

Unit Outline

12477 Public Relations Contemporary Practice 550

Semester 1, 2013

Unit study package number:	12477
Mode of study:	Internal
Tuition pattern summary:	Seminar: 1 x 3 Hours Weekly This unit does not have a fieldwork component.
Credit Value:	25.0
Pre-requisite units:	Nil
Co-requisite units:	Nil
Anti-requisite units:	Nil
Result type:	Grade/Mark
Approved incidental fees:	Information about approved incidental fees can be obtained from our website. Visit fees.curtin.edu.au/incidental_fees.cfm for details.
Unit coordinator:	Name: Marie-Louise Malkin Phone: +618 9266 3887 Email: M.Malkin@curtin.edu.au Building: 408 Room: 2012
Teaching Staff:	

Administrative contact:	Name: Elizabeth Martella Phone: 08 92661250 Email: Liz.Martella@curtin.edu.au Building: 408 Room: 2013
--------------------------------	---

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Indigenous Elders, custodians, their descendants and kin of this land past and present.

Syllabus

An overview of professional public relations with a focus on trends in contemporary practice. Consideration of the history, theoretical underpinnings and practice areas attaching to the profession. A review of key factors in practice excellence, including application of ethical frameworks, professionalism, creativity, strategic integration and technical skills. Focus on the emergence of corporate social performance and the associated fields of corporate social responsibility, stakeholder engagement and community participation, in the context of strategic public relations and marketing management.

Introduction

Public relations (also known as corporate communications) has grown exponentially in recent times to become one of the most influential fields in contemporary society. Public relations specialists are skilled communicators who help business and political leaders, corporations and NGOs both to get their message across in the 'court of public opinion' – and to respond appropriately to their social environment.

The maturing of corporate social performance as a management discipline has shifted the public relations function from 'nice to have' to 'core business'. Contemporary stakeholder strategy and corporate sustainability management are firmly anchored in the view that companies and society are interdependent. Public relations professionals are the legitimate boundary spanners between the organisation and its social environment, bringing the views of stakeholders into organisational decision-making.

This unit provides an introduction to the diverse world of public relations, offering a snapshot of emerging trends and practice areas.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit students can:		Graduate Attributes addressed
1	Examine and evaluate contemporary public relations practice	  
2	Develop solutions to real life public relations situations in business	  
3	Develop skills for effective public relations planning	  
4	Demonstrate Public relations practice principles in the context of your professional practice	  

Curtin's Graduate Attributes

	Apply discipline knowledge		Thinking skills (use analytical skills to solve problems)		Information skills (confidence to investigate new ideas)
	Communication skills		Technology skills		Learning how to learn (apply principles learnt to new situations) (confidence to tackle unfamiliar problems)
	International perspective (value the perspectives of others)		Cultural understanding (value the perspectives of others)		Professional Skills (work independently and as a team) (plan own work)

Find out more about Curtin's Graduate attributes at the Office of Teaching & Learning website: otl.curtin.edu.au

Learning Activities

Public Relations Contemporary Practice 550 is delivered via weekly, interactive three-hour seminars.

The format for the seminars is the delivery of a presentation with opportunities to reflect on and discuss the subject matter - followed by interactive workshops, group discussion and/or review of case studies and readings.

Power point presentations are available on Blackboard - but these are not a substitute for participating in class discussions on a regular basis. By participating actively in seminars, you will start to build a real understanding of public relations and greatly enhance your chances of achieving a high mark for the unit.

Remember that in order to participate effectively, adequate preparation is essential. Make sure you have completed the set readings and any other tasks as directed by your lecturer. You should also keep abreast of current affairs and be prepared to discuss issues currently in the news and to brainstorm public relations strategies.

Reading

You will need to purchase the following textbook in order to complete this unit:

Harrison, K. 2011. *Strategic Public Relations: A practical guide to success*. 6 ed. South Yarra: Palgrave MacMillan.

Students who are interested in supplementary information will find relevant readings on Blackboard. Case studies for review and recommended weekly readings are available via Blackboard and/or distribution at the weekly seminars.

The following academic journals are highly relevant to the public relations/corporate communications field. Most are available online through the Curtin library databases or in some cases in hard copy format in the library.

- Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal.
- Australian Journal of Communication.
- Corporate Communications: an International Journal.
- Corporate Reputation Review.
- Journal of Communication Management.
- Journal of Marketing Communications.
- Journal of Public Affairs.
- Journal of Public Relations Research.
- Prism.
- Public Relations Review.
- Public Relations Tactics.

Students are expected to make use of Curtin library's scholarly electronic databases. (See <http://gecko.curtin.edu.au/V/>).

Assessment

Assessment Schedule

	Task	Value %	Date Due	Unit Learning Outcome(s) Assessed
1	Special Topic Paper	25 percent	Week: 7 Day: Wednesday Time: 18:00	1,2
2	Public Relations Presentation	10 percent	Week: 10 Day: Wednesday Time: 18:00	1,2,3,4
3	Public Relations Plan	25 percent	Week: 11 Day: Wednesday Time: 18:00	2,3,4
4	Final exam	40 percent	Week: 15	1,2,3

Detailed information on assessment tasks

1. Assignment One: Special Topic Paper

This assignment requires a carefully researched and referenced paper on the evolution of public relations (PR) practice and theory - and the role of PR as a contemporary management function. The title of your paper is as follows: ***A perspective on the contribution of modern PR to the social performance of contemporary organisations.***

You are required to discuss the history and evolution of PR and reflect on its role in 21st century organisations, in the context of the emergence of the corporate social bottom line. Focus on the relationship between PR and corporate social performance (CSP), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate social responsiveness (CSR2).

There is a wealth of relevant published material available in scholarly journals, professional publications and the general news media. You should draw on all these sources in researching your paper.

In particular, please make good use of the library's electronic databases. See <http://gecko.curtin.edu.au/V>. The articles recommended for your weekly readings would make an excellent starting point. This is an INDIVIDUAL assignment.

The paper should be approximately 2,000 – 2,500 words in length and use the Chicago (author/date) referencing style. This is an INDIVIDUAL assignment.

2. Assignment Two: Public Relations Presentation

For your *second and third assignments*, you will be required to produce a public relations plan for an organisation of your choice.

1. For Assignment Two, you will make a presentation relating to your chosen organisation and principles to be applied in the plan that you envisage developing.
2. For Assignment Three, you will submit a public relations plan for the organisation which focuses chiefly (but not necessarily exclusively) on one key area of PR practice, eg: community engagement, CSR or employee/change communication.

These are group assignments. Groups should ideally consist of **THREE** students (depending on the size of the class). Final approval of group composition will be given by your lecturer.

You may choose any organisation you like – business or not-for-profit, local or overseas. But it must be a real organisation. If you choose a large organisation, it may be sensible to focus on one aspect or division of its operations.

You are required to thoroughly research the organisation and identify a public relations challenge or opportunity relating to it. You should ideally talk to people who work there in addition to examining as much other material as you can, e.g. online materials, brochures, sales literature, annual reports, advertisements, relevant newspaper and magazine articles. If possible, visit the organisation to interview key employees/stakeholders. Choosing a firm you have worked for is a good idea.

For Assignment Two, you are required to give a 15 minute Power point presentation (with an additional 5 minutes for questions) to the class covering:

1. Your chosen organisation.
2. The associated public relations challenge or opportunity.
3. An overview of key best practice principles relating to the area of PR practise on which your plan will focus.

3. Assignment Three: Public Relations Plan

You will also be required to hand in a report documenting your recommendations in a formal PR plan, which should include the following:

1. A brief summary of the organisation and the brief or the challenge/opportunity the organisation faces.
2. Public relations objectives (ie: what is your plan intended to achieve).
3. Key stakeholders.
4. Strategy (ie: key themes/messages/broad channels of communication - an overview of how you intend to achieve your objectives).
5. Tactics (ie: the major public relations activities you recommend together with a brief outline of how they would be carried out and an indication of the proposed timeline).

The paper should be approximately 2,000 – 2,500 words in length and use report referencing style (footnotes).

4. Exam

You will be required to undertake a practical exam that tests your knowledge of PR and ability to conceptualise creative and workable solutions to management problems

Fair assessment through moderation

Moderation describes a quality assurance process to ensure that assessments are appropriate to the learning outcomes, and that student work is evaluated consistently by assessors. Minimum standards for the moderation of assessment are described in the Assessment Manual, available from policies.curtin.edu.au/policies/teachingandlearning.cfm

Late Assessment Policy

This ensures that the requirements for submission of assignments and other work to be assessed are fair, transparent, equitable, and that penalties are consistently applied.

1. All assessments which students are required to submit will have a due date and time specified on the Unit Outline.
2. Accepting late submission of assignments or other work will be determined by the unit coordinator or Head of School and will be specified on the Unit Outline.
3. If late submission of assignments or other work is not accepted, students will receive a penalty of 100% after the due date and time ie a zero mark for the late assessment.
4. If late submission of assignments or other work is accepted, students will be penalised by ten percent per calendar day for a late assessment submission (eg a mark equivalent to 10% of the total allocated for the assessment will be deducted from the marked value for every day that the assessment is late). This means that an assignment worth 20 will have two marks deducted per calendar day late. Hence if it was handed in three calendar days late and marked as 12/20, the student would receive 6/20. An assessment **more than seven calendar days overdue will not be marked**. Work submitted after this time (due date plus seven days) may result in a Fail - Incomplete (F-IN) grade being awarded for the unit.

Pass requirements

To pass this unit you must receive a mark greater than or equal to 50% AND submit all assessment activities AND achieve a mark greater than or equal to 40% in the exam.

Referencing style

Students should use the Chicago and Report referencing style when preparing assignments.

More information on this referencing style can be obtained at http://library.curtin.edu.au/research_and_information_skills/referencing/index.html

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when work or property of another person is presented as one's own, without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing. Plagiarism is a serious offence. For more information refer to academicintegrity.curtin.edu.au.

Plagiarism Monitoring

Work submitted may be subjected to a plagiarism detection process, which may include the use of systems such as 'Turnitin'. For further information, see academicintegrity.curtin.edu.au/students/turnitin.cfm.

Additional information

Enrolment:

It is your responsibility to ensure that your enrolment is correct - you can check your enrolment through the eStudent option on OASIS, where you can also print an Enrolment Advice.

Supplementary/Deferred Exams:

Supplementary and deferred examinations will be held at a date to be advised. Notification to students will be made after the Board of Examiners meeting via the Official Communications Channel (OCC) in OASIS. It is the student's responsibility to check their OASIS account on a weekly basis for official Curtin correspondence. If your results show that you have been awarded a supplementary or deferred exam you should immediately check your OASIS email for details.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of all relevant legislation, policies and procedures relating to their rights and responsibilities as a student. These include:

- the Student Charter
- the University's Guiding Ethical Principles
- the University's policy and statements on plagiarism and academic integrity
- copyright principles and responsibilities
- the University's policies on appropriate use of software and computer facilities

Information on all these things is available through the University's "Student Rights and Responsibilities website at: students.curtin.edu.au/rights.

Disability

Students with a disability or medical condition (e.g. mental health condition, chronic illness, physical or sensory disability, learning disability) are encouraged to seek advice from Disability Services www.disability.curtin.edu.au. A Disability Advisor will work with you and liaise with staff to identify strategies to assist you to meet unit (including fieldwork education) and course requirements, where possible. It is important to note that the staff of the university may not be able to meet your needs if they are not informed of your individual circumstances.

Recent unit changes

We welcome feedback as one way to keep improving this unit. Students are encouraged to provide unit feedback through **eVALUate**, Curtin's online student feedback system (see evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/). Recent changes to this unit include:

The unit has been redesigned to focus on contemporary issues in public relations practice.



See evaluate.curtin.edu.au to find out when you can **eVALUate** this unit.

Program calendar

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	PRE-READING (TEXT)	NOTES
1.	March 4	Introducing public relations (defining public relations and exploring its theoretical foundations)	Chapters 1,3	
2.	March 11	Evolution and contemporary practice (history, evolution and emerging trends in modern PR practice)	Chapter 2	
3.	March 18	<i>Contemporary issues in practice</i> : corporate social performance (CSP), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate social responsiveness (CSR2)	Chapter 20	
4.	March 25	<i>Contemporary issues in practice</i> : stakeholder engagement and issues management	Chapters 20, 21	
	APRIL 1	TUITION FREE WEEK		
5.	April 8	<i>Contemporary issues in practice</i> : community engagement	Chapter 19	
6.	April 15	<i>Contemporary issues in practice</i> : employee engagement and change communication	Chapter 15	
	APRIL 22	TUITION FREE WEEK		
7.	April 29	Strategy and creativity in PR	Chapters 7, 14	<i>Assignment One due by 18:00 (May 1)</i>
8.	May 6	Public relations planning (focus on research, setting objectives, identifying stakeholders, developing strategy)	Chapters 8,9,10,12	
9.	May 13	Public relations planning and implementation (focus on tools and tactics, including integration of digital media)	Chapters 11, 16	
10.	May 20	In class presentations		<i>Assignment Two due - in seminar (May 22)</i>
11.	May 27	Excellence in public relations practice and management (ethics and professionalism, plus best practice principles)	Chapters 4, 5, 6	<i>Assignment Three due by 18:00 (May 29)</i>
12.	June 3	Unit review, exam tips		
	June 10	Study Week		
14.	June 17-28	Examinations		