

# PR WIRE

E-zine designed and published by PR students as part of the experiential learning process at SCMC



## REEL REVIEW

*An exploration of all things  
PR and TV/OTT*

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### EDITORIAL DESK

The PR Wire is an initiative by the students of SCMC specialising in the field of Public Relations. The PR Wire is a platform for students to discuss various aspects of the industry, both local and global, backed by research along with opinion pieces and industry news. Public Relations is an ever-growing and dynamic industry, and with this first edition of the PR Wire we give you a glimpse into how PR education is shaping up at our institute.

# CELEBRITY REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA

By Khushi Kayeless



Source: pexels.com

Media figures must acknowledge all possibilities in an environment where "one angry tweet will sabotage a brand." Social media has altered the market and the networking world, and celebrities tend to be aware of this change, whether passively or voluntarily. Developing examples of correspondence, coordinated effort, utilization, and advancement have made new areas of collaboration. There seem to be opportunities for exploration and correction over the course of this altered scenario, but difficulties abound. There are currently no full philosophies or a 'one-size-fits-all' equation that can be extended to all or any conditions to achieve optimal results. With the relentless rivalry and in the carefully monitored digital world, it's gotten essential for big names and VIPs, influencers to give adequate consideration to their digital reputation since news channels and media keep close eyes on their social profiles and make each moment happening viral.

Maybe their inclination to bomb openly is the thing that attracts everyone to the VIP culture. Perhaps knowing that people so beautiful and successful have poor hair days or seeing them pose for the most embarrassing photos of all time allows us to feel good towards oneself. Of course, these are all but myths. Public figures became perhaps the earliest ones to introduce people to the concept of reputation management firms, which would remove embarrassing Facebook images or a juicy nugget of dirt on you that you don't want to make public. Businesses are also shifting to image management companies, and with legitimate reason: a number of unfavourable ratings may have a significant impact on a company's standing, on the web and off.

## DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF CELEBRITY REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

### 1 PROFILE HIGHLIGHTING

It's a tad bit normal that celebrities receive both positive and negative responses online and that they face good and bad controversies, news and rumours around their name. A wise celebrity chooses the simplest celebrity reputation plan that highlights positives and suppresses negative content. For famous people, it's important to be in the spotlight at all times, and reputation management agencies achieve it smoothly for them. The efforts taken by the agency will define and shape their web profile as they would like to ascertain and project ahead of the audience.

## 2 WEB-PRESENCE MONITORING

After finalizing reputation objectives, reputation management agencies assemble the proper set of tools to watch the celebrity brand. The facility of the campaign is doubled by adequate use of tools like social listening tools, Google Alerts to note any negative stuff, vibes around the celebrity's brand. This leads to high-precision deliverables that help to plan subsequent moves.

## 4 SEO EFFORTS

Apt reputation management services will secure good content and this content would be within the top search results if the campaign is boosted by SEO efforts. Various content strategies would come with it, for instance:

- Press releases
- Social media posting
- Blog posting
- Image branding
- Links Profile
- Content marketing
- Article submission

## 3 PROMPT RESPONDING

The subsequent step within the process of celebrity brand creation is to style a sensible response system to deal with negative online developments. This strategy would be an all-inclusive approach right from challenging or refuting negative stuff, applying a way of humour, or maybe the utilization of legal actions in additional severe cases.

## 5 BRANDING EFFORTS

For a star reputation campaign, it's imperative to feature personal branding. The well-crafted campaign projects the online profile as a natural one and not the forced one. It's advisable to utilize a custom branding approach for every celebrity for catering to their unique reputation requirements. Although digital media provides ample advantages to celebrities, repeatedly they're seen as unfairly victimized by this tool. It's well said that it requires years to make an honest reputation and just a moment to spoil it and hence it's crucial to intently screen each news, buzz, and gossip that surfaces around your name and to handle it effectively. If the force of media is utilized appropriately, it can be a career opportunity, and in other cases, a career disaster.

Rithika Barua

# CELEBRITY PR THROUGH REALITY SHOWS



Getting celebrities on board is one of the best ways to make a reality show hit the popularity charts. It is also a vehicle for celebrities to get some PR mileage.

There are several Indian reality shows where celebrities are invited before their movie gets released on the big screen. They drop by for a chat, answer the audience's questions and sometimes perform to requests. Audiences connect to the reality show more, if a celebrity is responsive and interacts with them. This way, their movies get promoted and the reality show gets the desired attention.

Celebrity PR management has always been treated with utmost care; media attention comes complementary with the celebrity, which is an additional load to the job of a PR manager.

A PR manager who worked on the set of the popular "The Kapil Sharma Show" said his job was to be on the set and get as much gossip into a particular episode as possible. The script is prepared in advance with the talking points for the conversation to avoid any controversies on screen. It also has to be written in a way that is interesting and appealing to the viewers.

On one of the shows, for example, where actors Parineeti Chopra and Akshay Kumar featured while promoting their movie Kesari, a little social media stunt afterwards created a lot of media buzz.

Sonam Thinley Choden

## PR IN FICTION: BROOKLYN NINE NINE

*PR Takeaways from the Episode 'The Last Ride'*



Source: fox.com

*Brooklyn Nine-Nine, is a much-acclaimed US police comedy drama that has been on the air for seven seasons now- since from 2013, and is even available on Netflix. There are many lessons to be learned from this show from a communications perspective. A good example would be Episode 15 from Season 4 of the show, titled "The Last Ride."*

### **A summary of the episode:**

Now that crime rates in Brooklyn have decreased, the 99th Precinct is on the verge of being shut down. Following a poor report from the auditor, Terry's ex-girlfriend, it appeared that the precinct would close, or was on the verge of doing so. Everyone prepares for the end in their own ways.

While Jake and Charles are onto solving one last case, Captain Holt finally admits to Amy that he has been advising her all along, and the two of them squeeze in one last mentoring session. Terry believes he's just one arrest away from breaking the all-time precinct record, but the current holder of that honor, Alfred Hitchcock, of all people, isn't about to give it up easily. Gina is already planning her next business venture, Ginazon, an online platform where all of her followers will be able to watch her prank her colleagues into drinking cement. During the live stream, her fans see Captain Holt's passionate speech about how much the precinct loves the city, and they contact the police commissioner, pleading with him to save the Nine-Nine. And they succeed. The Nine-Nine has been rescued. All thanks to Gina and her followers.

### **Key PR Takeaways from this episode:**

Gina posts a clip of Captain Holt's speech on social media, and thanks to her large following, they can rally a large amount of public support and save the precinct. Captain Holt's passionate speech about how much the precinct loves and will always be loyal to the city makes the audience feel connected to the precinct, resulting in a positive response. This emphasizes the importance of persuading your audience through a passionate and authentic storytelling technique. It is always good and helpful to be authentic and genuine in your communication.

In this episode, the use of pathos is highlighted. Pathos is a rhetorical device that appeals to an audience's emotions to elicit a certain feeling. The speech of Captain Holt is used here to evoke a sense of belonging and togetherness. Through his speech, the audience feels connected to the precinct and therefore aids in saving it. Hence, employing pathos is very important in the act of persuasion.

The power of influencers can never be estimated. In today's era, influencers play a huge role in persuading and influencing audience behavior. Gina is the show's main influencer. She has a huge social media following, and she continues to interact with them in a variety of ways. Because of the video she shared on social media, they are able to save the precinct. Gina tells her followers that all they have to do is talk to the commissioner about it. Not only can you reach a wider audience with influencers, but the message's or communication's credibility also rises dramatically. If the same message were delivered differently, it would appear less credible, authentic, and relatable.

# LESSONS FROM THE SCREEN: THE PR POTENTIAL OF POWERFUL STORYTELLING

*What PR practitioners can learn from shows like The Queen's Gambit, Cheer, and Last Chance U*

By Anamika Chakravarty

If you watched 'The Queen's Gambit' on Netflix, there's a good chance you ended every argument with a 'check-mate,' or used an obsessive number of Chess metaphors in your conversations for a solid week. Now, you may wonder what a fictional show about a Chess prodigy, as fantastic as it may be, has to do with Public Relations. Not much, when you look at it through the same PR angle lens with which we tend to examine entertainment content in media- this isn't one of those treasure troves for product placements or brand mentions, and so on. But it still carries a key learning for public relations practitioners - and that is the potential of powerful storytelling.

The Queen's Gambit was never meant to be a PR campaign for the sport of Chess, or Gaming Companies or Sites or Clubs, and so on. Yet in the aftermath of the show's release, some very interesting changes occurred in anything and everything Chess related- a level of buzz that can apparently only be matched once every two years around the world championships.

Three weeks following the show's release, sales of Chess sets increased by 87%, and that of Chess books by 603%, according to data published by research firm NPD Group. Board game company Goliath Games reported a 1,048% increase in Chess sales over 2019 figures after the release of the show; up from the 178% increase earlier in the month, owing to the pandemic induced lockdowns and quarantines whilst eBay saw a 215% increase in sales of Chess sets and accessories. Chess games on streaming platforms like Twitch saw a massive surge in viewership. Memberships in the US Chess Federation and other such Chess organisations experienced a significant bump in new memberships and renewals, with many specifically attributing their decision to do so to the series, according to a senior official at the US Chess Federation.



Source: [pexels.com](https://pexels.com)



These outcomes would make for a PR campaign review report that would make any public relations practitioner euphoric. And yet, these outcomes were never intended. The intention was to tell a powerful story that resonates with audiences through its complex and deeply human narrative.

There's plenty more examples of powerful storytelling being the driving force behind the publicity earned by a project. Netflix's docu-series 'Cheer,' and 'Last Chance U' are two fantastic examples. The subject matter of these docu-series is hardly a novelty in the television sphere- countless fictional and nonfictional productions have explored cheerleading, football, and basketball. Yet, these shows drove massive publicity for its subjects in ways that documentaries in the same sphere haven't before.

In the case of 'Cheer,' despite the Navarro College Cheerleading team having a long list of accolades, people within their own town were completely unaware of the rich history of the sport in their town. Cut to the aftermath of the show's release, and the team found themselves "caught in a press whirlwind." Cast members

not only became social media influencers overnight, but were even invited to make appearances on the Today show, the Ellen DeGeneres Show, New York Fashion Week. The series even brought immense publicity for the inanimate subject of the show- the sport of Cheerleading itself, with a complete change in the common public perception towards it. Similarly, one of the coaches of the teams featured in 'Last Chance U' admitted the curiosity around his job has been "1000 times more" since the release of the series.

Now, the takeaway here isn't that the next big strategy in PR campaign planning should be to pour the entire budget into producing a documentary or a film. Whilst these can be effective tools in their own right- much like the plethora of tools and mediums available to PR practitioners, the ultimate effectiveness of this tool is heavily dependent on so many other factors- the objective, the target audience, the budget, and so on. Besides, the format isn't what drove the wild popularity of these shows- there was hardly anything novel about that. What matters is the narrative- the deeply human elements that make the piece memorable.

Microsoft's chief storyteller, Steve Clayton, claims the secret to creating a noticeable impact when it comes to promoting the brand's products and services begins with seeking out a story-

***"Seek out the story, tell it in a compelling nature and embrace the journey."***

He claims the journey one takes the audience through- the ups and downs, the personalities of subjects, the entertainment- be it in the form of humour, drama, tensions and conflicts, or raw emotion- is the essence of great storytelling.

This is precisely what critics and viewers have claimed drove the audience response to these shows. A spokesperson for the International Chess Federation claimed the Queen's Gambit's success lies in how it captured the richness of the Sport- the perfect balance of enjoyable ease and challenging complexity that fit multiple social labels of 'nerdy' and 'cool;' and its players- the intense competitive spirit amongst 'interesting, creative and colorful characters.' Cheer and Last Chance U, both works of the same creator, also have a similar approach to the animate and inanimate subjects they follow- the representation of

complex realities in multiple dimensions and the curation of these elements to tell a story in the most powerful way. And much like the stories these shows tell, Steve Clayton's stories are defined by four elements- people, places, process, and product, and it is the perfect amalgamation of these that, he claims, makes stories great.

Whilst on the surface these may seem like observations meant to inspire filmmakers or writers, what's important for PR practitioners is to note what these shows managed to achieve. They spurred conversation, and they spurred action. And that is precisely one of the key functions of public relations. To get people talking about something, someone, somewhere, and so on, and inspire some form of action- whether it's a physical, tangible act, or the mental act of changing one's perception about something. And these shows teach us about the potential powerful storytelling, whatever form it may take, holds to help PR Professionals do just that.

It's important to remember here that video content is not the only way to harness the power of storytelling. Images, written content, audio, performance art- storytelling is versatile and can be practiced in many different forms- what matters is the way the story is told.

Today, PR Practitioners have to be overly cautious about what audiences consider blatant selling. In such a world, stories sourced from unexpected places; stories that are designed for greatness- hold massive potential to set a brand apart.

To quote Steve Clayton,

“

**But don't just tell any story. Tell a great story.**





Source: NBC

# POLITICIANS AND 'FEEL-GOOD' TALK SHOWS

By Sonam Thinley Choden

Feel-good talk shows are used as a political strategy to depict politicians in a way conventional news shows and programs do not. This platform is used to establish and maintain a likable image that will help the candidate garner votes and win elections. Whether it's Nixon or Trump, several US presidential candidates have participated in feel-good talk shows. It is not rare for a presidential candidate to appear frequently on television talk shows like "The Oprah Winfrey Show", "The Late-Night Show with Jimmy Fallon", "Jimmy Kimmel Live", and others.

The 1992 Bill Clinton appearance on "The Arsenio Hall Show" was a milestone and an encouragement for the rest to make good use of this political tactic. While he chatted about current issues with Mr. Hall, he also showed off his musical skills by playing the Saxophone. It's been said that this appearance helped him court votes from the young audience. One significant advantage of the entertainment talk shows is the exposure to the young audiences who often would have limited interest in politics. Many candidates have appeared on various talk shows since then.

The 44th United States president Barack Obama was proficient at this strategy. Whether it was dancing with Ellen to Beyonce's songs, or reading mean tweets about himself with Jimmy Kimmel, Obama did all. It was his way to engross with the audience and build a friendly reputation.

Candidates place more effort into appearing on infotainment shows for two reasons: exposure and personalization. It's a part of their political propaganda. They reach and influence wider audiences who often might not be politically aware and active. Feel-Good talk show appearances are deemed to more effective than traditional news media as wider audiences with specific interests are addressed by these shows.

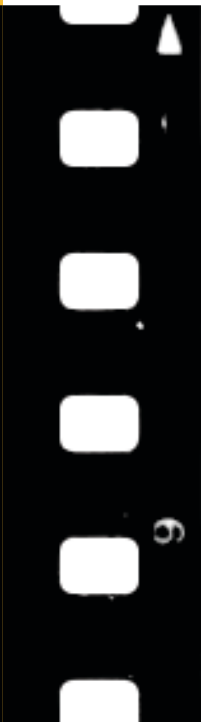
Furthermore, the attention is balanced between political and personal matters where the focus is equally given to the individual politician and not just the party (Individualization/ Personalization). The humane side of the politician is reflected by exposing his or her private experiences, interests, and choices. Studies show that revealing your personal side as a politician may result in receiving more media attention which is helpful for vote generation. Besides talking about personal issues, politicians also obtain an opportunity to discuss their political affairs and ideas and expose political characteristics. It is a form of engaging in emotionally charged communication with the audience when politicians perform comedy skits and engage in platform games and humor.

The debate, however, still stands. While the marathon of appearing in feel-good talk shows continues, critics are expressing concerns on the effects such appearances have on votes and the overall political stature. A study states that while such appearances serve the purpose of engaging the viewers, they also encourage viewers to learn about political issues and aids in the assessment of presidential candidates. Another study concludes that such appearance affects the participant's trust in politicians and that effect is strongly influenced by political knowledge an individual has. Hence saying that while the effect is positive among individuals with low political knowledge, it is noted that the effect is negative among individuals with high political knowledge. Nonetheless, it is well known that, in contrast to traditional news programs, feel-good talk show interviews are friendly and overwhelmingly positive. Hence, candidates use these platforms to present and maintain a more progressive image of themselves, which therefore aids in gaining votes and winning elections.

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# 'ADVANTAGE, INFOSYS': BRAND VISIBILITY IN SPORTING EVENT BROADCASTS

## *The Case for Adopting a PR Focused Approach in Sports Marketing*



By Anamika Chakravarty

For sports-related brands, using the sporting event platform for visibility is an obvious piece in the marketing mix puzzle - the platform presents a fantastic opportunity to display their products and trademarks. But often, despite their offerings having nothing to do with the sporting world, brands will still want to reap the benefits of marketing through sporting events and it's easy to see why. The visibility and brand awareness building capacity of sporting events is massive, especially today with the widespread access to high quality, geographically undeterred broadcasting not only on television networks but also on streaming platforms.

But once you move past the sporting goods category, it may seem a little difficult for brands to build awareness and visibility through any means beyond name sponsorships or athlete endorsements - and even this medium is beginning to get saturated. Not simply in terms of the volume of brands scrambling to score some kind of partnership, but also in terms of the largely homogenous nature of these partnerships.

Here's where a Public Relations focused approach to marketing through sports can afford brands with a fantastic opportunity to break through the clutter.

In this context, Infosys' partnership with three major tennis organizations- Tennis Australia, Roland Garros, and the ATP (Association of Tennis Players) Tour, is a fascinating one to study.

Whilst Infosys has a good reputation in its own right, one doesn't typically tend to associate the company's services with much outside of the corporate world. Infosys' own studies prior to these partnerships had suggested that different markets around the world held very low brand recall for the brand as an enabler of digital transformation.

Of course, technology companies do play a significant part in the broadcasts of these sporting events- IBM being a prime example- gathering and analysing data, preparing game statistics and charts displayed in the game breaks, across different mediums, or discussed by commentators and analysts.

Now, casual viewers will rarely stick around after a game to actually see these statistics - their engagement with the broadcast begins and ends with the entertainment value provided by the game. More hardcore fans on the other hand, will take an interest in the statistics, but this interest are geared towards the data and its implications, not the presentation of these. In fact, one rarely ever pays attention to the manner in which game statistics are presented unless it is unpleasant- and neither does one consciously yearn for innovation in its scope.

Over the past few years, Infosys's 'digital innovation' partnerships with these tennis events had relied heavily on displaying its "innovative digital services" through mobile applications, experiences for audiences at the venue - like AR and VR experiences of playing a rally with their favourite players, or virtual arena tours on the event website. So whilst these digital innovations were clear to anyone attending the tournament in person or intentionally visiting the websites and apps, for casual viewers at home, the visibility of these innovations was limited- broadcasts of these events tend to cover these fan experiences, if at all, at odd times when viewership is low- primetime is reserved for games and highlights.

But come 2021, the majority of the world was homebound, and able and eager, after a long period of deprivation, to access television broadcasts of competitive sporting events. Where earlier commutes, office jobs, social commitments would leave limited windows when they could tune into TV broadcasts, viewers could now access the broadcasts at any time of the day, or even for the entire day- and therein the opportunity for visibility through the television broadcasts of these



games became more lucrative than ever. Here's where Infosys set itself apart from the other partners at the Australian Open by leveraging the visibility afforded by the broadcasts to display its competencies - a difficult feat for most brands outside of the sporting world.

Data gathered for every shot in real time from the 'Hawkeye' technology (the tennis equivalent of the third umpire in cricket), was overlaid with three dimensional court vision to create animations enabling multiple vantage point immersive shot analysis displayed in between points, games, sets, and matches.

The highlight reels displayed at the end of matches were created in using machine learning to analyse multiple factors - like shot speeds, angles, crowd reactions, player techniques, player emotions etc., and pick the optimum shots depending on the cumulative scoring based on a combination of these objective and subjective factors.

Such an experience is bound to appeal to most viewers, irrespective of the capacity of their engagement with the event. For tennis and sport enthusiasts, this appeal may lie in the detailed nature of the statistics and advanced algorithmic curation of highlight reels, whereas casual fans may find appeal in the presentation - the animated immersive analytics and overall unique viewing experience. As an audience member, it's difficult not to take notice of the company that is responsible for elevating your viewing experience in such an unexpected way.

It's even more impressive when you consider that this is just a small part of the entire gamut of multi-channel experiences offered over the course of different tournaments to fans, coaches, players, analysts, sponsors, and other stakeholders. Since agreements with broadcasting partners differ, often, the capacity in which these innovative digital services have been integrated into the broadcast have been limited. But whilst negotiations for broadcaster partnerships (as Infosys has indicated it is pursuing) continue, even simply mentioning or describing the experiences beyond the broadcast available to viewers- during on-court interviews, game commentary, and so on, can certainly pique their interests. If broadcaster agreements permit, including glimpses of the other ways in which the 'digital innovations' are elevating experiences both on and off site in coverage between games can further heighten the visibility of the brand's competencies.



Source: [infosys.com](https://www.infosys.com)

Of course, the Infosys brand trademark appeared every time the statistics and highlights featured during broadcasts, but the audience was exposed to the brand in a capacity beyond the simple visual trademark- they were seeing and experiencing its products and services, its expertise, its trustworthiness, its values- all the tenets prescribed for a strategic PR campaign. For Infosys, when these broadcast viewers include strategists and decision-makers at organizations, investors, potential recruits, and the media, such noticeability translates into potential clients, investors, talent, and press coverage to attract even more of these. As Infosys VP of Global Marketing, Navin Rammohan stated in an interview with CMO,

***"Any sport, could be a useful tool in business development, as an engaging and relevant analogy, and to provide vivid examples of Infosys's capabilities to prospective clients with a long list of commitments and short attention spans."***

In fact, when you consider this partnership in the context of PR literature, what is impressive is the sheer number of PR functions this fulfils:

- Reinforcing the brand image as a leader in innovation,
- Reinforcing a trustworthy reputation by partnering in such an involved capacity with such a significant event,
- Establishing expertise,
- Informing the public about the scope and potential of innovative digital services, and
- Laying the ground for new partnerships and ventures into different sectors;

In fact, the sales teams across Infosys reportedly regularly showcase the company's data-analytics competencies using this tennis partnership as the opening pitch.

From the very first announcement of its partnership with these tennis organisations itself, Infosys has done well in making the partnership seem like it serves a purpose beyond building its own brand - with the objective to "bring new experiences" and "leverage technology to expand the boundaries of the game of tennis."

Once the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Infosys's strategic approach proved almost prescient. In a world where innovative digital experiences became a necessity over mere preference, Infosys used the visibility awarded by the broadcasts of a massive sporting event to not simply TELL people that their brand can serve their current and future needs, but to DEMONSTRATE it. Infosys Australia and New Zealand Senior VP and Regional Head Andrew Groth's statement on the 2021 is evidence of this precise strategy, "Our work with the AO this year is a clear demonstration of the power of data and AI, and its ability to bring people closer, no matter the physical distance."

So sporting events and televised broadcasts of the same hold great potential for brands to gain visibility through means beyond a simple name sponsorship or team endorsement. A strategic PR focused approach can bring numerous benefits beyond transient brand visibility - it can foster trust and build lasting relationships that can truly elevate the organisation.



Khushi Kayeless

## THE SHOE THAT FITS - INTERNSHIP DIARY

One of my batchmates, Sahinya Sundaresan, had previously had a terrible internship experience which led her to contemplate whether the field of PR was even for her. Since the earlier internship ordeal had taken such a toll on her, physically and mentally, she was skeptical about taking on any new opportunity.

When Ruder Finn came her way, she was hesitant, and relayed her concerns to the new organization, and was a tad bit reserved when she initially joined. The young PR aspirant was just looking for a positive and supportive work environment around her.

To her surprise, Ruder Finn turned out to be just the place for her with its compassionate atmosphere which was conducive to her growth as a person and as a PR professional. The organization respected deadlines and boundaries which created a space for work-life balance for Sahinya. After completing heavy tasks, they would even let her take a day to herself if needed. As a sweet gesture, they even got some sweets sent to her house as a parting gift by coordinating with her parents since they couldn't meet her in person due to the pandemic.

The favorable conditions led her to realize how PR was something she wanted to do for the rest of her life, the learnings at the organization were one for a lifetime. The difference between both the experiences taught her that with the right guidance and a positive work environment one can do the most difficult tasks with utter ease. After this episode, she promised to herself to always create such an encouraging space for her and her co-workers so that it can be constructive for everyone's growth and in turn the organization's growth.

## CAREER PROSPECTS IN ENTERTAINMENT PR

By Rithika Barua



*The entertainment industry provides exciting career opportunities to the young PR practitioner who wants to expand their horizon. Entertainment PR seems like a fun job to many people, but what is it like to people who actually work in this Industry. Rithika Barua spoke to Mr. Jimit Shah, Associate Manager at Ketchum Sampark, and an alumnus of Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication.*

### **Q: What are the career opportunities in Entertainment PR?**

The entertainment industry is full of opportunities. One can work in movies, different TV channels like Star Plus, Sony TV, Disney, etc, and other broadcast media; OTT platforms such as Netflix, Voot, Jio Cinema, Amazon Prime, Sony Live, Disney+ Hotstar, Hoichoi, and many more. There is also the glamorous side of the entertainment industry where one can work with celebrities. Celebrity reputation management is also a part of entertainment PR. Some YouTube channels like Filter copy, PoPxo, Scoop Whoop, BuzzFeed also hire PR managers for their agency.

### **Q: What, in your experience, is the work-life in this industry?**

Honestly, it is very stressful, as it's not a 9 to 5 job. You can get a call time at any time of a day and you have to be responsibly present at that time in that place. You have to be prepared for that. Though it sounds hectic, it's really a fun job.

My job is to get as many stories on the set as possible and then create a buzz around that topic. So if you get to be friends with celebrities, it becomes a lot easier to find stories, because being friends with them also makes them comfortable to share their stories. Also, it is very important to keep in mind: "Always take the approval of the press releases at first from the person you are talking about in that press release, to avoid any kind of controversy later". After that, you can send it across the various media houses for media coverage. The success of a story depends on the amount of media coverage it gets. It is necessary to maintain a good rapport with media houses so that you can get a fair amount of coverage of the story.

### **Q: What advice would you give to a person who wants to pursue a career in this industry?**

It's true that it's a glamorous job, but just like every coin has two sides, this industry too has its pros and cons. So you have to be very patient and passionate to work here. It is always a good experience to work in this industry because, at the end of the day, it's entertainment.

# INTERVIEWS IN NEWS MEDIA

By Tanya Marko

Media is a crucial channel for an organisation's external communication; they are the most credible instrument for distributing information in society. Media is also like marketplace where the important deals and agreements are settled; and that's where the PR professional comes in as a mediator.

The PR person's job is to assist the client in advance preparation for the interview, offer important background information to the journalist, and escort the client to the meeting. When you have secured a media interview that will make a huge difference to your client's reputation, as a PR professional you will have to fully leverage the situation and get the best out of it.

If we divide the news media interview process into three parts – before, during, and after – here are some of the things to remember.

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Make sure your agency has worked with the client's company to create a 'voice' of their business so their market position is clearly defined. All the available information (about the logo, brand, and voice) needs to be fused and integrated with the message.
- Try to understand your audience, and maintain a beneficial relationship with a journalist. It is only helpful if you look into the program beforehand so you can understand their process and style. Get your hands on a brief from the journalist so you are aware of what information they are expecting.
- Your key messages are the ones you want your audience to focus on, these core messages develop meaning, headline issues, and allow us control over the interview. These messages must be said and get across during the interview regardless of what questions the journalist asks. It is advised to be prepared with at least three key messages which the audience can absorb. Support your message by using evidence such as facts and figures or examples.
- Choosing the right spokesperson is crucial as the audience and public will see them and hear them, they are giving the organisation the voice and a face.
- The chosen spokesperson should have excellent communication skills, he/she needs to be a magnetic and compelling speaker. They should be able to handle pressure as they are likely to be asked tough questions or they are being interviewed during an ongoing crisis. The spokesperson should have authority, a person of high ranking in the company.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Picking the right outfit is necessary, a wrong outfit can distract the attention from your key messages. Dress professionally, avoid clothing with patterns and bright colours, heavy fabrics, numerous accessories.
- The message should be easy enough to reach an 'average' person, try to keep it simple and refrain from using technical terminologies or jargon.
- People will decide whether they like you or not in the first 8–15 seconds and will form an opinion of you, use it to your benefit with great body language. The majority of the communication is visual/vocal (non-verbal) in form, it includes how you look, your gestures, etc. Avoid exhibiting nervous habits such as fidgeting, fiddling with hair. Stressing specific words will change the meaning of the sentence and bring attention to the word. Make sure your tone matches your meaning.

# what to wear for a **MEDIA INTERVIEW** by Tanya Marko

- Use transitional phrases to bring attention to your key messages if you feel like the interview is deviating. Some transitional phrases are, "We're getting away from the important issue here...", "Let's not forget about the big issue here...", "That's an interesting point...", "Equally important issue we need to talk about here is..."
- Refrain from saying "no comment", this will indicate that you are ignoring the question. Explain why you cannot respond to the question at this time and proceed to shift attention towards your key messages.
- If you don't know the answer to a question it is okay to admit it, then move on to your message by using transitional phrases.
- Remember, nothing is off the record. Choose your words wisely.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send a thank-you email expressing your gratitude or call the journalist who conducted the interview. Ask them if there is a requirement for any additional information.
- Let the stakeholders know about your interview! Share it on multiple platforms such as social media profiles, newsletters, bring this up during meetings. Let this situation bestow credibility on you.
- Learn from the experience, was there anything you missed? Or anything you could have done better? Take notes and apply them in your next media interview.



**Wear a shirt with a collar or a pocket, most interviews require you to use lapel mics which is attached to your collar. With mics, comes battery packs. Men have it easy with their pockets so ladies need to make sure they wear an outfit with a pocket or a belt.**



**NO Short skirts for ladies! You might be required to sit, don't assume you will be hidden behind a desk. Go for skirts/dresses below the knees!**

**DONT wear white, black or green. White glows, black is harsh and green is also the color of the chroma key screen so you will blend into the set. DO wear colors like blue and pastels. Remember, Solid colors over Patterns! patterns are distracting! and NO logos!**



**Ladies, jingling jewelry might hit your mic and create disturbance. Wear minimalistic bling. Also, Don't wear shiny dangling earrings as it makes hard for cameras to focus!!**

**Your legs and feet are often forgotten! The camera will capture your shoes so make sure to polish them! Wear simple, high socks.**



**Your interview will probably end up online and people will remember how you presented yourself, so always choose TIMELESS FASHION to look polished and comfortable.**

**A Little Makeup doesn't hurt! This goes for men too. Men should opt for face powder to avoid shine from glare of lights! Ladies, keep your makeup natural and avoid anything glossy! Also make sure your hair is perfect and not falling across your eyes!.**





# 'BHUTAN HAS GROWING PROSPECTS IN PR INDUSTRY'

By Sonam Thinley Choden

In a country such as Bhutan, where the media industry is still in its infancy, PR practice focused on communication with media has to be seen in a different light. Unlike in other places, there is no actual separation between media relations and the overall practice of public relations and corporate communication. Often the roles are handled by the same professional under their responsibility as a communications officer or public relations officer. Sonam Thinley Choden highlights the insights she gained in her interview with Kapro Tshering, Senior Media Manager at Druk Holdings and Investments, the largest and only government-owned holding company in Bhutan, with shared in companies across various sectors such as manufacturing, energy, natural resources, financial, communication, aviation, trading, and real estate.

Even though public relations roles in Bhutan are often inter-related now, it is likely to be diversified and specialized over time to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

The primary skills for any public practitioner remain the same as everywhere, said Mr. Kapro. These include strong verbal and written communication skills, interpersonal and negotiating abilities, integrity and ethics and delivery to deadlines.

Although he did not mention the specific opportunities for media relations professionals currently in Bhutan, Mr. Kapro said the prospects remain bright with the changing times and the transformations in and around the country. "It is significant for the MRO (media relations officer) to represent their respective companies, create brand awareness, and make a healthy connection with the clients and stakeholders," he said.

When asked which media outlets were the most effective in Bhutan currently, Mr. Kapro cited BBS (Bhutan Broadcasting Service) and (Kuensel) newspapers. This is because Bhutan is still leaning towards the traditional media more despite being in an era where new media is thriving.

Although Bhutan is undergoing a shift from the traditional to the new media, the former still remains popular and effective. However the digital shift is very crucial because real-time information and decisions are required to make the strategic way forward plans, to which better technology and new digital media approaches are very important.

While we see the younger generation are adapting to the new media, there still most of the people still depending on the traditional form of media for any sort of information. For a media relation or public relations practitioner, it's very important to understand which channels and forms of media are popular in that geographical area and use those accordingly for effective communication and dissemination of information. It is understanding your target audience.

Mr. Kapro noted that unfavourable press coverage or misinformation is often inevitable in today's time. He recalled a situation where an information from their side was "captured differently" by the media and his team had to request for a correction and apology in the next edition. A reason for these lapses, he said, could be that there are not many professional reporters in Bhutan currently, and many of them lack experience.

However, such issues are a part and parcel of media relations and a PR practitioner should always be ready to tackle them to minimize the damage done to the organization's image.



# MEDIA RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS SHOULD BRING INNOVATION TO COMMUNICATIONS'

By Shreyoshee Halder

Media Relations, a staple of public relations practice, has undergone major changes with the advent of digital media, especially social media. Along with conventional networking, it has embraced new forms like video interviews, blogs, influences and podcasts.

Mitali Gajbhiye, Senior Officer- PR and Corporate Communications, with Times Internet, answers questions from Shreyoshee Halder on these transformations and their impact on corporate strategy.

**Q: In your experience what difference have you seen in the Media Relations department at different work environments, with regard to how much has changed since the digital media has taken precedence in the industry?**

Earlier media relations was mainly about how much coverage & interactions you could manage for your spokesperson, but things have changed and there are way more opportunities than the ones that earlier existed via Print mediums. With extensive digitisation, communications has slowly evolved and entered various different mediums like video interviews, podcasts, tweetchats, strategic associations with influencers and much more. This helps not only to establish a favorable image in target group who read newspapers but also tech savvy Millennial target group who spend so much more of their time on social media and are usually the primary audiences for brands today. Communication as a medium has never been static and it will always keep evolving, hence media relations professionals today need to bring innovation in the ways that they communicate for brands for better visibility and better results.

**Q. How would you describe media relations work at an organisational level on a daily basis, what is the exact nature of the work under this sub-department of corporate communications?**

Day to day media relations can vary in accordance to the kind of needs an organisation might have. If the company is a startup, majority of the media relations work might revolve around individual and company profiling to establish awareness. On the other hand, if the company is well established, a lot of media relations work will go towards achieving favorable stories through detailed interviews, international PR and developing relationships with media personnel that are closely related to your company's industry. Similarly during times of crisis, media relations are more focused towards controlling opinions in the media and nipping any kind of negative PR at the bud. Thus, the exact nature of work is not defined and may vary as and when the 'need' arises.

**Q. Would you say that Corporate Reputation and Media Relations of a brand usually work together to generate optimal results, if so then do all the brands have different departments for them or do they function under one single body?**

In my opinion, I believe there are times when the Corporate Reputation and Media Relations team have to work side by side to garner optimum results. If brands have an agency, the corporate reputation person in charge usually briefs the media relations team on the kind of communication approach they wish to take where for eg. particular journalists will be shortlisted (usually journalists who are experts in their beat) to go ahead with interviews with brand spokesperson. This results in controlled stories through credible sources. Startups or smaller brands

# 'MEDIA RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS SHOULD BRING INNOVATION TO COMMUNICATIONS'

## More about Mitali Gajbhiye:

She worked as a senior associate at Genesis Burson-Marsteller (WPP Company) before moving to Times Internet, and has previously interned at OgilvyOne Worldwide. She has an MBA in Communication Management (PR) from Symbiosis Institute for Media and Communication.

usually have one or two people max in their communications team, thus they end up depending entirely on one POC to get the necessary messaging in the media. In the end it depends on the kind of brand or company you are a part of, thus it's always better to keep upgrading and honing your skills.

**Q: In today's world when a single tweet from the brand's account itself can generate thousands of public responses do you think maintaining media relations sometimes takes a back seat?**

I absolutely don't agree. Who do you think controls the media when brands tend to make a mistake via 'an innocent tweet'? Additionally, a lot of Corporate Communications professionals are profound with their social media skills as they have a better sense of what content gets trolled vs what kind of content will go well with audiences on social media. A company's brand image & brand identity cannot solely depend on social media and hence, media relations will never take a back seat.

**Q: Which component of corporate communication department of your brand is more creatively flexible according to you and why?**

I would say the strategy team/person is usually more creatively flexible as they spend a lot of time in research to come up with the best communication strategies and tactics to position their brands favorably in the eyes of the media and other audiences. They have to think out of the box and come up with better and newer ways of communicating. This requires flexibility, any brand who sticks by the traditional methods can be at a risk of becoming obsolete and thus it is the job of the corporate communications strategy person to take a risk and venture into new avenues.



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