



University of the
West of England

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Code: UMKCYB-15-M **Title:** Public Relations **Version:** 1

Level: M **UWE credit rating:** 15 **ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

Module type: Standard

Owning Faculty: FBL **Field:** Marketing

Valid from: 1 September 2010 **Discontinued from:**

Contributes towards: MSc Marketing Communications; MSc Marketing; MSc Social Marketing

Pre-requisites: None

Co-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: Managing PR & Corporate Communications in the Internet Age – UMKCSB -15-M

Aim of module

The module is designed to build students' understanding of the challenges of, and approaches to, managing Public Relations and organisational communication campaigns in the context of a constantly evolving communications environment in which marketing cynicism among the general public and increasingly interactive communication, notably via the Internet, play an increasingly significant role.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the implications of the new communications channels and technologies for the professional communications manager;
- Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the influences of the external environment on PR and communication strategies, particularly in the context of corporate social responsibility and ethics;
- Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of Public Relations and corporate communications theories, principles and current practice;
- Critically appraise these principles and theories, challenging viewpoints, ideas and concepts;
- Demonstrate advanced analytical and evaluative thought processes through the application and interpretation of key academic concepts to real-world communication challenges;
- Identify, select and synthesise relevant information from available resources;
- Apply a range of appropriate analytical processes and tools to the planning and implementation of PR and organisational communications programmes;
- Undertake independent/self-directed learning;
- Use written formats to communicate ideas and information clearly, logically and effectively;
- Use oral presentation and communications skills to put forward plans and ideas in a persuasive manner.

All of the above will be assessed. In addition, the educational experience may explore, develop, and practise, but not formally discretely assess, the following:

- Effectiveness at working in groups as leader and member;
- Time management skills;
- Effectiveness at working independently;
- Use of appropriate IT and electronic data resource to aid efficient searching, communication and presentation of information.

Syllabus outline

- The Internet, interactivity, social networks and consumer activism
- Public relations principles and theory
- Organisational communication, reputation management and social responsibility
- Principles of corporate communications
- PR techniques, skills, and approaches
- Building and developing media relations
- Crisis management
- Ethics, lobbying and politics
- Internal and network communications
- Campaign planning, management and evaluation.

Teaching & Learning Strategy

Learning in the module is achieved through a combination of class-based activity, group-based activity and independent study. The classroom sessions are designed to actively support the development of independent learning strategies by the students. The sessions combine formal lecturing with a wide range of participative activities including case studies, problem solving activities and group discussion. The sessions also require a significant amount of preparation by the students in advance and consequently they are issued with a Module Handout detailing the overall aims of the module together with expected reading and questions to be addressed. Resources such as the University Library as well as the study skills web pages will also aid learning

A particular feature of this module is the opportunity for groups of students to develop recommendations for specific Public Relations campaigns based on a range of scenarios developed especially for this course. Each group will be expected to develop suitable creative ideas, produce detailed plans and present these to the rest of the class who will be expected to provide a critical response to the presentation. To enhance the practicality and currency of this activity, wherever possible case study scenarios will be presented, and student responses evaluated, by external practitioners.

Reading Strategy

All students will be encouraged to make full use of the print and electronic resources available to them through membership of the University. These include a range of electronic journals and a wide variety of resources available through web sites and information gateways. The University Library's web pages provide access to subject relevant resources and services, and to the library catalogue. Many resources can be accessed remotely. Students will be presented with opportunities within the curriculum to develop their information retrieval and evaluation skills in order to identify such resources effectively.

Essential reading

The module will draw heavily from a textbook that ***all students are expected to purchase***. Please check with the module leader before purchasing as the text may change from year to year.

This text is currently:

Tench, R. and Yeomans, L (2006) *Exploring Public Relations*. FT Prentice Hall.

However, as the Module Handbook will have the most current details on reading strategy, students are advised to check before proceeding to purchase. Additional essential reading material, including case studies, articles from professional journals such as PR Week, and reports from sources such as WARC along with essential academic papers, will be provided. Where possible, materials will be made available on Blackboard for easy access.

Further reading

As well as the Essential Reading, students will be expected to read articles as directed by the tutor or as part of a self-learning strategy. These will be in journals electronically or physically available through the University Library such as "Public Relations Review"; "International Journal of Advertising"; "Journal of Advertising Research"; "Journal of Marketing Communications"; "Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media"; "Journal of Interactive Advertising"; "Journal of Business Communications"; "Journal of Communications Management"; "Journal of Website Promotion".

Students will also be expected to familiarise themselves with the latest developments through regular access to sites on the world web.

Indicative reading list

As indicated above, the most current advice on reading will be provided in the Module Handbook issued to all students. However, the following constitutes a list of textbooks that students may find useful and which will be available through the University Library:

- Argenti (2006) *Corporate Communications*, McGraw Hill
Cornelissen, J. (2004) *Corporate Communications – theory and practice*, Sage.
Davis, A. (2004) *Mastering Public Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan.
Davies, Chun, Da Silva & Roper (2002) *Corporate Reputation and Competitiveness*, Routledge
De Mooij, M. (2004) *Consumer Behaviour and Culture*, Sage.
Green, Laurence (2007) *Advertising Works 15*. WARC Publications.
Haig, M. (2002) *Mobile Marketing*, Kogan Page.
Kelleher, T. (2006) *Public Relations On-line*, Sage
Moloney, K. (2005) *Rethinking Public Relations*, Routledge.
Parsons, P.J. (2004) *Ethics in Public Relations*, Kogan-Page.
Theaker, A. (2004) *Public Relations Handbook*, Routledge
Van Riel, C. & Fombrun, C. J. (2005) *Essentials of Corporate Communication*, Routledge.

Assessment

The assessment strategy makes use of a summative end-of-module exam alongside formative preparation for the exam. A 3 -hour case-study scenario based exam will be employed that presents students with a choice of complex corporate communication and public relations situations from which they must select three to critically evaluate, draw rationalised conclusions and make considered recommendations based on appropriate theory as well as practical examples.

Opportunities will exist throughout the module for students to analyse similar kinds of issues on which they will receive formative feedback.

Percentage Split

Weighting between components A (controlled component) and B N/A

ATTEMPT 1

First Assessment Opportunity

Component A

Description of each element

1. Exam (3 hours)

Element weighting

100%

Second Assessment Opportunity (further attendance at taught classes is not required)

Component A

Description of each element

1. Exam (3 hours)

Element weighting

100%

ATTEMPT 2 (OR SUBSEQUENT): Attendance at taught classes is required