

The communication field is filled with individuals, organizations and programs using a wide variety of names to describe what they do. In fact, lack of clear definitions is a key challenge for the industry. There are probably as many ways of understanding what roles are played by communication/public relations/marketing/fundraising professionals as there are organizations and individuals. What all of them have in common is the act of connecting an organization with an audience (one or many persons) to achieve something. *These* definitions are intended to aid in your understanding so that you can increase the likelihood that what is heard by your employers, boards, staff and volunteers, is actually what you intended to say. This should help equip you to better talk about the important work that you are doing and its value to your organization. The definitions selected for use below are based upon the Public Relations Society of America's designated text for accreditation, "Effective Public Relations," Cutlip, et al – 8th edition.

Definitions

Public Relations: The **management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics** on whom its success or failure depends.

Marketing: The **management function that identifies human needs and wants, offers products and services to satisfy those demands, and causes transactions that deliver products and services in exchange for something of value** to the provider.

The two are often confused. We'll be exploring both as integrated communication functions. In some organizations, marketing is subordinated, to PR, in others the reverse is true. Both are necessary to achieve successful outcomes for an organization's long-term health. Below are the components most often associated with each of these functions.

Marketing Components

Research: To identify market needs/wants and demands.
To test products/services with market segments.

Product Design: The development of products/services to meet market demand, circles back to research.

Packaging: The format the product/service will take as it is delivered to market.

Price: Cost of the product/service to the consumer.

Promotion: Channels and vehicles through which the consumer is made aware of the product/service.

Distribution: Mechanisms through which the product/service is delivered to the marketplace.

Public Relations Components

The terms discussed below all deal with an organization's relationships with specific groups (audiences or publics). They are all parts of the broader organizational management function known as public relations. This function is given many other labels and too often, employers and clients define public relations narrowly or wrongly by the various tasks they assign to it.

Public relations professionals who help organizations establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships perform an essential management function that has an impact on the larger society. They encourage social responsibility in organizations and promote public relations' role in maintaining social order.

Publicity*:	Information from an outside source that is used by the media, because the information has news value. Uncontrolled method of placing messages in the media because the source does not pay the media for placement. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media releases• Pitching stories• Newsworthy special events
Press Agency*:	Creating newsworthy stories and events to attract media attention and to gain public notice. <i>Most often thought of in association with entertainment industry.</i> * Both stories and events are commonly referred to as "media relations."
Advertising:	Information placed in the media by an identified sponsor that pays for the time or space. It is a controlled method of placing messages in the media. Examples include: TV, radio, newspaper, web, out-of-home.
Public Affairs:	Specialized part of public relations that builds and maintains governmental and local community relations in order to influence public policy.
Lobbying:	An even more specialized part of public relations that build and maintains relations with government primarily for the purpose of influencing legislation and regulation.
Development:	A specialized part of public relations in private nonprofit organizations that builds and maintains relationships with donors and members for the purposes of securing financial and volunteer support. [Note: Development is also viewed as a separate discipline and has a professional organization which governs its accreditation as well, The Association of Fundraising Professionals.]
Issues Management:	Proactive process of anticipating, identifying, evaluating and responding to public policy issues that affect organizations' relationships with their publics.
Investor Relations:	Special part of corporate public relations that builds and maintains a mutually beneficial relationship with shareholders and other in the financial community to maximize market value.