

Published by Prime Point Foundation and Chennai PR Club

PR-e-FACE: "Moving towards Accreditation..."

The PR-e-Sense has received tremendous response from communication professionals around the globe. Going forward, PR-e-Sense would take a theme-based approach with the content tailored to match the theme. With Public Relations Council of India (PRCI) forming a subcommittee to study the modalities of 'PR Accreditation' in India, this issue would focus on this theme.

Anyone working in today's marketplace has an Accreditation after his or her name to prove his/her professional standards. Today, PR (Public Relations) is seen by most as a legitimate industry. Many Indian universities have communications department offering degrees. Also, PR practitioners have branched out from simple publicity to a wide variety of communication and marketing related activities both internally and externally.

In an era of globalization, where communication is the hot seat, an

Accreditation to this profession becomes mandatory.

Notwithstanding any misconceptions around Accreditation programme, Accreditation benchmarks the profession and improves the credibility of the professionals. Accreditation provides standards against which a professional is assessed.

These programmes advance the profession by identifying those who have demonstrated knowledge, experience and professional judgment in the field of communications/public relations.

In a global scale, Nigeria has implemented its Nigerian PR Act and Kenya too. PRSA, CIPR, PRISA, IPRS and many other organisations accredit PR professionals through their programmes. It is good time that the Indian subcontinent has joined the PR fraternity to raise the industry standards.

PR-e-CISE

Inside this ezine:

- An exclusive interview with Mr Colin Farrington, Director General of CIPR, London
 - Exclusive interview with Ms Bhavani, President, Institute of PR of Singapore
 - Mr Eric Bergman, Dr. Jeff Hoyer, and Mr Richard Gaunt speak on Accreditation
 - Global Accreditation Institutions
 - PRCI's plans on Accreditation
 - PR Events in India and abroad
 - Extract of group discussions
 - And more ...
-

PR-eXCLUSIVE - Accreditation “benchmarks” the profession

Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), www.cipr.co.uk based at



London is the largest public relations institute in Europe, with more than 8000 members.

CIPR supports training and development of its members, produces policy

guidelines for PR profession to bring out the best practices. It also publishes books and periodicals on PR. CIPR is dedicated for raising standards of the PR industry, by enforcing code of conduct for their members to operate ethically with integrity and transparency.

Mr Colin Farrington, Director General of CIPR in an exclusive interview to K. Srinivasan, Chief Editor of *PR-e-Sense* emphasizes the need for Accreditation to raise the professional standards of communication profession in India. Mr Colin, a well-known PR professional of UK, was inducted into UK PR week's "Hall of Fame 2005" for his contribution to the PR profession. As Principal Advisor to Institute's Council, he is responsible for positioning CIPR as one of the leading PR organizations in the world.

Excerpts from his interview:

Q: What are the advantages of Accreditation to the PR professionals? Since it is a voluntary scheme, how the accredited PR professionals are in

advantageous position over the others who are not accredited?

A: 'Public Relations' is not really a profession that can successfully be regulated by laws. It is too diverse and too dynamic. Public Relations practitioners must reflect the culture and economy in which they work. However it is critical that the users of public relations have a nationally accepted benchmark so that they use only qualified people and do not waste money on the unqualified. Accreditation, whether it takes the form of examinations or recognition of years of experience, is an essential tool to show the 'clear water' between the qualified and the unqualified.

Q: In a developing country like India, how the Accreditation would help to improve the quality of PR profession to International standards.

A: Accreditation is best done to national standards by national associations. But by working and benchmarking with internationally recognized bodies such as the CIPR (see www.cipr.co.uk) in the UK all standards can be raised.

Q: What is your fraternal message to Indian PR professionals?

A: I had the privilege of visiting Delhi in November 2005 for the conference of the Indian public relations association. I made many friends there and understood the great strides that are being made in the Indian economy and in the professionalisation of services such as public relations. I hope that those strides can be maintained and that we can continue to work together productively.

PR-eXCLUSIVE - Accreditation is a symbol of professionalism

The Institute of Public Relations of Singapore (IPRS), established in 1970 as a non-profit organisation, is the only accrediting body for public



relations practitioners. In an exclusive interview to Ms Meera of PR-e-sense, Ms Bhavani, President, IPRS explained as to how employers would get better professional proficiency when

they hire Accredited Professionals. Ms Bhavani is also the Director of Corporate Communication Department in Singapore Government (www.mica.gov.sg). Excerpts from her interview

Q. What are the advantages of Accreditation to the PR professionals?

A. An Accredited PR Professional has demonstrated broad knowledge, experience and professional judgment in the field. The main objective of an Accreditation programme is to provide professional recognition and formal certification to prominent and experienced PR professionals. This means that employers can be assured of a certain degree of professional proficiency in hiring such PR professionals. These individuals would have been assessed by independent panels made up of fellow eminent industry practitioners before being awarded with the accredited status.

The Accredited status would become a symbol of professionalism and

competence. This is especially important for hires at key strategic management level.

In the Singapore's context, having evaluated and compared the Accreditation schemes of matured markets such as the USA, UK, Australia and Canada, we felt that it is important to focus our resources on getting the professionals accredited before considering Accreditation for PR agencies.

Q. In a developing country like India, how the Accreditation would help to improve the quality of PR profession to International standards.

A. In our experience, we have studied similar programmes in United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States before drawing up an Accreditation scheme that suits the Singapore context. We believe that as more of our PR practitioners get accredited, it would invariably help raise the level of professionalism to compete in the international arena. With the tremendous growth in the Indian economy, India should join the ranks of other countries and adopt the Accreditation scheme.

Q. What is your fraternal message to Indian PR professionals?

A. The introduction and acceptance of an Accreditation scheme is no doubt a long and tedious one. I believe that as Asia becomes an economic hub, the demand for certified PR professionals would make it viable for India to push forth with this scheme

Website : <http://www.iprs.org.sg/>

PReSTIGE - Accreditation establishes credibility

Eric Bergman, ABC, APR, MC, Chair, IABC International Accreditation Council
eric.bergman@rogers.com



My name is Eric Bergman. I am based in Toronto, Canada, and currently chair of the international Accreditation council of the International Association of Business Communicators

(IABC). The international Accreditation council is responsible for the ongoing development and marketing of IABC's accredited business communicator (ABC) designation. The ABC is the only internationally consistent Accreditation process in public relations and organizational communications. ABCs can be found on every continent worldwide (except Antarctica).

<http://www.iabc.com/>

I believe the Accreditation of public relations professionals, particularly in developing countries like India, is extremely important.

First and foremost, a peer review process will enable PR professionals in India to ensure that their work meets a consistent international standard. The nation may be developing but, in



my experience, the knowledge and experience of strategic communicators can be equal with that of PR professionals in more developed parts of the world. In other words, Accreditation enables them to validate their perspective to themselves and the world at large.

Second, it enables PR professionals to establish credibility within their own country. They can say that they meet an international standard, which validates their work and their role as a true professional.

I would be delighted to have the opportunity to assist you with the development of Accreditation in your country. I am accredited by IABC and the Canadian Public Relations Society. As such, I can bring a broad perspective to the issues you face.

PRESTIGE - Accreditation is recognition of "standards"

Jeff Hoyer, Ph.D. Associate Professor, UTM PR Sequence Director

jhoyer@utm.edu

I've been a PR professional and now for the past seven years have been an academic. I'm working toward taking the exam and here is why. Also, there is an Accreditation for the PR programs



academically at the colleges and universities.

Again, we are exploring that for our program here. I think both are good

because:

Accreditation from a reputable group like PRSA provides testing over a "body of knowledge." It represents competency over information acknowledged by professionals as being important for success within the profession. It is recognized by colleagues and industry as a "standard" that represents excellence and competence. The procedure is set forth by PRSA and can be found at www.prsa.org. As far as I know the test is the same for persons just becoming involved in the field and persons who have been in it for years...in other words, I don't think you can be "grand fathered" into it.

PRESTIGE - Accreditation shields "good professionals"

Mr Richard Gaunt, Chief Executive, BenchPoint, London www.benchpoint.com

As a long established PR practitioner in England, and a member of the UK's Chartered Institute of Public Relations, I welcome the moves to introduce professional Accreditation for Indian PR practitioners. After all, no democracy can work where the channels of communication are polluted by corrupt information.

If the UK experience is anything to go by, Accreditation (coupled with education) is working well. While there are many complaints about poor PR, dishonesty and "spin", the main culprits are politicians, and dishonest companies who would never dream of using a professional PR person. Overall, there are very few complaints about the PR profession itself. The CIPR says it handles only about six complaints a year, mainly about business management issues, for example contractual disputes, payment by results under dispute and late payment.

My perception is that India is very similar to the UK in the 1970's when

the PR profession was very young, but growing very quickly. People came in from all sorts of backgrounds, and had different standards. The reality is that those who performed badly or dishonestly were soon out of a job. But



there was a general recognition that, like other so-called "professions", we needed common standards and rules, and a means of disassociating ourselves from those who brought disgrace on the words "Public relations".

Accreditation for Indian PR professionals will provide an excellent focus for raising standards, improving education, and building public recognition and confidence in the PR profession. But it will take time. So be patient!

PR –e- VIEW – Extract from discussion groups

Prpoint Group

Rashmi Sreedharan, MA (PR) Student rsnbr@yahoo.com

When I saw the mails from the prpoint group members expressing their views on the “Accreditation of PR”, the first



thought that came in my mind was why the people are making this profession so complicated and bringing in certification.

But as I went researching on this topic to express my views, my mindset gradually changed and I realized that “Accreditation of PR” was something that should have been implemented long back.

When we search for a college or school, the first thing we look into is whether the institution is recognized or not. The same is the case with each and every profession. As a beginner in this field I feel that if I have the certificate of Accreditation then the credibility given to me will be more. This will even add on my confidence and at the same time give me a sense of responsibility to practice PR in an ethical way because I will have to answer to an authority above me who has given me this power to practice. So as a PR student I feel that an Accreditation is a necessity.

Prpoint group - Jagriti Motwani, Associate, Blue Lotus Communications
jags_sonikudi@yahoo.co.in

Accreditation is required for both the PR Agency and individuals. That is important because

a. Most of the times, clients and international affiliates first see/ buy the profile of concerned firm and then the individuals associated.

b. For individuals it is important, as it will give recognition to independent associates and also to some of us who are not formally qualified in PR.



Prpoint Group

G. Uma, PR Manager, ITC Hotel Park Sheraton um32003@yahoo.com

By accepting Accreditation status from a recognized organization, a



Public Relation professional agrees to uphold the quality standards set by them. The

accredited PR professional also agrees to periodically submitting the

Accreditation renewal review. The purpose of the continuous review is to ensure that the accredited institution is continuing to maintain the standards that Accreditation status stands for. Accreditation organizations also perform periodic quality reviews of themselves to ensure that they are effectively able to handle the requirements of their job.

PR –e- VIEW – Extract from discussion groups

Image Management Group

Mr C R Kannan, Chief Communication Officer, SPIC crkccoms@spic.co.in

The corporates would certainly look at working with like-minded agencies who feel the same pain, anguish, concern as themselves. Accountability increases with regulation and becomes a practice when it is treated as a norm.

Therefore bringing in Accreditation in their work ethos would only go to embellish their credibility, particularly when the stakes are high. Nobody wants to take chances. PR like advertising could be governed by a regulatory body that puts its stamp on

the agency based on certain parameters it considers important.



This sort of self-regulation will enable the PR industry itself to size up to a certain format, in line with what the corporates would expect them to be.. It becomes that much simpler and easier for the corporates to choose from this enhanced format.

PR –e- News – PRCI initiates process of Accreditation



Public Relations Council of India (PRCI), registered National body of PR / Corpcom professionals of India has initiated the process of Accreditation of PR

professionals in India. PRCI has set up an Expert Committee and Expert Sub Committee to study the global practices and to give recommendation to PRCI for implementation. PRCI is presently having 11 Chapters in India and shortly opening 9 more chapters. Many eminent professionals of India are associated with PRCI.

Extract from the views expressed by Mr M B Jayaram, Chairman, National Governing Council of PRCI to Media:

Today PR profession is emerging as a management function due to pressure of competition and all the organisations in India have become PR savvy to enhance their image. Presently, there is no system in India for streamlining the profession with accountability, as



prevailing for Doctors, Chartered Accountants, Company Secretaries, etc. In other developing and developed countries, the PR professionals get accredited through the Independent bodies to improve the quality of profession and the market prefers only accredited professionals

After receiving the Sub Committee report in June, PRCI, will be able to take it further for implementation. These measures will add value to the PR profession in India and improve the credibility and accountability. Few of the International PR bodies, who have carried out detailed studies worldwide are helping PRCI Sub-Committee in this regard.

Website <http://www.prc-india.org/>

Email : cccm@karnatakapower.com

PR –eMINENCE - Global Accreditation Institutions

The Universal Accreditation Board, USA

<http://www.prAccreditation.org/>

Accreditation in Public Relations is a voluntary certification program for public relations professionals, administered by the Universal Accreditation Board.

The [Universal Accreditation Board](http://www.prAccreditation.org/), (UAB) which was created in 1998, is a consortium of 10 professional communications organizations. Each organization contributes resources and senior-level volunteer members who represent all segments of the public relations profession. The UAB oversees the public relations profession's professional certification program. A revised Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations was launched in July 2003.



The Universal Accreditation Board oversees the Accreditation program and provides a balanced blend of backgrounds in a number of public relations specialties. This group of senior-level Accredited members meets several times a year.

Chartered Institute of Public Relations, UK (CIPR)

<http://www.cipr.co.uk/>



CIPR Accredited Practitioners

Accredited Practitioner status is awarded to CIPR members who have

completed three year's participation in the Institute's Developing Excellence Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme, and is valid as long as that individual continues to take part in the scheme.

Accredited Practitioners not only have improved status from being associated with the CIPR. It also reflects the steps they have taken to improve and maintain their competency as a PR practitioner. Accredited Practitioners have demonstrated their commitment to maintaining the highest levels of professional skills and knowledge.

PR –eMINENCE - Global Accreditation Institutions

Public Relations Institute of South Africa (PRISA)

<http://prisa.co.za/>

What is the purpose of Accreditation?



Can one become accredited without being a member of PRISA? No. In view of the fact that Accreditation is a level of registration within PRISA, it is not possible to take the assessment or use the designation APR without being registered with the Institute.

The purpose of PRISA's Accreditation certification is to recognise practitioners who have demonstrated broad knowledge, experience and professional judgement in the field. It seeks to improve public relations and communication management practice. The designation APR signifies a high professional level of experience and competence.

How can Accreditation be used? An individual who is accredited may use the designation APR in conjunction with his or her name. APR is an abbreviation for "Accredited in Public Relations". This identification shall be used only with the name of the member, who is accredited, not with the name of any business or organisation

Institute of Public Relations of Singapore (IPRS)

<http://www.iprs.org.sg/>

IPRS is a self-regulating Accreditation body that sets international benchmark standards for public relations professionals in Singapore.

The IPRS Accreditation Scheme is a distinctive recognition for PR professionals who have demonstrated strategic thinking, broad knowledge and experience in the field, and at the same time exhibited high standards of professionalism, commitment to the profession and code of ethics.

Since its introduction 2004, the IPRS has 50 accredited members to date.

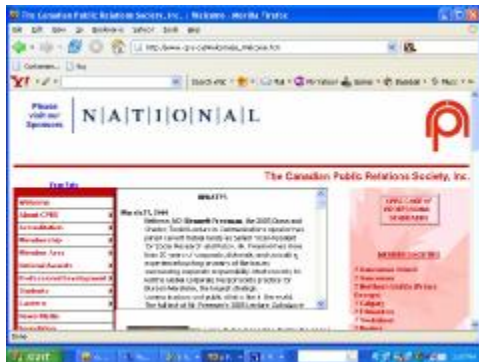


IPRS accredited PR practitioners are selected on their broad industry knowledge, experience and expertise; strategic perspective and counsel, and sound professional judgment and contributions.

PR –eMINENCE - Global Accreditation Institutions

The Canadian Public Relations Society, Inc (CPRS)

<http://www.cprs.ca/>



CPRS Accreditation (APR) is a respected measure of professional experience in the field of public relations. This program recognizes the

dedication, energy, perseverance and competence of successful public relations professionals. To pursue the Accreditation process you must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

- You are a member in good standing of the Canadian Public Relations Society.
- You have been employed full-time in a public relations position for at least five years; and
- You spend at least half of your professional time involved in specific public relations activities.

Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ)

<http://www.prinz.org.nz/>

To advance your career in public relations you need PRiNZ Accreditation. We are the only industry organisation specifically dedicated to advancing the public relations profession, and only accredited PRINZ members are entitled to use the letters MPRINZ.

MPRINZ or APR certifies that a public relations practitioner is both experienced and has a proven high level of professional knowledge.

Through Accreditation, PRiNZ sets standards of professional public relations knowledge and tests members' understanding of this body of knowledge.



The PRiNZ Accreditation programme is only open to members and requires at least five years' experience in professional public relations.

PR – eVENTS - What is happening around the world?

New Zealand

PRINZ (Public Relations Institute of New Zealand) Conference 2006 at Christchurch scheduled on June 2&3 is designed to be a learning and training opportunity. The conference will also

feature the usual mix of networking, social functions and the Annual PRINZ Awards. For details contact paul_dryden@prinz.org.nz

Singapore

PR Academy, Singapore will be conducting its 5th Annual PR Conference on 31 May 06 on the theme "New Media: The New Frontier

In Communications And PR". For further details contact PR_Academy@mica.gov.sg

Columbus, Ohio

Summit on Corporate Communications
- June 28-30, 2006 Columbus Marriott North, Columbus, Ohio

The newest element of the Institute for Public Relations Forums debuts in 2006, a three-day conference

exclusively for high-potential, mid-career corporate communications and public relations agency executives. For more details

www.instituteforpr.org

Mumbai, India

Reputation Institute (RI) was launched in India successfully at launch meeting

organized on 20th of March. For details visit www.reputationinstitute.com

Chennai, India

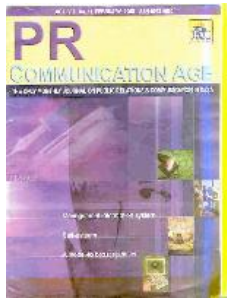


Mr Kirubashankar, a leading Blogger of India shared his views with Corporate Communicators at Chennai on 7th April

2006. He cited various examples of Corporate Blogging and explained as to how Blogs can be used as a good communication tool.

<http://www.kiruba.com/>

PR – e - LEARN - Knowledge sources



PR Communication Age, monthly PR magazine published from Kolkatta since 1998 is now restructuring the format of the magazine to cover more information and interviews with PR/Corpcom professionals.

They are bringing out a comprehensive PR Directory for India.

For more details contact Mr Rakesh Agarwal, (Associate Editor)
response@prgindia.com
 website : <http://www.prgindia.com/>

PR eTTY - Relax

Mitesh M Kapadia Sentinel Public Relations, Mumbai sentinelpr@vsnl.com

Moses calls a staff meeting.

Moses: Well, how are we going to get across the sea? We need a fast solution. The Egyptians are close behind us.

The General of the Armies: Normally, I'd recommend that we build a pontoon bridge to carry us across. But there's not enough time - the Egyptians are too close.

The Admiral of the Navy: Normally, I'd recommend that we build barges to carry us across. But time is too short.

Moses: Does anyone have a solution?

Just then, his Public Relations man raises his hand.



Moses: You! You have a solution?

The PR Man: No, but I can promise you this: If you can find a way out of this one, I can get you two or three pages in the Old Testament!

PResentors of PReSENSE

Chief Editor and Publisher:
 K. Srinivasan (Prime Point)
 Editor: Narrendiran (Blue Lotus PR)
 Editorial Board:
 Sakthi Prasanna (Brodeur India)
 Meera R (Aspire Systems)
 Satish N (Anna University)

Editorial Advisors
 T N Ashok (Alstom)
 Michael Driehorst, (The Lauerer Markin Group Inc. USA)
 Arun Arora (Maruti Udyog)
 Uma Bhushan (SIMSR)
 Feedback and contributions to:
ezinepresense@gmail.com

www.primepointfoundation.org
