**Writing a Public Relations Plan**

A public relations campaign is a series of activities that are **planned** in advance and relate to a specific goal. This contrasts with other areas of PR, such as general ongoing publicity tactics, paid advertising, and reacting to events.

Ultimately a public relations campaign has three characteristics:

1. Identifying an objective
2. Finding the message that will help achieve that objective
3. And communicating that message to the appropriate audience.

**Objective**

A good public relations campaign will have a clear objective. In theory this could simply be to raise awareness of a product, service or brand, but ideally it will be more specific. This could include a company increasing sales of a product or a pressure group changing public or government behavior. A specific objective not only makes it easier to focus the planning and execution of a campaign, but also to quantify its success.

## Message

Public relations requires a clear message for the organization to communicate. A good rule of thumb is to make the message as clear and concise as possible without losing precision or risking ambiguity. Ideally the message will not just inform the audience of a particular fact or viewpoint but will spur them into taking a particular action

## Targeting

Public relations campaigns occasionally target the entire population but usually need to target a specific group. This should be the group most likely to respond as desired to the message. For a company, this could be the type of consumer most likely to buy a particular product or service, which takes into account interests, tastes and spending power. For a membership group, this could be potential members. For a campaign group, this could either be potential activists and supporters, or it could be people in authority with the ability to make decisions that promote a cause.

## Other Considerations

There are a wide range of other factors that can affect the success of a public relations campaign.

* One is that it operates to a planned budget and that the money is spent in the most effective way possible.
* Another is that it does not fall foul of any regulatory issues-- for example, by defaming somebody or by breaching rules on incentives offered to public figures. Public relations staff also need to plan carefully to make sure a message cannot be misinterpreted or cause offense.