



Strategic Public Relations Leadership

By Anne Gregory, Paul Willis

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Public relations is operating in an increasingly challenging and complex environment. Pressures from outside the organisation include new accountabilities, empowered stakeholders, increased public cynicism and a new communication landscape. Internally, there are increasing demands to demonstrate a return on investment, alongside a requirement to coach and counsel senior managers exposed to these environmental pressures.

This context requires public relations professionals to be able to clearly articulate and demonstrate their own contribution to organisational effectiveness. This textbook provides public relations leaders with a framework to do this, as well as a checklist of essential capabilities which they must acquire and exhibit if they are to operate at the highest levels of any organisation.

This short textbook is suitable for aspiring practitioners, MBA and other masters qualifications in public relations - especially for those students who wish to pursue a successful career as a professional PR specialist able to operate strategically at the top of successful organisations.

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Editorial Review

Review

'This book demonstrates what leaders need to know to communicate effectively in their organization, but also to external audiences' Wim Elving, University of Amsterdam and Editor in Chief, *Corporate Communications, an International Journal*

'This book takes a giant stride in addressing the dearth of publications on strategic communication (public relations)' Benita Steyn. Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa and co-author of *Corporate Communication Strategy*

'One accepted notion of public relations is that practitioners implement, and often do so unethically, the ideas and wills of others. Taking a contrary view, Gregory and Willis do an excellent job of detailing how public relations professionals can exert leadership to not only improve the management philosophy of organizations but also the quality of engagement between organizations and their stakeholders.'

Bob Heath, University of Houston, USA

'Anne Gregory and Paul Willis provide a robust strategic lens through which any organisation should view public relations. Their framework and call to action will I hope encourage senior PR leaders – present and future – to believe in and champion PR as a valuable function in modern organisational life.'

Andrew Griffin, Chief Executive Regester Larkin Limited, UK

'The title of this book -- *Strategic Public Relations Leadership* -- is both a name and an aim, one shared by the CEO and the public relations leader. This focus on leadership could not be more timely, as organisations struggle with scrutiny from stakeholders with unprecedented access to mass communication power. As Gregory and Willis argue persuasively, today's leaders urgently need contextual intelligence, purpose and values to guide them, and they must learn to look at their world through a public relations lens. The book's academic rigour makes it an important part of our profession's body of knowledge, and its practical approach makes it an invaluable companion for practitioners in every corner of our global professional community.'

Daniel Tisch, APR, FCPRS, Chair, Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management

'There are many books on public relations but this is the first book which I believe focuses on the subject of Leadership and PR. It is long overdue. This book ought to become essential reading for both senior practitioners as well as heads of organisations who want to get the most out of their PR function. Written in a no-nonsense style, which is a hallmark of both authors, it is scholarly in its approach yet hugely practical. It will be a book to read, re-read and consult on a regular basis.'

Michael Murphy, Non-Executive Chairman and CEO of Grayling

'The authors write "an organisation's reputation is determined not by expert publicity programs, but

the alignment of declared and enacted values as judged by those with whom it has a relationship." If you understand what this means, this book will help you make it happen. If you don't understand what this means, you should read this book. Given the compelling association the authors identify between public relations excellence and organisational leadership, it can only benefit your career trajectory.'

Philip Sheldrake, Managing Partner, Euler Partners. Author, *The Business of Influence*

'The authors had previously done a superb job in describing what good communication looks like in the context of NHS organisations. In this book, they have shown that those principles (set out in 'The Communicating Organisation') are universal ones that must be recognised by any organisation seeking to take its reputation and engagement with stakeholders seriously. Anne Gregory and Paul Willis have described the challenging context facing all modern organisations, and provided the route-map for addressing these challenges. An important read for professional communicators and for leaders who recognise the importance of communications.'

Colin Douglas, Former Director of Communication, National Health Service

'Gregory and Willis cover three areas neglected in themselves: Strategic Public Relations, Public Relations Leadership, and PR theory-practice intersections. Their largest contribution, however, lies in how they integrate all three to offer coherent and actionable ways forward for academics and practitioners alike. Just three words of advice: get this book.'

Professor David McKie, University of Waikato, New Zealand

About the Author

Anne Gregory is Professor of Public Relations and Director of the Centre for Public Relations Studies, at Leeds Metropolitan University, UK, and Chair of the Global Alliance.

Paul Willis is Director of the Centre for Public Relations Studies at the Leeds Metropolitan University, UK.

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