CREATING A MEDIA RELATIONS PLAN FOR THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION/ RATIONALE

The public relations industry in Saudi Arabia is still in the development stage and needs further improvement and innovation. A field study showed that 68% of public relations experts in Saudi Arabia see it as a basic industry, while 19% believe it's a pivotal industry (Alayed, 2013). A field study, which included 50 companies that are considered leading companies in public relations like banks, the retail sector, the media, and universities, showed that 92% of those companies have management that specializes in public relations within the organizational structure. The study pointed out that the public relations industry is in the development stage, but it still needs further improvement and renewal (Alayed, 2013). This study shows that the field of public relations in Saudi Arabia needs to develop and improve in order to contribute to achieving the goals of organizations.

The concept of public relations suffers from ambiguity and lack of proper understanding in Saudi Arabia and in the Arab world in general. Kirat (2005) mentioned that, "The term public relations is very often misconceived, misunderstood and misappropriated in the Arab World" (p. 2). Some public relations professionals in Saudi Arabia believe that the role of public relations departments in government organizations is weak due to a lack of familiarity with the functions of public relations departments, as well as hiring people who are not specialists in public relations. One other barrier that makes the role of public relations weak is inadequate funding to meet the needs of public relations departments. One other obstacle to the role of public relations is that departments are not provided with an effective media relations section that should have plans which help to identify the correct way to deal with information, news and proper communication with journalists and how to deal with new media such as Facebook and Twitter.
(Jelwi, 2013). Therefore, public relations departments in governmental organizations suffer from problems related to media relations. There must be sections that have effective plans organized by specialists in media affairs and public relations, as this helps to provide an active role for public relations and media departments (Jelwi, 2013).

Public relations in governmental organizations have become more sophisticated than in the past because of a revolution in the field of media and public relations (Shaheen, 2012). This development is not satisfactory to achieve the objectives of the organization because public relations departments still suffer from poor performance and lack of familiarity with their duties. This is the status of public relations in Saudi Arabia in particular and in the Arab world in general. Kirat (2005) stated, "The last two decades have seen a huge expansion of public relations in various domains of economic, political, social and cultural sectors in the Arab World. However, this profession still suffers from poor performance, lack of strategies and absence of vision"(p. 2).

One of the most important reasons for poor public relations and media departments in governmental organizations in Saudi Arabia is the weakness of media relations’ sections that inform the public about missions and goals of organizations in a professional manner (Kirat, 2005). For this reason, this project created a media relations plan for the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in Saudi Arabia that meets international standards and is modeled after a plan at a comparable agency in the United States.

The IPA was founded in 1961 as an autonomous government organization. The purpose of its establishment was to raise the efficiency of public employees and teach them through training sessions. In addition, the IPA has four major activities: in-service and pre-service
training, consultations, administrative research and administrative documentation (Institute of Public Administration, 2013).
Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Public Relations Definition, Functions and Roles

According to Heath and Coombs (2006), "Public relations is the management function that entails planning, research, publicity, promotion, and collaborative decision making to help any organization's ability to listen to, appreciate, and respond appropriately to those persons and groups whose mutually beneficial relationships the organization needs to foster as it strives to achieve its mission and vision" (p. 7). This definition includes five main functions for public relations: strategic planning, research, publicity, promotion, and collaborative decision making. According to Heath and Coombs (2006), "Planning involves counseling management's efforts to align their interests with those of their stakeholders. Public relations uses research to obtain data that can be used to refine planning decisions regarding which publicity activities and promotional campaigns can get the organization's message to its customers" (p. 8).

Each function has specific tasks that help to achieve the goals of public relations, "Planning and implementing the organization’s efforts to influence or change public policy. Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities — in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above" (PRSA, 2009, p. 1). In terms of research function, public relations evaluates the impact of the organization's message on stakeholders. The publicity function requires attracting attention and dissemination of accurate information to clients about activities of the organization (Heath and Coombs, 2006, p.10). According to Heath and Coombs (2006), "Promotion involves a series of publicity efforts that transpire for several days, weeks, or months to attract customers' attention and supply them with
useful information.... Collaborative decision making in public relations involves counseling leaders within the organization and fostering a decision making style that respects the concern of the publics affected by a decision" (p. 10).

Public relations has a number of positive roles in organizations. According to Swaan, (2010), "Public relations provides publicity and promotion to raise awareness and aid sales and fundraising efforts" (p. 3). In addition, there are several roles such as organizational motivation, opportunity identification, crisis management, overcoming executive isolation, change agentry, and social responsibility (Swaan, 2010, p.3). These are the roles of public relations in general; however, the roles differ a bit in some types of organizations.

There are many specific functions that must be carried out by the public relations department in educational organizations. Some functions are: encouraging community participation; introducing solutions for image problems; creating all aspects of district publications, e.g., external newspaper and internal magazines, website; working as the key contact for the media, e.g., writing news releases and working to get media coverage of district news. Other functions include creating objective, informational materials for budget and issue campaigns; creating all levels of communications which include writing a crisis communication plan, doing public relations research, surveys, and polls; interpreting results for management; and training employees in the importance of public relations and how to work on its functions (Carlsmith & Railsback, 2001, p. 8).

**Excellence Theory**

To activate the role of public relations in governmental organizations, top management should focus and work on the major functions and tasks of public relations, give public relations
an administrative function in decision-making and use a two way symmetrical model. This is related to Grunig, who developed excellence theory (Grunig, 1992, p.1).

According to Grunig (1992), "The excellence theory first explained the value of public relations to organizations and society based on the social responsibility of managerial decisions and the quality of relationships with stakeholder publics. For an organization to be effective, according to the theory, it must behave in ways that solve the problems and satisfy the goals of stakeholders as well as of management" (p. 1). The essence of excellence theory is to create a good relationship for the long term with the strategic publics for the organization (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002, p. 57).

Heath and Coombs (2006) studied 327 organizations and refined a list of principles of excellence that outline how public relations and organizations should be structured to achieve maximize mutually beneficial relationships (p. 200). According to Heath and Coombs, "Organizations that embrace these principles will be more effective: Value communication; contribute to strategic organizational functions; perform the management role; use the two-way symmetrical model of public relations; potential to practice the ideal model; activism as positive energy; organizational culture and structure; and diversity as a strength" (p. 200). These principles should be available in the performance of public relations and its incompleteness may lead to an imbalance in performance.

In the governmental organizations in Saudi Arabia, public relations departments suffer from lack of activating their roles properly. One of the reasons is the lack of specialized sections for media relations in those departments. This results in the departments' inability to create
Effective communication with different audiences as well as their lack of awareness about the importance of media relations in achieving objectives of public relations (Ashtel, 2013).

**Reality of Public Relations Departments in Government Organizations in Saudi Arabia**

Some field studies, recommendations and discussions reveal that administrative and organizational aspects are considered the most important aspects that public relations departments suffer from the lack of their organizing. These aspects include size of the administration, administrative contact, and the functions that it performs. In addition, these studies reveal that a department of public relations would suffer from problems in the planning of its activities and how it does operations communications to implement the objectives of public relations (Hussein, Marghalani & Haroon, 1992, p. 13).

Communication with the external public is one of the most important objectives for public relations departments. The art of communicating with external public takes place through organizing occasions, press conferences, organizing visits and by using traditional media such as newspapers, television, radio, etc. Although communication with external publics is one of the main objectives of public relations departments at government organizations, public relations departments suffer from how to achieve this goal (Kirat 2005). There are several obstacles involved in the process of communicating with the external public. These include the lack of specialized sections of media relations, the lack of a plan for media relations, and the lack of a guideline for media relations (Hussein, Marghalani, & Haroon, 1992, p. 44). In addition, Saudi public relations departments cannot communicate with transparency and clarity with customers, because most of the public relations practitioners do not have enough experience or the right methods to engage in media work (Al-Bazie, 2010).
Media activity also is considered one of the most important activities carried out by the public relations departments in government organizations in Saudi Arabia. This activity includes hosting and participating in exhibitions; issuing magazines, newsletters and specialized publications; launching media campaigns; holding seminars and conferences as well as communicating with the media at large. These activities can suffer from lack of proper planning by the public relations departments in Saudi Arabia and the Arab countries as well. The reason for this is lack of attention on the part of senior management of organizations to the important role of public relations (Kirat, 2005).

A study to measure views on public relations departments in Saudi Arabia indicates that the concept of public relations is considered marginal and obscure. This study showed that many people do not understand the true role of public relations or its mission. The study attributes this weakness to the lack of awareness by senior management in some organizations about the importance of the role of public relations, the absence of specialists who work in public relations departments and the lack of procedures for reaching media using professional media plans designed to achieve the objectives of public relations (Hussein, Marghalani, & Haroon, 1992, p. 100).

**Media Relations' Definitions and Importance**

According to Ridgway (1996), "The term 'media relations' refers to the communication pattern between an organization and those sections of the media which are interested in its activities" (p. 5). Swaan (2010) added another definition and said, "Media relations is described as the practitioner's *relationship* with the editors and reporters of the mass media that function as communication channels directly to the organization's stakeholders" (p. 78). These definitions
explain the importance of media relations in the process of communication, which is a key role of public relations.

Media relations has become a crucial function for both public relations practitioners and journalists in the producing and spreading of news that is important to the public (Wilson, 2012, p. 1). According to Krishnan (2007), "Media relations has over the years become an increasingly significant profile and has added value to the business bottom line" (p. 1). Successful media relations requires an understanding of the role of the media, how media work and its requirements (Ridgway, 1996, p. 1). According to Ridgway (1996), "It also involves relating this knowledge to the needs of your own organization and the objective of its media relations programme" (p.1). Howard and Mathews (2006) stated, "Good media relations requires thoughtful plans and targeted strategies. It is much more than churning out news releases on new products or services. It is searching for other opportunities and news events that can be turned into positive media coverage" (p. 8). Knowing the requirements of public relations helps public relations practitioners to realize the importance of the role of media relations as a function of public relations that helps in achieving their goals.

According to Wilson (2012),"Media relations is the most common function of public relations and an important aspect of positive campaigns; consequently, it is generally considered to be essential to public relations" (p. 3). White & Park (2010) described media relations’ efforts as the “tip of the public relations iceberg – the most visible part” (p. 28). According to Wilson (2012), "Media relations is vital to public relations because of the importance of the media in our modern society" (p. 3). Grabowski (1992) said, “You must have a medium through which to deliver your message. And you must know how to employ that medium. It is the one essential element in any serious public relations program” (p. 37). This illustrates the need for the
formation of relationships between public relations practitioners and journalists in the process of spreading the message.

    Thoughtful planning and appropriate tactics constitute an important and decisive factor in media relations (Howard, 1988). Media relations is an important function for a public relations practitioner (Wilson, 2012). Wilson (2012) stated, "Harmon (1965) found that 86% of public relations practitioners engaged in media relations" (p. 3). A 1994 researcher found that 70% of CEOs named media relations in their job titles as the most important qualification in their communication specialists (Adams, 1995). Organizations have become interested in media relations. Because of the importance of media relations’ strategies and how they help to achieve the objectives of organizations, this function has come to the management table and has been integrated effectively with other strategies that lead organizations to their ultimate goals (Adams, 1995, p. 7). Media relations works with media for the purpose of informing the public about organizations’ missions, policies and practices in a positive way, and in a compatible and credible manner (Swaan, 2010, p. 79). According to Brewer & Grumbles (2013), "The following four elements of media relations are cornerstones for achieving the most positive results: Planning, media tactics, execution, follow-up" (p. 1).

    Public relations practitioners must practice media management skills because they will adopt some media tasks, or it is likely that there will be contact between them and journalists (Nair, 2004, p. 9). This is related to adaptation of system theory. According to Nair (2004):

    In the adaption theory, public relations is seen as the adaptive subs-system within the organization PR functions as channel of communications between the environment (abetted by the media) and the organisation. PR helps the organisation to adjust and adapt to its environment where the media plays a dominant role when public issues arise. The media may even influence the environment. The subsystems exists to achieve favorable reputation by: reducing the extent of public scrutiny; creating greater willingness among
public to accept reasons for the actions; generating support; and increasing confidence in the organisation amongst its public (p. 8-9).

These tasks show the importance of the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists. This partnership must be built on understanding common roles between journalists and public relations practitioners, which helps them to understand the different programs for media relations.

**What Kind of Program?**

According to Howard and Mathews (2006), "There are two possible kinds of media relations programs: (1) passive or reactive and (2) active or proactive. A passive program means that your organization has determined, for whatever reason, not to seek the attention of the public eye. Active means that you plan, implement and measure a well-conceived media relations program that supports your organization's goals and objectives" (p. 12). These programs have benefits for organizations because they show the public the actions of the organization and its functions using available means, such as media coverage. These benefits, according to Rose (2004), are:

Editorial coverage gives your organization better stakeholder attention compared to paid advertisements. Editorial copy generated through effective public relations is far more believable and credible than paid advertising, due to media objectivity. Recent studies in North America suggest that positive editorial coverage generates up to nine times more visibility than paid advertising. Regular and effective news releases can make your organization a "news media source." It is critical to develop relationships with the news media in the same way it is a good idea to develop other kinds of friendships in the community. Writers and reporters are always looking for reliable and respected sources to quote. Regular media exposure legitimizes your organization's work and enhances its reputation. There is a subtle but nonetheless real perception that mention in a newspaper or on television must be important. Media coverage communicates to the business community that your organization's qualifications and programs are worthy of "a serious look" (p. 5).
Therefore, these benefits show the importance of media coverage and news in media relations work.

News and Media Relations

News is one of the most important aspects in the field of media relations. Publishing news of organizations requires cooperation between public relations practitioners and journalists. But what is the news? According to Howard and Mathews (2006), "The original definition of 'news' is thought to come from the four points on a compass: North, East, West, South. But that definition doesn't mean that all information from all points on the globe are newsworthy. For readers, viewers and listeners, 'news' is what they personally are interested in" (p. 26). This illustrates the importance of the news as a means of communication that provide to people information that they are interested in.

News and press releases are some of the most important communication tools in media relations programs (Ridgway, 1996, p. 37). According to Ridgway (1996), "It will be needed almost every time you have any information to give to the media. Changes in company policy, new products and services, financial results, staff appointments, sponsorship news, factory openings - in fact almost any 'happening' or change within your company or organization will probably merit a release to at least a few papers or radio stations, for change is news" (p. 37). This clarifies tasks of media relations that are done by officials of media relations.

The mission of media relations officials is not to transfer the news to the editor. According to Howard and Mathews (2006), "For the media relations professional, the task is not the delivery of news to an editor. A more accurate characterization is the delivery of properly prepared material that might be passed on by an editor to become news. What do editors use in
determining whether or not material will become news?" (p. 26). News is characterized using five criteria: consequence, interest, timeliness, proximity, and prominence (Howard and Mathews, 2006, p. 26). In addition, published news should answer five questions: Who? What? Why? Where? When? (Ridgway, 1996, p. 37). However, journalists and media relations practitioners must cooperate to cover news of organizations through using traditional media such as television, newspapers, newsletters, magazines, radio, and new media such as Facebook and Twitter (Howard and Mathews, 2006, p. 33).

Journalists and media professionals typically have used traditional media (Ridgway, 1996, p. 18), but in recent years have expanded their use of online media and social media such as E-magazines, HTML- formatted Newsletters, SMS, websites (Niar, 2004, p. 33, 35). Social media consists of Facebook, Twitter (Wilson, 2012, p. 23). Social and online media create an atmosphere of direct interaction with the masses in an easy way (Lariscy, Avery, Sweetser, & Howes, 2009, p. 314).

The media revolution has produced new means of communication, such as social networking sites and online media (Nair, 2004, p. 26). This revolution has had an impact on the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists. According to Wilson (2012), "Social media has blurred the lines between public relations practitioners, journalists and the public. Furthermore, these new innovations on the Internet have changed how people perceive their own reality" (p. 23). Therefore, public relations practitioners should be aware of the importance of traditional and new media and how each helps practitioners understand the work of journalists and the media, as well as helping them to create good media relations between the two parties (Wilson, 2012, p. 5).
Reporters and Spokespersons

Building relationships with reporters is one of the most important aspects of media relations. According to Howard and Mathews (2006), "The emphasis in a media relations program should be on the relations aspect-working to build long-term relationships with the people who cover your organization" (p. 65). There is no doubt, helping editors by providing them news helps to build positive relations and has a long-term impact. Howard and Mathews (2006) added, "A media relations person deals with writers, editors, producers and photographers-not with newspapers, television stations, radio microphones and Web sites. Knowing who to assist a reporter and his /her supporting cast will make the difference in long term relationships with the media-the only kind to have" (p. 65). This refers to the importance of knowing who the reporters are and how knowing and understanding their roles help in the formation of a positive and long relationship.

Before building a relationship with a reporter, a media relations’ practitioner should know the reporter, and read about him/ her to know how to deal with him/her when the editor does positive coverage for the organization. According to Swann (2010), "Take the time to know the reporter as a person. Over time, find out something about the reporter. Read the reporter's stories and mention the ones you enjoyed reading. If a reporter does a good job on a story involving your organization, take the time to thank the reporter with a note or e-mail" (p. 82).

Media relations’ practitioners should be aware of the importance of time in dealing with editors and know the editors have deadlines in dealing with the news (Howard and Mathews, 2006, p. 67). Therefore, respect of time helps to build a good relationship between editors and media relations’ practitioners. Swann (2010) stated, "Many news operations are working under
stressful deadlines often compounded by small staffs. One of the best ways to earn a good reputation with editors and reporters is to respect their deadlines. When a reporter calls, return that call immediately—or in two hours or the next day‖ (p.79). The time is important for reporters when dealing with spokespersons for organizations because they may sometimes want breaking news about the events that are related to the organization.

On the other hand, there must be an official spokesperson whom is able to deal and communicate efficiently with editors of news and to provide them correct information about the organization. Often it is preferred that the official spokesperson is from management of media relations or public relations (Smith, 2009, p. 147). The spokesperson selection process is important. There are several characteristics to consider when choosing the spokesperson. According to Howard and Mathews (2006):

As the media relations person, you should become familiar with the abilities of others in your organization so you can choose the best spokesperson for each media opportunity. Here are the characteristics you are looking for: 1. Above all, knowledge of the topic to be discussed with the reporter, 2. An understanding of the organization's overall objectives and strategies, 3. An ability to tell and sell what he/she knows—in everyday language and from the point of view of the reporter and the ultimate audience, 4. The confidence of top management, 5. A desire to do the interview, 6. Overall presentation style (p. 97).

These are properties that should be available in the spokesperson.

There are certain qualities that spokespersons should possess. These elements are credibility, control, and charisma. These elements affect the message that is provided by the spokesperson to the masses. If these elements are available, the effect is expected to be large (Smith, 2009, p. 147). In addition, organizations should help the spokesperson learn through adequate training how to deal with interviews and press conferences and how to deal with various media. Preparing before the interviews is important for the spokesperson. According to
Howard and Mathews (2006), "Media relations people should make it a routine practice to get together with the spokesperson for a briefing before interview" (p. 99). After that, the media relations’ person introduces the spokesperson to reporters for the interview. After the interview, media relations should communicate with the spokesperson to learn his/her reactions and impressions about the interview because it could alert them to problems they should avoid in the future (Howard and Mathews, 2006, p. 100). Media relations also uses a spokesperson as a tool in crisis management to convey messages about the crisis to the public, taking an active role in the dissemination of information.

Media relations’ practitioners should be attentive to other key principles that media relations underpin. These principles are: provision of appropriate channels of communication with the media, how to communicate successfully with reporters, providing an official spokesperson for the organization who is qualified to work properly with media, crisis planning, and creating an appropriate plan for dealing with events that are held by the organization (Howard and Mathews, 2006, p. 23). Media relations’ practitioners should be aware of these principles to succeed in their work in media relations. They also should have some characteristics that help them in their work within the media field. Therefore, media relations’ practitioners should be cooperative, accessible, direct, fair, a resource, an authority, an educator, an advocate, a strategist, and a team player (Howard and Mathews, 2006, p. 23-24). There is no doubt that familiarity with the principles of media relations helps practitioners to prepare a plan to achieve the objectives of the organization.
The Role of the Media Relations Plan

Successful media relations’ plans require an understanding of the organization (Howard and Mathews, 2006, p. 23). Developing a plan for media relations demonstrates commitment of the organization to develop an effective program for media relations. This program must be based on assets and rules. According to The Hartford Loss Control Department (2000), "Develop a written policy statement that clearly reflects the organization’s commitment to an effective media relations program. Define the purpose and objective of the program, identify roles and responsibilities of the media relations team, and ensure that the policy statement is fully endorsed by senior management"(p.1). Media relations plan should be consistent with the organization's goals and strategies.

When practitioners prepare the media plan for an organization, they should develop and understand the organization’s framework and goals because these help to convey messages to achieve these goals. According to Ridgway (1996), "It is far better to plan a media relations program within the framework of your organization's objectives as a whole. This not only helps to channel your efforts into the most effective areas, but also ensures that everyone who comes into contact with the media knows what their organization is trying to achieve" (p. 5). Therefore, creating a plan for media relations gives many benefits that help to deal properly with the events in organizations.

Creating a media plan helps to regulate the media work in the organization. According to Ridgway (1996), "It is much more effective to carry out media relations activities within the framework of a detailed plan than simply to publicize events as they happen and haphazardly respond to media enquiries"(p. 9). When developing the plan, media relations practitioners
should focus on choosing appropriate types of media that fit the expectations of the organization. Heath and Coombs (2006) stated, "A media plan should consider the kinds of tools that can best be used, or are required, to reach and interact with the target MAP. For instance, a plan might feature print options that include a news story, a feature story, a major book that addresses key issues, and a series of stories in an employee, donor, or member newsletter" (p. 330). Therefore, developing a plan for media relations helps to set goals for disseminating news through the media. Also it helps to choose the appropriate means and identifies the names and types of publications desired for placement (Heath and Coombs, 2006, p. 328).
Chapter III

METHOD

This creative research project used a four pronged-approach to create a media relations plan for the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in Saudi Arabia. First, there was an examination of the international standards governing public and media relations’ plans (e.g., PRSA, International Public Relations Association). Second, the current media relations operations at the Department of Public Relations and Media at the IPA were reviewed to better understand the work and organization of this department, identify strengths and weaknesses, and potentially improve its media objectives. This review included an analysis of the website and other related documents at the IPA. Third, an analysis of the media relations’ plan of the Office of Personnel Management was conducted. This U.S. governmental agency has similar characteristics to those of the IPA and its approach could potentially be beneficial in the creation of the IPA plan. Fourth, the media relations’ plan was developed using literature of best practices cited in the previous literature review.

Analysis Standards of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and International Public Relations Association (IPRA)

PRSA standards play an important role in the work of public relations and media relations’ professionals. According to PRSA (2014), "The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is the world’s largest and foremost organization of public relations professionals. PRSA provides professional development, sets standards of excellence and upholds principles of ethics for its members and, more broadly, the multi-billion dollar global public relations profession."
Additionally, the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) aims to provide intellectual leadership for professional in public relations (IPRA, 2014).

Before developing a media relations’ plan, the PRSA and IPRA recommend that practitioners give careful attention to their goals and ethics. Trevor Gorin, Global Media Relations Director at Unilever, developed a set of rules that are considered standards for creating media relations plans. These rules are: 1) Know your business. 2) Know what you want to be famous for. 3) Know your influencers. 4) Build and maintain your relationships. 5) Build your team. 6) Invest in tools and processes. 7) Measure your progress (Gorin, 2014). These rules are based on the professional and ethical values on which the professions of public relations and media rely.

PRSA also has developed a code of ethics to set the standards for public relations and media professionals. The PRSA code emphasizes advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness (PRSA, 2014). According to PRSA website (2014), "These values provide the foundation for the Member Code of Ethics and set the industry standard for the professional practice of public relations. These values are the fundamental beliefs that guide our behaviors and decision-making process."

IPRA also has created a code of conduct for public relations and media practitioners. This code emphasizes the professional and ethical conduct for practicing public relations worldwide (IPRA, 2014). Some of the codes are not related to media work and how to create a media relations plan; however, applicable codes include integrity, transparency, confidentiality, accuracy and disclosure. These codes are similar to the code of conduct at PRSA.
The PRSA (2014) also has developed several standards that organize the work of public relations and media. Each standard has rules and provisions related to the code of ethics that help practitioners be effective. The "Professional Standards Advisory" covers illegal recordings, use of video news releases as a public relations tool, professional conflicts of interest, and phantom experience (inflating résumés, credentials and capabilities).

The first professional standard advisory that is taken into consideration in creating a media relations plan is illegal recording. Good media relations requires the formation of relationships between practitioners of public relations and media. This requires communication between the two parties through telephone conversations or even through meeting face to face. The constitution of PRSA clarifies the responsibility of public relations practitioners in how to communicate with journalists. For example, public relations practitioners should let journalists know that conversations or interviews are being recorded and journalists have the right to accept or refuse. PRSA has linked this standard to its code of ethics and provisions. The aim is to make the process of communication clear and to frame the communication in honesty and integrity. In addition, improving free flow of information maintains the integrity of media work and ensures the credibility of the information.

Example of improper practices: According to PRSA (2014), "You record a conversation between a reporter and an executive in Illinois, informing neither of your intentions to record the dialogue."

The second professional standard advisory is using video news releases as a public relations tool. PRSA indicated that some organizations, public relations practitioners, and media design videos for events that are hosted by organizations without reference to the source. This
happens because of the lack of a plan for disseminating video clips about the organizations. Public relations practitioners must understand the importance of publishing sources when designing a plan for media relations so that the information is credible. This also protects the free flow of information and enhances public confidence in the media work. Identifying the sources helps maintain the relationship between public relations practitioners, the media, government officials, and the public (PRSA, 2014).

The third standard is conflict of interest. According to PRSA (2014), "Conflicts of interest have the potential to undermine or compromise the impartiality, credibility or trustworthiness of a practitioner due to the possibility of a clash between the practitioner’s self-interest and a professional interest, or their public interest, or their client’s interest." When designing a media relations plans, PRSA is keen on the lack of conflict of interest of public relations practitioners and the media and journalists, as well as the public. Formation of relationships between public relations practitioners and media are essential in designing the media relations’ plan.

The fourth professional standard advisory that is taken into consideration in creating a media relations plan is phantom experience. According to PRSA (2014), "Phantom experience means providing information that overstates or distorts the actual experience being brought to the table by an organization, a company, a group, or an individual." This negatively affects the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners. A breach of this trust leads to a defect in the performance of the media relations plan (PRSA, 2014). This code helps, according to PRSA (2014): "Protecting and advancing the free flow of accurate and truthful information is essential to serving the public interest and contributing to informed decision making in a
democratic society.” In addition, it helps in building trust, credibility, and respect among public relations practitioners, journalists, and the public (PRSA, 2014).

These PRSA standards, which members are encouraged to follow, also are used as a basis for its internal media relations plan. For example, when there are inquiries from press or media about the PRSA as an organization, these inquiries are transferred to a designated person who is authorized to answer in accordance with the PRSA professional standards and ethics. According to PRSA (2014), "All unsolicited telephone, e-mail and postal inquiries received from print, broadcast or electronic journalists should be directed to the vice president, associate director or manager of the Public Relations Department (in that order) at PRSA’s National Headquarters." The media policy of PRSA shows that the organization can choose how to respond according to limits of its capabilities and it has the right to reject any inquiry about confidential information or inquiries that do not serve the reputation of the organization and its work. The media relations' plan of PRSA shows equality in the process of publishing releases to the media except in the cases that are identified as proprietary news. In general, the PRSA permits journalists to cover its events such as conferences and seminars, if the journalists receive prior approval.

**Review of the Current Status of the Department of Public Relations and Media at the Institute of Public Administration in Saudi Arabia**

Studying the current media relations’ activities of the Department of Public Relations and Media at the IPA is essential to the formation of a new plan that aligns with the capabilities and situations of the department. The researcher interviewed the Department of Public Relations and Media's manager via email because the manager was in Saudi Arabia and the researcher was in
United States. The purpose of this interview was to assess the current status of the department and its policies, as well as to examine documents that the department relies on in its work.

**Purpose of Institute of Public Administration**

The Institute of Public Administration was founded by the instrument of Royal Decree no. 93 of 10.4.1961, as a body-corporate, autonomous government agency. The purpose of its establishment was to increase the efficiency of public employees and educate them, so as to make them capable of shouldering their responsibilities and use their jurisdiction in a manner that would raise the level of administration and support the foundation of national economic development. In addition, the IPA contributes to the administrative organization of government departments, offers consultations on administrative problems referred to it by government ministries and agencies, undertakes administrative research works, and enhances cultural ties in the field of public administration (IPA, 2013).

**Organization and Goals of the Public Relations and Media Department at IPA**

The Department of Public Relations and Media is linked to the General Director of the IPA. The department has two parts: the media section and the public relations section. The department has 12 employees. In addition to the manager, there are six employees working in the media section and five employees working in the public relations section. The Department of Public Relations and Media does not have its own budget. Financial support for the various activities of the department is through the general budget of the IPA. The general goal for the department is "To establish a common understanding between the IPA and the internal and external public, through a process of contact that is planned, purposeful, and continuing to raise the level of internal harmony and external adaption to the IPA," according to the Department of Public Relations and Media (2014).

**General Tasks**
According to the Department of Public Relations and Media at IPA (2014), its tasks include:

1) To develop the five-year, annual, and operational plans that are related to activities of public relations and media, and implementation after adoption. 2) Planning, preparing and implementing media and advertising campaigns that serve the IPA's activities. 3) Preparation of studies and research of public relations and media, and measurement of public opinion around the institute's main activities and various services. 4) Development and consolidation of media relations between the IPA and the various media by providing them the necessary data and news about the activities of the IPA and following-up what the media publishes about the IPA. 5) Preparation and issuance of the publications, advertising, and media materials that aim to serve the internal and external activities of the IPA. 6) Supervision of the news and announcements on the Institute site on the Internet and update them. 7) Holding local and foreign events, festivals, and exhibitions that are related to the IPA. 8) Implementation of programs visits and ceremonies. 9) Supervision of the services that are offered by restaurants at the IPA. 10) Providing and following-up services that are provided to new colleagues and trainees of Arab countries. 11) Distribution of scientific works of the IPA to the target groups in the IPA and outside it. 12) Preparing periodic reports about the activities and achievements of the department and the necessary proposals for development and submitting them to the general director of the IPA (The Department of Public Relations and Media at IPA, 2014).

Organization and Goals of the Media Section

The media section is associated with the manager of the Department of Public Relations and Media. It has six employees. The media section does not have a written plan, but it has goals and tasks. The general goal is "To develop and implement plans and programs related to media activities to improve the level of awareness through definition about the various programs and activities of the IPA," according to the Department of Public Relations and Media (2014).

General Tasks

The media section has many tasks. According to the Department of Public Relations and Media (2014), the tasks are:

1) Develop the plans and programs for the activities of the media and the major events of the Institute. 2) Prepare the media reports that are related to the mental image held by the
public about the IPA. 3) Prepare, edit, output and print the magazine, "Administrative Development" on a monthly basis. 4) Prepare the radio and television programs and films that serve the goals and activities of the Institute. 5) Prepare and edit news, data, and media statements about the everyday events at IPA, and send them to the media. 6) Prepare and edit the daily bulletin of IPA "Daily Institute" and send it electronically via the computer network for employees of the IPA. 7) Supervision of media on the news and announcements on the IPA's site on the Internet and update it. 8) Follow what the print media publish and prepare through examination of the daily press clippings, and files and send them to the stakeholders within the IPA. 9) Prepare the media response to what the press and media publish (suggestions, complaints, or inquiries related to the IPA). 10) Establish media relations with the departments of public relations and media in government and private organizations. 11) Develop and activate the media relations between the IPA and the various media. 12) Prepare brochures, posters, and media as well as advertising documents that contribute to explanation of activities of the departments and services of the IPA. 13) Propose formation of committees for media events, celebrations, and important events in the IPA. 14) Supervise and organize media centers in the events that are organized by the IPA. 15) Prepare periodic reports about the activities and achievements of the media section and the necessary proposals for development, then submit them to the manager of the Department of Public Relations and Media (The Department of Public Relations and Media, 2014).

Review of the Media Relations Plan of U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

The researcher chose the U.S. Office of Personnel Management because of the similarity of the main tasks between the OPM and the IPA, such as training state employees, researching, consulting, documenting, and many other functions. A review of the media relations’ plan for the Department of Communications and Public Liaison at the OPM assisted in the creation of a plan that is compatible with the capabilities and situation of the department at IPA. The researcher analyzed information from a file about the media relations plan at the OPM. This file contains 75 pages and is accessible at OPM's website.

Before starting analysis, it is important to explain what the OPM is. According to the organization (2014), "OPM works in several broad categories to recruit, retain and honor a world-class workforce for the American people." The OPM has about 6,000 employees and
offers training and development programs for federal employees and agencies. Also, OPM works to ensure that the federal employees and agencies use fair practices in all aspects of personnel management. In addition, it leads the process of development, testament and implementation of new government-wide policies that relate to employees' issues. The OPM supervises the recruitment processes and services, such as health insurance for current employees and retirees. Also, the organization conducts research, consultation, and documentation of administrative for the activities development of the workforce in the federal organizations and its affiliates (OPM, 2014).

**Department of Communications & Public Liaison (CPL)**

The Department of Communications & Public Liaison reports to the office of the OPM director. The CPL has four sections: administrative, Web, speechwriting, and creative services. The department has made a media relations plan that states the objectives, goals, target audience, types of media to deliver messages, and how to measure the results of the plan.

**Objectives of the Department of Communications & Public Liaison**

1. Coordinate and highlight the efforts, works, and plans of the OPM and inform their audiences by using various media.

2. Produce informational materials such as print, images, video, writing and publishing, the production of information on social networking sites, and the OPM's Web site.

3. Establish positive relationships with the local media and assist in providing information to the public about services of the OPM.
4. Develop media relations with the representatives of foreign media and maintain them to facilitate communication between the OPM and its foreign national neighbors (OPM, 2014).

**Goal of the Department of Communications & Public Liaison**

According to OPM (2014) its goal is to, "Ensure that all media and communications successfully reach their intended audience—from the highest ranking elected officials, to federal employees, to the public."

**Target Audience**

The Department of Communications & Public Liaison target audiences are the internal public, such as managers, administrators, technicians, and all employees, which total 6,200 personnel - and the external audience. The external audience includes segments that have relations to the OPM - such as, farmers, taxpayers, military personnel, educators, and general population, federal agencies in the USA that have relations to the OPM, and foreign neighbors' national agencies (OPM, 2014).

**Target Media**

The department uses different methods to disseminate information about the tasks and messages to each target audience. It seeks to form positive relationships with the local media in the U.S. and the foreign media because the OPM has tasks outside the United States in addition to the expansion of culture inside the organization (OPM, 2014).

The CPL has identified four methods of communication to deliver the messages of the OPM. These methods are written, oral, visual, and personal. First, CPL uses many types of media for writing news, including news releases, fact sheets, speeches, written responses to
media or public inquiry, feature articles, pamphlets, newsletters, and magazines. PLC sends news releases to newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. In addition, the CPL has allocated a section for news on its website to publish press releases, articles, announcements, speeches, and reports. The CPL has made the website of OPM a source for information and news to the clients of the OPM.

Second, the CPL uses oral communication that includes television and radio that covers its mission and events, such as seminars, conferences, and press conferences. For television coverage, the CPL distributes materials to networks, such as CNN, Fox, ABC, NBC, and CBS, as well as public radio.

In addition to the oral communication, the CPL uses photographs and films for visual communication. The department has allocated space on its website for photos and video of events related to the OPM. This has made the website a source for media information for journalists and the general public.

Fourth, the CPL uses interviews, briefings, seminars, hearings, tours, awards ceremonies, speeches, workshops, news conferences, and discussions for personal communication. The CPL is keen on personal contact and communicating face-to-face with the media and the public. In addition, the department provides appropriate ways for officials in the organization to give interviews to journalists. It also organizes the press conferences and provides OPM representatives who can answer journalists' questions. In terms of external communication media, the OPM has provided staff members who speak different languages and who are able to communicate with media officials abroad. The CPL emphasizes personal communication to maintain and develop relationships with representatives of media locally and abroad and to
transfer messages to the public in various places. When the CPL creates relationships with journalists, it identifies the information that it needs to communicate with journalists, such as media organization name, phone number, media contact name, fax number, title, e-mail address, and area of expertise. In the process of personal contact, the CPL provides a spokesperson for the organization to talk to journalists. In addition, it identifies the appropriate speakers to talk to, according to the type of occasion and gives them appropriate recommendations to address the media and the public. For example, the CPL chose OPM Deputy Chief of Staff Justin Johnson to speak at the 2012 conference of the American Society for Public Administration in Las Vegas.

**Measuring the Performance of the Media Relations Plan**

The goal of measuring the plan is to determine its effectiveness and determine if it needs a change or development in tactics or tools that are used. In addition, the measurement includes analysis to study the reality of the local media to identify potential problems in the process of communication with media. After the process of measurement and analysis, experts in the department provide their recommendations to develop the media plan in order to be more effective and positive.

*Analysis and Conclusions*

To form an effective media relations’ plan for the IPA, it was helpful to examine the media relations’ plan of a similar governmental organization such as the OPM and to identify the existing weaknesses of media operations at the IPA. The goal was to exploit the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of both organizations when creating the new media relations plan for the IPA.
The strengths of media operations section in the IPA are 1) availability of an ample budget from the government that fully supports media outreach, communication, salaries, equipment, and supplies, 2) a fully trained and well-staffed Department of Public Relations and Media, and 3) the existence of well-defined duties that reflect good media practices even if the duties are not contained in a formal plan, 4) an assessment process that helps the department keep pace with media trends.

Although there are strengths, there also are weaknesses that affect the media workings at the IPA. The weaknesses in media work at the IPA are 1) limited visibility in the media, 2) the lack of a media relations plan, 3) lack of exploitation of human and financial resources for development of media work, and 4) an inactive Web presence.

The Department of Public Relations and Media at the IPA suffers from the infrequent use of the media and its weak presence on the website which affects the reputation of the organization and how the department achieves its goals. The IPA carries out many important tasks that serve government organizations such as management development, training of state employees, and consultation. The IPA includes many important committees, which aim to raise the operational performance in the public sector, such as the Supreme Committee for Administrative Organization. Media coverage of these tasks is considered small although these tasks are considered important. These tasks need to be highlighted in the media to clarify to the public the role of the IPA in management development in Saudi Arabia. Department of Public Relations and Media at the IPA should take advantage of these strengths to highlight the efforts of the IPA and to develop its reputation. A well crafted media relations plan would help.
There are strengths in the media relations plan at the OPM that should be taken into consideration when creating a media relations plan for the IPA. The strengths are 1) easy access to information, 2) a wide variety of media dissemination, 3) an active Web presence, 4) the existence of a media relations plan which helps to encourage media interaction, and 5) availability of staff members who can speak different languages to facilitate the communication process with foreign media. However, despite the existence of a media relations plan, media appearances are not frequent. This may be because American media is selective in what they publish, and because journalists have their own guidelines for what is newsworthy or deserves to be published. This point does not affect the formation of a media relations plan for the IPA because the government supports the media in Saudi Arabia and there is a symbiotic relationship between government agencies and the media which makes publishing news of the IPA much easier than in America. Governmental organizations in Saudi Arabia are fully supported financially and administratively by the government. This means that they do not suffer from problems with their budgets or workforce. This makes the media committed to cooperation with governmental organizations for dissemination of news and events.

Based on the explanation and analysis above, it is possible to create a media relations plan that is appropriate with the work, goals, and the policy of the Department of Public Relations and Media at the IPA. This plan is based on the ethics of the media relations practice as presented by the PRSA and IPRA. Also, it focuses on the media standards and rules that are used by the PRSA and IPRA on topics such as illegal recordings, use of video news releases as a public relations tool, professional conflicts of interest, phantom experience (inflating résumés, credentials and capabilities), and building a media team. All these conclusions were considered when creating the media relations plan for this creative project.
Chapter IV

BODY OF THE PROJECT

Media Relations Plan

This chapter focuses on creating the media relations plan for the Institute of Public Administration in Saudi Arabia. This plan will organize the media operations and improve communication channels between the media and the IPA. The media relations’ plan is based on standards that are internationally recognized and upon which many distinctive organizations depend. The previous review of literature and analysis of the other government media relations plans also are a cornerstone for creating this plan.

The researcher created an annual plan that addresses the needs of and covers the events handled by the Department of Public Relations and Media. It includes all platforms required to support the department's goals. The plan contains six components: objectives and goals, target audience, target media, media timeline, spokesperson program, and performance measurement.

First Component: Objectives and goals.

Objectives:

1. Increase public visibility of IPA efforts pertaining to administrative development in order to build a positive and strong reputation for the IPA.
2. Promote the services that are provided by the IPA, such as training, consulting, documentation and research.
3. Create and maintain strong relationships with the local and foreign media.
4. Improve the IPA website and its social media presence.

Goals and Tactics:
To achieve the main objectives of the media relations plan, goals must be set and tactics must be developed.

First objective: Increase public visibility of IPA efforts pertaining to administrative development in order to build a positive and strong reputation for the IPA. To achieve this objective, the following goals will be set:

1. Increase the number of interviews the general director and officials in the IPA give to newspapers, television channels, and radio stations.
   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     • Invite journalists to conduct regular interviews with the general director of the IPA and managers of key departments at the IPA. The goal is to complete at least five interviews a year.

2. Improve coverage of IPA events.
   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     • Send press releases and invitations to the media to come and cover all IPA events. The invitations should be sent by the manager of the Department of Public Relations and Media.

3. Provide video and text based information to the media about the activities and sessions that are hosted by the IPA in development of the administrative process in Saudi Arabia.
   - Tactics to achieve this goal:
     • Assign staff to produce video and written reports on all events.
     • Disseminate news stories and releases by IPA staff members to newspapers, magazines, and radio stations. Process of dissemination is via email that includes links to the IPA website which also contains the material.
4. Write articles about the IPA and its activities and provide articles to local and foreign newspapers, magazines (governmental and private), the IPA newsletter and other governmental newsletters.

   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     
     • Encourage managers of the departments at the IPA to write articles about the IPA and its activities and have the media section publish these articles in newspapers, magazines (governmental and private), and newsletters. Also, there should be one journalist working in the media section who can handle foreign media in English. The goal is to produce at least four articles a year, one of which will be written in English.

5. Encourage news coverage for the annual conferences and seminars that are hosted by the IPA, such as the International Conference for Administrative Development and the Conference of Administrative Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     
     • Invite governmental and private TV stations and journalists by paper invitation to cover the big events that the IPA holds. The invitations should be sent by the manager of the Department of Public Relations and Media.
     
     • Follow up the invitation with phone calls to journalists to ask them to cover the event.

6. Create a documentary film about the IPA.

   Tactics to achieve this goal:

   • Produce a film about the history of the IPA and its activities and achievements and broadcast this film on the Saudi Channel Documentaries. The film will be
produced by contracting with a company that specializes in producing documentary films. The channel will play this film, which will be about 40 minutes long, three times a year. Planning and producing the film may take up to a year. Therefore, implementation of this goal may be possible in the second year of the plan. If there is not an adequate budget to produce this film, it may be possible to produce short video clips of about 10 minutes in length. These video clips could be shown on the display screen in the lobby of the IPA. These videos will be an honest and accurate representation according to the ethical standards.

- Upload a copy of the film with English subtitles in the multimedia section on the IPA website and place the IPA logo on the film in order to preserve the intellectual property rights.

7. Ensure that major committees created by the IPA to serve government organizations are covered by the media.

-Tactic to achieve this goal:

- Write news stories about the major committees that serve the government of Saudi Arabia, such as the Supreme Committee for Administrative Organization and the Center Performance Measurement of Government Agencies. Journalists in the media section at the IPA should write these reports and send them to newspapers. The goal is to produce at least two stories per year on each committee.

Second objective: Promote the services that are provided by the IPA, such as training, consulting, documentation, and research. To achieve this objective, these goals are:
1. Ensure that the activities of the IPA that serve government organizations are covered by the media.

   - Tactics to achieve this goal:
     
     • Write news stories on how the IPA trains about 40,000 governmental employees annually. The media section at the IPA should create these reports and then send them to newspapers and magazines. In writing reports about the IPA, it is necessary to adhere to the ethics of the media work by providing the correct information and not exaggerating it.
     
     • Write news stories about the distinctive training programs that are offered by the IPA for graduates of high school and how these programs differ from other institutes in terms of teaching English and providing internships to the students. These news stories should be sent to newspapers by the media section.

2. Create comprehensive media coverage about activities of the IPA, such as consulting, documentation, and research that are considered the IPA’s main activities. Consultation activities help government organizations improve a structure of tasks and prevent the overlapping and duplication of the administrative aspects. Research pertains to administrative sciences carried out by faculty staff members at the IPA for study and analysis of the administrative situations in government organizations. Documentation refers to government administrative documents and the study of their contents in order to better develop the administrative process (IPA, 2013).

   Tactic to achieve this goal:

   • Produce news stories about these services and send them to the newspapers. The media section should write these reports and send them to newspapers. The goal is
to produce at least three stories per year. The high quality of these news stories will encourage journalists to publish them.

Third objective: Create and maintain strong relationships with the local and foreign media. This is a significant objective because building relationships with media is considered one of the most important principles of media relations (Howard and Mathews, 2006, 65). To achieve this objective, the goals are:

1. Make a partnership with the local media that is beneficial for both parties.

   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     
     • Hold an annual seminar about the Saudi media. The Department of Public Relations and Media should organize this seminar and invite senior journalists in from different media throughout Saudi Arabia. In this seminar, employees of the Department of Public Relations and Media should communicate with the media representatives in this event and exchange business cards with. This seminar will be held for one day. Speakers at this seminar should be Saudi media professionals who have extensive experience. It is important for organizers to tell participants that presentations and interviews are being recorded to protect intellectual property rights.

2. Invite foreign journalists to attend and cover the international events of the IPA.

   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     
     • Encourage journalists from foreign countries to participate in the international events held by the IPA, such as the International Conference for Administrative Development and the Conference of Administrative Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council. The IPA should bear travel expenses and accommodation
expenses for journalists unless their news organizations prohibit payment to the journalists.

Fourth objective: Improve the IPA website and its social media presence. To achieve this objective, the goals are:

1. Make the website of the IPA a source for organization news.
   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     • Increase production of informational materials such as images, videos, and text. Employees of the media section should update the website of the IPA by posting news, images, videos, and text about events of the IPA. Updates should take place at least twice per week.

2. Publish news of the IPA on Facebook, Twitter.
   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     • Produce daily updates of IPA news on Facebook and Twitter. The media section should designate one person who is responsible for these updates.

3. Increase the number of videos on the website.
   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     • Coordinate the video recording of events with the Department of Training Techniques, which can assign videographers to these projects. Apply the logo to protect intellectual property rights.

4. Increase the number of followers on Facebook from 590 to 5,000 over three years; the three-year goal for Twitter is from 2,600 to 6,000 followers.
   - Tactic to achieve this goal:
     • Tweet every day at least one news item published on the IPA website.
• Present topics for discussion on Facebook and Twitter about training and the main activities of the IPA. In these discussions, officials of the IPA are invited to participate in the discussion with different people. The discussion will be open to all.

Second Component: Target audience.

One of the main objectives of creating this plan is to provide and disseminate news of the IPA to its clients and the general public in Saudi Arabia. The target audience includes:

- The general public who have no direct relationship to the IPA.
- Public sector employees.
- High school graduates who may be considering IPA training programs.
- The staff of the IPA and collaborators with the IPA.
- Government and private agencies.
- Foreign governmental organizations that have people participating in international events of the IPA.

Third Component: Target media.

One of the basic components of this plan is to identify target media that help to deliver messages. Identifying different types of media helps to choose the appropriate means of delivering messages. Target media selected for the plan are supported by the government, which is expected to cooperate with the IPA in dissemination of news, reports and articles. In this plan, target media are divided into three types: print, broadcast, and Web, which is operated by the IPA (see appendix 2. p. 66).

- Print media:
• Newspapers: *Um Al-Qura Asharg Al-Awsat, Al-Bilad, Al Eqtisadiah, Al-Hayat, Al Jazirah, Al Madina, Al Nadwa, Arab News, Okaz, Al Riyadh Saudi Gazette, Al Watan, Al Yaum, Alsahrq, and Sabq*. The fourteen newspapers are the top newspapers in Saudi Arabia and all are supported by the government.

• Magazines: *Yamamah Magazine, Magazine Journal*, and magazines of governmental and private organizations that have an interest in IPA topics.

- Broadcast:
  • Television: Saudi TV channels, Arabia TV, and MBC TV.

- IPA website: (http://www.ipa.edu.sa)
  • The IPA website on the Internet (for posting video and photographs).

**Fourth Component**: Media timeline.

Distribution of media from the IPA to its target audience helps to regulate timing of the interviews and reports about the main activities of the IPA. Developing news is not included in the media timeline because the timing of some important events and announcements cannot be predicted. The media timeline is divided by months. In each month, there will be a presence for the IPA in the media. This helps to achieve the main objectives of the plan (see appendix 1. p. 62).

Media Timeline:

- January:
  • Make the general director of the IPA available to journalists for in depth interviews.

- February:
• News stories about the IPA achievements in a newspaper (e.g., create a profile story on an IPA employee who is doing good work).

• Article about the IPA achievements in a magazine (e.g., article about the role of consulting that IPA provides in improving some government organizations).

- March:
  • Meeting with company that specializes in producing documentary films to discuss documentary film about the IPA for the Saudi Channel Documentaries.

- April:
  • News stories in a newspaper, magazine, and radio station about the Conference of Administrative Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council, a meeting that aims to coordinate, integrate, and encourage interdependence among member Arab Gulf states in all fields, including administrative.
  • TV coverage for the Conference of Administrative Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council.
  • Opinion column by an IPA staff member in a newspaper about the Conference of Administrative Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

- May:
  • News stories about the IPA's main activities in a newspaper (for example, report about how the IPA annually trains more than 40,000 employees to improve their administrative skills).

- June:
  • Preview stories in a newspaper, magazine, and radio station about the International Conference for Administrative Development. This conference focuses on the role of
administrative performance in the development of organizations in the government sector.

- TV coverage for the International Conference for Administrative Development.
- Article in a newspaper about the International Conference for Administrative Development.

- July:
  - Article about the IPA's main activities in a newspaper (e.g., article about the role of training courses that IPA provides for improving the skills of government employees).
  - Create the documentary film script about the IPA.

- August:
  - Interview with the Supreme Committee for Administrative Organization, which resumes meetings after two-month break for the summer vacation.

- September:
  - Interview in a newspaper with the general manager of the Department of Research and Studies. This interview will focus on how research has improved the field of administration in government organizations.

- October:
  - Interview in a newspaper with the general manager of the Training Programs Department. This interview will focus on how training programs have improved the field of administration in government organizations and improved the skills of students in English language, critical thinking, and administration.

- November:
News stories in a newspaper, magazine, and radio station about the Conference of the Government Administrative Leaders. This conference focuses on the situation of administrative leaders and the future. It is held by the IPA in November, 2015.

- TV coverage of the Conference of the Government Administrative Leaders.

- December:

  - Interview in a newspaper with the general manager of the Department of Consulting. This interview focuses on how consulting has improved the field of administration in government organizations.

  - Production of the documentary film about the IPA and discussion with the Saudi Channel Documentary on when the movie can be scheduled.

**Fifth Component: Spokesperson program.**

Choosing a spokesperson for the media relations plan is very important. The spokesperson is necessary to meet the media and to ensure the messages of the organization are clear and concise. The spokesperson is considered a source of information for the media and the public. The spokesperson should be the manager of the Department of Public Relations and Media, who should know the operations of the organization and be well versed in its affairs. In addition, the spokesperson should be available to be interviewed by journalists to respond to their questions or inquiries.

There are important points to prepare the spokesperson for having an effective presence in front of the media and the public: 1) formation of the main talking points, such as expected highlights and key messages, 2) identification of expected questions and how to respond to them, and 3) allocation of enough time for practice before the interview. Following the interview, the spokesperson should evaluate his/her performance and identify any problems that occurred in
order to overcome them in the future. To improve the performance of the spokesperson, it is advisable that he/she should take a specialized training course for spokespersons to help him/her to develop skills to communicate well with the media and the public.

**Sixth Component:** Performance measurement.

This plan is designed to work during a complete year. After the year, this plan should be reviewed by officials in the Department of Public Relations and Media. There are two types of assessment for this plan: concrete measures, and open and closed question evaluation. For example, 1) Have we achieved our goal of doing five interviews as was written in the plan? 2) Have we achieved our goal of doing four articles in one year as was written in the plan? 3) Have we achieved our goal of doing five reports in one year as was written in the plan? For open and closed evaluation, there are several questions that should be part of this analysis. These questions are: 1) Has the media relations plan achieved its goals and objectives? 2) Were there problems with effectively implementing the plan? 3) Are there points of the plan that need to be modified? If so, what are these points and what should be done to change? 4) What are the staff recommendations to further develop the media relations’ plan? These are sample questions for concrete measures and open and closed question evaluation. After analysis, it is necessary that the appropriate changes be made to improve the plan or keep using it.
Chapter V

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS/ IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This creative project aimed to develop a media relations’ plan for the IPA in Saudi Arabia. The goal was to create useful tools designed to enhance media practices at the IPA and help organize tasks into a specific plan. While an analysis of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management was helpful in developing this plan, it is important to note there are significant differences between the media models in the U.S. and in Saudi Arabia. The government supports the media in Saudi Arabia and requires them to publish its news, goals and mission to various audiences. In contrast, the American media is free and independent, and only publishes content that editors deem newsworthy. Competition between media organizations in America imposes on the media the need to publish important news in order to gain customer satisfaction.

There is no doubt that a media relations’ plan is one of the most powerful tools used by organizations to communicate with different audiences and the plan created for this project drew heavily on research – scholarly and professional – that encouraged public relations practitioners to develop positive relationships with the journalists covering their employers. The plan also took into account the specific goals of IPA and the media specifics of Saudi Arabia. The plan sought to use the traditional and modern media to promote services and activities of the IPA, all of which should strengthen the reputation of the IPA.

The timeline portion of the plan organizes the media coverage of events and services of the IPA through news stories, releases, columns, and interviews at specific times during the year. In addition, this plan proposes to increase the number of followers of news of the IPA on Facebook and Twitter. Developing the IPA website and making it a source for news was one of the most important aspects of this project.
Also, this project proposed a program to help an agency spokesperson appear effectively in front of the media and various audiences. After the plan has been in place for a full year, its performance will be measured to determine whether the plan was effective in increasing the number of interviews, stories, etc. about the IPA or whether the needs modification.

**Limitations and Future Research**

This study relied heavily on official documents from the OPM and IPA available publically on the Web, and on email correspondence with select IPA officials. Additionally, translating documents from Arabic to English was difficult and lengthened the time needed to create an effective project. While these obstacles did not inhibit the creation of the final plan, additional detail could be added if in-person interviews could be arranged.

Future studies could more closely evaluate the IPA media relations’ plan to determine if it has achieved its main objectives and to respond to the plan’s strengths and weaknesses. The future evaluation should study whether the media relations plan needs to increase the proposed number of interviews, articles, and news stories. While Facebook and Twitter are used in the current plan, future media plans should extend social media distribution to Keek, Pinterest, and Google+, channels that may further revolutionize media relations. Future research also should study the impact of new media in Saudi Arabian governmental media relations.
Chapter VI

OUTSIDE REVIEWS OF THE PROJECT

Reviewer 1

An evaluation of the creative project entitled *Creating a Media Relations Plan for the Institute of Public Administration in Saudi Arabia.*

STUDENT: Turki Alrashid

DEGREE: Master of Arts

MAJOR: Public Relations


Evaluated by Ibrahim M. Alsubaie

Dear Professor Spillman:

I. According to my professional experiences in the media and public relations field for approximately 8 years, especially in the public relations and training field in Saudi Arabia, I would like to state that the public in Saudi Arabia has a positive image about the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). However, the IPA hasn’t taken enough steps to develop a positive interactive relationship with the public.

It is my pleasure to review this project, which I think will play an important role in activating the concept of media plans as a vital and significant model directly related to the media and public relations departments. This plan will promote the communication between the IPA on one hand and the society on the other hand, in a highly professional manner.
II. I have known Turki Alrashid as a colleague in the Institute of Public Administration in Saudi Arabia.

III. Turki Alrashid has succeeded in establishing a research plan distinctively associated with the Public Relations and Media Department in the IPA in Saudi Arabia. If the IPA managed to implement this research plan, the latter will be a pioneer in the public relation field compared with other public relations departments in the public sector.

The researcher chose an excellent and fitting topic as the media section in the IPA in a significant need for a media relation research plan that helps in representing the IPA in a more professional fashion. The researcher’s plan should activate the media tasks according to concrete plans and steps that help to accomplish the main media goals.

IV. In fact, the researcher is implementing very effective methods to accomplish the objectives of his research. His methods are approved by the international media measurements, which is included in the Public relations Society of America PRSA measurements. This ensures that the research plan will result in a powerful interaction between the IPA and its training activities on one hand, and the visual, listening, and print media tools on the other.

I really enjoyed the researcher comparison between the Department of Communications & Public Liaison in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management in the USA and the Media and Public Relations Department in the IPA in Saudi Arabia. This comparison aims at applying the powerful tips used in the human resources department in the US at the media department in Saudi Arabia. I trust that such an implementation will be a great development and growth for the
public relations and media department in the institute. It will also give the department the best professional practice in accomplishing its activities and programs in the near future.

V. I see the research paper’s body as one of the strong aspects of the paper. The researcher succeeded in dividing his research plan into six components; the goals, the strategies, the audience, the target media, a timed schedule for the media plan, and measuring the impact of the plan.

This division helps the research paper’s body to be a very effective. In addition, in order to make the “media plan” more effective and realistic, the researcher successfully chose and named the activities that will take place in the IPA.

The researcher managed to cover most of the important aspects that the media plan may need. In his media plan, the researcher successfully integrated the new media tools such as facebook and twitter, with the traditional media tools such as the TV, newspapers, radio, which are supported by the government.

There has always been a need to improve and reform the image of the IPA in Saudi Arabia in regards to its interaction with the society through its press conferences and its channel on its website. The researcher plan should make it more easier and applicable to reach out to the public in Saudi Arabia and even in the gulf area in general.

I totally agree with the researcher in indicating that the media in Saudi media is directly supported and funded by the government, while the American media is not funded by the government, which of course affects selecting the news each one of them broadcasts. However, I think things should change in Saudi Arabia when people work according to a plan for the “media relations” that should be able to achieve a professional coverage.
VI. In conclusion, I am looking forward to see this vital project taking place in the public relations and media department in our Institute of Public Administration. This plan will be a huge and unique development step in such a governmental organization. I also would like to recommend Turki Alrashid’s research plan to all the governmental organizations especially in the public relations and media departments that are eager to develop its departments in order to accomplish its duties in a professional and unique way.

Ibrahim M. Alsubaie. Faculty Member. PR & Journalism Dept. IPA, P.O.Box 205. Riyadh, 11141.
Reviewer 2

An evaluation of the creative project entitled *Creating a Media Relations Plan for the Institute of Public Administration in Saudi Arabia.*

STUDENT: Turki Alrashid

DEGREE: Master of Arts

MAJOR: Public Relations

March 24, 2014.

Evaluated by Ali M. Alshubli

Dear Ms. Spillman:

It is my pleasure to evaluate Turki Alrashid’s creative research project. I have been working in the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in Saudi Arabia for twenty four years. I have earned my masters from Murray State University in Kentucky, and then I have returned back to Saudi Arabia. I have a long experience in public relations and media and in developing materials and training programs for the IPA.

Turki Alrashid is a colleague in the Institute of Public Administration in Saudi Arabia. He is a very enthusiastic and motivated member in the Institute of Public Administration - the training sector and media field. I see that the researcher chose a very vital topic for our department. I totally agree with the researcher that the IPA and the public relations and media departments are in a real need for a dramatic improvement and modification.
I see that the researcher provided a background information on the IPA, and he suggested a media relations plan to communicate with both the traditional and new media tools. In addition, the researcher included a comparison between the IPA in Saudi Arabia and a similar department in the US. I believe that the IPA has been depending on the old positive image that was used long time ago, however, this image will dramatically change if we don’t take positive steps towards a planned media research and practice.

I believe Turki’s project provided all the suitable solutions to establish a good media relations plan for our institute. I truly believe we need to focus on the nature of the IPA as a governmental department that has two responsibilities 1) to focus mainly on accomplishing specific assigned duties, 2) to graduate students that will be qualified to work in both the private and public sector. Therefore, we have to admit that changing the nature of this institute is not an easy task, as it requires a complete improvement and amendment process in its media policy.

The researcher used a very good method. His method depends on applying the public relations international standards. However, I expected that there would be numerical standards that describe the current situation for media section in the IPA and not only a general description of the current situation. I think the research needs to shed more light on the major changes that are taking place in the media and communication field in Saudi Arabia nowadays. It also needs to clarify that the IPA is not gaining from those positive changes.

I disagree to some extent with the researcher about the employees in the Public Relations and Media Department in the IPA. I think the whole team is in an extreme need for improving and developing their skills. They need to get more exposed to professional development workshops and experiences. The public relations and media team needs to hire more young
public relations and media practitioners who have experience in the current social network platforms. The Public Relations and Media Department needs a complete modification and improvement. And it is worth mentioning that the director of the department was already laid off from his job in the past few years.

One of the most powerful aspects of the creative project was that the researcher succeeded in focusing on the targeted audience, the targeted media tools, and the evaluation. Another strong aspect is that the research plan covers the weak points in the IPA; such as the directors’ dogmatic theories, which resulted in the institute avoiding any communication with the media.

Turki’s creative project includes clear, concrete, and applicable steps, and I would like to add some recommendations to it, such as 1) adding new employees in the department, 2) training and improving the current employees skills, and 3) Changing the dogmatic vision of most of the employees in the institute especially in their communication with the media.

I believe the researcher’s project will have a huge impact on the media communication field in the public relations departments. I also believe that his project will be a first vital step in a series of studies that investigate the future of the public relations departments in the public sector.

Ali M. Alshubli . Faculty staff member in field of media and public relations at the Institute of Public Administration in Saudi Arabia.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


## Appendices

### Table 1

*Media Timeline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>With the general director of the IPA in newspaper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Story</td>
<td></td>
<td>- About the IPA achievements in a newspaper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion Column</td>
<td></td>
<td>- About the IPA achievements in a magazine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV Coverage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Meeting with company that specializes in producing documentary films to discuss documentary film about the IPA for the Saudi Channel Documentaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPA Website/Social Media</td>
<td>- Update the website of the IPA by posting news, images, videos, and text about events of the IPA.</td>
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<td>- Update the website of the IPA by posting news, images, videos, and text about events of the IPA. - Updates should take place at least twice per week. - Tweet every day at least one news item published on the IPA website.</td>
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## 2nd Quarter

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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>News Story</strong></td>
<td>- About the Conference of Administrative</td>
<td>- About the IPA's main activities in</td>
<td>- About the International Conference for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council, in a newspaper, magazine, and radio.</td>
<td>a newspaper.</td>
<td>Administrative Development in a newspaper, magazine, and Radio station.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Opinion Column</strong></td>
<td>- About the Conference of Administrative Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council in a newspaper.</td>
<td>- About the International Conference for Administrative Development in a newspaper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TV Coverage</strong></td>
<td>- About the Conference of Administrative Development in the Gulf Cooperation Council.</td>
<td>- About the International Conference for Administrative Development.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td>- With the manager of the Supreme Committee for administrative Organization.</td>
<td>- With the general manager of the Department of Research and Studies in a newspaper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Story</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion Column</td>
<td>- About the IPA's main activities in a newspaper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV Coverage</td>
<td>- Create the documentary film script about the IPA.</td>
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<td>- Tweet every day at least one news item published on the IPA website.</td>
<td>- Present topics For discussion on Facebook and Twitter about training and the main activities of the IPA.</td>
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<td>Goals</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>December</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>- With the general manager of the Training Programs Department in a newspaper.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- With the general manager of the Department of Consulting in a newspaper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Story</td>
<td>- About the Conference of the Government Administrative Leaders in a newspaper, magazine, and radio station.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion Column</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TV Coverage</td>
<td>- About the Conference of the Government Administrative Leaders.</td>
<td>- Production of the documentary film about the IPA and discussion with the Saudi Channel Documentary on when the movie can be scheduled.</td>
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Table 2

*Media Types*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Media</th>
<th>Written Media</th>
<th>Broadcast</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magazine</strong></td>
<td>- <em>Yamamah magazine, Magazine Journal,</em> and magazines of governmental and private organizations that have an interest in IPA topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Television</strong></td>
<td>- Saudi TV channels, Arabia TV, and MBC TV.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Website</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The IPA website.</td>
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