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PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Chief Editor **“PR education should be more industry centric “**



We are happy that our ezine has completed one year and this comes to you as the first edition of the second year. Every edition of the ezine in the past was a great learning experience for us. With

the support of our readers, we were able to bring out an issue every month on a single theme without break. The Editorial Board rededicates its commitment to continue the journey and bring out more and more quality contents for Corporates.

This edition deals with the theme ‘PR Education in India’. A quick survey conducted by us reveals a large gap between the PR industry and the academia.

Now, PR is emerging as a great ‘Management tool’ and needs to be combined with Management techniques.

For the first time in the world, we are making an attempt to design a syllabus for PR through ‘wiki’. This is a great unique experience for all of us.

Present PR Education needs to be revamped. Many Institutions run PR and communication courses without the involvement of the industry professionals. Any such professional course will not be effective, unless the educational institutions involve the PR industry to a minimum of 70 to 75 percent.

Even the professional bodies like PRSI, PRCI, PRCAI have not done much in this direction.

There is an urgent need for debating this issue and to develop suitable PR education system to suit the industry.

K. Srinivasan

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PR-e-CISE – Inside this ezine

- An exclusive interview with Mr Ujjwal K Chowdhury, Director, Symbiosis Institute of Mass communication
- Expert views on PR education
- PR syllabus through Wiki
- Institutions offering PR courses

PR-eXCLUSIVE

“PR education should be more learner centric, than teacher centric”



Listen to the full interview through *podcast* at

<http://www.primepointfoundation.org/presense0307.htm>



**Prof Ujjwal K
Chowdhury**
Director,
Symbiosis
Institute of
Mass
Communication
(SIMC), Pune is
a well known

communication expert in India. Presently, he is heading the Asia's premier Communication Institute. In an exclusive podcast interview with K. Srinivasan, he emphasized the need for involvement of PR and Communication professionals in the PR Education to a minimum of 70 to 75%. Please read the full text of his views: (You can listen to his audio in the podcast link given above)

The question is on public relation education –Infact the profession itself is at a developing or in evolving stage in India. I can say perhaps it is just crossed the nascent stage and therefore unfortunately like all professional education in the country the academic is not a leader professional, but a tail ender. Hence, unfortunately PR education is yet in a more nascent stage than a PR professional.

Largely people with MBA degree in marketing or general communication and journalism degrees have usually come into PR profession or many people who are former journalists or just like that. But professionally trained PR professionals are very rare. This is the phenomenon since 1990s or early 90s. Well over the last 15 years there had been a large influx of young PR people who had been trained to

enter the market. Till now I would rather say that PR education is not well developed. But it is developing. If I take communication management as a whole of which public relations, corporate communication are the dominant components then I would say the Mudra institute of communication, Ahmedabad, Symbiosis institute of mass communication, symbiosis institute of business management, or national institute of advertisement in Delhi are contributing towards education in PR.

What I would say that a PR professional if educated - if trained properly - should have a basic grounding in all forms of communication. A doctor is a doctor first – a specialist next! Whether he is orthopedic or ENT specialist, gynecologist or podiatrists. A communicator should be a communicator first then a PR person. A holistic integrated grounding of knowledge in all forms of media as vehicles and communication as a function should be first in the postgraduate level, before one begins the journey going deeper into communication management and PR.

And when we go deeper into communication and PR it has to be a vertical convergence within the communication management. That includes knowledge of advertising, publicity PR, event management, innovative media, direct marketing and more importantly Communication management through new media. So if these are all integrated at the second level, after the general media of communication integration we have a

good grounding. Beyond this grounding another one year of semester depending on the model chosen.

I am taking our model of specialization, which is 2 years in SIMC. In the second year we should concentrate more on the entire domain of public relations and image management with specific cases and sectoral or domain focus. For example after understanding entire PR Corpcom functions, reasonably well, then one can focus in getting trained on one or two areas of domain like telecom PR or broadly technology PR, banking or insurance PR, hospitality and tourism PR or for that matter medical care and health care PR.

These are all the areas evolving now and I would like to mention also that a good ground of marketing not just marketing communications but marketing course should also be in PR education. That means a broad overview of media vehicles, communication functions and marketing management at the best and overview of IMC (Integrated Marketing Communication) and integrated social communication in the middle and the details of PR corp comm, With one or two domain area of focus as the Apex. This gives us a clear pyramid structure of PR education.

Now this is the education side. But along with education and training, if the trainee or the student doesn't practice what he studies it makes no sense. Hence in a typically 2 years of course focusing communication management with PR as the specialization, a trainee must be

exposed to a minimum of 2 internships. One could be in an agency for 2 to 3 months, because an agency gives a very broad paradigm and spectrum. Because the clientele is very diverse, there is a lot of humility, there is a lot of humbleness while one functions in an agency structure and there is a lot of learning. Another internship of two or two and a half months in a corporate setup focusing on corporate PR or corporate communications.

Well one can also have an event management internship, instead of the second one in a corporate house depending on the choice. A minimum of 2 internships and a minimum of one focused dissertation in a domain specific PR and a few projects in the college along with this structure of education that I have just now outlined, I think, would make PR education really meaningful, effective and useful for the industry.

And I must also insist here that not more than 25% of the sessions in the college should be conducted by the full time faculty and the rest of 75% or atleast 70% should be conducted by professionals coming from the industry. People who run PR agencies, people who head corporate communication divisions and people who head event management outfits should be involved. Because they can bring their real life experience in the class room. And the education must be learner centric and not teacher centric - should be in a workshop mode and not only in the classroom. These are my broad parameters I would say of PR education in this county if PR education or training has to be meaningful.

PR –e- STIGE – Expert views

Prof. Sreenath Sreenivasan, Dean, Columbia School of Journalism sree@sree.net

“PR is more about ‘what’ you know than ‘who’ you know”



Well that the main thing that Indian PR needs to do is to become as professional as it can. Certain efforts now in India and with

the leadership of folks like you (meaning Prime Point Foundation) can make a real difference. PR education is undergoing transformation in the US as well, there has been lot of interest to become more transparent and to use new technology to help clients and in connecting clients in general.

Well what I feel about the comparison of PR industry in India and in developing countries is the new generation of PR happening in India that wasn't always as professional as it is today. In the old age, PR was more about who you knew than what you knew. I am seeing that in India as it is in US and elsewhere PR is more about what you know. And the more we communicate this to young people, the better.

Dr R Radhakrishnan, Vice Chancellor, Anna University, Coimbatore vc@annauniv.ac.in

“PR is not only communication tool, also a Management tool”



PR- Public Relations is an intelligent Management task by an individual having a multi dimensional

approach in the development scenario. In the present scenario it cannot be considered only as a communication tool, as no classroom teaching will help improving this personal relational thing. However PR dynamism – Public Relations dynamism can be achieved only by industry or by field experts in teaching the PR skill.

Anna University Coimbatore will be introducing industry-based curriculum

in Public Relations. One dynamic public relations officer or individual can take care of the corporate if properly trained. In this context I will be roping in more industry experts in the public relations skill training and making the students a good PR expert to meet the industry demand. As such if you see PR is not only individual based. Presently, we require more communication skills in the society. All that relevant training will be incorporated in our syllabus and more industry will be roped in and proper PR skills will be given to our students in the months to come. We are starting this course in the current academic year itself.

Podcast: You can listen to the views of Prof. Sreenath and Dr Radhakrishnan in the podcast at <http://www.primepointfoundation.org/presense0307.htm>

PR –e- STIGE – Expert views

Mr S Narendra, Former Information Advisor to Prime Minister of India and Chief Spokesman of Government of India sunarendra@gmail.com

“Align the PR education with contemporary trend”



You have asked me to give my views on the role of professional PR bodies like Public relation Society of India, Public Relation Council of India and

others in PR education. The professional associations in most of the developing countries lead the PR education and lead the PR profession.

In India we have more than one body and these are engaged in PR education. But what is required is all of them should come together to revisit the kind of PR education required in the new millennium and come on a common platform (a) for designing the syllabus, (b) for designing who will administer this (c) how the PR industry in India looks upon this education and (d) how it can access the students who have come out of this kind of programs. Unless they all come on a common platform, they will be delivering different kind of PR education. I think that is the first level.

The second level at which they can really help PR education in India is having a close interface with not only the PR Industry in India but also PR industry abroad because lot of MNC are coming into India and they are trying to use PR not only for their

image management, but also in corporate management, stake holders management and other PR purposes.

The third level at which the professional bodies like PRCI, PRSI can play is in designing some kind of accreditation process for all the programs delivered by not only the university affiliated colleges but also private institutions. I am happy that Bangalore based Public Relation Council of India with intervention of 'prpoint group' has come up with some accreditation scheme but this schema needs to be propagated and accepted both by the education institutions as well as by the PR industry.

The fourth and the final level at which these professional bodies can play a role is in raising the profile of the professional PR and also recognizing that not only a basic foundational programmes are introduced but also in carrying forward continuing education. Because today each industry requires a different kind of PR and what is required for brand management is entirely different from corporate management or crisis management. Hence, a variety of other kinds of subprograms need to be run. This is where I feel the professional bodies can play an important role constantly looking that the kind of PR education imparted by various institutions and then trying to align them, with the contemporary trend within the country and internationally.

Podcast: You can listen to the views of Mr Narendra in the podcast at <http://www.primepointfoundation.org/presense0307.htm>

PR –e- STIGE – Expert views

Ms Sulosana Karthigasu, Mg. Director, PR Academy, Singapore
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“Raise PR standards by shared knowledge and collective experience”



PR education can no longer remain theory based. While an understanding and knowledge of PR principles is very necessary, education

in universities and polytechnics need to focus on practical training in the various PR fields so that graduates joining the industry are able to bring to the table the latest thinking in PR and contribute immediately and

provide value-add to the projects that they undertake.

This is one of the reasons why the curriculum in polytechnics in Singapore that conduct PR and related studies provide equal emphasis on practical work and engage renowned PR practitioners as lecturers. By training students to meet the needs and demands of the industry, each new batch of officers who enter the profession also help to raise standards of existing practitioners through shared knowledge and their collective experiences.

PR SYLLABUS THROUGH WIKI

Anna University, Coimbatore has offered to start a PG diploma course on Public Relations course designed by the PR industry. We have already started a Wiki to develop a PR course.

Please visit the following link and participate in the making of curriculum

<http://www.editthis.info/prpoint/>

PR – e- Groups – Have you joined discussion groups?

Image Management Group – Second largest yahoo group on PR with 1440 plus global members. Click here

http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/Image_Management/

PRpoint Group - The largest Indian group for PR/CorpComm /academic professionals with 660 plus members. Click here

<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/prpoint/>

New Media Forum Group – A group for Indian journalists with around 350 members. Click here

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/New_Media_Forum/

India Vision Group – A group for Indian youth on India Vision 2020 with around 1200 members. Click here

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/India_Vision_2020/

PR –e- STIGE – Expert views

Ms Uma Bhushan, Sr Faculty and Researcher, K J Somaiya Institute of Management studies and Research, Mumbai umabhushan@gmail.com

“Raise PR standards by shared knowledge and collective experience”



In a landmark 15-year study of excellence in public relations and communication management in USA, UK and Canada

sponsored by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) in 1992, three major recommendations were put forward pertaining to PR education:

1. At the undergraduate level, PR education should continue to develop superior communication skills in their students but these skills must be framed in principles of strategic management, research, ethics and social responsibility. It must instill in students the view that PR is a strategic managerial function rather than a technical support function for other managerial functions.
2. Post graduate and continuing education programmes should focus on strategic management and research skills and educate future managers to be ethics officers in their organisations.
3. MBA programmes should include a unit on PR in the subject area such as

strategic management, public affairs or corporate social responsibility to prepare them to work with PR professionals when they become senior executives.

An informal survey of the MBA curricula in B-Schools in India revealed that advertising and sales promotion is more widely taught as a subject under a marketing specialization, while MBA programs in general management or HR or Finance or Operations do not have any modules on communication management or public relations at all. Further, a dip stick study from Google search for Public Relations courses in India resulted largely in Mass Communication degrees offered by major universities in India. Invariably courses in PR are offered as one of the numerous preparatory courses in mass communication degrees together with Journalism. Various part-time diploma courses offered also club PR with advertising. Only recently specialist Diploma courses in PR are being offered in India. It is therefore clear that streamlining PR education in India by way of offering professional degrees with specialization in PR, is the key to advancing the PR profession in order for it to be a strategic managerial function as elucidated in the IABC conducted excellence study.

PR courses in India

Details of institutions which are offering Public Relations courses (compiled by Ms Uma Bhushan)

Click here

http://www.primepointfoundation.org/PR_courses_in_india.pdf

PR – e - Views – Views of PR students

Ms Rashmi, II yr MA (PR) student, MOP Vaishnav College, Chennai rashmi.nbr@gmail.com
“PR education should contain more of local case studies”



I am pursuing my masters in Public relations in Chennai, for two years I have been learning about PR but if you ask me about Indian PR industry – I

think, I will be thinking and thinking and thinking without any answers, because what I learnt was about the foreign PR industry. Most of the colleges refer books written by foreign authors and even the case studies are of foreign brands. I am aware of foreign culture through Hollywood movies, news and books but I don't know about how the locality will be abroad. So a case study of a brand like hush puppies – a name I am not

familiar with, in a place I have never been to leaves me confused.

But if it was a case study on Amul or Reliance or Infosys, it will register in my mind quickly and I can come up with suggestions, my own ideas on what could have been if I were to be the PR person. I got practical knowledge through internships, and academic projects like campaigns, but I think the students need more. PR is not a course that can be confined to theory classes. More seminars, more interaction with professionals more exposure to Indian PR industry and updated course syllabus with – yes the Indian books as reference can help students a lot on becoming a successful executive of tomorrow. (You can listen to her views in the podcast also)

PR – e - Survey – How people think about PR Education



An on-line survey was conducted by us for this ezine purposes. 36 respondents (mostly from India) representing all segments such as students, teachers, PR agencies and Corpcom professionals registered their views. Important findings are:

- 50% consider the current Masscom/PR education has no relevance to industry needs
- 44% feel that academia do not involve the industry to develop PR courses.

- 45% feel that educational institutions do not develop right attitude needed for PR / Corpcom industry

- 64% feel that Masscom/PR education is helpful after joining the industry.

- 75% feel that candidates with Masscom / PR qualification are best suited for the industry in terms of skills, attitudes, talents, etc.

(Disclaimer – Since the sample size is very small, this need not be taken as industry view. It is only a broad indicator.)

PR – e - Views – Views of PR students

Ms Rajiv Hari, PG student of PR, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK
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“Raise PR standards by shared knowledge and collective experience”



I am listing some ideas which will help students attain certain practical 'Skill Sets' which will add to their theoretical skill set they have attained through education.

1. In today's world Blogging is becoming an important issue in regards to Public Relations. By Blogging a student can attain a great skill set, which an employer can see. Your PR writing skills will be shown; your understanding of PR events; your current affairs Knowledge and ; how much you are of an opinion leader; your contacts (another important part of PR); your skills of using computers (which is common, but important).

2. By 'Work Shadowing' a student can get good experience before graduating in the particular field which he is studying his degree in. Most students don't do work shadowing, as it is unpaid work, but students should see that in the long run that will prove to be very beneficial. This further gives you a great skill set to show to an employer.

3. Campaign hosting/designing: currently I am in the process of designing a "Speed Dating" campaign for my fellow classmates, here I will

invite 5-10 PR professionals and have them mingle with my fellow classmates, to enable them to learn and build contacts. The part about "Speed Dating" that comes into play is that some students are shy and don't talk so much. So speed dating idea (as everyone knows) is good as the basic concept is that everyone has to talk to everyone in the room. This way all students will have an opportunity to talk to every PR professional and learn from PR professionals about their experience. It will also give the students an opportunity to make some contacts. Through this your employer can see your organisational skills; persuasion skills; Leadership skills, as they are great Skill sets to have.

Maybe professors at the university should guide every student to get certain Skill sets; give ideas to students. Students themselves can be creative and come up with new ideas or use the ones which are given, in either case there would be a lot of knowledge gain.

Every student should remember that, only having an academic degree is not enough for the PR market today, a variety of skill sets beyond the academics are required to beat the competition.

<http://indianpr.wordpress.com/>

PR eTTY - Relax – Alexander's three wishes



Alexander, after conquering many kingdoms, was returning home. On the way, he fell ill and it took him to his death bed. With death staring him in his face, Alexander realized how his conquests, his great army, his sharp sword and all his wealth were of no consequence.

He now longed to reach home to see his mother's face and bid her his last adieu. But, he had to accept the fact that his sinking health would not permit him to reach his distant homeland. So, the mighty conqueror lay prostrate and pale, helplessly waiting to breathe his last. He called his generals and said, "I will depart from this world soon, I have three wishes, please carry them out without fail." With tears flowing down Their cheeks, the generals agreed to abide by their king's last wishes.

"My first desire is that," said Alexander, "My physicians alone must carry my coffin." After a pause, he continued, "Secondly, I desire that when my coffin is being carried to the grave, the path leading to the graveyard be strewn with gold, silver and precious stones which I have collected in my treasury.

" The king felt exhausted after saying this. He took a minute's rest and continued. "My third and last wish is that both my hands be kept dangling out of my coffin."

The people who had gathered there wondered at the king's strange wishes. But no one dare bring the question to their lips. Alexander's favorite general kissed his hand and pressed them to his heart. "O king, we assure you that your wishes will all be fulfilled.

But tell us why do you make such strange wishes?"

At this Alexander took a deep breath and said: "I would like the world to know of the three lessons I have just learnt. I want my physicians to carry my coffin because people should realize that no doctor can really cure any body.

They are powerless and cannot save a person from the clutches of death. So let not people take life for granted.

The second wish of strewing gold, silver and other riches on the way to the graveyard is to tell People that not even a fraction of gold will come with me. I spent all my life earning riches but cannot take anything with me. Let people realize that it is a sheer waste of time to chase wealth.

And about my third wish of having my hands dangling out of the coffin, I wish people to know that I came empty handed into this world and empty handed I go out of this world."

With these words, the king closed his eyes. Soon he let death conquer him and breathed his last. .

Source : unknown. . .

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