

Education Public Relations

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Relations with the media and audiences have always been a great challenge for school districts. The transition to an era of information technology and the increased need for public awareness has heightened the pressure for administration reformations especially on the qualities and qualifications of those who hold public office. Because of fundamental function of education and the rapidly growing number of students in schools, a qualified school public relations become prominent and necessary in school district, private schools and colleges.

Overview

Educational public relations refer to methodical and structured management activity that enables a educational organization evolve its facilities, services and programs. School Public Relations is a Strategic way to help both public and private schools to build partnerships with their communities. There are numerous group of people for school public relations to common irate with, such as parent, local citizens, religious organization, business and social media. The function of School Public Relations is founded on a effective and comprehensive two-way communication for both the internal and the external shareholders and stakeholders(Ediger, 2001). There are a great number of mission and accomplishment that could be handled and achieved by educational public relations.

First of all, school public relations professional provides public relations counsel. They need to anticipates and pay attention to the potential crises and provides plausible solutions to the school districts. In the 21st century, the age of informations, messages could be transmitted especially rapid, thus a school public relations is required to utilize different communication strategies for a school district to communicate with its audiences proactively. Regardless of how capable the school faculties might be, intermittent issues and difficulties are unavoidable.

Accidents, injuries and catastrophic events are a deplorable reality that may influence the communities. School public relations person can help build up an emergency correspondence plan so a school or region is set up to respond to any possible condition. An emergency plan can likewise fortify the validity and reputation of a school, as guardians and local residents will feel sure that you are ready for whatever occurs(Callahan, 2012). Thus, school districts must represent as an active roles in their community, instead of a passive one. For instance, the school public relations are responsible to do researches and surveys to demonstrate the attitudes and perspectives of the public as a foundation for predicting and planning(National School Public Relations Association, n.d.).

Secondly, acting as the key liaison between school districts and the media is one of the most crucial responsibility to school public relations. In contemporary society, the media is fundamentally supportive for many associations and institutions in distinctive industries to spread news, information to the public. By utilizing different social platforms, such as newspapers, websites, press releases and paid advertisement, the school districts is able to transmit informations(Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). Working to get media coverage of district news is remarkably important for school public relations. The informations might be significant, such as declaring administrative changes or national grades results. In other circumstances, the schools might also want to announce programs, pledge drives or grant acknowledgment by using social media(Callahan, 2012). As a result, a school public relations person is required to establish a positive relationships with media, which is necessary for a school to be successful.

Besides that, school public relations need to connect with the community. It is obviously essential for administrators and instructors to pay their attention to the advancement and

improvement of their students. Likewise, school public relations enables the attract attention and increase awareness throughout the community. By composing and disseminating outside correspondences, for example, newspapers, handouts and Websites, school public relations experts can elucidate informations and present it to the local people efficiently and in language the overall population would comprehend(Callahan, 2012).

At last but not least, building financial budgets for school district is extensive as well. The public relations budgets for faculties, programs and promotion would change due to the size and demand of the organizations and the accessibility of resources(Chappelow, 2015). Current pandemic condition exemplifies that a professional educational public relations is an essential ingredients for a school to succeed. Result of the erratic fluctuation of unstable economy lead to a sharp drop in the funding for arts, physical education and extracurricular activities that are crucial for the growth of students and children. Therefore, by helping a school district to convey its financial demand to the tax payer, public relations could improve the long-term learning environment for students.

Skills and Advanced Training

An outstanding educational public relations professional is responsible to improve the programs and services of school districts, private schools and colleges. Although the qualification would like to change contingent upon the complexity of the job description, there are some abilities that the specialists must be acquired.

First of all, The general standards for an school public relations person are comprehension of the importance of education in society, and the social responsibility of public relations for school district and academic association(Chappelow, 2015 & “*Educational*”, 1982).

Besides that, the specific skills for an school public relations professional could be separated into four sections: educational background, working experience, demonstrated ability and professional growth(Chappelow, 2015).

In the Journal of School Public Relations, Marsha A. Chappelow(2015) states that “ A bachelor’s degree from an accredited university or, for department leaders, 7 years experience in the field is a minimum requirement. School public relations professionals are asked to possess comprehensive knowledge about inside and outer public relations and communication programs for school districts. Additionally, both a dominate of communication skills and a capacity to offer suggestions and expertise to superior administration are essential abilities and aptitudes as a school public relations professionals.

Evolution of Educational Public Relations

The emerge of Educational public relations is caused by the increasing emphasis given to the public education. The New Republic published eight articles about education in one week in April, 1981. The degraded job of education was criticized by the public and was ignored by media and influential leaders(*“Educational”*, 1982).

There is no exact records of the development of school public relations. Alternatively, it is feasible to follow the moderately lethargic evolution of educational public relations to the current day from its earliest beginning, just a couple of years after Bernays initially instituted the term “public relations counsel” in his book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*”, which is published in 1923. Around the same time in 1923, Harland C Hines and Robinson Jones distributed a book called *Public School Publicity*. Besides that, Arthur Moehlman wrote *Public School Relations* in 1927. Another book, *Public Relations for the Public Schools* was distributed by J. Stone Waller in 1933

(*“Educational”*, 1982). It is clear that there was some evolution in the industry of school public relations, though the advancement was slow.

The National School Public Relations Association was established during 1935 and 1936. At that time, the association was called The National Association for Educational Publicity. In 1945, after the association was noticed by the public, it became a subordinate department of the National Education Association, and it finally changed its name to the National School Public Relations Association in 1945. The number of employees in NSPRA increased from 23 in the beginning to 1500 people, who are full-time educational public relations practitioners in national schools, in 1982(*“Educational”*, 1982).

Advantages and Disadvantages

Working in educational public relations has a number of benefits to an individual. As an education public relations professional, an individual performs a wide range of tasks such as budget management or policy implementation on a daily basis thus improving their skills and knowledge in the field (Kowalski, 1996). The position has several job prospects especially in post-secondary institutions due to the increasing need for additional education by people to meet their career goals (Taylor et al., 2009). Also, the position offers high job security due to the projected job growth for preschool and child care program, which is estimated to hit 17% by 2022 (LearningPath Organization, 2021). However, the job also comes with some disadvantages. The position requires an individual to have extensive knowledge, skills, and academic qualification like a master’s degree. The job is demanding and stressful as it involves a wide range of activities like; dealing with student problems, assisting struggling program instructors, meeting with parents and other stakeholders, and budget planning and control (LearningPath

Organization, 2021). Also, the job may prove inconvenient especially where one is required to attend sudden events taking place in the evening or mid-night.

Comparisons

Compared to other public relation jobs, this job is similar to that of an education event specialists in that individuals holding such positions are expected to attend external and internal meetings to represent the school districts they are working for, create public awareness of the schools they are dealing in through marketing and social media, explain the product to potential participants, report success of their program to the top management, and be able to convince potential consumers to take up the programs or products (Bateman, 2007). Education public relations is similar to communications manager job in that in all jobs, an individual holding the position is expected to; develop and create interesting marketing materials to create awareness about the program, generate new ideas and strategies to improve the given program, lead marketing and junior public relations staff, and respond to any issues concerning the program both internally and externally (Abowitz, 2002). Compared to the position of a community engagement manager, the two jobs are similar in that both of them require the job holder to; identify the key stakeholders in external and internal environments and liaise with them for proper project running (Rowe, 2012). Develop social media tools to promote the given program, update the top management project progress, ensure confidentiality and security of records, and integrate previous working experience to the current job to create a respectful and cooperative working environment.

Although it appears to be similar to other public relations jobs, the position of an education public relations professional has some distinguishing characteristics. The job requires competency in coordinating the day-to-day activities of the program, the ability to plan, develop,

implement, and monitor a program, identify and implement effective administrative policies that will lead to achievement of the specific objectives of the given program (The University of New Mexico, 2020). It also requires an individual to have the skills to design, write, edit marketing and promotional materials and analyze participant's feedback to compile a detail report specific to the program (The University of New Mexico, 2020). Besides, school public relations people need to have the professional knowledge about education and children behavior and psychology in order to deal with different issues for students specifically ("*Educational*", 1982).

Career Prospect and Personal Opinion

The steady growth of NSPRA membership and the demand for information pertaining to education public relations is a clear indicator that the profession of school public relations is alive and stable today and even in the future. Higher education institutions and even district schools swiftly understands the need to have public relation professionals represent them in larger and highly influential public opinion cases. A report by Gould+Partners indicated that there was a rise in the number of public relations agencies in 2015 by 8% with the U.S leading the statistics with a 25% growth. In the previous year, the public relations sector absorbed over 85,000 new employees globally giving a professional recognition in the global employment platform (University of Florida, 2021). The U.S News and World Report Money reported that public relations jobs were the lead choice in the creative sector. Also CNN Money in the same year ranked program coordinator job as the 94th most satisfying job to have (University of Florida, 2021). In its analysis, CNN projected that public relation jobs would increase approximately by 13% for the next 10 years. This prediction was later backed by the U.S Department of Labor which estimated that there would be a 6% or more growth in job opportunities for public relations between 2014 and 2024 (University of Florida, 2021). From the

projections above it is sufficient to say that a bachelor's degree or master's degree holder in the field of public relation has a greater potential for growth and job security. I would prefer an education program coordinator job due to its interactive nature, especially the interaction with students which presents a better platform to gain new ideas and experiences. The job requires little or no physical effort in completing tasks, has limited exposure to physical risk, and most duties are performed in office work environment. Besides, through curricula development for programs, I will get an opportunity to shape student's career by incorporating units that will enable them acquire skills relevant in the major market to give them a competitive edge in the job market.

Conclusion

In final analysis, school public relations is a career that need different skills and educational standards. It is relatively new specialist of public relations industry, but it was especially essential for current society and our future. Everyone should pay more attention on the importance of school public relations to the success of students and school districts.

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