

**AN ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTRIBUTION IN AN ICT
COMPANY:**

A CASE STUDY OF RLG

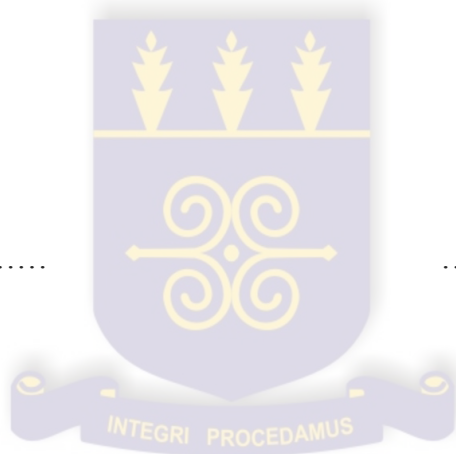


**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD
OF MA COMMUNICATION DEGREE.**

DECLARATION

I, Millicent K. Adjei, do hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own work and findings, except where indicated. All sources used have been duly acknowledged. This work was supervised by Professor Abraham Linus and Mr Gilbert Tietaah

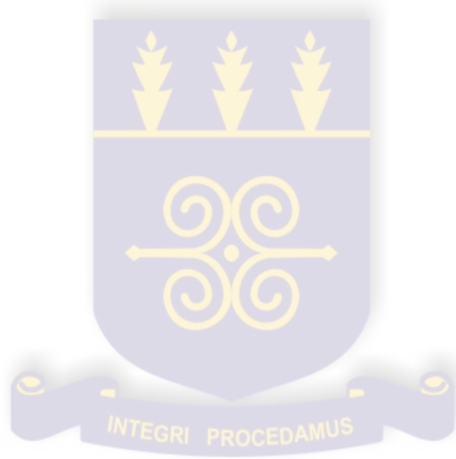
.....
Mr. Gilbert Tietaah
(Supervisor)



.....
Millicent K. Adjei
(Student)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mom and dad for their love and support always.



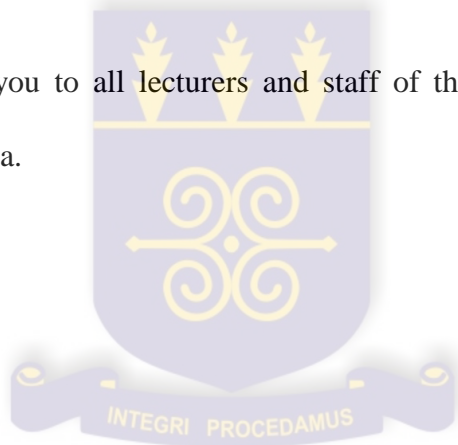
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for the guidance and for granting me good health, determination and strength to carry out this study; to my parents for their unconditional love and support; and to my friends Lanre, Christina, Aba and Vivian - for all the encouragement and unwavering support.

To my supervisors Professor Linus and Mr Tietaah, for their continued guidance, assistance, patience and wise counsel throughout this study: I am truly grateful, God bless you.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the staff of Rlg, especially respondents who contributed towards the successful completion of this research.

Finally, I say a big thank you to all lecturers and staff of the School of Communication Studies - University of Ghana.



| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| TITLE PAGE..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| DECLARATION | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| DEDICATION..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| TABLE OF CONTENT..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| ABSTRACT..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| CHAPTER ONE..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| INTRODUCTION | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.1. Background to the study | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.1.1 History of public relations | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.1.2 History and evolution of PR in Ghana..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.1.3 Definitions of PR | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.1.4 Functions of public relations..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.2. Company profile: RLG..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.3. Problem statement | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.4. Objectives of the study | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.5. Research questions | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.6. Significance of study..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.7. Limitations of the study..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.8. Summary | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 1.9. Organization of the Study | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| CHAPTER TWO | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW .. | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.1. Introduction | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.2. The excellence theory..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.2.1 Empowering the PR function..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.2.2 Roles | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.2.3 Organisation of the communication function and its relationship with other management functions | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.2.4 Models of public relations | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.3. The roles theory | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

| | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| 2.3.1 | The strategic managerial role..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.4 | LITERATURE REVIEW..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.4.1 | The excellence study..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.4.2 | Other related works..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2.5 | Summary | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| CHAPTER THREE | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| METHODOLOGY | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3.1. | Introduction | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3.2. | Research design | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3.3. | Population..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3.4. | Sampling process | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3.5. | Instrument..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3.6. | Data analysis | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3.7 | Summary | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| CHAPTER FOUR..... | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| FINDINGS..... | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.1 | Introduction | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.2 | The PR department..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.3 | Knowledge/understanding of PR | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.4 | Role and functions of PR | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.5 | Education..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.6 | Empowering the PR function | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.6.1 | PR as a management function:..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.6.2 | PR as an integrated function: | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.6.3 | PR as a distinct function from marketing: | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.7 | Model of PR practiced | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.8 | Contribution to organisational strategy and performance | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.9 | Summary | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| CHAPTER FIVE | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 5.1 | Introduction | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 5.2 | Program level | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5.3 | Departmental level | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 5.4 | Organisational level..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 5.5 | Role of PR | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 5.6 | The value of PR..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 5.7 | Conclusion..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 5.8 | Recommendations | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| APPENDIX A..... | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Interview Guide for Non PR Practitioners..... | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| APPENDIX B | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Interview Guide for PR Practitioners..... | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| APPENDIX C | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| CEO’s INTERVIEW GUIDE | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| REFERENCES | | Error! Bookmark not defined. |



ABSTRACT

PR is an integral part of an organisation and its effective practice is bound to the health of the organisation. Public relations is integral to the efficient performance of many organizations today. It is the means through which an organisation can effectively monitor, interact with other key groups within the organisational environment.

Over the years PR has moved from being all about disseminating information (press agency and publicity) to relationship management. Modern researchers have proven that for PR to play its role effectively and make a significant contribution it should be part of management and be practised strategically.

Using a modern telecommunications organization as a case study the purpose of this research was to assess the role of public relations in whose strategic organization. Excellence theory and document analysis were employed as the major theoretical and methodological tools. This study therefore sought to assess how PR contributes to the growth and success of Rlg, a modern communications company; postulating that being a modern company PR would be practiced strategically and as recommended by the excellence theory. Through a qualitative research methodology, the study discovered that the PR department of Rlg plays predominantly a strategic managerial role which has an impact on the overall strategy of the organisation. The department therefore contributed to the organisational effectiveness and excellence. The study recommended that the organisation employ practitioners who have formal education in public relations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

William Craig's *The Fall of Japan* provides an anecdotal illustration of the value of effective communication (and for that matter professional public relations practice) to social and organisational cohesion and success. According to William Craig, it was a case of miscommunication that led to the bombing of Hiroshima. In July of 1945, allied leaders, (US President, Harry Truman; British prime minister, Winston Churchill; Russian President, Joseph Stalin and President of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-Shek) sent a declaration of surrender terms to the Japanese with an added clause stating that any negative answer would invite "prompt and utter destruction." Yet they hoped Japan would agree to surrender. Among the Japanese leaders, there was a joyful reaction because the terms were more benign than they had expected. Since no formal decision had been reached at the time, when Japanese Prime Minister Kantaro Suzuki was questioned in Tokyo about the stance his government had taken in response to the declaration, Suzuki replied that he was withholding comments. He used the Japanese word 'mokusatsu' derived from the word 'silence'. The word however has many other meanings other than what was intended by the Prime Minister. The word could mean: to take no notice of; to treat with silent contempt; to ignore; to remain in a wise and masterly inactivity. International news agencies broadcast to the world that the Japanese government thought the ultimatum was "not worthy of comment." Angered by the purported tone of Suzuki's statement, U.S officials decided on stern measures. Within ten days the bomb was dropped, and Hiroshima was levelled.

A message of peace if miscommunicated can start a conflict or in the case of Japan, continue it. Communication of a message or an idea is as important as the message or idea in itself.

In our day-to-day relations with people, communication forms an integral part. Friendships are made or broken through communication or the lack of it. Communication is the tool for human interactions. An organisation's communication plays an even more vital role in achieving its goals.

In spite of this, public relations practitioners for many years have been struggling to define the role and place of PR in an organisation and the contribution of public relations to the performance of an organisation. This, in part, is also due to a lack of appreciation- or even understanding- by organisations of the role that public relations is expected to play in the strategic planning and management of an organisation.

In the contemporary competitive world of business/brand competition the ability to create maintain a positive corporate reputation has become an invaluable asset. It is this truism which inspired Macnamara (1999) to assert that the days of public relations practitioners performing solely press agency roles are over. An organisation thrives on the goodwill of its multiple stakeholders to remain competitive (Blair, Blair, Fottler, Nix, Payne, Savage, 2002). This makes the management of stakeholder relationships an essential factor in organisational success; this management is done by PR (Ni, 2006).

At the same time public relations practitioners need to prove themselves valuable by making strategic contributions towards the realization of an organisation's goals and objectives. To do this effectively, PR practitioners must demonstrate the capacity to provide analytical insight and professional direction on the choices and consequences of corporate decisions on potential audiences. This imperative of PR as a management function has been widely theorised and researched. Rawjee, Veerasamy and Gqamane (2012) stressing this contention

note that “Organisations need to recognize the value of placing public relations at the boardroom table as strategic business partner and critical part of business planning and operations” (p. 7745). The questions that these arguments provoke for the present study are whether corporate entities in Ghana recognize PR as a management function; and whether the publicly acknowledged positive corporate image of an organization can be (at least implicitly) accredited (at least in part) to the professional role and function of an effective PR unit.

In order to objectively answer these questions it is important, first, to explain the principles underpinning the assertions about a positive relationship between effective corporate communication and organisational success. It is very important for an organisation to manage its communication because organisations are made up of different departments as well as units. These departments and units perform different functions, roles and responsibilities towards the achievement of the organisational goal. Also organisations do not exist in a vacuum. As Lamb and Mckee (2005) noted,

No formal organisation is an island. Each is composed of an internal system of social networks and each exists within a framework of interrelated system of relationships with key stakeholders such as competitors, consumers, regulators and the media (p1).

There is therefore the need for coordination which can be achieved through communication. Effective communication will also prevent conflicts. This is where an understanding of the meaning and function of PR becomes important. Lamb and McKee (2005) argue that PR is an integral part of this subsystem and its effective practice is bound to the health of an organisation. PR provides a way for the organisation to monitor and interact effectively with the other key groups in this subsystem. According to Gqamane (2010), PR functions as the action and communication part of an organisation which builds and maintains relationships between the organisation and the other members of this system. The management of

communication (planning, execution and evaluation) between an organisation and its external and internal publics is the main function of public relations (Hunt & Grunig, 1995).

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) reckon that public relations is that management function that establishes and sustains mutually favourable relationships between an organisation and its stakeholders. Tench and Yeomans (2006) in agreement with Cutlip *et al.* on PR being a management function, define public relations as:

A distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organisation and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasises the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management to keep abreast of and effectively utilise change; serves as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools(p. 4).

PR facilitates the monitoring and interaction between the organisation and all of these stakeholders. It is therefore essentially bound to the survival and growth of the organisation (Steyn, 1999) and should play an integral role in the organisation.

These definitions all seem to agree on PR building and maintaining relationships with an organisation's stakeholders through communication. According to Grunig (2001) the focus of PR has moved from communication to relationship building. PR has thus evolved from performing solely the technician role which has to do with the creation and dissemination of information to a managerial role, with building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders as its main focus (Macnamara, 1999).

It is essential that communication between an organisation and its publics is managed so that each side appreciates what is expected of the other side. When communication is two-way, where information is sent and feedback received, it creates better understanding and leads to a good relationship between the organization and its stakeholders.

Research has proven however that most organisations are yet to identify the role, position and concomitant contribution of public relations within their organization. This is because for some organisations, public relations does not feature prominently in their organizational structure. Organizations do not regard public relations as an integral part and contributor to its success (Rawjee, *et al.* 2012).

This study therefore seeks to ascertain the role being played by PR in Rlg; be it technical or managerial and strategic and the value attached to that role by the organisation.

1.1.1 History of public relations

In order to put the contemporary practice and relevance of PR in proper perspective, it is important to provide a brief overview of its heritage as a profession. The historical account brings into sharp relief the fact that PR has long moved beyond being a mere appendage of the corporate governance structure and has become, increasingly, the fulcrum around which organisational image building and public goodwill revolves. Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman and Toth (2004) trace the rudimentary beginnings of PR to the persuasive skills of ancient Greek rhetoricians and to ancient Egypt, where achievements were shown through picture stories on monuments and during festival parades. According to Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) the term propaganda was coined in the 17th century when the Catholic Church set up its congregation de Propaganda Fides (Congregation for Propagating the Faith). Persuasion has been an element of PR, used to direct and influence the public and public opinion for centuries (Lattimore *et al.*, 2004).

Although it might be argued that public relations has been practised for thousands of years, PR as we know it today has only existed for a relatively short length of time (Bernays, 1952).

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), the history of modern PR and its evolution can be grouped into four stages which eventually became the four models of PR. These are the eras of press agency, publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical and the two-symmetrical models.

The early and mid-19th century was the era of press agency/publicity. This era of PR is marked by boastful claims and winning support irrespective of the means. Techniques of press agency were predominant during the American Revolution and subsequent conflict or situations when it became necessary to garner public support or power was threatened (Lattimore *et al.*, 2004). During this period PR was basically propaganda. Phineas Taylor Barnum (an American businessman, showman and entertainer) was associated with this era.

The late 19th century was the journalistic/public information era. According to Lattimore *et al.*, (2004), this was as a result of societal conditions such as the American industrial revolution and the growth of newspapers which was to serve a rising American middle-class market. Industrialization introduced changes such as government regulations, expanding suffrage, trade unions, corporate social responsibility (CSR), workers' rights and in the structure of society which required public relations expertise (Lattimore *et al.*, 2004). It became necessary to pay attention to how one's story was told. PR was therefore meant to secure favourable media coverage by providing information that was generally true and accurate. The works of Ivy Ledbetter Lee (considered the founder of modern public relations) symbolize this era of public information.

The era of scientific persuasion was during the First World War and the period immediately after the war. This was due to the success of behavioural science persuasion during the war in mobilizing support for the war (Lattimore *et al.*, 2004).

According to Grunig (1992), this era marked the beginning of the scientific approach to PR which is conducting of research. Although communication was two-way unlike press agency and public information, feedback from research was to help the organisation change the perception of the public while the organisation continued to behave the same way. Grunig and Hunt named this practice the two-way asymmetrical. Edward L. Bernays, a pioneer American publicist, was one notable practitioner who employed the scientific persuasion in his works.

The fourth and last era, the two-way symmetrical model was derived from the writings of Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays and John Hill (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). This era was marked by the principle of truth-telling, understanding between client and publics facilitated through research and a mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and its publics (Grunig, 1992).

Today, these four models of PR which mark the various stages of development are all practiced, at least in the European and North American literature. But what is the testimony or empirical evidence in Ghana (and Africa for that matter)?

1.1.2 History and evolution of PR in Ghana

In many ways, the PR history of Ghana seems to have trodden that same beaten footpath of its European and North American antecedents. It demonstrates a similar growing movement towards appreciating and applying PR as part of corporate capital investment; rather than an incidental cost element of (especially private) business operation in Ghana. According to

Gyan (1991) before independence, public relations was practiced in big companies by expatriates who were predominantly information officers. Upon independence the local people took over from the expatriates in the ministries and big multinational companies. The companies therefore needed indigenes to relate to those at the ministries on their behalf. The indigenes therefore acted as a link between the ministries and multinational companies. Many Ghanaians who were mostly journalists were appointed PR officers in these companies. These indigenes had no PR training although they performed PR function (Gyan, 1991). According to Gyan (1991) the need for a communication bridge between the big multinational companies and the local authorities in the ministries brought about PR in Ghana.

The Information Service Department (first Ghana Information Service), which was in charge of providing information, press and PR services therefore decided to recruit and train people to perform the PR functions. However they were trained to be information officers. This brought about the PR being equated to press agency due to their area of specialization as information officers (Gyan, 1991).

Mr. Macmillian, a British expatriate, started the Ghana Institute of Journalism to train early PR practitioners amongst other courses. The Information Service Department later became the PR department of the government during the 2nd Republic and began recruiting PR officers for the various government ministries and departments. These recruited personnel were usually trained by the Ghana Institute of Journalism and further trained by the School of Communication studies and the body formed by PR practitioners in Ghana known as Public Relations Association of Ghana (PRAG) now known as Institute of Public Relations (IPR). According to Gyan (1991) the association was formed to better improve the profession.

PR as a profession began basically as press agency in Ghana and was not recognized by most organisations. In other organisations PR was subsumed under other departments (Gyan 1991).

A study conducted in by Wu and Baah- Boakye (2008a) in Ghana showed that some changes had taken place and PR practitioners were now playing significant roles in their organisations. This means that PR in Ghana is growing as it is developing globally. Practitioners are moving away from playing predominantly technical roles: press agency and publicity roles to playing strategic managerial roles that are recognized as being integral to the performance of the organisation.

1.1.3 Definitions of PR

There are many different definitions of PR; there isn't an agreed definition today as there was not some 40years ago when Marston (1963) in van Ruler, Vercic, Flodin, Buetschi, (2001, p. 170) defined corporate communication as "a brotherhood of some 100 000 whose common bond is its profession and whose common woe is that no two of them can ever quite agree on what the profession is".

For this study however the definition given by Cutlip, Center and Broom and the one arrived at by the First World Assembly of Public Relations Associations would be used.

The First World Assembly of Public Relations Associations held in Mexico City in 1978, defined it as

The art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisational leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation and the public interest.

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000, p1) define PR as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between and organisation and its publics on whom its success or failures depends".

These definitions allow the study of public relations as a strategic management function that also deals with managing relationships with the various publics/stakeholders. They involve concepts that are measured in determining what contribution PR makes to an organisation. They contain the importance of effectiveness and efficiency through monitoring and evaluation, for which knowledge of PR is required. They also show the distinctive value PR adds to an organisation. Many organisations label their public relations department differently. Some call it the corporate communications department, communications, public affairs department.

1.1.4 Functions of public relations

The PR practitioner performs a variety of activities that are fundamental and originate from his/her role of communicating with publics, managing relationships and reputation of a company. PR is usually described by referring to certain specialized parts of its functions like media relations, employee relations, lobbying, government relations, investor relations etc.

(Cutlip et al., 2000). However the day-to-day activities performed by the practitioner include:

- (a) writing and editing of news releases, reports, speeches, feature stories, shareholder reports etc.; media placement and research
- (b) management and administration; counselling, advising and making recommendations to top management
- (c) planning and coordinating of special events; preparing and delivering of speeches
- (d) training and coaching of executives and colleagues on how to deal with the media, making public appearances and speech assignment

(e) serving as the link between the organisation and the media, community and other external and internal publics (Cutlip et al., 2000; Lattimore et al.,2004).

1.2. Company profile: RLG

Rlg Communications is the first indigenous Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Company in Ghana established in 2003. It is one of the leading assemblers of mobile phones, laptops and desktops in Africa and one of the first indigenous ICT companies to be set up in sub-Saharan Africa. Currently, Rlg holds a partnership status with Microsoft. Rlg can be found in Nigeria, the Gambia and China, with Tanzania, South Africa and Kenya set to begin operation soon. The company also runs a technology institute in Ghana. The company employs close to a thousand permanent staff in Ghana and invests heavily towards charity, sponsorship and corporate social responsibility.

In 2011, Rlg was adjudged the fastest growing company by the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) and the leader of the information and communication business sector in the country. In a ranking of the top 100 companies, Rlg placed 2nd. In 2013 the company was declared the premier company in the country in the Ghana club 100 ranking. Rlg communications has fast become a household name and is enjoying a lot of goodwill from the Ghanaian public.

Being a fast growing modern company with important stakeholders, one would assume that PR would be more than just publicity and propaganda. Public relations would be expected to be practiced strategically; part of management and communication with stakeholder publics would be symmetrical.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Public relations as a term is often misunderstood and misused (Kirat, 2005). PR is often seen as a tool for propaganda and publicity. Budd (1991) is of the view that the way PR is practised often reduces it to mere communication being the transmission of information.

Public relations in the past was not seen as a management function. About thirty years ago Lindenmann and Lapetina (1982) said PR practitioners did not have good management skills nor the “ability to look at the larger picture and had therefore adopted a role as policy implementers than makers of policies”. Fleisher & Mahaffy (1997) added that PR practitioners saw their work as tactical than strategic. Their role was more reactive but not to get in to conflict in the first place (PR influences 2003). There seems to be a lack of understanding and agreement about the role communication plays in an organisation between PR executives and their CEOs (Woodrum 1995). Grunig (2000) and Dolphin and Fan (2000) are also of the view that management and PR practitioners have different expectations and understanding of the role PR is to play in an organisation. According to Esler (1996) top management is of the opinion that PR should be more focused on key organisational issues and outcomes and less obsessed with their technical activities and media. CEOs described the role of PR in terms of results or solutions to critical issues whiles communication executives in speaking of their role referred to products, programs and activities.

This lack of understanding affects the practice of PR and its contribution in the organisation. Even though PR performs important communication functions in the organisation there is still doubt that PR contributes to realizing organisational goals (Yeo & Sriramesh 2009).

According to the excellence study (a study conducted to test the excellence theory) for an organisation to achieve excellent communication there should be a shared agreement in

expectations between the dominant coalition and the PR executive. Excellent communication demands that PR is part of strategic management (Ni, 2006). The strategic role of identifying and managing relationships, reducing conflict and uncertainty is only possible when PR is part of top management (Grunig, 1992).

As organisations become complex and try to survive in an increasingly complex, interdependent and turbulent world (Yeo & Sriramesh, 2009), PR becomes more and more essential because relationships with stakeholder publics become even more important. According to Wu and Baah-Boakye (2008b) PR as a strategic management function has become increasingly essential to help African corporations respond to economic, social and political changes, changes in information, technology and social institutions.

"There is added pressure on organisations to turn to public relations practitioners for advice on how to make sense of the increasingly complex environment" (Yeo & Sriramesh 2009, p. 425).

Rlg being one of the top growing modern companies in Ghana with very important stakeholders- and given its rate of growth- one would assume that PR as a modern function would be important and PR would be practiced as proposed by the excellence theory (the first general theory of excellence and effectiveness in public relations and communication management): managerial, strategic, and symmetric and as an integrated function.

The purpose of this study is to find out if PR in this modern company in Ghana plays a strategic managerial role and examine the role of public relations in the organization's performance.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The general aim of the study was to assess the contribution PR makes in a modern company in Ghana by examining the roles and functions of PR in Rlg and find out the importance attached to it. Specific objectives were:

- To find out the nature of PR practice in Rlg.
- To study the roles and functions of PR in Rlg and the importance attached to it.
- To determine management understands of the role of the PR department of Rlg.
- To establish the position of the PR department within the hierarchy of Rlg.

1.5 Research questions

- What is the level of knowledge about PR in Rlg and the importance attached to it by staff of the organisation?
- What roles and functions does PR play in Rlg?
- How is PR situated in the structure of Rlg?
- Is communication with internal and external publics symmetrical?

1.6 Significance of study

Public relations is gradually becoming an integral part of the organisation in developing countries. Modern companies are realising the importance of PR in the organisation. This research will serve as literature for subsequent studies on PR practice in a modern company in Ghana. It will provide an overview of the roles and functions played by the PR department

of a growing modern company and it will serve as a profile of the PR department of Ghana's leading ICT Company.

1.7 Limitations of the study

In-depth interviews were used as the methodology for this study. However in-depth interviews can be prone to bias. That is to say responses from the respondents might be biased as they are workers of the Rlg. The study was specific to Rlg and as such the results cannot be generalised beyond the organisation. There was also the challenge of access/availability of interview respondents. The CEO of the company was not available in the country to be interviewed and so the second in command who is the head of the Corporate Affairs and Legal department was interviewed in place of the CEO; acting as his spokesperson. The researcher was unable to interview heads of all the other departments because two managers were not available to be interviewed i.e. the audit and procurement.

Nevertheless the information gathered serves as good foundational material for an emerging business and communication industry in Ghana and the role that PR features in such organizations.

1.8 Summary and organization of the Study

This chapter provided the background to the study. It looked at the history of PR and the history of PR in Ghana. The problem statement, objectives and the significance of the study were defined in this chapter.

The study is organized in five separate chapters. Chapter one sets the study in context by summarising the history of PR in Ghana, as well as some definitions and functions of PR. It also examines the problem statement, the objectives research and research questions. Chapter Two discusses the excellence theory and the roles theory. These are theories underpinning the study. The chapter also highlights the basic tenets of the two theories and their relationship as well as relevance to the study. The chapter also reviews some related literature. Chapter Three describes the methodology and explains the processes employed in gathering and analysing the data collected. Chapter Four presents the results of the research. Finally, chapter Five contains a discussion and analysis of those findings and goes on to draw conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter tackles the theoretical underpinning of the study. The study was guided by the excellence theory and the roles theory. It must be noted that the excellence theory incorporates the systems theory and the strategic constituencies theory in answering the question of effectiveness. These two theories are essential when explaining public relations contribution in an organisation. They deal with organization and stakeholder relationship. They will therefore be covered in the excellence theory.

The chapter also provides a review of the available literature related to the topic. Literature and previous studies related to the study were reviewed in this chapter.

2.2 The excellence theory

The excellence theory is the first general theory of public relations (Lindeborg, 1994). The theory was as a result of a 15-year study of best practices in communication management (Grunig, 2000) known as the excellence study. The excellence theory is a theory of excellence and effectiveness in public relations and communication management. The theory specifies how PR makes organizations more effective, how it should be organized and managed in order for it to contribute to organizational effectiveness, and how to determine the monetary value of public relations (Grunig, 2002).

The excellence theory first explains the value of PR to an organization and the society in which it operates. This value is based on the quality of relationships an organisation has with its stakeholder publics (Grunig, 2002). The theory asserts that in order for PR to make a contribution in an organisation it must be part of strategic management (Ni, 2006).

According to the theory, for an organisation to be effective it must solve the problem and satisfy the goals of both the manager and stakeholders. Organisations must identify their various publics who are affected by the decisions taken by the organization or those who want the organisation to solve a problem important to them. To identify these publics the organisation must scan the environment. This is PR's contribution to strategic management (Grunig & Grunig, 2011).

Still on how organisations should behave, the theory suggests that organisations must communicate symmetrically with their publics. This facilitates the cultivation of quality, long-term relationships with them. Through symmetrical communication the organisation is likely to set and achieve goals desired by both the organisation and its publics (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). A good relationship is essential and crucial to the survival of the organisation. Grunig and Grunig (2011) explained that this is because a good relationship reduces cost incurred in unfavourable circumstances like litigation, regulation, legislation and negative publicity. It also reduces the risk of making decisions which may have adverse effects on different stakeholders and increase the chances of the organisation producing goods or services needed by various stakeholders and therefore revenue.

In addition to explaining the value of communication to an organisation, the excellence theory provides four broad categories of the characteristics of an excellent PR function i.e. how the PR function should be organised to attain maximum value (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). These characteristics are in the broad areas of PR as a management function, roles, models

and the organisation of the communication function. Each category contains several characteristics to be audited.

2.2.1 Empowering the PR function

According to the excellence theory for PR to contribute to organisational effectiveness it must be empowered as a strategic management function (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). This requires that the head of the communication department be involved in strategic management processes. The participation of public relations in strategic management is essential. An organization that practices public relations strategically develops programs to communicate with both external and internal strategic publics who can, at any point in time, be the greatest threats to, and opportunities for, the organization (Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996). Strategic publics are identified by scanning the environment. Communication programs for these strategic publics should also be managed strategically.

In empowering PR the senior PR executive must be a member of the dominant coalition in the organisation or must have a direct reporting relationship to senior management who are part of the dominant coalition. In effective organizations, the senior public relations person is part of or has access to the group of senior managers with greatest power in the organization. Both men and women should be empowered in all roles. Practitioners of diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds should be empowered. The PR roles should simply embody diversity. This aids in interacting successfully with all strategic elements of their environment (Grunig & Grunig, 2011).

The head of the PR function or other practitioners in the department must have the requisite knowledge for a strategic role, acquired through education. Practitioners should have

knowledge of the managerial role and symmetrical public relations. Excellent PR programs are staffed by professionals; people who have a formal education in the body of knowledge and are active in professional associations and read professional literature (Vercic, Ruler, Butschi and Flodin, 2000).

2.2.2 Roles

The second category is communicator roles. There are basically two major roles in PR: the communication manager and technician. Communication technicians carry out most of the everyday communication functions. Many practitioners play both the technician and managerial roles. However in less than excellent PR departments all communication practitioners, not excluding the manager, are technicians. The public relations unit should be headed by a manager rather than a technician. Communication technicians are essential to carry out day-to-day communication activities. However, excellent public relations units must have at least one senior communication manager who would conceptualize and direct public relations programs (Vercic *et al.*, 1996).

It will be impossible for PR to be empowered as a management function if the senior communicator is not a manager. The communication unit must be headed by a strategic manager who conceptualizes and directs the communication program, not an administrative manager or a technician. The excellence study also differentiated between a strategic manager and an administrative manager who manages day-to-day operations in the PR department; essentially a supervisor to the communication technician. Strategic managers however are those who come up with communication strategies that support the organisational goals.

Diversity should be embodied in all roles. Excellent public relations includes both men and women in all roles, as well as practitioners of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. In an excellent PR department both men and women have equal opportunity of being in a managerial role. Women are valued just as much for the strategic role. This therefore prevents filling in that position with a male head from another department who does not have the requisite knowledge in PR (Grunig & Grunig, 2011).

2.2.3 Organisation of the communication function and its relationship with other management functions

The mainstream literature suggests that an excellent PR function should have all communication programs integrated into a single function or have a mechanism to coordinate the departments (Vercic *et al.*, 1996). Programs targeted at different stakeholders are all gathered into a single department or coordinated through a senior practitioner; usually the second in command (Heath, 2005).

An integrated system allows PR to develop new communication programs for dynamic strategic publics and cater to changing strategic publics appropriately (Grunig & Grunig, 2011; Heath, 2005; Vercic *et al.*, 1996).

Secondly PR should not be placed under any other management function. PR should be separate from other functions. Public relations is a management function and so should be separated from other functions. When PR is put under another management function it loses its unique role in strategic management (Grunig, 1992). According to Vercic *et al.*, (1996) when the public relations function is merged with other functions, it does not allow the

transfer of communication resources from one strategic public to another as an integrated public relations function can.

2.2.4 Models of public relations

Extensive research has been done on the four models of PR and the extent to which they are practised in organisations and to find out the most effective and ethical (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). According to the authors these four models provide four typical means for conceptualizing and conducting the PR function. The four models are the two-way symmetrical model which entails dialogue, participation and cooperation; press agency which is essentially favourable publicity; public information model which is the dissemination of accurate but mostly favourable information and the two-way asymmetrical model which is essentially scientific persuasion (Grunig, 2002).

An excellent communication function therefore has the dominant coalition and the PR practitioners in the organisation believing in the two-way symmetrical model as being the basis of all communication activities. Also, two-way symmetrical strategies are actually used in developing communication programs. The two-way symmetrical public relations utilizes research and employs communication in managing conflict and in creating understanding with strategic publics. Excellent public relations departments model most of their communication programs along this model than on the press agency, public information, or two-way asymmetrical models. However, elements of the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models are often combined in a “mixed-motive” model (Vercic *et al.* 1996).

According to Grunig (2001, p. 12), “With the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners use research and dialogue to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviours of both their organisation and publics.”

PR practitioners must have professional knowledge of the two-way symmetrical model and communication in the organisation should be symmetrical. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984) the two-way symmetrical communication is characterised by consensus, mutual understanding, mutual benefits and feedback. A symmetrical system of internal communication empowers employees and encourages participation in decision making. Internal communication promotes participative rather than authoritarian cultures as well as builds good relations with and amongst employees. They have decentralized management structures which give autonomy to employees and allow participation in decision making (Vercic *et al.*, 1996). Management structures are organic rather than mechanical. According to Grunig and Grunig (2011) organisations have to be decentralized and organic in structure to practise symmetrical internal communication. Since these norms and ethos of effective organisational communication were established based on organizational cultures and practices other than the typical Ghanaian business setting, this study was interested in finding out whether the factors of effective communication within a typical Ghanaian organization resonate with the Grunig and Grunig (2011) typology.

The excellence study identified four dimensions underlying the four models. According to the IABC research team a model may be symmetrical or asymmetrical; two-way or one-way; mediated or interpersonal; and ethical or unethical. Of all the four only the two-way symmetrical model is seen as embodying the more desirable characteristic. It is symmetrical, two-way, ethical and both mediated and interpersonal. In an ICT-based organization such as Rlg, it would seem that the opportunities for public interactivity (through such platforms as

SMS, twitter and Facebook) would be even more effectively exploited. This study sought to verify this expectation.

According to Grunig and Grunig, the characteristics proposed of an excellent PR function are generic principles which are the same everywhere yet have specific application. This meant that application may however be affected by cultural and other contextual principles. Vercic, *et. al.*, (1996) suggested some contextual variables which could potentially affect implementing the generic principles: political system, economic system, culture, extent of activism, level of development, and media system.

This theory falls between a theory that suggests an organization should practice public relations in exactly the same way in every country usually the way it is practiced in the country where the headquarters of the multinational organization is located and a theory suggesting that public relations must be practiced differently in every country because of cultural and other contextual conditions (Grunig & Grunig, 2011: 9).

Excellence theory provides a normative guide for how public relations should be conducted, structured, and implemented, and it outlines the elements that help it contribute to overall organizational excellence. The Excellence models are helpful in this study because in ascertaining the impact of public relations activities, it would be imperative to establish the purpose and direction of the model being practised. The two-way symmetrical model is labelled the ideal model as it establishes and sustains long term relationships between the organisation and the stakeholders. It therefore benefits the organisation more and as a result contributes more to it.

2.3 The roles theory

The role played by PR is also essential to understanding how PR functions and the contribution it can make in an organization. Research done on PR roles has proven that there is a link between roles and the contribution of PR in the organization (Moss & Green, 2001).

Broom and Smith in 1979 conceptualized a four-role topology of PR practitioners (Hogg & Doolan, 1999): that of being the expert prescriber, the communication facilitator, the problem solving facilitator and the communication technician.

The expert prescriber: this practitioner researches to identify a problem, defines it and develops solutions to that problem and its implementation. The practitioner is to be blamed should something go wrong (Hogg & Doolan, 1999).

Communication facilitator: this role deals with the exchange of information between management and publics. The practitioner is thus concerned with the quality and quantity of information. It is more involved with communication than operational issues. This role facilitates the making of informed decisions by presenting both views.

The problem solving facilitator: this role entails works with other managers to define and solve problems. The practitioner forms a part of a strategic planning team (Cutlip et al, 2000) and plans and co-ordinates PR activities with senior management (Hogg & Doolan, 1999).

The communication technician: this practitioner is involved in the implementation of PR functions such as writing, editing, organizing and dealing with media contact (Cutlip, 2000). They are not involved in policy making or the taking of decisions.

According to Johnson (1989) in Hogg and Doolan (1999) the role performed by an individual depends on what others expect of that particular role being assumed. Therefore a PR

practitioner's role is derived from the knowledge and understanding management has of the roles PR practitioners are supposed to play.

A dominant role may emerge for a practitioner but the roles are not exclusive of each other. A practitioner may perform all these roles but predominantly one.

2.3.1 The strategic managerial role

This is a new role developed by Grunig as a role of the most senior public relations practitioner at the macro level (the top management level). This is public relations' contribution into the organization's strategic decision-making process.

Steyn and Puth (2000) define strategic management as balancing internal activities with strategies for dealing with external factors. This role comprises of scanning the environment, identifying and monitoring strategic publics and anticipating the consequences of policies and strategies on the organization's relationship with stakeholders. It also entails monitoring of issues before they erupt into crisis (Grunig & Repper, 1992) and its consequences on strategies and policies for stakeholders. The role of the strategist is linked to the boundary-spanning role of the PR practitioner. PR at this level then becomes integral to the realization of organizational goals and objectives.

Grunig (2011) postulated specific tools to help the strategic manager in the process of strategic management. They consist environmental scanning, identifying stakeholders, segmenting publics; issues management and crisis communication; scenario building; evaluating PR programs; relationship cultivation strategies; managing reputations; interaction of relationships and digital media.

The roles theory is used as theoretical background for this study because it explains that PR practice is affected by the position of the practitioners in the organization, the expectations of management and the perception the practitioners have of their job. Roles theory explains why PR practice may differ from organization to organization and so its contribution to the organization.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.4.1 The excellence study

The excellence study, considered a monumental study in PR, was conducted by a team of six researchers (J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Repper and White) and was funded by the International Association of Business Communications (IABC). Commencing in 1985 the research was conducted over a period of 15 years (Grunig et al, 2006). The excellence study surveyed 327 heads of public relations, C.E.Os and other PR practitioners; followed by a qualitative interview with heads of PR, PR practitioners and C.E.Os in 25 of the 327 organisations (Grunig & Grunig, 2011).

The research was to answer the question posed: "How, why and to what extent does communication contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives?" (Grunig, 1992, p5). This they called the question of organisational effectiveness (Rhee, 2004). The excellence study therefore offered the opportunity to conceptually examine how PR contributed to the organizational effectiveness (Grunig & Grunig, 2011).

Another question was added to the original question of organisational effectiveness which they called the excellence question: "How must PR be practised and the communication

function organised for it to contribute most to organisational effectiveness?" (Grunig, 1992, p. 5).

The team reviewed theories of business social responsibility, ethics and conflict resolution to back their study and developed a generic benchmark of best factors and practices in communication management across different types of organisations (Grunig & Grunig, 2011).

To answer the excellence question, the study proposed analysis at four different levels in the organisation, namely: the program/micro level, the departmental/messo level, the organisational/macro level and the economic level (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

2.4.1.1 Characteristics of excellent public relations programs in the different levels

Grunig et al. (2002, p. 9) provide a template of attributes of excellent PR programmes at the different levels of the organisational hierarchy. These factors (itemised below) provided the framework for assessing the communication practices within Rlg.

I. Program Level

1. Managed strategically

II. Departmental Level

2. A single or integrated public relations department
3. Separate function from marketing
4. Direct reporting relationship to senior management
5. Two-way symmetrical model
6. Senior public relations person in the managerial role
7. Potential for excellent public relations, as indicated by:
 - a. Knowledge of symmetrical model
 - b. Knowledge of managerial role

- c. Academic training in public relations
 - d. Professionalism
8. Equal opportunity for men and women in public relations

III. Organizational Level

- 9. Worldview for public relations in the organization reflects the two-way symmetrical model
- 10. Public relations director has power in or with the dominant coalition
- 11. Participative rather than authoritarian organizational culture
- 12. Symmetrical system of internal communication
- 13. Organic rather than mechanical organizational structure
- 14. Turbulent, complex environment with pressure from activist groups

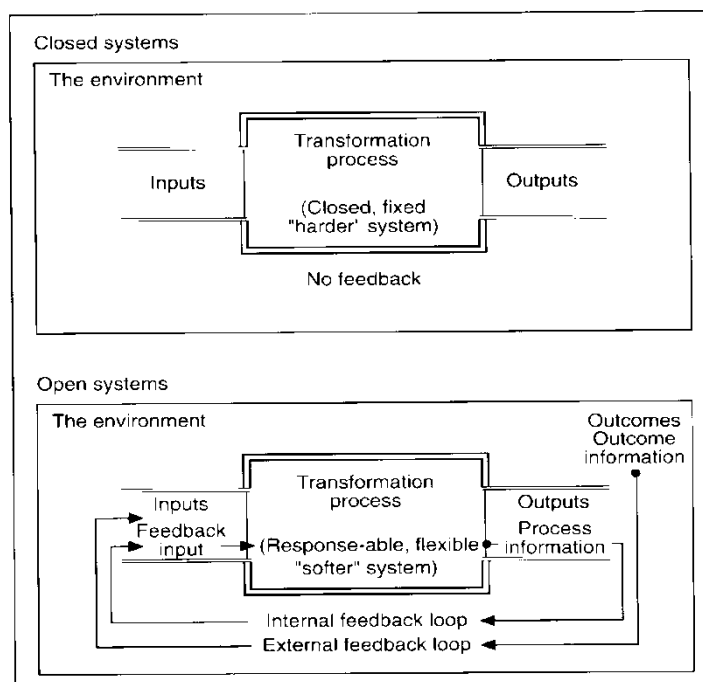
IV. Effects of Excellent Public Relations

- 15. Programs meet communication objectives
- 16. Reduces costs of regulation, pressure, and litigation
- 17. Job satisfaction is high among employees

The question of organisational effectiveness deals with how excellent communication makes an organisation effective and the economic value of that communication. The team argued that PR departments can contribute to organisational effectiveness by helping build relationships, resolving conflicts between an organisation and its strategic publics and managing those relationships. In view of the effectiveness question dealing with management of relationships between the organisation and its publics and its economic value, the IABC team adopted four major approaches on organisational effectiveness: using the systems theory, strategic constituencies theory, the goal attainment theory and the competing values approach.

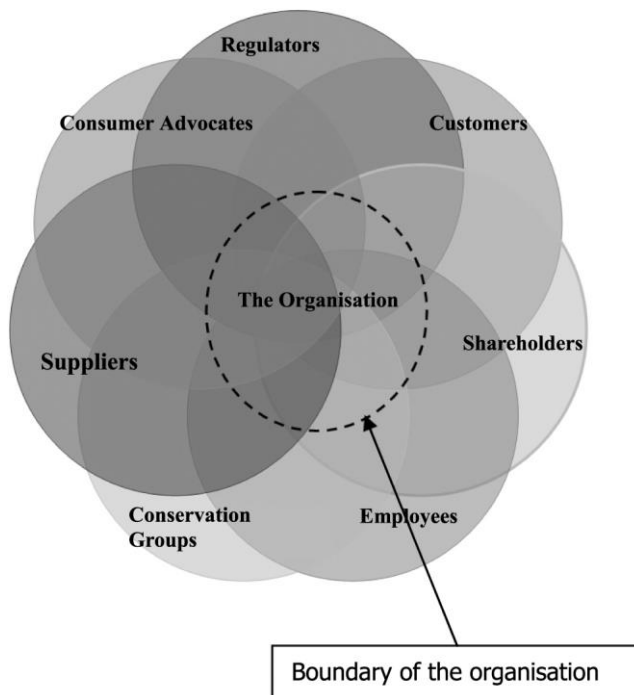
2.4.1.2 Systems theory

According to Cutlip *et al.*, (2000), a system is a set of interacting components that persists through time within a definite boundary by adapting and responding to pressures from the environment to attain goals and/ or maintain positions. A system can be said to be open or closed (Cutlip *et al.*, 2000). An open system has permeable boundaries which can be penetrated. It facilitates the exchange of information between the organization and its environment. Open systems adapt to changes in the environment and are perceived as dependent on their environment (Lattimore *et al.*, 2004). A closed system has boundaries which cannot be penetrated. Impermeable boundaries do not allow the exchange of information between the organization and its environment (Cutlip *et al.*, 2000). Organizations with closed systems are perceived as independent of their environment. An organization cannot succeed nor grow in a dynamic and turbulent environment with closed boundaries.



www.emeraldinsight.com/content/images/fig/1060060506006.png

In systems theory, PR practitioners are thought to be boundary spanners, "straddling the edge of an organization; looking both inside and outside of an organization" (Lattimore *et al.*, 2004, p. 48). PR practitioners therefore play the middleman between the organization and the environment in an open system.



www.mondaymorningbusinessethicist.com

The PR practitioner plays a mirror role which is giving the organization an outside perspective and the window function which is to take to the external environment the viewpoints of the organization. This helps in taking strategic decisions with the position of the public in mind.

2.4.1.3 Strategic Constituencies Theory

This theory identifies specifically those publics whose support or opposition can threaten the organization's goal or impede the attainment of these goals (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006). It does not focus on the environment as a whole but on the parts of the environment that are critical to reaching a particular organizational goal. The strategic constituencies are those particular publics/stakeholder groups most able to constrain or support the organization (Grunig *et al.*, 2006).

PR plays that role of having to identify these strategic publics and being watchful. It is essential to identify these key publics since the organizational goals can be affected by them (Grunig *et al.*, 2002).

2.4.1.4 The Goal Attainment Theory

This theory says that everyone in an organization should clearly understand and appreciate an organization's goals, objectives and aims and be aware of the part they have to play (roles and responsibilities) in the attainment of the organizational goals. Communication programs should therefore focus on helping the organization reach its goals.

2.4.1.5 Competing Values approach

This approach states that an organisation must integrate the values of their strategic constituencies with the goals of the organisation so that the organisation realizes the goals that are of most value to its strategic constituencies (Grunig *et al.*, 2006).

The IABC team conceptualized how excellent public relations contributes to organizational effectiveness. According to the team, by strategically managing communication programs and proactively managing potential conflicts, PR can help the organization meet its goals. (Grunig, Grunig & Vercic, 1998). The IABC research team found that generally Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) place a high value on public relations, especially when it is excellent, while the senior communicators were found to underestimate the value assigned to the function by the CEOs. Where public relations was highly valued, CEOs were of the view that it should be practiced as recommended by the principles of excellence. The IABC research team constructed a single excellence factor from twenty variables, which asserted that excellent public relations departments are characterized by participation in strategic management, the use of the two-way communication models and the PR department being headed by managerial practitioners instead of technicians (Grunig *et al.*, 1998).

The excellence study is used as a theoretical underpinning for this study because it shows the essential elements that should be looked at to show how a PR department can contribute significantly to the organization. It therefore helps in exploring PR contribution in an organization such as Rlg, which has been recognized as a success story. It emphasises the need for an organisation to foster a healthy relationship with its stakeholders, thereby showing the significant role PR plays. The Excellence study also provides concrete, empirical evidence to support the theory, and it explains how and why certain factors contribute to outstanding public relations.

This study attempted to replicate the excellence study and focused on PR models, communicator roles, empowerment of the PR function, and organisation of the communication function and the value of PR.

2.4.2 Other related works

In a study on the role and influence of cultural values on PR practice in Ghana, Wu and Baah-Boakye (2009) found out, through a survey of 64 practitioners that PR practitioners in Ghana practiced the cultural interpreter and the personal influence models of PR more than Grunig's four traditional models of PR. They attributed the practice of the cultural interpreter model to "the multi-cultural characteristics of the Ghanaian culture and the increasing impact of international trade" (p84). They also found out that amongst the four traditional models, practitioners in Ghana practiced the two-way models more as compared to the one way models. They inferred that this was a sign of "growing sophistication and professionalism of PR practices in Ghana" (p.84).

Wu and Baah-Boakye (2008a) surveyed 120 organisations and PR agencies in a study conducted on the practice of PR in Ghana. They found out that most PR practitioners were performing managerial roles. The research also found out that both male and female practitioners are given equal opportunities in their organisations.

In another study Wu and Baah-Boakye after surveying 64 public relations practitioners, concluded that PR is moving towards professionalism in Ghana because practitioners are utilizing research as a tool.

In a research conducted in Singapore by Yeo and Sriramesh in 2009, examining the role of senior PR practitioners in Singapore and the value that adds to the organisation, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 38 departmental heads. It was revealed that although top communication practitioners were operating strategically and had direct access to senior management, the practitioners lacked the requisite strategic knowledge to enact the role and were concentrating on the technical work only. The research recommended that the

PR practitioner should be fully equipped with relevant academic knowledge of what makes communication excellent.

Moss and Desanto (2011) identified the lack of managerial education for PR practitioners as one of the eight challenges to public relations being accepted as a mainstream managerial function within an organisation. The other seven challenges are: (a) the lack of a consensus on what the term PR means and the controversy over how the boundaries of the discipline or function should be defined, (b) ignorance of the value of PR efforts to the organisation, (c) the lack of a managerial function that is formally recognised within the organisation, (d) overlap and /or encroachment of PR functions and roles by other managerial functions, (e) the size of the PR function and presence in most organisations, (f) the wide variety of PR roles and functions, (g) varied background of PR practitioners with most of them not having any education in PR or any related course like journalism. According to the writers this is why senior practitioners have often struggled to be accepted as needing to be a part of the dominant coalition.

After conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions to allow the construction of a quantitative questionnaire, Hogg and Doolan(1999) indicated that CEOs have a very clearly defined perception of PR whiles the practitioners themselves held a limited view of the role that they can play in decision making. The researchers asserted that this affected the chances of PR being part of the dominant coalition and therefore the development of excellence in PR.

In an empirical study backed by the excellence theory, on the expectations of CEOs of the PR role within the organisational setting Steyn (1999) established a benchmark regarding what CEOs expected of the most senior PR practitioner. The PR strategist's role at the macro level of the organisation is to identify strategic stakeholders and their concerns; identify the

publics that are affected by key organisational policies and issues; and determine the consequences of organisational policies and strategies on the strategic stakeholders. According to Steyn (1999), the role of the PR strategist from the CEO's perspective includes feeding this strategic information into the organisation's strategy making processes. In so doing influence top management decisions on the organisation's attitude towards, and communication with, strategic stakeholders.

According to the study, the PR manager is expected to take responsibility for developing a communication strategy that supports corporate strategy and managing the planning, implementation and evaluation of communication plans and programs. The role of the technician was conceptualized as creating communication products that implement policy decisions made by others. Whereas most research on PR roles are on self-reports from the perspective of the PR practitioner, this study provided both the theoretical and empirical perspective of the chief executive as the 'role sender'. Shared expectation between the dominant coalition and the communication function is essential to having an excellent communication unit.

In a research conducted to explore relationships as an organizational resource and their contribution to strategy implementation, Ni, (2006) found that relationships possessed four key characteristics of resources that could lead to competitive advantage. Relationships were found to be valuable, rare, difficult to imitate and hard to substitute. It is therefore essential that relationships are managed since they are valuable resources and integral to the realisation of organisational goals. PR manages this essential resource.

2.5 Summary

The chapter reviewed the theories underpinning the study: the excellence theory and the roles theory, by examining all the elements that made up the theory. The theories elaborated in this chapter provide a roadmap for this study as they provide an explanation and link to the core elements that will be studied in exploring the contribution of PR in an organisation. Various research works that have been done which are significant to this study have also been reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology and design employed in the study. It gives details on population, sampling process, sample, data collection and data analysis. The study was designed as a qualitative study and so concerned itself with the depth of issues; not how widespread an issue was. The researcher applied the qualitative research approach of in-depth interviews to help assess the contribution PR makes in Rlg.

3.2. Research design

A qualitative research approach was followed in the collection and analysis of the data. Qualitative research is defined as an approach to empirical inquiry that collects, analyses, and displays data in narrative rather than in numbers. Information gathered qualitatively is restricted to the setting in which it was obtained. It cannot be generalized.

Data was collected using in-depth interviews. An in-depth interview is an extensive one-on-one personal interaction in which much more information can be obtained (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This technique was adopted in collecting data because it allows the researcher to probe further and ask follow-up questions where necessary. The qualitative approach was chosen for this study because it enabled the researcher collect rich data. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011) the wealth of detail provided by the in-depth

interview serves as a great advantage. It therefore helped in gaining in-depth knowledge and understanding of the role and perceived contribution of PR in Rlg.

3.3. Population

The totality of all phenomena respondents, subjects, concepts or variables is known as the population. A population has been defined as “the aggregate of all the cases that conform to some designated set of specification” (Selltiz *et al*, 1976, p. 513). The target population for this research was all employees of Rlg. The accessible population was employees of Rlg in Accra.

3.4. Sampling process

Events or elements that are selected from the population in order to find out something about the population are known as the sample (Selltiz *et al*, 1976). According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011) a sample is a subset of a population that is representative of the entire population. Sampling is therefore the process or guidelines by which events; participants are selected to represent the population.

This study employed the purposive sampling method. A purposive sample is one which is selected by the researcher subjectively. Being a non-probability means of sampling, samples would be chosen because they possess information that will be important for this study. The procedure starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose. Purposive sampling also seeks subjects selected on the basis of specific characteristics or qualities. The sample size was dictated by the objectives of this study. The sample for this study comprised three PR

practitioners, the managers of the human resource department, commercial (sales and marketing) department, finance department, the creative department and technical and IT department and the CEO of the organisation. The CEO was interviewed in his capacity as the role sender. Nine respondents were interviewed in all.

3.5. Instrument

An interview guide was constructed to guide the direction of the interview. In-depth interviews are used to get information from anyone with relevant information. Three different interview guides were developed and used in collecting information from the field: one for PR practitioners, one for non-practitioners and a different question guide drafted for the CEO. For this study the interview guides were drafted to cover the themes arising out of purpose and objectives of the study. The interview guide was not followed strictly as the questions were not asked themes in the order in which they appeared on the guide. Rather, the researcher asked questions based on the informant's responses.

Respondents were contacted prior to the interview and the reasons for the study were explained to them. When they accepted to do the interview, a date, time and venue was fixed. Interviews were one-on-one sessions. Responses received during the interview were recorded with a tape recorder. Notes were also taken during the interviews. The interviews were conducted over a period of three weeks as the informants were not readily available. The data gathered was transcribed, put into themes and analysed to help also draw conclusions for the study.

3.6. Data analysis

After collecting the data, the interview sessions were transcribed. Analyses were carried out thematically to meet the objectives of the study. Data analysis of the in-depth interview and observations were done using the research objectives as themes. Emerging themes were analysed manually. Themes centred on the department, knowledge and understanding of PR, role and functions of PR, education, empowering the PR function, model of PR practised and the contribution of public relations to organisational strategy and performance. The findings of the research were discussed with particular reference to theories, concepts, related works and themes as discussed in earlier chapters.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research method that was used for this study and how data was collected. It also outlined how data for this study was analysed as well as how it was presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the interviews conducted amongst PR practitioners and administrative managers of other departments in Rlg. Data for this study was collected through in-depth interviews.

A total of eleven interviews were set up. One with the CEO; three with PR practitioners; seven with head of other departments in the organisation: audit department, commercial (sales and marketing) department, creative department, finance department, human resource department, procurement department and the technical and I.T department. Nine interviews were honoured as the heads of the procurement and audit were not available to be interviewed. The second in command to the CEO was interviewed in place of the CEO (acting as a spokesperson) since the CEO was out of the country.

Public relations practitioners interviewed were identified as PRP (public relations practitioners) 1, 2 and 3. Heads of departments interviewed were identified by the names of their various departments.

4.2 The PR department

The PR department is known as the Corporate Affairs and Legal department of Rlg. It is made up of six permanent staff and assisted by some national service personnel and interns. Out of the six, two are women. There is an administrative manager who reports to the head of

the department. The department is actually two years old. The spokesperson for the CEO explained:

As at two years ago we didn't have a corporate affairs department and we realised that we needed to. There was something called the media relations desk. But was it adequate? Perhaps for the kind of company we used to be but as we grow we have had to resource and revamp it and position it as fully fledged corporate affairs unit with different elements in the unit. Departments have grown along with the company.

Although the practitioners work together, each is in charge of a specialised function. There is a practitioner in charge of internal communication, one in charge of corporate social responsibility which they refer to as “the foundation”, another in charge of government affairs; a practitioner in charge of corporate communication, the administrative manager handles media relation. There is a legal practitioner in charge of legal affairs. PRP2 said it was essential that a practitioner employed in the department speaks at least one Ghanaian language fluently and it was even better if you spoke more than one Ghanaian language. He further explained that it was easier to build a relationship with someone if you spoke their language and sometimes the message was better received.

The head of the finance department, chuckling, said “the department is about what, two years old... but those people are the most popular guys in the company”.

4.3 Knowledge/understanding of PR

Asked if in their opinion PR existed in their organisation, all respondents replied in the affirmative, explaining that PR existed under the corporate affairs and legal department. Respondents described PR in various ways based on their opinion. Responses given by non-practitioners interviewed were:

The arm that manages the reputation of the company; the ones who take care of media relations and stakeholder relationships; those who handle both

internal and external communications and build relationship with the public; those who protect the image of the company and the people who write about the good things the company does.

It is worth noting that every respondent in describing what they understood by PR mentioned stakeholder management, reputation management, and media relations. Non-practitioners interviewed had quite an impressive understanding of stakeholder management and its importance. The spokesperson for the CEO said, “The Company needs ears and eyes outside the organisation, to give us stakeholders’ points of view during policy making and strategies”

He explained further saying:

Stakeholders are diverse and essential and as a company we need to satisfy all these different stakeholders, and we have to make sure we don’t satisfy one group and offend another. So we rely on the corporate affairs department to give us the diverse views.

The human resource manager also said:

We have many stakeholders as a private company that works with government; government, regulators, the citizens...you know..., we need to have a cordial relationship with all these people, even our competitors, and corporate affairs is there to do just that.

PR practitioners interviewed also had the same view of PR being about media relations (often stressed by respondents), stakeholder management, publicity, and reputation management.

According to the spokesperson for the CEO, PR deals with the building and sustaining of relationships, image protection, media relations and publicity and communication.

4.4 Role and functions of PR

Most respondents listed specialised functions of PR when asked what they thought were the functions of PR: lobbying, government relations, media relations, CSR (which they call foundation), internal communication. Some other functions listed were writing of press releases, event planning, internal and external communications and crisis management. PR practitioners interviewed explained that each practitioner in the department had specialised functions of which they were in charge. Although all practitioners do a bit of technical work such as writing, distributing promotional material and press releases, events management, among others, most of the technical work is left to the interns and the national service personnel. PRP1 interviewed explained, “Our job also entails putting out honest and accurate information to avoid confusion or some form of misconception. And because we also don’t want PR to be associated with the telling of lies and spreading falsehood”.

The following are some other responses received on the functions of the PR department from some non-practitioners:

Human resource manager said, “They are custodians, owners of the brand and so it is up to them to ensure that the brand reputation is maintained and protected both internally and externally”.

Finance manager also added that, “One is for them to find a way to relate to the public...They manage information that goes out into the public space”

Commercial manager added, “They also train our sales and marketing guys, like how to communicate and relate with customers”

The spokesperson for the CEO also listed specialised functions when asked about functions he expected of the corporate affairs department. He added that the members of the department are expected to build relationships with the various stakeholders and “sustain”

them. He also said that “PR is expected to publicize the actions of the company and protect the image of the company by telling the truth... see to the planning and organising of events and handle both internal and external communication effectively”.

4.5 Education

In view of the roles and functions expected of the practitioners, the study was designed to find out if respondents thought it essential that a practitioner should have formal education in PR in order to practise it or they thought of it as soft skill in which no formal education was needed.

All three PR practitioners interviewed had formal education in communication: two in journalism and one in public relations. According to PRP1 the other two practitioners who were not interviewed had formal education in journalism too. The head of the department had no formal training in communication. He had trained as a journalist on the job and is lawyer. Both non-practitioners and practitioners interviewed indicated that it was “absolutely essential” for a PR practitioner to have a formal education in PR or “at the very least, journalism”. According to the spokesperson for the CEO, who is also head of the corporate affairs and legal department, it is important that practitioners undergo “continuous training” and therefore encourages his team members to take advantage of the training courses offered by IPR (Institute of Public Relations) Ghana. Although some participants believed people can also learn on the job, they were all quick to add that while on the job the practitioner should take some “short, short courses” in the field. Respondents explained that formal education was important for in depth understanding of the practice.

PRP1 said:

There are certain things learning on the job will never teach you. Like the theories we hate so much, certain concepts and even definitions; your boss won't teach you that but they are very important.

Human resource manager said:

I think people think because once you can talk you can do anything communications especially PR. Maybe when it had to do with saying good things about bad people formal education wasn't that important but with growth in the discipline one needs to be educated.... PR is just like any other discipline: HR., marketing, finance... and to excel in it and be good at it you need formal tuition. Formal education helps you understand and recognize certain things that happen on the field.

Generally, staff of Rlg were of the opinion that a formal education in PR or a communication discipline is essential for a PR practitioner. According to them, a formal education would equip the PR practitioner with essential knowledge and skill. This would enhance the practitioner's performance.

4.6 Empowering the PR function

4.6.1 PR as a management function:

The head of the corporate affairs and legal affairs department is next in command to the CEO. He reports directly to the CEO and sits in management meetings. The manager reports to the head of corporate affairs and legal department. Although he does not sit in management meetings he has access to the CEO. Participants were of the view that PR deserves to be a part of management for a number of reasons but the two most frequent reasons were: because of the importance of stakeholder relationships to the organisation and because they manage the reputation of the company.

The following were some of the replies given when non-practitioners were asked if they thought PR had to be part of management:

Human resource manager said,

Oh! Absolutely! I think it is absolutely essential because let me tell you what, it takes a life time to build a reputation but it takes moment to destroy it. Ok? So if you are investing so much money in growing the company and you are not bothered about the reputation of the company then I don't think you are a serious business person. So, seriously I think that it deserves a place at the board table; the executive level, which it is really in Rlg.

Creative department manager also said,

Stakeholder management, reputation management and media relation are so important to this company that they have to sit in board meetings.

Technical and IT manager said,

They are the ones who handle communication in the company; both internal and external. And communication is very important for every organisation.

According to the spokesperson for the CEO,

The views of the people...I mean the public: customers, stakeholders and all must be known when strategizing and making plans and we rely on PR to give us that so they ought to be part of management and be in management meetings.

PR strategies are suggested by the head of corporate affairs and legal department and made amongst the CEO, the head of the department and the manager who is supposed to ensure its implementation. Both the head of the department and the manager are held responsible for the outcomes of PR strategies.

4.6.2 PR as an integrated function:

PR practitioners interviewed are of the opinion that all communication activities are undertaken by the corporate affairs department. According to them no other person or department attempts to “usurp” the functions of the corporate affairs department. “No other department undertakes any kind of PR activity or function. We do it all”, PRP2 explained,

“even stuff to be communicated internally comes to us first they know that we are the mouthpiece of the company”. PRP3 was however of the view that marketing entails a bit of PR and the sales and marketing department sometimes ends up performing certain PR activities. PRP3 explained that this is inevitable since in order for the “sales guys” to make any sales they must form some kind of relationship with the customer.

Interview conducted at the sales and marketing department revealed that the department has a distinct form of communication which they refer to as marketing communication. This was basically advertising and sales. This communication is undertaken by the sales and marketing “team” who do not have any formal communication education but are periodically trained informally “when need be” by the corporate affairs” team”.

4.6.3 PR as a distinct function from marketing:

All but one respondent interviewed were of the view that PR is distinct from marketing and should be independent departments. They agreed unanimously that the sales and marketing department and the corporate affairs and legal department should however work together.

The CEO’s spokesperson said that,

PR ought to be made independent of every other department, marketing included. They should be on their own. However those two departments must work together....I don’t think PR should report to marketing or any other department for that matter. Then it would have defeated the point I made earlier that PR has to be at the executive level.

PRP1 said,

...Strictly speaking, there is a difference between you selling your product and you having that engagement with the public. Sales and marketing deals specifically with potential customers who are just a small sect the public PR is supposed to deal with. In PR you have stakeholders, regulators, government, and other institutions so the dealing with them isn’t marketing.

Commercial department manager said,

Although marketing and PR intersect they are very distinct functions. But they must work together. It would be suicidal when marketing communications is communicating one leg of a thing and the PR wing is also churning out separate info on the same topic. It's more of coordination than integration that is needed.

Human resource manager also said,

You see PR as defined I think should be set on its own. They would work with marketing but they shouldn't be under marketing or even merged as one department. Marketing is more of being able to sell your brand and giving it appeal. They need to work, and actually has a close linkage, with sales because sales rides on the back of the marketing effort ok. But PR is about the entire company.

According to the commercial department manager the PR team sometimes sits in sales and marketing (commercial) departmental meetings and vice versa.

4.7 Model of PR practiced

The PR practitioners were asked what model of PR in their opinion was practiced in Rlg. PRP2 and PRP3 explained to mean they practiced all except press agency. PRP1 however said in his view they practiced the two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical model more. He explained, "We try as much as possible to relate with stakeholders and know what they expect of us and try to let it shape policies and strategies. But sometimes too we just inform, put the info out there".

PRP3 said, "As for telling the good things our company does and projecting us in a favourable light it's our duty...we can't run away from it".

All respondents, especially the managers of the commercial, creative and finance departments expressed some amount of displeasure with internal communications. All respondents, including the practitioners, agreed there needed to be more work done on their internal communication apparatus. Asked how they communicate with internal publics, PRP2 explained that communication is often one-way and they often received complaints from staff members. The practitioner also explained that this was as a result of the near impossibility of asking everybody for ideas or what they think. He however said he did not think that was “such a big deal” because the PR department and the decision makers have the staff members at heart and would always come out with good decisions. He said,

“...and people also make complains about consultation, that ‘you didn’t consult us when you did that; you didn’t ask us first’ you know that sort of thing. But we can’t ask everyone’s opinion on an issue”.

PR practitioners however said they were doing their best to improve internal communication. Following are some responses received from non-PR practitioners when asked about internal communication.

Commercial department manager said:

We have a huge problem with internal communication; a very big one. Communication is sort of one way and I even get to feel that way only because I get to hear it. Some don’t at all.

Finance department manager said, “I think internal communication is one of our weak points as a company. But well that’s only an opinion”.

Creative department also said, “For instance some of us don’t get e-mails forwarded. So before you know it has happened or has changed”.

According to the PR practitioners interviewed, internal communication relies on the ICT apparatus and the human resource department. PRP1 explained:

We have about 500 staff members nationwide and so e-mail becomes our best means of communication, although we have departmental meetings... Every member of staff is supposed to have an address, staff e-mail address through which we send info. Now that e-mail address is provided by IT and IT depends on HR. to tell them when there is a new addition (staff member).

PRP3 also said, “Some of challenges are secondary, maybe internet at their end is not functioning or they don’t have access to computers. So at the end of the day they begin to grumble that you leave us out etc.”

The finance manager said that there were notice boards around on which notices were placed which in the view of staff members does not allow any form of feedback. “But I can’t reply on a notice board. I can do that through e-mail or in a face-to-face conversation. Notice board is good for certain things. On a notice board it doesn’t look like questions are welcome”, said the finance manager.

However, during most of the interview sessions with the various managers, the researcher noticed that “team members” (as all managers referred to subordinates) were able to walk into their managers offices at any time and have various kinds of discussions/conversations with them. Managers were only a knock away. The atmosphere was very relaxed. It looked like team members had a cordial relationship with their manager. According to PR practitioners they “try as much as possible” to get information from the public and see how best they can adjust to a policy or action plan to suit stakeholders so they do not incur their displeasure although they cannot do that all the time. PRP1 said, “Sometimes, we can factor in their expectations. Other times we have to explain and try to make them understand why it

has to be like this or like that. You know? There are many stakeholders just like the staff members and we can't please them all at the same time”.

4.8 Contribution to organisational strategy and performance

According to the PR practitioners interviewed PR creates good publicity on which sales thrive. Also, they explained that they shape the “direction of the company” when they want to formulate strategies or undertake certain projects or activities. This is possible because they have a relationship with the various publics and know what they expect. PRP1 said that “even the kind of events we sponsor is chosen strategically; to appeal to a particular section of our publics”. They also explained that they bring the publics’ view and their expectation to the company.

Non-PR practitioners talked about the building and handling of relationships with stakeholders as one contribution of PR. They pointed out that by publicising and disseminating information about the company they let stakeholders know what services they can get from the organisation and what is going on in the organisation. They elaborated that by so doing they enhance the image of the organisation this is because they “say nice things about the company”. They also agreed unanimously that PR contributes to the organisation by protecting the image of the company and by bringing the views of stakeholders into strategy making.

According to the spokesperson for the CEO, PR contributes to organisational strategy by acting as the link between the organisation and its “important stakeholders”; identifying the public that is important at a given time, by building relationships and managing them; putting the brand out there and by preventing unfavourable publicity.

According to practitioners and the spokesperson for the CEO, communication programs often meet targets or objectives set although not always in the degree or extent expected.

Measurement of PR activities is sometimes done using the alternative cost approach. So you have to also have a way of measuring. PRP1 said:

So you can do....alternative cost. If we didn't do the PR what would have happened, what we would have lost and things like that...otherwise if I don't go out there and make the company look good we may not get the sales. So the days we had bad publicity and sales went down you use those once.

4.9 Summary

This chapter presented findings of the interviews conducted. Findings were organised based on themes arising from reviewing the theories underpinning the study and the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to analyse and interpret the data gathered. The findings are analysed using the typology proposed by Grunig et al., (2002) of the characteristics of an excellent PR department at the different levels, the roles theory and the literature reviewed. It further highlights the conclusions of the study and offers recommendations based on the interpretation of the results.

5.2 Program level

The literature showed that PR can make a contribution to the organisation if it is practiced strategically and seen as making a contribution to strategic planning. According to Steyn and Puth (2000), in order to come up with a general organisational strategy all functions should take part in the formulation and implementation of the strategy.

Findings show that the corporate affairs department of Rlg is managed strategically. Programs are developed strategically to meet a specific or strategic public. The head of the department takes part in strategy formulation. Grunig, (2011) suggested tools to help the strategic manager in strategic management.

Most of these tools were found in PR practiced by the corporate affairs department of Rlg. These are: environmental scanning, identification of stakeholders, issues management,

evaluating PR programs, relationship cultivation strategies, managing reputation and digital media.

5.3 Departmental level

Although the sales and marketing department has a function labelled marketing communications which essentially is advertising and sales, all other communication functions are performed by the corporate affairs and legal department in Rlg. Thus at the departmental level PR functions are integrated in one department as recommended by the excellence study. This therefore allows for maximum concentration and allows the moving of resources from one strategic public to another.

The department is separated from the sales and marketing department. However the department suffers “authority encroachment.” This is a situation whereby the head of the PR department is trained in another discipline; in this case, law. It should be noted that the department is put together with the legal department although staffed with corporate affairs persons. There is only one legal personnel in the department who handles legal issues.

Members of the corporate affairs department report directly to the head of corporate affairs and legal department who is part of senior management.

Both the two-way symmetrical and the two-way asymmetrical models of communication are practised in Rlg with feedback affecting strategy some of the time. The excellence theory upholds the two-way symmetrical model of communication as the ideal form of communication but recognises that most companies operate a mix method of both the two-way symmetrical and the two-way asymmetrical model.

The literature suggests that at the departmental level the most senior PR team member must play a managerial role and not be headed by a technician. This is because PR must be represented at board meetings and must be involved in strategy and policy. This is essential to public relations being included in strategic management. For PR to be involved in strategy making, the literature indicates that the most senior PR practitioner should be part of the decision makers if not other non-PR personnel will take decisions for the PR department. Findings indicate that both the head of the department and the administrative manager in Rlg play managerial roles.

Most of the practitioners were trained as journalists but take courses with the Institute of Public Relations Ghana. This could be as a result of how the department began as a media desk and the importance placed on media relations and publicity. Only one out of the three practitioners interviewed had knowledge of the symmetrical model. This may be as a result of the lack of formal education in PR. However they all appreciated the feedback system. According to the literature on the excellence study, the head of the PR function or other practitioners in the department must have the requisite knowledge for a strategic role, acquired through education. Practitioners in Rlg do have knowledge of the strategic role assumed to be acquired through courses with IPR Ghana.

Practitioners exhibit a sense of professionalism by espousing the need for a formal education in PR; truth, accuracy and honesty in information they put out. They also are part of IPR which is a PR professional body and the practise of the two-way symmetrical model of communication. There is equal opportunity for men and women in the department.

5.4 Organisational level

The head of the PR department is second in command to the CEO and therefore wields some amount of power in the dominant coalition. Internal communication is predominantly one-way and decision making is not participatory. This shows that internal stakeholders are not part of the PR effort. Internal stakeholders are as vital as the external stakeholders or maybe even more important. As ambassadors of the organisation, their loyalty is essential for the realisation of the organisational mission, vision and goals. However the structure is to a certain degree organic: employees working together, face-to-face communication both formally and informal and a network of teams with team members acknowledging teams.

At the organisational level in Rlg, communication programs often met objectives.

5.5 Role of PR

The PR department of Rlg played the boundary spanning role as expected in the systems theory. They were referred to as the mouthpiece, eyes and ears of the organisation. Being the eyes on the ground refers to the strategic role of environmental scanning. According to the literature, surveying and monitoring the environment to identify threats and opportunities is a way for PR to contribute to organisational strategy and organisational effectiveness and excellence (Steyn and Puth, 2000). They also brought the public's side of the story to the organisation which helped in policy making and also told the organisation's side of the story to the public. Thus they serve as the boundary spanners. Rlg can be said to operate an open system where there is exchange of information between the organisation and the public. From the literature we learn that for an organisation to survive and grow it needs permeable membranes that allow the exchange of information.

PR plays a strategic managerial role in RIg with the most senior practitioner being a part of strategic decision making and by monitoring publics and anticipating the consequences of policies and strategies on the organisation-stakeholder relationship. The literature has showed that the only way PR can make a contribution to the organisation is if it is practiced strategically and seen as making a contribution to strategic planning. The administrative manager of the corporate affairs department of RIg takes responsibility for communication programs and plans as expected in Hogg and Doolan (1999). There is shared expectation between the CEO and the practitioners. According to the literature this is essential for an excellent communication unit as the CEO is perceived as the role sender.

5.6 The value of PR

Literature indicates that the importance or value attached to PR by the dominant coalition will determine if it is made a line function or it is made subordinate to other functions. The function should play a managerial role and the most senior PR practitioner should be part of management. It further suggests that PR in any organisation should be recognised for the strategic role it plays rather than "for its message delivery role" (PR Influences, February 2003). PR is also said to have value when its programmes affect the cognitions, attitudes and behaviours of stakeholders.

The results of this study have revealed that PR in RIg is appreciated and valued as it is treated as a line function and plays a managerial role. This is because practitioners have been able to demonstrate that its programmes have any effect on the attitudes and behaviours of the stakeholders and plays a role in strategy formulation. By their own admission, practitioners evaluate programmes and tailor programmes for specific stakeholders; they are also able to

prove that their programmes have an effect on the stakeholders. The research concludes that PR is valued in Rlg because it adds value to the organisation

5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out if PR in Rlg in Ghana plays a strategic managerial role. To achieve this purpose this research employed the qualitative research methodology and the excellence theory. The dissertation also outlined some objectives to guide the research process: (a) to find out the nature of PR practised in Rlg (b) to study the roles and functions of PR in a modern company in Ghana and find out the importance attached to it (c) to determine management's knowledge of the role of the PR department of Rlg and (d) to establish the position of the PR department within the hierarchy of Rlg. A literature review was done to lay the ground regarding the requirements or characteristics that needed to be present in order for PR to make any contribution in an organisation. Therefore, to draw conclusions regarding the contribution of PR in Rlg, the empirical findings were compared to the literature.

From the findings PR in Rlg can be said to play a strategic managerial role and takes part in strategic decision making. PR through the corporate affairs department plays an integral role in policy making. Although communication internally is one-way, external communication is both two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical.

There is an impressive understanding, knowledge, appreciation and value of PR amongst staff members of Rlg. Managers of the various departments interviewed expected PR to play a managerial role and not a technician role. The department builds and manages relationships with various stakeholders, identifies strategic publics, handles internal and external

communication and plays the boundary spanning role and serves as the link between the organisation and the public.

The corporate affairs department is independent of all other departments. The structure is therefore supportive as PR is not made to be subservient to other professions making it possible for it to be heard at the highest level because it has access to top management. The head of the department is a lawyer who once practised journalism and is a part of management. He reports directly to the CEO. Besides communication being one-way internally, PR is managerial, practised strategically and an integrated function as proposed by the excellence theory.

The results of this study indicate that PR through the corporate affairs department of Rlg contributes to organisational effectiveness and excellence as its role is strategic and managerial. This is revealed by the fact that it conforms to what the literature says about strategic PR. Most of the characteristics of excellence as proposed by the Excellence Study (noted in chapter 2), exists in the PR department of Rlg. It has to be noted that an organisation does not have to have all characteristics of excellence to be considered excellent and effective. Therefore, this research is able to conclude that PR makes a contribution to organisational strategy by acting as a boundary spanner and managing stakeholder relationships. PR in Rlg contributes to organisational excellence and effectiveness as it plays a strategic managerial. The reason why PR under the corporate affairs department plays a managerial role is because both management and practitioners understand strategic PR and what it involves. Their understanding of PR has moved beyond the early stages of PR when it was just about publicity and public information. Public relations is generally seen as a tool to facilitate communication between the organisation and its stakeholders.

It was also clear PR was a priority department in the organization. There was a belief or feeling that public relations functions sometimes crossed over with other departments but this was generally seen as unavoidable due the expansive role of these departments. Generally it was believed that the company's image was enhanced through a good corporate office. There is little doubt that Rlg will continue to utilize public relations as a tool to build and manage relationships with its important stakeholders.

5.8 Recommendations

More effort should be put in ensuring symmetry and feedback in the internal communication system. The organisation should endeavour to employ more practitioners formally trained in public relations. Excellent programs are staffed by professionals; that is, people who are educated in the body of knowledge. Also for public relations to be a useful tool, regular standards of evaluation must be employed by the company. For future studies the strategic management role of PR in a number of modern companies could be studied.

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for Non PR Practitioners

1. Based on your understanding of public relations do you think it exists in your organisation? Explain.
2. What do you perceive to be the job of a public relations practitioner, that is what activities do you expect them to carry out?
3. How would you describe the job of the Public relations practitioners in your organisation? i.e what is it that they do?
4. In your opinion is formal education in public relations necessary for one to be a PR practitioner? Explain.
5. Is it up to your expectations? Explain.
6. Would you say they understand and know what they are doing? Explain.
7. From your point of view do you think the practitioners in your organisation have the same understanding as you do as to what is expected from them? '
8. Would you say management interferes in the job of the Public Relations Practitioners or are they left to do their job as professionals who know what they are doing?
9. What do you think of the reporting structures of the Public Relations department? Can it deliver the way it is or does it need changing? Explain.
10. In your opinion is the most senior Public Relations practitioner in the organisation a part of the management team? Elaborate.
11. In your opinion who makes public relations policies and/or decisions in your organisation?
12. Who is held accountable for public relations strategies?
13. Who is responsible for helping other departments in public relations issues/problems in your organisation?

14. To what extent would you say the Public Relations practitioners in your organisation are pro-active or re-active?
15. Do you think PR practitioners are sufficiently educated to take part in strategic planning?
16. Do you think PR should be integrated with marketing to form one department? Why?
17. In your opinion is it necessary for one to have a qualification in public relations in order to be a public relations practitioner? Explain.
18. In your opinion does formal education in public relations add to the extent to which public relations can contribute to the organisation?
19. In your opinion do you think the PR department in your organisation is manned by relevant qualified people?
20. In your opinion do you think the public relations department is making a significant contribution and adding value to the organisation? Explain.
21. What would you suggest that the PR departments should do to make a significant contribution to the organisation?

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for PR Practitioners

1. Based on your understanding of public relations do you think it exists in your organisation? Explain.
2. As a practitioner what do you believe should be the job of a public relations practitioner in an organisation?
3. Do you think the top management team has the same understanding of what PR as you do?
4. Do you think what they perceive to be your job interferes in anyway with your doing your job to the best of your ability?
5. What exactly is your job in your organisation? Describe the core activities that you do in the organisation.
6. In your opinion is formal education in public relations necessary for one to be a PR practitioner? Explain.
7. What qualification would you say is relevant for one to be a public relations practitioner? Why?
8. What are the constraints that you see in carrying out your job?
9. Which department does public relations fall under in your organisation?
10. To whom does the most senior public relations practitioner report to?
11. Would you consider yourself a part of the management team? Why?
12. Who makes PR policies and strategies?

13. Who is held accountable for all PR strategies?
14. Would you say the public relations you practice is strategic? Does it add value to the organisation's strategy? Briefly explain.
15. Do you think your organisation is using you to your full potential? i.e. are you happy with what you do or do you feel you could offer the organisation more. If yes what more can you offer?
16. What would you say is the contribution of public relations in your organisation?
17. In what way do you think the top management team appreciates public relations?
18. Would you say other people in the organisation appreciate and see the value of the public relations profession? Explain.
19. How does your department communicate with internal and external publics?
20. How do you know the concerns of your publics?
21. With your knowledge in PR is communication symmetrical or asymmetrical?

APPENDIX C

CEO's INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Based on your understanding of public relations do you think it exists in your organisation? Explain.
2. How long has this office been in this institution?
3. What does the PR concept mean for your organisation
4. Will you consider the public relations office as relevant to achieving organizational goals of this institution?
5. Do you consider the PR practices as strategic?
6. What are the specific functions performed by the public relations practitioner in this institution?
7. What other functions do you think it is appropriate for the public relations practitioner to perform?
8. In your opinion is formal education in public relations necessary for one to be a PR practitioner? Explain.
9. Do you think practitioners are adequately educated to take part in strategic management?
10. What do you think is the difference between PR and marketing? Do you think they should be integrated?
11. Who does the public relations practitioner report to?
12. Who makes PR policies and strategies?

13. Who is held accountable for PR strategies?
14. Is the public relations practitioner involved in decision making?
15. What would you say is the contribution of PR in this organisation?
16. What are some of the challenges the public relations practitioner faces?
17. How can these challenges be addressed?
18. How can public relations be strengthened in this institution?
19. From your point of view do you think the practitioners in your organisation have the same understanding as you do as to what is expected from them?

REFERENCES

- Bernays, E. L (1952). *Public relations*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma press.
- Blair J. D., Blair S. A., Fottler M. D., Nix T. W., Payne T. G., Savage G. T. (2002). *From stakeholder management strategies to stakeholder management styles: Serendipitous research on organisational configurations*. Bingley, UK: Emerald
- Botha, D., Chaka, M., du Plessis, N., Kraus, B., Rawjee, V.P., Porthen, D., Veerasamy, D. & Wright, B. (2007). *Public Relations Fresh Perspectives*. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.
- Broom, G.M. & Smith, G.D. (1979). Testing the practitioner's impact on clients. *Public Relations Review*, 5(3):47-59.
- Budd, J. F. Jr. (1991). Widening the window of opportunity. *Public Relations Journal*, 47(2):9-10.
- Craig, W. (1967). *The Fall of Japan*. New York, NY: Dial Press
- Chandler, A.D. (1962). *Strategy and structure: Chapters in the History of American Industrial Enterprise*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Cutlip, S., Center, A., & Broom, G. (2000). *Effective Public Relations* (11th ed). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Dolphin, R.R. & Fan, Y. (2000). Is corporate communication a strategic function? *Management Decision*, 38, 99-106.
- Esler, D.R. (1996). Communications measurement: An oxymoron bites the dust. *Internal Communication Focus*, May: 9-12.
- Fleisher, C.S. & Mahaffy, D. (1997). A balanced scorecard approach to public relations management assessment. *Public Relations Review*, 23(2):117-142.
- Grunig, J. E. (Ed.) (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Grunig, J. E (2000). Collectivism, collaboration, and societal corporatism as core professional values in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 12, 23-48.
- Grunig, J. E. (2001). Two-way symmetrical public relations: Past, present, and future. In R.L. Heath (Ed.), *Handbook of public relations* (pp. 11-30). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Grunig, J. E. (2002). The value of public relations can be found in relationships, only secondarily in reputation. *Maine Magazine*, 7(10), 18-22.
- Grunig, J. E. & Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing public relations*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

- Grunig, J. E. & Repper, F.C. (1992). Strategic management, publics and issues. In Grunig, J.E. (Ed.), *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Grunig, L. A., Grunig, J. E., & Vercic, D. (1998). Are the IABC's excellence principles generic? Comparing Slovenia and the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. *Journal of Communication Management*, 2, 335-356.
- Grunig, L. A., Grunig, J. E., & Dozier, D. M. (2002). *Excellent public relations and effective organizations: A study of communication management in three countries*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Grunig, J. E., Grunig, L. A., & Dozier, D. M. (2006). The excellence theory. In C. H. Botan & V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory II* (pp. 21-55). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grunig J. E. & Grunig L. A. (2011). Characteristics of excellent communication. In T. Gills (E.d), *The IABC handbook of organisational communication: a guide to internal communication, public relations, marketing, and leadership*, 2nd ed. (pp. 3-14). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gqamane, Z. (2010). The role of public relations: A case of selected corporate organisations within the greater Durban area. Unpublished master's degree dissertation, Durban University of technology, Durban, South Africa.
- Gyan, M. (1991). *A profile of public relations practice in Ghana*. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana.
- Heath, R. L. (2005). *Encyclopedia of public relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Heerden G. & Rensburg R. S. (2005). *Public relations: South African perspectives*. Sandown. South Africa: Heinemann.
- Hogg, G. & Doolan, D. (1999). Playing the part, practitioner roles in public relations. *European Journal of marketing*, 33, 597-611.
- Hunt T., & Grunig, J. E. (1995). *Tehnike odnosov z javnostmi*. Ljubljana, Slovenia: DZS. (Slovenian translation of *Public relations techniques*).
- Kirat, M. (2005). Public Relations in the Arab World: A critical assessment. *Public Relations Review*, 31, 323-332
- Lamb, L. & McKee, K. (2005). *Applied public relations: Cases in stakeholder management*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Lawrence, R. J. & William, F. G. (1988). *Strategic Management and Business Policy*. (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Lattimore, D., Baskin, O., Heiman, S. T. & Toth, E. L. (2004). *Public Relations: The profession and the practice*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill Companies Inc.
- Lindeborg, RA (1994). Excellent communication. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 39,5-11.

- Lindenmann, W.K. & Lapetina, A. (1982). Management's view of the future of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 7(3):3-14.
- Macnamara, J. R. (1999), Research in Public Relations: A review of the use of evaluation and formative research. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journals*, 1(2), 107-134.
- Moss, D. & Desanto, B. (2011). *Public Relations: A managerial perspective*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Moss, D. & Green, R. (2001). Re-examining the manager's role in public relations: What management and public relations research teach us. *Journal of Communication Management*, 6(2), 118-132.
- Ni, L. (2006). Relationships as organisational resources: Examining public relations impact through its connection with organizational strategies. *Public Relations Review*, 32, 276- 281.
- Opoku-Amankwa, K. (2009). *Social research methods*. KNUST: University Printing Press.
- PR Influences (July, 2003). Measuring PR: outputs - the first essential step. *Network Communications*.
- Rawjee, V. P., Veerasamy, D., & Gqamane, Z. (2012,). The practice of public relations within selected organisations in Durban, South Africa. *African Journal of Business Management* 6(26), pp. 7745-7749.
- Rhee, Y. (2004). *The employee-public-organization chain in relationship management: a case study of a government organization*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park.
- Seitel, F. P. (2011). *The Practice of Public Relations*, (11th ed.). Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J.
- Selltiz, C., Wrightsman, L. S., Cook, S. W., & Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. (1976). *Research methods in social relations* (3rd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Steyn, B. (1999). CEO expectations in terms of PR roles. *Communicare*, 19(1),20-43.
- Steyn, B. (2005). Africa, practice of public relations. In Heath, R. L. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of public relations* (volume 1). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Steyn, B. & Puth, G. (2000), *Corporate communication strategy*. Sandown, South Africa: Heinemann.
- Tench, R. and Yeomans, L. (2006). *Exploring public relations*. London: Pearson Education
- Van Ruler, Vercic, D., Flodin, B & Butschi, G. (2001). *Public relations in Europe: A Kaleidoscopic picture*. *Journal of communication management*. Vol 6(2). P.166-175
- Vercic, D., Van Ruler, B., Butschi, G., & Flodin, B. (2000). On the definition of public relations: A European view. *Public Relations Review*, 27, 373-387.

- Vercic, D., Grunig , L. A. , & Grunig , J. E. (1996). Global and specific principles of public relations: Evidence from Slovenia. In H. M. Culbertson & N. Chen (Eds.), *International public relations: A comparative analysis* (pp. 31 – 65). Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Wu, M. Y. & Baah-Boakye, K. (2008a). A profile of public relations practice in Ghana: Practitioners' roles, most important skills for practitioners, relationship to marketing, and gender equality. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 52(1), 30-36.
- Wu, M. Y. & Baah-Boakye, K. (2008b). Public Relations in Ghana: Professionalism and Impacts of Globalization *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the NCA 94th Annual Convention, TBA, San Diedo, CA online.*
- Wu, M. Y. & Baah-Boakye, K. (2009). Public relations in Ghana: Work-related cultural values and public relations models. *Public Relations Review*, 35, 83-85.
- Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (2011). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (9thed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Woodrum R. L. (1995). How to please the CEO and keep your job. *The Public Relations Strategist*, 1(3):7-12.
- Yeo, S. L., & Sriramesh, K. (2009). Adding value to organizations: An examination of the role of senior public relations practitioners in Singapore. *Public Relations Review*, 35(4) 422- 425.

