

Five Public Relations Truths

1. Trust is the basis of all good public relations. Before your audiences spend time and money or devote effort to your organization, they will want to have a comfort level with your organization. Building trust builds comfort levels.
2. People often confuse public relations with marketing or advertising. Marketing is the practice of building customers by finding customer needs and meeting them with products and services. Advertising is payment for space or time to promote your organization's products and services. Advertising also allows you to have complete control of the message (since you are paying for it). Public relations is a behavioral science that uses audience research to create, maintain and evaluate TRUSTWORTHY relationships using communication to the mutual benefit of an organization and its key audiences. In other words: marketing deals with customers, advertising deals with promotions and public relations deals with relationship building – with all of an organization's constituents.
3. When creating strategies to meet a public relations goal, one good formula to use is the MAC Triad, which stands for **M**essage, **A**udience and **C**hannel:
 - ? Message: the information that will reinforce or change attitudes and ultimately behavior
 - ? Audience: who is it you are trying to reach. Hint: Everyone is not an audience.
 - ? Channel: What ways do audiences prefer to get information about your organization, its products and services?
4. Remember, there are four primary channels you can use to get your message out:
 - Print – newspapers, fliers, direct mailings, etc.
 - Electronic – TV, radio, Web sites, e-mail, etc.
 - Face-to-face – one-on-one and small group meetings and small group roundtables
 - Special Events – company celebrations, commencements, honors society inductions, etc.
5. Good PR practice is more than getting a positive story about your organization placed on the front page (above the fold) of the *Star-Ledger*, creating a fancy Web site, or getting a mention on the 6 p.m. local news. Effective public relations consists of research and analysis, policy formation, planning, obtaining audience feedback, and most important: COUNSELING! PR practitioners are the voice of the public and must advise management on decisions that will affect the organization's audiences.