

# Importance of Public Relations in New Business

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## Abstract

*Understanding the true meaning of public relations will never be classified as a science because it is an ever-changing process much like a research process. There are continuous additions and subtractions being made; some of which are related to the progressive changes being made in the business world and some of the modifications are due to the evolving attitudes of the consumers. Public relations have been, in the past, separately paired with many terms such as marketing, advertising, introducing, communications. As of recently, with the various technological improvements that have taken place it has started to entail all of these things. The aim of this research paper is to try and dissect the different levels of public relations, when and where it is most commonly used, understanding whether the type of business plays a part in choosing the medium of public relations to be used and to decide at which stage public relations are best used in the business cycle.*

**Key Words:** *Public Relations, Karachi, Start-up companies, Entrepreneurs.*

## INTRODUCTION

“A business without a face is a business without a future.” – Mary C. Gannon. This is an authentic example of being a needle in a haystack. A business has to stand out and Public Relations seem to be the trend that everyone is following more-so now than ever.

Public Relations have always been a tricky subject and one that has been of importance for longer than most people would expect. Public Relations are multi-faceted and used in many different ways among the workforce and at the workplace.

Some people may think of public relations as a science but if it could be understood in its real sense it could never be a science, because it requires a change. With time we may observe different facets of public relations. These changes are due to the changes observed in economy and some are due to the changes in the perceptions and attitudes of company's consumers.

The notion of Public Relations has changed over the decades but not quite the way one could think. Instead of stopping by at a hotspot or two, one could now use the internet or voice mail, voice chat, visual aids to help get their message out anywhere and meet the people that they need to know in order to succeed further in life.

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When we look around our self we found that public relations are all around us. The environment itself demands public relations should be at the forefront. With the changing climate it is only natural for things such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace etc. to take charge; but what is their basic functionality? Obviously the basic function is of public relations. There are many that would say using applications such as these are not considered as public relations but what one is doing from these applications if not networking? Also, no longer can an entrepreneur deem face to face interaction with people as sufficient public relations attempts. With all of the advancements being made in the technological field, an entrepreneur is expected to use things such as Facebook, Myspace and many other business related communities to get his company's or business message to the mass public.

Most people rely heavily on what they see, who they interact with, or what they do online and allow those things to influence the major buying, collaborating, socializing and networking decisions in their lives today. This makes it absolutely necessary for an entrepreneur to use these mediums of communication regularly so that the business may maximize on its networking efforts and reach its potential quickly.

The basic functionality of public relations is a different ball game now but at the end of the day it has the same goal that needs to be achieved, which is to introduce an individual or their company to the marketplace, a group of people, an industry and make them memorable.

The X factor is another very important part of PR and will only exist if one would allow it do so. Making them or their company memorable can only be done one way; one got to have something genuinely and uniquely exciting about them that catapults there name into the limelight. There are tag lines such as "Just Do It" or "Youngistan Meri Jaan" that are uniquely associated to certain brands, but they have made that consistent effort to stand out from the crowd which is why they could retrieve their names from the top of any one's mind. There is another benefit of having the X factor which is having the right approach. More often than not when one would open his e-mail inbox or paper mail and see at least two or three letters from different companies trying to reach out to him and more often than not he will dismiss them immediately marking them as trash or PR spam which is what they are usually called. This happens only due to one reason and that is the PR team has not done their homework. Every customer that one is trying to reach out to has a specific lifestyle or temperament and must be approached accordingly.

In some cases, spam PR mail is filtered out before it even gets to the person one is targeting which means his time, effort and money has just gone down the drain. An example of this can be if he is trying to reach out to a CEO or someone that is of great importance to him and his company and is in a high standing- their mail goes through a screening process which means that paper mail will probably not be his best option. He has to get creative and think of other ways to reach them and it must be something that leaves the desired impression that he wants them to have of him and his company so that they will not hesitate next time he will come to them.

Another example is to know when to stop in terms of PR, an overload of it can give one's customer/prospect a headache and they will begin to avoid him or sometimes even move on to his competitor in search of a more peaceful relationship which is something one or their company would definitely never want.

Many times PR groups have failed because they give the customer too much at the beginning which drives them away. Most customers, in majority's opinion, want their product as easily as possible and usually go to the most trustworthy sources so that the simplicity does not seem too good to be true.

In Pakistan we may have seen that most of the time the companies that give second grade products are the ones that have the most customers because the better companies did not know how to approach their clientele. This happens simply because of one reason, the PR groups do not study their clientele behavior and thought process properly which results in the loss of business.

Another reoccurring glitch in the PR machine is the promise of deliverance of a product or service at a certain standard and minimal execution/follow up. The basic function of a PR team is to study the environment, their customers, and their prospects, understand what makes them happy and most of all know what keeps them happy. If a customer has expressed interest in the company's product or has heard of the company, it automatically becomes the company's duty whether to use a PR professional or not to engage the customer further and build a relationship before they move on to another.

The epic mistake that most people make is when they think someone is not going to be of use to them- they shrug them off or they do not give them that added spice which helps them pick some other company out from the rest.

Another vital factor for survival of company in terms of PR knows how to handle a potentially bad or worsening situation without panicking. There have been many corporate situations more so overseas than in Pakistan that have had horrible repercussions for companies but it is how the PR teams have handled it that has made all the difference. A quote comes to mind watching this happening which is, "It's not how hard you get hit, it's how fast you get up and deal with it" which primarily highlights what PR teams have to do when faced with such a situation. Most PR teams do not have a clue as to how to handle the bad press and others refuse to acknowledge that there is a problem until they start losing customers and/or business and then wonder why it has happened. Knowing how to nip the problem at root is of monumental importance and is taken very lightly if the problem initially does not show much reason to be concerned. As people usually write it off saying it would heal itself and then begins to snowball into disaster.

Public relations are in every sphere of one's life; whether it be related to professional, personal or leisure. Examples start from the common man all the way up to specifically designed PR teams. When a man is searching for a job, he uses his network of common friends, acquaintances and family members to find out if there are any employment opportunities that he can grab onto. Once a discovery has been made, he would try to use those contacts to try and get an interview and once he is being interviewed; there is a likely chance that he would be asked for references which again reverts back to his network of people. This sort of example places a great deal of emphasis on his personal public relations and how he has used it to get something he needs or been asked about it so that he may seem to be a credible candidate.

Another example can take place at middle management, when an employee is given a task to complete within a given time period and needs the aid of various people in order to get

the job done completely, successfully while meeting a certain standard. His first move; more often than not would be to organize his thoughts, convert them into tasks and see how he can make his job easier by talking to the right people. The only way he would gain access to those people is by networking, knowing who to talk to, where to meet these people and how to approach them so that they have the desired impression. These are all fundamentals of public relations and are the building blocks to building good PR. The third example of PR is at the corporate level where the boss or company head has to maintain excellent public relations with his workers and other employees in order to maintain harmony within the organization.

I think there are two types of bosses in a company and when someone starts a business he/she has to make that choice whether they want to be a certain type of boss or not. One boss keeps his nose in his work and does not bother to heavily invest in his relationships with his employees. He will spend more time trying to map out goals that must be achieved and how to achieve them and communicate these thoughts and plans of actions via e-mail, a telephone call or a quick 2 hour meeting.

The other kind of boss gives equal time to what needs to be achieved for the business to succeed and the human element of the organization which is to maintain good relations with his workers and try to listen to their problems as much as possible. There is a division of tasks and the second boss does not consider interacting with his employees as work.

The first type of boss who exercises the least amount of public relations with his employees will have unhappy, unsatisfied and very drone-like workers who would not make the company goals or things that need to be achieved in a timely fashion; a priority. Also they would be more inclined to finding work elsewhere in a happy, more peaceful and more motivational business or organization.

Again, it is the art of understanding the people that helps and that caters to which is of monumental importance because without that one is making ones chances of success seem further away. The second boss will have a business that has more chances of doing well because he would have workers that would try twice as hard to make their product of better quality, enable the company to perform better; easier and keep their eye on potential threats in their industry.

When workers are happy where they are, they begin to naturally initiate two things. The first thing is keeping their eye out on trends and who could potentially be dangerous to their business (in fear of their own job, cutbacks and loyalty to the company). The second thing which helps the company more than anything is the word of mouth public relations. When employees and workers socialize outside the workplace or are in the company of outsiders they become their company's eyes, ears and public relations team. Without a doubt that becomes the most important thing at that moment because what they say, how they handle situations and what is being said about business or products they are dealing with, when it is freely discussed without any inhibitions because of the absence of repercussions. Company/product/business secrets have been revealed in such gatherings and potentially dangerous or helpful information has been exchanged without it being highlighted. It is human nature for people to discuss every aspect of their lives and one of the conversation starters and conversation favorites is talking about the workplace or how it is doing in the market. These conversations are very important as they play a vital role in the feedback given to the prospective clients and other people that may

impact business later in the business cycle. If an employee, client or worker gives good feedback, the listeners will be more inclined to keep an eye out for business's name in the paper or listen for it in a discussion. If one of these three people gives bad feedback about business, then it begins to spread like wildfire and the company is sure to be blacklisted in some discussion or amongst a certain group. This is why a boss or an entrepreneur should try his/her hardest to be the second kind of boss so that this "word of mouth" public relations has a higher probability of being positive than negative.

The final example which could be considered stems from the tailor made PR team coming into play. The first thing that a smart PR team knows is the difference between good PR and bad PR and how to achieve one and avoid the other- or handle it accordingly. Another thing that a good PR team knows is the difference between advertising their brand and creating PR awareness for their brand.

There is a thin line between the two but there is a difference nonetheless. One of the main functions of a PR team is to get their company/product/brand name out to the public but it is the after-effects which make the distinction of an average PR effort to an excellent one. It is the bridges that must be built, maintained and supported over time that will build the loyalty of company's network and their customers. With experience it could be seen that many people and corporate teams that consider just attending certain business related and social functions and/or seminars and talking to people once or twice good enough.

This "Make an appearance and get out quick" strategy was not greatly successful in the past and with the changing social demands that people and brands have today, it is simply unacceptable. When those people do not come knocking on their door as a business prospect- they begin to wonder where they went wrong. Customers want to feel like they are being talked with, not talked to; public relations is all about maintaining the image and building relationships with all kinds of people who might be of assistance or mutually beneficial to them and their company.

Some may also label it an art form because it is so diverse and involves being knowledgeable about so many different things. We could think some of those things include knowing how to understand PR and how to react gracefully and respectfully when approached with the negative side of PR is what would make the company stand out when it's all said and done.

We may consider that public relations are an ongoing effort from the time of conception of business/product until the end (which is never clearly defined). There have been many times when people think that the end is when they either lose a customer or their product is not successful in the market but this is not the case. Public relations with that lost customer or hype about a newer product (even after the failure of an old one) are of epic importance. In some situations there have been times where customers have come back because of company's consistent public relations efforts and begin to form a higher level of trust with that because they see company's stability and dedication.

Other times newer products create twice as much hype as compared to the previous product did simply because of consistent goodwill of the product, maintenance of the brand and persistent communication with the customers. This is what makes the company's clients/customers want to give the next product of that business, a second chance.

We can also think that some companies that have average products have done so well in the past and continue to be market leaders because of their excellent public relations efforts.

There are many examples of that in Pakistan alone where you have average products that are hyped up immensely but because they are seen as products that “give a little extra”, they are chosen over their competitors. Red Bull could be a prime example of such a business that makes sure their customers are always smiling and that their company is always seen in a good light.

Red Bull, being an established and well off company/brand does not need to go that extra mile and spread awareness about their product through interacting with their customers or prospects but it does so with great zeal. Basically what they do is that they send two girls in a customized Red Bull car to all the colleges and universities where the greater half of their target is most likely to be. They have ones started to give free samples of their Red Bull product which was about 200 rupees in the market and had dispersed them along with a pamphlet about the company and the product’s benefits to every student they see.

One might think that the company would be going into a loss but the strategy that Red Bull has taken is nothing short of genius. This is a low cost and far reaching strategy which allows them to reach a greater audience and almost one fourth that heavy duty public relations would take. They are going straight to the consumer and minimizing time wastage by doing so. This is also a great way of picking up market intelligence to understand how many customers drink their beverage and why but at the same time getting feedback from the ones that do not.

Public relations could also be thought to be elementary to the successful and complete introduction of a business and is the fundamental tool used when consistently stabilizing and making a name for business in the industry over time instead of something that must be used when a company thinks that things are going sour.

## **RESEARCH STATEMENT**

Public relations have always been an inclusive part of the environment around us. This paper will attempt to explain its importance, longevity and role in young businesses in Karachi, Pakistan.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Public Relations started long before most of us would imagine. “General Electric, a very well-known company in the United States started using PR to promote the first refrigerator and realized the importance of good public relations if they wanted to be successful and trusted in times of turmoil.” (8)

General Electric was and is one of the oldest and most successful companies; in fact it is so well known that it has come to be known as part of the American culture. According to previous knowledge already shared about public relations, the most common factor that has been discussed is the evolvement, growth and new usage of this specific activity. It stemmed from being something that General Electric was aware of to have specific teams hand-picked for a department specifically tailor-made to handle all PR activities.

Even though PR is such a huge phenomenon now, people are still trying to agree to a common definition of these two terms. “At the moment there is a gap in what PR is and what it should be which leaves most businesses and people very frustrated. Some businesses still follow and adopt the ancient understanding of PR and gauge its success on media publicity. Either PR is not given enough importance or a very minute part of it is extensively worked on so all the bases are not covered. Another group that was interviewed defined PR as actively listening to the feedback and then being able to pinpoint issues or ideas that must be discussed or handling stakeholders via meeting their expectations.” (3) A group of people have agreed to a singular definition and they apply it properly, that is the road to success.

Knowing from where to start is the key and can only be unlocked once we understand the root of this phenomenon and how much using it has changed. “The comprehension part of it begins and ends with one thing which is how much has changed in the past three decades or so which force people to change the way they look at PR. Start ups are now given the opportunity to reach a wider audience with the click of a button and that has changed the way people communicate with others in a big way.” (1)

## **WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL PR?**

After understanding that there is an evident change in the way public relations is understood and the shape that it has taken, the next chunk of knowledge encompasses how to successively use it. The next obvious question would be how does one measure successful PR? “One of the findings in the study was that people often estimate a product’s brand value by how many times its name is printed in the newspaper or in a magazine which is again a public relations strategy.” (4)

There are many elements that professionals think lead to successful public relations such as a well-trained group, regular training, regular supervision, and more money dumping into the PR department and achieving targets. Some people use a few of these things in hope of getting easy name recall for their products and companies and others choose to focus on just one.

When it comes to selecting people for the group companies shell out hundreds of thousands of dollars or rupees and debates whether the characteristics of the group members should be heterogeneous or homogeneous and whether they should work on a task by task basis or a long term ultimate goal achievement basis. Then comes the matter of deciding how much of the budget should go to public relations. The budgeting process requires such decisions to be made and whether the money allocated to PR is justified (via looking at past performance or expectations for future performance).

## **DOING IT THE RIGHT WAY**

The path to that kind of success is the introduction of one’s company. The magic begins in the uniqueness of their story, their entrance into the market. People should know about the company when the company wants them to take notice of and at the right time when interruption is minimal. “...A business should be unique so that its introduction may be one that people will keep in mind, and that a capable person who is best suited for the job should be the only one handling the public relations in business or company. That leader should also

pinpoint the best day or time to make that introduction so the greatest amount of people are listening and/or are present and so the amount of “information traffic” is minimal so that your entire message can be sent through instead of the listeners selectively choosing what they want to listen to.” (1)

Timing is of paramount importance and if the company or individual is able to mine out the most favorable time to make his/her introduction, it could make all the difference in the world. A greater audience full of potentials or people that could help serve company’s mission better would be paying attention to its message. Also it is important to keep in mind that the information that is shared about the company must be 100% useful and accurate so that people do not tune the message out.

“PR is the bond that business has with the public so one must make sure that their target audience is aware of their business, trusts that, is reasonably educated about their business or products/services and that the reputation of their business is protected no matter what. Also another very important factor that businesses should take into consideration is to only introduce information or things that are of some use to the public so that press releases and other such things are not considered spam or a waste of time. The PR team should always give accurate, substantial and interesting information at all times and dive into the public head first but be cautious too”. (7)

## **SHIFT OF IMPORTANCE TO CUSTOMERS**

There is an ever-flowing current which controls what people do and how people do them and the name of that current is change. Change has sparked many improvements in our daily lives and influenced changes in the way we perceive what the ultimate lifestyle looks like. Consumer behavior has now become a full-fledged social science where professionals are told to understand the inner workings of customers’ minds and what makes them react to certain products the way they do. Understanding changes in buying behavior, likes/dislikes/preferences, how environmental factors have an impact on their behavior.

An example of the factors could be how technological improvements garner the customers to change their habits and become more technologically savvy. At first customers were seen as targets that must be acquired foregoing the in-depth look at what the customer is experiencing when listening to a company’s message or viewing its product. As the years have gone by the attempt to try and get into the customer’s mind has been heightened and become something of optimum importance. Now customers are seen as human beings making choices that will affect their lives and via PR people are trying to ease that transition and build that level of familiarity and trust by continuously reminding them that these companies exist which care about them. They will know how successful they are by getting constant feedback which would let them know whether what they are doing is sufficient or if changes need to be made.

Another factor which people must take into consideration is that the treatment of their customers and prospective clients has shifted from just telling them about the product to understanding, listening and getting feedback from them so they could better tailor company’s product or service. This article talks about the importance of understanding the consumer, employees, public interest groups minds and habits within and outside of the community so



that a business can successfully cater to them and have long lasting customers and affiliations.

The article also explains that public relations is and always will be centered around the fact that people act and react to their perception of the environment that surrounds them. “Public relations goal is to try and influence and manipulate these perceptions positively and once that is done, one of many goals is achieved.” (10)

## **STEPPING OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE**

Another factor that was highlighted is that people associated with the business should participate and interact with people outside of their professional realm and begin building their relationships accordingly so that it can give them an edge in the market.

Even though a listener or customer may seem to have similar characteristics, reaching one customer does not automatically mean that the other one has been successfully reached too. The PR leader should be knowledgeable enough to know how to successfully reach both of them and leave the desirable impression.

As business grows the needs of customers also grow which means that at every step of the business cycle a company’s target market must be re-introduced in order for the business to have a long lasting life in the industry.

The message the company’s professionals or the company is trying to send should be short and sweet but at the same time communicating exactly what they want about their business or service. There should be an achievable goal and that there has to be a realistic benchmark of success.

The use of a spokesperson should only be taken into consideration if it is one that can articulately explain the existence of a company’s business but always be up to date with the discussions about a company’s services or the industry that they are in.

## **PR; A JOB OR A LIFESTYLE? AND GOOD PR VS. BAD PR**

In the initial stages public relations was nothing more than something people needed to keep in mind or something that was on a checklist as a minor activity to do. Now public relations all over the world has become a practice that requires intensive, consistent and creative training as strategies or skills picked up in this training could end up saving or making the company they work for, millions of Rupees. “...Even though General Electric is a company known worldwide, it doesn’t mean that its PR job is done- they still spend millions of dollars getting their name across via advertisements and otherwise.” (8)

Even established giants such as GE still put PR as one of their main focus areas because of the strength that good PR and/or bad PR possesses. “This article describes a situation where a company called Spirit Airlines garnered a lot of bad publicity due to how they handled a situation and was then compared to U.S. Airways. Two passengers were supposed to be on a Spirit Airlines flight to a destination but because their plane crashed (they survived and were taken to another airport), they could not make their connecting flight which resulted in canceling the Spirit Airlines tickets.

When they contacted a Spirit Airlines official, they explained their situation and instead of sympathizing or trying to help them he quickly told them they had to pay \$90.00 as a cancellation fee. This left a bad taste in the passengers' mouths and the bad publicity began. Spirit Airlines now looked like an airline that cared more about making money than the safety of their passengers and did nothing to try and mend the severe damage that was already done.

Even if the tag of not caring about their passengers is untrue, the thought of it had already settled in peoples' minds and Spirit did not address it quickly which made it worse. The comparison of both airlines was made when U.S. Airways was seen taking initiative in trying to find out where the passengers' luggage was, commending the crew at handling the death defying situation with such strength and carrying out an NTSB investigation. The conclusion of this article highlights the importance of caring about customers and making sure that professionals of the company and company itself does not do anything to harm its reputation especially in times of crisis." (2)

This article shows what kind of situation is created by simple PR misconduct and/or quick damage control. The power of good and bad PR will be highlighted in the methodology section of this paper but this is a prime example of what can go wrong if a worsening situation is not handled immediately. Spirit Airlines lost the customers it had that day due to the mistreatment but the future loss of other customers was far greater than what happened that day. They will always be looked at as a company that cares more about the profit they make or achieving their bottom line as opposed to hoping their customers are safe, taken care of and appropriately compensated.

U.S. Airways swooped into the situation and took the spotlight from Spirit Airlines because they knew what their main area of focus should be on, the customers. This means companies' PR guard should always be on because one never know when it is needed or how it can turn into an opportunity for another company-making PR more of a lifestyle than a job description.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A handful of interviews were conducted with people that own businesses in different industries (An age of 1-8 years was considered as a young start-up company). A one to one discussion about public relations and their concept of PR was discussed among other things. There were mixed reviews about PR and how it is used today but most of them revolved around a singular theme which was that PR is being used in Karachi but not to its potential and that people have yet to understand the complete meaning of PR in order to use it properly.

The interviewees were a private shoe/sandal designer named Ms. Ayla Mirza, a car parts retailer named Mr. Shahid Javeri, a computer service provider named Mr. Najam Durrani, the owner of a seafood home delivery service named Mr. Nabil Hoodbhoy and a private caterer named Ms. Shagufta Nabi. These people represent businesses that are catered for the middle class and the upper class, ones that can afford to spend or are aware of the concept of public relations.

Meetings were scheduled throughout the span of a month's time (whenever their busy schedule allowed them to meet) and we covered topics such as what they think public relations is, what is the current standing of it in Karachi, when they injected it into their business, which

part of the business cycle would it be most successful in, if the genre of the business makes any difference to the success of PR, should everyone be responsible for PR or should it be a specific group of peoples' responsibility and whether it is a job that requires a 9-5 effort or one that should become a part of a person's personality and/or habitual behavior.

Also, different articles written by people who are knowledgeable about public relations were read and analyzed that covered topics such as what PR is, how to use it successfully according to one's situation, how things can go sour if it is not given the importance it deserves and how it has changed over time.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Ms Ayla Mirza thinks that PR is self-marketing. She says that she used PR as much as she could when she first started her business mainly due to the existing competition in the Karachi market. There are a lot of men and women that offer good quality sandals and shoes so she had to make an extraordinary effort so her finished product would stand out.

She started attending ladies' luncheons, charity events, many other social events and exhibitions at hotels to try and scope out her potential customers. She would talk to them and introduce her brand via her business card. She had thought about bringing a sample shoe and sandal to the exhibitions that she attended at the hospitals but had decided to open up a stall after attending previous exhibitions because she had witnessed the buzz of the customers at these hotels.

Gradually people began to crowd around her stall and once her client base started to build. She maintained an at home service where her customers would call her and tell her what kind of shoes they want made or ask to see her latest line. She says PR is most important at the infant stages of the business and in the first half of the growth stage because once people start talking about your product, PR is not needed the only effort will be maintaining that buzz via making good quality product.

Mr. Shahid Javeri a car parts merchandiser opened up his shop near KFC on 26th street a little over eight years ago. He says public relations meaning how well one get their company's out to the public in the shortest amount of time. Since he is in a field where there are newer, better car parts made every month, he says there has to be extensive PR effort throughout the business. Once his customers think that his shop can no longer offer them the latest, highest quality car parts they will move on to the next 100 shops that have what they are looking for. He says his PR effort was basically to make his shop a very flashy one attracting attention of his main customer age bracket which is 15 years – 25 year old boys/men who are into sooping up their cars or having modified cars.

Mr. Nabil Hoodbhoy who has started up his own seafood home delivery service has said PR has been one of the main areas of concern for him as he devised up ways of how to maximize it the best he can. He says he made paper and computer based advertisements and posted it in all the residential areas that he is targeting and also put it in the weekly magazine issue of HomeXpress (a magazine that produces limited number of issues distributed to upper class homes) and will give place an ad in Dawn Newspaper once the seafood hiatus is over.

Due to the nature of his business and product, PR is essential in the success because it is quality and safety sensitive. The promise of having good quality seafood as well as trusting the provider is what Mr. Hoodbhoy had to focus on the most which is why he focused on what kind of PR he needs to bank on. He says that PR depends on the type of business the entrepreneur has started so PR should be adjusted accordingly. The nature of the business is very important so you know exactly what PR tactics to use and which ones will reach the audience that you are targeting.

Mr. Najam Durrani started his business 10 years ago and didn't know where to begin. He was afraid that his business would have slim chances of success because he didn't know how to introduce his company online. Having a business online is a very tricky proposition, one that needs extensive pre-opening homework to be done so once you do manage to start a business online- you are not completely floored by the magnitude of things to come.

Another problem he had was the location where his business began; Karachi is a very volatile city where IT is not as user friendly as it should be so if I needed any help in understanding how to best capture the market I didn't have anyone to go to without being tricked into doing the wrong thing. Then he came across a workshop online which was kind of like "Starting a Business Online- for Dummies"; a life altering decision was just a mouse click away. He was very happy with what he found; he was given guidelines as to how to approach the internet community which is basically everyone in a clever yet approachable way.

He says PR is very important but it should be a continuous job, not one that ends when the bell rings. Even though his company is now established and doing well he still remains as efficient about his PR efforts as he did at its inception.

Ms. Shagufta Nabi told me she had always loved to cook and had a passion for food which many did not understand. For her food has always been more than just something that is consumed to fill your stomach and give you energy; there are colors, tastes, qualities and techniques that are unheard of in Karachi but have the ability to blow one's mind.

She says that PR is one of the most important things in a business and that it should not be taken lightly when starting a business. Since customers' preferences keep changing, one must pay close attention to the markers (times when you know there will be a change in fashion and/or food tastes) and try to grab on to that by introducing your company as an answer to peoples' needs. PR is consistently in her business because she says that her customers and other potentials need to be reminded of her catering as an option when they have luncheons, parties, events etc.

All interviewees have declared that the type of business does have a major impact on what kind of PR, how much of it and when it should be used. Every business has an initial starting point as they all need to get their companies' names out to the public but they go their separate ways when the type of service they are providing and who they are providing these services to come into play.

Also PR should be checked in on regularly throughout the life of the business and should be handled diligently and efficiently so that it doesn't take up too much time or go to the wrong people. Especially when companies are being introduced to people, your name and your

company's name are relatively alien to the general public- it is your job and your PR's job to make it a household/trusted name.

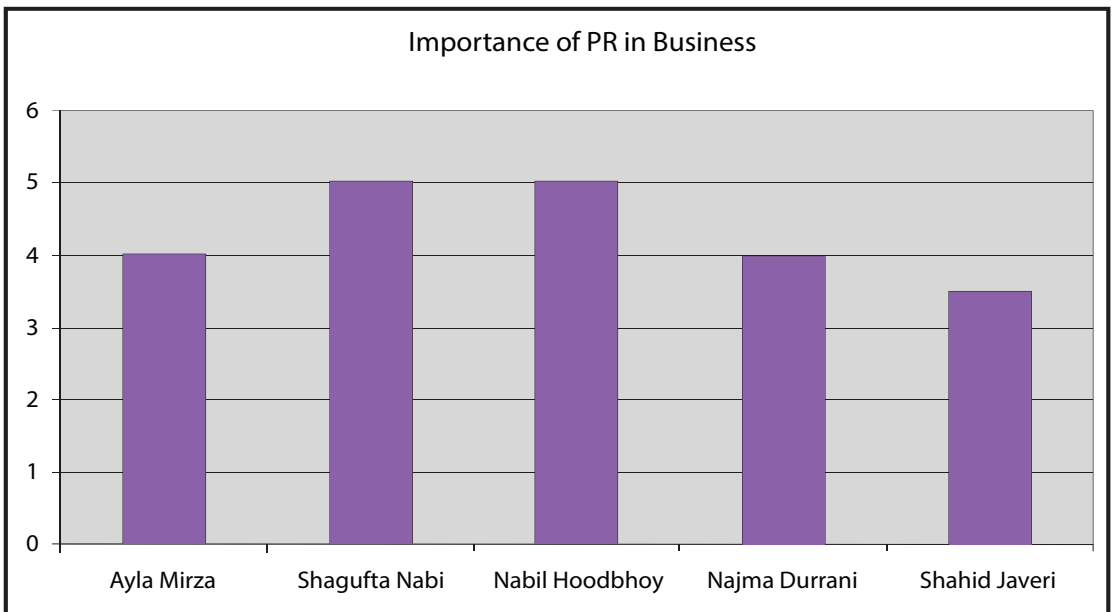
Public Relations is how the maintenance of the public image of a company or an individual is done and how it may impact the people involved. Public relations can be included in the creation of that image, in the sustenance of that image or in the maintenance of that image.

There have to be many more opportunities for these people to spread their wings and meet other professionals in their fields so that a healthy swap of ideas and trends can be made. People in Karachi have started attending seminars, soirees and other functions by seeing it as opportunities where information exchanges take place and chances that they can introduce themselves into the market and take heed of who their competitors are.

The tables below are a representation of the overall suggestions and conclusions of the interviewees on a scale from 1-5 (1 being the weakest in opinion/favor/importance and 5 being the strongest). Each of the interviewees thinks that public relations is important at some time in their business but its importance varies according to the business. The definition of public relations is also mixed due to each individual's experience with public relations or what they have seen/understood it to be. As for the importance of public relations in regards to the business cycle, everyone deems it to be essential in the creation part of the business and for most of the growth stage and it streamlines according to the strategy that the entrepreneur goes with. Each of the interviewees had suggestions regarding what can be done to further educate the mass about public relations and make it a more accessible, easier and beneficial way to create buzz about their business

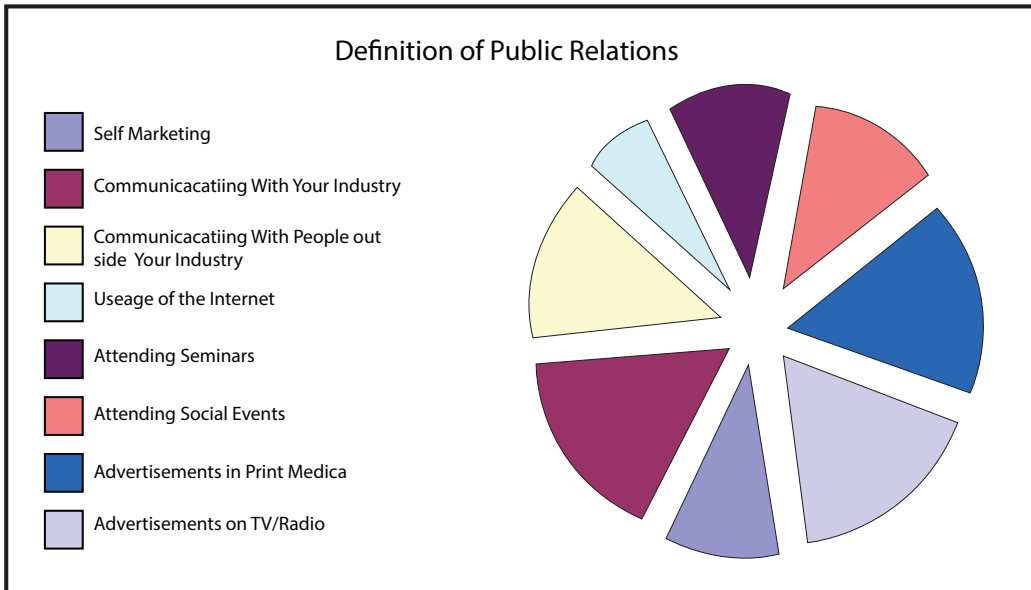
The visual representations of my findings are shown in the tables below:

*Importance of Public Relations in a Business*



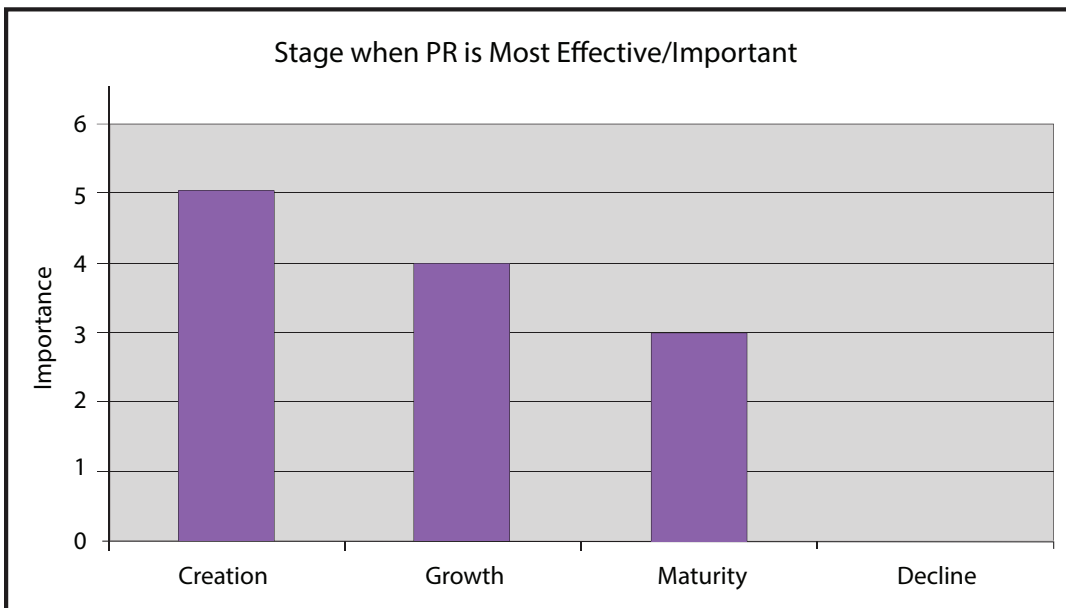
*\*This table shows what the interviewee's think about the importance of public relations in a business. Each interviewee represents a bar and the numbers on the y-axis represent the level of importance (1 being the least important, 5 being the most important).*

## Definition of Public Relations



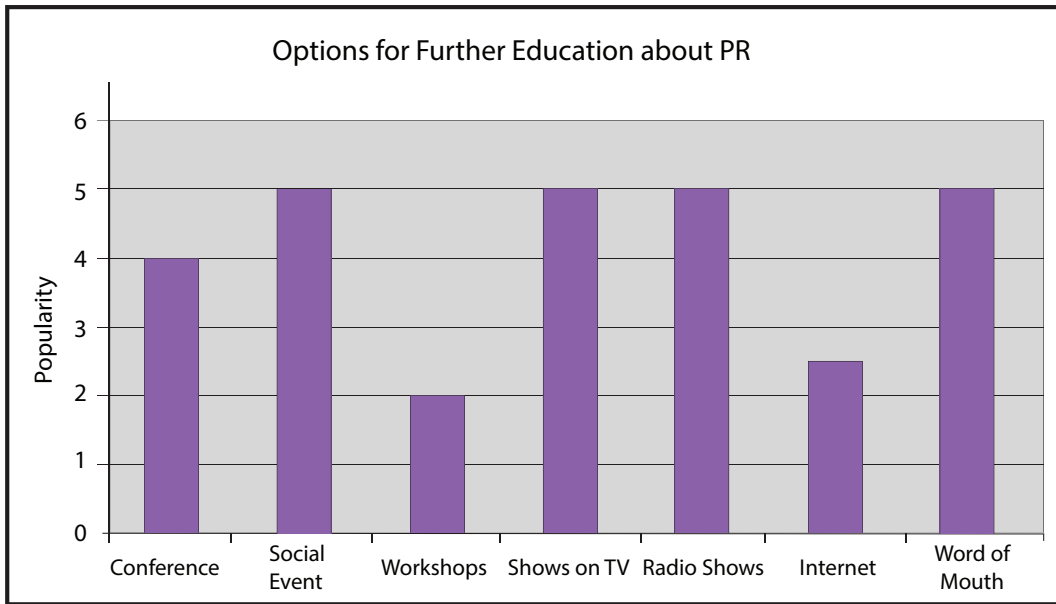
*\*This table shows how the interviewees define public relations. As you can see there isn't a general consensus on what it means, it is quite diverse.*

## Effectiveness of Public Relations in the Business Cycle



*\*There is a consensus among the interviewees despite their various lines of work about when public relations is most effective. Everyone agreed that public relations is important when creating the business, it is still important in the growth part of the business and then decreases as the business reaches its maturity stage—but it does not disappear.*

## Options for Further Education about Public Relations



*\*This table shows suggestions made by the interviewees regarding how Karachi's population can be educated about public relations. Social events, WOM, TV Shows and radio shows seem to be the most popular suggestions made by the interviewees.*

## CONCLUSION AND LIMITATION

### Conclusion

Ideas, feelings and lingering thoughts are abundant in the business world which is why it is of utmost importance to be a mind reader by having the knowhow about as much as possible. In a matter of milliseconds; thousands of ideas and opinions are exchanged and it is PR's job to keep up with. People in-charge of PR are the visual storytellers of your business that have painted a picture and continuously making improvements to that painting as time goes by. Your customer will see the business through your eyes and through what is on the canvas, knowing how to make them appreciate, like and want what you're painting is the beauty of public relations.

### Limitations

The only limitation I came across in this research paper was the availability of time of the interviewees. Due to the fact that they were all from different strata in society, working around their schedules was a little hectic and tiring but the quality of the interviews far outweighed the time management issue.

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