Public Relations

What is Public Relations?
Public relations is the business of perception. Public relations professionals are responsible for shaping people’s viewpoints; how the consumer, the competition, the international community and the average person on the street view a client. A large amount of the news that is put in print, on television, and on the Internet is the direct result of public relations.

Position Types
Public relations positions involve one or more of the following activities: event programming, cultivating relationships, writing and editing, managing information, producing, speaking, researching and evaluating. The following is a sample of some of the potential departments within public relations:

- **Research:** Determining attitudes and behaviors of the public and analyzing the causes for these attitudes and behaviors in order to plan, implement and measure activities to influence or change them.
- **Media Relations:** Relating with communications media in seeking publicity or responding to their interest in an organization.
- **Employee/Member Relations:** Responding to concerns as well as informing and motivating an organization’s employees/members, its retirees and their families.
- **Community Relations:** Continuous, planned and active participation with and within a community to maintain and enhance its environment to the benefit of both an organization and the community.
- **Public Affairs:** Developing effective involvement in public policy, and helping an organization adapt to public expectations; a term also used by military services and some government agencies to describe their public relations activities.
- **Government Affairs:** Relating directly with legislatures and regulatory agencies on behalf of an organization, usually as a central element of a public affairs program; often called “lobbying.”
- **Issues Management:** Identifying and addressing issues of public interest in which an organization is, or should be, concerned.
- **Financial Relations:** Creating and maintaining investor confidence and building positive relationships with the financial community; also called investor or shareholder relations.
- **Industry Relations:** Relating with trade associations and other firms in an organization’s industry.
- **Development/Fund Raising:** Demonstrating the need for and encouraging an organization’s members, friends, supporters and others to voluntarily contribute to support the cause.
- **Multicultural Affairs:** Relating with individuals and groups in minorities.
- **Special Events:** Stimulating an interest in a person, product or organization by means of a focused “happening;” also, activities designed to enable an organization to listen to and interact with its customers and the public.
- **Marketing Communications:** Combination of activities designed to sell a product, service or idea, including advertising, collateral materials, publicity, promotion, packaging, point-of-sale display, trade shows and special events.
Public Relations Websites

For more information on PR, industry trends or job postings visit the following:

The Association for Women in Communications http://www.womcom.org
Organization for women across communication disciplines. Hosts conference and other professional development activities. Includes a job board.

Council of Public Relations Firms http://www.prfirms.org
Represents over 100 of the leading PR firms. Provides “find a firm” features with roster of member PR firms by geographic location, size and expertise. Maintains a job bank.

Institute for Public Relations http://www.instituteforpr.com
An independent non-profit organization serving educators, researchers, PR professionals, and their clients. Site includes free, downloadable research reports and news.

International Association of Business Communicators http://www.iabc.com
Professional network including more than 70 countries and 14,000+ professionals; hosts seminars (including web) and conferences, publishes research and publications, and maintains a job bank. Some content is members-only.

Media Bistro http://www.mediabistro.com
One of the best job search engines for communications jobs. Site also includes events, forums and news.

Media Week http://www.mediaweek.com
Site of trade publication for media industry. Focuses on news, analysis of and commentary on the media business. Includes job search engine (for all media/communications jobs, including PR).

O’Dwyer PR http://www.odwyerpr.com
Includes free access to rankings of firms, list of PR firms by specialty (located under “1,000 PR specialties”), extensive list of PR associations and organizations, blogs, and related links. Maintains a job bank.


PR Channel http://www.prchannel.com
Check the blog section for interesting tips, PR situations, and general industry info. Includes listing of the top PR and Advertising Agencies.

PR News Online http://www.prnewsonline.com
Provides the latest news and strategies related to PR and marketing, including industry resources and research.

PR Temp Jobs http://www.prstaffing.com

PRWeek http://www.prweekus.com
Extension of PRWeek, a weekly industry trade publication. Site provides news, reviews, profiles, techniques, and fresh research relating to the PR industry. Includes job postings.

Public Relations Society of America http://www.prsa.org
The largest professional organization for PR professionals (also includes 255 college and university chapters, PRSA focuses on continuing education for members through networking, professional development and publications. Maintains a job bank.

Public Relations Student Society http://www.prssa.org

Talent Zoo www.talentzoo.com
Job search engine featuring media blogs and the latest headlines in the communication industry.

Vault, Career Insider Guides http://www.wfu.edu/career (*must use your WFU email to access)
Vault, Career Insider – Vault Guide to Top Advertising and PR Employers

Wetfeet Careers & Industries http://wetfeet.com
Overview of the public relations industry and careers within the field.