives of a Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter (organization) make an announcement in an introductory communications class to recruit new members (public). That's public relations. The Japan National Tourism Organization (organization) posts photos and videos to its "Visit Japan" Facebook page and interacts with commenters (public) on the page. That's public relations. Hewlett-Packard Co. (organization) posts a news release announcing that quarterly profits have slipped and hosts a live audio conference call for media contacts (public) and investors (another public) in order to satisfy Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC—yet another public) regulations. That's public relations too. Notice that in none of these cases has the organization set out to engage the general public. Instead, Amazon shoppers, new communication majors, Facebook commenters, media contacts, investors and the SEC are identified as specific publics.

The labels for publics and organizations are sometimes interchangeable. If executives from Hawaiian Electric Co. (organization) visit homes of community leaders in the neighborhood of proposed new power lines (public) to discuss options for meeting increased energy demand, that's public relations. And if neighbors in the community organize a coalition (organization) to oppose the electric company (public) at government hearings, that's still public relations.

Completing a full definition of **public relations** requires more than just identifying organizations and publics. We still have to understand the second part of the term *public relations*—the relations.

Textbook Definitions

Perhaps the most commonly cited definition of public relations is the one written by James Grunig and Todd Hunt in their classic 1984 public relations text *Managing Public Relations*: "the management of communication between an organization and its publics."[1] There's a lot to this business of managing

More than 37,000 people around the world are getting clean water because of your @AmazonSmile purchases! This #PrimeDay, choose @charitywater before you shop on @Amazon, and help change even more lives: smile.amazon.com/ch/22-3936753
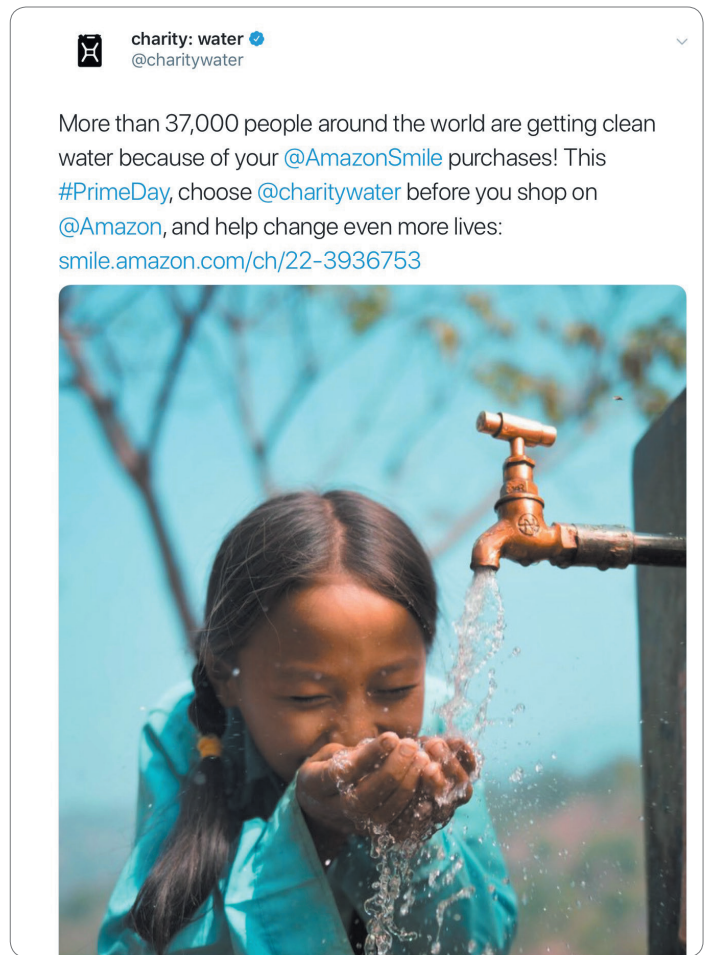
Charity: Water partnered with Amazon to raise money on Amazon Prime Day.
Who were the key publics?

To define public relations, consider organizations, publics and the relations between them.

Public relations
Management of communication between an organization and its publics, or the strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.

communication, which is why so many other definitions of public relations abound. Another classic definition from another classic public relations text, *Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations*, defines public relations as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends."[2]

Naturally, people are wary, or even skeptical, of textbook definitions. Ask people outside of the field of public relations what public relations is and you'll get very different answers. In introductory communication courses, I often ask students to name the first thing that comes to mind when I say "public relations." "Damage control" and "spin" are almost always mentioned.

Case Study

Hold the Fiasco, Please.

Often when we hear about public relations in the news or on social media, it's not pretty. In fact, generally, it's a "PR nightmare," "disaster" or "fiasco" that makes headlines. These were the words used by various media outlets to describe an incident involving Papa John's founder and Chairman John Schnatter when *Forbes.com* revealed that Schnatter had used the N-word on a conference call with a marketing agency.

Ironically, the conference call was intended "as a role-playing exercise for Schnatter in an effort to prevent future public-relations snafus," according to *Forbes'* Noah Kirsch, who broke the story.[3] A few months earlier, Schnatter had publicly entered a debate about National Football League players protesting the national anthem. Schnatter had blamed slow pizza sales, in part, on the NFL's issues. Papa John's then hired a public relations agency to help recover from the fallout with the NFL. However, no one from the public relations agency was on the conference call with the marketing agency a few months later. After the story broke, both agencies terminated their contracts with Papa John's.

On the day that news of the conference call broke, Papa John's stock prices dropped nearly 5 percent. That same night, Schnatter apologized and resigned. On the very next day, Papa John's stocks jumped 11 percent. And get this—as a 30 percent stockholder, Schnatter increased his net worth by an estimated $50 million in one day as a result![4]

Inasmuch as Schnatter was the namesake, spokesperson, and even the guy whose image was on the pizza boxes, his personal actions were inextricably tied in with the Papa John's organization and its relationships with key

publics. Therefore, it would be difficult to deny that this incident illustrates public relations—and also, unfortunately, what people commonly think of when they think of PR. However, the case made by Papa John's CEO Steve Ritchie the following week more closely resembles preferred definitions of public relations.

In an open letter sent via email to customers and posted on the company's web page, Ritchie attempted to speak for the whole organization in managing Papa John's relationships with its publics. Before outlining a specific plan of action to "rebuild trust from the inside-out" by "engaging a broad set of stakeholders," Ritchie set the context:

> Papa John's is not an individual. Papa John's is a pizza company with 120,000 corporate and franchise team members around the world. Our employees represent all walks of life, and we are committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace for all. Racism and any insensitive language, no matter what the context[,] simply cannot—and will not—be tolerated at any level of our company.[5]

Schnatter, however, did not go silently. Although he stepped down as chairman after the conference call controversy, he remained the largest single shareholder in the company. Schnatter filed a lawsuit against the company and started his own website, https://savepapajohns.com, where he too attempted to appeal to multiple publics: "I built Papa John's from the ground up and remain its largest shareholder. I love my Company, its employees, franchisees and customers."[6] On the website, he made very public his criticisms of the company's leadership and included direct challenges to Ritchie, who also faced criticism for poor leadership and creating a toxic work environment.[7] The real "fiasco," it turned out, likely resulted as much from a culture of inappropriate leadership as it did from the actions of any one individual. And the real challenge for public relations professionals was to rebuild trust and relationships from the very top of the organization all the way down.

So what do we make of this disconnect between public relations as professors and professionals want to define it and public relations as so many others see it? It is tempting to just ditch the name and call it something else. Many organizations have done that, or they have never called the function public relations in the first place. Instead, they have departments of public affairs, corporate communications, community relations and so on. Some organizations have exercised great creativity in naming these roles. Dane Cobain of South Africa's Memeburn website highlighted 21 ridiculous job titles.[8] Among them are social activationist, community data guerrilla, senior social media capability architect and the dreaded social media guru.
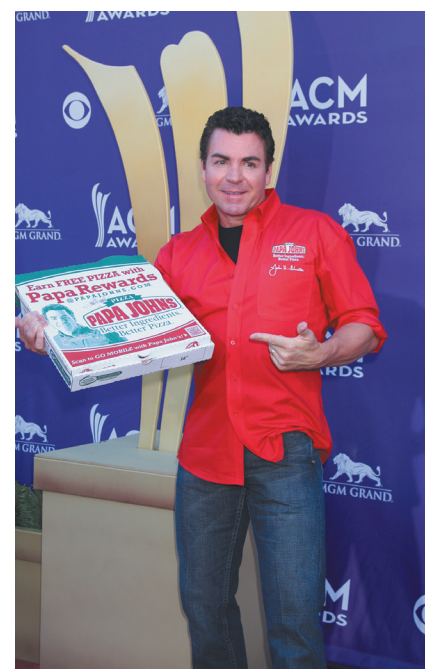
It was labeled a PR disaster when former Papa John's chairman and CEO John Schnatter used a racial slur on a conference call with a marketing agency and later resigned.

How does this incident, and its coverage by the media, shape perceptions of public relations?

Crowdsourcing a Definition

The negative connotations and confusion over job titles have not been lost on those in the profession. In late 2011 and early 2012, PRSA set out to tackle the definition of public relations.

> *"Public Relations Defined" is an initiative to modernize the definition of public relations. Through an open and collaborative effort, PRSA and its industry partners are providing a platform for public relations, marketing and communications professionals to add their voice to a new definition of public relations.*[9]

The effort included consultation with 12 allied organizations including the Canadian Public Relations Society, PRSSA, the National Black Public Relations Association, the Hispanic Public Relations Association and the Word of Mouth Marketing Association. The advent of social media was certainly a factor, as reported by Stuart Elliot in *The New York Times*:

> *Perhaps the most significant changes have occurred most recently, as the Internet and social media like blogs, Facebook and Twitter have transformed the relationship between the members of the public and those communicating with them. A process that for decades went one way— from the top down, usually as a monologue—now goes two ways, and is typically a conversation.*[10]

Given the circumstances, PRSA's use of a blog and its comments from readers (http://prdefinition.prsa.org), Twitter (#PRDefined) and an online form for submitting candidate definitions seemed appropriate. It was an exercise in crowdsourcing. Oxford Dictionaries defines the verb **crowdsource** as "obtain (information or input into a particular task or project) by enlisting the services of a number of people, either paid or unpaid, typically via the internet."[11] And that's exactly what PRSA did. In this case the help was unpaid. By day 12 of the open submission period, the top 20 words submitted as part of suggested definitions for public relations were:

organization (mentioned in 388 submissions)	inform (144)
	management (124)
public (373)	brand (119)
communication (280)	company (116)
relationship(s) (260)	business (112)
stakeholders (172)	people (100)
create (170)	engages (94)
mutual (158)	client (92)
understand (153)	awareness (88)
build (152)	maintain (81)[12]
audiences (147)	

The task force soon had narrowed the field of definitions down to three finalists, opened a public comment period online, hosted a second "Definition of Public Relations Summit" with partner organizations, revised the three definitions, and held a public vote to select the new definition. And the winner was . . . "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics." You may have noticed that the crowdsourced and modernized definition of public relations isn't all that different from the classic definitions.

Principled Public Relations Management

Regardless of how you define it, good public relations requires excellent management. When an organization's communication is focused more on image and less on what the organization is actually doing, negative connotations like **spin** and damage control become unfortunately accurate descriptions.

The problem with communication strategies based on image and fluff, however, is that publics can see right through them. Sometimes they will play along for the fun of it. This is common in sports and entertainment. Sensationalism, snafus, ballyhoo and bombast are all part of what keep people interested in Kylie Jenner's cosmetics or LaVar Ball's business ventures well beyond their families' talents in entertainment and athletics.

This isn't to say that celebrity and social media influence doesn't have a place in legitimate public relations. **Social media influencers** who have earned credibility in specific market segments and with specific publics can be instrumental in strategic communication programs. The keys to successful social media influence are reach and authenticity, and the key to authenticity is matching influencers to organizations and their causes. For example, Serena Williams is one of the world's best tennis players, but she's also a powerful social media influencer with more than 10 million Twitter followers and more than 10 million Instagram followers. As such, she promotes Nike, Beats by Dr. Dre and the Allstate Foundation's Purple Purse, which helps domestic violence survivors by supporting financial empowerment.

Of course, publics have been discussing businesses and their **authenticity** since long before the internet, and managing relationships between organizations and publics is about a lot more than finding the right social media influencer. Arthur Page, longtime vice president of AT&T Inc., worked at the company from the 1920s through the '30s and '40s and into the '50s. Page was one of the first public relations people to reach that level of management in an organization of that magnitude. He articulated and practiced principles of public relations management that apply as well now as they did in the mid-20th century.

1. Tell the truth.
2. Prove it with action.

Spin
Disingenuous strategic communication involving skewed interpretation or presentation of information.

Social media influencer
Social media user who has earned credibility with specific publics and who can be instrumental in strategic communication programs because of his or her reach and engagement.

Authenticity
The degree to which one communicates reliably, accurately and true to his or her own character and the character of the organization that he or she represents.

Arthur W. Page was an early proponent of authenticity and transparency in American public relations.

Do Page's principles apply any more or less in the digital age?

Serena Williams is a powerful social media influencer who partners with Nike, Beats by Dr. Dre and the Allstate Foundation Purple Purse.

Why do these partnerships work?

3. Listen to the customer.
4. Manage for tomorrow.
5. Conduct public relations as if the whole company depends on it.
6. Remain calm, patient and good-humored.
7. Realize the company's true character is expressed by its people.

Tell the Truth

It's one thing to not lie; it's another to proactively tell the truth. This principle can be equated with the idea of **transparency**.[13] Public relations researcher and ethicist Brad Rawlins has defined it as the opposite of secrecy:

> *Transparency is the deliberate attempt to make available all legally reasonable information—whether positive or negative in nature—in a manner that is accurate, timely, balanced, and unequivocal, for the purpose of enhancing the reasoning ability of publics and holding organizations accountable for their actions, policies, and practices.*[14]

Arthur Page realized that large organizations like AT&T were particularly susceptible to public mistrust and suspicion when they overzealously protected secrecy. Governments, schools, churches, NGOs and nonprofits are all in danger of breeding fear, apprehension, dislike and distrust when they shirk

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transparency. Of course, there are times when secrecy makes sense to publics, such as in times of national security crises or when businesses want to protect proprietary information to compete in markets, but even in those cases, organizations can still "tell the truth" about what they are keeping secret and why.

Prove It with Action

You might call it the 90-10 rule. Page said that 90 percent of good public relations should be determined by what an organization does, and about 10 percent by what they say. Publicity is important, but only if it follows action. Disneyland is the happiest place on earth. Ajax is stronger than dirt. 3M is innovation. Levi's quality never goes out of style. These are among the 50 most powerful slogans for brands, according to the Advergize website,[15] but think about how much work goes into making the slogans resonate. The slogans are hollow if the organization isn't managed in such a way as to make the words ring true.

You won't see BP's "Beyond Petroleum" slogan on the list. In 2000, BP introduced a new logo as part of a major re-branding campaign by its agency, Ogilvy & Mather. The bright, new—and of course green—sunburst logo was a textbook example of branding. Literally. In Pavlik and McIntosh's *Converging Media* textbook, the authors defined branding as "the process of creating in the consumer's mind a clear identity for a particular company's product, logo, or trademark." To illustrate the concept in the second edition of that text, the logo was captioned "British Petroleum has successfully rebranded its company with a new logo and a public image as being environmentally friendly."[16] (And I'm the first to admit I used it as an example in my own classes!)

But according to contributors on the PR Watch website, "BP's investment in extractive oil operations dwarfed its investment in renewable energy."[17] Critics immediately began to question the campaign. Then in the summer of 2010, when BP's Deepwater Horizon rig exploded, leading to one of the worst manmade environmental disasters in history, BP was just hammered on social media. Online contests were introduced to see who could design the best logo mocking BP's green sunburst. A YouTube video portraying clumsy BP executives botching an attempt to clean up spilled coffee went viral, getting 10 times more views than BP's official YouTube channel headliner following the accident. More than 160,000 Twitter users followed a fake BP Twitter account spoofing the company.

Later, BP did make some commendable efforts as part of its continuing road to recovery. They used Twitter to send important information out as quickly as possible when media inquiries were overwhelming their media relations staff. But in terms of action, BP soon became seen as "A Textbook Example of How Not to Handle PR," at least according to an NPR story title. After interviewing experts, journalist Elizabeth Shogren concluded that BP had "failed to communicate the three key messages the public needed to hear: That BP was accountable for the disaster, was deeply concerned about the harm it caused and had a plan for what to do."[18] Not only were they not able to communicate well, they also weren't ready to prove it with action.

Good public relations is based much more on what an organization does than on what it says.

BP's sunburst logo was designed to highlight the company's commitment to the environment.

What comes to your mind when you see the BP logo?

Following the BP oil spill, web users competed to design the best mock logo for the company.

Why do you think it was so easy to mock BP after the oil spill?