

CONSIDERATIONS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING AND SPEAKING

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ABSTRACT

Public Relations writing and speaking is a scholarly article which probed the concerns of public relations practitioners when they write or speak. The piece revealed a range of what public relations people write or speak on and the role communication plays in the network. The passage through the realm of communication, in an "intertwined" relationship with public relations, is splashed with elements of good writing: including source and receiver responsibility for communication success, language of communication, readability and an update on referencing in view of the digital revolution just experienced and a model of the application of public relations theory in boosting communication impact. The reader is then lead through professional steps public relations writers and spokespersons adopt to enhance the effect of their communication effort. The article ends with ethical concerns and guidelines for negotiating the land mine represented by dealing with the public.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The primary assignment of public relations is to re-assure the numerous public that the goals and aspirations of the company are in consonance with public interest with evident performance. Only a two-way communication using mainly speaking and writing makes it possible to reach employees, customers, community leaders, stakeholders, the media, various governments and a host of others. Be it publicity materials such as a News Release, an advertisement, poster, meeting, symposia, flyers, pamphlets, a radio or television talk and lots more speaking and writing, aside images, remain the tools of communication. It is both realistic therefore to say that public relations is impossible in a context devoid of writing and speaking.

The significance of writing and speaking in corporate communication was underscored by Black (1991) who separated the tools of public relations communication into three -writing, speaking and imagery. The writing tools he labelled as the "Printed Word" and the speaking tools he designated the "Spoken Word". This permanently demonstrates the key role of writing and speaking in public relations practice and scholarship.

Under the Printed Word, Black (1991) lists below-the-line media which he categorised as House Publications. These are intra-company news materials aimed at telling the company's story, in its own words and its own way without being interrupted as would be the case through the public media. House Publications refer to journals and includes Handbooks and Materials such as Indoctrination Booklets-used generally in welcoming new employees, society members, students, etc. to the organisation; Reference Guides which enable the new entrant to get specific information and his/her own bearing quickly; Institutional Booklets and Brochures used in selling an idea or philosophy, sometimes used in

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Way back, Berlo (1960) rendered a rudimentary profile of communication. But, unlike literary definitions Berlo ripped the communication organism open and led into its innards. The anatomy of communication was discovered to consist of four components. In what is now known as Berlo's model of communication the constituents are Sender, Message, Channel and Receiver. These elements of communication act on each other in a progressive sequence that completes a communication chain. In other words, communication has not taken place if any of these parts did not take part. Although several other models of communication with further anatomical components have been developed by different scholars over the years, for educational reasons the Berlo model remains less complicated, simple and preferred. (See Fig. 1 attached.) Other discovered members of the communication organism are feedback and noise. These are analysed below.

2.1 Sender. The sender is the person who initiates the message and triggers the communication process. He/she is also referred to as a source or communicator. Berdell (1978), cited in Aderibigbe, et al (2013, p. 23), designates the sender and receiver as "encoder" and "decoder" respectively. In corporate parlance sender includes the organisation, governments, groups, writer, spokesperson, etc. The source decides what to encode, how, the media to use or how the information should be accessed. A communicator seeks to influence behaviour and must take responsibility for the success or failure of his communication initiative. Thus, requiring the assistance of human and public relations principles avails. Lazarus (1981), cited in Aderibigbe, et al (2013, p. 24), offers the following guidelines if a piece of communication is to be fruitful.

- (i) know the receiver and present the information at his/her level;
- (ii) speak or write clearly or concisely;
- (iii) Convey the desire to reach the receiver by his attitude; and
- (iv) Obtain feedback to confirm that the message has been received correctly.

In other words, the source should reckon with the receiver's language proficiency, cognitive ability, social status, aspirations, learning styles, psychological situation and family structure (Salawu, 2008, cited in Aderibigbe, et al, 2013, p. 24). Also, the communicator should adopt the basic skill in writing and speaking summed in the acronym: KISS - Keep It Short and Simple. Saul (1968), cited in Aderibigbe, et al (2013, p. 23) and Nweke (2006, p. 102) agree that the attitude of the communicator toward the receiver counts. The successful writer must radiate warmth and positivity toward his audience. Another impeding factor of successful communication is the carrier for the message. This must be carefully worked out if the mission of the message is to be fulfilled.

Aderibigbe, et al (2013, p. 24) suggests that for success the source should engage the receiver in a periodic probe to be certain of his/her gains during the communication process as a means of obtaining the receivers' performance; and where necessary affect corrections. Agreeing, Salawu (2008, p. 24) offered four methods for accessing the feedback as follows:

- (i) Questioning the receiver on specific points during presentation:
- (ii) Careful observation of the receivers' facial expression and manner;

(iii) Solicit suggestions, or explanations or examples from the receiver; and

(iv) In general, make your receivers(s) active during communication.

2.2 Message. This is any form of content or idea developed by the encoder of the message and aimed at the receiver. The desires and intentions of man are unlimited and according to individual communicator. Aderibigbe, et al (2013, p. 25) views a message as including the task, information, content, the subject matter, knowledge, attitude, values, beliefs and/or skills designed and planned to be acquired by the receiver.

Messages are the substance of writing and speaking in public relations and incorporates items such as news release, publicity material, advertising, poster, brochure, circular, image, etc. The message responsibility of the communicator are onerous. It should be accurate in every way and devoid of ambiguity. The message should observe all the technical, human and public relations prescriptions in 2.1 above as well as avoid any related forms of noise.

2.3 Channel. This is the medium or vehicle used to send or transmit a message to the receiver(s). Channel is also referred to as carriers, conveyor belt such as the mass media - newspapers, radio, television, films, blogs, new and social media, etc. Others are below-the-line reinforcement media such as pamphlets, plain paper, black boards, wall, billboard, magazine, books, etc. (Nweke, 2001).

Channel responsibility of the encoder includes the choice of an appropriate channel to be used to send or transmit the message. The right medium or media is the one unencumbered by any form of noise that may impair the fidelity or message filtration. (See 2.6.7 below.)

2.4 Receiver. The receiver is the individual, organisation, government or group to whom the message addressed or targeted. The receiver is the subject of the senders' influence through the information sent. Severally referred to as decoder, recipient, destination, audience, publics, etc. the receiver occupies the other end of the communication chain. In newspapers, magazines and books, they are readers; on radio they are listeners and on television they are viewers or participants; while in public relations they are the audience, publics, customers, employees, etc. He/she receives and, expectedly, acts on the message depending on the impact the content had on them. Receiver end factors of a communication breakdown are numerous and will be discussed under noise- 2.6 below.

2.5 Feedback. Feedback is a reaction to the piece of communication which takes the form of a correspondence response or a behaviour act or change. Feedback is indicator that a communication or sharing of meaning has taken place between the parties. Where there is no feedback or response of any kind, Nweke (2001, p. 101) posits that no feedback itself is a feedback because the communicators themselves may safely assume that the message sent was not received.

2.6 Noise. According to Aderibigbe, et al (2013, p. 26) noise is any occurrence or act that impedes communication fidelity. Several impairments to communication have been identified over the years.

These include:

- 2.6.1 Physical/environmental noises flow from the immediate physical environment and negatively impact reception of communication messages. Among these are continuous loud sounds from radio and television sets, markets, grinding machines, block making machines, hooting by moving vehicles, outcry from the next classroom, etc.
- 2.6.2 Physiological noise arise from ill-health on either or both parties in the communication process. These include headaches, stomach disorder, body pains during the communication engagement.
- 2.6.3 Psychological noise on the other hand covers unfavourable state of the mind of either or both parties in the communication relationship. This ranges from conditions such as fatigue, emotional depression, annoyance and lack of enthusiasm due to internally or externally induced problems. Nweke (2001, p. 100) also suggests three major communication noises, including:
 - 2.6.4 Channel and Static Noise. In writing or typing noise are represented by bad handwriting, typographical errors, unclear type characters, cancellations, missing paragraphs and pages. On radio, guttural voice, hissing sound and channel noise that break through the filters; on television, guttural voice, fog, snow, hissing sound and other channel disturbances; and on computers virus. These negatively impact the communication process and results in communication breakdown.
 - 2.6.5 Environmental/Physical Noise. Description the same as 2.6.1 above.
 - 2.6.6 Semantic Noise. These are distortions to a message which arise from the meaning of words or symbols used in encoding the message not being clear or lost, implying that though the message was received as sent the meaning is lost or misunderstood.
 - 2.6.7 Dealing with Noises. To deal with channel and static noise, Nweke (2001, p. 100) suggests that the ugly situation can be overcome by the use of attention-getting devices and meticulous and careful repetition of the key points in the message in various forms. Semantic noise should be dealt with using definition and explanation of terms and concepts and careful adjustment or total removal of the confusing vocabularies, technical terms. With environmental/physical noise the source should avoid places like industrial site, factory site, market place, motor parks. This is more so when the business is a public lectures, communication, speeches, shareholders meetings, etc. Aderibigbe, et al (2013, p. 26) also sites poor preparation, lack of deep knowledge of the issue at stake, use of wrong media, exhibition of wrong mannerisms, inadequate command of the language of communication, insensitivity to the receiver on the part of the encoder as noise to be avoided.

3.0 THE LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION

By now, it is obvious that communication is strictly the exchange of idea, information, data, content or message between a sender and a receiver through a channel. It should also be clear that communication is not linguistic, the latter being an avenue for the expression of the content of communication. In other words, to communicate the communicator needs a language. And to communicate well he/she requires being good in the language of communication.

English Language is the official lingua franca in Nigeria. Purveyors of public relations writing and speaking should therefore must possess a mastery of the common codes of communication to be good to go. That is to say that their writing and speech respectively should at least pass the readability test of easy and enjoyable read; and, in spoken communication, the RP (Received Pronunciation) that is the established standard for users of English. These are what make readability possible and further communication meaningful.

3.1 Readability. Earlier, complexity of the vocabulary and syntax of a language were the factors of readability. By 1935, over 60 of these had been identified. However it seems that the world grew weary with language elements of readability indicated by low research interest on the one hand and on the other hand increased research emphasis on typography such as colours, white space, line spacing, font style and size, text width, heading, graphics and animation. Yet the effect of the wrong word, spelling, syntactic error, etc. still do affect easy and enjoyable reading of textual materials.

Public Relations writing and speaking seeks to affect behaviour, therefore clarity in the common code that everybody understands is essential. In writing, two areas are central and will be treated in this work. These are sentence length and word length although they are by no means all.

3.2 Sentence Length. This is also a case in readability. It is obviously that a short sentence quickly opens itself to easy read and understanding. However, a continuous stream of short sentences is not equally as good. They make for a jerky staccato rhythm which detracts from attention and meaning. On the other hand long sentence chokes and obscures the idea being delivered. It has however been effectively demonstrated that a well-constructed long sentence is good. Also powerfully argued is the fact that a mix of long and short sentences is good writing. Public Relations writers and spokespersons seems to prefer to mix short sentences with an occasional and properly deployed long sentence. Clear words and sentences—short or long—should be the aim.

3.3 Word Length. Writing and speaking should aim at being understood by using common words understandable to members of the target group. The unnecessary grandiloquent (long or high-sounding words) hinder communication. They are not easily understood, aside that they switch attention from meaning to sound and fury. Unfamiliar words will make reading your text difficult and probably abandoned. For instance, using "accumulate" when "gather" will do, "remuneration" instead

of "pay", "experiment" rather than "test" or "precipitation" to mean "rain" is a sure way of sending your readers, listeners and viewers to the dictionary every sentence. It presents a readability condition which, of all writers, a public relations writer or spokesperson museschew.

Aside clearly, Public Relations writing and speaking should aim at being warm, positive and interesting. A dull and uninteresting write up or speech is not the favourite of an audience being human. There are two ways to overcome this. Clearly, some subject matters are interesting to some people and not to others. This accounts for why public relations principles demand that the writer or spokesperson know and understand his/her audience before the communication act takes place. With this you will know what interests them and to play that up. The second strand of a moving and exciting write up is to anchor it on simple and clear composition, adorning with maxim, witticism, anecdotes, comparison, group idioms and very typical illustrations the audience understand. Writing should be natural and devoid of stress, artificiality or a forced word.

Style guides such as the American Psychological Association (APA) or Harvard Style when adopted should be apply with consistency to avoid the readers or auditors as the case may be.

3.4 Noteson Writing. This is primary for those who speak English as a second language. There are other disturbing aspects that affects communication negatively. It is important that the public relations writer or spokes person understand them though this study will turn to a textbook on English to pursue them. They will therefore only be outlined here as a lead for those who at every moment seek the motejoste (a sweet morsel) to enhance themselves. They include the proper use of active and passive voices, tenses, especially the present tense in quoted texts to achieve writing dynamism. The mechanics of the language, otherwise known as punctuation marks is equally important. Then you have spelling, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, vocabulary and syntax in general. A review of the Use of English (GST 101) will be helpful in the aspect of English.

Professionally, the journalist and public relations specialist have additional need of learning to express numbers and statistics for print and sight and sound. They should avoid jargon or gobbledegook so to say. Bias, prejudice, stereotype, politically incorrect expressions and redundancies. The diligent public relations act will soon get the reward for his/her effort. The more the practice the better.

4.0 USE OF LIBRARY

The digital revolution was thought to have brought the death-knell of manual or analogue library. It turned out however to have enhanced, expanded and deepen the Use of Library. The search for information gets more intense as data storage and retrieval takes on increasing significance. Digital storage now dominates the realm though the Public Relations writer's reference frame still encompass old flames as the dictionary. Most dictionaries are now online or having electronic or digital versions as well as they are also available on tapes, CD-ROM and DVD. Some are there

as part of operating system of computers such as Microsoft Word, Dell, Apple, Sony, etc. The once unavoidable Oxford

Advanced Dictionary of English is now online. Webster's Dictionary and American Heritage Dictionary -all now have electronics version and are online. Once imperious Encyclopaedia Britannica and the Encarta-a class by themselves-are online although you will have to subscribe before being admitted to partake of these repository of knowledge and information. The Net has enough space and also accommodates an Etymological Dictionary. Style Guides such as Harvard and APA, Media Dictionary and Atlas are available and only features.

Professional periodicals have not lost their relevance as a result of the advent digital storage; rather they are flourishing in online presence. For the public relations practitioners there is choice to make from the array of Public Relations Quarterly, Inside Public Relations, Public Relations Review, Journal of Public Relations Research, etc. in digital format but as with Encyclopaedia Britannica users have had to subscribe for their usage using your Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and password. Internet Groups which provide up-to-date information on public relations abounds on the net. Use nets groups called Newsgroup -a global system of discussion; and Listservs-a software programme for setting up and maintaining discussion groups through e-mail are available for the public relations professional users. The possibilities are enormous. You can do a review with a topic search with Search engines such as Google, Yahoo, American Online (AOL), Safari, Firefox, Bing and Opera Mini. The Public Relations practitioner may also harness the International Public Relations Association Forum for its global membership assistance at ipra@yahoogroups.com. This is a peer group information showing which helps practitioners in most countries of the world.

Public relations is composed of five knowledge areas of which writing and speaking is only one. Other areas are business, management, current events and trends. In addition to the above online resources the public relations writer and spokesperson especially will do well to befriend the world's mainstream media for sure. There are numerous such media from different regions of the world. However, CNN, Al Jazeera, CGTV, EuroNews, Time, Sputnik, The Economist, Newsweek International, New York Times, Xinhua, The Guardian and Washington Post make the list although are not all. The third world practitioner must look inside their own nations for the main news media as well, current events and trends in all aspects.

Computer is the game changer. Be it a table top, laptop or palmtop the computer is the closest working gadgets of a public relations writer. Tim McIntyre of the School of Mass Communication of Boston University found that Public Relations practitioners spend a median of five hours a day on their computer. Complemented by digital phone the Public Relations writer and spokesperson ought to be digital-compliant to be relevant in contemporary practice environment. He ought to be abreast of information and sources or where to find information such as media directories and be able to use the various Search engine enumerated above. Google Scholar is very helpful for research. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn are other repository of knowledge and information which can be leveraged for useful data.

5.0 PUBLIC RELATIONS THEORIES

A theory is a synthesised body of knowledge associated with a particular field of study or knowledge. It is a perspective or perception that helps to explain, anchor, interpret and reinforce the discipline. Arguably, a theory wears the cloak of science without really being scientific in empirical sense. Nevertheless, Schramm (1963, p. 72) describes a theory as a "crap detector" that separates scientific from unscientific deduction. On his part, Kaplan (1964, p. 26), in Folarin (2002, p. 3) sees a theory as a facilitator that helps a researcher to make sense of a disturbing situation. For an African student, a theory may be much easily appreciated when likened to a proverb, maxim or apothegm used to illuminate a story and make it clearer and more meaningful.

What is generally regarded as communication theories are social science theories that incidentally found application in communication field and in this work particularly public relations. They help the writer and spokesperson and indeed practitioner to illuminate, explain and guide concepts in public relations practice and field operation. They enrich public relations writing, speaking and scholarship though public relations theories are anchors for its campaign programming.

A good example is Professor Everett Rogers' Diffusion and Adoption of Innovation Theory. This theory was developed back in the 1930s but was expanded by the Stanford University don who outlined the stages a product goes through from production to consumption. The stages are: Awareness, Interest, Trial, Evaluation and Adoption. This finding became of great consequence for public relations writers as well as field operators or marketers to whom the stages of the innovation determines the message, media and marketing strategies.

Awareness as the first stage is when the product is just being introduced into the market and people need to know about its existence. This prompts the PR writer on product descriptive approach and elaborate use of above-the-line media strategies. This is the use of mainstream media such as newspapers, radio, television, social media and others. At the Interest stage, when the market is already aware of the innovation, the strategies must change from description to inquiry and reinforcement as a sensitised potential consumer looks around for more information on the product. These stages rely mainly on below-the-line strategies such as employment of posters, pamphlets, brochures, meetings, videotape, etc. to satisfy consumers' desire for information. This is the premise on which awareness campaigns must leave a contact or "800 number" where potential buyers may direct their enquiries on the innovation.

At the Trial and Evaluation stages, families, friends, peers and the likes become influential by way of shared discussion or comparing notes or experience. Here the media strategies is reinforcing of messages through the mass media as prelude to ultimate product Adoption and sustenance yet of the reinforcement strategies.

Rogers' theory also suggests that individuals do not necessarily go through all the stages to adoption based on several variables. These include: Relative advantage, Compatibility, Complexity, Triability

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and Observability -different conditions that influences early or late adoption of the product, cause or innovation. (See Fig. 2 attached).

6.0 PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING AND SPEAKING

Using Marston's model of public relations (RACE) writing and speaking occupies the third stage of the PR process which is Communication. As indicated earlier, writing or speaking is one of five essential knowledge areas in public relations the mastery of which adds to accomplishment as a practitioner. It (writing and speaking) operates in the province of PR appeals and therefore the make or mar of a public relations programme. The key status of writing and speaking in public relations is also indicated in the stage it occupies and why it is preceded by research and action.

The unaware folk thinks that Public Relations writing and speaking is merely to put pen on paper or to simply make audible noise chewing the mouth. Some even think that it is all outright chicanery and deception. They are unable to fathom public relations appeal being invisible sell without a physical product. Whereas public relations is serious business predicated on distilled facts obtained through research and full information.

6.1 Research. Research is the first and crucial stage of the public relations process according to the instant model. It is all about facts and empirical reality gathered using standardised information gathering methodologies. This tool expresses the importance Public Relations attaches to truth and the offensiveness or its abhorrence for manipulation as though a propaganda that mislead people to act before they think of the propriety of their action (Rampton, S. and Stauber, J., 2003). Public relations is not fiction, hocus-pocus or deception and flourish on truth and full information. Areas of public relations research includes products or cause, audience, media and message.

6.1.1 Product Research. To write a factual, interesting and persuasive News Release or feature article on a product, cause or innovation the Public Relations writer, assource in this context, has a duty to familiarise themselves with the object celebre (the subject of the action -the product) as well as perform all the source responsibilities possible. Wilcox (2005, p. 18) proposes the following guidelines for the diligent public relations hand.

- (i) Meeting the head of Marketing for price and product information, availability, benefit and capability.
- (ii) Interview someone in the Research and Development (R&D) who is responsible for the development of the product.
- (iii) Research on potential market, the competition and how to position your product; in terms of competing products, difference in price or quality.
- (iv) May talk to an expert in the area whose assessment could represent endorsement if he permits you to use it.

(v) Interact with customers who may avail you what will convince them to try the product; for example, price, convenience, brand reputation or reliability.

6.1.2 Audience. This is one of the components or main concerns of public relations writing and speaking that is eminently research-based. According to Wilcox (2005, p. 3) a journalist who plies as a general interest news medium has no problem with audience because he/she reports for one mass medium such as a newspaper, radio or television and their audience although composed of diverse interest groups all key into that specific channel. He also posits that the opposite is the case with corporate communication where public relations writing and speaking targets numerous and obviously different audience in different specialised media such as travellers, customers, bankers, shareholders, employees, homemakers and numerous others specialised news outlets. The public relations writer and spokesperson has to know the specific audience, their common interests, values, attitudes, beliefs, disposition as foundation for formulating the right appeals that matches their psychographic make up and taste. In the words of Wilcox (2005) who has written extensively on the subject, "Effective public relations writing is based on carefully defining the audience and its composition so that you can tailor your information to its interest and concerns." The public relations writer and spokesperson is therefore concerned with their audience; particularly their needs, concerns, interests, location and above all the common media of choice or interest they share. When a message is thus "tailored" to the identified attitude, values and beliefs of a given public or group, it is called "channelling" and do not fail to enchant or move emotions.

6.1.3 Media. This is the medium, media or platform through which a message is delivered to the select audience. Media is a determinant of the effectiveness of a public relations message. The powerful role media play in message impact was affirmed by McLuhan (1964, p. 126) when he asserts that the "Message is the media." Therefore, research on product characteristics, market factors or the competition are just as good as they help to pigeonhole the right media for the right public relations message. Hence, the challenge for the public relations writer is greater than for a journalist who serves a specific medium, employer or publisher.

Aside strategic columns or pages in general interest medium other channels a public relations writer may target with their messages are posters, special events, direct mail, pamphlets, videotapes, CD-ROM, organisational newsletters, chat group, Internet via online newsletter or news platforms, Web sites, e-mail, etc. The public relations practitioner or writer has to research all these and figure out the one or combinations of them that will best cater for the interests, concerns, values, tastes and predilections of the identified publics.

In like manner as the public relations writer who has a range of above-the-line and below-the-line media from which to make an appropriate choice, the public relations spokesperson is not without choice of forms to use. The public relations spokesperson has such organs as meeting, convention, press conference and press briefings, symposium, podcasting, face to face interpersonal, group-to-one or one-to-a-group fora for also channelling their verbal message delivery. This is by no means all.

Having highly diversified audience and media to harness also implies that the public relations writer and spokesperson is obliged to develop and internalise the skills for writing and speaking in a variety of formats that suits the different media they may chose for their message. If they chose to use five different media genres, the same story may have to be re-written the same number of time to make it suitable for each of the selected medium. The report of a seminar sponsored by Business Wire and West Glen Communications which had only public relalions specialists and journalists attendee agreed that,

For public relations practitioners, such news formats will require an in-depth understanding of not only each news brand and its respective audience, but also all of the components of the media mix, as they become more and more diverse in whatinformation they present and how they present it.

Whereas the format for newspaper uses the standardised news reporting format or the 5Ws and H of news radio and television are sound and sight media which uses headlines mainly and are basically ephemeral. Matters have been compounded by the emergence of new media reporting format.

6.1.4 Message. The determination of audience and media characteristics throws up the next challenge of the PR writer and spokesperson. This is the all-important acid test that rest squarely with PR writing and speaking-writing the message. The writer should remember its professional objective "not only to accurately inform, but also to persuade and motivate" the publics towards the established corporate goal in the communication effort. Corporate communication drives are numerous and as a result probably amorphous. However, Nweke (2001, p. 134) sums them up as four: that is, to adopt,discontinue, continue or deter; suggesting a paradigm shift in every case but one from an existing behaviour, attitude, value, believes, disposition to the suggested one that is held up as the beneficial one.Let us look at these each:

- (1)Adoption presupposes that the receiver of the message is involved in opposing behaviour to the objective of the organisation and is requested to relocate to that which benefits. For example,Nigerian Breweries may reposition its Heineken brand to consumers as "best" of all beer beverages. This is a suggestion that consumers quit their present brand and embrace Heinken.
- (ii)Discontinuance suggests that the target receiver of the message is in one negative or outdated mode of practice from which i should discontinue in enlightened self-interest. A manufacturer of pre-natal, natal or post-natal products, for instance Johnson and Johnson Limited, may suggest to pregnant women and mothers that drinking alcohol together with a specific product is counterproductive.
- (iii)Continuance is indicative of a corporation's approval of an existing consumption of its products and encouragement or appeal to consumers to persist in it for their own good. In the face of competition from Pepsi, for instance, Coca Cola may embark in a reinforcement campaign and appeal to consumers to stick to it because "Coke is it!"

- (iv) Detersuggests that there is danger in the existing value, practice or behaviour and a suggestion for the receiver to quit in their own interest. To illustrate, the Ministry of Youth Development and probably educational authorities too may run a campaign to warn youths off self-medication with prescription drugs such as Codeine and Tramadol bearing in mind that many youths have developed psychotic conditions from the wholesale consumption of these hard drugs and consequently endangers social safety.

PR writing and speaking is entirely the art of persuasion and must start with framing the message you have for the chosen audience in order and meticulously choosing the right ideas, words and structure of the message. They should be anchored on the existing dispositions of the audience obtained through research. Remember the product USP (Unique Selling Point) - the primary benefit of the product. Adorn with the product image, a nice headline, caption, statistics, charts if possible, comparison and such other promotional product qualities.

An irresistible persuasion message ought also to be predicated on elements of source credibility. Therefore, the narrative, arguments, assertions, data, statistics, comparison must be realistic, believable, convincing and applicable and much more. It bears repeating that the language of expression and the concept employed must reflect the level or ability of the receivers to understand and in the first instance enjoyed in reading. This implies that familiar words, phrases and less complicated sentences should be the general rule. There is need to reiterate that the ultimate the customer or receiver wants to hear is, how the product would benefit them. The best write up never answer all questions nor satisfy all members of the audience. So leave an 800 number for inquiries.

7.0 PUBLIC RELATIONS ETHICS

The unpredictable side of human beings in society made it absolute that controls in the form of laws, rules and regulations down to professional ethics be instituted. Public relations ethics is one of the fall-out of that condition and refer to the self-righting formulations constructed to guide or restrain practitioners from destructive excesses. From the backdrop of accusations of manipulation and deception and even labelling as "spin doctors" society seeks escape, safety and sustenance from professional maleficence, clients or principals desires that they are not compromised by untrustworthy employees or professionals, while professional guardianship feels compelled that, for the good of all and the profession itself, it would not have the shame and embarrassment of a negative reputation which would lead to avoidable social distrust, condemnation and stigma. Moreso, image development and projection is the centrepiece of the public relations calling, requiring that the "preacher practice what they preach."

Public relations is advocacy in the marketplace of public opinion, therefore it is unrealistic that a professional persuades the same people using uneven techniques and expect to be justified. This was the high road to the realisation that "Trust" is the prime requirement in the relationship with the public and today it remains the strong pillar of public relations ethics. Trust lead logically to the necessity of truth. For instance, Wilcox (2005, pp. 58-61) reasons that Trust 'comes from telling the truth and

distributing accurate information." This corroborates the W. Page Society of senior communication executive requiring members to only provide "an accurate picture of the company's character, ideals and practices" of their client. The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) is even more copious in its charter declaring that, "Each member shall refrain from subordinating the truth to other requirements." The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) also conceded on truth as a vital ethical requirement of publication. "We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truths in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public." Perhaps the punchiest comment on truth and accuracy came from Chambria-a writer with PRWeek who cautions that, "Do make sure your statements are accurate. The press will pick up on even innocent mistakes as potential lies." Truth and accurate information were therefore adopted as an ethical requirement of public relation practice, writing and speaking.

In brief, some other public relations ethical principles agreed upon were:

- (1) The overriding supremacy of the public interest over whatever interest;
- (2) The supersession of the interest of the profession over the personal interest of individual members;
- (3) Avoidance of diversionary tactics;
- (4) Members shall not claim to be an expert in an area that they are not;
- (5) Never deceive the audience by concealing your real motive;

The full range of ethical requirements of public relations writers and spokespersons are expectedly incorporated in the constitution of the local (country) branches of the profession. WNWriters and spokespersons may contact these for what the exact contents are and to adopt as guides.

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