



FROM THE HISTORY OF PR TECHNOLOGIES

Ramanova Gulnoza

Journalism and mass communication university of Uzbekistan Teacher at the
Department of Public Relations and Advertising.

Abstract

The article tells about the history of Pr technology and relations. More scientific works of foreign scientists were used to cover the topic of the article.

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Introduction

Do you know the history of public relations? It has existed for centuries. From the ancient Egyptians to the medieval period – people have been using devices and channels to relay important information to each other and help keep subjects aware of what's occurring. These methods of communication have helped shape what we know as public relations today. There are many examples where public relations has been used throughout the ancient world, for example: around 469 BC, the Greek philosophers (like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) realised the value of public opinion. These philosophers and many others taught noblemen that art of persuasion through rhetoric (i.e. public speaking or spoken publication). In 394 AD, Saint Augustine acted as what we know today as a public relations director for the imperial court. He would deliver eulogies to the emperor and the public regularly to benefit the church. If we were to think about what Saint Augustine conducted now, we'd consider it a press conference. While the true founder is debated, public relations first served as a way to manage and manipulate public opinion through sociology and mass psychology, however, in its early beginnings public relations was criticised for sometimes being a major form of propaganda.

Before the rise of the most powerful PR professionals, there were some ancient personalities that influenced and shaped the PR industry.

So who are the first PR influencers worth mentioning?

- Ptah-Hotep (2200 BCE) was an Egyptian literary who wrote the book The Maxims of Ptah-Hotep focusing on the importance of communicating with people.
- Socrates (470 BCE - 399 BCE), one of the founders of Western philosophy, was of the opinion that effective communication should be based on the truth.





- Aristotle (384 BCE - 322 BCE) whose work Rhetoric dealt with the art of persuasion and shaping the public opinion.
- In 50 BCE, Julius Caesar (100 BCE- 44 BCE) publicized his military exploits in the first known political campaign biography to convince the public opinion of Romans that he would make the best head of state – a practice which is still used in mass media by political candidates today. This document is regarded as the first public newsletter.

18th Century: The age of print. Propaganda was very prevalent after the invention of the printing press. It allowed prominent figures to spread information to the masses and influence them to view a certain way. This was a great tool when many countries grew into a democracy and citizens had the right to vote in government elections. During this period, there were many people using public relations to support various causes. For instance, Benjamin Franklin used the printing press to campaign against slavery, increase national security, and improve education. Throughout the American Revolution Thomas Paine wrote “The Crisis”, which was a pamphlet designed to persuade General Washington’s army to stay and fight after they were thinking about deserting. Public relations kept itself relevant, especially in politics. Duchess Georgiana of Devonshire campaigned heavily for the Whig candidate, Charles James Fox. She used her own public profile to enhance Fox’s, which resulted in success. Although it sounds relatively new, modern public relations was first introduced in the 18th century, but today’s meaning of the phrase appeared during the 20th century. The PR industry wouldn’t be what it is today if it wasn’t for its pioneers and significant events that laid the foundation of public relations as a notable profession.

But let us start from the beginning, that is in 1440 when Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press. It caused nothing less than a cultural and social revolution, enabling the sudden widespread of propaganda, journalistic activity, and printed material such as books, pamphlets etc.

Around 140 years later (in 1584), Sir Walter Raleigh decided to do some advertising and sent reports about the beauty of Roanoke Island to England to persuade more settlers. Despite his efforts, his attempt was far from being a success as it turned out that the land was swampy.

In 1773, Samuel Adams, considered the Master of Propaganda, orchestrated public relations for the Revolutionary War, while 3 years later, Thomas Paine wrote the pamphlet Common Sense encouraging people to fight for an egalitarian government. When Amos Kendall became the press secretary of President Andrew Jackson (1820), he was quickly regarded as the one causing public relations to become a career.



Basil Clark is regarded as the first PR professional, establishing the first UK PR agency Editorial Services in 1924.

However, PR became a profession when Ivy Lee started working as an advisor of John Rockefeller in 1903. The publicity expert was responsible for Rockefeller's reputation boost after a crisis caused by a series of strikes in the coal mines. Ivy Lee is also believed to be the author of the first press release.

One of the most important names in the field of PR is Edward Bernays, the Father of Public Relations and author of the influential book *Propaganda*. Being the nephew of Sigmund Freud, his PR strategies were greatly influenced by his uncle's theories on behavioural psychology. Edward Bernays was of the opinion that political propaganda used by the governments during WWII, could also be used by corporations to influence the customer and consumer in a more subtle form.

Businessman Henry Ford started using PR in the 1930's to publicize his company and boost sales.

As you can see, only through the effort of numerous people who dared to try new approaches, we can speak of public relations as a meaningful profession.

No PR without Inventions

PR is a very broad topic, therefore it makes sense to focus on the most important aspects, one of them being inventions enabling the development and progress within the industry.

History mentions numerous inventions that caused major changes in society, however, we will focus on the ones relevant for public relations.

1. Telegraph (1830s)
2. Daguerreotype (1839): First commercially successful photographic process
3. Telephone (1876)
4. Phonograph (1877)
5. Gramophone (1887)
6. Motion picture camera (1892)
7. Wireless telegraphy (1896)
8. Tesla coils (1897): Electrical resonant transformer circuit. It is used to produce high-voltage, low-current, high frequency alternating-current electricity.
9. Long distance radio communication (1901)

But what affected the modernization of PR? Once again, the answer is innovation.

It started with the birth of the Internet (1969), followed by the phenomena that the world wide web became accessible to the public (1991) and Hotmail was defined as the first web-based email service (1996).





Soon after, in 1999 to be more precise, first bloggers emerged and were finally able to share their content on Blogger, the first free blog publishing platform.

5 more years have passed before the world witnessed the explosion of social media platforms with the launch of Facebook and Twitter. They attracted more and more customers each day, advertising became easier and we could go on and on about the impact (positive and negative) the platforms have on society.

Consumers, as well as technology enthusiasts, could buy their first iPhone in 2007 and the number of Apple customers is still growing, which can be attributed to effective PR including advertising, media relations, well thought through marketing concepts etc.

People have been using PR (and PR's sister occupation, content marketing) to capture the public's attention and spur them into action since the beginning of time. The channels have changed a bit here and there with various inventions such as the printing press, followed by the Internet and social media (can you imagine how the American Revolution would have been different had Twitter existed?), but the basic strategies and principles remained the same.

People have been using PR (and PR's sister occupation, content marketing) to capture the public's attention and spur them into action since the beginning of time (yes, we are suggesting that cavemen probably had some sort of PR campaigns). The channels have changed a bit here and there with the invention of the printing press, and now the Internet and of course social media and sophisticated media monitoring tools; but the basic strategies and principles are the same.

20th Century: The age of mass media. Throughout the last few centuries, public relations has served as a go-to for people to build strong relationships and maintain a positive public image. As technology grew, so did public relations. The introduction of mass media like television and radio, helped spread messages around the globe and paved the way for some of the most effective public relations campaigns ever created. In the early 1900's, amid the Women's Liberation Movement, arguably one of the most famous publicity stunts took place as the cigarette company Lucky Strike hired Edward Bernays to increase their sales. Bernays, now labelled a pioneer in the field of public relations, identified that a large portion of the market of people who could smoke (i.e. women) wasn't due to the fact that it was still considered to be unseemly for women to be seen smoking in public and women who did were thought to only be 'fallen women' or prostitutes. To change this negative public perception Bernays created a women's liberation movement, making it a feminist issue that women couldn't smoke. To do this he paid women to smoke in the middle of the Easter Sunday Parade in New York. Photos and footage of this event were shown around the world



through mass media channels and the act was considered a protest for women's rights called "Torches of Freedom." Women everywhere embraced smoking and sales skyrocketed.

21st Century: The age of digital and social media. In the early 2000s, public relations became prominent as the internet created a platform where information was readily available to the public. To remain relevant, public relations needed to keep up with the changing media landscape and adapt to new ways of communication. In 2008, the U.S. Presidential Election saw social media used effectively to connect politicians with their voters. Former President Barack Obama used social media platforms like Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube to gain a popular following among the youth of America. Exit polls revealed that this tactic proved to be a success, as Obama won almost 70 per cent of the under 25's vote. This result is the highest percentage seen since the creation of U.S. exit polling in 1976. Obama's public relations strategy demonstrated the influence social media was beginning to have. Throughout the last few years especially, social media has dominated the world of communications, becoming a popular and effective tool used by public relations professionals to connect with the public. With the constant creation of new and innovative technologies, public relations will continue to grow and shift.

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