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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HOW PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS
AND JOURNALISTS NEED, PERCEIVE AND DECEIVE ONE ANOTHER

By:
Jamie Leigh Mufalli

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
At
Rowan University
May 6, 2002

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved 5-6-02

ABSTRACT

Jamie Leigh Mufalli

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HOW PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS
AND JOURNALISTS NEED, PERCEIVE AND DECEIVE ONE ANOTHER

2001/02

Dr. Donald Bagin

Master of Arts in Public Relations at Rowan University

This thesis studies the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists; how they perceive one another, what defies the relationship and what they would do differently if they were in the opposite field.

The author surveyed journalists and public relations practitioners to determine what kinds of attitudes help shape and define the relationship between these two very important professions.

Both public relations practitioners and journalists believe they are equal partners in the dissemination of information. Only 34.6 percent of public relations practitioners believe journalists have high morals and ethics, and are honest with public relations practitioners. Over 50 percent of journalists do not think public relations practitioners have high ethics and morals, and they do not believe public relations practitioners are honest with them.

The majority of public relations practitioners do believe journalists are credible. Journalists believe public relations practitioners understand the problems journalists

encounter such as meeting deadlines, space limitations and the need to make a story look more attractive for readers.

More than 26 percent of public relations practitioners do not believe they can trust journalists. More than 45 percent of journalists do not believe they can trust public relations practitioners. Nearly 75 percent of public relations practitioners believe that journalists rely very heavily on them to disseminate information to the targeted publics. More than 95 percent of journalists believe public relations practitioners need to obtain confidence from journalists as credible sources of information in order to do their job.

More than 80 percent of public relations practitioners do believe that journalists' goals are to uncover facts for accurate news stories. Nearly 55 percent of journalists do not believe public relations practitioners are key in opening the lines of communication between the media and the public. Nearly 65 percent of public relations practitioners do believe they are key in opening the lines of communication between the media and the public.

MINI ABSTRACT

Jamie Leigh Mufalli

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HOW PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS
AND JOURNALISTS NEED, PERCEIVE AND DECEIVE ON ANOTHER

2001/02

Dr. Donald Bagin

Master of Arts in Corporate Public Relations at Rowan University

This thesis examines the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists. The author surveyed journalists and public relations practitioners to determine what kinds of attitudes help shape and define the relationship between these two very important professions. The author found that more than 26 percent of public relations practitioners do not believe they can trust journalists; and more than 45 percent of journalists do not believe they can trust public relations practitioners. Nearly 75 percent of public relations practitioners believe that journalists rely very heavily on them to disseminate information to the targeted publics. More than 95 percent of journalists believe public relations practitioners need to obtain confidence from journalists as credible sources of information in order to do their job.

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Jodi, Matty, and Paul Thank you for always supporting me and for all the kind words of encouragement – I love you!

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Special thanks to Dr. Don Bagin, my graduate advisor, for helping me in preparing and presenting this thesis. You were always available to me for words of wisdom and support. Thank you for believing in me.

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To the late Brigida Catti – May you forever rest in peace in the arms of the Lord.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

I. Purpose of the study

Public relations practitioners need journalists. Likewise, journalists need public relations practitioners. But are they really dependent on each other? Can either still do their job without the other? These are the types of questions have been studied repeatedly over many years. A recent article in *Public Relations Quarterly* describes the problems arising when journalists go up against PR people. According to Marken there are two major problems journalists face:

“The first was that journalists couldn’t figure out how to make money in a new environment consisting of fewer news holes, reduced ad revenues and layoffs. The PR person also has to have the technical expertise or be able to provide it quickly to assist the editor/reporter, assuming you can even get them interested in the topic.”¹

According to Marken there are also many problems facing public relations practitioners:

“The first was that most PR people don’t have a grasp of good journalistic writing. The second was that most PR people are using the Internet to abuse the press. Furthermore, Marken says the

¹ G.A. Marken, “How to place articles for company or product publicity. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 32(2) (1987) pp.30-31.

press come to conventions to get news for their audience, not to help publicists fill a meeting schedule.”²

The interesting question here is why there is an on-going, yet rocky relationship of these two career professionals who must work closely at times toward the same news goal.

Wilcox adds:

“When one takes into consideration all of the news supplied by all forms of public relations, many expert estimate that as much as half of the print and broadcast news nationwide comes from public relations activities.”³

The role of the media is best described by File, who noticed a trend by the leading business and financial editors to expand and increase coverage of business in their papers. The principal reason given for the increase in coverage was the increase in the general public’s concern and interest for business news. Editors implied a need to cover stories with topics such as consumer issues, macroeconomics and the energy crisis. In turn, more business stories were gaining front-page news coverage. This displayed evidence of a growing sophistication and refinement among readers has increased the realization that business developments ultimately affect them.⁴

² G.A. Marken, “How to place articles for company or product publicity. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 32(2) (1987) pp.30-31.

³ Derk Arend Wilcox, “The Right Guide 1995: A Guide to Conservative and Right of Center Organizations,” 1995.

⁴ L. T. File, How business editors view public relations. *Public Relations Journal*. 34(2), 1978, pp.8-9.

The rocky relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners has been going on for quite some time now. For many years journalists have believed that PR people are trying to pull one over on them. Former *New York Times* reporter Stephen Conn sums up the hostility between the two professions:

"Journalists distrust PR people because they feel that public relations professionals are generally trying to cover up or put spins on things. Years ago I vowed that no matter how bad things got, I would never go to either side of the wall separating journalists and PR practitioners."⁵

The on-going rivalry between these two ever-growing professions dates back towards the early 1900s. In 1914 a group of New York writers were prepared to launch a new journal called *The New Republic*. Walter Lippmann was one of the journalists working on this new journal that would become America's most influential publication. Lippmann wrote a handwritten letter revealing his attitude towards Ivy Lee, a very successful public relations counselor:

"I wish you would do that article on the windier Americans. They irritate me enormously; so much that I can't treat them with the respect they undoubtedly deserve. They are so damned lazy.

⁵ *The New York Times*, Stephen Conn, 1997, p. 38

Rhetoric is so damned cheap. That man Lee has sold like a novel: he makes every self-righteous businessman feel like Julius Caesar and St. George rolled into one. Lee's theory is that businessmen will become that by assuming they are that. But I think Lee is a toady and a flatterer and a deceiving fraud. I don't know why I should get into a temper about this to you. I guess it's because I've had such close contact this winter with people like Lee, and I'm raw only the subject" ⁶

Lippmann was one of the first to acknowledge that even though the publicist exploits the press, the press also exploits the publicist:

"In respect of most of the big topics of the news, the facts are not simple, and not at all obvious, but subject to choice and opinion, it is natural that everyone should wish to make his own choice of facts for the newspaper to print. The publicity man does not. And in doing it, he certainly saves the reporter much trouble, by presenting him a clear picture of a situation out of which he might not otherwise make neither head nor tail."⁷

Never-the-less, Lippmann's anger and frustration with Lee is an example of how many journalists generally feel about public relations practitioners throughout the century. The appearance of the "press agent" in the 1900s, the precursor to today's public relations practitioner may have created some of the hostility that journalists have for

⁶ "Letter to Van Wyck Brooks (5 February 1914)," in John Morton Blum, ed., *Public Philosopher: Selected Letters of Walter Lippmann*. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1985, p. 17.

⁷ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*. New York: Macmillian, 1992, p. 345.

public relations practitioners. Ray Eldon Hiebert writes that P.T. Barnum became the prototype of the nineteenth-century press agent through his ability at creating headlines for the Ringling-Barnum Circus with “contrived and often under-handed stunts”.⁸

Edward L. Bernays states that other early trumpeters for the tented caravans were Major John Burke, Dexter Fellows and Henry Reichenbach. But the “common press agent, circus barker and ballyhoo stunter,” who talked big, shook hands with everyone, and distributed free tickets to police, news reporters and civic officials, was destined to go the way of the traveling medicine man.⁹

On the other hand, Silas Bent, writing for *The New Republic* in 1929, argued the press was to blame for propaganda, not the PR industry:

"When the United States was a participant in the World War (while Mr. Bernays was serving the Red Cross among other clients), the newspapers learned to accept with docility the restrictions of official 'information' dispensers. Having learned to accept war handouts without question, the daily press afterward made little apparent effort to change its habits. We need not be surprised that some publicity persons took advantage of the tacit invitation this extended."¹⁰

E & P acknowledged the difference between the press' use of propaganda in wartime and PR practitioners use of propaganda when the world is at peace:

“Perhaps someone can explain to us why it is that certain

⁸ Ray Eldon Hiebert, *Courtier to the Crowd*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1966, p. 8

⁹ Edward L. Bernays, *Biography of an idea*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 1965, p. 202.

¹⁰ Silas Bent, “Ivy Lee-Minnesinger to Millionaires,” *The New Yorker*, 60:781 (20 November 1929), p. 372.

publishers who would instantly discharge a reporter for 'making news' will accept the synthetic creations of press agents, eagerly, if we can believe all that Edward L. Bernays says in his persistent propaganda in favor of the ballyhoo business."¹¹

Ramer suggest the importance of PR at war and at peace:

“PR is now one of the major sources of news because the profession helps journalists get far more information quickly and in a readily usable form than they obtain either on their own or from any other source.”¹²

The role and importance of public relations is accented by Blyskal and Blyskal:

"PR is gaining clout in the business of selling corporate goals, projects, programs and philosophies. No longer are PR people relegated to the role of press liaison somewhere way down the corporate ladder: they are now being given entrée into the executive suite. They are becoming an integral part of management and planning."¹³

Some like Gandy describe this rocky relationship on a lighter note:

“The relationship between sources and journalists resembles a dance . . . it takes two to tango, either sources or journalists can lead, but more often than not, sources do the leading.”¹⁴

¹¹ Anon “Where’s the Difference?” *Editor and Publisher*, 62:10 (27 July 1929), p. 32.

¹² Ramer, 1992, p. 64.

¹³ J. Blyskal & M. Blyskal, PR: How the public relations industry writes the news, 1985, New York: Morrow.

¹⁴ Gandy, 1982, p. 11.

Unlike Blyskal and Blyskal who emphasized the significance of PR, Editor and Publisher has attacked public relations through most of the century:

"Though our readers may wary of the diet, we nevertheless yield to the temptation to pass along the latest hot buttercake from the griddle of Mr. Bernays, most audacious, blatant, ponderous, insistent of the self-styled public relations counsel 'profession' . . . We might go on, were it not so transparent to our readers that, no matter what virtuous men Mr. Bernays or Mr. Ivy Lee or other professional propagandists may be, the device they seek to establish in public life is dangerous because it is irresponsible and is calculated to break down advertising practice, which responds to checks and balances, evolved from experience and conscience during a study and trial." ¹⁵

Unlike Editor and Publisher, Grates emphasizes the role and importance of public relations and notes that business expects public relations professionals to play a vital role in executing corporate business goals, innovating measurable, bottom-line oriented results and providing a greater level of value than in the past. Public relations practitioners are generally considered "experts" on public relations, best informed about public relations issues, and best qualified to answer public relations questions".¹⁶ Grunig and Hunt stated this role could be linked to the two-way asymmetrical model.¹⁷

¹⁵ Anon., "The Propaganda Game," *Editor & Publisher*, 61:17 (15 September 1928), p. 32.

¹⁶ G. F. Grates, Competing in the '90's: What business wants and needs from public relations professionals. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 37 (3), 1992, pp. 20-23.

¹⁷ James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt, *Managing Public Relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984, p. 24.

The two-way symmetrical model emphasizes a change in the attitudes of both the organization and its publics. The public relations practitioner acts as a mediator to develop a mutual understanding between the organization and its publics. Practitioners use techniques such as bargaining, negotiation, and strategies of conflict resolution to change ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both groups.¹⁸

Murphy (cited in Dozier) used game theory to suggest organizations practice public relations in a “mixed-motive” game.¹⁹ In game theory, both sides pursue their own interests while realizing the final outcome must be satisfactory to both sides. In public relations, the final outcome is the relationship. Dozier suggests a mixed-motive model involving the short-term use of asymmetrical practices within the context of a broad symmetrical philosophy.²⁰

Grates identifies many major issues facing business today such as: the increasing impact of special-interest groups, the environment, and downsizing and industry consolidation.²¹ Blyskal and Blyskal identify the same major issues, but would also include influencing the government.²²

Other studies were conducted by Stegall and Sanders and Carroll, which concerned samples of higher education public relations practitioners and education journalists in Missouri and education editors nationally. These studies concluded that the

¹⁸ David M. Dozier, *Manager's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, 1995, p. 93

¹⁹ David M. Dozier, *Manager's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, 1995, p. 47

²⁰ David M. Dozier, *Manager's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, 1995, p. 51

²¹ G. F. Grates, *Competing in the '90's: What business wants and needs from public relations professionals*, *Public Relations Quarterly*, 37 (3), 1992, pp. 20-23

²² J. Blyskal, & M. Blyskal, (1985) *PR: How the public relations industry writes the news*. New York: Morrow.

public relations practitioners in higher education have a credibility problem with journalists and editors.²³

The animosity many journalists feel towards public relations practitioners is not a recent trend. In fact, it has been going on for decades. In the 1920s the press questioned the moral principles and ethics of public relations. The press also complained that these new publicists, like the press agent before, were cashing in on free publicity at the expense of newspaper owners. An editorial in *Editor and Publisher* makes this point:

Edward L. Bernays is considered by many to be the founding father of public relations. For the first time ever, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, published in 1923, set the groundwork describing the role and purpose of public relations practitioners.²⁴ Bernays argued that PR practitioners were not press agents, a supporter or promoter, or an advertising representative. Bernays believed that PR practitioners' main function was to analyze public opinion and adjust relations between an organization and the public. The PR professional was an observer of public opinion who integrated social psychology, advised corporate policy on how to influence the public to benefit a company, and how the policy could help serve the company's clients. The "two-way communication model" would replace the agenda of the press agent. Bernays proclaimed this new agenda would generate a new emphasis on ethical conduct.²⁵

One newspaper cited reviewed Bernays' work as such:

²³ L. Stegal, & K. Sanders, (1986). Coorientation of pr practitioners and news personnel in education. *Journalism Quarterly*, 9, 88-90.

²³ R. A. Carroll, (1992) An analysis of attitudes of daily newspaper education writers toward public relations practitioners in higher education. (Doctoral dissertation. University of Southern Mississippi, 1992). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 52.

²⁴ Cf. Edward L. Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*. New York: Liveright, 1923.

²⁵ Cf. Eric F. Goldman, *Two-Way Street: The Emergence of the Public Relations Counsel*. Boston: Bellman, 1948.

"If, with the change of name, there is to be a change in the ethics and manners of the press agent, people will be delighted to call him a public relations counsel or sweet little *buttercup or anything he wishes*."²⁶

The New York World added:

"Mr. Bernays might fare farther and faster if he did not seek so palpably to avoid or avert the ancient odium of the 'press agent'."²⁷

One of the most disgraceful documents ever published in any industry recently was issued by the American Newspaper Publishers' Association . . . The document lists 500 brand articles of merchandise, which are being press-agented in grafted space in Among the names of many of the free publicity gentry engaged in promoting these 500 articles and enterprises in news space is that of Edward L. Bernays, the self-styled 'public relations counselor' who makes ethical pretenses but is not above hustling for Crisco, Ivory Soap, Lucky Strike, Edison Light and many other purely philanthropic enterprises.²⁸

Kopenhaver believes the problems between journalists and public relations practitioners start in the classroom:

"The wariness journalists feel toward public relations practitioners, and the consequent defensiveness practitioners feel about their communication with the media, apparently has its roots in journalism education.

²⁶ Herman J. Mankiewicz, "The Virtuous Agent," *The New York Times*, 6 April 1924, p. 3.

²⁷ Anon., "Book Review: Crystallizing Public Opinion," *The New York World*, 16 March 1924, p. 7E.

²⁸ "500 Grafters," *Editor and Publisher*, 62(30):36 (14 December 1929).

Misunderstandings about the contributions both groups make to information dissemination move from the classroom directly into working relationships.”²⁹

How to make the public relation practitioner/journalist relationship work is summed up in a 2001 article in *Financial Advisor*:

“Organizations which work hard to help journalists understand their business enjoy better media relations. Those companies and individuals which make the greatest effort to build relationships with the media are generally the ones who are called upon to give their comments.”³⁰

Statement of the problem

The problem was to investigate and determine the practices and problems that exist between public relations practitioners and journalists during the average daily workday.

An ever-increasing antagonism exists between journalists and public relations practitioners. For decades journalists have indicated that the problem between the media and public relations practitioners is alive and well.

This needs to be studied because public relations practitioners try to acquire support and embellish the image of their company. It is their responsibility to properly diffuse messages to targeted publics. Therefore, it is key for public relations practitioners

²⁹ L. L. Koppenaver, (1985). Aligning values of practitioners and journalists. Public Relations Review 11(2), 34-42.

³⁰ *Financial Advisor*, January 11, 2001, “Media focuses on the bad news”.

to earn and maintain credibility with media gatekeepers. To achieve success in this communication process-the source must be credible. Public relations practitioners need to obtain confidence from journalists as credible sources of information.

The relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners can be highly successful and beneficial to both parties in getting news out to the public when they work together. However, when one cannot supply the other, this relationship can become troublesome and a major problem for both parties.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study is that public relations practitioners rely so heavily on the media, particularly journalists, to deliver their messages to targeted publics, public relations practitioners must realize and comprehend the attitudes and assumptions media gatekeepers have toward them. A close scrutiny of the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners should reveal findings concerning public relations practitioners' insight about journalists' complaints and views of the public relations field, and will offer specific suggestions to help establish a better working environment.

It is also significant to determine how public relations practitioners deal with journalists and how their dealings directly reflect press coverage. However public relations practitioners do not always acquire the press coverage they desire, no matter how much they try to develop a relationship with journalists.

Many public relations practitioners believe that journalists prefer to write and talk about conflict, gossip, and scandal. This produces a conflict with public relations

practitioners who are seeking fairness in reporting and unbiased news stories. Findings in this study will offer specific suggestions to help establish a better working relationship.

Definition of terms

Essential to this study are words and terms that have the following meanings:

Chi-square: a non-parametric test of statistical significance for bivariate tabular analysis. The Chi-square test involves a comparison between what is observed and what can be expected by chance.

Concordance correlation: In this thesis it is used as an example of a study expressing journalists who ranked news values with consistency in terms of themselves and in the manner in which they perceived public relations practitioners would rank the news values. The higher the number, the more consistency. The number will range between -1 and 1 .

Editor: One who prepares for publication by arranging, revising, making changes in a newspaper, etc.

Journalism: the collection and editing of news for presentation through the media; the collection and editing of news; writing designed for publication in a newspaper or magazine.

Journalist: A communicator who disseminates, seeks, and processes information; a person engaged in journalism; especially: a writer or editor for a news medium.

Kurtosis: The quality of a distribution such that it is flat or peaked.

Mean: A type of average where the scores were summed and divided by the number of observations.

Media: a medium of communication (as newspapers, radio, or television) that is designed to reach the mass of the people.

Median: An average, which is defined as the midpoint in a set of scores.

Mode: The value that occurs the most in a set of scores.

Pearson's R Correlation Coefficient: This is a test that measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables

Press: the gathering and publishing or broadcasting of news; newspapers, periodicals, and often radio and television news broadcasting; news reporters, publishers, and broadcasters.

Press agent: an agent employed to establish and maintain good public relations through publicity.

Publicity: mention in the media. Organizations usually have little control over the message in the media, at least, not as they do in advertising. Regarding publicity, reporters and writers decide what will be said.

Public relations (PR): Public Relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends. Often, public relations are conducted through the media, that is, newspapers, television, magazines, et.

Public relations practitioner: One who practices public relations.

Publicity: Aims to create interest in a person, product, idea, organization, or

business establishment generally through the generation and placement of favorable stories in the news media such as newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio.

Reporter: One who gathers information and writes about assigned topics for a newspaper.

Rho: In this thesis it is used as an example of a study expressing the values held by journalists were opposite the values which journalists perceived public relations practitioners to hold and also the values held by journalists were opposite the values which journalists perceived public relations practitioners to hold. The higher the number, the more consistency. The number will range between -1 and 1 .

Skewness: The quality of a distribution that defines the disproportionate frequency of certain scores. A longer right tail than left corresponds to a smaller number of occurrences at the high end of the distribution; this is a positively skewed distribution. A shorter right tail than left corresponds to a larger number of occurrences at the high end of the distribution; this is a negatively skewed distribution.

Standard Deviation: The average deviation from the mean.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for this study. First, the samples drawn for the study accurately represent the population. Secondly, the researcher assumed that respondents accurately and truthfully completely the survey; and the person who the survey was intended for is the person who actually completed the survey. Another

assumption is that the results of this study can be generalized to journalists (editors and reporters) at large, and also public relations practitioners at large.

Limitations

The findings from this study are subject to some limitations. First, the sample of the surveys for both public relations practitioners and journalists is relatively small. The sample will represent practitioners and editors/reporters of daily newspapers nationwide; therefore generalizability is at the minimum. By geographically targeting journalists and public relations practitioners in mostly New Jersey, the results may be demographically varied.

The subject was also limited to PR practitioners and journalists who work a full day; therefore the survey may not be completely accurate because of time constraints. The survey instrument used may also be subject to being completed by a person other than the one for whom it was intended.

Another limitation of the study is that the mail survey method of collecting data has a lower than satisfactory response rate. Time is also a limitation. The length of time it may take to complete the survey may limit the number of respondents who complete it. Finally, this study was limited to active members of PRSA and SPJ.

Plan of study

The plan of this survey is to determine the attitudes of a systematic random sample of public relations practitioners working in business or for an organization and a random sample of journalists, including editors and reporters, working on American daily

newspapers for both profit and non-profit organizations. The researcher has determined that directories that listed journalists and public relations practitioners would meet the requirement of this study. Most researchers agree that membership lists of professional associations are acceptable to use as sampling frames.

The researcher will collect data through a mail survey from public relations practitioners and journalists. Using previous studies as guidelines, the survey instrument that will be used for this study is the questionnaire.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

The following libraries were used to research and collect information on this subject: Savitz Library of Rowan University of New Jersey (Lexis-Nexis, Infotrac) and the Library database at Cumberland County College of New Jersey.

There are many researchers who believe that PR practitioners and journalists have a lot in common:

"Crucial to the rise and influence of all public relations opinion molders, however, are the press and the media. They hold the keys to the massive communications machinery of their nation. Through that machinery PR people work their magic."³¹

Not only do many researchers believe PR practitioners and journalists have a lot in common but many also believe that the public relations profession actually developed from the newspaper industry. Public relations and journalism started out together and whether they like it or not, they need each other. Anderson says:

"As societies become more complex and develop higher levels of communications systems, they are able to achieve a greater

³¹ J. Blyskal, & M. Blyskal, (1985) PR: How the public relations industry writes the news. New York: Morrow.

transcendence of time and space through telephones, television, VCR's and the Internet."³²

Furthermore, Sallot, Steinfatt, and Salwen point out how news is a product of the transactions between PR practitioners and journalists:

"The primary source of reality for news is not what is displayed or what happens in the real world. The reality of news is embedded in the nature and type of social and cultural relations that develop between journalists and their sources."³³

To gain the media's attention PR practitioners need the help and cooperation of journalists. File emphasizes this point:

"One out of three of the close to 100 editors surveyed specifically listed public relations people or news releases as reliable sources of business information. Survey results indicate that a large segment of the media utilizes the public relations person to effect contact with high corporate officers and to provide creative news and features about his or her particular company. Some media outlets rely on news releases more than they would like due to staff shortages, but even these outlets usually try to contact the company for further development. Not surprisingly, top corporate executives

³² Allison, Anderson, (1997). *Media, culture and the environment*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, p. 12.

³³ Lynn M. Sallot, Thomas M. Steinfatt, and Michael B. Salwen (1998). Journalists and public relations practitioners news values: Perceptions and cross-perceptions. *Journalism and Mass communication Quarterly*. Vol. 75. No. 2, Summer, p. 377

are viewed as important sources of business news, and some editors consider them indispensable."³⁴

Sallot, Steinfatt, and Salwen studied the perceptions of editors and public relations practitioners about each other; they found a difference in how journalists perceive public relations practitioners. What they found was that:

"Little similarity between the news values and the perceptions of practitioners' news values but practitioners perceived a modest relationship between their news values and those of journalists."³⁵

The main question many journalists ask is "But should you trust PR?" A recent article in *Information Advisor* suggests people have mixed feelings:

"Traditionally, journalists and other professional researchers have looked upon the PR profession as a mixed blessing. On the one hand, a good PR contact will open doors, understand the researcher's query, and ferret out a truly knowledgeable expert inside an organization. But the less competent, or more cautious PR person may function more as a barrier or speak only in broad generalities, never going beyond the company line."³⁶

According to Marken:

³⁴ L. T. File, (1978), How business editors view public relations. *Public Relations Journal*, 34(2), p. 8.

³⁵ M. Sallot, Lynne, M. Steinfatt, Thomas and Michael B. Salwen, (1998). Journalists and public relations practitioners news values: Perceptions and cross-perceptions. *Journalists and mass Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 75. No. 2, Summer, p. 370.

³⁶ *Information Advisor*, April 2001, Vol. 13, No. 4, "Using PR as an Expert Source: More Than Just Spin?", pg. 5.

"Nearly every editor and reporter complains that the writing quality of the PR materials has deteriorated to a dangerous level with many releases lacking clarity, brevity and directness."³⁷

When it comes to news releases, Seymour Topping, former managing editor of the *New York Times*, says:

"We get hundreds of press releases everyday in each of our news departments . . . and often there are legitimate news stories. Often the first hint of a newsworthy event is heard of by us from a press release."³⁸

Pros and cons of PR practitioners and journalists

A recent survey by Workinpr.com found that a majority of PR professionals rank strategic direction of their business as the hardest part of their job when compared to client management, tactical work or managing internal staff. Another key finding was that the majority of journalists view PR professionals as "gatekeepers." Other key findings from the survey, which recorded feedback from more than 1,600 public relations pros and journalists, are as follows:

- Just under 9 percent of PR respondents received formal training from managers or peers, while nearly 37 percent received no training at all

³⁷ G. A. Marken, (1994). Press releases: When nothing else will do, do it right. Public Relations Quarterly, 39(1). P. 9.

³⁸ J. Blyskal & M. Blyskal, PR: How the public relations industry writes the news, 1985, New York: Morrow. P. 46.

- According to PR respondents, the top two skills lacking in entry-level PR professionals today are knowledge of the industry/business issues and strong written/verbal skills.
- A majority (73 percent) of PR professionals believe having a personal relationship receives the best response from the press; 10 percent felt that direct e-mails receive good response, while only 7 percent believe press releases are effective. Meanwhile, 24 percent believe journalists are receptive to PR pitches.
- When asked about their relationship with PR professionals, the majority of journalists (36 percent) believe they are gatekeepers of information; 29 percent believe that PR professionals are cooperative, but not very valuable.
- The majority of journalists (43 percent) say they find expert sources from their own “little black book,” while 26 percent say they find expert sources from industry groups.³⁹

“It’s no secret that public relations has got a pretty poor public image, sitting somewhere between the polarized camps of ‘fluff’ and ‘spin’,” appeared in a 2000 article in PR week. The article went on to say, “Most journalism is really about telling the truth as you see it, while PROs often create the image that the truth is entirely malleable. In a

³⁹ Public Relations Tactics, December 2001, p.3.

lot of cases, journalists and PRs are conspiring as to what is going out, and that's terribly damaging."⁴⁰

Heath explains that public relations professionals are:

"Influential people in that they design, place, and repeat messages in behalf of sponsors on any array of topics that shape views of government, charitable organizations, institutions of public education, products and consumerism, capitalism, labor, health, and leisure. They write, speak and use visual images to discuss topics and take stances on public policies at local, state and federal levels; and they create images and publicize business and special interest events."⁴¹

Some researchers argue that the problems between journalists and public relations practitioners are technology based and have more to do with writing than any thing else.

Marken exemplifies this point by reporting that:

"Nearly every editor and reporter complains that the writing quality of the PR materials has deteriorated to a dangerous level with many releases lacking clarity, brevity and directness."⁴²

However, Williams disagrees. He writes:

"The problem is not the vehicle. The problem is with those whose

⁴⁰ PR Week, March 10, 2000, MAIN FEATURE: Exposed! – Maja Pawinska examines a report which analyses the image of image makers, MAJA PAWINSKA.

⁴¹ Robert L. Heath (1992). Critical perspectives on public relations. In Toth, Elizabeth L. and Hesth, Robert L. (Eds). *Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

⁴² G. A. Marken, (1994). Press releases: When nothing else will do, do it right. Public Relations Quarterly, 39(1). P. 9.

job it is to transform the vehicle into effective communication. Although it has been routinely scorned, ridiculed, ignored and trashed, there's nothing wrong with the press release that a perception overhaul, complimented by some basic skill enhancement, won't fix."⁴³

Hallahan argues that it is more than just press releases; he says the press criticizes public relations practitioners for the following reasons:

- Cluttering public communication channels
- Failing to tell the whole truth
- Incessantly putting a positive spin on stories
- Failing to be responsive to inquiries
- Blocking access to newsmakers

Likewise, Arnoff found that news people see public relations as:

"An important part of the process of getting news to the public, even though they continue to associate the public relations profession with unacceptable practices."⁴⁴

Arnoff's findings also indicated that:

"Journalists have negative attitudes toward public relations practitioners and perceive heterophilous news value orientations and occupational status as compared to public relations."⁴⁵

⁴³ Doug Williams (1994). In defense of the (properly executed) press release. *Public Relations Quarterly*, Fall, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Craig Aronoff. "Credibility of Public Relations for Journalists," *Public Relations Review*, 1(2):45-56 (Fall 1975).

⁴⁵ Craig Aronoff. "Credibility of Public Relations for Journalists," *Public Relations Review*, 1(2):45-56 (Fall 1975).

It is not just journalists who are complaining; public relations practitioners have their own set of complaints. According to Nolte (1979) public relations practitioners criticize journalists for these reasons:

- Being uninformed
- Failing to investigate facts
- Distorting and unbalanced coverage
- Being hostile reporters
- Being biased against public relations

Perceptions of journalists and PR practitioners

Sallot, Steinfatt and Salwen also looked at the perceptions of editors and public relations practitioners about each other. They only found a difference in the perception of journalists about public relations practitioners:

"The former saw little similarity between their news values and their perceptions of practitioners' [news] values [but] practitioners perceived a modest relationship between their news values and those of journalist."⁴⁶

Irwin Ross of *The New York Post* had this to say:

"Journalists tend to be suspicious both of the deft indirection of the

⁴⁶ Lynn M. Sallot, Thomas M. Steinfatt, and Michael B. Salwen (1998). Journalists and public relations practitioners news values: Perceptions and cross-perceptions. *Journalism and Mass communication Quarterly*. Vol. 75. No. 2, Summer, p. 372.

sophisticated public relation's man and the crude importuning of the old-fashioned press agent. The former they regard as "manipulative" in some ill-defined way and the latter as a downright annoyance. The general disdain for the breed exists in all editorial shops, despite the fact that most journalists admire the proficiency - and even the integrity - of individual practitioners."⁴⁷

The Associated Press Managing Editors' APME manual added this regarding journalist's hostility toward the public relations practitioner:

"A flack is a person who makes all or part of his income by obtaining space in newspapers without cost to himself or his clients. Usually a profession . . . they are formerly known as public relations men. The flack is the modern equivalent of the cavalier highwayman of old . . . a flack is a flack. His job is to say things about his client. He will not lie very often, but much of the time he tells less than the whole story. You do not owe the PR man anything. The owner of the newspaper, not the flack, pays your salary. Your job is to serve the readers, not the man who would raid your columns."⁴⁸

Truesdell addresses source credibility in this way:

"Faced with the dilemma, the public relations practitioner must always be candid. If you deceive the media, you'll get away with

⁴⁷ Irwin Ross, *The Image Merchants*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1959.

⁴⁸ *Associated Press Managing Editors Guidelines*, a loose-leaf manual prepared by the Associated Press, New York, NY, undated, p. 44, cited in Scott Cutlip and Allen Centre, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

the deception only once and at the cost of alienating that reporter - and maybe the entire publication or broadcast outlet - from that particular client and possibly from all of your firm's clients in the future." ⁴⁹

Blyskal and Blyskal have their own thoughts regarding the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners:

"There is a great deal of confusion about the credibility of PR people. In general, PR "flacks," as they are disparagingly called by the press, are seen as outright liars. In general, and especially for the upper reaches of the PR industry, that is a false assessment. PR people know they must deal with facts - and they do deal in facts. If they couldn't be trusted in the PR-journalist relationship, the press would always be double-checking what the PR people had to say. Neither party would like that: not the journalists, because it would mean twice the work for them (and, as we know, journalists often depend on PR people for shortcuts); and not the PR people, who seek to discourage the press from digging up other sides of a story." ⁵⁰

The ongoing antagonism can sometimes make it very ugly for PR people. An editorial page editor of the *Washington Post* had this to say:

⁴⁹ W. E. Truesdell (1989) Dealing with the business and financial media. Experts in action: Inside public relations White Plains, NY: Lomgman, p. 162.

⁵⁰ J. Blyskal & M. Blyskal, PR: How the public relations industry writes the news, 1985, New York: Morrow. Pg. 68-69.

"We don't want any of that damned [public relations] crowd around here. If people want to get to us . . . it's as easy as pie, so long as they don't come in (or send their manuscripts in or make a request) via a flack firm. The reason for saying no to these wolves is very plain and strong . . . Why should we be in their goddamn memo traffic as exploitable or exploited 'resources'?"⁵¹

The relationship between PR practitioners and journalists

McLeod and Chaffee developed a model, which had been used to study the relationships between groups; this model is called the coorientation model. The coorientation model is defined as a model that:

"Considers the relationships between cognitions of the persons involved in the act as possible causes and effects of communication."⁵²

Aronoff (1975) performed the first coorientation studies focusing on source credibility between public relations practitioners and journalists. These same studies were replicated by Kopenhaver, Martinson, and Ryan (1984), Stegall and Sanders (1986), Carroll (1992), and Owles (1993).

Aronoff found that journalists ranked news values with consistency in terms of themselves (concordance correlation = .71) and in the manner in which they perceived public relations practitioners would rank the news values (concordance correlation = .52).

⁵¹ Anon., "Flack Attack: The *Post* spurns p.r. wolves," *Time*, May 10, 1982, p. 101.

⁵² Jack M. MacLeod and Steven H. Chaffe, "Interpersonal Approaches to Communication Research," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 16:3 (March-April 1973), p. 221.

However, the values held by journalists were opposite ($\rho = -.97$) the values which journalists perceived public relations practitioners to hold.⁵³

Aronoff also found that public relations practitioners ranked news values with less consistency (concordance correlation = .40) but viewed their own news values as similar to the news values of journalists ($\rho = .77$) which they ranked as having more consistency than their own (concordance correlation = .66). In addition, news values reported by public relations practitioners were like values reported by journalists ($\rho = .83$).⁵⁴

Aronoff reported that in order for public relations practitioners to increase their credibility with the media, they must try to improve the attitudes the media hold about the public relations profession.⁵⁵

A decade later, Kopenhaver, Martinson, and Ryan replicated Aronoff's study (in a different geographic location - Florida) to see if the results would differ. Kopenhaver reported journalists' attitudes towards public relations practitioners were almost the same as what Aronoff found. Kopenhaver said this about news value:

"When practitioners were asked to complete the same rankings, their own news value hierarchy agreed almost identically with the editors' own hierarchy. Both ranked their top ten news values in the same order and the last value for both was "depicts subjects in favorable light," which journalists perceived to be practitioners'

⁵³ ⁵³ C. Aronoff, (1975). Credibility of public relations for journalists. Public Relations Review, 1(2)

⁵⁴ ⁵⁴ C. Aronoff, (1975). Credibility of public relations for journalists. Public Relations Review, 1(2)

⁵⁵ ⁵⁵ C. Aronoff, (1975). Credibility of public relations for journalists. Public Relations Review, 1(2)

primary news value. In contrast, in their perceptions of journalists, practitioners were fairly accurate."⁵⁶

Kopenhaver's conclusion slightly differed from Aronoff. Kopenhaver concluded that:

"It is obvious that the results of the Florida study reinforce the findings of Aronoff and Jeffers with regard to news values and role and status perceptions of journalists and public relations practitioners. Cline's contention that journalists are educationally conditioned to have negative attitudes toward public relations practitioners has a great deal of validity when one considers that the news value orientation of both groups is virtually identical . . . If public relations professionals do indeed put into practice those principles and priorities they profess to hold, perhaps editors' attitudes can be changed so both truly become partners in the dissemination of information."⁵⁷

Owles replicated Aronoff's study of journalists' attitudes towards public relations practitioners by including all the news editors and broadcast news directors in Nevada. Owles' results supported the conclusions made in Aronoff's and Kopenhaver's studies. Owles found no significant differences. He concluded that:

"The current study's results for Nevada were consistent with the 1975 Texas study and the 1984 Florida study. There were no

⁵⁶ L.L. Kopenhaver (1985) Aligning values of practitioners and journalists. Public Relations Review 11(2), p. 39.

⁵⁷ L.L. Kopenhaver (1985) Aligning values of practitioners and journalists. Public Relations Review 11(2), p. 41.

significant differences in the responses of the news journalists and public relations practitioners, despite a 20-year span. And yet, after nearly 20 years since Aronoff's study, there is still this antagonism between journalists and public relations practitioners. Still the distrust. Still the low credibility ratings for public relations practitioners"⁵⁸

Carroll replicated Aronoff's and Kopenhaver's studies and reported results, which supported both their findings. Carroll came to this conclusion:

"Empirical evidence from several studies over a period of almost 20 years supports the argument that public relations practitioners continue to have a credibility problem with journalists. Aronoff (1975) reported a credibility problem among Texas journalists: Kopenhaver, Martinson, and Ryan (1984) reported similar findings among Florida journalists: and Stegall and Sanders (1986) found education writers in Missouri had a negative orientation toward higher education practitioners.

The combined results of those three more narrowly focused studies, together with the current research on a national sample, would support an empirical generalization that journalists have negative attitudes toward public relations practitioners. In fact, the

⁵⁸ P.A. Owles (1993) How public relations practitioners and news journalists perceive each other in Nevada. (Master's thesis, University of Nevada, Reno). Masters Abstracts.

problem seems to be as serious today as it was when Aronoff reported his findings in 1975."⁵⁹

America is not the only country reporting problems between journalists and public relations practitioners. The contempt journalists have for PR has also been reported in Canada. Canada's largest business magazine ran an article called "The Incredible Thinking PR Man," which mocked public relations practitioners in the headline. The story raised the generalization that PR practitioners are not respected, trusted or very ethical. Larry Gaudet reported:

"It's somewhat ironic that a profession dedicated to image-making has a lingering problem of its own."⁶⁰

Another Canadian writer attacked public relations in an article. Joyce Nelson's *Sultans of Sleaze: Public Relations and the Media*. She writes:

"The power of the PR industry is demonstrated not only by its hegemonic maneuverings within and for every area of government and business, but also by its remarkable ability to function as a

⁵⁹ R. A. Carroll (1992). An analysis of attitudes of daily newspaper education writers toward public relations practitioners in higher education. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 92). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 52, pp. 145-146.

⁶⁰ Larry Gaudet, "The Incredible Thinking PR Man," *Canadian Business*, 65:5 (May 1988), p. 117.

virtually invisible "grey eminence" behind the scenes, gliding in and out of troubled situations with the ease of a Cardinal Richelieu and the conscience of a mercenary. (Nelson, *The Sultans of Sleaze: Public Relations and the Media*."⁶¹

This relationship may not be as complex as we think. An article in The Guardian offers a solution:

“Maybe media need to show their PR content, in much the same way that food labeling does for sugars, additives and vitamins. A list in every piece and in every closing broadcast credit of the ingredients that make up each story. Should it happen? I think journalism would prefer to continue to bite the hand that it feeds. But even a pilot scheme for a limited period would show whether consumers avoid stories with too high a PR content. But then again, maybe the stories just wouldn’t taste the same without . . .”⁶²

Pr practitioners versus journalists

Scott Cutlip and Allen Center, authorities on public relations, summed up journalists’ complaints regarding the public relations field:

⁶¹ Joyce Nelson, *The Sultans of Sleaze: Public Relations and the Media*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1989, p. 19.

⁶² The Guardian, November 13, 2000, Media: Face up to who your real sources are: All PR is a waste of money, or a scam, say the newspapers. Not so, argues Julia Hobsbawm, who calls for journalists to be more honest about where their good stories come from, JULIA HOBSBAWM.

1. Attempts by practitioners to color and check the free flow of legitimate news.
2. Space-grabbing for 'free advertising', with consequent loss of revenue to the media.
3. Attempted use of 'influence' and pressure to get into news columns, indirect and sometimes direct bribery of reporters.
4. Gross ignorance of the media's requirements; no conception of what news is or how it should be written.
5. Raiding news staffs for experienced men with the lure of higher salaries.⁶³

To help minimize journalists' complaints Grunig and Hunt suggest all public relations practitioners possess the important ability of:

"Understanding of how the media really works and thinks; knowing what is news and what is not news; and knowing what sparks a journalist's interest, curiosity, and investment of time in a story."⁶⁴

Bernard Ury believes it is a lack of ethics and professionalism on behalf of the journalists that causes problems between PR practitioners and journalists. Ury writes:

"It is surprising how even on some of the most respected magazines and newspapers you run into editors and reporters who deal haphazardly, in a cavalier manner, or even boorishly with

⁶³ Scott Cutlip and Allen Center, *Effective Public Relations* (revised 5th edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., p. 383.

⁶⁴ James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt, *Managing Public Relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984, p. 83.

capable PR people. There are still "Front Page" types - even young ones - in positions of power whose attitudes toward PR are reflected in their use of terms such as "flack" and in plain surly bad manners whenever a PR person calls or visits."⁶⁵

Public relations practitioners have a list of their own when it comes to complaints against the news media:

1. The media are not doing a thorough job; they have failed to increase news staff to keep up with the ever-expanding list of activities demanding news coverage (in the fields of government, business, science, education, medicine, etc.)
2. The news media are too sensational, always over-emphasizing conflict and minimizing the more constructive events taking place in society.
3. The attacks on practitioners as "space grabbers" conveniently hide the media's hunger for money.
4. The media fail to distinguish between honest, helpful practitioners and those who are unethical or incompetent; this leads to a failure to treat news as news regardless of the source.
5. Despite their frequent condemnations of public relations, reporters are becoming increasingly independent on PR sources to

⁶⁵ Bernard E. Ury, "A question for editors: What are you doing to PR?", *Editor and Publisher*, 102:4 (1 February 1969), p. 22.

fill news space.⁶⁶

Both sides have their own list of complaints; however, many believe journalists and public relations practitioners are being taught this when they are being educated as students. Kopenhaver concludes this point as follows:

"Finally, if indeed, as Honaker points out, journalism students are being taught to "hate and reject" news releases, then communication and journalism schools and departments must work toward facilitating a greater understanding between public relations and journalism students and the goals and expertise of each. Both groups of professionals provide a special service, and each must be appreciated for its particular ability and contribution to the dissemination of information and knowledge. Both professions then benefit, and so does the public."⁶⁷

In the classroom is not the only place students may be learning to put up their defenses. Business people are also exhibiting this kind of behavior. Howard made the following comments:

"When business people are asked to speak with reporters, they frequently employ the "Pac Man" defense--Eat your enemies before they eat you. 'He'll never quote me right.' 'She doesn't understand our business. What's she going to ask anyway?' 'They never print what we want them to say.' 'All newspaper stories are

⁶⁶ Scott Cutlip and Allen Center, *Effective Public Relations* (revised 5th edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., p. 384.

⁶⁷ L.L. Kopenhaver (1985) Aligning values of practitioners and journalists. Public Relations Review 11(2), p. 42.

biased. These can be typical reactions of potential spokespeople both in large corporations and in smaller nonprofit organizations.

Indeed, many clients and executives understandably are more comfortable to the choir already in church, and not quite so agreeable about venturing outside to talk to the unconverted. As union leader Lane Firkland put it, "The only way to convert the heathen is to travel into the jungle."

Implementing this philosophy is not easy. *The Book of Lists* ranks fear of public speaking ahead of death, flying and loneliness--and being interviewed, hosting a news conference, or talking to reporters for attribution has got to be the most *public* of public speaking opportunities..."⁶⁸

The importance of PR practitioners and journalists working together

Geuger is more optimistic than Howard and believes there is a way to succeed:

"To succeed in media relations, one needs to operate more strategically, become more responsive, and find ways to communicate messages to reporters."⁶⁹

American journalist Robert Heilbroner of *Harper's Magazine* also had optimistic conclusions regarding the PR professional:

"Good public relations has become something very much like the

⁶⁸ C. Howard (1989). Media relations: Public relations' basic activity. In B. Cantor (Ed.). *Experts in action: Inside public relations*. White Plains, NY: Longman. p. 259.

⁶⁹ Maridith Walker Geuder (1995). Media mentality. *Currents*, November/December, p. 46. Robert L. Heilbroner, "Public Relations: The Invisible Sell," *Harper's Magazine*. 214:1285 (June 1957), p. 31.

corporate conscience—a commercial conscience, no doubt, but a conscience none-the-less. If the public relations professional can bolster this role, if it can become the corporate conscience openly, fearlessly, and wisely, speaking not only *for* business, but *to* business, then it will have more than redeemed its name."⁷⁰

Farrar believes that analyzing what each group thinks of one another could help the journalist/public relations practitioner's relationship the most:

"Journalists accuse public relations practitioners of: trying to manage or control the news: attempting to finagle space in the news columns for their clients' benefits; employing pressure to affect editorial policy to slip a story into the paper; being uninformed or indifferent to the media's editorial requirements; and of hiring away talented reporters for better-paying jobs as public relations executives. Public relations practitioners, on the other hand, accuse journalists of: neglecting to cover many types of important and newsworthy events especially news from the business community, education etc.; failing to realize a good story; and continuing to overemphasize negative news of strife and conflict while ignoring upbeat, constructive stories (Farrar, 1996, pp.)"⁷¹

⁷⁰ Robert L. Heilbroner, "Public Relations: The Invisible Sell," *Harper's Magazine*. 214:1285 (June 1957), p. 31.

⁷¹ Ronald T. Farrar (1996). *Mass Communication, an introduction to the field*, (2nd ed.), New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc. pp. 251-252.

In 1958 Edward J. Flynn, journalist for *The American Editor* examined the journalist/public relations practitioner relationship very closely:

“It is likely that the public relations man is here to stay. The breed is hardy; it shows evidence of improvement, and time will separate the sheep from the goats. The metamorphosis can be stimulated by editors themselves to their own advantage. For a while some editors may cherish doubts, the public relations man who knows his business makes the editorial connection a two-way street. He gives the editor something for what he gets in exchange, a service of value in these days of rising editorial costs and, often, limited personnel and facilities. Recognizing that the deal cuts both ways, many editors have learned to rely on those public relations men who, they feel, understand their trade. The editor’s problem is to determine ‘who is who’. This is not easy.”⁷²

Blyskal and Blyskal believe that it may not be a matter of finding out who is who; it may be a matter of figuring out the way journalists think. He summarizes the importance of public relations:

“We showed how the press thinks it is too savvy to be fooled by PR. Actually, journalists seem to suffer from a kind of double-think fallacy. On the one hand, they find it easy to dismiss PR’s

⁷² Edward J. Flynn, “Equipment for Public Relations,” *The American Editor*, 2:2 (July 1958) pp. 33-39.

⁷³ J. Blyskal & M. Blyskal, PR: How the public relations industry writes the news, 1985, New York: Morrow. Pg. 46-47.

influence as minimal. On the other hand, they admit to using PR-
extensively.”

Seymour Topping, former managing editor of the *New York Times*, adds:

“PR people do influence the news, but really more in a functional
manner rather than in terms of giving editorial direction. We get
hundreds of press releases every day in each of our departments.
We screen them very carefully for legitimate news, and very often
there are legitimate news stories. Quite a lot of our business stories
originate from press releases. It’s impossible for us to cover all of
these organizations ourselves. PR is becoming a second news
network behind the legitimate news media: a second network that
feeds the news media more and more of its news.”⁷³

Furthermore, according to Blyskal and Blyskal, perhaps half of the
articles, which appear in the Wall Street Journal, come from press releases.

According to Roy Greenslade, Guardian media commentator, public relations
practitioners need to start thinking more like journalists:

“Newspapers are increasingly relying on ‘scoops of interpretation’
or ‘spin’ in a bid to provide a daily diet of exclusives. This need to
‘find exclusive angles’ is placing increasing pressure on the
relationship between public relations professionals and journalists.
People in public relations need to start thinking more like

⁷³J. Blyskal & M. Blyskal, PR: How the public relations industry writes the news, 1985, New York:
Morrow. Pg. 46-47.

journalists and learn how to tell complex and serious stories in a populist, human interest way.”⁷⁴

Many people have acknowledged the importance of public relations practitioners and their relationship with journalists for quite some time. In 1967, *Time* magazine declared public relations to be a “legitimate and essential trade, necessitated by the complexity of modern life and the workings of an open society”.⁷⁵

Other people believe that Public Relations is to blame for all the confusion and problems because it allows itself to accept attacks. Take a look at this passage in a 1995 article in PR Week:

“Public relations is an easy target. It has always been. Usually the attack takes the form of: ‘Smug journalist shows witty disdain for the mountains of misdirected press releases from flighty bimbos’. But now the observer brings us: ‘Earnest investigator uncovers the sinister world of the video news release, which is secretly taking over the media and changing the face of democracy as we know it.’ The media pundits cannot make up their minds. PR people are simultaneously described as ineffectual airheads and as Machiavellian manipulators dictating the news agenda to quaking editors. This contradiction was painfully evident in Matthew Paris’ misguided attempt at a hatchet job on the public relations industry

⁷⁴ PR Week, August 8, 1997, “Hard Commercial Edge of PR 1997: The right PR spin can help overcome journalist mistrust”.

⁷⁵ Anon., “Essay: The Arts and Uses of Public Relations,” *Time*, 7 July 1967, pp. 40-41.

last year. Which is it to be? They can't have it both ways. Anyone whose knowledge of public relations goes deeper than the last series of Absolutely Fabulous will realize that neither caricature represents the truth-although both contain truthful elements. There are indeed some public relations people who seem to specialize in irrelevant press releases and pointless, ill-informed telephone calls. And there are also shameless manipulators and obfuscators who will distort the truth.”⁷⁶

However, not all people look to blame PR. Jack Donoghue describes his experience while working for the British United Press during the late 1930's and early 1940's:

“I was learning something about popular opinion and journalism. I was also learning how reporters worked, how they approached news, and why they did the thing they did, knowledge that was fundamental for a PR individual and that would serve me well in the years to come. After World War II, when the function of public relations rapidly expanded, journalists were the main segment of the population from which PR people were drawn.”⁷⁷

Much of the antagonism existing between journalists and public relations practitioners is over accurate and factual news:

⁷⁶ PR Week, March 24, 1995, p. 9, Editorial: Industry's image does matter.

⁷⁷ Jack Donoghue, PR: *Fifty Years in the Field*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993, p. 6.

”I can’t think of one story that I have placed, in either print or broadcast media, which has been a 100% accurate rendition of the facts I have presented. Most have been more like 50% at best, once you’ve taken sub-editing, interpretation, and headlines into account for print, and interview or story context into account for broadcast. That’s ‘freedom of information’. So the obvious bias from PR in the first place, and the less obvious bias of journalism, means that the consumer’s diet of fact is being eroded by both trades, each one blaming the other.”

The article goes on to say:

“The contract between the two trades is inescapable and co-dependent. The Guardian has recognized this dysfunctional relationship in the political lobby, which so often spins out of control. This is no surprise: both journalism and PR are at best interpretation or oral history and at worst political bias and malicious wounding.”⁷⁸

In 1961, Bernard Rubin, a professor of public relations at Boston University, made the following comments:

“The public relations man too often gains entrance to the field on his own announcement . . . Some of the blame for the low self esteem which public relations suffers in many quarters can be lain

⁷⁸ The Guardian, November 13, 2000, Media: Face up to who your real sources are: All PR is a waste of money, or a scam, say the newspapers. Not so, argues Julia Hobsbawm, who calls for journalists to be more honest about where their good stories come from, JULIA HOBSBAWM.

on the shoulders of the self-appointed public relations expert. It is high time that we in the field realize that experience in some process or some cheerily enthusiastic willingness to join the ranks is not enough to qualify in public relations. Before the 'Shingle' is displayed the standards of a profession must be met.”⁷⁹

A 2000 article in *The Guardian* compared PR practitioners to lawyers in this way:

“We are increasingly the gatekeepers to crucial access to a story, barring the way to a simple quote by a bureaucratic procedure that can look like, and sometimes is, a way of buying time and agreeing to write ‘a line’ first. Like lawyers, the majority of the PR trade believes in the taxi-rank school of appointment, namely that everyone has the right to representation, regardless of the merit of their case. I disagree with this policy, but it doesn’t mean that unethical systems of information automatically follow suit.”⁸⁰

A study conducted by Jean Charron describes the relationship between journalists and PR practitioners as “playing a game.” Charron’s study incorporated “game theory” to explore the processes governing the journalist-practitioner relationship-conflict, cooperation and negotiation.⁸¹

Charron’s model concludes that:

⁷⁹ Bernard Rubin, “Public Relations, Communication Science: The Practical and the Professional,” *The American Editor*, 5:2 (July 1961), p. 15.

⁸⁰ *The Guardian*, November 13, 2000, Media: Face up to who your real sources are: All PR is a waste of money, or a scam, say the newspapers. Not so, argues Julia Hobsbawm, who calls for journalists to be more honest about where their good stories come from, JULIA HOBSBAWM.

⁸¹ Jean Charron, “Relations Between Journalists and Public Relations Practitioners: Cooperation, Conflict and Negotiation,” *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 14:1 (Winter 1989), pp. 41-54.

“Neither partner is completely powerless before the other, but there is not a puppeteer (the public relations practitioner) on one side and a puppet (the journalist) on the other. Public relations officers succeed in exerting influence on journalists only to the extent that they yield, to a point, to the journalists’ demands.”

Charron goes on to say:

“By complying with the journalists’ working requirements, and by striving to meet their needs, public relations practitioners make use of journalistic constraints for their own benefit. The compromise must satisfy both sets of players at least minimally if the relationship is to endure. Relations between public relations practitioners and journalists are maintained and become institutionalized in a game, because both sides want to continue playing.”⁸²

A 1995 article in PR Week suggests it is the credibility and image of PR, which will either make or break the profession:

“PR, like every other industry, has its share of incompetents and miscreants, but they are not in the majority. The public relations industry would not survive if that were the case, because the truth that is essential to its proper functioning would break down. For

⁸² Jean Charron, “Relations Between Journalists and Public Relations Practitioners: Cooperation, Conflict and Negotiation,” *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 14:1 (Winter 1989), p. 52-53.

any journalist who is really concerned about the minority of offenders (as opposed to whipping up a storm of mock indignation to fill an awkward space around the ads in the 'style' section) the answer is simple. Don't take the call, and aim the press release or VNR at the bin. It's your choice.

The article goes on by suggesting that:

"Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect praise for public relations in print or on air from journalists, who will always feel uncomfortable in publicity acknowledging the symbiotic nature of the relationship. But there is a serious issue here. The image of the industry is crucial to its future health, not only in raising its credibility with business leaders, but because it affects the industry's ability to attract the high quality recruits it needs."

The article concludes with:

"Many people choose to ignore the brickbats, and aim to win admirers simply by doing a good job. But, as the Royal Mail recently discovered, that is not enough. Perception is as important as reality in a competitive marketplace. Put another way, when it comes to securing budgets and accounts, PR is only as good as people think it is. The image matters."

CHAPTER III DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Selection of the sample

This chapter presents the design of the study, including the methods and procedures used in conducting this research study. This chapter consists of five major areas including the selection of the sample, measuring instrument, procedures, and analysis of data.

To explore the love-hate relationship existing between journalists and public relations practitioners, data was gathered from the following libraries: Savitz Library of Rowan University of New Jersey (Lexis-Nexis, Infotrac) and the Library database at Cumberland County College of New Jersey. After researching the attitudes of journalists and PR practitioners and how they perceive one another, the researcher wanted to explore these problems more deeply and attempt to uncover new evidence leading to ways the two professions could work better together. A mail survey was sent to journalists (reporters/editors) and public relations practitioners. A systematic random sample of each group was drawn.

Henry identifies the target population for a study as “the group for which the researchers would like to make general statements”. The sampling frame or list from which the sample is selected, provides “the definition of the study population and

differences between the target population and sampling frame constitute a non-sampling bias”.⁸³

Every element of the target population may not be included in the sampling frame because the list of elements may be incomplete. However, directories and membership lists of organizations are considered acceptable to most researchers.

The survey focuses on how journalists perceive public relations practitioners and an analysis of what journalists would do differently in carrying out public relations tasks. Surveys were sent to journalists and public relations practitioners listed in the two sampling frames in comparable positions.

Measuring instrument

The survey instrument used was a questionnaire. Using Arnoff (1975) and Kopenhaver as a guideline, this instrument intended to measure how journalists perceive public relations practitioners and what journalists would do differently in carrying out public relations tasks.⁸⁴

Procedures

The steps taken to collect the data started with going to the PRSA directory and The Society of Professional Journalists and dividing the number of questionnaires the researcher was planning on sending out into the number of members for both sampling frames. Then this researcher went to the random table of numbers to see where to start. By using the proper formula N/n the appropriate interval of selection was determined.

⁸³ R.L. Henry, (1990), Practical Sampling, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

⁸⁴ C. Aronoff, (1975). Credibility of public relations for journalists. Public Relations Review, 1(2), 45-46.

This researcher also used a backup for each number in case there was a change of address, profession, etc.

This researcher sent out 100 questionnaires to public relations practitioners nationwide and 100 to journalists nationwide. Each subject was mailed a cover letter, a questionnaire, and a self-addressed stamped return envelope (see appendix). The respondents were offered anonymity by not filling in their name. The questionnaires were coded with a number written at the bottom of the first page and were recorded to determine who had responded in case the respondent chose to remain anonymous.

Analysis of data

This researcher will handle the data collected by producing descriptive statistics using SPSS for Windows computer program. Frequencies, means, modes, medians, range, variance, skewness, kurtosis, Pearson's R Correlation Coefficient and standard deviations were calculated for every attitude statement on the questionnaire. With this information the researcher will produce a chi-square analysis to see how different PR practitioners and journalists' responses are. This will help to uncover how the two professions perceive each other and what could make the relationship more beneficial to both professions. Then the researcher will conclude the findings while addressing significant information. Finally the researcher will make recommendations for future studies on the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine what kinds of attitudes help shape and define the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists and suggest ways in which the two professions can work better and more efficiently together.

Respondents' answers are presented in this chapter, along with a discussion of their answers. An analysis of the data appears in chapter V along with conclusions. The frequency charts and bar graphs are presented in the same order as the questions appeared in the questionnaire.

The charts and graphs represent the statistics for frequencies and percentages of responses for each subject. The results for each of the individual questions were given first. There are two frequency charts for each question, one representing public relations practitioners, and one representing journalists. In this first section you will find the results for attitude, such as who agreed, who disagreed, etc.

Two charts represent each of the five tests performed, one for public relations practitioners, and one for journalists. In the first set of charts, results for the mean, median, mode and sum, were reported. The mean is a type of average where the scores were summed and divided by the number of observations. The median is an average, which is defined as the midpoint in a set of scores. It's the point at which one-half, or 50%, of the scores fall above and one-half, or 50%, fall below. The mode is the value that occurs most frequently.

In the second set of charts the results for the chi-square test were reported. The Chi-square test involves a comparison between what is observed and what would be expected by chance. Chi square is a non-parametric test of statistical significance for bivariate tabular analysis. Any appropriately performed test of statistical significance lets you know the degree of confidence you can have in accepting or rejecting an hypothesis.

The third set of charts represents the results for the standard deviation. The standard deviation is the average deviation from the mean or the average amount of variability in a set of scores. These scores are important because the larger the standard deviation, the larger the two data points are from the mean of the distribution. The larger the standard deviation, the more spread out the values are. The degrees of freedom are values that are different for different statistical tests and approximates the sample size of number of individual cells in an experimental design.

The fourth set of charts represents the variance and range. The variance is defined as the square of the standard deviation and another measure of a distribution's spread or dispersion. The range is the highest score minus the lowest score and a gross measure of variability. The range gives you an idea of how far apart the scores are from one another.

In the fifth set of charts the results for skewness and kurtosis were reported. The indicators of shape of the distribution are skewness and kurtosis. A distribution which is not symmetric but has more cases, or more of a 'tail', toward one end of the distribution than the other, is called skewed. If the 'tail' is toward the larger values, the distribution is positively skewed, or skewed to the right, and negatively skewed if to the left. Kurtosis measures how 'peaked' the distribution is. If positive, it means the peak value is not as high as in a normal distribution. Values for skewness and kurtosis both equal 1 if the

observed distribution is exactly normal. All of the charts have the corresponding question and number at the top.

Public relations practitioners and journalists are equal partners in the dissemination of information.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART I

ONE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	8	15.4	15.4	15.4
agree	17	32.7	32.7	48.1
neutral	3	5.8	5.8	53.8
disagree	22	42.3	42.3	96.2
strongly disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Public relations practitioners and journalists are equal partners in the dissemination of information.

Journalists responded:

CHART II

ONE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	6	10.9	10.9	10.9
disagree	35	63.6	63.6	74.5
strongly disagree	14	25.5	25.5	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the frequency chart above indicates that more than 42 percent of the public relations practitioners do not believe that public relations practitioners and journalists are equal partners in the dissemination of information to the public. And 63.6 percent of journalists also do not believe that public relations practitioners and journalists are of equal partners in the dissemination of information to the public.

Public relations practitioners are very helpful to journalists for factual, complete, timely news.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART III

TWO

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	17	32.7	32.7	32.7
agree	32	61.5	61.5	94.2
neutral	1	1.9	1.9	96.2
disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Public relations practitioners are very helpful to journalists for factual, complete, timely news.

Journalists responded:

CHART IV

TWO

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
agree	13	23.6	23.6	27.3
neutral	21	38.2	38.2	65.5
disagree	17	30.9	30.9	96.4
strongly disagree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the frequency chart above indicates that the journalists' responses were very diverse: 38.2 percent believe PR practitioners are very helpful to journalists for factual, complete, timely news, while 30.9 percent disagreed and 23.6 percent agreed. More than 61 percent of public relations practitioners agreed with this statement, while 32.7 percent strongly agreed.

**Public relations practitioners clutter the lines of communication between the media
and the public.**

PR practitioners responded:

CHART IV

THREE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	4	7.7	7.7	7.7
disagree	29	55.8	55.8	63.5
strongly disagree	19	36.5	36.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

**Public relations practitioners clutter the lines of communication between the media
and the public.**

Journalists responded:

CHART VI

THREE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
agree	16	29.1	29.1	36.4
neutral	16	29.1	29.1	65.5
disagree	17	30.9	30.9	96.4
strongly disagree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the above frequency chart indicates that 55.8 percent of public relations practitioners strongly disagreed that public relations practitioners clutter the lines of communication between the media and the public, and 36.5 percent strongly

disagreed. The journalists' responses were very different: while 30.9 percent disagreed, 29.1 agreed and 29.1 remained neutral on this issue.

Journalists try to compete with public relations practitioners when it comes to news stories.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART VII

FOUR

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
neutral	13	25.0	25.0	30.8
disagree	29	55.8	55.8	86.5
strongly disagree	7	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Journalists try to compete with public relations practitioners when it comes to news stories.

Journalists responded:

CHART VIII

FOUR

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
agree	10	18.2	18.2	25.5
neutral	7	12.7	12.7	38.2
disagree	27	49.1	49.1	87.3
strongly disagree	7	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the chart indicates that 55.8 percent of public relations practitioners disagree that journalists try to compete with public relations practitioners when it comes to news stories, while 25 percent were neutral on the issue. The journalists' responses were similar, 49.1 percent disagreed, 18.2 percent agreed, and 12.7 percent remained neutral on this issue.

Public relations practitioners and journalists are of equal professional status.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART IX

FIVE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	9	17.3	17.3	17.3
agree	27	51.9	51.9	69.2
neutral	9	17.3	17.3	86.5
disagree	7	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Public relations practitioners and journalists are of equal professional status.

Journalists responded:

CHART X

FIVE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	23	41.8	41.8	41.8
neutral	23	41.8	41.8	83.6
disagree	9	16.4	16.4	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the above frequency chart indicates that 51.9 percent of public relations practitioners believe that public relations practitioners and journalists are of equal professional status, 17.3 percent strongly agreed, and 17.3 remained neutral. The journalists' responses were split: 41.8 percent agreed, and 41.8 percent also remained neutral on this issue.

Journalists have high morals, ethics, and principles, and are honest with public relations practitioners.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART XI

SIX

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
agree	15	28.8	28.8	34.6
neutral	24	46.2	46.2	80.8
disagree	8	15.4	15.4	96.2
strongly disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Public relations practitioners have high morals, ethics, and principles, and are honest with journalists.

Journalists responded:

CHART XII

SIX

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	8	14.5	14.5	14.5
neutral	19	34.5	34.5	49.1
disagree	20	36.4	36.4	85.5
strongly disagree	8	14.5	14.5	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the above frequency chart indicates that 46.2 percent of public relations practitioners remain neutral when asked if journalists have high morals, ethics, principles, and are honest with public relations practitioners, 28.8 percent agreed, and 15.4 percent disagreed. When journalists were asked if public relations practitioners have high morals, ethics, principles and are honest with journalists, 36.4 percent disagreed, 34.5 percent remained neutral, 14.5 percent agreed, and 14.5 percent strongly disagreed.

Most public relations practitioners feel journalists are credible.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART XIII

SEVEN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
agree	35	67.3	67.3	69.2
neutral	10	19.2	19.2	88.5
disagree	6	11.5	11.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Public relations practitioners understand the problems journalists encounter such as meeting deadlines, space limitations and the need to make a story look more attractive for readers.

Journalists responded:

CHART XIII

SEVEN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	7	12.7	12.7	12.7
agree	33	60.0	60.0	72.7
neutral	3	5.5	5.5	78.2
disagree	10	18.2	18.2	96.4
strongly disagree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the above frequency chart indicates that 67.3 percent of public relations practitioners believe that most public relations practitioners feel journalists are

credible, 19.2 percent remained neutral, and 11.5 percent disagreed. When the journalists were asked if public relations practitioners understand the problems journalists encounter such as meeting deadlines, space limitations and the need to make a story look more attractive for readers, 60.0 percent agreed, 18.5 percent disagreed, and 12.7 percent strongly agreed.

Journalists understand that public relations practitioners are just doing their job by acquiring support and embellishing the image of their company.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART XV

EIGHT

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
agree	21	40.4	40.4	46.2
neutral	13	25.0	25.0	71.2
disagree	13	25.0	25.0	96.2
strongly disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Journalists understand that public relations practitioners are just doing their job by acquiring support and embellishing the image of their company.

Journalists responded:

CHART XVI

EIGHT

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
agree	30	54.5	54.5	58.2
neutral	11	20.0	20.0	78.2
disagree	8	14.5	14.5	92.7
strongly disagree	4	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the above frequency chart indicates that 40.4 percent of public relations practitioners agreed when asked if journalists understand that public relations practitioners are just doing their job by acquiring support and embellishing the image of their company, 25.0 percent remained neutral, and 25.0 percent disagreed. When journalists were asked the same question, 54.5 percent agreed, 20.0 percent remained neutral on this issue, while 14.5 percent disagreed.

You can trust journalists.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART XVII

NINE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	20	38.5	38.5	38.5
neutral	18	34.6	34.6	73.1
disagree	14	26.9	26.9	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

You can trust public relations practitioners.

Journalists responded:

XVIII**NINE**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	13	23.6	23.6	23.6
neutral	16	29.1	29.1	52.7
disagree	24	43.6	43.6	96.4
strongly disagree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the above frequency chart indicates that 38.5 percent of public relations practitioners agree that they can trust journalists, 34.6 percent remained neutral, and 26.9 percent disagreed. When the journalists were asked if they could trust public relations practitioners, 43.6 percent disagreed, 29.1 percent remained neutral on this issue, while 23.6 percent agreed.

Journalists rely very heavily on public relations practitioners to disseminate information to the targeted publics.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART IXX**TEN**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	2	3.8	3.8	3.8
agree	37	71.2	71.2	75.0
neutral	8	15.4	15.4	90.4
disagree	5	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Public relations practitioners need to obtain confidence from journalists as credible sources of information in order to do their job

Journalists responded:

CHART XX

TEN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	18	32.7	32.7	32.7
agree	34	61.8	61.8	94.5
neutral	2	3.6	3.6	98.2
disagree	1	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the above frequency chart indicates that 71.2 percent of public relations practitioners agree that journalists rely very heavily on public relations practitioners to disseminate information to the targeted publics, and 15.4 percent remained neutral. When journalists were asked if public relations practitioners need to obtain confidence from journalists as credible sources of information in order to do their job, 61.8 percent agreed, and 32.6 percent strongly agreed.

Journalists' goals are to uncover facts for accurate news stories.

PR practitioners responded:

CHART XXI

ELEVEN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	5	9.6	9.6	9.6
agree	37	71.2	71.2	80.8
neutral	8	15.4	15.4	96.2
disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Public relations practitioners are key in opening the lines of communication

between the media and the public.

Journalists responded:

CHART XXII

ELEVEN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
agree	13	23.6	23.6	27.3
neutral	10	18.2	18.2	45.5
disagree	23	41.8	41.8	87.3
strongly disagree	7	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

An examination of the above frequency chart indicates that 71.2 percent agree that journalists' goals are to uncover facts for accurate news stories, and 15.4 percent remained neutral. When journalists were asked if public relations practitioners are key in opening the lines of communication between the media and the public, 41.8 disagreed, 23.6 percent agreed, and 18.2 percent remained neutral on this issue.

Public relations practitioners are key in opening the lines of communication

between the media and the public.

PR practitioners responded:

XXIII

TWELVE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	10	19.2	19.2	19.2
agree	23	44.2	44.2	63.5
neutral	12	23.1	23.1	86.5
disagree	7	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Public relations practitioners had one more question than journalists. When they were asked if public relations practitioners are key in opening the lines of communication between the media and the public, (journalists were asked same question in number 11) 44.2 percent agreed, 23.1 percent remained neutral, and 19.2 percent strongly disagreed.

MEAN, MODE, MEDIAN, AND SUM

PR practitioners' results:

CHART XXIV

Statistics

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN	TWELVE
N Valid	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	2.8654	1.7692	4.2115	3.7692	2.2692	2.8269	2.4038	2.8077	2.8846	2.3077	2.1346	2.3077
Median	3.0000	2.0000	4.0000	4.0000	2.0000	3.0000	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Mode	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Sum	149.00	92.00	219.00	196.00	118.00	147.00	125.00	146.00	150.00	120.00	111.00	120.00

Journalists' results:

CHART XXV

Statistics

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN
N Valid	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	4.0364	3.0727	2.9455	3.4182	2.7455	3.5091	2.4000	2.6727	3.2727	1.7455	3.3636
Median	4.0000	3.0000	3.0000	4.0000	3.0000	4.0000	2.0000	2.0000	3.0000	2.0000	4.0000
Mode	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	2.00 ^a	4.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	2.00	4.00
Sum	222.00	169.00	162.00	188.00	151.00	193.00	132.00	147.00	180.00	96.00	185.00

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The frequency charts above represent the mean, median, mode and sum for both pr practitioners and journalists. The mean (or average) for public relations practitioners responding to the question: Public relation practitioners and journalists are equal partners in the dissemination of information to the public was 2.8 (agree). The median (or midpoint) for public relations practitioners was a three (neutral) and the mode (most frequent) was a four (disagree). For journalists, the mean (or average) was a four (disagree), the median (or midpoint) was a four (disagree) and the mode (most frequent) was also a four (disagree).

CHI-SQUARE

Public relations practitioners' results:

CHART XXVI

Test Statistics

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN	WELVE
Chi-Square	29.731	49.385	18.269	30.154	20.308	32.423	52.769	24.154	1.077	60.462	60.462	11.231
df	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	4	2	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.584	.000	.000	.011

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 10.4.

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 13.0.

c. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 17.3.

Journalists results:

CHART XXVII

Test Statistics

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN
Chi-Square	24.473	27.455	19.636	30.727	7.127	9.655	58.727	45.455	18.091	53.000	22.364
df	2	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	3	3	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.001	.000	.028	.022	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 18.3.

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 11.0.

c. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 13.8.

An examination of the above frequency charts represents the degree of confidence in accepting or rejecting an hypothesis. The charts involve a comparison between what is observed and what would be expected by chance. Chi square is most frequently used to test the statistical significance of results. In the second row of each one of the charts you will see "df" this stands for degrees of freedom. The degrees of freedom of an estimate is equal to the number of independent scores that go into the estimate minus the number of parameters estimated as intermediate steps in the estimation of the parameter itself. The degrees of freedom is a value that is different for different statistical tests and approximates the sample size and also the number of categories in which data have been

organized. Using this number and the risk you are willing to take, you can use the chi-square table to look up what the critical value is.

To interpret the charts, you look at the first row of numbers horizontally; these represent the exact value of chi-square. All the values are listed horizontally under the corresponding numbered question. The row under chi-square is the degrees of freedom, which approximates the sample size of number of individual cells. The last row, which is labeled Asymp. Sig, represents the exact level of significance.

As you can see in the first chart, which represents public relations practitioners, the significance levels (which is the risk set by the researcher for rejecting a null hypothesis when it is true) were so low, they were computed as .000 for almost all questions. In question nine the level of significance is .001, which is also very low. In question 11 the level of significance is .584, which is considered a moderate relationship.

In the second chart, which represents journalists, the significant levels were also extremely low and were computed as .000 for all questions except three. In question three, the level of significance is also very low and is computed as .001. In questions five and six, the levels are computed as .028, and .022 respectively.

STANDARD DEVIATION

Public relations practitioners' results:

CHART XXVIII

Statistics

		ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN	WELVE
N	Valid	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Std. Deviation		1.2372	.6749	.8004	.7571	.9100	.9014	.7211	1.0105	.8081	.7012	.6271	.9401

Journalists' results:

CHART XXVIII

Statistics

		ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN
N	Valid	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Std. Deviation		.8381	.9200	1.0259	1.1497	.7257	.9204	1.0470	1.0193	.8704	.6152	1.0948

- a) The standard deviation is the average deviation from the mean or the average amount of variability in a set of scores. Standard deviation is important because the larger the standard deviation, the larger the two data points are from the mean of the distribution. The standard deviation is a statistic that tells you how tightly all the various examples are clustered around the mean in a set of data. When the examples are pretty tightly bunched together and the bell-shaped curve is steep, the standard deviation is small. When the examples are spread apart and the bell curve is relatively flat, that tells the researcher you have a relatively large standard deviation. Looking at the standard deviation can help point you in the right direction when asking why data

is the way it is. In the first chart you can see that the standard deviation for public relations practitioners varied from .62 to 1.2. This means that the scores varies between .62 and 1.2 from the mean. The standard deviation for journalists varied from .83 to 1.1. This means that the scores varies between .83 and 1.1 from the mean. These scores are important because the larger the standard deviation, the larger the two data points are from the mean of the distribution.

VARIANCE AND RANGE

Public relations practitioners' results:

CHART XXX

Frequencies

Statistics

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN	TWELVE
N Valid	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Variance	.5305	.4555	.6406	.5732	.8281	.8126	.5200	1.0211	.6531	.4917	.3933	.8839
Range	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

Frequency Table

ONE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	8	15.4	15.4	15.4
agree	17	32.7	32.7	48.1
neutral	3	5.8	5.8	53.8
disagree	22	42.3	42.3	96.2
strongly disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

TWO

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	17	32.7	32.7	32.7
agree	32	61.5	61.5	94.2
neutral	1	1.9	1.9	96.2
disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

THREE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	4	7.7	7.7	7.7
disagree	29	55.8	55.8	63.5
strongly disagree	19	36.5	36.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

FOUR

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
	neutral	13	25.0	25.0	30.8
	disagree	29	55.8	55.8	86.5
	strongly disagree	7	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

FIVE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	9	17.3	17.3	17.3
	agree	27	51.9	51.9	69.2
	neutral	9	17.3	17.3	86.5
	disagree	7	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

SIX

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
	agree	15	28.8	28.8	34.6
	neutral	24	46.2	46.2	80.8
	disagree	8	15.4	15.4	96.2
	strongly disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

SEVEN

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
	agree	35	67.3	67.3	69.2
	neutral	10	19.2	19.2	88.5
	disagree	6	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

EIGHT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	3	5.8	5.8	5.8
	agree	21	40.4	40.4	46.2
	neutral	13	25.0	25.0	71.2
	disagree	13	25.0	25.0	96.2
	strongly disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

NINE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	20	38.5	38.5	38.5
	neutral	18	34.6	34.6	73.1
	disagree	14	26.9	26.9	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

TEN

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	2	3.8	3.8	3.8
	agree	37	71.2	71.2	75.0
	neutral	8	15.4	15.4	90.4
	disagree	5	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

ELEVEN

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	5	9.6	9.6	9.6
	agree	37	71.2	71.2	80.8
	neutral	8	15.4	15.4	96.2
	disagree	2	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

TWELVE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	10	19.2	19.2	19.2
	agree	23	44.2	44.2	63.5
	neutral	12	23.1	23.1	86.5
	disagree	7	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	52	100.0	100.0	

CHART XXXI

Journalists' results:

Frequencies

Statistics

		ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN
N	Valid	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Variance		.7024	.8465	1.0525	1.3219	.5266	.8471	1.0963	1.0391	.7576	.3785	1.1987
Range		3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00

Frequency Table

ONE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	6	10.9	10.9	10.9
	disagree	35	63.6	63.6	74.5
	strongly disagree	14	25.5	25.5	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

TWO

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
	agree	13	23.6	23.6	27.3
	neutral	21	38.2	38.2	65.5
	disagree	17	30.9	30.9	96.4
	strongly disagree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

THREE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
	agree	16	29.1	29.1	36.4
	neutral	16	29.1	29.1	65.5
	disagree	17	30.9	30.9	96.4
	strongly disagree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

FOUR

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
agree	10	18.2	18.2	25.5
neutral	7	12.7	12.7	38.2
disagree	27	49.1	49.1	87.3
strongly disagree	7	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

FIVE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	23	41.8	41.8	41.8
neutral	23	41.8	41.8	83.6
disagree	9	16.4	16.4	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

SIX

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	8	14.5	14.5	14.5
neutral	19	34.5	34.5	49.1
disagree	20	36.4	36.4	85.5
strongly disagree	8	14.5	14.5	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

SEVEN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	7	12.7	12.7	12.7
agree	33	60.0	60.0	72.7
neutral	3	5.5	5.5	78.2
disagree	10	18.2	18.2	96.4
strongly disagree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

EIGHT

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
agree	30	54.5	54.5	58.2
neutral	11	20.0	20.0	78.2
disagree	8	14.5	14.5	92.7
strongly disagree	4	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

NINE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	13	23.6	23.6	23.6
neutral	16	29.1	29.1	52.7
disagree	24	43.6	43.6	96.4
strongly disagree	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

TEN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	18	32.7	32.7	32.7
agree	34	61.8	61.8	94.5
neutral	2	3.6	3.6	98.2
disagree	1	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

ELEVEN

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
agree	13	23.6	23.6	27.3
neutral	10	18.2	18.2	45.5
disagree	23	41.8	41.8	87.3
strongly disagree	7	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Variance, the square of the standard deviation, for public relations practitioners' varies from . The variance for journalists varies from .37 to 1.3. The range, the most general form of variability, gives the researcher an idea of how far apart the scores are

from one another. For public relations practitioners, it is . For journalists it is either a two, three or four. The range is computing by simply subtracting the lowest score from the highest score.

SKEWNESS AND KURTOSIS

CHART XXXII

Public relations practitioners' results:

		Statistics											
		ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN	WELVE
N	Valid	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skewness		-.122	1.109	-1.361	-.429	.565	.189	1.166	.285	.217	1.262	.891	.365
Std. Error of Skewness		.330	.330	.330	.330	.330	.330	.330	.330	.330	.330	.330	.330
Kurtosis		-1.449	2.967	2.355	.178	-.326	.162	.488	-.785	-1.431	1.288	2.092	-.655
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.650	.650	.650	.650	.650	.650	.650	.650	.650	.650	.650	.650

Frequencies

The indicators of shape of the distribution are 'skewness' and 'kurtosis'. A distribution which is not symmetric but has more cases, or more of a 'tail', toward one end of the distribution than the other, is called 'skewed'. If the 'tail' is toward the larger values, the distribution is positively skewed, or skewed to the right, and negatively skewed if to the left. Kurtosis measures how 'peaked' the distribution is. If positive, it means the peak value is not as high as in a normal distribution. Values for skewness and kurtosis both equal one if the observed distribution is exactly normal. A bell-shaped curve is the equivalent normal distribution.

PEARSONS COEFFICIENT CORRELATION
Public Relations practitioners' results:
CHART XXXIV

Correlations

	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN	TWELVE
ONE Pearson Cor	1.000	.432*	-.268	.259	.399*	.366*	.018	-.115	.161	.071	.378*	.222
Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.055	.063	.003	.008	.898	.416	.255	.616	.006	.114
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
TWO Pearson Cor	.432*	1.000	-.416*	-.106	.327*	.126	-.087	-.066	.130	.360*	.353*	.083
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.002	.453	.018	.372	.541	.640	.358	.009	.010	.558
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
THRE Pearson Cor	-.268	-.416*	1.000	.017	-.457*	-.220	-.219	-.070	-.113	-.328*	-.175	-.192
Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.002		.902	.001	.117	.119	.622	.425	.018	.215	.172
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
FOUR Pearson Cor	.259	-.106	.017	1.000	.206	-.088	-.077	-.008	-.173	.136	-.098	.047
Sig. (2-tailed)	.063	.453	.902		.143	.533	.586	.956	.221	.335	.487	.743
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
FIVE Pearson Cor	.399*	.327*	-.457*	.206	1.000	.297*	.249	.185	.150	.359*	.004	.199
Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.018	.001	.143		.033	.075	.188	.289	.009	.978	.157
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
SIX Pearson Cor	.366*	.126	-.220	-.088	.297*	1.000	.472*	-.145	.430*	-.162	.562*	-.237
Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.372	.117	.533	.033		.000	.305	.001	.250	.000	.091
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
SEVE Pearson Cor	.018	-.087	-.219	-.077	.249	.472*	1.000	.324*	.216	.060	.311*	-.158
Sig. (2-tailed)	.898	.541	.119	.586	.075	.000		.019	.124	.674	.025	.263
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
EIGHT Pearson Cor	-.115	-.066	-.070	-.008	.185	-.145	.324*	1.000	-.100	.140	.165	-.184
Sig. (2-tailed)	.416	.640	.622	.956	.188	.305	.019		.482	.321	.241	.191
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
NINE Pearson Cor	.161	.130	-.113	-.173	.150	.430*	.216	-.100	1.000	-.178	.263	.125
Sig. (2-tailed)	.255	.358	.425	.221	.289	.001	.124	.482		.206	.059	.377
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
TEN Pearson Cor	.071	.360*	-.328*	.136	.359*	-.162	.060	.140	-.178	1.000	-.096	.181
Sig. (2-tailed)	.616	.009	.018	.335	.009	.250	.674	.321	.206		.498	.200
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
ELEVI Pearson Cor	.378*	.353*	-.175	-.098	.004	.562*	.311*	.165	.263	-.096	1.000	-.138
Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.010	.215	.487	.978	.000	.025	.241	.059	.498		.329
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
TWEL Pearson Cor	.222	.083	-.192	.047	.199	-.237	-.158	-.184	.125	.181	-.138	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.114	.558	.172	.743	.157	.091	.263	.191	.377	.200	.329	
N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Journalist's results:
CHART XXXV**

Correlations

		ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	EIGHT	NINE	TEN	ELEVEN
ONE	Pearson Corre	1.000	.285*	-.385*	-.170	-.076	.192	.068	.058	.164	.413*	.248
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.035	.004	.215	.582	.161	.624	.676	.232	.002	.068
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
TWO	Pearson Corre	.285*	1.000	-.624*	-.187	.111	.371*	.142	.243	.437*	.099	.414*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.	.000	.172	.418	.005	.300	.074	.001	.473	.002
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
THREE	Pearson Corre	-.385*	-.624*	1.000	.365*	-.019	-.245	-.221	-.124	-.398*	-.140	-.444*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.	.006	.891	.072	.105	.368	.003	.309	.001
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
FOUR	Pearson Corre	-.170	-.187	.365*	1.000	-.225	-.380*	-.095	-.150	-.227	-.056	-.094
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.215	.172	.006	.	.098	.004	.489	.275	.095	.684	.497
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
FIVE	Pearson Corre	-.076	.111	-.019	-.225	1.000	.170	.112	.336*	.053	.101	-.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.582	.418	.891	.098	.	.215	.415	.012	.699	.463	.878
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
SIX	Pearson Corre	.192	.371*	-.245	-.380*	.170	1.000	.438*	-.095	.401*	.102	.217
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.161	.005	.072	.004	.215	.	.001	.488	.002	.457	.111
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
SEVEN	Pearson Corre	.068	.142	-.221	-.095	.112	.438*	1.000	.003	.447*	.075	.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.624	.300	.105	.489	.415	.001	.	.980	.001	.588	.239
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
EIGHT	Pearson Corre	.058	.243	-.124	-.150	.336*	-.095	.003	1.000	.144	.160	-.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.676	.074	.368	.275	.012	.488	.980	.	.294	.243	.678
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
NINE	Pearson Corre	.164	.437*	-.398*	-.227	.053	.401*	.447*	.144	1.000	.167	.399*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.232	.001	.003	.095	.699	.002	.001	.294	.	.224	.003
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
TEN	Pearson Corre	.413*	.099	-.140	-.056	.101	.102	.075	.160	.167	1.000	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.473	.309	.684	.463	.457	.588	.243	.224	.	.308
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
ELEVE	Pearson Corre	.248	.414*	-.444*	-.094	-.021	.217	.162	-.057	.399*	.140	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.068	.002	.001	.497	.878	.111	.239	.678	.003	.308	.
	N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55

*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson's R Correlation Coefficient measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables. The assumptions that are made are that both variables (often called X and Y) are interval/ratio and approximately normally distributed, and their joint distribution is bivariate normal. Pearson's R Correlation Coefficient can take on the values from -1.0 to 1.0. Where -1.0 is a perfect negative (inverse) correlation, 0.0 is no correlation, and 1.0 is a perfect positive correlation. A low value for this test means that there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, or that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. I did not have any significant correlations to flag. But if I did they would be significant because it would give me an indication of what the probability is on any one test that the relationship between variables is due to chance alone. Significant correlations can tell us if the research hypothesis is more attractive than the null hypothesis; thus we can tell if there is a significant relationship. We used a two-tailed test as opposed to a one-tailed test because we didn't predict the direction of the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

When public relations practitioners were asked what they would do differently if they were in the field of journalism, the most frequent answers were:

- Be more accurate and trustworthy when citing quotes and details.
- Be consistently fair in citing both sides of an issue.
- Be more open to calls from PR practitioners because they are a great source of information.
- Look more into the history and learn more about the topic when reporting a story, specialize more.
- Take the time to get to know the PR practitioners and try to understand their perspective.
- Keep opinion and your own bias out of the story.
- Work harder to localize wire stories.
- Keep a better log book with good contacts on various subjects and at various companies.

When journalists were asked what they would do differently if they were in the field of public relations, the most frequent answers were:

- Represent only one viewpoint.
- Cultivate relations with a number of journalists.
- Provide accurate, timely information.
- Return phone calls promptly and give a time line when a story is expected to be finished.
- Make sure I worked for a company that I believed was honest.

- Try to get the reporter an interview with an expert instead of acting as a middle man; trying to explain things I do not really understand.
- Learn what is newsworthy and make press releases more attractive to editors.

CHAPTER V ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The objective of conducting this study was to explore the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists by determining what kinds of attitudes help shape and define the relationship between these two very important professions. The purpose of this thesis was to record, through literature research and mail response survey, the feelings and thoughts of public relations practitioners and journalists. This study asked questions like how public relations practitioners and journalists perceive one another, if they are dependent on one another, and how the two professions could work better and more efficiently together. Literature and survey research revealed the attitudes of journalists and public relations practitioners towards one another.

Conclusions

As a result of the findings from the survey and literature research, the following conclusions have been derived:

- Both PR practitioners and journalists do not believe they are equal partners with one another in the dissemination of information.
- PR practitioners believe they are helpful to journalists for factual, complete, timely news. However, most journalists either disagree with this statement, or are neutral on the issue.

- PR practitioners do not believe they clutter the lines of communication between the media and the public. Journalists' thoughts are more diversified; some agree, some disagree, and some are neutral.
- Both PR practitioners and journalists do not believe that journalists try to compete with PR practitioners when it comes to news stories.
- Most PR practitioners believe they and journalists are of equal professional status. Journalists were split on the issue, some believed they were equal partners with PR practitioners and some were neutral.
- When PR practitioners were asked if journalists had high morals and ethics, and were honest with PR practitioners, they remained neutral on the issue. When journalists were asked if PR practitioners had high morals and ethics, and were honest with journalists, they either disagreed or remained neutral on the issue.
- Most PR practitioners feel journalists are credible.
- Journalists believe that most PR practitioners understand the problems journalists' encounter such as meeting deadlines, space limitations, etc.
- Both PR practitioners and journalists believe most journalists understand that PR practitioners are just doing their job by acquiring support and embellishing the image of their company.
- While the majority of PR practitioners believe they can trust journalists, some remained neutral on the issue. However, the majority of journalists do not believe they can trust PR practitioners.

- The majority of PR practitioners believe journalists rely very heavily on PR practitioners to disseminate information to the targeted publics.
- Most journalists feel that PR practitioners need to obtain confidence from journalists as credible sources of information in order to do their job.
- Most PR practitioners believe that journalists' goals are to uncover facts for accurate news stories.
- While most PR practitioners believe they are key in opening up the lines of communication between the media and the public, the majority of journalists do not.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the following recommendations are offered:

- Record remarks when studying the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners with regard to size of company, frequency of interaction with one another, and success levels.
- Research to see if part-time and full-time employees feel the same way.
- Determine and break down the terms "journalist" and "public relations practitioner" with regard to duties, electronic, print, broadcast, and face to face interaction
- Use a larger sample size if possible. The larger the sample size, the more accurate the findings.
- Conduct focus groups with both journalists and public relations practitioners to find out more in depth and specific attitudes. This form of qualitative research will allow for more subjective responses.

Based on the open-ended questions the following recommendations can be made on how to improve the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists:

- Journalists can be more conscious regarding accuracy when citing quotes and details.
- PR practitioners could be conscious in representing only one viewpoint.
- Journalists can be more open to calls from PR practitioners.
- PR practitioners could try harder to cultivate relationships with journalists.
- Journalists could be more aware of both sides of a story.
- PR practitioners could be more aware of only providing accurate, timely information.
- Journalists could take the time to get to know PR practitioners and try to understand their perspective.
- PR practitioners could be more conscious in making sure their story is newsworthy and honest.
- Journalists may want to keep a logbook recording good contacts and sources.
- If both PR practitioners and journalists took the time to get to know one another and worked a little harder at building relationships; the results could be remarkable.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire mailed to public relations practitioners

Dear public relations practitioner,

What kinds of attitudes help shape and define the relationship between two very important professionals-journalists and public relations practitioners? What would you do differently if you were in the field of journalism? Those are the types of questions in a study I am completing at the College of Communications at Rowan University under the supervision of Dr. Don Bagin.

As a public relations practitioner, you possess unique and significant information concerning the practice of public relations practitioners that is vital to my study. Because of your position you have been selected at random to represent thousands of other public relations practitioners in this confidential survey concerning the attitudes of public relations practitioners towards journalists.

The enclosed questionnaire has been sent to 100 journalists and 100 public relations practitioners nationwide. Responding to the questionnaire should take only about ten minutes of your time. Please mark your answers and return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Each completed questionnaire is essential to my study.

The findings will be very important to thousands of journalists and public relations practitioners nationwide and hopefully will suggest ways in which the two professions can work better and more efficiently together. All respondents shall remain anonymous and you can be assured that your reply will be treated confidentially.

Your help is very much appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jamie L. Mufalli

PUBLIC RELATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

Section I

Please circle the number which best indicates your response to each statement. Responses are: 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (neutral), 4 (disagree), or 5 (strongly disagree).

1. Public relations practitioners and journalists are equal partners in the dissemination of information to the public.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
2. Public relations practitioners are very helpful to journalists for factual, complete, timely news.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
3. Public relations practitioners clutter the lines of communication between the media and the public.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
4. Journalists try to compete with public relations practitioners when it comes to news stories.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
5. Public relations practitioners and journalists are of equal professional status.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
6. Journalists have high morals, ethics, and principles, and are honest with public relations practitioners.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
7. Most public relations practitioners feel journalists are credible.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
8. Journalists understand that public relations practitioners are just doing their job by acquiring support and embellishing the image of their company.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
9. You can trust journalists.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
10. Journalists rely very heavily on public relations practitioners to disseminate information to the targeted publics.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
11. Journalists' goals are to uncover facts for accurate news stories.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
12. Public relations practitioners are key in opening the lines of communication between the media and the public.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)

(continued)

Section two

If you were in the field of journalism, what would you do differently?
If you need more space, please submit a separate sheet.

Section three-optional

Please complete the following information about yourself
by circling the correct answer.

Sex: (1) male (2) female

Age: (1) 18-25 (2) 26-34 (3) 35-44 (4) 45 and above

Years in present position:
(1) under 2 (2) 3-5 (3) 6-10 (4) 11-15 (5) 16-20 (6) 21 and above

Have you ever worked in public relations? (1) yes (2) no

Highest level of education attained: (1) high school diploma (2) college degree
(3) M. A. (4) Ph.D (5) not known

*If you would like to receive an abstract citing the results of this study,
please send your name and address to the researcher at
2293 GreenWillows Drive, Vineland, NJ 08361.
You will be provided with the abstract containing the results
as soon as the study is complete.*

Thank you for your assistance.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire mailed to journalists

Dear Journalist,

What kinds of attitudes help shape and define the relationship between two very important professionals-journalists and public relations practitioners? What would you do differently if you were in the field of public relations? Those are the types of questions in a study I am completing at the College of Communications at Rowan University under the supervision of Dr. Don Bagin.

As a journalist, you possess unique and significant information concerning the practice of journalists that is vital to my study. Because of your position you have been selected at random to represent thousands of other journalists in this confidential survey concerning the attitudes of journalists towards public relations practitioners.

The enclosed questionnaire has been sent to 100 journalists and 100 public relations practitioners nationwide. Responding to the questionnaire should take only about ten minutes of your time. Please mark your answers and return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Each completed questionnaire is essential to my study.

The findings will be very important to thousands of journalists and public relations practitioners nationwide and hopefully will suggest ways in which the two professions can work better and more efficiently together. All respondents shall remain anonymous and you can be assured that your reply will be treated confidentially.

Your help is very much appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jamie L. Mufalli

JOURNALIST QUESTIONNAIRE

Section I

Please circle the number which best indicates your response to each statement. Responses are: 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (neutral), 4 (disagree), or 5 (strongly disagree).

1. Public relations practitioners and journalists are equal partners in the dissemination of information to the public.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
2. Public relations practitioners are very helpful to journalists for factual, complete, timely news.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
3. Public relations practitioners clutter the lines of communication between the media and the public.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
4. Public relations practitioners try to compete with journalists when it comes to news stories.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
5. Most public relations practitioners feel journalists are credible.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
6. Public relations practitioners have high morals, ethics and principles, and are honest with journalists.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
7. Public relations practitioners understand the problems journalists encounter such as meeting deadlines, space limitations and the need to make story look more attractive for readers.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
8. Journalists understand that public relations practitioners are just doing their job by acquiring support and embellishing the image of their company.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
9. You can trust public relations practitioners.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
10. Public relations practitioners need to obtain confidence from journalists as credible sources of information in order to do their job.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)
11. Public relations practitioners are key in opening the lines of communication between the media and the public.
1 (strongly agree) 2 (agree) 3 (neutral) 4 (disagree) 5 (strongly disagree)

(continued)

Section two

If you were in the field of public relations, what would you do differently?
If you need more space, please submit a separate sheet.

Section three-optional

Please complete the following information about yourself
by circling the correct answer.

Sex: (1) male (2) female

Age: (1) 18-25 (2) 26-34 (3) 35-44 (4) 45 and above

Years in present position:

(1) under 2 (2) 3-5 (3) 6-10 (4) 11-15 (5) 16-20 (6) 21 and above

Have you ever worked in public relations? (1) yes (2) no

Highest level of education attained:

(1) high school diploma (2) college degree (3) M. A.
(4) Ph.D (5) not known

*If you would like to receive an abstract citing the results of this study,
please send your name and address to the researcher at
2293 GreenWillows Drive, Vineland, NJ 08361.
You will be provided with the abstract containing the results
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Thank you for your assistance.