

Related Careers

Public relations specialists create favorable attitudes among various organizations, special interest groups and the public through effective communication. Other workers with similar jobs include advertising, marketing, promotions and sales managers; demonstrators, product promoters and models; news analysts, reporters and correspondents; lawyers; market and survey researchers; sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing; and police and detectives involved in community relations.

Resources

- Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov
2004 Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Public Relations Society of America, www.prsa.org

Sources of information for this publication:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov
2004 Occupational Outlook Handbook
Careers in Communications by Shonan F.R. Noronha, 1997



Pathways to Media

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What's Inside:

- **Related Majors at Mizzou**
- **How to Prepare for a Career in Public Relations**
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Description and Job Duties

A professional in the field of public relations serves as an advocate for businesses and organizations, and builds and maintains positive relationships with the public. According to the Public Relations Society of America, public relations specialists provide strategic counsel to management as well as organize events, communicate to the media and maintain cooperative relationships with others inside and outside of the organization. Public relations takes many forms in different organizations, including public information, investor relations, public affairs, corporate communications, employee relations, marketing or product publicity, and consumer service or customer relations.

A typical day in public relations includes writing reports, speeches, presentations and letters; researching case histories, proofreading copy, producing displays and publications; answering calls for information from the press and public; and organizing and attending events and presentations. Often public relations specialists operate under deadlines, which can mean irregular schedules and frequent interruptions. Meetings, community functions, business lunches, travel assignments, special speaking and writing commitments and unscheduled work on "crisis" situations often mean long hours.

Skills and Abilities

Creativity, initiative, good judgment and the ability to communicate thoughts clearly and simply are essential skills in this occupation. Decision-making, problem-solving and researching skills also are important. People who choose public relations as a career need an outgoing personality, self-confidence, an understanding of human psychology and an enthusiasm for motivating people. They should be competitive individuals but also team players who are open to new ideas.

Majors at MU

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|---|----------------|
| Agricultural Journalism (CAFNR) | Business (BUS) |
| Communication (A&S) | English (A&S) |
| Parks, Recreation and Tourism (NR) | Theatre (A&S) |
| Journalism (JOURN) | |
| Hotel and Restaurant Management (CAFNR) | |

Preparation

- Obtain a related 4-year degree.
- Hone skills in writing, public speaking and organization.
- Obtain experience through part-time employment, internships, co-ops or volunteer experience.
- Get involved in campus activities and professional organizations to gain leadership skills.
- Explore specializations within major and professional field.
- Select electives to enhance knowledge in area(s) of interest.

Typical Career Opportunities

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Public Relations Director | • Production Supervisor |
| • Public Relations Specialist | • PR Assistant |
| • Account Supervisor | • Community Relations Director |
| • Account Executive | • Government Relations Supervisor |
| • PR Writer | |
| • PR Researcher | |

Career Information

According to the Public Relations Society of America, the average entry-level salary in public relations for a person with a baccalaureate degree is approximately \$18,000 to \$22,000. A public relations director for a small- to medium-sized organization may earn \$35,000 to \$40,000 while the range for a large corporation more likely would be \$40,000 to \$60,000.

Keen competition likely will continue for entry-level public relations jobs, as the number of qualified applicants is expected to exceed the number of job openings. Many people are attracted to this profession because of the high-profile nature of the work. Opportunities should be best for college graduates who combine a degree in journalism, public relations, advertising or another communications-related field with a public relations internship or other related work experience. Applicants without the appropriate educational background or work experience will face the toughest obstacles.

